

A Culinary Quest

Peruvian Women Entrepreneurs in Southern California Negotiating Gender,
Home, and Belonging

Ann Cathrin Corrales-Øverlid

Thesis for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Peruvian women entrepreneurs whose life stories impacted me in so many ways.

Scientific environment

During my PhD, I was employed and had my workplace at the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Bergen. I was an active member of the Research school in Literature, Culture and Aesthetics at the Department of Foreign Languages and participated in two research groups: Latin America Language, Literature, and Culture (Department of Foreign Languages) and Foundational Questions in Gender and Sexuality Research (Center for Women's and Gender Research). I was also part of Bergen International Migration and Ethnic Relations Research Unit (IMER Bergen), and I served as coordinator of the IMER Bergen junior scholar network.

Associate professor, Synnøve Ones Rosales, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Bergen, was my main advisor, whereas Florence Everline Professor, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, served as co-advisor.

From August 2017 to May 2018, I was a visiting graduate scholar at the Department of Sociology, University of Southern California, where I was also part of the Immigration Graduate Group affiliated with the Center for the Studies of Immigrant Integration (CSII). The research stay and fieldwork was facilitated by funding from the Meltzer Research Fund.

Preface and Acknowledgements

This dissertation was completed under the particular circumstances that have shaped the lives of individuals and families across the globe during the year of 2020. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard and wide, it exacerbated deeply ingrained inequalities in our societies and elucidated the particular vulnerability of certain groups. In the United States, newspaper headlines and statistical reports have pointed to how intersecting dimensions of privilege and oppression such as gender, ethnicity/race, and class structure the consequences of the pandemic unequally across the population. Women, immigrants, young adults and people with low educational attainment have been particularly affected by job losses, and unemployment rates have risen sharply, especially among Hispanic women (Kochhar June 9, 2020). Restrictions and economic downturn in American states that have been hardest hit by the virus, such as California, has had a particular impact on small business owners many of whom have faced severe economic hardships (Klee, Laughlin, and Munk June 30, 2020). Sociologist Karina Santellano's (2020) timely research among Latinx coffee shop owners in Los Angeles, for example, highlights the barriers many Latinx entrepreneurs face when trying to access funds from The Paycheck Protection Program, which is included in The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

The pandemic has further altered people's lives and behaviors, and divisions between the private and the public sphere—between work and family life—have been blurred. During the pandemic, women as well as men have found themselves confined to their private homes, as working parents turned into teachers and full-time homemakers, having to balance family commitments with work obligations. Other workers do not enjoy the privilege of home office, and as employees in low-status occupations have gained recognition for performing essential front-line work, they also face higher risks of being exposed to the virus. The stories of Peruvian women entrepreneurs in Southern California, around which this dissertation centers, elucidate many of these inequalities and issues. And the effects of the pandemic and lockdown has stressed the significance of these stories, as they serve to enhance our understanding of important

intersections between the private and public space, between work and family, as well as between the formal and informal economic sector.

While I struggled to finish this manuscript, I was also adjusting to a new way of juggling family, home schooling and work, a balancing act which normally in my case is facilitated by state policies and a Norwegian welfare state that provides subsidized child care and after school programs. These were everyday struggles for many Peruvian women in Southern California who juggled business ownership with care obligations. As the pandemic continues to affect our lives, my thoughts wander to all the Peruvian women culinary business owners that I met during field work in 2017/2018 and whose life histories I was able to collect through this research project. I cannot help but wonder about the impact that the current crisis may have on these women's food businesses, a hard-hit sector. I know that a few of the businesses have had to close down, whereas others struggle to keep afloat during these challenging times. When I hear about people in my own neighborhood who turn to public benefit programs in order to mitigate their situation as temporary laid off, while waiting for the pandemic to pass and the economy to recover, I particularly think about the undocumented immigrant women who participated in this study and of those who run informal businesses who find themselves in an acutely vulnerable position as they lack access to health insurance and are ineligible to protection by labor and employment laws. I am also left wondering what role self-employment and particularly informal business activities will play in the lives of marginalized people and others who in the aftermath of the current crisis will attempt to recover from this economic turmoil.

I am deeply indebted to Peruvians in Southern California who agreed to participate in this study, particularly to the Peruvian women entrepreneurs who let me into their lives, businesses, and homes. It is with my deepest respect that I try to convey to a broader audience what was shared during these private moments of trust, reminiscence, laughter, joy and also tears. Thank you! The way other Peruvians in the area encouraged me and supported me in so many ways made my time in the field not only easier, but also fun and personally fulfilling. There are many resourceful people working for the unity of the Peruvian community and for the well-being of other Peruvians. Many names could be mentioned, but I want to highlight the indispensable

support I received from Milagros Lizárraga, Betty Arévalo, Augusto Marin and the Peru Village board. In Peru, I thank Gastón Acurio, Teófilo Altamirano, and Janina León for your willingness to meet with me and discuss the topics of this project.

To my dissertation advisors, Synnøve Ones Rosales and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, it has been an honor to work with you. Synnøve, with your expertise in Latin American history you have been an important mentor both regarding teaching and dissertation work. The way you always believed in me made me feel that I could do this, even when I doubted myself. Thank you for always leaving your door open for my countless questions and doubts. Pierrette, I am thankful that you replied positively to a hopeful email from a Ph.D. candidate from Norway. Without your expert comments and detailed gaze this dissertation would not have turned out as it did. You have guided my academic path and made me aware of the type of researcher I want to be and of the kind of lenses I choose to see the world with. I will bring with me these insights in the career that lies ahead of me.

At the Department of Foreign languages at the University of Bergen (UiB), and particularly in the Latin American studies group, I found a home and several new friendships. Thank you Maria Álvarez, Jon Askeland, Kari S. Salkjelsvik, Miguel A. Quesada-Pacheco, Xavier Llovet Vilà, Håkon Tveit, Alissa Vik, Marta Salvá, Roxana Sobrino, Soledad Marambio, Ernesto Semán and Tania Espinoza. I also direct a special thank you to Victoria Jensen, who provided administrative assistance and personal support, and to Laura Saetveit Miles, who, as a leader of the Research School in Literature, Culture and Aesthetics, has taught me so much about how to navigate life in academia. I further thank Kari Normo and Vigdis Holtet at the UiB humanities library who have helped me obtain books from all over the world.

As a visiting graduate scholar at the University of Southern California (USC), I received important support and trust from Jody Vallejo. Thank you, Jody, for taking me under your wings. My stay at USC had not been the same without the friendship and support of Blanca Ramirez, Karina Santellano, Alli Cortiz, Mary Ippolito and Yael Findler. Thank you for including me in the graduate group. To Luis Cruz Fritsch and Isabel Yanez, thank you for your hospitality, for welcoming me and my family to Los

Angeles, and for letting us stay at your house. I also thank Ina Schießl and Florian Lteig who contributed to enrich our stay in Los Angeles.

They say that writing a dissertation is a lonely job. To me, however, it has been quite the contrary. In the IMER junior scholar network I found academic support, writing motivation and extraordinary people who have become close friends. This journey would not have been the same without our weekly ShutUpAndWrite sessions, seminars, reading groups, as well as social gatherings and informal discussions. Thank you, Noor Jdid, for initiating the network. Writing retreats, lunches and walk-and-talks with Line Grønstad and Kari Hagatun were particularly appreciated and essential for my progress and personal well-being, as were supportive and enlightening conversations with Karin Anne Drangslund. I have also been fortunate to be part of the research group Foundational Questions in Gender and Sexuality Research at the Center for Women's and Gender Research, as well as of Bergen International Migration and Ethnic Relations Research Unit (IMER Bergen), which have provided important academic environments.

A number of people contributed to the quality and completion of this dissertation. I thank Randi Gressgård, Paolo Boccagni, Alejandro Miranda Nieto and Zulema Valdez for offering insightful comments at an initial stage of the project. I am also grateful to Stine H. Bang Svendsen, Kari Jegerstedt and to my colleagues in the Latin American studies reading group who provided important feedback on selected chapters, as did fellow Ph.D. candidates at the Research School in Literature, Culture and Aesthetics and at the IMER junior scholar network. A special thanks to Marta Bivand Erdal for critical revisions on the first complete draft. I further thank Sebastián Corrales Longhi-Øverlid and Gabriel Ebhardt for help with transcribing interviews, as well as Lulio Lazo Lovatón and Ingrid Haugen for technical assistance. I owe a special thanks to my good neighbors and friends, Jannicke and Dag Folkestad, for lending me their cabin, which offered peace and a wonderful view during multiple writing retreats where I could get away from family obligations and immerse myself into dissertation work.

Although I have fully enjoyed the thrill of doing research, the process has made me aware of what matters most in life. I thank my parents, Sissel and Einar Ove Øverlid, who are the reason that I stand here today. You gave me independence from an early age and never pushed me, nor asked more of me than for me to be happy. To my

wonderful sisters, May Britt, Veronica, and Hilde, you are a true blessing. Thank you, Veronica, for reading large parts of the manuscript and for providing comments and support. My amazing mother-in-law, Lida Cárdenas Ovalle, deserves to be recognized for introducing me to Peruvian cuisine, and for nurturing me and my family with mouthwatering dishes flavored with experience and care. Tenacity and a strong work ethic got me through this project, of which my dear grandparents have set the example. Our family cat, Wayra, merits a special mention. She kept me company through many writing sessions, and often inserted typos to the manuscript. The week before I handed in this dissertation, she left this world and a big void in our hearts. To my children, Sebastián and Ayla Gabriela, you always kept me grounded and constantly reminded me that also my endeavors of making it in academia formed part of broader life projects and everyday life. You have been so patient, and your warm hugs and understanding have been my greatest support. To Marco Corrales, my life partner and best friend, who gives the best massages after demanding work days and the exact right words when I need them the most. You have stood by my side, as I will stand by yours.

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List of References to Food:

Aji amarillo—Yellow and spicy Peruvian chili pepper and an essential ingredient in Peruvian cuisine.

Aji verde—Peruvian green chili pepper.

Aji de gallina—A typical Peruvian creamy hen/chicken stew made with *aji amarillo*.

Alfajores—Cookies filled with *manjar blanco*—a creamy, sweet pastry filling, common in a range of Latin American countries (also called *dulce de leche*).

Anticuchos—Marinated grilled beef heart skewers often found in *anticucherías*, at outdoor events, or among informal vendors who fill the streets in Peruvian cities.

Arroz con chanco—Pork with rice.

Arroz con leche—Peruvian-style rice pudding.

Arroz con pollo—A popular Peruvian dish consisting of chicken served on a bed of rice, seasoned with cilantro and *aji amarillo*, speckled with carrot cubes, peas and red bell pepper.

Asado—Roast.

Ceviche—One of Peru's signature dishes based on raw fish that is marinated in lime juice, red onions, salt and pepper. It is often served on a bed of lettuce and accompanied by cooked sweet potato and toasted corn.

Chanco/carnero al palo—Large pieces of pork/lamb are arranged on steel racks and roasted on wood fire.

Chicha morada—Soft drink made from purple corn.

Choclo—Corn from the Peruvian highlands. Different in form, color and taste from the North American corn.

Costillitas al horno—Oven baked ribs.

Causa limeña—Layered potato dish.

Crema volteada—A Peruvian version of the dessert Crème Caramel.

Cuy—Guinea pig.

Empanadas—Fried or baked crescent-shaped pastry with varied fillings such as beef, chicken, pork or vegetables.

Ensalada de papa—Potato salad.

Huacatay—Black mint, a common herb used in a variety of dishes in Peru. Restaurants often serve *salsa huacatay* (creamy black mint sauce) with the food.

Huancaína sauce [Huancayo style sauce]—yellow creamy and slightly spicy sauce prepared from onions, cheese, condensed milk and *aji amarillo*. It is usually served over a bed of potatoes garnished with hard-boiled egg and olives—an appetizer called *Papa a la Huancaína*. *Hancaína* means “from Huancayo”, a city in the Peruvian highlands.

Lomo Saltado—Peruvian signature dish consisting of stir-fried marinated strips of sirloin, *aji amarillo*, onions and French fries.

Maíz morado—Purple corn variety native to Peru.

Paiche—Amazon freshwater fish.

Papa rellena [stuffed potato]—Made by mashed potato, filled with ground beef, raisins, hard-boiled egg and olives, formed into a potato shape and pan fried until crisp and golden outside. It is often served as an appetizer with *salsa criolla*.

Papa nativa—Native potato.

Parihuela—A spicy Peruvian-style seafood soup consisting of fresh seafood and Peruvian hot peppers.

Pollo al horno—Baked chicken.

Pollo a la brasa—Marinated rotisserie chicken roasted over fire wood. It is typically served with French fries, salad, and a selection of creamy sauces.

Quinoa—A protein packed grain originating in the Peruvian highlands. It is often used as a main ingredient in the main course, or in soups or hot drinks.

Salsa criolla—Peruvian red onion relish.

Seco de cordero—Peruvian lamb stew based on cilantro often served with beans, rice, and *salsa criolla*.

Tallarín verde—Spaghetti dish made with a spinach and basil pesto sauce often served with steak or fried chicken.

Tamales—Common in many Latin American countries. Peruvian tamales are often enjoyed for breakfast. The base is made with cornmeal and *ají amarillo*, which is stuffed with pork or chicken, and wrapped in either banana- or corn leaves depending on the region.

Yucca fries—Similar to French fries, but made of cassava instead of potatoes.

Abstract

A complex context of reception shapes culinary business ownership among Peruvian immigrants in Southern California. In the United States, Latinxs are often negatively portrayed as undocumented, poor, and criminals, and thus as a threat to US society and values. However, such negative discourse intersects with a favorable opportunity structure for Peruvian culinary businesses, as the recent gastronomic boom in Peru has placed Peruvian cuisine on the top of culinary hierarchies, and Peruvian food has garnered high status internationally. This dissertation is the first study to document the development of a growing Peruvian gastronomic scene in Southern California. With a focus on Peruvian immigrant women who have established culinary businesses in the area, it argues that women play an important role in shaping the Peruvian culinary scene, as they establish a variety of food ventures in the formal as well as in the informal economic sector. By elucidating how the women negotiate gender, home, and belonging through culinary entrepreneurship, I extend scholarship on so-called ethnic entrepreneurship and shift the center of attention from economic incorporation and entrepreneurs as mainly economic actors to a focus on spatial practices, non-economic business outcomes, and broader processes of immigrant integration.

In order to understand these complex dynamics of immigrant business ventures, I employ qualitative methods, including thirty-five interviews with Peruvian women entrepreneurs as well as ten months of participant and non-participant observation in the women's businesses and in the Peruvian immigrant community. By drawing on novel insight on home as a lens to understand immigrant integration, and bringing this into conversation with the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, the dissertation offers a new and more comprehensive framework—*the nested approach to immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship*. Building on previous theorization that emphasizes how individual-, group-, and macro-level factors facilitate and constrain entrepreneurship, and on recent efforts to employ an intersectional lens to the field, I add important socio-spatial dimensions with an emphasis on how immigrants' entrepreneurial practices are nested within larger life projects and the search for home and belonging. Hence, this study broadens our understanding of the entrepreneur's social embeddedness, and by lifting

the gaze beyond the economy and the market, I find important intersections between the private/family and the public/work sphere.

Moving beyond comparative male/female frameworks that often emphasize women entrepreneurs' marginalized position relative to men, I find that under certain circumstances women also benefit from their gendered location and bargain with patriarchy as they draw on culinary skills to occupy roles as head of independent and family businesses. By paying attention to life course and to spatial practices, I further demonstrate that motherhood informs entrepreneurial practices. Mothering responsibilities shape how the women navigate informality/formality and how they transgress socially constructed boundaries between the private and the public sphere and contest deeply ingrained gendered inequalities in a capitalist economic system constructed around a male template.

The nested approach emphasizes immigrant home-making and place-making. Through their businesses, Peruvian immigrant culinary entrepreneurs contribute to shaping local environments. Control over a space in culinary markets allows them to reproduce the "homeland" and create home-like places in a migrant context. As Peruvians in an area shaped by large-scale Mexican immigration and by the negative narrative on Latinx immigrants, they draw on the status of Peruvian food to negotiate inclusion through distinction and claim the right to membership of the urban community. The recognition of and character of such distinction, however, is negotiated in the encounter with the established population, but also with other immigrant groups, as well as with other Peruvians. Hence, culinary entrepreneurship arises as a powerful tool that immigrants draw on to make sense of who they are in a migrant context.

Introduction: Peruvian Women Migrants and Culinary Entrepreneurs

An atmosphere of contemplation, joy and celebration is created by the religious melodies that rise to the top of the Romanesque church tower, and fills the spacious nave adorned with tall and elegant columns of shiny marble supporting this 20th century architectural treasure. Men dressed in purple robes carry the image of *El Señor de los Milagros* [The Lord of Miracles],¹ gliding down the aisle, feet tapping in synchrony with ceremonious hymns. October has dawned upon Southern California, and Peruvian immigrants gather in Catholic churches to celebrate *El mes morado* [the purple month],² which brings with it loaded signification and nurture memories of traditions and practices from the country they once left behind.

In the parking lot outside of the church, Peruvian women, and some men, are busy preparing traditional Peruvian culinary specialties like *arroz con pollo*, *papa rellena*, and *tamales*.³ Plastic tables and chairs are arranged, and portable stoves are lit, while experienced hands work quickly and efficiently in order to have everything ready for the influx expected at the end of the procession, as hungry Peruvians and other

¹ Anthropologist Karsten Paerregaard (2008a) notes that the image of the Lord of Miracles traces its roots to the first Africans who were brought to Peru by Spanish colonizers in the sixteenth century. As the slaves converted to Catholicism, they established their own Christian brotherhoods. Inspired by indigenous mural paintings of Andean gods designed to protect the population from frequent earth quakes, the African slaves began to make murals of Jesus Christ. The legend of the Lord of Miracles emerged when a mural painted by an African slave was preserved in the midst of severe destructions following the earth quakes in 1655, 1687, and 1746. Perceived as a miracle, this prompted the wider Catholic population to join the African slaves' deification of the image. Since the eighteenth century, religious brotherhoods have arranged annual processions on October 18th to honor the image as it is carried through the streets of central Lima. In the 1990s, the procession spread to other parts of the city. Paerregaard further demonstrates how this image, with roots in Peru's past as a country of (forced) immigration, and with syncretistic elements, has achieved a transnational dimension as Peruvian emigrants bring their traditions with them to cities such as Madrid, Barcelona, Milan, Genoa, Rome, Milan, Los Angeles, New York, Washington DC, Miami, Tokyo, Kyoto and Buenos Aires, where they organize similar processions in the honor of *El Señor de los Milagros*.

² The *cuadrillos* [teams] who carry the image of the Lord of Miracles are dressed in purple robes. Due to the prevalence of the color purple during these processions, the month of October is called *el mes morado*.

³ *Arroz con pollo* is a popular Peruvian dish consisting of chicken served on a bed of rice seasoned with cilantro and *aji amarillo* [a yellow and spicy Peruvian chili pepper and an essential ingredient in Peruvian cuisine], speckled with carrot cubes, peas and red bell pepper. *Papa rellena* [stuffed potato] is made by mashed potato filled with ground beef, raisins, hard-boiled egg and olives, formed into a potato shape and pan fried until crisp and golden outside. It is often served as an appetizer with *salsa criolla* [Peruvian red onion relish]. *Tamales* are common in many Latin American countries. Peruvian tamales are often enjoyed for breakfast. The base is made with cornmeal and *aji amarillo*, which is stuffed with pork or chicken, and wrapped in either banana- or corn leaves depending on the region.

Latinx⁴ Catholics fill the parking lot in search of Peruvian gastronomic delights to purchase in order to satisfy not only their spiritual needs, but also corporal desires on this dark and crisp evening. I am there to help out Victoria,⁵ an undocumented⁶ Peruvian immigrant, who runs an informal catering business offering Peruvian food at a variety of cultural, religious and festive events. I witness how Peruvian immigrant women, men and their children gather around the different food stands, inhaling the delightful aroma from a varied selection of dishes while waiting to grab a bite of what by many is experienced as “a taste of home”.

Within a stone’s throw, in the same neighborhood, Sofia, another Peruvian woman, provides her Central American cook with some last instructions before she takes me with her in her car on a delivery round to a nearby neighborhood. The restaurant she owns together with her husband, in one of the popular middle-class suburbs surrounding Los Angeles, has hired a young man to do the delivery. Tonight, however, Sofía had to assume this task herself. Upon our return to the restaurant, she invites me for a wonderful Peruvian meal. We sit down at a neatly set table located in a corner under the shadow of a large image of *Inti*, the Inca Sun God, sophisticatedly carved in brass. *The Huancaína sauce*⁷ melts on my tongue, and the very particular taste of *aji amarillo*, transports me, for a moment, back to the many visits I myself have made to Peru. Between phone calls and attending to customers, she shares with me the story

⁴ I employ the term “Latinx” here, but use the term “Hispanic” when referring to a source that employs this term. According to sociologists Rogelio Sáenz and María Cristina Morales (2015, 3) the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” refer to the same group—people of Latin American descent. There are differences of opinion, however, on which term is preferred. Due to difficulties of defining the US population of Latin American decent, the government invented the label “Hispanic” toward the end of the 1970s, and the term was widely applied by the media. Some Latinxs, however, criticized the government for imposing the term upon them, and distanced themselves from this label. The term “Latino” started to proliferate in the media in the 1990s, but some were skeptical to the term since it distanced them from their Spanish ancestry. I share the view of sociologist Marlene Orozco and her colleagues of the term “Latino” as “in part a construction of power relationships and the imposition of categories and in part a self-construction of an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1983)” (Orozco et al. 2020a, 21). Recently, however, there has been an effort to de-gender the Spanish language. I hence adopt the term “Latinx”, which rejects a binary understanding of gender.

⁵ In order to ensure the confidentiality of the study participants, I use pseudonyms.

⁶ I employ the term “undocumented immigrant” since this was the label the participants referred to themselves [in Spanish: *indocumentada/o*] along with the phrase “sin papeles [without papers]”. The term “undocumented” is extensively used in the US context. I also employ the term “unauthorized”, as the temporality inherent in this concept underscores that the legal status of undocumented immigrants is produced through government regulations which are tied to temporal and spatial horizons. Legal scholar Keramet Reiter and anthropologist Susan B. Coutin argue that through the US legal system immigrants are re-labelled as “deportable noncitizens” which initiates “a process of othering” leading to “categorical exclusions” (2017, 567). Hence, a person’s “undocumentedness” is only produced in relation to the state. As historian Mae M. Ngai’s (2006) article title asserts: “No Human Being is Illegal”. Nevertheless, the phrase “illegal immigrant”/“illegal alien” often appears in the media and in political and popular discourse.

⁷ *Huancaína* sauce [Huancayo style sauce] is a yellow creamy and slightly spicy sauce prepared from onions, cheese, condensed milk and *aji amarillo*. It is usually served over a bed of potatoes garnished with hard-boiled egg and olives—an appetizer called *Papa a la Huancaína*. *Hancaína* means “from Huancayo”, a city in the Peruvian highlands.

around the circumstances that brought her to the United States, and how she decided to leave a long career in a major Los Angeles corporation, to fulfill her dream about opening her own Peruvian restaurant business.

* * *

Religious processions, like *El Señor de los Milagros*, and other cultural events make the small but growing Peruvian population in Southern California more visible as a minority in the urban space. Yet, the most visible evidence of Peruvian immigration to the region is the increasing proliferation of Peruvian culinary businesses. Californians and other Americans have embraced Peruvian Gastronomy, which is illustrated by its frequent appraisals in local and national foodie discourses. Peruvian restaurants enter lists such as “The World’s 50 Best Restaurants 1-50” (The World’s 50 Best Restaurants 2020),⁸ “12 Flavor-Packed Peruvian Restaurants to Try in Los Angeles” (Chaplin February 19, 2019),⁹ and “The Best Dishes Eater Editors Ate This Week” (Eater LA October 5, 2020). The so-called Peruvian gastronomic revolution¹⁰ has indeed reached the shores of California and penetrated its culinary markets. While famous Peruvian chefs have opened gourmet restaurants in several countries across the globe,¹¹ and the Peruvian government has invested in campaigns promoting Peruvian gastronomy internationally,¹² migrants also contribute to expanding the reach of the gastronomic

⁸ Peruvian restaurants in Peru’s capital, Lima, are ranked as number 6 and 10

⁹ The majority of the restaurants on this list have either a male owner, or are family owned. Two of them, however, are run by women.

¹⁰ The Peruvian gastronomic revolution/boom refers to the enormous growth in popularity and importance that Peruvian gastronomy experienced, beginning in the 1990s, but achieved momentum in the new millennium. Local Peruvian dishes were reinvented by elite chefs in Lima who were trained abroad. And over the span of a decade, Peru turned into a food nation that could brand itself with a globally recognized cuisine. Culinary institutes, schools and businesses popped up at high speeds in Peru, and the profession of chef garnered high prestige. I discuss this process in further detail in Chapter 2.

¹¹ Two of the most famous Peruvian chefs, Gastón Acurio and Virgilio Martínez Véliz, have opened restaurants in cities like Santiago de Chile, Bogotá, Quito, Caracas, Mexico City, San Francisco, Chicago, London and Dubai.

¹² The government-sponsored nation-branding campaign “Marca Perú [Peru Brand]” is a “tool that seeks to promote tourism, exports and attract investment capital” (Marca Perú n.d.; my translation). Peruvian gastronomy forms an important part of the campaign. One example is the commercial “Peru, Nebraska”, a publicity spot that was broadcasted in 2011, in which food is displayed as the primary symbol of peruvianness.

boom through culinary entrepreneurship.¹³ Peruvian restaurants seem to have popped up across the Golden State, and particularly in and around Los Angeles, where at least one Peruvian restaurant is found in most neighborhoods. The majority are run by Peruvian immigrant entrepreneurs. However, celebratory culinary narratives are articulated alongside negative depictions of Latinxs in the United States, often stereotyped in the media and in political and mainstream discourse as undocumented, poor and delinquent, and hence also as a threat to American society and values (Chavez 2013). In this dissertation, I explore Peruvian culinary entrepreneurship in Southern California and the entrepreneurs' effort to navigate business ownership within this complex context of reception.

If you participate in the variety of events that are organized by the Peruvian community in the area, you will soon notice, as I did, that along with music, food is the main ingredient in such events, as well as a material and sensory aspect that brings Peruvian immigrants together from afar. As Alberto, a Peruvian I interviewed in Los Angeles, expressed: "I believe that what Peruvians miss the most here is the food, always. They miss Peruvian food."¹⁴ The food seems to be one of the most important elements from the country of origin that is reproduced in a migrant setting, as it often evokes memories of a home left behind. According to anthropologist Ghassan Hage, "[t]he relation between home and food is an essential one" (2010, 416). His statement prompts the question: How does the presence of food at such cultural events, as well as in Peruvian culinary businesses, contribute to immigrants' sense of home in the host

¹³ I employ the term "culinary entrepreneur" referring to self-employed and business owners in the commercial food sector, including ventures in the informal economy. "Culinary entrepreneurship", thus, encompasses a variety of food businesses, such as restaurants, catering companies, cake and pastry businesses, and food markets. I use the term "culinary markets" when referring to the institutions and mechanisms through which food is commoditized, commercialized and exchanged. Although the term culinary entrepreneurship appears frequently in mainstream discourse and in the media, it has not been widely embraced by scholars preoccupied with ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. Numbers from The Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs from 2015 underscore the important relationship between the culinary sector and minority business ownership. The accommodation and food sector was the largest among all minority-owned employer firms, in which minorities counted for about one-third (34.6 percent) of the ownership of employer firms in this sector (U.S. Census Bureau July 13, 2017). Moreover, businesses in the culinary sector constitute a potential space for dynamics of representation through the production and reproduction of culture, as culinary business owners often draw on performances of ethnicity and authenticity as a business strategy. Combined with an overrepresentation of culinary initiatives among minority business owners, the particular space of cultural representation often inherent in such ventures, underlines the usefulness of treating the culinary as a meaningful category related to immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship.

¹⁴ "[Y]o creo que los peruanos lo que más extrañan de acá es la comida siempre. Ellos extrañan la comida Peruana."

¹⁵ Such personal opinion is corroborated in a study by anthropologist Cristina Alcalde (2018, 144-145) who conducted an online survey among Peruvians residing in various countries around the world. Responding to the question "What I miss most about Peru is _____", "Peruvian food" figured among the two most common items mentioned, only surpassed by "family" in frequency.

society? And what role does it play in the lives of the immigrants who run these businesses and the ways in which they make home in a new place? The Peruvian population in the region is still small in size.¹⁶ The communal organization, however, is under rapid development, albeit still not widely institutionalized. In this context, Peruvian culinary business spaces play a vital role in providing a space in which Peruvians may interact with other coethnics, as well as a space in which *peruanidad* [peruvianness] is presented to local residents of the receiving society.

You have probably heard the popular saying: “The way to a man’s heart is through the stomach”, which suggests that food is power and has the power to conquer. The development of a Peruvian gastronomic scene in Southern California is certainly a victorious one. Peruvian ventures are increasingly conquering space in culinary markets, and the celebratory narrative around Peruvian gastronomy is reproduced beyond Peruvian borders and reinforced by the experiences of a California based clientele that is increasingly familiarized with Peruvian traditional dishes, and further enhanced by reviews on websites like Yelp¹⁷ and media coverage, such as the ones presented above. The contradictory context of reception and opportunity structure¹⁸ shaped by a negative narrative on Latinx immigrants, on the one hand, and the increasing popularity of Peruvian food, on the other, informs the pathways, practices, and experiences of Peruvian entrepreneurs in Southern Californian culinary markets.

The saying also refers to the gendered dimensions of food and food spaces. While the kitchen constitutes a space traditionally assigned to women, the haute cuisine is associated with men. These phenomena are materialized in the stereotyped figures of the male chef in the fancy restaurant and the female domestic cook in the kitchen. The

¹⁶ According to the Pew Research Center’s tabulations of the American Community Survey of 2017, a total of 679 128 Peruvians resided in the United States. 16% of them resided in California. (Here, Peruvian refers to people who self-identify as Hispanics of Peruvian origin, including recent arrivals, their native-born children and people who were born in the United States but trace their family ancestry to Peru) (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah September 16, 2019).

¹⁷ Yelp is an online directory through which customers may search for and write reviews of local businesses, for example restaurants.

¹⁸ Sociologist Roger Waldinger defines opportunity structure as “market conditions which may favor products or services oriented to co-ethnics and situations in which a wider, nonethnic market is served” including “the ease with which access to business opportunities is obtained” which depends on “the level of interethnic competition and state policies” (Waldinger 1993, 693). Moving beyond social embeddedness, and addressing how broader political and institutional frameworks and related socio-economic processes of change produce opportunity structures “along path-dependent trajectories”, sociologist Jan Rath and economic geographer Robert Kloosterman highlight three crucial variables of the opportunity structure: “the size of the market domain, accessibility of markets and growth potential of markets” (Rath and Kloosterman 2002, 8). Together, these definitions inform my understanding of the opportunity structure as market conditions that favor certain products or services, which eases access to business opportunities, and are shaped by social embeddedness, as well as by the broader socio-economic, political and institutional context.

business realm in general is a space in which women's participation has been limited. Yet, Peruvian women are contributing in high numbers to the development of a Peruvian food scene in Southern California, and establish a variety of different culinary businesses in the area. In this study, I foreground the stories of Peruvian immigrant women and their experiences as head of culinary businesses. I explore how these women contribute to shaping the development of a Peruvian culinary scene in the area, and emphasize their particular experiences as women and business owners in the culinary sector.

While there is a large body of scholarly work focusing on the more populous Latinx groups in California, Mexicans and Central Americans,¹⁹ few scholars have explored the settlement of Peruvian immigrants in the area, and this dissertation is the first scholarly work to document the development of a Peruvian culinary scene, and particularly the participation of women in such processes. Highlighting the experiences of Peruvian women who are culinary entrepreneurs, sheds light on gendered as well as racialized processes and experiences of immigrant incorporation in labor markets, in the business realm, as well as in the culinary sector. The number of Latinx businesses is growing, yet there is a dearth of research on this group (Vallejo and Canizales 2016, 1637).²⁰ Indeed, Latinx women's businesses are rapidly growing in number, revenue, and employment (Wroge October 15, 2019), as the amount of Latinx women-owned firms has more than tripled over the past seventeen years (Gándara October 31, 2015).

The so-called ethnic entrepreneurship literature has tended to focus narrowly on economic outcomes. Sociologist Min Zhou and child and social welfare scholar Myungduk Cho (2010) draw the attention to the understudied area of non-economic effects of ethnic entrepreneurship, and call for more research, particularly on the

¹⁹ The scholarly interest in the experiences of the more established Chicanx and Mexican population relates particularly to their numerical domination in the area, as well as to their long-term settlement which predates the constitution of the United States as a nation. In fact, the area which today comprises of the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, as well as parts of Wyoming, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Kansas, formed part of the Spanish colonial empire. After receiving its independence from Spain, it was integrated into the new Mexican nation until the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. Yet, large scale Mexican immigration is, as Peruvian immigration, a recent phenomenon. It constitutes the longest running labor migration in the world, initiated by patterns of colonization, and later propelled by the bilateral bracero worker recruitment program (1942-1964) (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002, 34-35). An emergent body of research has further highlighted the growing Central American population in the United States, of which 49 percent reside in California, most of them with roots in El Salvador and Guatemala (O'Connor, Batalova, and Bolter August 15, 2019). Central American immigration was particularly prompted by the civil wars that raged countries such as El Salvador (1980-92) and Guatemala (1960-96).

²⁰ According to Orozco et al. (2020b, 23), Latinx entrepreneurs in the United States have opened about 1 million new businesses every five years since 2002. And whereas the number of non-Latinx businesses declined during the great recession of 2008-2009, Latinx-owned businesses continued to grow in number.

mechanisms through which, and conditions under which, non-economic effects are produced to affect community building and immigrant adaptation. Responding to their call, this study extends earlier efforts to explain the complex dimensions and significances of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship, and moves beyond limited political-economic analyses in seeking to understand how Peruvian women negotiate gender, home and belonging in the context of migration and culinary entrepreneurship. This overarching question prompts a range of sub-questions:

1. What motivates Peruvian immigrant women to run businesses in the culinary sector? What characterizes their ventures? And what role do they play in the development of a Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California?
2. How does the complex context of reception structure the opportunities, challenges and constraints the women encounter in the culinary business realm?
3. How does gender and gendered orientations to space shape the women's experiences with culinary entrepreneurship?
4. What role do everyday entrepreneurial practices related to Peruvian food and food spaces play in the processes through which these women may or may not develop a sense of belonging and feeling of home in the society of settlement?

This qualitative study is grounded in, informed by, and engages with theoretical approaches and empirical scholarship within three subfields: the literature on immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship, which is mainly developed by sociologists; gender theory and empirical work on gender, particularly related to the topic of gender and migration as well as gender and work; and finally, the literature on immigrant integration from which I draw on scholarly work on home and belonging. In all these discussions and debates, I employ a critical approach to the power relations and stratified structures in which the Peruvian women's lives and practices are embedded. The perspectives of intersectionality and decoloniality are thus important lenses through which I examine the qualitative data collected in this study.

Historical Context and Research Sites

To be able to answer the questions raised above, I draw on ten months of field work in Southern California from August 2017 through May 2018.²¹ I immersed myself into a small, but active and vibrant Peruvian immigrant community in the area in and around Los Angeles and also attended some Peruvian events in Bakersfield.²² Over the course of the past century, Peru has moved from being a popular destination for immigration to become a country of emigration. How did that happen? Who left? And where did they go? Today's Peruvian emigrants as well as their destinations reflect earlier processes of immigration to Peru, which produced the racial and cultural blend that makes up the current Peruvian domestic as well as emigrant population. The economic, political, and cultural connections that were created by people from Spain, Italy, Argentina, North America and Japan who came to work or settle in Peru, carved out the routes for the various Peruvian emigrations that followed (Paerregaard 2008b, 44).

The United States was the primary destination for the first Peruvian emigrations. While political factors influenced a small group of refugees to seek exile in the United States during the 1930s, better educational opportunities prompted members of the Peruvian middle- and upper classes to go north after WWII (Busse-Cárdenas and Lovatón Dávila 2011, 1784). The decades that followed the war further demonstrate how forces in the American labor market attracted Peruvian immigrants also from lower socioeconomic strata. Working-class Peruvian men sought better jobs in the United

²¹ As part of the field work, I also spent some time in Lima in June 2018 where I interviewed Gastón Acurio, who is currently Peru's most famous chef and has been a primary promoter of the Gastronomic boom. I was also able to meet and discuss my project with various Peruvian scholars, among them anthropologist and former Tinker Professor at LILLAS University of Texas at Austin, Teófilo Altamirano Rúa, who is one of the few researchers who have written extensively on Peruvian immigrants in the United States.

²² Throughout this dissertation, I often refer to the Peruvian community. The terms "La comunidad Peruana" or just "la comunidad" were often repeated by Peruvians I talked to. Some Peruvians, however, denied the existence of one Peruvian community in Los Angeles, and talked about a variety of groupings, some more isolated than others. To determine if these divisions are primarily based on neighborhood and place of residence (as indicated by a study participant), or if they were also linked to ethnic/racial and socioeconomic divisions, is beyond the scope of this study. Zhou and Cho define ethnic community as "a complicated set of interrelated social relationships among various institutions and individuals bounded by ethnicity, which has significant consequences facilitating or constraining possibilities for upward social mobility" (2010, 90). The Peruvian community/ies that I refer to in this dissertation are still weakly institutionalized and not spatially clustered in an ethnic neighborhood or in an ethnic enclave. However, since the Peruvians I talked to and interviewed during my time in the field always used the term community in its singular form, I adopt that term when referring to the complex relationships and institutions that bring Peruvians together in the area. I refer to the Peruvian community in Los Angeles and the Peruvian community in Bakersfield as two distinct, but interrelated communities.

States, most of them settling in Paterson, New Jersey.²³ Some of them, however, decided later to seek work in Los Angeles, which also turned into a hub for Peruvian immigrants whose objectives were to find work on the East Coast. Some of them never reached their final destination, however, and settled in Los Angeles (Paerregaard 2008b). Female migrants also found work in the United States, and women from the Peruvian rural highlands migrated to Miami as domestic workers.²⁴ These early migration processes further contributed to establishing social connections between local communities in Peru and Peruvian migrants on the East Coast, in the west and in the south-east. Such connections were later drawn upon by Peruvian immigrants who escaped the chaotic political and economic situation resulting from violent internal conflict in the 1980s and '90s.²⁵ The consequences of the so-called *Guerra Sucia* [dirty war], along with economic precarity following structural adjustment measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund and implemented by the government of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000), prompted emigration rates to peak. Social bonds also facilitated the northbound trajectory undertaken by the many immigrants who, despite a more favorable economic context in Peru, made their way to the United States in the new millennium.

While the 1980s witnessed the start of massive international Peruvian emigration to the United States, at the end of the decade and during the 1990s this process changed direction. Unlike many other national emigrations that tend to target a limited number

²³ Peruvian immigrants have left deep impact on the city of Paterson, New Jersey, illustrated by the following statement by Paerregaard: "When you turn off New Jersey's Garden State Parkway and drive into Paterson, for a brief moment you might believe that you are in Peru and not the United States" (2008b, 60-1). In fact, the area is popularly called "Little Peru" (Takenaka 2003, 66). According to Altamirano Rúa (2000a, 24), the first Peruvian immigrants arrived in Paterson in the early twentieth century, attracted by jobs in the booming manufacturing industry. Paerregaard, however, underscores that information from the Peruvian consulate in Paterson dates the earliest migration from Peru to the city to the early 1940s when the head of a US textile manufacturing company exporting cotton to Peru decided to bring Peruvian workers to his factory. Yet, the majority of immigrants to the city have arrived after the 1950s, most of them working-class men from Lima who later brought their families to the country. Paerregaard reports that today there is a well-developed Peruvian community in Paterson with a range of migrant institutions, a consulate, as well as an annual parade on July 28, celebrating Peruvian independence from Spanish colonial rule (2008b, 62).

²⁴ These young Peruvian women from rural areas in the Andean highlands spearheaded what was to become a wave of migration peaking in the 1980s and 1990s. They were brought to the United States by their US employers for whom the women had worked as domestic servants in Peru. Later Miami became the destination for Peruvian middle- and upper-class migrants who escaped political and economic crises as well as political efforts to deprive them of their privileges (Paerregaard 2008b, 57-58).

²⁵ The insurgent group, Sendero Luminoso (SL), initiated its armed revolution in 1980. The ideology behind the insurgency combined the Maoist doctrine with the ideas of the Peruvian political philosopher, José Carlos Mariátegui, and claimed to be fighting a society characterized by semiféudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and imperialist domination. In 1984, another armed guerrilla group—el Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaro (MRTA)—entered the scenario with a slightly different ideological base, inspired by the Cuban model and Guevarian tactics. The political violence of the insurgent groups as well as the brutal and repressive response by the authorities caused approximately 70,000 fatalities, and indigenous communities in the Andean highlands were particularly affected and often forced to leave their homes (Aguirre 2012, 111-13).

of countries, Peruvian emigrants became scattered around the world (Durand 2010, 20). Whereas such change was rooted in the political and economic situation in Peru during this period, it was also linked to a tightening of immigration policies in the United States,²⁶ which coincided with the passing of more favorable immigration laws in countries like Spain, Italy, and Japan, encouraging Peruvians to pursue labor opportunities in low paid jobs in these countries. While Peruvian women found jobs in domestic work in Spain, the Japanese manufacturing industry attracted Peruvian men. When these labor markets became saturated during the second half of the '90s, however, the demand for low wage labor in Argentina and Chile encouraged Peruvian emigrants to go south. Particularly women who lacked the means to travel across continents headed toward these neighboring countries where many of them took work in the domestic service industry (Paerregaard 2008b, 46-7). Whereas the largest Peruvian emigrant population is still found in the United States (30.9 percent of Peruvian emigrants), today, large Peruvian populations reside in Argentina (14.5 percent), Spain (14.2 percent), Chile (11 percent), Italy (10 percent) and Japan (3.9 percent) (Sánchez Aguilar et al. October 2018).

The Peruvian emigrations presented above may be partly explained by macrostructural forces, network theory and theories of cumulative causation (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002, 19-20).²⁷ The history of Peruvian emigration demonstrates, however, how intersecting social dimensions such as class and gender structure migration. While men have traditionally dominated international migration, women have also formed part of such movements. Women have, in fact, dominated Peruvian

²⁶ The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965—which abolished national-origins quotas, and for the first time in history put a cap on immigration from the Western Hemisphere—had unintended consequences. The law contributed to initiate one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in contemporary United States, as large scale immigration from Latin America, and particularly undocumented immigration from Mexico, came to mark the size and composition of immigration to the United States, and contributed to reshape the racial and ethnic makeup of the US population (Sáenz and Morales 2015, Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). However, more restrictive US immigration policies were passed and border control was tightened during the '80s and '90s, which made it more difficult for Peruvians and other Latin Americans to enter and settle in the country legally (Paerregaard 2008b, 55-6). Today, nearly 60 million Latinxs live in the United States, constituting approximately 18 percent of the total population (Noe-Bustamante and Flores September 16, 2019).

²⁷ According to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002), migrant networks constitute an important source of social capital for people who are planning on migrating abroad and refer to “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants at places of origin and destination through reciprocal ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin” (19). Since such ties minimize costs and risks related to migration, access to these social networks increase the likelihood of people opting for international migration. Massey and his colleagues build on the work of Gunnar Myrdal on cumulative causation migration and argue that the very act of immigration contributes to alter the social context within which decisions about future migration are made, which further increases the likelihood of future mobilities. Such processes become self-perpetuating until reaching a point of saturation.

emigration since the 1930s (Paerregaard 2012, 496), and also today more women than men emigrate from Peru (Sánchez Aguilar et al. October 2018, 26-7).²⁸ What has been labeled “feminization of migration” is a general trend and is prompted by a range of factors such as dynamics of rural-urban migration; a large sector of unemployed or underpaid female labor in the global South; changes in the economy in the global North as a result of women’s entry into the work force; and the subsequent growing demand for domestic service and caretakers (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; cited in Paerregaard 2012, 500). Sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994, 187) argues, however, that although macrostructural factors influence these trends, they do not offer an explanation of how people respond to such circumstances. She argues that migration is the exercise of multiple interests and hierarchies of power, and that “[g]ender relations in families and social networks determine how the opportunities and constraints imposed by macrostructural factors translate into different migration patterns” (1994, 188).

Though the number of Peruvian immigrants in the United States is high, it is still a small number in comparison to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Guatemalans and Salvadorans. The United States has experienced a demographic shift since 2000; several counties have become majority non-White, and in many of these, Hispanics constitute the largest non-White population (Krogstad August 21, 2019). On a national level, the Hispanic population peaked in 2018, and despite current declining numbers, estimates suggested that Hispanics would make up the largest minority group in the 2020 electorate with thirty-two million eligible voters, slightly above the share of Black voters (Gramlich December 13, 2019).²⁹ California is among the three top states where Latinxs constitute the highest share of eligible voters (Noe-Bustamante, Budiman, and Lopez January 31, 2020). Mexicans are by far the largest minority group—constituting 32.4 percent of the total Californian population (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). And although California houses the second largest Peruvian population in the country,³⁰ the 110,298

²⁸ Between 1990 and 2017, 51% of all Peruvian emigrants were women. In 2017, women constituted 53.7 percent of the total emigration rate (Sánchez Aguilar et al. October 2018, 30).

²⁹ Analysis based on decennial census results as well as 2008, 2012 and 2016 American Community Survey data.

³⁰ Florida is the state in which most Peruvians are concentrated.

Peruvian residents constitute a miniscule number in comparison to the more than 12 million Mexicans who reside in the Golden State (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

Despite linguistic and cultural similarities, South American immigrants like Colombians, Ecuadorians and Peruvians are often closer to the non-Hispanic White US population than to their Latinx coethnics from Mexico and Central America in terms of indicators such as median household income, educational attainments and home ownership (Bergad 2010). Peruvians in the United States demonstrate relatively high median household incomes, low poverty rates and extraordinarily high educational attainments. According to anthropologist Jorge Durand (2010, 18), education level is an important indicator of the class and regional differences between these Latinx groups. Most Peruvian immigrants originate from more urban areas than the predominantly rural and indigenous Mexican and Central American immigrant population in the region. This is particularly the case for Peruvians in Los Angeles, as the Peruvian population in the city is primarily made up by Peru's urban working class, mainly from the coastal cities, Lima being the primary sending city (Paerregaard 2008a, 60).³¹

The majority of the Peruvian women in this study resided and operated their businesses in the Greater Los Angeles area. Los Angeles County houses the largest Hispanic population in the country, as about 4.9 million Hispanics make up 49 percent of the total Angelino population (Noe-Bustamante, Lopez, and Krogstad July 7, 2020). In the Greater Los Angeles area you also find the largest population of Peruvians on the West Coast, with 48,380 Peruvians living in the metropolitan area (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah September 16, 2019).³² While several studies have focused on Peruvians in cities on the East Coast (e.g. Altamirano Rua 2000b, Berg and Paerregaard 2005, Berg 2015, Paerregaard 2017), which count for the highest concentrations of

³¹ A majority *mestizo* population resides in Peruvian coastal cities, whereas indigenous populations dominate in number in the Peruvian highlands and the Amazon region. "In Peru, *mestizo* is the most popular ethnic/racial self-identification according to official surveys" (Paredes 2015, 132). Based on a biological understanding, the term *mestizo* originally referred to processes of miscegenation, and to colonial systems of castes that produced hierarchical distinctions between Spaniards, *criollos* (descendants of Spaniards), *mestizos* (people with indigenous and Spanish heritage), *indios* (indigenous people), and Blacks. In post-colonial times, however, the ideology of *mestizaje* has come to include cultural symbols, traditions, and practices from indigenous, Afro-Peruvian and Asian heritages that have gradually been assimilated into the local mainstream (Paredes 2015, 134), and boundaries between the *mestizo* and non-*mestizo* are considered as fluid and open for negotiation for those who possess the phenotypic or cultural resources for "cultural Whiteness" (Golash-Boza 2010). Peru has been imagined as a *mestizo* nation in which the country's diversity has been celebrated as a homogenizing feature under the assumption that all Peruvians are mixed, hence equal. Such discourses, however, have masked the fact that colonial divisions and racism prevail in Peru, as indigenous and Afro-Peruvian populations suffer marginalization, discrimination and exclusion (Trivelli 2005).

³² According to the Pew Research Center's tabulations of the American Community Survey of 2017, 48,380 Peruvians resided in the Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim metropolitan area (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah September 16, 2019).

Peruvians in the country,³³ anthropologist Karsten Paerregaard (2008a) is one of the few who has engaged scholarly with Peruvians in California. In *Peruvians Dispersed*, published in 2008, but based on field work from 1998 in Los Angeles, Miami and Paterson (New Jersey), Paerregaard highlights the two latter cities as sites where the Peruvian migrant communities are active and organized. About Los Angeles, on the other hand, he observes “the dispersal and lack of unity” (2008b, 60). Online searches made prior to field work, however, drew my attention to Peru Village, a non-profit association in Los Angeles, which, since its founding in 2012, has advocated the designation of a stretch of Vine street in Hollywood to be named “Peru Village”, as a way to “express cultural values of a community” through “gastronomy, sports, the arts and sciences, cinematography, medicine and a multitude of small businesses” and to contribute to the city through “economic endeavors and enterprises” as well as in “cross-cultural expressions” (Peru Village LA n.d.b.). Thus, by focusing on Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs in the Greater Los Angeles area, I saw an opportunity to explore whether the Peruvian community in the city had developed and become more united since Paerregaard conducted his field work at the end of the ‘90s, and to examine the role the Peruvian culinary scene and culinary businesses played in shaping such development.

The city’s character with its diverse racial, ethnic and cultural composition and myriad ethnic communities, made the area a perfect context in which to study the development of a Peruvian gastronomic scene and non-economic dynamics of culinary entrepreneurship. The high concentration of people of Mexican descent in the area allowed me to explore Peruvian immigrants’ experiences of making sense of themselves as a minority, not only among the White Anglo population, but also in relation to other Latinx groups. The particular demographic profile of California and Los Angeles, with its vast population of Mexican descent, constitutes a very different context of reception for Peruvian immigrants than cities on the East coast and in Florida, where the immigrant population is more diverse. The immense ethnic food scene in the area,

³³ While the Greater Los Angeles area houses most Peruvians on the West Coast, metropolitan areas like New York-Newark-Jersey City (169 672), Miami-Fort Lauerdale-West Palm Beach (81 729), and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria (53 961) have a higher concentration of Peruvians according to the Pew Research Center’s tabulations of the American Community Survey of 2017 (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah September 16, 2019).

dominated by Mexican eateries, also made it a particularly interesting site for the study of Peruvian food businesses.

As I observed certain interaction between the cultural and culinary scenes in the Greater Los Angeles Area and in Bakersfield, I decided to include both cities in the study design. Yet, the main focus is on the Greater Los Angeles Area, particularly Los Angeles County, Orange County and Ventura County.³⁴³⁵ During the early 1990s, Bakersfield became the center for indigenous shepherds recruited from the central Peruvian highlands. Many of these shepherds decided to overstay their H-2A visas and settle in this inland Californian city as unauthorized immigrants (Paerregaard 2008a, 118).³⁶ Today 387 Peruvians live in Bakersfield, a number which probably obscures an even larger undocumented population (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Moreover, as many Peruvians in Bakersfield have roots in rural Peru, the population differs from the more urban character of the Peruvian population in Los Angeles.

³⁴ Riverside County and San Bernardino County were not included, though there are also some Peruvian culinary ventures there.

³⁵ Orange County and Ventura County are both majority non-White, but also here Hispanics make up the largest non-White population (Krogstad August 21, 2019). Bakersfield is in fact majority Hispanic (52.4 percent in 2019) (U.S. Census Bureau 2019).

³⁶ According to Altamirano Rua, indigenous and peasant farmers from the Peruvian central highlands were actively recruited to fill labor shortages in ranches in Wyoming, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, California and Colorado beginning in the 1970s. They replaced Basque shepherds whose domination in this type of work declined when Spain transitioned to democracy after Franco's death in 1975 (2010, 122).

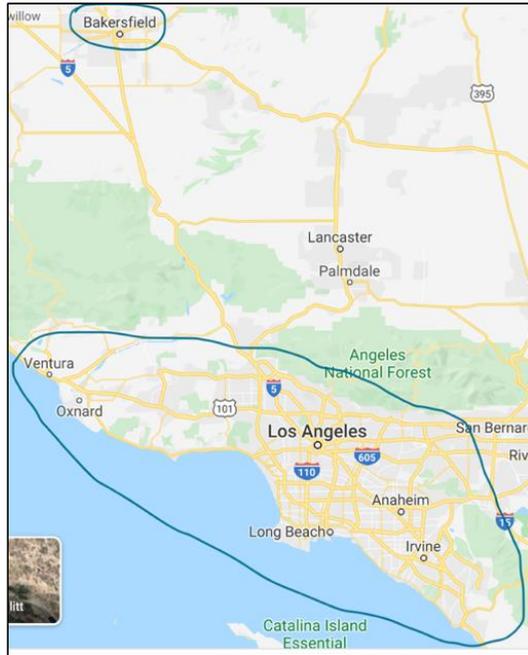


Figure 1. Map of Research Area: Bakersfield and the Greater Los Angeles Area including Ventura County, Los Angeles County and Orange County.³⁷

Description of the Study

Life history interviews as well as participant and non-participant observation provide the data for this study. The voices of thirty-five Peruvian immigrant women³⁸ who are culinary entrepreneurs³⁹ constitute the pillars of the dissertation, but are also complemented by the views of their families, community leaders and other Peruvian immigrants in the area. I attended a range of Peruvian cultural and religious events and meetings. These arenas served as a starting point to learn about the cultural and culinary Peruvian scene. And I soon developed close ties to some of the active members and

³⁷ Photo elaborated from Google Maps (Google Maps n.d.).

³⁸ The sampling approach of purposefully targeting a specific ethnic minority group may entail challenges related to “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003), and runs the risk of reproducing minority/majority boundaries in the American society. Similarly, the women-only sample of culinary entrepreneurs, may lead to the reproduction of essentialist notions of gender, and obscure other categories that may be more important in order to explain entrepreneurial experiences, as well as the development of a sense of home and belonging. However, I seek to not reproduce these social categories through exploring empirically how and when dimensions of identity such as nationality, ethnicity, race, class and gender are salient, and the intersectional lens allows me to observe how these categories are mutually constitutive in the processes I examine.

³⁹ I refer to these women as culinary entrepreneurs since all of them auto-identified themselves as head of food businesses. Some of them ran independent establishments, whereas others were co-owners of family ventures, or ran the business with a non-family partner. For a definition of ethnic, immigrant, minority and culinary entrepreneurship, see Chapter 1.

leaders of the Peruvian community, whose help has been indispensable in the process of mapping businesses and recruiting women (and men) to participate in this study.

Most of the women were recruited through snowball sampling (Thagaard 2013, 61). Some women even contacted me, since they had heard me presenting my study to the public at a Peruvian event.⁴⁰ Others, however, were sought out through advertisements in Peruvian local newspapers, restaurant websites or through publicity in the general media. The two latter mediums allowed me to recruit entrepreneurs with less strong ties to the wider Peruvian community. Thus, after a primary snowball sampling process, I further built a purposive sample (Thagaard 2013, 64-5) based on these initial contacts to assure a diverse sample in terms of business type (informality/formality, home-based/catering/brick and mortar businesses, restaurants/cake and pastry/market). The women's busy schedules became an obstacle in the research process, and scheduling an interview was challenging. However, this experience provided me with insight into how labor intensive such businesses can be.

The Peruvian female culinary entrepreneurs who participated in this study were all born in Peru and had immigrated to Southern California.⁴¹ All but three had resided in the United States for more than a decade (Table 1), and two had arrived as accompanied minors. It is worth noticing that more than half of the women (63 percent) were aged fifty or more, while three of them were still in their thirties. The majority of the women (71 percent) opened their (first) business ten years ago or more. All but two formal businesses were established after 2000, while two of these were only recently constituted. Some of the informal businesses, however, were already in operation in the '80s and '90s. The informal businesses make up 46 percent of the sample, and six of the formal businesses owners had first opened ventures in the informal sector, which they were later able to formalize. Fourteen women (40 percent) held US citizenship, whereas sixteen (46 percent) had spent several years in the country as undocumented immigrants.

⁴⁰ People made contact in order to inform me about a variety of Peruvian businesses that could be worth studying, and some male culinary business owners wondered why I was not interested in studying them. Peruvians have opened a variety of businesses in the area from contracting businesses, entertainment businesses, dance studios, businesses in the health industry, beauty salons, newspapers as well as tax preparation and insurance firms among others.

⁴¹ The majority (62%) of Peruvians in the United States are foreign born (Noe-Bustamante, Flores, and Shah September 16, 2019).

Of these, six had been able to regularize their status and, at the time of the interview, resided as lawful permanent residents or had naturalized.⁴²

Table 1. Table of Study Participants: Peruvian women culinary entrepreneurs⁴³ Study Sample (n=35)

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Years in the US	Type of business	Year of business start-up ⁴⁴	Legal immigration status
Gerthy	51-60	17	Cake & Pastry (formal, previously informal)	2002	Undocumented
Miguelina	51-60	32	Multiple restaurants (formal)	2013	US citizen (resided without authorization) ⁴⁵
Rosina	41-50	17	Home-based catering (informal)	2001	Protected status (resided without authorization)
Victoria	61-70	24	Home-based catering (informal)	1993	LPR ⁴⁶ (resided without authorization)
Yessica	51-60	37	Restaurant (formal)	2005	US citizen (resided without authorization)
Mayra	51-60	30	Restaurant (formal, previously informal)	2005	LPR (resided without authorization)
Gabriela	61-70	39	Restaurant (formal)	2014	US citizen
Sofia	61-70	42	Restaurant (formal)	1998	US citizen
Angelika	61-70	55	Restaurant (formal)	1970s	US citizen
Elisa	41-50	17	Restaurant (formal, previously informal)	2012	Undocumented
Gloria	41-50	16	Restaurant (formal, previously informal)	2018	Undocumented
Jaqueline	51-60	16	Multiple restaurants (formal, previously informal)	2008	LPR (resided without authorization)
Beatriz	---	10	Restaurant (formal)	2009	---
Camila	41-50	14	Restaurant (formal)	2004	LPR
Sara	41-50	14	Restaurant (formal)	2014	LPR
Lorena	61-70	16	Restaurant (formal, previously informal)	2006	LPR (resided without authorization)
Paloma	51-60	24	Home-based (informal)	1994	Undocumented
Diana	51-60	18	Home-based (informal)	2007	Undocumented
Cintia	41-50	8	Market (formal)	2018	LPR
Rocío	51-60	29	Home-based (informal)	1990	US citizen
Carolina	51-60	39	Home-based (informal)	2000	US citizen
Fabiana	31-40	31	Multiple restaurants (formal)	2001	US citizen
Julia	51-60	34	Restaurant (formal)	2002	US citizen
Vanessa	51-60	34	Home-based (informal)	2000	US citizen
Pilar	51-60	33	Multiple restaurants (formal, closed down)	2000	US citizen
Indira	51-60	41	Home-based (informal)	1987	US citizen
Ada	31-40	4	Home-based (informal)	2015	LPR

⁴² In 1986, President Reagan introduced the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), through which millions of long-term undocumented immigrants legalized. Peruvian women who had entered the country on a visa (most of them on a tourist visa) and overstayed it, as well as those who had entered the country without authorization before IRCA, had been able to regularize their undocumented status. Those who crossed the border without authorization after IRCA was passed in 1986 had not had the same possibility.

⁴³ Numbers dated from the time of the interview.

⁴⁴ Year of establishment of first business.

⁴⁵ “Resided without authorization” signifies that although these women were authorized to reside in the United States at the time of our encounter in 2017/2018, they had previously spent several years in the country as undocumented immigrants.

⁴⁶ Legal Permanent Resident.

Noelia	41-50	15	Home-based (informal)	2005	Undocumented
Yahaira	41-50	23	Home-based (informal)	1995	LPR
Juliana	51-60	19	Home-based (informal, previously formal)	---	Undocumented
Carla	31-40	9	Home-based (informal)	---	Undocumented
Laura	51-60	10	Home-based (informal)	2008	LPR
Roberta	41-50	15	Home-based (informal)	2011	Undocumented
Andrea	61-70	34	Multiple restaurants (formal)	2001	US citizen
Veronica	61-70	40	Home-based (informal)	2009	US citizen

Table 2. Table of Study Participants: Partners Study Sample (n=8)

Name (pseudonym)	Wife's name (pseudonym)	Role in the business	Current occupation	Legal immigration status
Jorge	Gerthy	Co-owner, administrative role and assisted Gerthy in manual work.	No other occupation	Undocumented
Antonio	Miguelina	Co-owner, responsible for financial matters.	White-collar job	US born citizen
Trevor	Gabriela	Co-owner, assisted when needed.	Manager in white-collar job	US born citizen
Emilio	Lorena	Worked in the restaurant.	No other occupation	LPR (resided without authorization)
Marco	Diana	Head of informal semi-restaurant, assisted Diana in informal <i>tamales/alfajor</i> -business.	No other occupation	Undocumented
Victor	Yahaira	Minor role/Assisted when needed.	Service technician	LPR
Rigoberto	Juliana	Assistant.	Construction worker	Undocumented
Fredy	Roberta	Minor role/Assisted when needed.	Own business	Undocumented

Table 3. Table of Study Participants: Key interlocutors Study Sample (n=17)

Name (pseudonym)	Role in community
Belén	Leader of community organization
Mercedes	Leader of community organization
Jerónimo	Leader of community organization
Fiorela	Leader of community organization
Esau	Leader of community organization
Ernesto	Leader of community organization
Alesandra	Leader of community organization
Efrain	Leader of activist organization
Julián	Previous restaurant owner
Jefferson	Previous restaurant owner
Paolo	Male restaurant owner
Ramiro	Male restaurant owner
Enrique	Male owner of informal food business
Leonardo	Peruvian in Los Angeles with little connection to the Peruvian community
Christian	Peruvian in Los Angeles with little connection to the Peruvian community
Alberto	Peruvian in Los Angeles with some connection to the Peruvian community
Gastón Acurio (not pseudonym)	Owner of multiple Peruvian restaurants in Peru and abroad

Because I seek to capture the women's personal experiences of social relations as well as processes developed over time and related to life events as migration and entry into self-employment, I draw on life history interviews. While qualitative interviews are particularly appropriate for exploring social processes and change over time (Rubin and Rubin 2005, 2, 6-7), in-depth interviews and life history accounts are among the more suited methodologies for understanding constructions of gender and gendering processes in relation to business ownership (Henry, Foss, and Ahl 2016, 24). The interviews were conducted either in the women's homes, in the business, or in public and more neutral spaces like a café or a non-Peruvian restaurant. As many women shared stories that evoked feelings of joy, sorrow and nostalgia linked to memories of an earlier life left behind; experiences of fear, discrimination, failure and victory; as well as their hopes for the future, they were often accompanied by tears and emotional reactions. So, when possible, I sought out a private location. Three interviews were also conducted in my own apartment. Most interviews lasted between one and two hours, while a few were shorter than one hour, and I met some of the women for more than one interview. I always gave the women uninterrupted time to tell "the story of their lives" in the beginning of the interview. When they signaled that their story was over, I proceeded to follow-up questions linked to the stories they had just shared and used a thematic interview guide (Appendix C) for follow up questions. I encouraged them to elaborate on topics related to their immigrant experience, their experiences with starting a business, their thoughts about business outcome and success, challenges they had encountered as business owners, experiences of discrimination, as well as more detailed information about business strategies and the women's own role in the business, in addition to the role of family members. I particularly led them to talk about gendered experiences as well as practices and feelings of home⁴⁷ and belonging across national

⁴⁷ According to the Collins Online Dictionary, "home" is translated into terms such as "casa [house]", "domicilio [residence]" and "hogar [refuge]" (Collins Online Dictionary n.d.). The phrase "feel at home" is translated into "sentirse como en casa" (Collins Online Dictionary n.d.). Since this can cause confusion, I was quite careful with the way I raised the question "Where is home?", starting with the question "¿Dónde está tu casa? [Where is your *casa*?]", followed by "¿Dónde sientes que perteneces? [Where do you feel that you belong?]", I also employed the term hogar when that was more appropriate, for example when asking: "Podrías contarme sobre el proceso de crear un hogar para ti aquí? [Could you tell me about the process of creating a home for you here?]", I was, hence, attentive to possible confusion when I analyzed the women's answers to this question, as well as to the terms the women employed when they mentioned this topic elsewhere in the interview. Moreover, I was attentive to the analytic overlaps and distinctions between the concepts of "home" and "belonging" (See Chapter 1).

borders. At the end of each interview, I used a separate form to collect data on factors such as age, marital status, immigration status, housing, annual income etc., in addition to more instrumental data about the business, like year of foundation; number of employees and their gender and ethnic background; as well as target clientele (Appendix B).

The Peruvian women's stories are complemented by data from participant and non-participant observation in the women's businesses and in the Peruvian community in general. During my stay in the field, I engaged in innumerable informal conversations with Peruvians with strong, less strong, and almost no ties to the Peruvian community. Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews with leaders of community organizations (eight leaders from four organizations), other Peruvians in the area (three) as well as with a few male culinary business owners (six; four interviews with restaurant owners and one interview with an informal business owner in Los Angeles, and one interview with the famous Peruvian chef, Gastón Acurio, in Lima) (Table 3). Since I was interested in gendered aspects of business ownership and the possible impact on gendered relations in the family, I also sought to talk to the women's life partners.⁴⁸ As I needed to go through the women themselves in order to establish contact, it resulted more difficult to recruit partners. Some women might have considered their business as something that did not concern their partner at all, while others were maybe more reluctant to let me hear the partner's view, which could distort the picture they themselves had given me of these topics. Spending time in many of the businesses, however, I was able to talk more informally with some of the husbands, and I interviewed eight of them (Table 2). Most of the husbands that I formally interviewed were involved in the business either as co-owners or as paid employees, or they assisted their wives when needed.

In the interviews and informal conversations with husbands and with male culinary entrepreneurs, my primary concern was to understand the gendered dynamics within the business, as well as the men's views and experiences with gendered activities and spaces linked to the culinary business realm (Appendix D). The interviews with key interlocutors varied in content, but most focused on the historical development and

⁴⁸ Twenty-five women lived with a partner. All of them were married.

institutionalization of the Peruvian communities in the area, as well as on the social relations and dynamics within these, with particular emphasis on the role of culinary businesses in these processes. We also touched upon topics related to racial, gendered and classed dynamics within these communities (Appendix E).

Observation was conducted on four different social arenas: the culinary business space;⁴⁹ Peruvian cultural and religious events; non-Peruvian events at which Peruvians played an active and visible role; as well as at formal meetings in Peruvian non-profit organizations. Participating at events and observing the Peruvian community and its institutions allowed me to notice the ongoing interaction between community organizations and many culinary ventures in the area. I was invited to become a member of Peru Village, which allowed me to participate more actively and to attend their monthly meetings at Casa Perú, another Peruvian non-profit community organization, and the only one (to my knowledge) with a physical space for gathering the community. This provided me with a wide array of contacts within the Peruvian community and put me in contact with leaders and members of other organizations as well as with Peruvians who had lived in the area for decades and had experienced the development of the community as well as of the culinary scene over time. People were eager to talk about the Peruvian culinary influence in the area, and through these events and conversations, I gained insight into the informal food scene. Many informal businesses were connected to these events, others had fewer or weaker links to the Peruvian community. I collected Peruvian newspapers, restaurant brochures, flyers of events, business cards and other supportive data in order to orient myself about the role food, food ventures and other Peruvian businesses played in the community.

To get a broader view of the Peruvian culinary scene, I dined at a wide variety of Peruvian restaurants in the area. I visited all of the women's businesses at least one time, while most of them I visited at several occasions. A few of the women allowed me to shadow them in their work, and some of them invited me for meals at the restaurant or in their homes, which often included other family members. I was also invited to help out three of the women in their informal businesses, one of them on several occasions

⁴⁹ Here the culinary business space extends the conventional confines of the brick and mortar business. This is particularly the case when the business overlaps with the private home and with community events.

and at different venues. This gave me particular insight on how home-based informal culinary businesses are organized and function. Observing and working alongside the women in their businesses as well as spending time with some of them in the private domestic space, following them around on errands or tagging along when they were out taking care of everyday chores and responsibilities gave me an idea of their role in the enterprise as well as the role played by their husbands and other family members. It also provided me with insights on gendered dynamics in the business and beyond.

I conducted the interviews in either Spanish or in English, sometimes even using a mix of languages, allowing the interlocutor⁵⁰ to lead the conversation in whatever language she or he felt comfortable with. The interviews were tape recorded⁵¹ and transcribed verbatim.⁵² Quotes that originate from interviews conducted in Spanish have been translated into English. In order to remain transparent, however, the Spanish original version is provided in footnotes.⁵³ When referring to Peruvians and others who shared their stories and views with me, I use pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality, unless the participant agreed to the release of their identity. For privacy reasons, I have also altered some features of the women's biographies and a few details about their businesses that were not relevant for the analysis.⁵⁴ The data were analyzed through close reading of interviews and field notes, and central themes were elaborated following Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) who are inspired by grounded theory's strong commitment to inductive procedures (Strauss and Corbin 1994), but who move beyond a view of theory as something to be "discovered" in the data and see analysis as simultaneously inductive *and* deductive.⁵⁵ The qualitative data analysis program Nvivo was a useful tool in the initial process of coding transcribed interviews. However, in line

⁵⁰ To emphasize that I am not writing *about* the Peruvians who participated in this study, but *with* them (Manning 2018, 320), I have adopted the term "interlocutor" or "participant" rather than the more common (and more passive) "informant" or "interviewee", stressing the participant's agentic role in the research process.

⁵¹ One of the women declined to be tape recorded. I hence took extensive notes and tried to capture as many verbatim quotes as possible. I made sure to type up my notes on the computer immediately when I came home after the interview. The tape recorder also stopped after twenty-six minutes in an interview with another woman. I discovered it when I came to the car, so I immediately took out my notebook and jotted down a lot of notes when the conversation was still fresh in my memory. These notes were also typed up on the computer when I arrived home. A few of the interviews with key interlocutors were not tape recorded.

⁵² The interviews were transcribed by the author as well as by two research assistants.

⁵³ The quotes that appear in the dissertation without the Spanish original in a footnote, are taken from interviews conducted partially or entirely in English.

⁵⁴ As is required of research projects based in Norway, protocols from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) were followed throughout the research process.

⁵⁵ Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw note that fieldnotes cannot be analyzed "independently of the analytic processes and theoretical commitments of the ethnographer who wrote them" (1995, 144).

with sociologist Herbert J. Rubin and public administrator Irene S. Rubin (2005),⁵⁶ I found it necessary to keep close contact with the women's voices and to work with their stories as a whole, beyond the fragmented coded parts in Nvivo.⁵⁷

The study is interdisciplinary in character, as are the fields of gender and migration. I situate the women and their life histories in a contemporary historical moment, and pay particular attention to the historical processes in which their migration trajectory and culinary entrepreneurship are located. Sociological perspectives and concepts from human geography guide my analysis, however, and allow me to capture the complexity of these women's everyday practices in this particular historical moment, spanning from the growing Latinx and also Peruvian settlement in the region in the aftermath of the Heart-Celler Act of 1965 and up until today. The data and findings in this research are not representative nor generalizable, but the insights can be of use for scholarship of a range of disciplines, particularly for those who study ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs as well as gender and migration, and immigrant integration.

Roadmap of the Dissertation

All chapters in this dissertation focus on how Peruvian women make home in the society of settlement, and how culinary entrepreneurship, engagement with Peruvian food and the creation of Peruvian food spaces shape such processes. Following this introduction, Chapter 1, "A Nested Approach to Immigrant and Ethnic Entrepreneurship", introduces a new theoretical approach to the study of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs. I bring novel insights on immigrant integration as a process of home-making into theorization on ethnic entrepreneurship to illustrate how immigrants' and other minorities' entrepreneurial practices are nested within social processes often ignored by previous scholarship, such as broader life projects and the entrepreneurs' search for home and belonging in the environments they inhabit.

⁵⁶ Rubin and Rubin highlight the benefits of using a computer software for qualitative analysis. They warn, however, against letting the data-analysis program "gradually replace the thoughtful analysis necessary to qualitative theory building" (2005, 16) and underscore that in qualitative research designs the analysis goes beyond how many times a concept or a theme appears in the data.

⁵⁷ In "Appendix A: Notes on Fieldwork and Reflexivity" I go further into some methodological issues.

Chapter 2, “Building a Life in Southern California: Between an Inhospitable Context of Reception and a Welcoming Culinary Market” situates the Peruvian women’s businesses within a broader historical, geographical, political and social context. I demonstrate how a complex context of reception and opportunity structure shapes the women’s entrepreneurship, and specifically how a positive discourse around Peruvian cuisine enmeshes with a negative narrative toward Latinx immigrants. In Chapter 3, “‘I Never Thought I would be Working with Food’: Motivations, Pathways, and Practices”, I show that changing life projects shape the Peruvian women’s motivations for business, as well as their entrepreneurial strategies. The chapter sheds light on how the women’s agency is facilitated and constrained by the opportunity structure and context of reception described in Chapter 2, but also by their social location within intersecting power hierarchies. I emphasize the strategic means these women actively employ in order to overcome structural challenges, highlighting the complex interplay between agency and structure.

What is it like to be a Peruvian female immigrant and business owner within the culinary sector? And how is this experience shaped by family relations and obligations, as well as by gendered expectations and norms? As Chapter 4, “Gender, Family, and the Culinary Business Space” argues, intersecting structural inequalities condition the Peruvian women’s economic incorporation and entrepreneurial practices. However, the women also benefit from gendered, cultural, and classed experiences and bargain with patriarchy in order to overcome structural constraints. I further demonstrate that while the migration process challenges and reconfigures gender relations, entrepreneurship reinforces these processes. Chapter 5, “Precarious Entrepreneurship or Resistive Mothering?” contends that motherhood shapes the Peruvian women’s entrepreneurship. Their narratives inform debates around work-family balance, and call for these to acknowledge and to value other ideals of family and motherhood, not limited to those defined by White bourgeois feminism, which are often constrained by individualist perspectives. Although they accept a role as primary caregivers in the family, the women simultaneously negotiate boundaries between the private/family sphere and the public/business realm, and thus contest deeply ingrained inequalities in an economy and a labor market constructed around White men in the Global North as the norm.

Chapter 6, “A Culinary Conquest: Claiming the Right to Home and Reproducing the ‘Homeland’”, examines the role attachment to Peru plays in shaping the women’s home-making processes in the society of settlement. The women conquer space in culinary markets in which they reproduce *peruanidad* through daily interaction with food and through entrepreneurial practices. Hence, they claim membership of the urban community, and their right to home and to belong. In Chapter 7, “Peruvians in a ‘Mexican’ City: Reimagining and Redefining *Peruanidad*”, I demonstrate how the women draw on food and food discourses as a material and symbolic resource through which they negotiate a position within social hierarchies in the receiving society, made up by multiple layers of internal and external Others. Food arises hence as a social weapon through which they are able to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes linked to the Latinx label. Simultaneously, however, they reinforce these stratifications.

Chapter 8, “Ethnic Culinary Businesses and Immigrant Integration”, wraps up the central arguments traced throughout the previous chapters by demonstrating how the nested approach has guided my understanding of the relationship between culinary entrepreneurship; broader life projects; gendered and intersectional dynamics; and the laborious work immigrants invest in order to build a new home in a new place.

Chapter 1: A Nested Approach to Immigrant and Ethnic Entrepreneurship

When I returned to Peru, I was no longer part of Peru. I was Peruvian, but I felt like a stranger. (...) this is my home. And if I go to Peru I stay for a week, two weeks, I see what I want, I eat, all of that, and after that I feel, I miss it, I want to come back here. (...) I cannot forget who I am. I cannot forget my family, where I come from. I always dream of going [to Peru], and my memories are there. But when I go there, I am struck with surprise that I cannot stay there, because it is very different. (...) [T]here are others who have opened their restaurants and there is nothing Peruvian about them, but they have Peruvian food. And they tell me, right: “And why do you use so many things like that, so many paintings, everything Peruvian, it looks so ugly, all *huachafó* [tacky, not classy]”. But this is the representation of my Peru. This is what we are. I mean, should I serve Peruvian food and nothing else Peruvian? I am Peruvian, and as Peruvian (...) I want to do everything I can to represent my Peru.⁵⁸

- Andrea, owner of multiple restaurants.

In general, migrants are not *birds of passage* who travel from the Global South to the Global North in order to satisfy labor shortages in markets that offer higher wages than in their own societies, and then return to their place of origin when there is no longer need for them. They are rather human subjects with corporal, social and emotional needs and experiences that shape their actions as they move through life, and through the world. They are also part of families and communities. And although migration may be initiated as a temporary project, migrants often choose to stay, as the migration experience produces ruptures with the life they led in the society they parted from. Hence, rather than passing by, many migrants settle in their new communities, and seek out resources, experiences and strategies that they can use to build their *nest*—a new home in a new place. Culinary entrepreneurship is one such strategy. It allows immigrants, like Andrea, whose statement initiated this chapter, to draw on cultural experiences from the country of origin in order to settle into their new societies. These entrepreneurial strategies form part of migrant’s home-making processes.

⁵⁸ “Cuando regresé a Perú, yo ya no era parte del Perú. Era peruana, pero me sentía muy extraña. (...) este es mi casa. Y si yo voy a Perú estoy una semana, dos semanas, veo lo que quiero, como, todo esto, y después ya me siento, extraño, quiero venir acá. (...) No puedo olvidarme de quien soy. No puedo olvidarme de mi familia, de donde he venido. Que yo siempre añoro ir, y mis recuerdos son allá. Pero cuando voy allá, me doy con la sorpresa de que no puedo estar allá, porque es muy diferente. (...) [H]ay otras que han abierto sus restaurantes y no tienen nada de peruana, pero tienen la comida peruana. Y me dicen a mí no: “Y por qué le pones tantas cosas de esto, tantas pinturas, tanto esto peruano, que feo que se ve, todo *huachafó*”. Pero así es la representación de mi Perú. Eso es lo que somos nosotros. ¿Ósea tengo la comida peruana y nada peruano? (...) yo soy peruana, y yo como peruana (...) quiero dar lo mejor para representar a mi Perú.”

Piore's classical book *Birds of Passage* (1979) argued that migration is primarily determined by labor demand and direct recruitment to low-status jobs in the secondary labor market in the receiving society, pointing to the ways in which structural and institutional forces, inherent in industrial societies, prompt migration. More complex approaches followed Piore's pioneering work, enhancing our knowledge on how macrostructural factors impact migration patterns.⁵⁹ Despite their important contribution to our understanding of how these broader structural forces produce and perpetuate migration, macrostructural theories have overlooked important social dimensions of migration such as human agency and subjectivity, as if immigrants were "homogeneous, nondifferentiated objects responding mechanically and uniformly to the same set of structural forces" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 6). In general, migration theory has centered around the market-oriented labor migrant and overlooked other dimensions of human life, as well as labor performed outside of the paid labor market (Lauster and Zhao 2017, 498).

With *Birds of Passage*, Piore also pioneered contemporary thinking on immigrant settlement, by pointing to the transition immigrants' social identities undergo as their locus shifts from the society of origin to that of settlement. He notes that, in an initial phase, immigrants accept the stigma of low-status jobs, since they measure their own status according to parameters in the society of origin. With the passing of time and accumulation of experiences in the receiving society, however, their reference of social identity is increasingly aligned with receiving-country standards, and they start to aspire better jobs and upward mobility. Sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994, 14-15) criticizes Piore's reasoning, as he fails to explain how settlement is socially constructed, and neglects the central role women, families and gendered dynamics play in settlement processes. Although more recent theorization addressing why people migrate has moved beyond neoclassical understandings of individual migrants as self-interested economic

⁵⁹ According to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002, 13), the World System perspective builds on the theoretical insights of sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and was further developed by scholars such as sociologists Alejandro Portes (1978) and Saskia Sassen (1988). It highlights how developments and changes in the structure of global markets, beginning with colonization in the sixteenth century, contribute to prompt migration. Capitalist expansion and penetration in non-Western economies disrupts these markets, and are often accompanied by political intervention, which has further effect on society. Moreover, transportation routes, infrastructures and communication links are developed, facilitating migration in the opposite direction. Economic globalization further forges cultural links that are drawn upon by migrants (Sáenz and Morales 2015, 28, Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002, 13-14).

agents, research and policy on immigrant integration still rely heavily on the assessment of economic incorporation and upward economic mobility. Such focus has also dominated much of the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, as business ownership has been celebrated as an alternative pathway to upward mobility for immigrants who often experience discrimination in the regular labor market. Some scholars, however, underscore the need to “shift the focal point from mobility outcomes (...) to intermediate social processes” (Zhou and Cho 2010). And whereas early work on ethnic economies focused on the individual and neglected the family as a unit of analysis, recent scholarship has begun to pay more attention to the role the family plays for individuals’ economic adaptation (Light and Gold 2000), for female entrepreneurs (Jennings and Brush 2013), and in ethnic and immigrant owned businesses (Gold 2014; Valdez 2016; Munkejord 2017).⁶⁰ Anthropologist Mai Camilla Munkejord even suggests that the family may “play a key role in explaining entrepreneurial processes” (2017, 270). In line with these insights and calls, my study finds that Peruvian women culinary entrepreneurs in Southern California diverge from the *birds of passage* depicted in Piore’s work, embodied by (masculinized) labor migrants and described as “essentially transient” individuals who “view themselves as strangers and their work as instrumental” (1979, 81). The Peruvian women in this study have labored hard to build their *nest* in the receiving society. And as they struggle to attach a sense of belonging to their new environments, culinary entrepreneurship constitutes more than an instrument through which they can earn a living and achieve economic mobility.

But how do we move beyond the view of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs as *homo economicus* [the economic man]? And what theoretical lenses do we need to employ in order to capture the broader social processes in which immigrants and ethnic/racial minorities’ entrepreneurial actions are enmeshed? *The nested approach to immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship* that I present here seeks to fill this void in the

⁶⁰ An increasingly prolific gender and entrepreneurship scholarship has contributed to shed light on the ways in which women’s entrepreneurship is embedded in the family, an overlooked aspect in the general entrepreneurship literature in which the business, and not the entrepreneur is the main unit of analysis, and in which individualism permeates theorization and research (Jennings and Brush 2013). Ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship has been more attuned to the entrepreneur’s social embeddedness than the broader entrepreneurship literature, but has maintained a focus on ethnicity and the ethnic community as the most important unit of analysis. Some scholars, however, have pointed to the important role of the family for immigrants’ economic adaptation. In *Ethnic Economies*, sociologists Ivan Light and Steven Gold, for example, dedicate a whole chapter to the importance of the family in ethnic economies. Nevertheless, family embeddedness is rather absent in dominant theoretical frameworks which tend to focus on “ethnicity as a salient factor in economic action or resource mobilization” and often conflate “resources that are more precisely situated within the family with those of ethnicity” (Valdez 2016, 1618-19).

literature by emphasizing important intersections between entrepreneurial practices and the social and material world in which such practices are nested. By paying particular attention to previously overlooked dimensions such as home-making, place-making, broader life projects, as well as interactions between the public/private and business/family sphere, the nested approach moves the researcher's gaze beyond the self-interested individual economic actor, the economy and the market and allows us to understand the larger implications of ethnic entrepreneurship as a means of not only economic incorporation and upward mobility, but of immigrant integration.

Beyond the Rugged Individualist *Homo Economicus*: Immigrants and Ethnic Entrepreneurs as Socially Embedded Living Subjects with Life Projects

Many social scientists believed that small businesses and entrepreneurs—which they saw as incompatible with capitalist economic concentration—would vanish into oblivion with the advance of modernization (Light 1984, 195). As expected, self-employment rates in almost all major Western industrial nations continued to decline until the 1970s, when contrary to these predictions, the trend towards decline was reversed (Maxim, Beaujot, and Zhao 1994, 81). In the United States, this reverse process was, in part, prompted by “the dual structural forces of economic restructuring, a consequence of globalization and large-scale, non-White immigration from African, Caribbean, Asian, and Latin American sending countries” (Valdez 2011, 22). This generated a reemerged interest for immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship among researchers and policy makers preoccupied with immigrant adaptation and incorporation. It was within this context that Ivan Light's now classic book, *Ethnic Enterprise in America* (Light 1972), paved the way for the ethnic solidarity thesis. While

other theories have focused on cultural endowments,⁶¹ individual traits,⁶² and blocked mobility⁶³ as drivers and facilitators of ethnic entrepreneurship, Light points to the structure of immigrant groups and resources acquired through coethnic networks. In this and in later works, Light and his colleagues (e.g. Light, Bhachu, and Karageorgis 2004; Light and Gold 2000; Light and Bonacich 1988) claim that such group resources determine the survival and success of immigrant business ventures, as these collective resources mitigate the effects of discrimination and serve to compensate for lack of financial capital and business contacts in the outside world.⁶⁴ Scholars have pointed out, however, that the ethnic economy does not always foster solidarity and trust, but are also sites of exploitation and oppression (e.g. Bonacich 1973; Sanders and Nee 1987; Zhou 2009). As a reaction to the shortcomings of previous approaches, sociologist Roger Waldinger (1986) developed the interactive approach,⁶⁵ which was followed by sociologists Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut's "modes of incorporation"⁶⁶ as well as "mixed embeddedness" developed by economic geographer Robert Kloosterman and

⁶¹ In earlier studies, some groups were thought to have a greater propensity for self-employment than others due to their distinct cultural endowments. These culturalist theories trace their origin to Max Weber's analysis of the effect of the Protestant ethic on the development of capitalism (Light 1979, 32; Portes and Rumbaut 1990, 77). Whereas Weber pointed to Puritan values, others highlighted the development of a distinct autonomous logic linked to shared religious and cultural traditions among Russian and German Jews who arrived in the 19th and early 20th century (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, 1329-30), as well as Chinese-American social organization around kinship groups and clan values which prompted important values such as "shared collective responsibility and mutual loyalty" (Nee and Nee 1973, 64; cited in Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993, 1330; see also Valdez 2011, 23).

⁶² Neo-classical economists have sought to explain self-employment rates and entrepreneurial outcomes on individual grounds by underscoring the importance of individual human capital in terms of educational differences, work experience and parental socioeconomic background (Verdaguer 2009, 21). See also Portes and Rumbaut (1990, 57-71) for a detailed overview, as well as a critical response to the exclusive reliance on individual skills and motivations by scholars when seeking to explain entrepreneurial participation and outcomes.

⁶³ In an attempt to understand why foreign-born immigrants tend to display higher rates of ownership in small businesses, labor market theorists have pointed to blocked mobility, referring to how poor language abilities, racialization, discrimination as well as non-transferable skills and educational credentials limit immigrants' entry into the labor market (Verdaguer 2009, 21). Building his argument on the work of a range of scholars and testing their findings against US Census Bureau data, Light (1979) brings together theories of disadvantage and culturalistic theories in order to explain why some groups tend to be more entrepreneurial than other, and how they enter different levels of business.

⁶⁴ Later, Light and colleagues (Light and Bonacich 1988; Light and Gold 2000) refined these theoretical perspectives by highlighting the difference between, but also overlapping dimension of class-derived/class-preponderant and ethnic-derived/ethnic-preponderant resources, and how these are drawn upon in business.

⁶⁵ Waldinger demonstrated how entrepreneurship is shaped by the interaction between "the opportunity structure of the host society and the social structure of the immigrant group" (1986, 250). While acknowledging the contribution of resources theory and the ethnic solidarity thesis, he draws the attention to how the value of these ethnic resources depends on their fit with the environment in which the ethnic business functions.

⁶⁶ Portes and Rumbaut's "modes of incorporation" framework points to how individual-level human capital attainment, the type of community and labor market they incorporate into, and what they call the "context of reception"—which they refer to as "the policies of the receiving government", "the conditions of the host labor market", and "the characteristics of their own ethnic communities"—combine to produce different modes of incorporation for immigrants through ethnic enterprise (1990, 85).

his associates.⁶⁷ With a centering on contextual factors as determinants for diverse outcomes of ethnic entrepreneurship, these interactive approaches are more complex than previous theorizations, as their frameworks combine micro-, meso-, and macrostructural factors.

The pathways, practices, and outcomes of the Peruvian women's culinary entrepreneurship is only partially explained by the dominant interactionist approaches and their attention to individual-, group-, and structural-level analysis. An imperative corrective to these approaches is found in the work of scholars like sociologist Zulema Valdez (2011) and others who have employed an intersectional lens to the study of ethnic entrepreneurship, shedding light on how not only ethnicity, but other intersecting axes of power like gender, race, and class condition the Peruvian women's access to resources on all these levels.⁶⁸ None of these approaches, however, serve to explain the complex ways in which the Peruvian women's entrepreneurial practices intersect with broader social processes and everyday practices generally considered separate from the economy and the market. By listening to the women's life histories and observing them in their everyday endeavors, instead of limiting the analysis to their experiences as business owners, I learned that their entrepreneurial actions were far from isolated processes, but rather intimately entangled with broader individual, family and communal everyday life.

Recognizing economic practices as situated in social relations (Granovetter 1985; Polanyi 1957), previous scholarship has underscored the social embeddedness of ethnic entrepreneurship. However, most studies have emphasized how social networks, with a

⁶⁷ Kloosterman and his colleagues developed the interactive theories further through the mixed embeddedness approach, which expanded the focus on entrepreneurs' social embeddedness by addressing "their embeddedness in the socio-economic and politico-institutional environment of the country of settlement" (2002, 253). This approach maintains attention to micro-, meso-, and macro level factors in a way that enables comparison across contexts, as it captures important dimensions of the divergent opportunity structures encountered in for example European welfare states which differ markedly from the less regulated US context. Hence, it adds an important focus on how the legal-political and regulatory context linked to state policy and the extent of legal enforcement shapes business development. Sociologist Dolores Trevizo and labor economist Mary Lopez (2018, 146), illustrate how this approach may be valuable also in a North American context, and argue that despite fewer state regulations in relation to opening small businesses in the United States than in Europe, an individual's legal immigration status constitutes an important barrier to many immigrants living in the United States.

⁶⁸ Valdez points to three neglected factors and weaknesses in the interactive approaches: (1) Class is conflated with ethnicity; (2) ethnic groups with low rates of entrepreneurship are not included in the empirical studies on which they base their framework; and (3) they overlook the ways in which race, class, and gender intersect with ethnicity in shaping entrepreneurial activity. In her book *The New Entrepreneurs*, she advocates for the "embedded market approach" which moves beyond the monolithic treatment of ethnicity in previous approaches and "situates the role of group affiliation within the context of the American social structure (...) comprised of three interlocking systems of power and oppression: capitalism, patriarchy, and White supremacy" (2011, 32).

primary focus on coethnicity, influence access to tangible and intangible resources that facilitate enterprise, which again may lead to upward economic mobility (Light 1972; Waldinger 1986; Portes and Rumbaut 1990).⁶⁹ The focus hence remains on economic action, and social embeddedness is primarily linked to resource mobilization, particularly within the ethnic community. And whereas the intersectional approach pushed the focus away from ethnicity and directed the attention to the role of other intersecting axes of differentiation in facilitating and constraining ethnic entrepreneurship, studies adopting an intersectional lens have also primarily focused on how structural inequality conditions access to resources (Valdez 2016; Vallejo and Canizales 2016)—the entrepreneur’s “market capacity” (Valdez 2011).⁷⁰ Hence, they have often overlooked other important intersections between entrepreneurial practices and broader social processes beyond the marketplace.

As the Peruvian women’s life histories unfolded before me, I came to understand that the women’s economic incorporation through culinary entrepreneurship formed part of broader processes of immigrant integration, as they interweaved with larger life projects, everyday practices and their search for home and belonging in the society of settlement. Furthermore, the way the Peruvian women talked about their achievements, made me aware of the fact that business success is about far more than revenue and growth, as noted by other scholars (e.g. Valdez 2011; Jennings and Brush 2013, 693; Gabaldon, De Anca, and Galdón 2015). Yet, entrepreneurial success continues to be equated with size, number of employees, growth in sales and financial profit. There is hence an urgent need to move beyond the limited scholarly focus on economic outcomes when evaluating the success of businesses run by immigrants and other racial and ethnic minorities. Exploring these complex and imbricated processes is vital to our understanding of the complexities of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship.

Reacting to these shortcomings, this dissertation forms part of a recent body of scholarship that is more attuned to an understanding of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs as living subjects whose value, objectives and actions move beyond the

⁶⁹ Waldinger, for example, states that the interactive framework emphasizes “the role of social structure as a facilitator and condition of economic action” (1986, 695).

⁷⁰ According to Valdez, an entrepreneur’s market capacity consists of market, social and government capital, which all contribute to facilitate and constrain the viability and life chances of ethnic businesses.

narrow emphasis on *homo economicus* (e.g. Ray 2016; Estrada 2019; Muñoz 2017). Moreover, the particular focus this study has on food businesses opens up a range of questions related to issues of space, materiality, authenticity and identity,⁷¹ as well as to notions of home and belonging. I observed that these Peruvian business owners were spatial actors whose entrepreneurial practices were mediated by the ways in which space and place interact with multiple axes of differentiation, and whose entrepreneurial actions also contributed to shape space and construct place. Such socio-spatial processes constitute another neglected aspect in the literature (Wang 2013; Munkejord 2017). The women's stories also drew my attention to the significance of material culture in business. Sociologist and food studies scholar Krishnendu Ray argues that scholars tend to overlook the fact that human beings are living people with bodies that need to be nursed with "materials and memories that matter affectively" (2016, 17). By advocating for including notions of pleasure, taste and affect when studying ethnic culinary entrepreneurs, Ray pushes the literature in a new direction, and encourages researchers to move beyond the narrow political-economic focus of ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship.

The nested approach parts from the premise that immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs are economic *and* social *and* living subjects whose economic practices are embedded in time, space, and everyday life. It extends previous attempts to explain immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship by aiming to view the whole person, not just its economic actions. Building on recent theorization on immigrant integration as a home-making process (Bocagni 2017; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017a; Lauster and Zhao 2017) it proposes a more holistic approach that captures the complex ways in which economic and social life intersect in shaping immigrant and other ethnic and racial minorities' search for home and belonging in their local environments. With its attention to spatial dimensions, it underscores the important overlapping between entrepreneurial action in

⁷¹ Scholars have addressed the conceptual difficulties and ambiguities of the term identity (e.g. Anthias 2002). However, alternative concepts that have been developed and proposed have not gained ground in the literature, and identity continues to be an important concept particularly in relation to notions of home and belonging (Erdal 2014, 364). Broadly conceptualized, identity is a tool "by which individuals or groups categorize themselves and present themselves to the world" (Owens 2006, 206). In this dissertation, I emphasize the relational aspect of identity with attention to how individual and collective identities are constructed through specific social relationships, referring to both avowed and ascribed identification. Identity emerges as "an affective link between the individual and the social world based on integration or interdependence with others" (Hochschild 2010, 622). Hence, identity refers to ongoing processes of negotiation rather than to fixed and essential categories.

the work/business space, questions of representation in the public space, and dynamics within the intimate spaces of the private realm, people's nest (home). Exploring these intersections may enhance our understanding of the complex ways in which dreams of economic success and upward mobility intertwine with other dreams and processes like broader life projects, individual and collective well-being, and the quest for membership and recognition. The focus on life projects further points to temporal dimensions referring to the fluidity of such projects and their contingency on continuities and ruptures, life course and important life events. Finally, in line with Valdez's theorization, the Peruvian women's stories underscore the ways in which "*the integration of structure and agency*" (Giddens 1973; cited in Valdez 2011, 33; emphasis in original) conditions entrepreneurial pathways, practices and outcomes. Expanding on the intersectional approach (Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011), the nested approach illustrates how the larger social structure is at play at all three analytical levels—individual, group, and structural—, as these macro-structural forces facilitate and constrain agency at the micro and meso level. Moreover, agency also manifests itself across all levels, and can even shape macro structural level processes, since immigrants, like the Peruvian women in this study, are not just passive pieces located within a set of static power structures, but active agents of social change whose actions contribute to reinforce and challenge existing power relations.

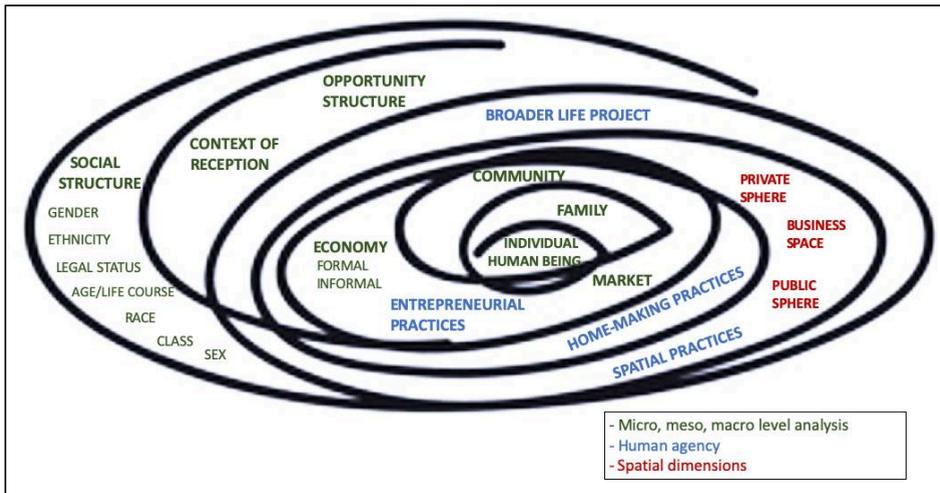


Figure 2. A Nested Approach to Ethnic and Immigrant Entrepreneurship⁷²

The nested approach (Figure 2) builds on the concept of nested/nesting employed in a variety of fields such as marketing, software development, psychology and geography. In geography, for example, a nested approach is used to explain the hierarchy of bounded spaces, or scales, that vary in size (Delaney and Leitner 1997). Such use evokes associations to Russian nesting dolls, in which one doll is nested inside another according to size, from the smallest to the largest. Employed this way, the nested concept refers to a hierarchical structure—a nested taxonomy. In geography, the local is traditionally perceived as nested within progressively larger regional, national, and global scales.⁷³ Recently, however, human geographers have challenged the hierarchical structure of geographic scales, and argue that rather than hierarchical and nested, scales may also be relationally produced and dynamic (Moore 2008) as well as emergent and perspectival (Xiang 2013), reflecting a view of space as relational and emphasizing agency as well as change over time (Erdal 2020).

Thinking along with such insights from human geography, the nested approach to immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship parts from the metaphor of the bird’s nest,

⁷² The model is developed by the author. The illustration is created in cooperation with designer Ingrid R. Haugen and elaborated from a photo accessed at www.colorbox.com.

⁷³ Within migration research, sociologists Tanya Golash-Boza and Zulema Valdez (2018) have also adopted a geographical understanding of a nested approach to explain the context of reception that undocumented students encounter, referring to how three levels of context—local, state, and federal policies and societal reception—shape undocumented students’ success in higher education.

rather than the more hierarchical Russian nesting dolls. The less rigid structure and intersecting twigs of the bird's nest destabilizes the hierarchical taxonomy of the nesting doll model, and serves thus as a better metaphor for the ways in which the Peruvian women's entrepreneurial actions are nested within other economic, political, social, spatial and temporal processes of everyday life. The metaphor of the birds' nest reminds us of the prominent role notions of home and belonging play in migrants' lives and highlights the importance of the domestic and homely space. Sociologist Paolo Boccagni (2017, 9) claims that among the spaces that individuals try to appropriate and make meaningful, personal and secure, the domestic ones and spaces of family life are primordial. Hence, he establishes a taxonomic relationship between these realms and other non-domestic, non-family spaces. My findings among Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs confirm the primary status of family/domestic space. However, they also demonstrate that such hierarchical divisions are often blurred, as semi-public business spaces are domesticated through entrepreneurial practices, and as entrepreneurial endeavors and economic transactions sometimes move into the private and domestic/family sphere. Hence, the nested approach is grounded in a view that immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship is embedded within broader social processes, and that the relationship between such processes is nested, but also relational, dynamic, emergent and perspectival. While retaining important components of previous theorizations, the nested approach contributes to expand on these by adding three important theoretical lenses: (1) a lens on home-making, (2) a less comparative and more analytical gender lens to the intersectional approach, and (3) a spatial lens. After a brief discussion about who ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs are, I move on to discuss these three lenses in further detail.

Ethnic, Immigrant and Minority Entrepreneurship

Within the literature, ethnic entrepreneurship is "defined simply as business ownership among immigrant ethnic minorities" (Valdez 2011, 22) and an ethnic entrepreneur as "any member of an ethnic/immigrant group who owns and operates a business" (Verdaguer 2009, 20). Among the Peruvian women who participated in this study, not

everyone used the term *emprendedora* [entrepreneur] or *emprendimiento* [entrepreneurship] to refer to themselves and to their businesses. Yet, when I addressed them in such terms, it became clear that the label entrepreneur was something that made them proud. My contact with these women was often established through other Peruvians, and when they introduced me and my project, they frequently emphasized that I was studying “*mujeres emprendedoras como tú* [entrepreneurial women like you]”.

Classically envisioned, the image of the entrepreneur is based on the male stereotype embodied by the young or middle-aged man who develops his business in dynamic and innovative sectors and seeks mainly financial profit (González-González et al. 2011, 360-361). Scholars have, however, defined and applied the terms entrepreneurship and entrepreneur in myriad ways. Some consider entrepreneurs as managers or innovators, while others have developed definitions encompassing part-time, full-time, and so called “low-skilled”,⁷⁴ marginal, and “highly skilled” self-employment (Verdaguer 2009, 20).⁷⁵

Contrary to the classical entrepreneur described above, sociologist Min Zhou underscores that the stereotypical ethnic entrepreneur is rather related to “the image of petty traders, merchants, dealers, shopkeepers, or even peddlers and hucksters, who engage in such industries or businesses as restaurants, sweatshops, laundries, greengrocers, liquor stores, nail salons, newsstands, swap meets, taxicabs, and so on” (2004, 1040). She notes that few would think of large-scale successful firms like Computer Associates International and Watson Pharmaceuticals as ethnic business and their founders as ethnic entrepreneurs, although they are immigrants from China and Taiwan respectively.

US based scholars have had a disproportionate focus on immigrant groups with high entrepreneurship rates and associated with economic mobility, such as Koreans, Chinese, and Cubans (e.g. Light and Bonacich 1988; Zhou 2009; Portes 1987). Ethnic or racial groups with below-average participation rates, like Blacks and non-Cuban

⁷⁴ I criticize such terminology since no human being is unskilled—that is without any skill. See discussion in Chapter 4.

⁷⁵ In line with much of the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, I employ the terms “self-employed/self-employment” and “entrepreneur/entrepreneurship” interchangeably, although some scholars limit the term “self-employment” to “those who work for themselves without employees” (Verdaguer 2009, 20).

Latinxs are neglected in such analyses. These groups are reduced to the category of survival strategy self-employed workers, and their business activities are often perceived as a hybrid-form of entrepreneurship since they are not entrepreneurial in the traditional sense (Valdez 2011, 29). Recent studies, however, have criticized such narrow focus and advocate for a broader research scope in which transnational and survivalist micro entrepreneurs ought to be included (Verdaguer 2009; Zhou 2004; Rosales 2013; Estrada 2019). Valdez argues that “[t]his common practice of dismissing the entrepreneurial activity of nonentrepreneurial ethnic group members ultimately limits our understanding of ethnic enterprise and confines our discussion and conception of ethnic entrepreneurs to those groups with markedly high rates of participation and economic success only” (2011, 29). In concert with such criticism, this study maintains a broad approach to the concept of entrepreneurship. By including informal business owners, survivalist and micro-entrepreneurs in the study design, I am able to capture the complexities of the development of a Peruvian culinary scene in the area, and to highlight voices that are often invisible in the literature on ethnic entrepreneurship.

Ethnic, immigrant and minority entrepreneurs have mainly been examined in light of the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, and though these terms are often applied interchangeably, there is a semantic difference between them. While immigrant entrepreneur simply refers to an entrepreneur who is an immigrant, the term ethnic entrepreneur represents an entrepreneur who is member of an ethnic minority group, whether she or he is an immigrant or born in the country. The term minority entrepreneur, on the other hand, signifies entrepreneurs that are members of a minority group, and is thus not limited to ethnic minorities. The thirty-five female entrepreneurs in this study are all immigrants. Hence, they are all immigrant entrepreneurs. However, in order to engage with and expand on previous studies on ethnic entrepreneurship, I employ the term ethnic entrepreneur along with the term immigrant entrepreneur when meant to refer to the specificities of immigrants.⁷⁶ I recognize the essentializing function of the term “ethnic entrepreneurship”, since it refers to businesses to which a specific

⁷⁶ Sociologist Steven Gold (2016) claims that the ethnic entrepreneurship literature has tended to define Black Americans as a cultural or ethnic group, which neglects the role racial inequality has played in shaping Black minorities’ entrepreneurial opportunities. The term minority entrepreneurship is hence more inclusive than the terms ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs, which exclude the Black population. Due to the sample in this study, however, I choose to employ these two latter concepts. Yet, the discussions developed in this dissertation may also apply to other minority entrepreneurs.

ethnicity is ascribed, either because these businesses offer commodities and services related to a specific nationality or ethno-cultural heritage, or because the entrepreneur is minoritized based on her/his ethnic background. Hence, also small business owners who run businesses in which ethnicity is not salient neither in the product they offer nor in material arrangements within the business space, are often perceived as ethnic entrepreneurs. All the business owners in this study, except one, offer Peruvian food and market their product as Peruvian. Many of them claim to offer the clients an experience of Peru beyond the culinary product, which is reflected in artefacts and symbols employed in the business space.

Beyond Economic Incorporation: Toward a Focus on Home-making

By demonstrating the ways in which ethnic entrepreneurship is shaped by structural inequality, recent scholarship has challenged the celebrated view of ethnic entrepreneurship as an alternative pathway to achieve the American Dream⁷⁷ of upward social and economic mobility for immigrants who find themselves disadvantaged or excluded in the regular labor market (Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011, 2015; Vallejo and Canizales 2016). The findings in this study support such criticism. However, moving beyond the endeavor of determining if these businesses lead to upward economic mobility or not, this dissertation examines the role such businesses play in the entrepreneurs' everyday lives and in broader processes of inclusion/exclusion. Hence, it offers a more complex picture of the significance of ethnic entrepreneurship by demonstrating that (1) the motivations and objectives for business ownership among Peruvian women go beyond financial profits and economic mobility, (2) the women's businesses have consequences beyond revenue and growth, and (3) their business practices go beyond economic incorporation and form part of broader processes of immigrant integration. Hence, to really understand if these business ventures are successful or not, scholars need to employ other non-economic indicators.

⁷⁷ The idea that "through hard work, individual effort, and starting at the bottom and working your way up, anyone can achieve success" (Nawyn 2011, 684).

Economic success is frequently equated with successful integration, as integration is often measured according to socioeconomic indicators such as income, occupation, educational attainment, language proficiency, and home ownership. Less tangible indicators of integration, such as emotional attachment and feelings of belonging in the receiving country, are frequently overlooked and more difficult to measure (Takenaka 2017, 118). This does not mean, however, that these indicators are less important, particularly since belonging is considered a basic human need (Baumeister and Leary 1995). As this study examines the Peruvian women as living human subjects, and not just economic actors, such emotive indicators of integration become important to incorporate also when exploring their entrepreneurial practices.

The two dominant approaches to immigrant integration—assimilation and transnationalism—have shed light on the varied ways in which immigrants incorporate into their new environments. The assimilation paradigm emphasizes how immigrants shed cultural traits and customs and become increasingly similar to or indistinguishable from natives. Since theories of assimilation and acculturation have played a central role in coercive, ethnocentric, and patronizing policies directed toward immigrants, however, today these terms often evoke negative connotations (Castañeda 2018, 3). Broadening the thinking around immigrant integration, anthropologists pioneered the transnationalism perspective,⁷⁸ which became a buzzword and dominating paradigm, alongside refined assimilationist frameworks⁷⁹ that still prevail. According to the transnationalism paradigm, the transnational life is not constrained by geographic territory, and recent technological developments allow migrants to be active participants in both sending and receiving societies. All of the Peruvian women engaged in transnational practices, and transnational bonds to family and friends were important in the women's lives. They maintained frequent contact with family and close friends in Peru, and those who possessed the necessary financial and legal resources travelled

⁷⁸ According to Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, transnationalism is defined as “regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders” (1999, 219).

⁷⁹ Portes and Zhou (1993) developed the theory of segmented assimilation in order to explain current immigrants' divergent paths of incorporation in two different ways. They claim that whereas some immigrants follow a straight-line movement into the White middle class, as earlier assimilationist paradigms had suggested, others experience downward social mobility and assimilate into a minority underclass. Claiming that the segmented assimilation theory oversimplifies the divergent pathways immigrants follow into the American middle class, sociologist Jody Vallejo, employs a minority culture of mobility framework, to illustrate how many Mexicans also move upward on the social mobility ladder, not by assimilating into a White middle class, but by following a minority pathway of upward mobility.

often to the country of origin. Although to a lesser extent, several women reported that they drew on transnational networks in the operation of their businesses.⁸⁰ Some received economic support from kin in Peru to finance their business, others engaged in so-called “suitcase entrepreneurship” and brought ingredients and products from Peru. Many also travelled to Peru to buy artefacts with which they decorated the business space. Yet, the women’s life histories highlighted ruptures rather than simultaneity in the “transnational social field” (Levitt and Schiller 2004), and drew my attention to the many strategies these women had undertaken in order to settle in the receiving society, and in order to create a home for themselves and for their families, and in some cases even for the extended Peruvian community.

Moving beyond assimilation and transnationalism, a recent body of scholarship has become more attuned to immigrant’s subjective and lived experiences of migration, shining attention to the work of home-making in migration processes. Hondagneu-Sotelo claims that although the assimilation and transnationalism paradigms have made important contributions to our understanding of immigrant integration, they have overlooked “the critical ways in which immigrants practice place-making and invest meaning and effort into the project of making a new home” (2017a, 14). Similarly, sociologists Nathaniel Lauster and Jing Zhao (2017, 2) argue that, as they continue to center around market-driven labor migration and migrants’ economic incorporation, migration scholars have largely ignored the centrality of home-making to the migration experience, despite feminists’ long struggle for making everyday home-making work more visible. My study aligns with this newer body of scholarship. However, whereas these scholars have focused on how migrants perform important home-making work “configured outside of and even in opposition to the market” (Lauster and Zhao 2017, 509)⁸¹ as well as in particular public spaces (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017a),⁸² I find that the Peruvian women’s home-making practices are not always detached or independent from

⁸⁰ Other studies (e.g. Zhou and Liu 2015) have highlighted the transnational character of many businesses, and the important transnational practices the business owners engage in in order to operate their businesses. Transnational approaches are thus important perspectives to keep in mind when studying ethnic entrepreneurship. In the Peruvian women’s culinary entrepreneurship, however, these transnational practices seem to be less salient, and transnationalist approaches cannot fully explain these women’s experiences.

⁸¹ Focusing on Chinese migrants in Canada, Lauster and Zhao examine daily routines in order to understand the labor of home-making that immigrants perform as they build lives in a new country. They describe how the study participants work hard to settle in, settle down, and settle for.

⁸² Hondagneu-Sotelo explores urban community gardens.

market-related activities, such as entrepreneurship. Thus, I seek to connect insights on immigrant home-making with existing scholarship on ethnic entrepreneurship, and demonstrate how important processes of home-making are performed in the work and business space, and how home-making practices in the private, public and work sphere relate to one another. A focus on home-making allows me to capture the ruptures and continuities that shape the women's integration into the society of settlement, and how these processes inform and are informed by culinary entrepreneurship.

In line with Boccagni (2017), who presents a theoretical framework for the analysis of home in migration studies, I adopt the concept of home as a lens to understand processes of integration among Peruvian women in Southern California, and explore how culinary entrepreneurship forms part of such processes. Boccagni argues that the concept of home is essential for a migrant, and considers home not as a static structure, but as a dynamic process. He defines home as a special and meaningful relationship with place—"a culturally and normatively oriented experience, based on the tentative attribution of a sense of security, familiarity and control to particular settings over all others" (2017, 1). In the same vein, sociologist Adriano Cancellieri refers to home-making as the construction of a spatial, emotional and social realm, in which symbolic and material resources are repeatedly articulated, resulting from the continuous place-making practices we all engage in as social actors (2017, 50). Hondagneu-Sotelo adds to this by referring to home as primarily "a place of belonging, one where people seek to transform the physical surroundings in ways that they find agreeable, and that will support daily utilitarian purposes of social reproduction and restoration" (2017a, 15). In this dissertation, I explore the Peruvian women's home-making processes with a particular attention to how the women's engagement with culinary entrepreneurship shapes their relationship with place and informs processes of belonging.⁸³

⁸³ In line with human geographer Marco Antonsich (2010), who builds on theorization of belonging by sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis (2006), I situate belonging at the intersection of the "personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)" (Antonsich 2010, 645). Boccagni's (2017, 23) theorization of home as a process—what he calls "homing"—is broader than Antonsich's conceptualization of place-belongingness, as Boccagni includes the cognitive/normative (what home is expected to be like), emotional (what home feels like) and practical (how home is made) dimensions of home. The way Antonsich links place-belongingness with politics of belonging, however, conceptualizes belonging and home as interrelated, but adds another dimension to the concept of belonging by emphasizing power relations and socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion. Combining the insights of Boccagni and Antonsich, I employ home and belonging as interrelated but analytically distinct concepts.

Beyond Comparative Frameworks: Gender,⁸⁴ Intersectionality and Decolonial Lenses

The migration experience is gendered, and so is immigrants' social and economic integration conditioned by structural barriers that affect men and women's agency differently. Whereas the role of women remained invisible in earlier scholarship on migration, today there is a rich body of literature documenting women's participation in migration processes, and scholarly work has moved from merely including women to the research agenda, to recognizing gender as a set of social practices that shape and are shaped by migration, and to finally recognize gender as "a key constitutive element of immigration" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, 9).

As migration, entrepreneurship is also a gendered phenomenon (Jennings and Brush 2013), and the business realm a space in which gender relations are negotiated. While women are increasingly entering these arenas as leaders, CEOs, partners and owners, business is, as several of the Peruvian women in this study describe, still a man's world, and women's paths to leadership are "riddled by biases, discrimination and other obstacles" (Ballakrishnen, Fielding-Soingh, and Magliozzi 2019). Scholars of gender and entrepreneurship Colette Henry, Lene Foss and Helene Ahl (2016, 218) note that despite a recent proliferation of empirical studies on female entrepreneurship, few are published in top tier entrepreneurship journals. They also claim that most of these studies adopt essentialist assumptions of gender, focusing on gender as a variable. Many simply add women to their analyses and favor male/female comparative frameworks. Hence, they often conflate gender with sex and employ a weak or no feminist perspective. There are few studies focusing on women-only samples, and within-group comparative analysis is hence lacking.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Following Messerschmidt et al. (2018) and their rethinking of Raewyn Connell's theorization of gender in *Gender and Power* (1987), I employ the concept of gender as both social practice and social structure. The aforementioned authors acknowledge the important contribution of poststructuralist views of gender and deconstructionist critique of identity (e.g. Butler 2007), but criticize poststructuralist work for leading the attention away from "questions of economic exploitation, inequality, domestic violence, and struggles over polity that 1970s feminism had highlighted" (Messerschmidt et al. 2018, 164). They emphasize the centrality of power and inequality in gender relations, and, in their re-articulation of Connell's theoretical work, they incorporate more recent perspectives like intersectionality, postcolonial thinking and decolonial critique. I consider these expanded approaches to gender structure theory as useful frameworks for understanding gender as a historical, culturally specific phenomenon, that changes over time through shifting practices.

⁸⁵ It is important to note that this criticism is mainly directed toward quantitative approaches.

Their criticism applies also to the sub-field of ethnic entrepreneurship. Scholars who study ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs have increasingly addressed previously neglected gender perspectives in their research design (Lee 2006; Espiritu 2008; Light and Gold 2000). A particularly important contribution has been the intersectional approach mentioned earlier in this chapter. However, also studies that adopt an intersectional lens largely rely on comparison between men and women (Valdez 2011; Verdaguer 2009; Vallejo and Canizales 2016).⁸⁶ In this dissertation, however, I focus on a women-only sample. I employ gender not only as an empirical category, but as an analytical concept. Paying attention to constructions of gender, I examine how the Peruvian women negotiate gender in the context of ethnic entrepreneurship, and how gender structures their entrepreneurial practices and experiences.

The Peruvian women are not only subjected to gendered processes linked to the business realm, they also center their businesses around food practices that throughout history have been heavily structured by gender. A body of feminist scholarship has explained how unequal gender relations are perpetuated through social and cultural meanings attached to food (Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann 2010, 592). Food spaces are hence gendered, and while business primarily plays out on a public arena, people's involvement with food and cooking transgress boundaries between the public and the private realms. The domestic kitchen is a space traditionally assigned to women, and a space in which women have taken on the primary role of covering the family's basic needs as well as invested in relations of care. Women's disproportionate food labor has been legitimized through such naturalization of the relationship between food and femininity, which has contributed to reinforce gendered divisions between the public and private. The haute cuisine, however, has been identified as a hypermasculine culture, and a space in which women's participation has been limited (Droz 2015), reflecting "the traditionally gendered figures of the masculine professional chef and feminine domestic cook" (Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann 2010, 594). As with Western celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsey, Peruvian famous chefs are also mostly men, represented by Gastón Acurio, one of the most prominent figures behind

⁸⁶ Although these studies compare female and male entrepreneurs, qualitative methodologies along with an intersectional approach does allow them to see inter-group differences. Within a comparative framework, however, women's oppression seems to be salient, and the ways women contest structural disadvantage might be obscured.

the Peruvian Gastronomic Boom. However, the development of foodie culture⁸⁷ has not only encouraged men to pursue careers as professional chefs, but has also brought men into the domestic kitchen. Sociologists Kate Cairns, Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann note that though these men may break with the gendered stereotypes of domestic and public cooking, the production of a “culinary masculinity” in the domestic space does not seem to reorganize the long-standing gendered divisions of domestic labor, as male cooking is linked to creative leisure, and not to everyday practices of feeding the family (2010, 594). They further highlight that gender and class privilege are intersecting aspects in food and foodie culture (2010, 609).

The Peruvian women’s multiple experiences of gender relations and practices within these different realms, and the very diverse regional, national, transnational, ethnic/racial, classed and precarious legal contexts in which they are produced, call for drawing attention to how gender and patriarchal structures are experienced in relation to other hierarchies of power. “[G]ender does not exist in a vacuum, but emerges together with particular matrices of race relations, nation, occupational incorporation, and socio-economic class locations” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003, 5). Women of color and from the Global South have challenged what they saw as universal and biased views of what it means to be a woman. Hence, more comprehensive theorization and debates have decentered the way we treat the concept of gender, from a Eurocentric and White, middle-class feminist tradition to encompass and seeking to understand people’s lived experiences of gender and gender relations in other non-Northern contexts, as well as across class and ethnic/racial boundaries. This culminated in the term intersectionality, coined by legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991)⁸⁸ and has later been developed and debated by a range of scholars from a variety of disciplines. Intersectionality highlights inter-group differences by underscoring how gender, race,

⁸⁷ Cairns, Johnston and Baumann view the term foodie culture as “referencing a new, omnivorous cultural interest in a wide range of foods ranging from high-brow classics (e.g., duck à l’orange) to low-brow culinary treasures (e.g., handmade tacos)” (2010, 592).

⁸⁸ Crenshaw drew on the work of other Black feminist scholars like Angela Davis, Audre Lorde and Patricia Hill Collins who had already rejected class, race and ethnicity as separate essentialist categories, and pointed out that systems of domination systematically neglected the experience of marginal groups in the United States, upholding White bourgeois women’s experiences as a universal example of sexism, while studies of racism focused on Black men (Prins 2006, 278). Crenshaw (1991) criticized such obscuring of intra-group differences and demonstrated the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s experiences.

ethnicity, class, sexuality and other social divisions intersect in producing inequality and hierarchies of privilege and oppression.

Acknowledging the power of the nation-state and legal regimes, this study also extends the scholarly literature on intersectionality and ethnic entrepreneurship by exploring intersecting relations beyond the “holy trinity” (Romero 2017, Introduction) race, class, and gender, and provides a more thorough analysis of how cultural and legal productions of illegality, citizenship and informality intersect with these social relations in the context of migration and self-employment. Moreover, I draw on recent scholarship (Valdez and Golash-Boza 2017) that claims that rather than treating race and ethnicity separately, a focus on how these distinct but yet intersecting social group formations mutually constitute each other will enhance our understanding of how they combine to shape inclusion and exclusion as well as subject-positions within the US social structure.⁸⁹⁹⁰

In this study, intersectional perspectives (Crenshaw 1989, 1991; Collins 2000) are complemented by decolonial (Quijano 2000; Maldonado-Torres 2007; Grosfoguel,

⁸⁹ In line with sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994), I consider race as socially constructed, and a fundamental organizing principle in US society. The social consequences of race are real and definite for different racial groups (Bonilla-Silva 2018; Omi and Winant 1994). Latinx is not an official racial category in the United States. However, in the absence of available meaningful categories in the US racial landscape, Latinxs often appropriate ethnic and panethnic terms such as “Mexican” and “Hispanic/Latino” as racial referents based on experiences and practices of race in everyday life (Flores-González 2017, 4). In a study of Latinx millennials, sociologist Nilda Flores-Gonzalez (2017) sheds light on how these young Latinxs find these panethnic labels more representative of their experiences and racial belonging than conventional racial categories employed in the United States (five mutually exclusive races are recognized by the US government and reflected in surveys and the U.S. census: White, Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander).

⁹⁰ Traditionally, scholarship on race and ethnicity have represented two distinct paradigms that have been divorced from each other. Recent scholarship, however, has put these two analytical concepts into dialogue with one another. While the ethnic paradigm has focused on assimilation and group-level processes, macro-level analysis linked to systemic racism and racial inequality has been at the center of the race paradigm. Hence, the research questions posed by these distinct paradigms have differed, and so have their theoretical assumptions and empirical interpretations. Sociologists Zulema Valdez and Tanya Golash-Boza (2017) argue that race and ethnicity are “conceptually distinct categories of identity and group belonging” and although they are both articulated within the system of White supremacy, they are not interchangeable nor additive dimensions of identity, but rather produced and reproduced in relation to one another. Some scholars employ an ethnoracial perspective (Aranda 2017; Flores-González 2017), arguing that “new” populations in the United States, such as Asians and Latinxs experience racialization based not only on skin color, but also on ethnic markers (language, culture etc.), and that Latinxs reject standard racial categories, and view themselves as a distinct ethnoracial group. However, in line with Valdez and Golash-Boza, in this dissertation, I employ the concepts of ethnicity and race separately, and sometimes linked with a dash (ethnicity/race) in order to illustrate how these are two distinct categories, but how they also constitute mutually constitutive axes of differentiation that intersect in shaping the Peruvian women’s experiences with migration and entrepreneurship.

Oso, and Christou 2015)⁹¹ and decolonial feminist (Lugones 2010)⁹² critique of Northern hegemonic position in the production of history and knowledge in order to understand the ways in which different but converging hierarchies of power shape the Peruvian women's experiences with culinary entrepreneurship.⁹³ The shadow of colonialism constitutes a central structural force that shapes the political, legal, economic, and social processes in which these women's lives and entrepreneurship are embedded, and decolonial scholars have called for a shift from Eurocentric epistemologies to incorporation of an understanding of imperialism and neocolonial global power relations as well as contemporary dependencies.

A power-centered treatment of the concept of gender as well as intersectional and decolonial feminist approaches are thus employed to understand these women's experiences with migration and entrepreneurship, and allows me to notice the complex power relations that shape these experiences. The integration of an intersectional lens along with decolonial perspectives enriches the feminist stance of this research through a critical treatment of important concepts such as "gender equality", "female emancipation" and "motherhood". Gender, intersectionality and coloniality of power are hence important lenses through which I examine the Peruvian women's entrepreneurial projects and practices, as well as the ways in which they make home in a new place.

⁹¹ Building on World-systems theory, sociologist Anibal Quijano (2000) coined the term "coloniality of power" referring to the ways in which colonization produced a new pattern of world power, in which the idea of race and racial social classification mediated the distribution of work and salary, new racial geocultural identities, as well as the concentration of the control of productive resources and capital, in a way that privileged Whiteness. He notes that "although 'race' and 'racist' social relations in the everyday life of the world population have been the most visible expressions of the coloniality of power during the last 500 years, the most significant historical implication is the emergence of a Eurocentered capitalist colonial/modern world power that is still with us" (2000, 218).

⁹² Feminist philosopher María Lugones (2010) criticizes Quijano's analysis for the conflation of gender with sex, and takes on the task of complicating further the understanding of the capitalist global system of power by introducing the term "coloniality of gender" as the analysis of racialized, capitalist, gender oppression, and "decolonial feminism" as a way of overcoming the coloniality of gender (2010, 747). Hence, she argues that similar to race, gender also constitutes capitalism through processes of colonialization. While colonization is a system of the past, coloniality of gender is highly present today and lies at the intersection of the central constructs of the capitalist world system of power gender, class and race. Decolonizing gender implies enacting a "critique of racialized, colonial, and capitalist heterosexual gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social" (2010, 746).

⁹³ Raewyn Connell (2014) views Lugones' term as useful, though she questions an absolute opposition between the colonial and the indigenous. I agree with this criticism. But as Connell also does, I find Lugones' connection between gender, imperialism and neocolonial global power relations an imperative contribution to understanding these processes as gendered and as influential in producing and perpetuating gender structures. As Connell puts it: "Feminist movements are concerned with transforming—revolutionizing unequal gender relations. To do so on a world scale needs theorizing on a world scale; and to do that, absolutely requires postcolonial, decolonial, Southern Theory" (2014, 539).

The Power of Place

The Peruvian women's stories also drew my attention to spatial practices and the ways they, as business owners, navigated, interacted with and produced meaning into space, also contributing to construct place.⁹⁴ Despite an increasingly prolific entrepreneurship scholarship, the ways in which space, place, and ethnicity/race interact in entrepreneurship processes are still underexplored (Wang 2012, 98).⁹⁵ One exception is the focus on ethnic residential neighborhoods and theorization on ethnic enclaves.⁹⁶

Attending to this void in the literature, geographer Quingfang Wang calls for a focus on the overall social-spatial process of ethnic entrepreneurship, and a shift of “the focal point from purely economic outcomes of entrepreneurship to the creation of place making, community building, and social justice” (2013, 107). While the perspectives Wang proposes are still highly absent from the literature, scholars have begun to scratch the surface of these issues. A recent body of scholarship has for example highlighted the ways in which ethnic businesses contribute to community building and neighborhood development (Liu, Miller, and Wang 2014; Zhou and Cho 2010). Others show that place embeddedness may prompt self-employment. In a study about immigrant entrepreneurship in rural Norway, for example, Munkejord (2017) found that although modes of entry into business ownership varied, they were often related to the pursuit of an initial feeling of belonging to the place of settlement, as the wish to live in a certain place or to contribute to local development led immigrants of different ethnic

⁹⁴ Geographer Doreen Massey challenges the dichotomy of space as something abstract and place as something lived and meaningful, arguing that space is also concrete and embedded, and, like place, relational and in constant making. The politics of place is not opposed to, but set within the politics of space. She notes that “If (...) the spatial is thought of in the context of space-time and as formed out of social interrelations at all scales, then one view of place is as a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings” (1994, 5).

⁹⁵ Scholarship on gender and migration has also overlooked the importance of place (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017b, 113).

⁹⁶ Scholars have disagreed on whether the spatial concentration of ethnic/racial minority groups is a benefit or disadvantage in terms of producing opportunities and resources for business owners. Some scholars have highlighted the possibilities found in such spaces of ethnic networks, trust among coethnics, common language, available and often cheap coethnic labor, access to financial capital and informal credit associations, as well as knowledge and information about the market (Portes 1987; Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes and Bach 1985; Zhou 2009). Others have pointed to the limitations of businesses that are dependent on a coethnic customer base, arguing that it constitutes a constrained market, particularly in relation to impoverished neighborhoods in which a lower-class clientele may not be able to support local businesses (Barrett, Jones, and McEvoy 2003; Lopez and Trevizo 2018). On the other hand, studies have demonstrated that such ethnic spatial concentrations may provide opportunities for business owners belonging to other minority groups with higher class resources who enter these markets in order to serve as middlemen minorities catering to low-income minority residents (Waldinger 1989; Bonacich 1973). Additionally, economic geographers have underscored the importance of spatial clusters in relation to business development. However, since these studies often adopt an elitist view of entrepreneurship with a focus on larger businesses with higher revenue, combined with the fact that ethnic entrepreneurship is often associated with small business and petty trade, ethnicity is often overlooked in such studies (Wang 2012, 103).

backgrounds to open businesses. The Peruvian women's stories extend these findings by demonstrating that entrepreneurs interact with space in a variety of ways, and contribute to construct place. Employing a spatial lens, also sheds light on how the women's entrepreneurial practices contribute to produce feelings of belonging to particular places, as well as the ways in which the power of place shapes their actions.

In the 1970s, Marxist geographers (Harvey 2009; Lefebvre 1976) brought power into conversations about space, connecting as such spatial and social processes. When addressing power and inequality, however, critical spatial theorists have tended to focus primarily on class structures and on how economic and political power intersect (Neely and Samura 2011, 1940). Recent scholarship, however, has demonstrated how space structures and is structured by social relations along intersecting axes of power and oppression, such as gender and race. Geographer Doreen Massey has pointed to the important and co-constitutive relationship between geography and gender, and how not only class, but also gender structures space and place (1994, 182). She states that “[t]he hegemonic spaces and places which we face today are not only products of forms of economic organization but reflect back at us also—and in the process reinforce—other characteristics of social relations, among them those of gender” (1994, 183). In a similar vein, sociologist Caroline Knowles directs our attention to the analytical advantage of attending to “the spatial dimensions of race-making” (2003, 78). By identifying space as an “active archive of the social processes and social relationships composing racial orders” (2003, 80),⁹⁷ she argues that a spatial lens offers particular understandings about human agency that is not accessible by other analytic tools. Space is hence one more lens through which we can understand the complex meaning and operation of race and ethnicity.

A solid body of feminist- and critical race scholarship has demonstrated how gender and race mediate spatial mobility, as certain spaces in the US urban landscape may be perceived as less safe for women due to factors such as sexual harassment and abuse, as well as for Black men due to racial profiling by law enforcement. Adding to this, however, scholars have directed our attention to how race and gender intersect with

⁹⁷ Knowles' theorization of space as an active archive resonates with Massey's work, as it articulates the “sociality and the history enmeshed in space” (Neely and Samura 2011, 1940).

legal status in producing (un)safe environments for undocumented immigrants, as Latinx men are particularly vulnerable to apprehension (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Peruvian women and their family members' legal status intersected with gender and race in structuring how the women interacted with space through culinary entrepreneurship. Paying attention to the entrepreneurs' spatial practices and their relationship with place sheds light on the important ways in which these women not only seek economic incorporation through business ownership, but on how they navigate space, construct place, and claim the right to home-making through culinary entrepreneurship.

* * *

The nested approach provides a more comprehensive framework than previous theorizations on immigrant and ethnic businesses. By approaching immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs as living human subjects and active agents that are embedded within families and communities, and by paying attention to how entrepreneurial practices form part of broader socio-spatial processes linked to life projects, home-making, place-making and everyday life, it enhances our understanding of the complex experiences, contributions and significance of these entrepreneurs and their businesses. A spatial lens and an emphasis on place-making and home-making illuminate important dimensions through which multiple and intersecting power relations are organized and enacted, and enable us to see the larger implications of entrepreneurial practices and how these operate in everyday interactions. In the chapters that follow, the nested approach guides the understanding of the women's motivations for self-employment and of how these Peruvian women negotiate gender, home and belonging in the society of settlement through culinary entrepreneurship.

Chapter 2: Building a Life in Southern California: Between an Inhospitable Context of Reception and a Welcoming Culinary Market

Resting her elbows at the tiny kitchen table in a modest and worn-down studio apartment next to piles of casseroles and cooking equipment tightly stowed like herrings in a barrel, the gloomy light from the California evening sun penetrated the windowpane and illuminated Noelia's face, revealing the sparks in her eyes as she rambled on about her informal business activities and the food she offered to her customers:

I cook with joy, with love, when I manage to make something beautiful: "Oh, how lovely, so delicious, what a beautiful color, this and that", that is, I make all this. Listen, my sister got married on Saturday (...). I made *asado* [roast], *arroz con chanco* [pork with rice], *pollo al horno* [baked chicken], *ensalada de papa* [potato salad], *causa limeña* [layered potato dish] and *costillitas al horno* [oven baked ribs] with barbeque sauce. People were... (...) Well, Peruvian food is tasty.⁹⁸

In a very different neighborhood in suburbia of Southern California, I seated myself by the window and waited for Gabriela to instruct the cook about changes in the menu before she was ready to dine with me. My gaze fell on the counter that separated the dining area from the kitchen. It was covered with photos representing the diversity of Peruvian products: yellow and purple *choclos* [Peruvian corn] and the vast variety of potatoes, particularly the famous *papa nativa* [native potato] in all its shapes and bright colors. My contemplation was abruptly disturbed by a "wroom" leading my attention to the bright red Ferrari convertible passing by and making the window pane rattle for a second. Gabriela was awfully proud to show me that her Peruvian dishes had been accepted in a neighborhood where luxurious estates, pricey cars and White wealthy folks dominated in numbers, and where experiences of racialization and discrimination were quotidian for Latinxs like her.

During my time in the field, I visited a variety of Peruvian food spaces represented by small booths at cultural events, restaurants, pastry stores, supermarkets,

⁹⁸ "Cocino con gusto, con amor, cuando me sale una cosa bonita: 'Ay, que hermoso, que sabroso, que bonito color, que esto, que otro', ósea, hago todo eso. Fijate que mi hermana se casó el sábado (...). Hice asado, arroz con chanco, pollo al horno, ensalada de papa, causa limeña y costillitas al horno en *barbeque*. La gente se quedó... (...) Pues la comida peruana es sabrosa."

as well as home-based ventures in humble apartments and lavish suburban houses. I observed how Peruvian women and men gathered in these spaces, seeking to understand the complex processes that shape and are shaped by Peruvian women's culinary entrepreneurship. Images of hard-working and ambitious women thriving as business owners intermeshed with narratives about economic hardships, mere survival, racial discrimination and gendered experiences. The diversity of the women's aspirations, dreams, migration trajectories as well as business practices and outcomes reflected the variety of contexts they came from in Peru, and the ways in which an individual's social location within mutually constitutive ethnic, racial, class, gender and legal hierarchies intersected with the context of reception and opportunity structure in conditioning the fulfilment of such dreams. At first sight, one could get the impression that Gabriela's restaurant, located in an affluent neighborhood, serving a varied but mostly White, upper-class and English-speaking clientele had little or nothing in common with the informal home-based business venture that Noelia operated in a poor majority-Latinx *barrio*. Yet, one salient aspect tied these women's narratives together: their love for and pride of working with Peruvian cuisine. While the food they served was recognized, valued and welcomed, many of the Peruvian women's stories corroborated Gabriela's narrative of racialized experiences and discrimination. But, on a culinary quest to "conquer" North American palates, they had found a weapon in the Peruvian kitchen.

Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs, like Gabriela and Noelia, establish their businesses within a complex context of reception, in which the opportunity structure is shaped by a set of converging historical processes. A growing Latinx, population in the United States, and particularly in California, during the last half century constitutes a progressively influential force on a variety of arenas, and is increasingly visible in the urban landscape. A steadily growing Peruvian population forms part of this process. Whereas this radical demographic shift supports economic and social incorporation for Latinxs in a variety of ways, it has also led to the development of a negative narrative concerning Latinx immigrants in the media and in popular discourse. Several Peruvian women who participated in this study reported that they were affected by the negative stereotypes associated with an ascribed Latinx identity, and a challenging context of reception contributed to push some of them into self-employment, as it seemed like a

better option than taking on wage work. Due to the positive discourse produced in relation to Peruvian food, their ethnic background yielded opportunities in culinary markets. The United States, and particularly large metropolises like Los Angeles, have witnessed an increasing obsession with food and the explosion of culinary discourses. Moreover, the so-called Peruvian gastronomic boom has entered global as well as US markets, and Peruvian food is increasing in popularity and status among foodies in the country and in the Golden State. In this chapter, I explore how this broader macrostructural context shapes the Peruvian women's opportunities for culinary business ownership in the society of settlement.

Racialized Discourses and Intersecting Structural Inequalities in a Transnational Context

The Peruvian women's economic and social incorporation into American society is shaped by their location along intersecting axes of power, oppression and privilege, primarily linked to ethnicity, race, class, gender, and legal immigration status. Since their social position, however, is far from static, but rather situated in time, space, as well as across multiple scales, embedded in particular social, economic, and political contexts (Yuval-Davis 2015), migration has contoured the women's experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the receiving society.

The influences from centuries of colonialism continue to inform social relations in Peru. As decolonial scholars have pointed out, constructions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality are rooted in the "coloniality of power" which has constituted imaginaries of modernity⁹⁹ and produced the dominant capitalist world-economy, as well as the prevailing division between the West and the rest (e.g. Quijano 2000;

⁹⁹ In line with Quijano (2000), I see modernity as a specific historical experience that began with the colonization of América, and the production of new material and subjective and intersubjective social relations, along with the development of a new Euro-centered, capitalist, colonial world power structure. Modernity is thus a product of a Western European hegemonic knowledge perspective, linked to a version of modern rationality that changed the relations between "body" and "non-body" ("subject", "spirit", or "reason"), as well as between Europe and non-Europe. It also produced a view that "all non-Europe belonged to the past" paving the way for "an evolutionist historical perspective that placed non-Europeans vis-a-vis Europeans in a continuous historical chain from 'primitive' to 'civilized', from 'irrational' to 'rational', from 'traditional' to 'modern', from 'magic-mythic' to 'scientific'" (2000, 221). Hence, non-Europeans were constructed as something that could progress through Europeanization or modernization.

Lugones 2010; Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou 2015).¹⁰⁰ In Peru, notions of indigeneity¹⁰¹ and Whiteness have occupied center stage in shaping experiences of racialization. In Andean societies, the exclusion of indigenous people has been coproduced along discourses of modernity, progress, and civilization (Rojas 2013, 584). Late President Alan García's reaction to indigenous protesters in the conflict known as *el Baguazo*¹⁰² in 2009 serves as a powerful illustration of such power relations, as the President referred to the protesters as second-class citizens and blamed them for blocking the country's progress (Aiello July 15, 2009).

The pejorative terms *cholo*¹⁰³ and *serrano*¹⁰⁴ emphasize how notions of indigeneity are linked to rural communities and regional differences, as well as to processes of rural-urban migration. The explosive growth of rural migrants to the coastal cities, and particularly to the capital, Lima, after World War II, disrupted the dominant image of coastal areas linked to Whiteness, on the one hand, and an indigenous Andean highland and Amazon region, on the other. These processes also affected the ways in which intersections of race and ethnicity had historically mediated class divisions in Peruvian society, as also children and grandchildren of *quechua*-speaking¹⁰⁵ rural-urban migrants managed to climb the social ladder (Cruz 2020).¹⁰⁶ An important body of scholarship (e.g. Alcalde 2020; Berg 2015) has pointed to how race and class are mutually constitutive forces in Peruvian society, as the construction of middle- and

¹⁰⁰ The West refers to European/Euro-American metropolises, while the rest represents non-European peripheries (Grosfoguel, Oso, and Christou 2015, 641).

¹⁰¹ Here I use anthropologists Marisol de la Cadena and Orin Starn's (2007) reconceptualization of indigeneity as something that is not static, but a process that emerges "within larger social fields of difference and sameness", in articulation with what is considered non-indigenous within the particular social formation in which these imaginaries exist (de la Cadena and Starn 2007, 4).

¹⁰² *El Baguazo* refers to the conflict between the Peruvian government and indigenous communities in the Amazon region Bagua in 2009. These communities mobilized against the implementation of the Peru-US Free Trade Agreement, which they claimed violated their land rights and threatened the safety of natural resources (Arrunátegui 2010).

¹⁰³ In Peru and Bolivia, the figure of *el cholo* has been portrayed as a transgressive identity between the *indio* and *mestizo*, a person of indigenous and rural background residing in an urban environment and adopting an urban life-style (Brooke 2005; Alcalde 2020). The term has derogatory connotations (Berg 2015, 1).

¹⁰⁴ Literally, the term refers to "a person from the mountains". The popular use, however, alludes to how race (constructions of the "indio") and place of family origin (the Andean highlands) intersect in shaping ascribed identities (Alcalde 2020, 6).

¹⁰⁵ Quechua is the dominant indigenous language in Peru, and the country's second most widely spoken language after Spanish. It is primarily spoken in the central and southern Andean highlands, but also by rural-urban immigrants residing in the coastal cities (Coronel-Molina 1999).

¹⁰⁶ Historian Victor Arrambide Cruz (2020, 285) demonstrates how what was considered a quite homogeneous Peruvian middle class at the beginning of the 20th century, progressively diversified into three strata: (1) a traditional middle class linked to the dual colonial imaginary and to spending as an investment in maintaining a certain life-style, (2) a consolidated middle class conformed by an intellectual and technocratic elite produced by urban expansion and university reform, and (3) an emergent middle class resulting from massive rural-urban migration, which redefined urban space and prompted new ways of exploiting economic and relational capital. Regarding the latter group, however, he refers to Norma Fuller's (1998) analysis of how these new elites, with family roots in rural Peru, accumulated capital and capacities of consumption similar to other middle-class members, but did not enjoy the cultural capital and the social networks often associated with the traditional middle-class sector.

upper-class identities are intimately linked to sameness with Spanish or other Western European ancestry, and distance to the *indio*, the *cholo*, and the *serrano*, but also to *negros* and *chinos* (Alcalde 2020, 6-7). Colonization and posterior processes of transnational and internal migrations have hence shaped racial, ethnic, cultural and class relations in Peru. And as the Peruvian novelist and anthropologist, José María Arguedas' (1980) book title so famously proclaims: Peru constitutes an astounding mixture of *Todas las sangres* [All Bloods], as today's Peruvian population can trace its cultural and ethnic origin to "almost every corner of the world" (Paerregaard 2008b, 38).

The Peruvian women who participated in this study came from a variety of ethno-cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds in Peru. While the majority had migrated from Lima or from one of the other coastal cities, a small minority of the women had grown up in rural Peru, and a few had been brought up in families that had migrated or they had migrated themselves to Lima from the highlands before continuing the migration trajectory to the United States. Several women had enjoyed middle- and even upper-class lives in Peru, a lifestyle and status that some had managed to reproduce in the receiving society, while others had experienced downward economic and social mobility, often due to undocumented immigration status. Among the few women who had left precarious lives in Peru, where poverty and racial discrimination had shaped their lives, some had managed to build a more economically stable life in the society of settlement, while others continued the struggle to make ends meet in their new environment.

Hence, the women brought with them a diversity of experiences of inclusion and exclusion from the country of origin, and to many of them, such experiences were hard to escape, also in a migrant context. As they settled in their Southern Californian neighborhoods and began to build a new life there, these experiences intersected with local power structures that were rooted in colonial processes—similar to those that had shaped their communities of origin—and further entrenched by processes of immigration, particularly from Latin America. Some women who due to lighter skin color and to class status had never suffered racial discrimination in Peru relayed about very different experiences of racialization in the United States, where they, due to a strong Spanish accent, sometimes combined with their entry into certain job sectors,

were ascribed a Latinx identity which in particular situations placed them in a disadvantageous position. Other women relayed that they, as in Peru, also in their local US communities passed as White, which they explained by referring to lighter skin color, English language proficiency, educational status and higher class position.¹⁰⁷

While indigeneity and class shape experiences of racialization in Peru, in the US context, legal immigration status also mediates such experiences.¹⁰⁸ While immigrants enter the United States without authorization from a variety of nations and corners of the world, Mexicans have been perceived as the “quintessential ‘illegal aliens’” (Chavez 2013, 4).¹⁰⁹ This has further fueled the negative discourse on Latinx immigrants, what sociologist Leo Chavez (2013) has referred to as the “Latino threat narrative”, a view constructed by the media and political rhetoric of Latinx immigrants as a threat, and in some extreme and apocalyptic cases a peril to the survival of the United States as a nation. In this context, the mark of illegality is affecting not only undocumented Latinx immigrants, but also lawful permanent residents, as well as US born and naturalized American citizens of Latin American descent who are perceived as Mexicans, and thus also as unauthorized immigrants due to their appearance, because they speak Spanish or because they hold certain jobs in sectors dominated by Latinxs. Such negative stereotypes are reinforced by people who occupy powerful political positions. In his campaign, prior to winning the elections in 2016, President Donald Trump repeatedly called Mexicans and Latinxs rapists and criminals. Such pejorative references permeate

¹⁰⁷ The racialization that many of the Peruvian women experienced in their local US communities, went beyond traditional definitions of racism linked to skin color and phenotype. It is hence better explained by the broadened definition of racism that Ramon Grosfoguel, Laura Oso and Anastasia Christou offer: “Racism is a global hierarchy of human superiority and inferiority, politically, culturally and economically produced and reproduced for centuries by the institutions of the ‘capitalist/patriarchal western-centric/Christian-centric modern/colonial world-system’” (2015, 636). This definition is based on a view that hierarchies of human superiority and inferiority are constructed around a variety of racial markers that vary according to the specific colonial history of the region in which such power relations are produced. Racism can hence be “marked by colour, ethnicity, language, culture and/or religion” (2015, 636). However, I consider Grosfoguel, Oso and Christou’s definition in dialogue with Valdez and Golash-Boza’s (2017) intersectional approach to ethnicity and race (see Chapter 1). The racism that many Peruvian women have experienced, both in Peru and in the United States, is based on markers that go beyond colorism, such as language and culture. Yet, although ethnicity and race intersect in shaping the Peruvian women’s experiences of racialization as they operate in relation to one another under the system of White supremacy, I employ the terms racial/ethnic markers, stressing that ethnicity and race are distinct but intersecting categories.

¹⁰⁸ Sociologist Elena Sabogal and anthropologist Lorena Nuñez (2010), who have studied the experiences of undocumented Peruvian immigrants in South Florida and in Santiago, Chile, draw our attention to the strong link between undocumented status and social class also in Peru. The authors claim that undocumented status is particularly associated with poor indigenous people, as history illustrates how this segment of the Peruvian population has experienced legal exclusion in their own country, as well as the many obstacles they have encountered in order to obtain legal recognition. This is further linked to structural factors rooted in a non-unified registry of births, and to the destructions of civil registries during periods of violence. Since 2004, however, the government has tried to remedy the situation (Ibid.Sabogal and Nuñez 2010, 90).

¹⁰⁹ Although unauthorized Mexican immigration rates have declined over the past decades, and Mexicans no longer constitute the majority of undocumented immigrants in the United States, estimates suggest that out of the 10.5 million unauthorized immigrants who live in the country, 4.9 million (47 per cent) were Mexicans (Passel and Cohn June 12, 2019).

public discourse and influence how ordinary people view Latinx immigrants, and hence also how the Latinx population is treated as individuals and as collectives in their local US communities.

Contrary to popular perception and stereotypes of undocumented immigrants, members of the Peruvian middle classes also enter the country without authorization.¹¹⁰ Whereas the majority of the Peruvian women resided in the United States on legal grounds, nearly half of them had spent several years in the country as undocumented immigrants. Those who did not possess the financial means or lacked access to social networks that could facilitate obtaining a visa and a flight ticket to the United States, had travelled through several Central American countries before crossing the Mexican-American border. Others had enjoyed the privilege of entering on a regular tourist visa, which implied documenting income and other resources not accessible to the lower social strata of the Peruvian population.¹¹¹ Yet, not only undocumented Peruvian immigrant women, but also those who were privileged with legal immigration status shared their experiences of how an ascribed Latinx identity placed them in a marginalized position on a variety of arenas in the society of settlement.

It is important to note that California is considered one of the most welcoming states for immigrants, also for those with an unauthorized immigration status. As the state with the largest number of undocumented immigrants, California has adopted the most favorable policies toward this group (Nguyen and Serna 2014). It has not always been this way, however. Several of the Peruvian women resided in California during the 1990s when anti-immigrant sentiments culminated in Proposition 187 that targeted undocumented immigrants.¹¹² As California has turned to more liberal and progressive policies toward this segment of the population, Latinxs and undocumented immigrants continue experiencing discrimination on a variety of levels. And although California has declared itself a “Sanctuary State” (Vaughan and Griffith October 26, 2020), scholars

¹¹⁰ Estimates made by The Migration Policy Institute (Zong and Batalova November 7, 2018) suggest that as many as 111,000 unauthorized immigrants living in the United States in 2016 were from Peru, which constitutes around 17 percent of the total Peruvian population in the country.

¹¹¹ Sabogal and Nuñez (2010) found that forged tourist visas to the United States were sold in Lima through a highly organized black market of false documents. None of the participants in this study, however, reported having employed such strategies.

¹¹² Proposition 187 sought to make undocumented immigrants ineligible for public benefits such as public social services, nonemergency health care, and public education. It also demanded that a range of state and local agencies report those suspected of residing in the state without authorization. The proposition was overturned by the courts, however, for being unconstitutional (Pastor 2018).

have highlighted how federal, state and local law, policies and societal reception combine to shape undocumented Latinx immigrants' experiences (García 2019; Golash-Boza and Valdez 2018). Hence, place of residence also contoured the women's experiences with racialization and discrimination, as the Peruvian women had settled in very different neighborhoods; some resided in majority Latinx working-class areas, whereas others lived in ethnically diverse neighborhoods or in majority White affluent areas, some of these more hostile to immigration and undocumented immigrants than others.

The large Latinx population in the area, combined with a complex and, for some, hostile context of reception for Latinx immigrants, facilitated and constrained the Peruvian women's social as well as economic incorporation into the society of settlement, and also informed their experiences with business ownership. However, ethnic food has been on the rise in the United States and in Southern California, as Americans and Californians are increasingly craving for what is often viewed as "exotic" cuisines. And with the growing popularity and status of Peruvian food, the negative narrative around Latinx immigrants intersects with a favorable opportunity structure for the commodification of Peruvian gastronomy, linked to the exceptionally positive reception of Peruvian cuisine in US and Southern Californian culinary markets.

The Rise of Ethnic Foods in the United States and in Southern California

Food is essential for human beings' survival. Historically, however, the role food has played in peoples' lives exceeds satisfying biological processes and feeding the hungry. Food as culinary practice and cuisine is related to the social context of the meal and to social exchanges. While such a basic social behavior, eating, in the words of sociologist of food scholar Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, activates "immensely complex systems of social differentiation that at once generate and promote invidious distinctions" (2014, 116). The role intersecting axes of differentiation like gender, race, ethnicity and class

play in shaping people's foodways,¹¹³ practices and discourses materialize in myriad ways throughout history and across space. This can be articulated by a variety of images from that of aristocratic spectacular dining in Ancien Régime France (Ferguson 2014, 117-118), to food exchanges between colonial elites and the African women who prepared their daily meals, as well as to present-day undocumented immigrant street vendors and Latinx domestic workers in Los Angeles serving Latin American flavored dishes to wealthy clients and employers.

According to Ferguson (2014, 112), the most striking feature of today's food talk is that food has become more than something one can enjoy and that appeals to the senses. Due to celebrity chefs and high-profile cheffing, the domestic kitchen has opened its doors to the public, and food has become entertaining and exciting. The media has played a pivotal role in the development of food discourses, which today are found everywhere. Ferguson claims that through food talk we "craft identities and construct social worlds" (2014, xvii). Taking street vending of food as an example, this profession was once stigmatized and reserved for working class consumers. Today, celebrity chefs and other famous figures, as well as food *connoisseurs* have put street food on the foodie agenda, and have reconstructed the derogatory narrative of such enterprise. While the famous Netflix series *Chefs Table* (McGinn et al. 2015) presented (mostly male) chefs from the pricy high-end restaurant scene, the more recent documentary *Street Food* (Gelb and McGinn 2019) explores street food in Asia and in Latin America, educating the public about low-end affordable ventures, many of them run by women. The series has been praised by the critics, and contributes to produce counter narratives to the traditionally marginalized image of such ventures. Still, street vendors often face discrimination, and in some cities, their profession is illegal.¹¹⁴

Ferguson highlights the last two or three decades of the twentieth century as the period in which "American cooking came into its own (...) when Americans (...) embarked on a passionate, and vocal, engagement with food" and "[e]ver-greater numbers of Americans enthusiastically explored new worlds of food" (2014, 84).

¹¹³ According to sociologist and food studies scholar Raúl Matta, foodways refer to the ways people relate to food in their everyday lives through activities, attitudes and behaviors. This also encompasses how food is produced, preserved, presented, marketed and traded (2016, 346).

¹¹⁴ In Los Angeles street vending was illegal until January 1st 2019.

Classic American dishes were (re)discovered and foods with origin in other places were appropriated, turning previously ethnic dishes into American food. “Appropriation meant Americanization”, and the culinary lexicon was expanded by the inclusion of produce, ingredients, and dishes with previously exotic connotations. Commentators claimed that the new millennium had turned America into a gourmet nation and talked about a “food revolution” (2014, 85). A variety of media platforms documented how “Americans came alive to the sheer fun of food—cooking it, eating it, talking about it, writing about it” (2014, 85). These processes coincided temporally with technological progress and with the development of the internet and social media. With the digital revolution food resources were only a click away, and through the proliferation of entertainment shows dedicated to gastronomic splendor, foods that were once reserved a privileged elite became available to a main stream audience. Concurrently, new immigrations and particularly large-scale immigration from Asia and Latin America also contributed to shape urban dining and the United States as a food nation. As with earlier immigrations, these people brought their foodways with them, and progressively, consumer desire switched from Continental Europe and French cuisine to tacos, pad thai, sushi and Korean bowls. And while some food types have moved from the “exotic” category and entered mainstream American culture, Americans are still “eating the other” (hooks 2015).¹¹⁵

In fact, Americans quite willingly eat the Other—or, as suggested by historian of food and migration, Donna Gabaccia, “at least some parts of some others, some of the time” (2009, 9). While one might assume that crossing cultural boundaries in order to eat ethnic foods is a recent development, Gabaccia presents a different story. In her book *We Are What We Eat* (2009) she demonstrates how American eating habits, as well as identities, have evolved over time, driven by two interrelated historical processes: recurring human migrations and alterations to how food is produced and marketed (2009, 6-7). The culinary and ethnic history of the United States has been shaped by regionalism and reinforced by territorial expansion. Modern technology, however, has created a culinary landscape that has moved beyond local ingredients, though local

¹¹⁵ Bell Hooks’ essay “Eating the Other” directs sharp criticism toward the commodification of culture and of racial and ethnic others. By eating the exoticized other, one acknowledges difference, but fails to challenge the power relations that produce the other, and even contribute to uphold them.

eating habits still persist. On the one hand, the gradual development of a national marketplace, modern food industries and corporate food business—sometimes disparagingly called “industrial food”—have promoted standardized foods and national connections. New migrations, on the other hand, have steadily contributed to bringing diversity into the national culinary imaginary, and the immigrant population also constitutes new “communities of consumption” (2009, 8).

Culinary cultures contribute to define the ideals of a nation, and France constitutes the most prominent example of a nation in which the culinary emerges as a fundamental attribute of what is considered French (Ferguson 2010; Matta 2014). Ferguson states that “there is no American cuisine, that is, no culinary configuration identified with the country as a whole” (2004, 106). And though the new generation of American foodies prides itself on an increasing American culinary consciousness, this does not mean that the product is a national gastronomy (Fan 2013, 30). Persisting regional differences are complemented by increasing culinary diversity fueled by global influences and by immigrants.

While food is at the center of such immigrant influence, labor is also an important part of these processes. Sociologist and food studies scholar Krishnendu Ray (2014b) highlights the farm and the kitchen as two important nodes through which immigrant workers have contributed to shape the American food system. He traces the numbers back to the first US census in 1850, and concludes that historically immigrants and minorities have made up the majority of farm work and domestic work. Moreover, they make up the majority of food service occupations. This is also the case today. According to the last census in 2010, foreign-born made up 75 percent of restaurant cooks and 64 percent of restaurant workers (Ray 2014b). Moreover, many immigrants also start ethnic food businesses and contribute to influence American’s gustatory imagination and preferences through culinary entrepreneurship, reproducing foods and foodways from their country of origin in their new communities.

For decades, scholars have contributed to expand our understanding of how food and gastronomy contribute to reproducing boundaries between ethnic groups (Douglas 2003; Gabaccia 2009), as well as to demarcating distinction across social classes (Bourdieu 1979; cited in Matta 2014) and castes (Appadurai 1988). Gabaccia (2009, 8)

emphasizes the intimate relationship developed between food and cultural uniqueness, also linked to group loyalty. The way people eat and what they eat is closely related to cultural boundaries. Praising a group's cuisine as superior is, according to Gabaccia a way of celebrating, or elevating, the group itself. On the other hand, degradation of other groups is also obtained by pointing to eating habits. To exemplify this, Gabaccia highlights how, in the United States, different groups have been labeled according to associations to their food consumption. Germans have become "krauts," Italians "spaghetti-benders," Frenchmen "frogs," and British have been called "limeys" (2009, 9).

A glance at the history of American foodways informs us that ethnic foods and immigrants' food customs have often been devalued and stigmatized. According to sociologist and food studies scholar Raúl Matta and anthropologist María Elena García, "food figures in tense and asymmetrical relationships, from the familial to the colonial and hegemonic" (2019a, 3). Class hierarchies and their racial manifestations have played a particularly salient role in maintaining distinction between foodways. Moreover, imaginaries of healthy food have shaped processes of "othering" foreign foods, which have often been perceived as a threat since they were valued as less nutritious than more familiar and "real" American foods (Ferguson 2014, 84). In *Revolution at the Table* (1988), labor historian and food scholar Harvey Levenstein points to how, at the end of the 19th century, the diets of "new immigrants" from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe were devalued by nutritionists and public health professionals who wanted to Americanize immigrants' "unhealthy" diets. Similarly, the policies of assimilation and Americanization in the early 1900s encouraged Mexican immigrants to adopt US foodways and to give up their supposedly unhealthy food habits (Pilcher 2008, 535; Wallach 2016).

First introduced by food writer M. F. K. Fischer and later brought into the domestic kitchens by tv-chef and cookbook writer Julia Child, French gastronomy, on the other hand, made its way into the gustatory repertoire of the American people under very different circumstances than many other foreign cuisines. French cuisine was Americanized, but not "naturalized". According to Ferguson (2014, 98), the fact that the French immigrant population was small in numbers facilitated its insertion into

American culinary markets, as it remained associated with something foreign that a lucky few who had been able to travel abroad had brought with them back to the United States. Hence, Fischer and Child along with other well-off American celebrity cooks and culinary commentators—well wandered in the streets of Paris and in French culinary techniques—educated the American people about the art of French cooking. These examples underscore the symbolic power food has assumed throughout US history, and refer to how food is linked to identity and status, as well as to processes of othering.

What is included in the term “ethnic cuisine” varies both geographically and historically (Johnston and Baumann 2015, 23). Referring to a US National Restaurant Association (NRA) survey study from 1999, Ray explains how some cuisines have moved from being considered ethnic to entering main stream US culture. “For most bicoastal Americans”, he suggests, “there is American food, then there is Italian and Tex-Mex food, and the rest is ethnic” (2004, 77). He further projects that Chinese food will join this intermediary category within decades. According to Johnston and Baumann (2015, 23), the boundaries of what is perceived as “exotic” are constantly manipulated by elite food professionals and food enthusiasts influencing the food avant-garde’s opinions of what is *hot* and what is *passé*. And while immigrants earlier suffered under policies of forced assimilation, as I have described above, they also resisted such processes. Some adjusted their habits and adopted American foodways, but many immigrants also kept their own traditions. That could be problematic for immigrants in the early 1900s. Today, however, ethnic food is valorized, particularly the ethnicity of middle-class professionals (Ray 2004, 114). In the National Restaurants Association’s 2018 culinary forecast (NRA 2018),¹¹⁶ the term ethnic is listed a variety of times. The report also refers to international foods like “Peruvian cuisine” in addition to “Thai-rolled ice cream”, “African flavors”, and “Filipino cuisine”. Next to healthy and environmentally friendly foods, ethnic foods are dominating the report. In the forecast for 2020 (NRA 2020), however, the term “ethnic” appears only twice in relation to “Ethnic breakfast dishes” and “Global Ethnic Cuisines”. Health and eco-friendly themes

¹¹⁶ At the end of each year, the National Restaurant Association surveys American Culinary Federation members and ask them regarding next year’s hot trends in terms of food, cuisine, beverages and culinary themes.

are at the forefront here and most likely will be in the following years. Ethnic cuisines that can market themselves in terms of health and sustainability might thus appeal to foodie's search for adventure and novelty, as well as to their health and environmental concerns.

To Southern Californians ethnic dishes have become a fundamental part of food consumption. While Mexican food is found everywhere, local Angelinos and tourists visiting Los Angeles can move from one ethnic enclave to the next in the pursuit of tastes from all corners of the world. If you fancy Asian foods, take a trip to Chinatown, to Koreatown, to Thai town or to Little Tokyo. Later you might want to pass by little Armenia to try the variety of Armenian baked goods and pastries. The recent popularity and appraisal of street food might draw you to the Mexican enclave of East LA or to el Corredor Salvadoreño where you can enjoy the popular *pupusas*,¹¹⁷ And if you look closely, you might also spot some of the Peruvian eateries that have begun to carve their way into Angelino culinary markets. Peruvian cuisine has captured the attention of Californian foodies and other local consumers, and Peruvian culinary businesses are popping up across the Golden state at increasing speeds.

The Peruvian Gastronomic Boom and Southern Californian Culinary Markets

More than two decades have passed since the violence of *la Guerra Sucia* left Peru deeply wounded and divided. At a moment in which Peru was considered a dangerous place to visit, few had predicted that twenty years later, tourism was going to boost and that people would swarm to the country to experience not only the newly declared Wonder of the World, Machu Picchu, but also what is now ranked as one of the world's leading culinary nations. Indeed, Peru has won the World Travel Award for best culinary destination the past eight consecutive years (World Travel Awards n.d.), representing the gastronomic success of a country that has been struggling to recover from the

¹¹⁷ The *pupusa* is a traditional Salvadoran dish made from a dough based on corn flour and filled with ingredients such as ground or shredded pork, shredded cheese, refried beans or loroco (a green Central American flower bud) (Nicholls November 7, 2007).

traumas of the past and which has sought to bridge intercultural differences and encourage social inclusion through food. But how did this shift come about?

From the 1990s Peruvian gastronomy experienced a gigantic growth in popularity and importance. According to semiotician and anthropologist Elder Cuevas Calderón (2014) Peruvian food changed status from subaltern to world-class cuisine. This coincided with the adoption of neoliberal economic policies and the opening of the country to global capital (Matta and García 2019a, 6). What has been termed the Peruvian gastronomic revolution, or the gastronomic boom also overlapped with a long period of sustained economic growth (Matta 2019). According to Matta (2016), the increase in people's purchasing powers, particularly in Lima, as well as the influence of global cultural patterns, contributed to further enhance existing class distinctions through novel trends in taste and consumption, and as in other urban economies, such processes led to a growing interest in gastronomy. A group of chefs, most of whom came from wealthy families and had received their training in Europe, took advantage of this context and initiated the boom, by which Peruvian cuisine has reinvented itself through discursive and technical processes. Food took center stage of a new national project, consolidating "its prominence as a legitimate cultural field and a profitable activity" (2016, 342).

The Peruvian elite chefs who spearheaded the Peruvian culinary adventure that followed combined techniques and standards of haute cuisine and fine dining with rural and indigenous food traditions. Hence, they contributed to give value to foodways that had long been perceived as backwards by members of the Peruvian upper classes. And just like that, Andean *cuy*¹¹⁸ and *paiche*¹¹⁹ from the Amazon region became familiar and esteemed items on the menu of restaurants frequented by members of Lima's middle- and upper classes, along with other dishes and products erstwhile unthinkable for this segment of the population. As one of the early figures of the boom, journalist and food critic Bernardo Roca-Rey is, together with chef Luis "Cucho" La Rosa, regarded as the creator of *la cocina novoandina* (Novo Andean cuisine)—a fusion of ancient Andean ingredients and modern European techniques. Roca-Rey was also the founder of

¹¹⁸ Guinea pig.

¹¹⁹ Amazon freshwater fish.

APEGA (Asociación Peruana de Gastronomía/ the Peruvian Society of Gastronomy), a non-governmental organization, lobby and think-tank made up by restaurant owners, experts in development studies, heads of culinary schools and chefs aiming to foster national identity, social inclusion and economic development through food and foodways (Matta 2016, 346).

Although the gastronomic boom builds on the pioneer work of first generation chefs as Roca-Rey and La Rosa, among others, it was the successful celebrity chef Gastón Acurio who in the mid-2000s entered the scene as the star spokesperson of the boom leading a “development-oriented discourse” through which he convincingly presented “a cosmopolitan vision” of the potential of a Peruvian cuisine that takes pride in traditions and native food resources as fundamental components of Peru’s agrobiodiversity (Matta 2016, 345). The fact that Gastón was offered the candidature for the Ministry of Culture, which he declined however, underscores the elevated importance gained by certain chefs during this period (Matta 2016, 345).

While elite chefs elucidated the potential of the varied Peruvian cuisine, other stakeholders followed and contributed to broaden the scope of the boom to institutions and actors beyond the culinary realm and beyond national borders. Food entrepreneurs, investors and governmental and private institutions joined forces to promote Peruvian gastronomy in Peru and abroad, and a variety of projects have been implemented to modernize agricultural production and to increase its competitiveness, as well as to valorize traditional foods from the Andean and Amazon regions in order to attract tourism and to obtain UNESCO’s recognition of Peruvian food as an intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.¹²⁰ This process must be considered in light of the centuries deep regional, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic inequalities that have marked the country since colonial times (Matta 2016, 340).

A dominant narrative has emerged, fomenting a more intimate relationship between Peruvian gastronomy and the nation. And similar to nineteenth century nation building processes, the past decades have witnessed the need to elaborate on an imagined “We”—to create a new idea of the nation. These efforts found their source in

¹²⁰ In 2007 Peruvian cuisine was declared Cultural Heritage of the Nation. However, the road to achieve inclusion in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List, turned out to be a slippery slope, and such aspirations remain still a priority on the national agenda (Matta 2016).

the Peruvian kitchen, and the relationship between culture, food and politics. Through these processes, ethnicity has turned into a means of commodification and economic growth, and food has been placed at the center of the intersection between culture, identity and the market (Matta 2016, 339). The narrative bears the promise of social inclusion and alliances between the city and the rural provinces, between indigenous farmers and White, upper and middle-class urban chefs (Matta and García 2019a, 3). According to Acurio, the feeling of cohesion without difference that Peru has managed to create around its cuisine is uncommon and unprecedented. In an interview, he stated that “barriers break, it is a unifying bridge, of tolerance, of opportunity” (El Comercio January 25, 2011). Particularly, the need to unite a country whose divisions had been further entrenched by the internal conflict that had left rural and indigenous communities in the Andes heavily affected, has played a pivotal role in shaping discourses of inclusion and tolerance.

Although the promises inherent in the narrative constructed around Peruvian cuisine and the boom have been warmly welcomed and celebrated by a variety of actors from the media to the state apparatus, critical voices have emerged in the scholarly realm and beyond. Alliances have indeed been built between rural indigenous producers, on the one hand, and urban elite chefs on the other. These relationships may potentially benefit both parts. Previously devalued products and foodways have also gained recognition, and in the words of Matta and García, “the celebration of indigenous knowledge as *knowledge* can be a powerful antidote to the racism and marginalization Native peoples in Peru continue to face” (2019a, 8). Yet, those who have enriched themselves on the gastronomic boom are mainly White male entrepreneurial restaurateurs from coastal cities, and the boom has remained primarily a *Limeño*¹²¹ phenomenon.¹²² The promise of integration and decentralization is, according to author, reporter and cultural critic, Mirko Lauer, a project that is much more politically demanding than what can be done from the realm of the kitchen (Interview in Matta

¹²¹ From Lima, the capital.

¹²² It is noteworthy that, despite its inclusive vision, not a single rural peasant or small-scale food trader has been incorporated in APEGA’s direction, which is exclusively made up by professionals (Matta 2016, 346).

2019).¹²³ Despite criticism of the gastronomic boom, however, food has certainly become a primary signifier of Peruvian national identity, and Peruvians have begun to take pride in their food and thus also in their country and cultural heritage.

Yet, while the boom has contributed to strengthen the notion of a national cuisine as well as to define what is to be included in *lo peruano* (what is Peruvian), tracing the genealogy of Peruvian gastronomy leads us to processes beyond national borders. Already before Europeans set foot on the American continent, the area which today is Peru was experiencing an “autochthonous diversity” uncommon in other places (Fan 2013, 32). This is due to the area’s ecoclimatic diversity divided into three primary climatic zones from the particular vegetation in the Amazon rain forest, through the coastal landscapes rich in seafood, to the high altitudes of the Andean mountain range that provide the perfect conditions for cultivating an astonishing variety of native potatoes and other products. European immigrants and African slaves influenced the foodways of the inhabitants of the Viceroyalty of Peru. In the post-independence republican era, however, the country has received large groups of immigrants primarily from Europe and Asia, which furthered this diversity and has contributed to shape Peruvian cuisine as we know it today. Indeed, *Nikkei* food—Japanese-Peruvian fusion food, developed by descendants of Japanese immigrants,¹²⁴ but labelled and popularized by non-Japanese Peruvian actors—had already established itself as a cuisine in Peruvian culinary markets, but was further promoted by Gastón Acurio within the context of the Peruvian gastronomic boom (Takenaka 2017, 123). Another influence considered an essential component of Peruvian cuisine is *Chifa*—Peruvian-Cantonese fusion food found practically on every corner in the capital Lima and all over Peru. In fact, one of Peru’s emblematic dishes, *lomo saltado*,¹²⁵ traces its origin to the fusion between

¹²³ In a similar vein, research psychologist Judith Fan refers to the film *Mistura: The Power of Food*, a documentary celebrating APEGA’s annual gastronomical festival in Lima, in which six gastronomical archetypes are highlighted: the visionary leader, the *huarique* cook, the baker, the street food vendor and the elite chef. She contends that simply placing marginalized food actors as the *huarique* cook (particular Peruvian informal, often home-based food business) and the street food vendor alongside elite chefs and visionary leaders, does not automatically lead to social inclusion, and may in fact rather contribute to erase historically reinforced inequities (2013, 35). Lauer, on his side, suggests that the gastronomic revolution has moved from a focus on social inclusion towards a process of exclusion – or what he calls *des-inclusión* (In Matta 2019).

¹²⁴ The first Japanese immigrants made their way from Okinawa and mainland Japan to Peru between 1899 and the 1930s. Japanese immigrants and their descendants, many of them third and fourth generation, are known as *Nikkei* Peruvians (Takenaka 2017). There is also a *Nikkei* Peruvian community in Los Angeles. Some of them have started Peruvian or *Nikkei* restaurants in the area that comprises the focus of this study.

¹²⁵ The Peruvian signature meal *lomo saltado* is a stir-fry dish made of strips of sirloin, *aji amarillo*, onion, tomato and French fries. Literally *saltado* means jump. It refers to the jumping of ingredients that occurs when stir-frying.

Peruvian products and Cantonese cooking techniques and flavors (Rodríguez Pastor 2004, 125).¹²⁶ Hence, the Peruvian cuisine that has been promoted through the narrative of the boom as a cultural signifier of a national “We”, is ultimately a product of encounters between a variety of groups from different corners of the world, shaped by complex historical processes of conquest, colonization and immigration.

The past two decades have witnessed Peruvian food entering global culinary markets at high speeds, inverting the fusion processes described above. Peruvian food is now influencing foodways beyond the country’s national borders. Such development is promoted by public agencies as well as by private efforts to market Peruvian cuisine abroad and to the opening of Peruvian restaurants in major world cities. However, as Peru has become a migrant sending country, Peruvian emigrants have also brought their foodways with them. And as Spanish settlers, African slaves and European and Asian immigrants contributed to shaping Peruvian food while Peru still was a country of immigration, Peruvian emigrants today influence culinary markets in their local communities abroad. Peruvian migrants have opened a range of culinary businesses in cities like Santiago de Chile (Imilan 2014; Stefoni 2008),¹²⁷ Barcelona,¹²⁸ Múnich

¹²⁶ Chinese immigrants arrived in great numbers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. While the amount of immigrants decreased over time, the number of Chinese immigrants has remained stable up until today (Rodríguez Pastor 2004, 115).

¹²⁷ The research of anthropologist Walter Imilan and sociologist Carolina Stefoni have contributed to shed light on the Peruvian food scene in Santiago de Chile. Together, their studies constitute the most comprehensive studies of a Peruvian food scene abroad. Stefoni (2002) explores how a “Peruvian subject” has been constructed in public discourse and in the media. Drawing on media texts as well as interviews with local Chilean residents, she demonstrates how Peruvians in Santiago are often stigmatized and associated with illegality both in terms of unauthorized migration, informal work as well as with crime. However, among the few positive elements that was mentioned in the interviews was the Peruvian contribution to the culinary scene in the city. In a different study, Stefoni (2008) identifies an area in the city center of Santiago that has turned into a Peruvian enclave. She observes how such development is classed and gendered, referring to the fact that most culinary business owners seem to be men, and that the ethnic enclave, although a space associated with *el barrio* [inner-city lower income neighborhoods], also opens up for class transgression in terms of the establishment of high-end culinary ventures and higher status linked to the recognition of Peruvian food. Half a decade later, Imilan (2014) conducted a mapping of Peruvian restaurants in Santiago, and found 268 Peruvian restaurants concentrated in two different areas of the city. He notes that despite Santiago’s high level of sociospatial segregation, the city center produces an inclusive public space in terms of social class, particularly due to the concentration of administrative and financial institutions. He observes that such class diversity also is reflected in the variety of Peruvian culinary establishments in the area, which ranges from popular working-class ventures to high-end restaurants. The second area of Peruvian culinary business concentration is found in a business district East of the city, where more expensive Peruvian restaurants predominate.

¹²⁸ Julián, one of the Peruvian male restaurant owners I interviewed, had previously lived in Barcelona where he had opened a Peruvian restaurant. He told me that there are several restaurants in the city, which seems to be confirmed by a quick Google search. Also Gastón Acurio is found among the culinary entrepreneurs in the Catalan capital.

(Alcalde 2018)¹²⁹ and San Francisco (Brain 2014).¹³⁰ Along with Chile, however, the US is probably the country with most Peruvian restaurants outside Peruvian borders, as it is also the country hosting the majority of the Peruvian population abroad. And though Peruvian eateries are less visible in the urban landscapes of Southern California, overshadowed by mainstream American and other ethnic gastronomies among which Mexican restaurants by far dominate in number, the narrative of the gastronomic boom and the status Peruvian cuisine has achieved shape the establishment, opportunities and life chances of Peruvian food business in Southern Californian culinary markets. And while Peruvian cuisine has been promoted as a tool of inclusion in Peru, Peruvian immigrants of all social classes and ethnic backgrounds aspire to play a role in exporting the Peruvian gastronomic boom abroad by opening culinary businesses in their local societies of settlement.

According to Peru Village's website, the first formal brick and mortar Peruvian restaurants were established in Los Angeles in the early 1960s. The first to open was *Inca's*, a family-owned restaurant. The second, *Perricholi*, was run by two women. Both were located in Hollywood, which at that time hosted a small cluster of Peruvian immigrants (Peru Village LA n.d.c).¹³¹ During the decades that followed, slowly but steadily, a Peruvian culinary scene started to appear in the urban landscape. The first Peruvian migrants who settled in and around Los Angeles and in Bakersfield did not have the chance to spend Sunday afternoon in restaurants where they could order familiar dishes like *lomo saltado*, *arroz con pollo* and *papa a la huancaína*. Neither

¹²⁹ In her recent book *Peruvian Lives Across Borders*, anthropologist Cristina Alcalde (2018) includes a chapter about Peruvian food abroad, in which she explores the relationship between food and home, nostalgia, pride and processes of inclusion/exclusion. In large parts of the chapter, she draws on an online survey with Peruvians around the world and their relationship with Peruvian food: analysis of a documentary; and interviews with a variety of Peruvian immigrants in Canada, The United States, and in Germany as well as return migrants in Peru. However, she has also interviewed a few culinary entrepreneurs and chefs, and include ethnographic observation from one of Gastón Acurio's restaurants in Chicago, a Peruvian cultural event in Munich, as well as a handful of restaurants in Munich and one in Nuremberg. Due to the small Peruvian population in these German cities, Peruvian restaurant owners had opted for a variety of strategies in order to attract a wider non-Peruvian clientele to survive and thrive. This often meant adapting dishes to local palates.

¹³⁰ Geographer Kelsey Brain conducted a study of Peruvian supply chains in San Francisco. In addition to whole sale businesses, she included interviews with chefs/owners of ten restaurants in order to map the commodity networks through which they obtained their products. She notes that while most Peruvians live in areas surrounding the city, the highest density of Peruvian restaurants were found in the downtown area.

¹³¹ Kenneth MacKenzie, a Peruvian who arrived in Los Angeles in the early 1960s, verified many of these details. In a personal conversation, he told me that he lived in Hollywood at the time and also opened his own restaurant—*The Peruvian Room*—in the neighborhood shortly after (1970). He relayed that *Inca's* became an important site of gathering for the small Peruvian community, as the restaurant offered Peruvian food and entertainment seven days a week. On Peru Village's website (Peru Village LA n.d.a), co-founder and Vice President of Peru Village, Milagros Lizárraga, has posted photos that she has taken from newspaper archives that illustrate advertisements from these first Peruvian restaurants in the area (Image 2.1).

could they go to a market and find *aji amarillo*, *maíz morado*,¹³² or *cuy*. They used what they found in local markets and made “magic” in their homes to feed their families “the Peruvian way”, providing their children with sensory experiences from their parents’ country of origin. Some of them began commercializing Peruvian food informally, pioneering what later was to become a booming business opportunity, also in the formal economy. At the advent of the gastronomic boom in Peru, the growth of the Peruvian food scene in Los Angeles accelerated at a burgeoning pace.



Image 2.1. Advertisements for the first Peruvian restaurants in the area as they appeared in Los Angeles newspapers at the time (Photo credit: Milagros Lizárraga).¹³³

Peruvians who migrate to the Greater Los Angeles area today can choose between more than eighty restaurants serving Peruvian gastronomy, and Peruvian restaurants are

¹³² *Maíz morado* is a purple corn variety native to Peru.
¹³³ All photos that appear in this dissertation are taken by the author, unless stated otherwise. This image is a composition of photos from Los Angeles newspaper archives, courtesy of Milagros Lizárraga—made as part of her investigation about the Peruvian community history in Southern California. The photo collage is reproduced with the permission of Ms. Lizárraga.

spread across the city and suburbs.¹³⁴ These businesses cater to the growing Peruvian and Latinx population, but also to a broader clientele. If you are looking for *comida casera* [home-made food], however, you can purchase that from one of the many informal businesses in the area. During my stay in Los Angeles, the first larger Peruvian-owned market opened in the city offering products imported from Peru as well as from other South American countries.¹³⁵ In Bakersfield, where the Peruvian population is smaller in number, most business ventures were informal, but there was one restaurant and several Peruvian events where Peruvian food could be purchased.

While the large Latinx population in Southern California contributes to fuel the “threat narrative”, it also provides Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs with a business opportunity linked to dynamics of Latinx pan-ethnicity. The common language and shared cultural characteristics facilitate friendships and network links among Latinxs, providing Peruvian entrepreneurs with a broader coethnic network than many other minority groups in the area. The Peruvian community is still small, and despite efforts to establish a “Peru Village” in Hollywood as well as a cluster of Peruvian culinary businesses in the San Fernando Valley, there is still no Peruvian enclave in the area. The lack of an ethnic enclave is probably due to the dispersion of the still quite small Peruvian population across a variety of neighborhoods, reflecting the socioeconomic diversity of the Peruvian immigrant population in the area, and the fact that Peruvians constitute a more privileged minority than many other immigrant groups. While the presence of an ethnic enclave may benefit ethnic businesses, the socioeconomic diversity of the Peruvian community, seems to have paved the way for the development of a variety of Peruvian businesses ranging from fine-dining restaurants in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods, to more humble working-class ventures and survivalist entrepreneurial projects. A cluster of restaurants cater to a multiethnic clientele in up-and-coming working-class neighborhoods in the San Fernando Valley and to an even

¹³⁴ As I toured the restaurant scene in the area during field work, I developed a list of Peruvian restaurants through searches on the internet, personal visits and by talking to Peruvians in the area. I have listed more than eighty restaurants, but there were probably more. In December 2020, I gave the list to Milagros Lizárraga who combined my list with her personal list, and posted it on the website of the Peruvian organization Peru USA Southern California (Peru USA Southern California n.d.). On this list you can find 120 Peruvian restaurants, a couple of them also in San Bernardino county (I only included Los Angeles county, Orange county and Ventura county on my list).

¹³⁵ Smaller Peruvian markets already existed in the city in form of small kiosks or informal home-based mini-markets. Many restaurants also have a section of Peruvian products, and in some grocery stores like Vallarta and Jon’s located in certain areas you can find a small shelf offering a selection of Peruvian products. Some South American markets also have a section with Peruvian products.

more varied customer base in the Hollywood area. Other Peruvian formal and informal food businesses are scattered around the Greater Los Angeles Area, also in marginalized neighborhoods in South LA, Downtown LA, and in areas surrounding the port of the city. On the other end of the socioeconomic spectrum, however, Peruvian restaurant owners have managed to reach a well-off clientele in wealthier areas of Los Angeles like West Hollywood and in affluent Orange County suburbs such as Yorba Linda, San Clemente and Laguna Beach. Consequently, Peruvian food is not associated with a particular neighborhood, and hence neither with a particular socioeconomic group. This allows Peruvian entrepreneurs across class divisions to draw on the positive discourse produced around Peruvian food, linked to the narrative of the gastronomic boom in Peru and to the reputation and high status Peruvian food has achieved among foodies and foodie culture in the region.

Peruvian women play a central role in the development of a Peruvian food scene in Southern California. In fact, as mentioned above, women were also involved in the establishment of the first Peruvian restaurants in Los Angeles. And as the Peruvian culinary scene has expanded, women have opened a variety of enterprises in the formal as well as in the informal economy. I identify five types of women run businesses: (1) formal brick and mortar establishments, (2) informal businesses linked to events in the Peruvian community, (3) informal home-based “semi-restaurants” or “semi-markets”, (4) informal home-based catering businesses¹³⁶, and (5) informal home-based businesses that supply formal brick and mortar establishments with certain products confectioned in the private home. Some of these ventures offer breakfast/lunch/dinner menu, some specialize in cake and pastries, whereas others commercialize Peruvian food products and fresh produce. While men also run informal food businesses in the area, women seem to be overrepresented among informal culinary entrepreneurs. However, a range of women establish formal businesses, and alongside Peruvian men and informal business owners they contribute to the making of a diverse and vibrant Peruvian culinary food scene in Southern California.

¹³⁶ Many of the informal business owners who sell food at community events, also run informal home-based catering businesses.



Image 2.2: Formal restaurant business, adorned with images of Machu Picchu and the Peruvian rural highlands.

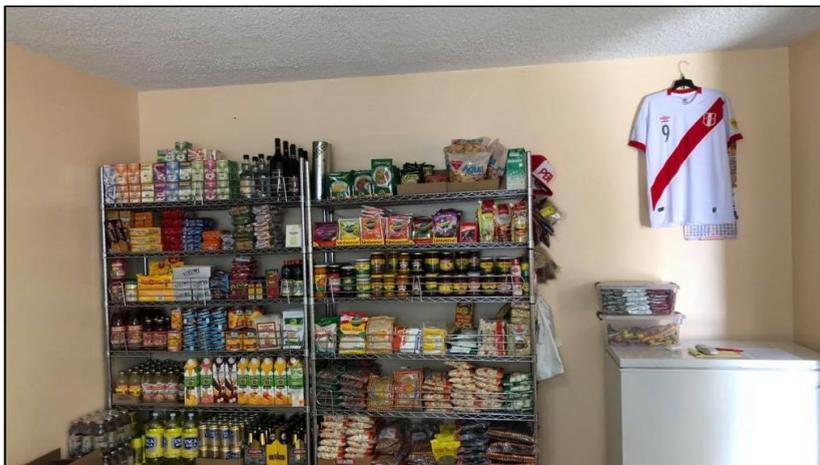


Image 2.3: Informal home-based mini market.



Image 2.4 and 2.5. Informal business space, private garden turned into semi-restaurant.



Jackeline's Story: A Culinary Entrepreneur Making Home in a Complex Context of Reception

Identifying the structures that facilitate and constrain the women's business projects is valuable. But to fully understand how these women respond to these circumstances, and how they strive to overcome structural challenges, it becomes important to listen to their life histories. Jackeline was one of the Peruvian women who had come to the United States as a migrant and had managed to open multiple brick and mortar restaurants, despite undocumented immigration status. For many years, she had carried a dream about going to the United States, and in 2002, she decided to bring her three children with her on a tourist visa, although her husband did not agree with her decision. She defied his objections, however, and initiated the journey that eventually led to the husband reuniting with the rest of the family in California a year later. As an undocumented immigrant who had overstayed her visa, Jackeline landed different jobs. She worked in a clothing store, cleaned houses and cared for other people's children. As a single mother of three (before her husband arrived), however, these jobs did not allow her to accommodate to her own children's needs, as she had to leave them alone in the house during several hours a day, the oldest taking care of the younger siblings. She was happy when she found a job in a Peruvian restaurant, which allowed her to bring her youngest son to work when necessary. Although she was quite familiar with domestic cooking and Peruvian dishes, she had never worked with food before, as in Peru, she had primarily held office jobs. She was a fast learner, however, and little by little, the Peruvian restaurant owner trusted her with managerial tasks. He also allowed her to use the kitchen outside business hours, so that she could earn some extra money selling food informally, which she delivered to private households and to workers at different workshops in the area. When a friend of the owner decided to open another Peruvian restaurant, he asked her to join him as the restaurant chef. She accepted, but on the premise that he made her partner as well. Indeed, she was the one who knew how to cook and organize a kitchen, which he did not, so he saw himself obliged to accept. Although Jackeline invested less money in the business than her partner in the start-up phase, over the years, the success of the restaurant allowed her to accumulate enough money to buy her partners' share and to invest in another restaurant business. When I

met her in 2018, she had recently sold one of the ventures in order to dedicate herself to the other.

Jackeline ran the restaurant during ten years without legal papers. She did not see her undocumented status as a major obstacle for business ownership, as she started out with a partner who provided legal papers, and for some formalities she was able to use her ITIN number.¹³⁷ Managing her own business, she did not have to leave her children alone in the house anymore. The oldest two often waited tables, while the youngest used the restaurant as playground, and sometimes helped her out too. She was happy to be able to have them around. Little by little, the family was able to move from a small apartment, to a bigger one, then to a rented house, and eventually they bought their own house. Whereas her husband earned more money than her in Peru, in the United States it was Jackeline's restaurant that contributed most to the household economy.

Later, their daughter had been able to facilitate legal papers for the parents, as she had married an American citizen. After having spent twelve years without being able to visit her country of origin, the first thing Jackeline did was to return to Peru. But although her *corazón*¹³⁸ was still in Peru, Los Angeles had become her home. After all, she told me, it was not obtaining legal permanent residency that made her feel that she belonged in her new environment, but complex processes of home-making. Business ownership formed part of these processes. Apart from providing financial gains and upward social mobility, running her own restaurant had contributed to the construction of home in the society of settlement. While it had yielded opportunities and financial security, it had also provided her with a space to which she had developed a sense of belonging in the public sphere. It was also a space in which she could present her Peruvian roots to people in her local community, through introducing them to Peruvian food and through a variety of images and artefacts symbolizing Peru within the business space. "Having a Peruvian restaurant is like a tiny contribution to make people know Peru more",¹³⁹ she told me. And it made her proud to see that people accepted and

¹³⁷ An Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) is "a tax processing number only available for certain nonresident and resident aliens, their spouses, and dependents who cannot get a Social Security Number (SSN)." To obtain an ITIN number one must document "foreign/alien status and true identity" (InternalRevenueService(IRS)). Many undocumented immigrants, hence, use an ITIN number to be able to file taxes, as they are not eligible for an SSN.

¹³⁸ "Mi corazón está todavía en Perú [My heart is still in Peru]".

¹³⁹ "Tener un restaurante peruano es como colaborar con un granito de arena para que Perú sea más conocido, no."

praised her Peru. She also felt proud to have managed to create a space to which other Peruvian migrants could come and feel at home, as she believed that other Peruvians came to “experience their roots”.¹⁴⁰

As Jackeline’s story demonstrates, the Peruvian women do not only build businesses in Southern California. Above all, they build lives and search for home and belonging for themselves, for their families, and also for the wider Peruvian community. A complex context of reception for Latinx immigrants contributed to push many Peruvians into self-employment, and a favorable opportunity structure for the commodification of Peruvian gastronomy opened up a variety of business opportunities, facilitating economic incorporation for these women. Yet, to fully understand the significance of their ventures, one must look beyond macrostructural factors and economic outcomes, since the businesses yielded results beyond the economy and the market. As I studied these businesses and the women’s life histories materialized through our encounters, it became clear to me that these businesses occupied a larger role in the women’s lives. To Jackeline, it was a way to combine mothering responsibilities with an income and constituted a safer work space than many other jobs available for undocumented Latinx immigrants. It also became a way to create spaces of representation where she could be an ambassador for her country of origin, and a way of negotiating an identity as Peruvian in a “Latinx” and predominantly “Mexican” city. The following chapters dig deeper into these complex non-economic dynamics and outcomes of Peruvian women’s culinary entrepreneurship in Southern California, and demonstrate in more detail how entrepreneurial endeavors are nested within everyday social life and form part of broader processes of immigrant integration. As the women and other Peruvians struggled to make sense of themselves in a migrant context, food ascended as a powerful tool, and culinary business ownership contributed to create a pathway to economic *and* social incorporation, to home, and to a sense of belonging in the society of settlement.

¹⁴⁰ “Yo creo que uno busca encontrarse con sus raíces”.

Chapter 3: “I never thought I would be working with food”: Motivations, Pathways, and Practices

Elisa and her family enjoyed a middle-class life in Peru. She was a stay-at-home mother, while her husband, Carlos, who had obtained a university degree, held a well-paid job in a multinational firm. Every Christmas they used to travel to the United States to visit Carlos’s mother, who had migrated earlier and had become an American citizen. Due to enduring insecurity in Peru in the aftermath of la *Guerra Sucia*, Elisa’s mother-in-law convinced them to reconsider their return. They overstayed their tourist visas, hoping for a pathway to legalization in the future. In the United States, Carlos found low-wage work in the construction sector. However, he lost one job because of his forged social security number, and another since he, as an undocumented immigrant, was not able to renew his driver’s license.¹⁴¹ To support the family financially, Elisa started working in a Peruvian restaurant, where she was exploited as an employee, as she worked long hours and performed managerial tasks for a minimum wage. However, Elisa gained experience in running a kitchen and managing a business, and when the opportunity for buying an informal pastry-business from a Peruvian friend presented itself, she and Carlos began their entrepreneurial trajectory, without papers and with an informal business. Later, they were able to open a Peruvian restaurant, this time in the formal economy, drawing on the mother-in-law’s legal and financial resources. When I met them in 2018, six years had passed since they had inaugurated the restaurant, which had allowed them to move first into their own apartment, later to a house, and then to a bigger house. And although the business required long work hours and provided few opportunities for wealth accumulation, it protected them from other less desirable jobs and riskier confrontations with the regular labor market, as they still had not been able to legalize their immigration status. It also allowed them to provide better opportunities for their children than what they thought they would have had in Peru.

Entrepreneurship was not a panacea to upward economic mobility for Peruvian immigrant women, but for many it was a viable means that allowed them to achieve immediate and long-term objectives of broader life projects. For Elisa and her husband,

¹⁴¹ Only when the Assembly Bill (AB) 60 took effect on January of 2015, the Californian Department of Motor Vehicles were able to issue California Driver’s Licenses to undocumented immigrants (Lopez and Trevizo 2018, 162).

as for Jackeline and her family, as described in the previous chapter, it was a way of responding to a challenging context of reception and the complex opportunity structure that many Latinx immigrants, particularly those with undocumented immigration status, encounter when they arrive in California and attempt to insert themselves into the American labor force. Their struggles uncover the agency individual migrants and families demonstrate in the endeavor of overcoming structural constraints. The women's pathways into self-employment and culinary entrepreneurship were diverse. Whereas some opened businesses out of necessity, to others it had been a life-long dream. Most of the women relayed that they never thought they were going to end up working with food, but many of them saw market opportunities in light of the increasing popularity of Peruvian cuisine and the demand for a variety of such businesses in the areas where they resided. The financial outcomes of these ventures were as varied as the motivations behind their start-up, but all the women's stories stand out as examples of hard work to achieve the dreams and hopes they had of a better life and a home for themselves and for their families in the United States.

These hopes and dreams seem to fluctuate across the entrepreneur's life course and business trajectory, in tandem with the development of broader life projects and in relation to continuities and ruptures that the entrepreneurs experienced in business, but also in broader social and everyday life. In this chapter, I explore the women's pathways into self-employment, their motivation for business ownership, and the strategies they develop to be able to establish and operate a culinary business in the society of settlement. By highlighting the complex relationship between business formality, legal immigration status and class position, the chapter also challenges preconceptions about informality and illegality, and examines the following questions: What are the Peruvian women's motivations for business ownership, and how do these align with broader life projects? How do immigrants open formal businesses despite irregular migration status? How do some informal entrepreneurs manage to convert their business into formal ventures? And lastly, why do Peruvian immigrants who are privileged with legal immigration status, some even with US citizenship and middle-class resources, opt for a business outside of the formal economy?

Previous scholarship has often employed a comparative perspective and bifurcated framework by examining so-called entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial groups, classified as so according to formal entrepreneurship rates (Valdez 2011, 29). Research on Latinx entrepreneurship has thus, on the one hand, highlighted successful Cuban enclave entrepreneurs, pointing to how class resources, such as individual financial and human capital, combine with the structure of the ethnic community and interact with a favorable context of reception for pre-Mariel Cuban refugees in facilitating upward social mobility through entrepreneurship (Portes and Rumbaut 1990). On the other hand, non-Cuban Latinxs' low entrepreneurship rates and negligible entrepreneurial activities—often represented by Mexican survival-strategy entrepreneurs—have been explained by “the absence of these same determinants” (Valdez 2011, 26). The Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs' stories demonstrate a different trajectory than these polarized examples, corroborating recent scholarship that claims that the (non-Cuban) Latinx population is less homogenous than often portrayed in the literature (Verdaguer 2009; Vallejo and Canizales 2016).

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, Peruvians in general migrate with higher class resources than their Mexican and Central American counterparts, who make up the majority of the Latinx population in Southern California. Peruvian culinary businesses in the area reflect a socioeconomically diverse and geographically dispersed Peruvian population, which enables the narrative of the Peruvian gastronomic boom—of Peruvian food as high-status cuisine and fine dining—to be reproduced in a migrant context without being associated with a specific ethnic neighborhood or class segment. This opens up opportunities for business across socioeconomic boundaries. Nevertheless, Peruvian immigrants suffer similar disadvantages to other marginalized Latinx groups, as many reside as undocumented immigrants—including Peruvians with middle-class backgrounds—and incorporate into a Southern Californian labor market in which the Latinx often suffers exploitation and discrimination. And as other scholars have argued, ethnicity intersects with gender, race, and class in shaping Latinx business owners' pathways, experiences, and outcomes (Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011; Vallejo and Canizales 2016).

Employing an intersectional lens, I demonstrate the complex interplay between macrostructural forces that enable and constrain the Peruvian women's entrepreneurial practices, and the agency they exert in order to overcome these challenges. The women are not only victims of existing structural constraints and market conditions, but respond to the current opportunity structure in creative ways and engage proactively with the market through creating a demand for their products and services. They navigate gendered constraints, experiences of racialization, legal regimes, class barriers, and transgress boundaries associated with illegality as well as between the formal and informal economic sector, as they all contribute to developing a diverse and vibrant Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California.

Dream or Necessity?

Consistent with the blocked mobility thesis (Light 1979; Waldinger, Aldrich, and Ward 1990), several Peruvian women report negative experiences in the labor market as a push factor toward self-employment. This seemed to be a motivating factor primarily among two groups: (1) Women whose educational credentials were not recognized in the society of settlement, and (2) undocumented immigrants who had experienced exploitation and discrimination in the work place. Some women also reported that their husbands' negative experiences with wage work had pushed the wife into self-employment to contribute to the family economy, as exemplified by Elisa's story above.

Women who had not experienced blocked mobility, however, also opened culinary businesses out of necessity. These women told me that they had sought ways to increase earnings in order to uphold a certain life style. Gabriela, whom I introduced in the preceding chapter, grew up in a middle-class family in Lima, and migrated to the United States as a teenager together with her parents and siblings. After finishing her master's degree, she opened an advertising company and married a White American professional. The business and her husband's white-collar job offered them the possibility to buy a house in one of America's most affluent neighborhoods. However, when her oldest son was about to apply for college, she decided to add to their income in order for their children to be able to choose among the best universities in the country. She opted for a franchise business in a popular and conveniently located shopping center

where local residents came for their weekly grocery shopping, banking errands, and spa appointments. Franchising required lower financial capital investments than the Peruvian restaurant she later opened at the same location. Whereas the franchise business had been a necessary investment for the family economy, turning it into a Peruvian restaurant was rooted in the dream of bringing Peruvian food to an affluent White North American clientele, in a neighborhood where Gabriela was often perceived as a racialized Other.

Only a few of the women had dreamt of starting a culinary business prior to migrating to the United States, among them Mayra. When she arrived in the host country as an undocumented immigrant, it was difficult to find a job, but she managed to land a part-time job at a florist. To add to that income, she established a home-based business, selling Peruvian food to clients in her social network who stopped by her house for a meal after work. After a while, she saw the opportunity to open her own flower shop. The ultimate goal, however, was to one day open her own Peruvian restaurant. “My dream was to have a restaurant here in Los Angeles.”¹⁴² In Peru, Mayra had obtained valuable lessons helping out in her mother’s restaurant as a child and young adult. When I met her in 2018, she ran a restaurant business together with her cousin, Yessica, who never dreamt of being a restaurant owner. Yessica didn’t even know how to cook. She told me that “[w]hen [Mayra] was preparing food, I always helped her call the customers, I went to buy things, but me cooking, I only cook for my household. Just seeing this opportunity, I jumped at it.”¹⁴³ While Mayra was in charge of the menu, Yessica took care of the administrative tasks. After several years in the business, however, they both occupied administrative functions, and left the cooking and waiting to employees. Though they entered the country crossing the border without authorization many years ago, they had both managed to legalize their immigration status through the IRCA reform, which facilitated the establishment of a formal restaurant business. Hence, while some started culinary businesses out of necessity, for others it had been a life-long dream. Some women, like Gabriela and Yessica, however, developed new dreams as they grappled with racialized experiences linked to being a

¹⁴² “Mi ilusión era tener aquí un restaurante en Los Ángeles.”

¹⁴³ “[y]o siempre que ella hacía comida, yo le ayudaba a llamar a los clientes, a ir a comprar las cosas, pero yo de cocinar, no sé cocinar. Solo cocino para mi casa. El solo ver que había en esa oportunidad, yo me lancé.”

Latinx immigrant and because they found opportunity for business in an increasingly favorable market for Peruvian cuisine.

Opportunities in the Market

Several Peruvian women report that the popularity of Peruvian food led them to seize the opportunity to start their own business. Like Yessica, the majority of the Peruvian women who participated in this study, had never thought of running their own food venture. Andrea, a naturalized American citizen with a degree in hotel management and tourism, and the owner of several Peruvian restaurants, told me: “I never thought that I was going to have a restaurant!”¹⁴⁴ However, helping out a friend, who had also opened a Peruvian restaurant in the area, made her see the potential of commercializing Peruvian food in Southern Californian culinary markets.

Whereas many Peruvian women had benefitted from a favorable opportunity structure with an increasing demand for Peruvian food, it had not always been that way, and it was not always the women themselves who understood the potential of their cultural background and knowledge about Peruvian food. In Peru, Victoria, whom I presented in the introduction to this dissertation, worked as a travel agent and had been able to fulfill a long-cherished dream of opening her own travel agency. This dream was put to rest when she and her husband, Juan, decided to migrate to the United States. When I asked Victoria how she got into working with food, she expressed: “I never imagined”.¹⁴⁵ As many other Peruvians, Victoria, Juan, and their oldest daughter had overstayed their tourist visas and had settled in a Los Angeles suburb where the White middle class had increasingly been replaced by upwardly mobile working-class Latinxs, where they aspired to build a better future for their two daughters, one of them American citizens by birth. During the first years in the United States, Victoria landed jobs such as baby-sitting and cleaning. Without a driver’s license and without childcare support, she walked from house to house bringing her children with her. As they rented a spacious house with a big garden, they often threw dinner parties, and Victoria always prepared food from Peru for these *fiestas*. As people noticed her culinary endowments,

¹⁴⁴ “¡Nunca pensé que iba a tener un restaurant!”

¹⁴⁵ “Nunca me imagine.”

they encouraged her to capitalize on her talent. It all began when she was asked to do the catering for a wedding. With no experience, she had thrown herself at the opportunity. Since then she had catered at a variety of events and venues, and regularly she offered a take away menu that people could pick up at her house. From time to time, she organized a big party in her back yard, where also other Peruvian entrepreneurs were invited to sell their food and merchandize. Her dream of a career in tourism and as head of her own travel agency, had been replaced with a new dream, one that she had never dreamt of when living in Peru, of one day being able to open her own formal *jugeria*.¹⁴⁶

A few of the women revealed that their non-Peruvian husbands convinced them to start their own culinary businesses, perceiving a market opportunity, and thus, their wives' knowledge about Peruvian food as a strategic asset for the household economy. It was Pilar who introduced her non-Peruvian husband Henry to Peruvian food, and he loved it! They spent a lot of time searching for Peruvian restaurants in Los Angeles, but still at the end of the 1990s, the options were few. Henry convinced Pilar about the opportunity for her to open a restaurant. "Baby, we have to open a restaurant! Everyone is going to love the food!"¹⁴⁷ In 2000, they established the first of three family-owned restaurants, all managed by Pilar. The experience of running a culinary business did not turn out quite the way that Henry had depicted for her, however. He was too busy with his own company to be able to help her out in the restaurant as he had promised, and she had to dedicate sixteen hours a day to get the business up and running. In the beginning she did not have a clear vision of what she wanted from the business. However, as time passed and her efforts began to bear fruits, she began to shape it according to her own ideas and develop personal objectives, which gave her much more satisfaction and prompted her to open two other restaurants, all located in affluent neighborhoods and catering to a predominantly White Anglo upper-middle class clientele.

Miguelina was also convinced by her non-Peruvian husband to open a restaurant business, despite the fact that she had promised herself to never walk in her mother's footsteps, haunted by the memories of a mother who was absent most of her childhood because she was busy with the restaurant business she had in Peru. But he convinced

¹⁴⁶ A food business where customers can purchase freshly made juices and sandwiches.

¹⁴⁷ "Baby, ¡tenemos que abrir un restaurante! ¡A todo el mundo le va a encantar la comida!"

her, and after a while, she had started to enjoy it. “And now, I love it, because when I work here, I come, I am happy, I talk to people, that’s how I spend my day, and I like it.”¹⁴⁸ Although demonstrating how these women were convinced by others into starting their own ethnic food businesses, the three very different stories above, illustrate how the experience with running a culinary business created new dreams, very different from the aspirations they had when they entered the business world. Some of these changes were related to a growing wish to convince White Anglo-Americans that Peruvianness was loaded with positive connotations.

Gendered Motivations

In keeping with previous scholarship on gender and entrepreneurship, gender and motherhood played a significant role in shaping the women’s entry into self-employment (Gabaldon, De Anca, and Galdón 2015; Jennings and Brush 2013; Jacocks 2016). Some women saw it as a way to become more independent, and not having to rely on their husband’s income, while other women considered self-employment as the best option in order to be able to juggle mothering with work. Vanessa’s ex-husband, a German-born man who had migrated to the United States, owned a financially successful business, and earned enough for them to buy a big house in a middle-class Southern Californian suburb, and for her to be a stay-at-home mother for their son. Although Vanessa and her son lived comfortable lives, it was her husband who provided for the family and managed their finances. To be able to send money back to her family in Peru and to earn her own spending money, Vanessa started a part-time, home-based business selling *empanadas*¹⁴⁹ and taking on catering jobs for people in her social network. She found freedom and independence through this informal venture, though the financial returns were small.

As Vanessa, Carla was also a home-maker and stay-at-home mother. Her eyes filled with sorrow as she relayed about her oldest son whom she had to leave behind in Peru. In the United States she was going to reunite with her boyfriend, who was not the

¹⁴⁸ “Y ahora, yo estoy encantada, por que cuando trabajo yo acá, yo vengo, yo estoy contenta, yo hablo con la gente, se me pasa así el día, es que me gusta.”

¹⁴⁹ *Empanadas*—Fried or baked crescent-shaped pastry with varied fillings such as beef, chicken, pork or vegetables.

father of her son, but with whom she later had two daughters. Carla's main reason for leaving Peru was to be able to earn money to send back so that her son would have a better life as well as opportunities she herself did not have access to, growing up in precarious conditions in the Peruvian rural highlands. However, as a mother of toddlers, it was difficult for Carla to take on wage work. Her husband provided for her and for her US born children, but he was not willing to provide for Carla's son in Peru. To be able to combine mothering with an income, Carla opened a home-based business selling food to people in her mostly Latinx network. Her informal business venture provided her with enough money to send to her son, as well as to her mother and siblings. For Carla, a home-based business was the only possibility to earn money that she could spend as she pleased, while also taking care of her mothering responsibilities. In Chapter 4 and 5, I discuss these gendered dimensions of the women's businesses in further detail.

Training Opportunities in the Ethnic Economy and Entrepreneurial Capital

Previous work experience in Southern Californian Peruvian restaurants prompted several women to start their own food businesses, as these jobs had provided them with hands-on knowledge, as well as connections to potential clients and business contacts. Their pathways into self-employment corroborate the findings from other studies that have observed that working in ethnic businesses may provide immigrants with training possibilities (Bailey and Waldinger 1991) and business contacts, constituting hence an important source of human and social capital (Vallejo and Canizales 2016, 1643) and ultimately what is referred to as entrepreneurial capital (Aldrich, Renzulli, and Langton 1998).

Elisa's job in a Peruvian restaurant saved her family from economic precarity, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. After three years of employment, a disagreement arose between the manager and the owner, and since the owner did not know much about computer systems, the employees failed to receive their payment on time. Elisa offered to help him, and with telephoned assistance from her husband, who held a university degree from Peru and extensive experience with similar software

programs, she solved the problem. From then on, the owner kept consulting her regarding managerial tasks, until one day he told her: “I want you out of the kitchen. I don’t want to see you in the kitchen ever again. You will be working outside with me.”¹⁵⁰

Work in an ethnic food business provided Elisa with valuable experience. Yet, it also tied her to a job in which her undocumented immigration status made her vulnerable to maltreatment. Although performing managerial work, she was still paid as a regular employee. “I felt exploited, but at the same time, now at this moment of my life, I thank him [the boss], because I learned a lot. Thanks to that, I have this [the restaurant]”,¹⁵¹ she told me. This illustrates the type of ethnic entrepreneurship, which along with ethnic enclaves and the ethnic economy has been celebrated by scholars (e.g. Portes and Zhou 1992; Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Zhou 2004) since they offer an alternative pathway to economic integration and upward mobility for immigrants who find themselves marginalized or excluded from the mainstream labor market. Like Elisa, other culinary entrepreneurs had acquired important experience working in Peruvian restaurants and other coethnic owned businesses in the United States. While some women relayed about quite positive experiences, other women shared stories akin to Elisa’s, revealing exploitative conditions. Hence, although a job in the ethnic economy may provide important opportunities for economic incorporation, they do not prevent immigrants, particularly those with unauthorized immigration status, from experiencing abuse. These women’s stories add to the criticism raised against the ethnic solidarity thesis, as they demonstrate that instead of solidarity, ethnic businesses and the ethnic economy also constitute sites of exploitation (Sanders and Nee 1987; Bonacich 1993; Zhou 2009).

Nevertheless, a job in a Peruvian restaurant provided Elisa with important entrepreneurial capital since she was working closely with the owner of the business. Trevizo and Lopez (2018, 14) found that Mexican immigrant women entrepreneurs whose parents were business owners performed better in business than their working-class counterparts. Comparing business performance is beyond the scope of this study. However, several of the Peruvian women highlight entrepreneurial capital as an important motivational factor for taking up self-employment and a resource in their own

¹⁵⁰ “Tú te me sales de la cocina. No te quiero ver nunca más en la cocina. Vas a trabajar conmigo afuera.”

¹⁵¹ “Yo me sentí explotada, pero a la vez, ahora en esta época de mi vida del presente, le agradezco [al jefe], porque aprendí mucho. Gracias a eso tengo esto [el restaurante]”.

ventures. Some had husbands who ran their own businesses, while others had parents who were business owners either in Peru or in the United States. As exemplified by Mayra's story above, some of the women acquired valuable experience in their parents' food businesses in Peru, learning about the industry and the business world at an early age. Others worked in Peruvian owned culinary businesses, which they later took over. Valdez (2011, 51) found that Latinx entrepreneurs who had a family history of business ownership were more likely to start their own businesses than their peers who did not possess such entrepreneurial capital. She argues, however, that gender and class intersect in shaping Latinxs' access to entrepreneurial capital.¹⁵² Among the Peruvian women, however, entrepreneurial capital was found across class lines, and although Valdez's (2011) findings suggest that women have a harder time than their masculine counterparts in translating entrepreneurial capital into viable businesses, several Peruvian women had benefitted from entrepreneurial capital acquired in family ventures. I further found that entrepreneurial capital was acquired through informal entrepreneurship, as it provided important experiences, business contacts and a reputation, on which some of the women capitalized when turning their informal food ventures into formal businesses.

Immigration Status and Business Formality

Albeit less visible in the urban landscape and primarily confined to a Peruvian or Latinx coethnic market, informal businesses have also shaped the development of a Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California.¹⁵³ While much ink has been spilled trying to

¹⁵² Valdez notes that while Latinx, White, and Black men, in particular, benefitted from family business experiences, it seemed more difficult for women to translate entrepreneurial capital into entrepreneurial activity. Women often relied on their husbands' entrepreneurial capital and associated networks rather than their own. In general, middle-class men were more likely to inherit business, while gender was also here a prevalent factor among middle-class Latinx men and women, as middle-class Latinx men were more likely to take over the family business.

¹⁵³ Some of the businesses I refer to as informal, may as well be identified as semi-formal, according to Castell and Portes' (1989; cited in Gold 2019, 12-13) definition of business formality and legality, since parts of business operations were formalized, for example by paying tax. The authors distinguish between formal businesses that in general comply with laws and regulations for enterprise, informal businesses that form part of an informal economy characterized by unregulated and unrecorded economic activities, and illegal businesses that offer goods that are prohibited to commercialize. Most Peruvian food businesses find themselves in the first or second category or in the intersection between these. However, there are also overlaps between formality, informality and illegality, the latter particularly linked to regulations that prohibit the commercialization of certain food products for health and sanitary reasons. A distinction is often made between informalization and informal self-employment. Contrary to unregulated and unregistered self-employment, informalization refers to firms that transfer part of the production process to a subcontractor, often individual homeworkers, and hence avoid expenses such as medical, disability, or unemployment insurance (Wilson 2010, 343).

explain formal ethnic entrepreneurship, a recent increase in scholarship concerned with informal ethnic ventures have highlighted the magnitude and significance of the often stigmatized informal economy (e.g. Ramadani et al. 2019). Scholars note that although once predicted to disappear as a result of modernization, these informal income generating activities, are not premodern relics of the past, but increasingly recognized as constitutive elements of advanced capitalism (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009, 70; Estrada and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2011, 104). And while many blame immigrants and other disadvantaged minorities for the very existence of an informal economy, a growing number of scholars and activists claim that although these groups are dominating quantitatively in informal business activities, the causes behind the existence of such a sector are found in “social, financial and legal patterns reflected in contemporary economic conditions—including global competition, high rates of unemployment, costly and restrictive regulations and the inability of established firms to adapt to ever-changing environments” (Gold 2019, 11).

In the literature, informal ethnic entrepreneurship is often discussed in relation to disadvantaged minority groups, undocumented immigrants and survivalist entrepreneurial ventures. Anthropologist Tamar Diana Wilson (2010, 343) notes that, in the United States, self-employment in the informal economy is prevalent among immigrants, particularly among those who are marginalized due to race, ethnicity, or class, or because they lack documents or are less fluent in English. Sociologist Steven Gold (2019, 10) states that the growing number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, as well as the elevated risk of taking on employment in the formal economy for those who lack legal documents, has led to an increase in informal self-employment rates among this group. Sociologists Mary Romero and Zulema Valdez further contend that “survivalist entrepreneurship is an informal economic activity that is practiced by many low-skilled, undocumented, immigrant, ethnic and racial minority men and women, but is often neglected by scholars of ethnic enterprise who tend to view this activity [entrepreneurship] as an avenue of economic progress, a way to thrive not just survive” (2016, 1560).¹⁵⁴ Groups with high numbers of marginalized populations like Mexican-origin immigrants and Black Americans, for example, have often been

¹⁵⁴ For a critical discussion on the use of the term ‘low-skilled’ see Chapter 4.

considered non-entrepreneurial by US scholars due to their low rates of entrepreneurship in formal statistics. Romero and Valdez (2016, 1562) claim, however, that these groups are far more likely to engage in informal entrepreneurial activity. They argue that by considering these informal activities as entrepreneurial, their participation rates may even exceed those of groups traditionally perceived as more entrepreneurial, where members normally engage in the formal sector.

Street vending is often highlighted as an example of informal survivalist activities, and is a prime example of self-employment that is often not considered as entrepreneurship in the literature. Until recently street vending in Los Angeles has been illegal and criminalized.¹⁵⁵ However, in some Latinx neighborhoods the streets are filled with immigrant street vendors who offer food and other commodities. According to geographer Lorena Muñoz, most street vendors in Los Angeles are Mexican (75 percent) or Central American, and “on any given day there are approximately 50,000 unpermitted Latinx immigrant street vendors selling food on the streets” (2017, 283). Unlike many other scholars, Muñoz defines these street vendors as “ethnic entrepreneurs”, but argues that the entrepreneurial process linked to this type of work, and the clustering of Latinxs in this sector, cannot be explained through the frameworks developed in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, since it is not a reflection of homogeneous entrepreneurial attributes within the ethnic group, but rather a sector that offers a buffer from saturated formal labor markets (Muñoz, 286-7). While informal entrepreneurship indeed functions as a buffer to Peruvians who struggle to incorporate into US labor markets, the reasons behind Peruvian informal ventures also vary, and only a few of the Peruvian informal food businesses can be characterized as survivalist ventures.

Linger around the streets of Los Angeles, and you will have a hard time finding Peruvian street food vendors. Some Peruvians in the area sold Peruvian textiles and other ethnic and non-ethnic themed products on the street. Still, people in the Peruvian community kept telling me that Peruvians do not engage in street vending of food in Los

¹⁵⁵ In September 2018, the government of California passed the Safe Sidewalk Vending Act (SB-946) into law, which prohibited local authorities from regulating sidewalk vendors. Immigrant- and small business advocates had been pushing for legalization for decades. The same year, Los Angeles City Council voted in favor of legalizing sidewalk vending (Bruene and Capous-Desyllas 2020). Los Angeles is the last of the largest ten American cities to decriminalize and legalize street vending. However, though the regulations are being passed by legislators, there are still many issues to be resolved, such as the extent of neighborhood control over local vendors, the costs of permits, and the staff to enforce the regulations (Taylor-Hochberg June 26, 2017).

Angeles.¹⁵⁶ Instead, many Peruvians had opted for home-based informal food businesses. Some elements of these informal business activities, however, did not differ much from those of street vendors of food, although most were operated in very different and less visible spaces. The food was primarily prepared in their private residences. This includes take-away ventures, catering businesses, semi-restaurants, semi-markets and food delivery businesses. Yet, transactions often happened outside the private sphere as they catered at parties or weddings, delivered food to private domiciles, to a variety of work places, and to Peruvian restaurants, or they rented a food stand at events in the Peruvian community and beyond. However, in some cases, clients came by the private residence to pick up their orders, and some business owners had literally created restaurants or markets within the private realm, into which they invited clients who came to purchase goods from the country of origin or to sit down to enjoy a Peruvian meal while watching TV and chatting about their day. An important body of scholarly work has concentrated on the street vending sector. Home-based vending, however, is an overlooked—though common—economic activity, particularly among marginalized women (Valdez, Dean, and Sharkey 2012).¹⁵⁷

When so many Latinxs engage in street vending of food in the area, why do Peruvian women choose to run their informal businesses within the confines of the private sphere and in less visible spaces? Providing an answer goes beyond the scope of this study, but explanations could be found in demographic disparities between Peruvians and the dominating Latinx groups in the area. Peruvian women who enjoyed a more privileged socioeconomic status in Peru, might be reluctant to engage in street vending, a stigmatized sector both in Peru and in the United States. The fact that potential Peruvian clients are not concentrated in specific Peruvian-dominated neighborhoods may also shape this pattern. Moreover, the risk of health inspections and

¹⁵⁶ This might be surprising since food carts are found on most corners in Peruvian cities. Street vending has often been considered a cultural tradition that immigrants bring with them from their country of origin. However, sociologist Emir Estrada (2019) demonstrates that street vending is much more than a cultural legacy that immigrants draw on when facing structural labor market constraints in the receiving society. She argues that structural and cultural factors intersect in specific settings, and mediate Latinx immigrants' entry into these informal sector jobs. The Peruvian women's experiences lend evidence to such argument, since only some of them had engaged in similar activities in Peru. Rather than a cultural inheritance from the country of origin, informal sector culinary businesses emerged as "cultural economic innovations" (Estrada 2019, 63) prompted by a variety of factors, among them the complex context of reception many of these Peruvian women encountered in Southern California.

¹⁵⁷ Whereas Valdez, Dean and Sharkey claim that home-based vending is an economic activity that is practiced almost exclusively by women, I find that several Peruvian men also engage in such business practices. The majority of the Peruvian home-based vendors, however, were indeed women.

police raids adds to this, and has particularly affected undocumented Peruvian immigrants who fear deportation.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, some of the women in this study sold food on the street in an initial phase, but negative experiences with the police had prompted them to withdraw from these spaces and to operate their informal ventures in less visible manners. Victoria was one of them: “Earlier we used to sell at *la placita* (...) we were *ambulantes* [peddlers], and the police chased you, they do not let you sell. (...) At times I have taken a lot of risks (...), they practically arrested me in one of these... they wanted to handcuff me for selling, a terrible thing.”¹⁵⁹ When we were introduced in 2017, her venture was confined to the private residence, as well as to private events and semi-private venues where she offered her catering services. The demand for Peruvian food allowed these women to seek out alternative spaces in which they could engage informally. Albeit far from all, many of the informal business owners had access to apartments and houses that were private and large enough to serve as venues for business activities. Moving the business into the domestic realm allowed them to run informal businesses without being identified with the stigmatized street vending sector and the racialized and classed dimensions of such activities. In Chapter 6, I discuss how Peruvian women who are informal culinary entrepreneurs distance themselves from the negative stereotypes linked to Latinx street vending, and thus also from popular perceptions of informality and illegality.

Contrary to common beliefs, Gold (2019, 25) notes that the informal economy is characterized by a dynamic and economically significant sector, and that marginalized people, such as undocumented immigrants, are often highly entrepreneurial. Given that informal entrepreneurship is often the only way for disadvantaged people to survive, informal businesses may provide great social and economic benefits to the larger society, he states. However, while scholars often take for granted the relationship between marginalization, undocumented immigration status and informal economic

¹⁵⁸ While deportation rates elevated during the Obama era, earning the former president the entitlement of “deporter in chief” (Chisthi, Pierce, and Bolter 2017), unpredictable US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids have proliferated and become commonplace under the Trump administration’s zero tolerance policies, targeting not only those convicted of serious crimes and recent border crossers which had been the priority under President Obama, but all irregular immigrants regardless of how many years or decades they and their families had spent in the country.

¹⁵⁹ “Vendíamos antes en la placita (...) éramos ambulantes, que la policía te correteaba, no te deja vender. (...) A veces yo me he arriesgado mucho (...) a mí prácticamente me arrestaron en una de esas... querían esposarme por estar vendiendo, una cosa terrible.”

activity, this study demonstrates a more complex picture of an informal Peruvian culinary sector made up by a diverse group of Peruvian immigrants. Peruvians across socioeconomic class membership and with a variety of legal statuses open informal culinary ventures. Whereas some Peruvian women opt for informal self-employment in precarious contexts as a buffer and a means of survival, informal business ownership is also an alternative pathway for women who lead middle-class lives and whose life-styles and living environments are far from the precarity often associated with informality. Hence, this study lends support to a recent line of scholarship that has highlighted that informal business activities are performed by a variety of actors.¹⁶⁰ I further complicate the picture, however, by demonstrating that undocumented immigrants also open formal businesses.

Formal and informal ventures are often studied separately. By focusing on a range of different businesses within one sector—the culinary—I am able to capture the complex interplay and often blurred lines that exist between formality and informality. Four Peruvian women with American citizenship and middle-class statuses (Carolina, Veronica, Vanessa, and Indira) had opted for a business in the informal sector, and six had managed to open formal businesses despite their undocumented status (Elisa, Gerthy, Gloria, Juliana, Lorena and Jackeline). Moreover, among the women who used to run informal businesses, seven managed over time to convert these into formal ventures (Elisa, Gerthy, Gloria, Lorena, Jackeline, Mayra and Juliana). These Peruvian women’s stories move beyond the formal/professional and informal/survivalist dichotomy, and contest the stereotypes of businesses in the informal economy as small enterprises related to marginalized workers, and low wages. In the following, I examine these intersecting dynamics.

¹⁶⁰ Gold (2019) observes that while undocumented immigrants with low human capital attainment are highly active in the informal economy, people with legal immigration status as well as high levels of human and financial capital are also involved in this sector. In the same vein, entrepreneurship scholar Velan Ramadani and his colleagues claim that “[t]he informal economy provides individuals with business opportunities regardless of immigration status or educational qualifications” (2019, 1).

Undocumented Status, Formal Entrepreneurship

Social capital¹⁶¹ emerged as a fundamental resource for undocumented Peruvian immigrants who had opened formal businesses, and often intersected with access to class resources in shaping processes of formalization. As mentioned, some of these undocumented immigrants came from middle-class backgrounds in Peru. In the United States, however, unauthorized immigration status sometimes led to downward social mobility. The social bonds they still maintained with extended family members often provided them with access to both legal resources and financial capital.

Scholars have highlighted the value and benefits of weak ties¹⁶² and bridging social capital in order to create viable enterprises and business growth (e.g. Zhou 2004, 1059). The findings in this study emphasize, however, the important role strong ties and bonding social capital play when undocumented immigrants establish businesses in the formal economy. The women who had managed to open formal businesses despite irregular migration status all drew on legal resources in their mixed-status extended family network, either via a parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter/son or brother. As presented in the beginning of this chapter, Elisa and Carlos acquired both legal and financial resources through Carlos' mother, who had enjoyed middle-class status in Lima which she maintained as she migrated to the United States and married an American citizen. When her husband died, he left her with their co-owned house, which offered her the possibility to lend her son and daughter-in-law a considerable sum of money to get their restaurant business started. She also lent her name and signature for all formal paperwork. "So, my mother-in-law gave us the money. This restaurant is in her name, because we are undocumented. We have the license for liquor since she is a

¹⁶¹ Scholars such as social scientist Robert Putnam and sociologists James S. Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu have contributed to develop the concept of social capital, as it is employed today (Leonard 2016). Putnam refers to social capital as "connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (2000, 19). From a sociological point of view, however, Coleman and Bourdieu see social capital as a resource that individuals can draw upon. Bourdieu states that social capital is "convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital" (2002, 281), a view reflected in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. Whereas social capital has mainly been considered in positive terms, Portes and Landolt point to how it may also constrain an individual's actions and choices (Portes and Landolt 1996; cited in Leonard 2016, 929). As a response, Putnam draws a distinction between bonding (exclusive) social capital formed within homogenous groups and promoted by tight bonds, trust and solidarity, on the one hand, and bridging (inclusive) social capital, on the other, referring to the kind of bonds that can "pave the way for acquiring other forms of capital such as financial or human capital" (Leonard 2016). Bridging social capital is hence seen as the best way for "getting ahead", whereas bonding social capital is good for "getting by" (Putnam 2000, 23).

¹⁶² Studying network structures, sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973) distinguishes between strong (intimate, close-knit) and weak (distant social relationships) ties. He emphasizes the cohesive power of weak ties, as they facilitate the linkage of micro and macro levels within network structures, and hence produce important opportunities for individuals.

citizen. Everything is in her name. But we are the owners, she does not manage anything here.”¹⁶³

Other Peruvian women shared similar stories. In Peru, Gerthy ran her own beauty parlor. She came to the United States to search for better options for her daughter who had special needs, and who did not receive the assistance she needed to succeed in the Peruvian education system. Since her brother was long settled in the United States, Gerthy and her family obtained tourist visas, which they overstayed. They sold their house and the business in Peru, and once in the United States, Gerthy started to prepare food which she sold to workers and clients at her brother’s legal practice. After experiencing a public health inspection, however, she learned that it was illegal to sell food without a license in Los Angeles. Her brother, a lawyer and an American citizen, helped her start a formal business, providing her with both financial and legal capital. After overcoming initial obstacles and learning to navigate the complicated regulations within the food sector, she decided to dedicate her business to cake and pastries. She participated in a variety of expositions where she promoted her business and improved her products. It was, however, through the possibility of studying patisserie and baking at a leading culinary art school that she obtained the necessary licenses to be able to deliver her products at events celebrated at venues outside people’s private homes, such as hotels and other establishments. Despite lack of English fluency, she managed to pass her studies thanks to a Spanish speaking fellow student who took on the task of translating; to her children who helped her prepare homework and presentations; and to the school’s chef who saw her talent and gave her a chance despite language barriers.

I was contacted by Gerthy’s husband, who proudly told me about his wife’s business venture, which he presented as an impressive accomplishment. We agreed that I would stop by the business to be able to talk to both of them. I parked my car outside the small shopping center where Gerthy rented a space for her business. The store as well as the delivery car parked outside were decorated with flamboyant colors with images and models of her creative culinary art work. Our conversation was constantly interrupted by costumers entering the store to pick up a cake for a birthday or

¹⁶³ “Así que mi suegra nos trajo la plata. Este restaurante está a nombre de ella, porque somos indocumentados. Tenemos la licencia de licor como ella es ciudadana. Todo está a nombre de ella. Pero nosotros somos los dueños, ella no maneja nada acá.”

quinceañera party,¹⁶⁴ or stopping by to leave an order. Her customer base had exceeded the Peruvian and Latinx population, and she had even begun to transport some pastries on a weekly basis to a wholesaler in Nevada. The business had ten employees including herself, her husband, Jorge, her three children, as well as five non-family employees. Gerthy and Jorge worked long hours seven days a week, but both agreed that their business had turned into a successful venture. While access to legal and class resources within the family had facilitated entry into formal business ownership, Gerthy admitted to the limitations of their undocumented immigration status.

Look, this business was first my brother's, because I did not have [the financial] capital for this. He opened it with the objective that I work here. (...) And my brother sometimes... I called him: "[Ramón], there is no more flour left." And he had to go and buy, because it was his business. He had to leave [the office], he had to come with the products. He couldn't take it.

And why didn't you do it?

Because the account was in his name.¹⁶⁵

After a while, her brother wanted to give up the whole business, but she asked him to transfer it to her, and promised to make a down payment. Jorge's ITIN number made the transfer possible. Finally, they could control most business transactions, without her brother's interference.

Hence, for undocumented immigrants to be able to open formal businesses, access to legal status through social networks was crucial.¹⁶⁶ Whereas previous studies have illustrated how children provide legal resources¹⁶⁷ and function as legal brokers¹⁶⁸ to protect their immigrant parents from law enforcement and to inform their

¹⁶⁴ *Quinceañera* is an important Latin American tradition which often implies a big celebration in order to mark the transition to adulthood for girls as they turn fifteen.

¹⁶⁵ Mira, este negocio primero fue de mis hermanos, porque yo no tenía el capital para esto. Ellos lo pusieron con la finalidad de que yo trabajara aquí. (...) Y mi hermano a veces... Le llamaba: "[Ramón], se acabó la harina." Y ellos tenían que ir a comprar porque de ellos era el negocio. Tenía que dejar allá [la oficina], tenía que venir con los productos. No aguantó.

¿Y porque no lo hacían ustedes?

Porque la cuenta estaba en nombre de ellos [For privacy reasons, I have changed a few details in this quote].

¹⁶⁶ Similarly, in a study about Mexican gardeners, sociologists Hernán Ramírez and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2009) found that legal status was an important factor enabling occupational mobility within such businesses, which they refer to as hybrid forms of entrepreneurship.

¹⁶⁷ In a study of Latinx children who assist their parents in their street vending businesses, sociologist Emir Estrada (2019, 72) found that in mixed-status families the children's legal status often served as an asset in the parents' businesses, since it protected the family against the police.

¹⁶⁸ Sociologist Vanessa Delgado (2020) found that undocumented college students often shared legal resources with their parents in terms of providing them with legal advice and information that could improve their legal situation. She terms this process legal brokering.

undocumented immigrant parents about their rights, the Peruvian women's experiences demonstrate that not only children, but also extended family members serve as legal brokers. They also show that that legal brokering facilitates formal business ownership for immigrants with an unauthorized immigration status. Whereas undocumented Peruvian immigrants were able to run formal businesses due to legal brokering, however, their entrepreneurial actions were often constrained, since all legal paper work had to be signed by the "real" owner. Moreover, legal status intersected with class status in shaping the ways in which undocumented immigrants could make use of legal resources found within extended mixed-status family networks.

From Informal to Formal Business Ownership

Whereas previous employment in Peruvian restaurants and markets offered training possibilities, informal business ventures also provided Peruvian women with important entrepreneurial and also financial capital that they drew on in order to convert their businesses into formal ventures. Gloria started out informally, preparing food at home which she delivered to a range of offices. When I met her in 2018, she had converted her informal business into a formal restaurant six months earlier, and it was already popular. Her son, an American citizen, provided her name to all the paperwork, and her brother, also an American citizen, lent her the additional money she needed in order to finance her business. Lorena shared a similar story. Having entered the United States on a tourist visa, together with her husband, Emilio, and their children, as many other Peruvians, they overstayed their visas and continued living as undocumented immigrants. Lorena was willing to take whatever job that could provide her with money to add to Emilio's financially unsuccessful contracting business. The jobs she was hired to do, however, were according to her "*horrible[s]*" and provided her with a meagre income. As a consequence, they had to leave the apartment they were renting, and went to live with a nephew. There she met some Peruvian friends who encouraged her to prepare Peruvian food and sell it at their Saturday football practices. Soon her clients urged her to open her house and cook for them also on Sundays. Her nephew was not very pleased by the idea, so she decided to rent a place with a spare room which she furnished with dining tables where the customers could sit comfortably as in a

restaurant. She also bought a second-hand industrial oven. Emilio helped her out, and little by little she expanded her business, opening her home-based semi-restaurant for customers Friday through Monday. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday she prepared *menú*¹⁶⁹ and delivered the food at a variety of firms in the neighborhood.

Since her apartment was rented, however, she operated her business with constant fear of negative reactions from the landlord. Some days the driveway was packed with customers' cars. To avoid living in fear, her son-in-law helped Lorena find a house that she could buy. Through her informal venture, she had managed to save up \$ 8,000 which she used for down-payment on the house. Her daughter, who had naturalized through marriage, facilitated access to a mortgage to cover the rest of the expenses. Lorena finally managed to open a formal brick and mortar restaurant business by taking out equity on her house and split the cost with her son-in-law who entered as partner. Later, he decided to opt out, and she managed to collect money here and there and to buy his part of the business which she, when I met her in 2018, was running together with Emilio, who had closed his own failed business. Finally, they managed to legalize their immigration status through their daughter, but during two years Lorena ran her formal business as an undocumented immigrant. These and also other Peruvian women's stories serve as examples of how informal entrepreneurship may function as a stepping stone into formal business ownership. It may be a source for acquiring experience within the sector, creating a customer base, developing entrepreneurial as well as financial capital that can be pooled with other resources found within co-ethnic or family networks.

Legal Immigration Status, American Citizenship and Informal Business Ownership

The examples above demonstrate the agency of Peruvian immigrant women, including those with precarious legal statuses and negative experiences in the regular labor market, and how they find ways of navigating structural and legal barriers in order to open formal and informal culinary businesses. However, some Peruvian women had opened

¹⁶⁹ In Peru, many restaurants offer a daily *menú* in addition to *la carta* (which is the regular menu from which customers can select the dish of their choice). The *menú* may differ from day to day, but contains normally a soup, an appetizer, a main course and dessert. It is usually cheaper than the selections in *la carta*, since the restaurant prepares that specific selection in large quantities.

informal ventures despite enjoying the privilege of legal immigration status and a middle-class position. When asked why, they pointed to gendered factors as well as to moments of crisis in the lives of their families.

These informal Peruvian business owners' trajectories resonate with the experiences of other Latinx entrepreneurs in the area. Sociologists Jody Vallejo and Stephanie Canizales (2016) interviewed Latinx professionals who had opened formal white-collar businesses in Los Angeles and found that family dissolution or macro-structural circumstances such as financial recession had motivated these professional Latinx women to take up self-employment. Unlike the Latinx business owners in Vallejo and Canizales' study, however, these Peruvian women had opted for self-employment in the informal economy. Moreover, whereas the aforementioned authors claim that such crises leave professional Latinxs with "no other choice" than self-employment, Peruvian women did not only start their own informal businesses because these moments of crisis left them with no other choice in order to survive, but rather as a means to be able to uphold a certain standard of living, echoing the motivations of formal entrepreneurs as discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

When her husband left her with four children, their seven-bedroom house and a mortgage, Carolina did not want to sell the house. Her job in real estate as well as another job in logistics allowed her to keep it. A few times, she also organized parties where she sold food, but it was not until the real estate market started to fall that she found the need to draw on her cooking skills for business purposes.

I worked in real estate. It went really well. My husband also earned quite well. We were a financially well-off family... not good, not bad. Middle class, *de clase media*, right. So, that's how I started. As time passed, my children were growing. I divorced after eighteen years of marriage. The real estate... Wall Street went down. "Now, what do I do?" I started to work in other things. Still not with food, because that was not in my head. I said: "I cook delicious food for my children". My friends came to the house, and they told me: "Your food is so delicious!" (...) My children grew, they started to work. They still lived with me. I prepared the dinner, made them lunch boxes for work. So, when they heated up their food the smell emerged, it's quite strong. [People] said: "It smells so good! What is it?" And they said: "My mother made this thing—*seco, aji de gallina, tallarin verde*".¹⁷⁰ They tasted and said: "¿Do you think that your

¹⁷⁰ *Seco* refers to *seco de cordero*, a Peruvian lamb stew based on cilantro often served with beans, rice, and *salsa criolla*. *Aji de gallina* is a typical Peruvian creamy hen/chicken stew made with *aji amarillo*, and *tallarin verde* refers to a spaghetti dish made with a spinach and basil pesto sauce and served with either steak or fried chicken.

mother could prepare something for me?” That’s how I started with two meals, four, eight meals, fifteen meals, twenty meals. I work alone, and I delivered it to their work place.¹⁷¹

At the time of our encounter, in 2018, her informal business had become well established. For several years, Carolina had daily been delivering lunch to workers at office buildings where her children worked. On Saturdays she also used to cook for a Latinx football team in the neighborhood. Her informal catering business could not compensate for the income loss the household experienced through divorce and the financial recession. However, it became one of the sources of income that she relied on and mitigated the effects of income loss. The food business had played a particularly important role in the sense that it had given her extra money for her own luxuries.

Veronica shared a similar story with me. I visited her in the family’s two-story house on a typical suburban street in Orange County where carefully manicured gardens and neatly trimmed lawns encircled spacious houses painted in a variety of terracotta shades. The *alfajor*-pastries¹⁷² she offered me were neatly formed into flower shapes and melted in my mouth as I listened to her story. Gendered dynamics linked to parenthood had prompted Veronica to search for flexibility in her work schedule to be able to assist her son with special needs and to alleviate the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis. She had lived a comfortable life in Peru where she worked as a secretary, but had decided to join her sister in the United States when the economic situation turned harsh at the end of the ‘70s. After living as an undocumented immigrant for a while, she had managed to obtain a green card and had started work in an insurance company. However, when her son was born with special needs, she had quit her job and dedicated her life to take care of her three children. Although her husband, who immigrated to the United States from China, held a well-paid job, it had been difficult to maintain their

¹⁷¹ “Trabajaba en real estate. Me iba muy bien. Mi esposo ganaba también bastante bien. Éramos una familia económicamente, no bien, no mal. *Middle-class*, de clase media, no. *So*, así empecé. Con los años, mis hijos fueron creciendo. Me divorcié después de dieciocho años de estar casada. El *real estate*, Wall Street, se vino abajo. ‘¿Ahora que hago?’ Comencé a trabajar en otras cosas. Aún no lo de la comida, porque no estaba en mi cabeza. Yo decía: ‘Yo cocino rico para mis hijos’. Mis amigas iban a la casa, y me decían: ‘¡Que rica tu comida!’ (...) Mis hijos crecieron, comenzaron a trabajar. Seguían viviendo conmigo. Yo preparaba la cena, les hacía sus táperes para el trabajo. Entonces, cuando ellos hacían calentar su comida el olor sale, es muy fuerte. Decían: ‘¡que rico huele! ¿Qué es?’ Ellos decían: ‘Mi mamá hizo esta cosa—*seco, allí de gallina, tallarin verde*’. Probaron y decían: ‘¿Tú crees que tu mamá pueda preparar algo para mi?’ Así empecé con dos platos, cuatro, ocho platos, quince platos, veinte platos. Yo trabajo sola, y llevaba al trabajo de ellos.”

¹⁷² Alfajores are cookies filled with *manjar blanco*—a creamy, sweet pastry filling, common in a range of Latin American countries (in other countries often called *dulce de leche*).

life-style with only one income. Because of her son's situation, having to go in and out of hospitals, she had found the job flexibility she needed helping out in a small interior design store nearby where she used to work some hours a day while her children attended school and later college. However, when the Great Recession affected her husband's job, Veronica had established a home-based informal pastry business to contribute to the family economy. This had prevented them from having to take out equity on their house to make the wheels go around. She had never imagined herself working with food, but soon she learned to love it and aspired to formalize and expand the business in the future.

Veronica and Carolina's stories and lives are echoed in the narratives of other Peruvian women in this study, but diverge from the hardships documented in the literature on street vending, and can hardly be classified as survivalist entrepreneurship. These women, some of them American citizens, others lawful permanent residents, capitalize on their food and pastry making skills and establish informal culinary ventures as a way to uphold a certain life-style for themselves and their families in moments of crisis and to overcome challenges such as divorce, children's health issues and macro-economic volatility. They bear pride in their skills and businesses, operating informally, but within the private sphere shaped by middle-class material features and life-styles. In chapter seven, I discuss how space as well as class attributes mediate experiences of informal business ownership.

Formality in the Informal

Some informal business owners went to great extents to give their business a more formal appearance. During my time in the field, I assisted Victoria in her business and helped her and her husband to sell food at a variety of venues. I noticed that her informal food business appeared formal in many ways. Victoria had her own business card carrying the logo of her catering business, which appeared on the aprons of her employees, as well as on all marketing campaigns in social media and in Peruvian newspapers. In the latter, Victoria's ads materialized indistinguishable among other ads promoting the variety of formal Peruvian businesses that fill the pages of these newspapers and provide them with the income needed to be able to publish news about

the Peruvian community and about the current political, cultural and social situation in Peru. Victoria was preoccupied with reporting her taxes, and at times her business was also to be found within the confines of formal businesses, such as Peruvian restaurants where she lent her work to charitable events organized by the restaurant. On a few occasions, she had also been invited to have a pop-up restaurant in a beer-tasting business in her neighborhood. None of the Peruvian women's informal businesses were registered according to local regulations, and they failed to comply with other requirements to formality within the culinary sector such as regular health inspections etc. Tax payment, however, was an element that provided Victoria and other informal business owners with a foot inside of the formal economy. Tax paying is indeed a key aspect of formality, and while some of the women did not report their earnings to the IRS,¹⁷³ many of them did, also undocumented informal entrepreneurs.¹⁷⁴

Some home-based businesses supplied formal Peruvian restaurants with certain goods, particularly *tamales* and *alfajores*. Diana had established a home-based business in which she confectioned these products. Some were sold to customers who stopped by the home-based semi-restaurant she was running together with her husband, Marco, while the rest were delivered to a variety of Peruvian restaurants in the area, where they were offered to customers as an integrated part of the menu. Informal culinary entrepreneurs, like Diana, become an important part of the supply chain within the coethnic culinary market, and contribute to reducing costs for formal Peruvian culinary businesses, creating a codependence between informal and formal ventures. Sociologist Jenifer Lee also found that informal and formal businesses often develop complementary relations (Lee 2002; cited in Gold 2019, 18). Gold (2019, 18) notes that while sometimes such collaborations may be spontaneous and lack an actual agreement between formal and informal entrepreneurs, these arrangements may also be mutually beneficial. To Diana, the cooperation with formal Peruvian restaurants provided her

¹⁷³ Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is the US federal service for revenue and “administers and enforces U.S. federal tax laws” (U.S. Government Services and Information n.d.).

¹⁷⁴ In the US, undocumented immigrants contribute with fees and taxes through the use of an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN). Many undocumented immigrants pay their taxes in order to be considered eligible for obtaining legal status or citizenship in the future, while others simply do it to feel like a good citizen (Associated Press 2008, April 10). As such, numerous undocumented immigrants are paying for benefits they will never collect. In fact, the U.S. Social Security Administration estimated that unauthorized workers contributed an annual amount of \$ 13 billion in payroll taxes, while only collecting \$1 billion in benefit payments (Goss et al. April 2013).

with a more stable and secure market, while the restaurants could add *tamales* and *alfajores* to their menu, which are products that would have been time consuming to produce in the restaurant kitchen.

Studies tend to either focus on informal survivalist entrepreneurship or on businesses ownership in the formal economy. Hence, they often fail to capture how the line between formality and informality is all but rigid. Since the 1980s, however, a line of scholarship has drawn our attention to the variety of interconnections that exist between these two sectors. Neo-Marxist analyses have shed light on how the informal economy provides a subsidy to the formal economy, by for example supplying inputs to core capitalist firms, or by providing cheap goods and services to the working class, which again reduces pressures for higher wages (Wilson 2010, 342).¹⁷⁵ The Peruvian women's stories add to this body of scholarship by demonstrating how informal and formal culinary businesses benefit from each other in a variety of ways. And apart from the various relationships developed between particular formal and informal business owners, both of these sectors contribute to shaping the Peruvian culinary scene, as well as to extending people's knowledge and experience with Peruvian food, and as such, together they also expand the demand for Peruvian cuisine among a variety of customers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and across neighborhoods.

Whether protecting undocumented immigrants from perils lurking in the regular labor market, providing flexibility and permitting women to juggle domestic responsibilities with an income, or allowing middle-class Peruvians to maintain a certain life-style during moments of crisis, to many Peruvian women (and some men) establishing an informal culinary business had been an important strategy of economic incorporation in the receiving society. However, informal business ownership did not compensate for the benefits that often accompany employment in the formal sector, such as medical, disability, or unemployment insurance. The risk of being denounced for illegally operating a business, was also a constant worry, particularly for undocumented immigrants who feared confrontations with law enforcement. Social media platforms,

¹⁷⁵ Sociologist Saskia Sassen (1988), for example, has pointed to how informal homeworking formed part of formal sweatshops in Los Angeles and New York. Others have highlighted the important ways in which informal vendors form part of larger value chains, and hence contribute to the viability of a variety of formal businesses (e.g. Stoller 2002, 57-58, 60; cited in Wilson 2010, 346).

particularly Facebook groups created for Peruvians in certain neighborhoods and other groups tied to cultural organizations, facilitated these informal businesses' marketing strategies. But by posting their menu and events on such pages, they took a risk. Since they had heard about informal home-based vendors who had been denounced and hence had received a visit from the health department, a few had moved to more private channels, such as WhatsApp groups or private text messages. Others used these online channels frequently to market their products. Although many informal entrepreneurs considered their business a successful venture which provided them with better opportunities than what the regular labor market could offer, the possibility for informal ventures to formalize their business activities could potentially enhance business operations and provide them with more benefits. To many, however, the costs were too high. As Diana's husband, Marco, expressed: "To me, it is not profitable, I am better off here in my home".¹⁷⁶

While previously perceived as "deviant, socially destructive and of limited economic impact" and hence rejected by economists and policy makers on moral grounds, scholars and bureaucrats have increasingly acknowledged the ways in which informal ethnic entrepreneurship may positively impact society and its significant effects on the global economy (Gold 2019, 12). Many large scale and cutting-edge industries would not have functioned without the essential tasks performed by these informal and often stigmatized ventures. However, such businesses still suffer under a less favorable legal context and lack of institutional support. The much-needed recognition of street-vendors in Los Angeles constitutes an important advancement in order to acknowledge the economic contributions of undocumented immigrants and informal entrepreneurs. While street-vending is a very public matter, however, these political achievements may obscure the entrepreneurial struggles that women and men exercise within the confines of the private home. While developing measures for how to regulate street vending, it is important to have in mind that similar practices are also exercised off the streets. To facilitate the operation and regularization of such ventures is hence imperative. There are some measures in place in California through the Homemade Foods Operations Act from 2018 (California Legislative Information n.d.).

¹⁷⁶ "Para mí no es rentable, mejor estoy acá en la casa".

However, since it is up to county and city environmental health departments to choose whether or not they want to conduct inspections and issue permits, the law is still not effective and is far from perfect. It is also one of the few of its kind in the country (Kauffman Januar 2, 2019). The Peruvian women's stories further highlight the need for scholars and policymakers to avoid stereotypes when addressing the issues concerning this sector, since informal entrepreneurial activities often interact with the operation of formal businesses, and contribute to shaping the markets and sectors in which formal businesses operate. Informal entrepreneurship is also practiced by a range of actors from different socioeconomic backgrounds and may be an important gateway into formal business ownership. Indeed, the majority of the women who operated informal culinary ventures dreamed of one day opening their own businesses in the formal economy. Among other obstacles such as undocumented immigration status and domestic responsibilities, lack of financial capital was the main impediment to achieving such dreams.

Access to Financial Capital

One of the obvious and critical barriers to starting a business is access to financial capital (Bates and Robb 2013; Valdez 2011; Vallejo and Canizales 2016). The Peruvian women who own formal culinary ventures report having invested about \$50,000 or more in order to get their businesses up and running. The high amount of start-up capital required to open such formal culinary businesses demonstrates the level of entrepreneurship in which many of the Peruvian women in this study engage. How they have accumulated such economic resources is hence an important inquiry, particularly since scholars suggest that Latinxs are less likely than other groups to obtain business loans due to lower levels of wealth and restricted access to banks (Vallejo and Canizales 2016, 1640).¹⁷⁷ Studies have shown, for example, that Chinese and Koreans, who tend to migrate with higher levels of human capital, access start-up capital through personal

¹⁷⁷ Valdez (2011, 66) also points to lower-class Latinxs' lack of access to business loans from national banks, whereas economists Robert Fairlie and Christopher Woodruff (2010) highlight how low levels of wealth and legal immigration status limits access to credit for Mexicans in the United States, referring to class status and to the vulnerable position of the large undocumented Mexican population. On the other hand of the spectrum, however, Portes illustrates how Cuban entrepreneurs in Miami obtained loans from smaller minority-owned banks based on their business reputation and credit history in Cuba (1987, 363).

savings or rotating credit associations in their family or ethnic networks (Light and Gold 2000). Other scholars have highlighted how access to financial capital is gendered. Valdez (2011, 73-74) found that among Latinx restaurant owners in Houston women had fewer opportunities to accumulate the market capital resources needed to start a business and to produce business growth. In the same vein, sociologist María Verdaguer (2009, 167) who studied Peruvian and Salvadoran entrepreneurs in the Greater Washington metropolitan area, found that across the two groups men had access to more diversified sources for start-up capital, including commercial loans, while women relied more on social capital through loans from family and coethnics, particularly from other women. Similarly, Vallejo and Canizales' study among Latinx professionals observed that access to financial capital was shaped by intersecting social positions related to class, gender and ethnicity, which often determined personal wealth and resources, such as access to financial institutions and family and co-ethnic networks through which such resources could be accessed (2016, 1640, 1649). Finally, Michael Pisano and associates found that among Latinx entrepreneurs in Southern Texas “[f]emale-owned businesses began with significantly smaller start-up resources; 64.2% began with \$1,000 or less as compared to 36.4% for men” (2017, 304). This is fifty times less than the average start-up capital that Peruvian formal female business owners reported, but similar to the amount reported by most informal entrepreneurs among whom the majority also established their businesses with less than \$ 1,000.

The Peruvian women financed their businesses in a variety of ways, which reflects the divergent level of entrepreneurship across this group of women, ranging from survivalist informal entrepreneurship to financially successful business ventures in the formal sector. Their narratives reveal three salient aspects: access to financial capital through social networks, particularly linked to male and/or American citizen family members; access to middle-class resources such as higher education, home ownership or savings; and savings from previous business projects—often informal, as well as from previous employment—often in coethnic businesses or from professional white-collar jobs, all of these highlighting the intersectional aspect of capital accumulation.

Pilar's story corroborates that of other Peruvian women in this study and lends support to sociologist Dolores Trevizo and labor economist Mary Lopez (2018, 16) who claim that firm-level success improves with marriage, which suggests that a marital partner can offer additional financial and labor resources. I visited Pilar in her spacious suburban house where she lived with her husband, Henry, her three children and the family Labrador. The view from the kitchen toward the neatly designed garden surrounding the big swimming pool was just as upscale as the tranquil neighborhood they resided in. As the former owner of multiple Peruvian restaurants located in affluent suburban areas outside of Los Angeles, she willingly shared the story of her entrepreneurial adventure. Married to a non-Peruvian and American born Latinx entrepreneur, Pilar was able to draw on her husband's business (in which she was co-owner, despite referring to it as his business) in terms of start-up capital, but also in times of low revenue returns. The privilege of her husbands' business provided her with financial capital that she could invest in the restaurants, as well as with what Vallejo and Canizales (2016, 1648) call "hidden financial capital".¹⁷⁸ Since Henry's business covered family and housing costs, Pilar was able to reinvest the profits from the restaurants into the business without being concerned with family expenses.

The fact that the majority of the Peruvian women in this study relied on economic assistance from family members to finance their businesses supports Vallejo and Canizales' findings. The women who reported having access to commercial loans either ran their businesses together with a male family member/friend and/or the male family member/friend provided part of, or in some cases a larger share of the financial capital. However, and contrary to Verdaguer's (2009) findings among Peruvians and Salvadorans in the Greater Washington Metropolitan area, Peruvian women in Southern California relied on loans and financial support from both male and female family members. In fact, most reported financial support from male family members like husbands, brothers or sons-in-law. The high demand for Peruvian food, combined with its elevated status, seem to have encouraged men to invest in female family members or coethnics' culinary skills. Recall Jackeline's story from Chapter 2, who drew on her

¹⁷⁸ Vallejo and Canizales's (2016, 1648) study on Latinx professionals in Los Angeles illustrates how married women profit on what they call 'hidden financial capital' through significant others, which increases access to market capital, reflecting patriarchal structures of the labor market, in which professional men enjoy greater earning power.

skills in the kitchen to bargain with a male friend who invested money in the restaurant and allowed her to be his partner. Similarly, Sara, another restaurant owner, capitalized on her knowledge about Peruvian food and experience from working in a Peruvian-owned restaurant. She partnered with a non-Peruvian Latinx male friend who provided the financial capital needed in order for them to take over the restaurant where Sara had been working. Elisa's story adds to this. She told me that she was planning to up-size her pastry business by establishing a small-scale factory. "It is my brother who will provide the money, and I will provide the knowledge and everything".¹⁷⁹ Hence, as Peruvian cuisine has gained momentum, culinary skills have become an asset used for obtaining financial capital, also through male networks.

Class resources were often mediated by social networks. Women, who came from middle-class backgrounds, but who had experienced downward social mobility in the receiving society—often due to undocumented immigration status—, and women who themselves or whose children had married middle-class American citizens seemed to have greater access than others to financial resources across class-segments. Elisa's story above serves as an example of downward social mobility through migration, since unauthorized immigration status had pushed the family into a precarious economic situation in the receiving society, prompting them to take on jobs associated with a lower class position. Despite forming part of the Californian working class, however, their extended family network still provided them with access to middle-class resources. Although migration may change an individual's socioeconomic status, it does not necessarily erase existing social network ties. As such, and consistent with resource-based theory (Light 1984; Light and Bonacich 1988; Light and Gold 2000), Peruvian migrants who experience a disadvantaged position due to lack of English language competence, failure to transfer educational attainment and skills, as well as undocumented immigration status, may capitalize on class-resources and bonding social capital in cross-class coethnic and family networks.

Some women accumulated capital through informal business ownership which they later invested in a formal business. Others reported that they had saved up money while working in other Peruvian restaurants. However, these earnings came short if not

¹⁷⁹ "Mi hermano, es él que va a poner el dinero y yo voy a poner el conocimiento y todo".

combined with other sources of financial capital, often acquired via social networks, primarily in terms of strong ties and bonding social capital, often via a male family member, friend or colleague. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, ethnic entrepreneurship scholars have pointed to the limits of strong network ties or bonding social capital (e.g. Zhou 2004, 1059). This study suggests, however, that the socioeconomically diverse Peruvian migrant population provides an inherent possibility of coethnic cross-class social network ties, offering a wider possibility within networks made up by strong ties than in other ethnic communities with a more homogenous demographic profile and with lower levels of human and class capital attainment. Several Peruvian women formed part of extended families with mixed legal-statuses, and though their own nuclear family had followed a downward economic trajectory in the receiving society, other extended family members had managed to maintain their class status, which offered important cross-class network links within the family and within the ethnic community.

Other women were less dependent on social networks. These were women who had obtained a visa, and had migrated with class- and human capital which helped them land white-collar jobs in the receiving society, through which they accumulated savings which they later drew upon to open a culinary business. Yessica's story is one of the few among the Peruvian women who participated in this study that resembles the rags-to-riches narrative often associated with (ethnic) entrepreneurship. When I met her in 2018, she was running a trendy Peruvian restaurant in one of Los Angeles' touristic areas, also catering to the abounding white-collar businesses in the neighborhood. Unlike many other undocumented Peruvian immigrants who enter the United States on a tourist visa, Yessica had crossed the Mexican-US border without authorization. She shared her border crossing story with ease, explaining that it occurred without further inconveniences, few negative experiences and low financial costs, since she entered the United States before the increased militarization of the border following IRCA, through which she later managed to regularize her immigration status. The initial plan was to live with a cousin, but it soon became clear that she was an unwanted burden. She was left on her own, sleeping on the floor in different houses, often having to steal an apple at a local market to survive the day. She took on unstable low-wage jobs, but managed

at the same time to study to become a legal assistant at a college. Combined with her studies at university level from Peru, this helped her land a job in an American multinational financial services company, which was when her life started to change, and she was able to earn enough to send money home to her family and to accumulate savings that she would later invest in the restaurant. The benefits she obtained through her white-collar job allowed her to maximize her saving possibilities. Yet, not even Yessica's story is solely a story of individual effort and hard work. When her social network broke down, legal immigration status combined with class resources from Peru, such as human capital in form of educational attainments, mediated her upwardly mobile trajectory through business ownership.

In line with the interactive approaches to ethnic entrepreneurship, the Peruvian women's stories demonstrate how individual-, group- and structural-level factors shape their motivations and pathways into self-employment, a trajectory highly influenced by a complex context of reception and opportunity structure. While some Peruvian women experienced blocked mobility in the labor market linked to racialization, illegalization, lack of English language proficiency and of human capital or difficulties of transferring educational credentials and skills in the receiving society, they also capitalized on the increasing demand for Peruvian food. Moreover, the Peruvian women benefitted from family and coethnic networks when establishing culinary businesses. However, by employing an intersectional lens, I have elucidated how opportunities and obstacles, as well as access to and exploitation of resources within social networks are shaped by the entrepreneur's social location within intersecting systems of oppression and privilege. While corroborating recent scholarship (Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011; Vallejo and Canizales 2016) that has argued that the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and class shape Latinx entrepreneurship, the Peruvian women's narratives emphasize the important ways in which legal immigration status intersects with other dimensions of differentiation in mediating their pathways into self-employment as well as their access to financial capital. Their stories further underscore that these women are more than victims of structural constraints, social positions and existing market conditions. Rather, they navigate the opportunity structure and the structural challenges they face, as they interact with the market and create business opportunities by introducing Peruvian food

to a wide audience and educating different segments of the population about Peruvian gastronomy. As such, they also contribute to shaping the opportunity structure.¹⁸⁰

The Status of Working with Food

Although the majority of the Peruvian women in this study had never imagined themselves working with food, many told me that running a Peruvian culinary business filled them with pride, particularly given the status that Peruvian gastronomy had achieved in food discourses in Peru as well as in the United States. The complex connotations associated with food preparation and work in the kitchen, however, impacted how Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs perceived their role in the business.

Pilar held a college degree in nursing, and had been able to practice her profession both in Peru and in the United States. Being a nurse gave her intellectual satisfaction and a certain status. When she opened her first restaurant, however, she had to leave her job in the hospital. Although her primary role was to manage the business, she often had to step in and do the manual work in the kitchen.

One of the most difficult things for me was, when I worked in intensive care, I think I felt, like, a bit intelligent, the type of work that I had, and my relationship to other nurses and doctors. And when you enter the restaurant, which is yours, you have to do everything. First, I didn't even know how to cook, but my stepfather was there, we had someone who helped us. But to save money, I had to do the dishes, I had to help with what was needed. And there were really stressful days, when I had to... I like to keep everything tidy and clean. So, sometimes I was doing the dishes quickly, and I said: "My God, is this why I went to college? To be here? Is it really worth it?"¹⁸¹

To Pilar, culinary business ownership initially felt like stepping down from the status she had previously enjoyed in her profession as a nurse. The way she was able to

¹⁸⁰ Zhou has argued that "[i]nstead of responding to existing host market conditions, ethnic entrepreneurs proactively create new opportunities" (2004, 1050). She highlights the ways in which ethnic entrepreneurs draw on available, and what she defines as "low-skilled" immigrant labor in order to open businesses within industries that have already been outsourced abroad. She refers to the garment industry as an example. She also points to similar practices in relation to work previously performed by family labor, such as gardening, housecleaning, and childcare, today often performed by immigrants.

¹⁸¹ "Una de las cosas mas dificiles para mi fue, cuando yo trabajaba en cuidados intensivos y creo que me sentía como un poco inteligente, el tipo de trabajo que yo tenia, y mi relación con otros enfermeras y doctores. Y cuando entras al restaurante, que es el tuyo, tu tienes que hacer de todo. Primeramente, yo no sabia ni cocinar, pero estaba mi padraastro ahí, teníamos alguien quien nos ayudara. Pero para ahorrar tenia que yo lavar los platos, tenia que ayudar en lo que se podía. Y había días tan estresantes que yo tenia que... Me gusta tener todo en orden y limpio. Entonces a veces estaba lavando rápido los platos, yo decía, "¡Dios mío! ¿Por eso fui al colegio? ¿Para estar aquí? ¿Realmente vale la pena?"

improve the level of her restaurant, and as such break through to a wider White and affluent American clientele, however, made her proud, and changed her attitude about running a culinary business. Unlike Pilar, Elisa and Carlos had started their business out of necessity. Working in a restaurant had felt like a step down from the white-collar job Carlos had held in Peru, and in many ways also a descending track from the economically comfortable life the family had enjoyed in the country of origin. Nevertheless, as time went by, they understood that the restaurant business also gave them certain status that could mitigate the low prestige of their position as undocumented immigrants. For example, one time when they had the chance to rent a bigger house in a more attractive neighborhood, the landlord was quite skeptical at first. But when they told him that they were the owners of a Peruvian restaurant, he became quite interested, providing them with a topic of conversation, and also with his trust.

Other women told me that they felt proud when White Americans entered their business and were excited about Peruvian food, as if these experiences of accept counteracted other experiences of racialization and discrimination linked to being Latinx in Southern California. Similarly, informal entrepreneurs prided themselves with having contributed to enrich the Peruvian-Angelino culinary scene with “authentic” home-made food, capitalizing on the status of Peruvian gastronomy, claiming their right to reap part of the benefits that the Peruvian gastronomic boom had granted so many elite culinary entrepreneurs in Peru and beyond. And whereas Pilar felt that she had lost status when entering the restaurant business, women without educational credentials were able to capitalize on gendered skills acquired in the domestic kitchen in order to enhance their status through culinary business ownership. Conversely, husbands who assisted their wives in their businesses, relayed about gendered discrimination linked to the kitchen as a female domain. Other men found ways of performing masculinity in these spaces while working side by side with their wives, contributing to their common dream of providing their family and children with a better future. Such experiences made me realize that the drivers and outcomes of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship often go beyond aims of financial gains and upward economic mobility, and are intimately related to processes outside of the economy and the market.

The original reasons behind business startup were primarily rooted in the push and pull factors that I have described throughout this chapter, and resonate with previous scholarship that has dedicated impressive quantities of ink to explain why immigrants, ethnic minorities and women start their own businesses, referring to individual-, group- and macrolevel factors. These were the responses the women gave me when I asked “Why did you decide to open a Peruvian culinary business?” By observing the women, talking to them, and paying attention to their life histories, however, these motives seemed to be braided into larger dreams, aspirations and endeavors that all contributed to shape these women’s pathways, practices and experiences with culinary entrepreneurship. The women’s motivations to and aspirations for business ownership also seemed to have changed over time through tenure in the business, and in accordance with other transformations in their own and in their families’ lives, as well as with their experiences as Peruvian immigrants in Southern California. What had often begun as a means of enhancing personal and/or family income, gain financial independence etc., had little by little started to form part of broader processes of home-making and of integration into the society of settlement.

While the existing theoretical approaches to ethnic entrepreneurship serve to explain why these women entered self-employment in the first place, they do not fully capture the complexities of the women’s entrepreneurial motivations for business ownership over time. Other scholars have pointed out that discourses on business success among women in general (Bates 2005), and among Latinx women in particular (Valdez 2011, 2019), are often related to non-pecuniary goals. Economist Timothy Bates (2005), for example, studied the closure of small businesses in the United States and found that significantly more women than men seemed to close down their businesses despite perceiving it as a successful venture. The only existing explanation found in scholarly work at the time was parental expectations and responsibilities. But Bates points out that “women” and “parent” are not synonymous, and call hence for further research to be able to fully explain these processes. Since business closure was not a topic of scrutiny in this study, the Peruvian women’s stories may not provide the answers to Bates’ inquiry, but may offer some guidelines to how scholars could go about to indagate a gender gap in business closure. How Peruvian women’s motivations,

pathways and practices are nested within non-economic processes does not suggest that women's entrepreneurship is inherently different than men's. Rather, as the chapters that follow elucidate, the women's social location within intersecting axes of power and privilege shape the ways in which their ambitions and life projects vary over time, linked to discontinuities in relation to the family sphere and to life course, such as motherhood and other life-alterations and events.

* * *

Peruvian immigrant women contribute to shaping a growing Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California. Women from all social strata open a variety of businesses from fine dining restaurants and working-class ventures in the formal economy, to smaller and often home-based ventures in the informal sector. This chapter has challenged stereotypes of undocumented immigrants linked to low income and informal and survivalist entrepreneurship, and has demonstrated how lines between formality and informality are often blurred. Although a few of the women's stories reflected the rags-to-riches narrative of upward social mobility through entrepreneurship, it was not hard work alone that facilitated such ascent. As other studies have demonstrated, the entrepreneurs' social location along intersecting axes of inequality shaped access to resources and hence also the entrepreneurial trajectory. Whereas many studies limit their inquiry to why immigrants and other minorities establish businesses, however, the Peruvian women's stories demonstrate that motivations for business seemed to change over time. As many of these women were pushed and pulled into business ownership in the culinary market, a sector in which many had never pictured themselves working, their motivations, ambitions, and objectives often changed as they entered new life-stages and experienced major life events, and as they gained more tenure and experience in the country and in the business. The increasing popularity and status of Peruvian food seemed to have an impact on the women's motivations for business. Women who had never dreamt of working with food, found themselves developing new dreams that involved culinary business ownership, as running a food business became something that made them proud and that granted them status. Hence, motivations for business

seemed to be nested within broader life projects and developed and fluctuated in tandem with the entrepreneurs' experiences as women, mothers and immigrants searching for home and belonging in a complex context of reception.

Chapter 4: Gender, Family, and The Culinary Business Space

[C]ooking has always been women's work. Most of the time and in most places, it still is. When men are involved, typically, cooking becomes a vocation, a profession, or a hobby—that is, a choice made at one's leisure. A woman "simply" does her job. Is it so surprising that even the most enlightened among us in the supposedly advanced twenty-first century, women no less than men, tend to see cooking as one more expression of what a woman does, must do, and should do, as wife, mother, hostess, nursemaid, housekeeper, and neighbor? This, despite the women we all know who do not do "their" job, who rely on convenience foods, on take-out and order-in, and are often clueless in the kitchen (Ferguson 2014, 80).

As head of culinary businesses, the Peruvian women grapple with gendered norms linked to food, cooking, and to food spaces. Sociologist and food scholar Priscilla P. Ferguson suggests in the quote above that gendered expectations to domestic labor and to nurturing the family are deeply entrenched in family and household relations. When such mundane activities, however, are moved out of the domestic sphere and into the business realm, they take on new meanings. Women remain associated with the domestic kitchen. Cheffing, on the other hand, is considered a male profession. "[T]he higher you climb on the culinary ladder, the fewer women you are likely to find on the rungs" (2014, 81).

During fieldwork, I listened to women's stories about gendered discrimination, unequal parenting arrangements and domestic violence, but also of women as head of businesses, leaders of ethnic organizations, mothers who were proud of having provided their children with a college education both through their examples as hard-working women and by contributing financially to the household economy through entrepreneurship. The agency that these women exercised in shaping their own pathways arise as a salient pattern in the fabric that constitutes their different but converging life histories. However, the stories of individual agency are woven into a complex backcloth of social practices and structural inequalities that mediate these Peruvian immigrants' entrepreneurial experiences, as women, mothers and racialized subjects in a context of South-North migration.

This chapter aims to bring together these complex issues by highlighting the experiences of what it is like to be a Peruvian immigrant woman and business owner

within the culinary sector, and how this experience is shaped by gender and other intersecting axes of social power. Aligning with the growing body of scholarship that has adopted an intersectional approach to ethnic enterprise (e.g. Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011, 2015, 2016; Vallejo and Canizales 2016), I demonstrate how multiple dimensions of inequality like gender, race, class and legal immigration status intersect with ethnicity in shaping the Peruvian women's culinary entrepreneurship. These studies have primarily focused on how gender intersects with other stratifying forces in facilitating and constraining access to resources for business. Moreover, by comparing male and female business owners, they often highlight Latinx women's disadvantaged position. Moving beyond comparative frameworks and paying attention to how entrepreneurial practices are nested within broader social processes, I explore how gender relations are negotiated within the culinary business space, and how entrepreneurial experiences may impact gender relations outside the business realm. I complicate the picture that these previous studies paint, and demonstrate that women also draw upon gendered, cultural, and classed experiences as a way to bargain with patriarchy and to succeed in the business world. A favorable business context for traditionally gendered activities, such as cooking ethnic food, shapes the women's opportunity structure in a complex receiving context in which positive food discourses intersect with negative depictions of Latinx immigrants.

Negotiating Gender in a Transnational Context

"In Peru there is a lot of *machismo*,"¹⁸² was a recurrent phrase that was often enunciated when the topic of gender and roles of women and men were brought up during the interviews and conversations I had with Peruvian women in Southern California. Most of the women perceived gender relations to be more equal in the society of settlement than in their country of origin.¹⁸³ However, many also stated that "it has changed a lot

¹⁸² "En Perú hay mucho machismo".

¹⁸³ A national scale may not always be the most accurate analytical frame since, as I discuss, gender is performed differently within nation states, and gender systems and norms may vary across determinants as race, ethnicity, class and rural/urban contexts. I choose, however, to employ a national scale since it reflects the way the Peruvian women refer to their experiences—comparing the two context they engage in on national levels.

since I lived there”, indicating a movement toward a more gender equal Peruvian society.

In *Gender's place: Feminist Anthropologies of Latin America* (2002), Rosario Montoya, Lessie Jo Frazier and Janise Hurtig explore how gender relations vary across time and space and highlight the “specificity of gender arrangements and ideologies in particular places”. The concept of *machismo* as a negative and extreme form of masculinity has often been linked to gender relations in Latin America alongside the framework of *marianismo*,¹⁸⁴ which presents women as self-sacrificing as well as spiritually and morally superior to men. Anthropologist Marysa Navarro (2002) demonstrates how these concepts have been criticized for presenting stereotypical and oversimplified views of gender relations, and for undermining the heterogeneity of femininities and masculinities in this vast region, as well as for neglecting the important intersections between gender and identity markers like race, ethnicity and class.

Studying the Peruvian urban context, anthropologist Norma Fuller (2005) highlights a movement toward more equal gender relations from the second half of the 20th century and onward. She explains these changes by pointing to women’s enhanced reproductive and legal rights, as well as to increased participation in education, the labor market and in politics. She also finds that paid work has received high importance and prestige, and even among stay-at-home mothers the current feminine ideal is the career woman (2005, 115). Similar changes are documented in other Latin American countries, and their causes are often linked to political and economic changes. Scholars highlight the effects of neoliberal policies of restructuring and austerity. These policies had severe impacts on families, particularly those who were already marginalized, and neoliberal values of self-sufficiency and individualism engendered new demands on women. As a response to these challenges, women have played an important role in developing coping strategies, which has led them into taking up wage work and to engage in grassroot collective organizing (Mora 2006; Hays-Mitchell 2002). Although Peruvian women experience enhanced gender equality, these processes are uneven and conditioned by rural/urban

¹⁸⁴ *Marianismo* alludes to the Virgin Mother Mary, and hence also to religious underpinnings of gender roles linked to European colonial influence in Latin America.

divisions as well as by ethnic/racial and classed inequities. Fuller (2005) points to a context in which more equal gender relations coexist with what she calls “traditional codes”. She notes that although more equal models of gender relations have been adopted, issues like household division of domestic labor and linking production to masculine identity still prevail. Women remain the primary responsible for reproductive work, which is often outsourced to other women, particularly to those of lower social strata. Despite increased equality between women and men in Peru, the continuous influence of the Catholic church and the fragile authority of human rights limit advances in gender relations, she argues.

As they had migrated to the United States from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural backgrounds in Peru, the women brought with them diverse experiences of gender arrangements. In Southern California, they encountered a different context in which a variety of gender ideals and practices coexisted. The women navigated this diverse landscape of gendered relations. In the interviews they often reinforced stereotypes of Mexican immigrants as more *machista* than Peruvians, and accused certain Asian groups for gender discrimination. In general, most of them homogenized White North American women whom they perceived as more liberated than Peruvian, Latinx and Asian women.

Like many other Peruvian women in this study, Fabiana experienced gendered expectations within the family when growing up, as well as the tension between what she perceived as Peruvian and US gender norms. She came to Southern California as a child. Although she was raised in a large Peruvian family with weekly contact with extended family members, her Californian childhood had also been shaped by the relationships and experiences she had gathered outside the Peruvian community through school, friends, college, jobs etc. During our interview, she relayed about gender relations in her Peruvian family, and confirmed that her brother had enjoyed certain privileges which she as the daughter had not been granted. “[B]ecause you know, in Peruvian households the boy is king”, she stated with wry humor, but with a reference to her personal experience with growing up in a Peruvian household. She added a story about her grandmother on her father’s side, a part of the family, in her opinion, much more “Peruvian” than the mother’s side who, in her own words, were more

Americanized: “So you know, my grandmother on my dad’s side would always say, when I was growing up, oh should we be like, you know, ironing his shirt or something... ‘You know, you are going to be doing this for your dad. And you better know how to do this, cause [sic] you are going to be taking care of him, you know’”. That it was Fabiana, and not her brother who was taught how to take care of their father was an established expectation, and from an early age, she was confronted with situations where her experiences in the private family sphere clashed with the norms and practices she encountered and enacted outside the family.

Similar to Fabiana, other Peruvian women entrepreneurs negotiated gender within this complex context, as well as in relation to their interaction with gendered environments such as the domestic sphere, the business realm and food spaces. Transnational migration and self-employment informed these negotiations.

Gendered Spaces: Business is Still “a Man’s World”

The business space constitutes a site of encounter between a variety of actors from different backgrounds. Such encounters inform gendered experiences with business ownership. Most of the women hire Latinx employees, and many engage in supply chains in which Spanish is the dominating language. And though all of their businesses cater to Peruvians and other Latinx clients, the customer base varies significantly among the different Peruvian culinary businesses. Growing up in a middle-class and entrepreneurial family had given Fabiana access to legal, human, class and entrepreneurial resources which she exploited for business purposes, as the owner of multiple Peruvian restaurants. Her privileged position, however, did not prevent her from experiencing gender discrimination, neither within the family nor in business.

It’s tough with, especially with Latin men, they do not... eh machismo, they do not like to be ordered around by women at all.

And have you experienced that in this business?

Oh yeah, absolutely and plus being young, being young and a woman, I’ve had to prove myself a lot.

Her position as a young woman, socially situated in the intersection of ideas about femininity and young age, had generated the need to prove herself as a leader for male employees who did not always respect that she was the boss.

Similarly, other women reported experiences of sexism and lack of legitimacy with employees as well as with other male business relations. Miguelina, for example, relayed that when her husband was present in the restaurant, vendors and suppliers tended to address him, despite the fact that she was head of the business. On one of my many visits to Miguelina's restaurants, I was able to meet and talk to her husband, Antonio. I was sitting at a comfortable grey leather sofa next to a big vine plant, sipping from a glass of *chicha morada*,¹⁸⁵ while interviewing Antonio about gender in business and his version of the story of *la emprendedora*¹⁸⁶ Miguelina. Salsa music was playing in the background, giving a Latinx touch to the atmosphere in Miguelina's newly opened Peruvian restaurant. This was her third business, and while the other two were situated in working-class and predominantly Latinx neighborhoods, where also a great number of Peruvians reside, this restaurant was different both in terms of location and interior design, representing a cosmopolitan style. It was located on a busy street in an up-and-coming neighborhood, which used to be populated by working-class Latinxs, but had recently gone through a renaissance and had turned into a hipster haven. The music reminded me that it was business as usual in the world of salsa; men were trying to conquer women with sleazy phrases: "Ven, devórame otra vez [Come, devour me again]", and I found myself glancing at Miguelina, busy as always, interacting with her customers and employees with her extraordinary charisma. Although Antonio had been raised by non-Peruvian Latinx parents, he was born in the United States and was hence an American citizen. Through marriage, Miguelina, who had overstayed her original permit as a tourist, had been able to regularize her immigration status. I asked about his perspective of the advantages and disadvantages of being a woman in this type of business.

We can talk about the 21st century and talk about all the growth and culture and evolution in social economic ideals, but in reality, when they come in here, vendors for example, or other business people,

¹⁸⁵ Soft drink made from purple corn.

¹⁸⁶ The woman entrepreneur.

they want to talk to me... But I think that is part of culture too, you know. I've been dealing with business with men, so I am used to dealing with men, I feel comfortable dealing with men, so therefore I want to talk to the owner, and I am assuming the owner is male. And I tell them: "I'm sorry. I can't make any decisions, I'm sorry I can't speak with you, you need to talk to the owner. I'm not the owner, she's the owner".

Antonio's answer resonated with the story I had heard from other Peruvian women whose husbands helped out from time to time in the business.

Similar to Miguelina, Gabriela also referred to gendered experiences in business relations. When Gabriela and her husband, Trevor, were in the process of setting up their franchise business, as I have referred to in Chapter 3, they went together to a meeting with the franchisor. The conversation primarily revolved around finances and marketing strategies, which is Gabriela's responsibility in the business, since she holds a master's degree in marketing and business administration. The franchisor, however, only addressed Trevor, who felt the need to intervene:

I had to tell this gentleman, I said: "Hey, you know what, this is my business partner, you know." I mean, just a little thing like orienting the chair in relationship to where I was sitting and it was almost like she was an outcast. And I said: "Hey! This is my business partner, you know. It's not just talking to me, you know. We're making this decision together. This is what we do. It is not going to be a single type situation."

Gabriela added:

And when I am the one who ask the questions financially, they respond to him. And I don't like that, because I'm the one that is asking the questions. I'm asking, you know: "Can you tell me what are the fixed cost?" and stuff like that. I'm asking, and they turn around and they talk to him.

Gabriela and Trevor were not sure if this incident was caused by racial or gendered prejudices. It might have been a combination. But it was certainly not due to lack of human capital, since she had already given them all her credentials and, on their request, she had proven her qualifications and licenses. Trevor also mentioned that in this particular case they referred to a business man of Asian descent, and that he personally believed that the man's behavior might have been influenced by gender norms linked to his specific cultural background. In Trevor's opinion, the general culture of American

businesses had changed in terms of gender, and women had started to climb the ladder, although they were not quite there yet. With regards to race, however, inequities still persisted, he explained, and referred to his own status as a White American male:

So, I mean, even though it, from a pale skin situation, it's still nowhere close. But from respect, I think just women in general are climbing the ladder, but they're not there yet. (...) I still kind of think that maybe it might be a man's world that men talk to men because that they think that maybe, from a professional perspective or a monetary perspective, that they have the upper hand, or "who wears the pants in the family", you know what I mean?

Her husband's statement confirmed other stories that Gabriela had shared of racialized experiences as a Latinx woman in a White upper-class neighborhood. For example, one time when she had signed her daughter up for swimming lessons, the swimming instructors refused to let Gabriela take her daughter home after class, arguing that only the parents were allowed to pick up their children. Since the presence of Latinx women in such neighborhoods is often related to domestic help and child care providers, the instructors immediately assumed that Gabriela was not the child's mother. And as Trevor's declaration above illustrates, similar preconceptions were also translated into the business realm. When I asked Gabriela about Trevor's role in the business, she stated: "Very important! Because of his American face. Sometimes I feel that I get more respect. I am sad to say that, but it's true".

Some Peruvian women expressed that they had never experienced discrimination based on ethnic/racial markers in their US communities. Indeed, some Peruvian women who were fluent English speakers, had a lighter skin color, and came from a middle-class background in Peru, assumed a privileged position within predominantly Latinx neighborhoods in the receiving society. Gabriela's experiences, however, corroborate stories I heard from other Peruvian women, and are also in keeping with findings in previous scholarship on Latinx entrepreneurship. Sociologists Jody Vallejo and Stephanie Canizales (2016) found that Latinx professional entrepreneurs in Los Angeles capitalized on human capital, as well as on social and financial resources acquired through work experience in well-paying white-collar professional occupations, and exploited their knowledge about the growing Latinx population to bring professional services to low-income co-ethnics. Yet, this did not exempt them from experiencing

discrimination based on intersections of gender and race. Like the Latinx professionals in Vallejo and Canizales' study, Fabiana, Miguelina and Gabriela's cultural knowledge and class position facilitated entrepreneurship. Their experiences, however, were shaped by intersecting racial and gendered inequities in the highly stratified society in which they operated their businesses. Peruvian women hence navigate business ownership within a stratified American social structure in which determinants like age, gender, race, ethnicity, class and legal status shape their opportunities and experiences as culinary entrepreneurs.

Gendered Spaces: The Culinary Business Realm

Culinary businesses evoke particular imaginaries linked to certain tasks that are perceived as either feminine or masculine. Several women highlight the physically challenging work in the kitchen as a barrier for women in such businesses. I interviewed Elisa late one evening after most of the clients had called it a night and the restaurant was nearly empty, allowing us to sit down in a corner and talk in private. As with an urge to let others learn about her hardships and achievements, her life history filled the empty room. Referring to the heavy work in the restaurant where she worked prior to starting her own business, Elisa explained:

The work in the kitchen gave me a lot of pain (...) It didn't matter if you were a woman or a man. It didn't matter if you had to carry the burners. You had to carry the burners, not because of being a woman, no, you had to do it. If it was your turn, it was your turn.¹⁸⁷

In the restaurant that she ran together with her husband, she was the chef and performed most of the manual labor, although she had also hired several employees to help her. Most of the women who had the financial possibility, however, took on managerial roles in the business, and hired chefs to do the manual work. There seemed to be a practice of hiring male chefs among the restaurant owners, often men with Mexican or Central American descent. The heavy work in the kitchen, that Elisa referred to above, was often stated as the reason for such practices. Unlike Elisa, Sofia, whom I introduced in the

¹⁸⁷ Me dolió mucho si trabajar en la cocina. (...) No importaba si era mujer u hombre. No importaba si tenías que cargar las hornillas. Tenías que cargar las hornillas no porque seas mujer, no, lo tenías que hacer. Si te tocaba a ti, te tocaba a ti.

beginning of this dissertation, did possess the financial means necessary for hiring staff that could perform the manual work in the restaurant. Those who prepared the food were all Mexican men. Sharing from her experience on this topic, she declared:

[R]eally, outside you see many more [male] chefs than women chefs. But this is now changing. Now, it might be that this also has an impact, because in the kitchen it is not only about, if you are now at a high level where you only prepare or manage. But if you are at the bottom level, that you start in the kitchen, cooking and the like, there are many things to carry in the kitchen. “Oh, this sack of potatoes or this sack”. Actually, I believe that most restaurant owners can have some women, but they need some men, because for women it is very difficult to carry a sack and move them and so on. Which is not the case for men. So, maybe that’s why that also in construction you can see many more men than women. And maybe women also could do a job, maybe even better. I think we are more attentive to the details, but the problem is that, it’s not just about doing the construction, it includes a range of other things that you need for this job. So, when it comes to the kitchen you need to carry many things. “Oh, the meat is heavy” and a box of sixty pounds. Well sometimes women cannot carry sixty pounds. So, it turns out to be easier to have men. I believe that all these factors are contributing to the gastronomic case, that there are more men than women.¹⁸⁸

These women’s reflections reveal a normative conception of men being more physically fit to perform the tasks in a commercial kitchen, linking heavy physical work to masculinity. On the one hand, it may suggest that physical arrangements in the commercial restaurant kitchen is constructed around the figure and body of the male chef and male workers. However, not everyone agreed that physically demanding work and heavy lifts constituted a real barrier for women, and highlighted other more structural causes behind a gender bias in the culinary business world.

The famous Peruvian chef Gastón Acurio, for example, provided me with a different view. Through a Peruvian contact in Los Angeles, I was lucky to get an interview with Acurio, in Lima. I met the distinguished chef at *La Mar Cevichería*, a

¹⁸⁸ “[R]ealmente, ‘outside’ se ve muchos más chefs que mujeres chefs. Ahora mas bien está incrementando mas. Ahora puede ser que de repente también influye, porque en una cocina no se trata solo de, si ya estás a muy ‘high level’ de solo preparar o dirigir, pero si estás en el primer nivel que empiezas de cocina, cocinando y esto, hay muchas cosas que cargar en la cocina. “Oh, este saco de papa o este saco”. Que en realidad yo creo que la mayoría de dueños de un restaurante puede tener algunas mujeres, pero tienen que tener algunos hombres porque para las mujeres es muy difícil estar cargando un saco y moverlos y esto. Lo que el hombre no, entonces, quizás por eso también en construcción se ve muchos mas hombres que mujeres. Y de repente las mujeres también podrían hacer un trabajo, quizás mejor. Somos yo creo mas detallistas, pero el problema es que, no solamente es pues hacer ese construir, es, envuelve todo ese perímetro de otras cosas que se necesita para ese trabajo. En caso de la cocina pues es cargar muchas cosas, “oh pesan las carnes” y una caja de sesenta libras. Bueno las mujeres a veces no podemos cargar sesenta libras. Entonces se hace mas fácil que haya hombres. Yo creo que todos esos pedacitos es que contribuyen en el caso de gastronomía haya más hombres que mujeres.”

restaurant chain with only one location in Peru and the other six located in various international metropolises, of which two are in the United States. The Peruvian gastronomic boom has been celebrated, and a national narrative of pride and inclusion has been forged. However, it has also been criticized for constituting a project on which primarily White, middle-class men, like Acurio, capitalize, as discussed in Chapter 2. When confronted with the question of gender, Acurio confirmed that most of the culinary entrepreneurs he worked with were indeed men. He did not believe, however, that the heavy work was an important factor, having personally witnessed many women engaging in and mastering heavy kitchen work. Instead, he highlighted the unfavorable work hours and life-style that come with running a restaurant and being a chef. He stressed how difficult it might be for women with families and care obligations to comply with these expectations. Acurio and his team were preoccupied with these limitations within culinary businesses, and wished to contribute to changing the situation, though acknowledging that this would require transforming deeply ingrained structural inequalities within the industry. He relayed that his *picanterías*¹⁸⁹ in the city of Arequipa, for example, were all managed by women and had women chefs. The reasons behind this, according to Acurio, was that the *picanterías* close at five in the afternoon, making it easier to combine mothering and work.

Acurio's analysis corroborates my own observations in Peruvian restaurants in Southern California, in which Peruvian women often worked long hours and struggled to juggle business with mothering responsibilities. It also resonates with my observation of informal Peruvian culinary businesses, which were primarily run by women. Many of these businesses were operated within the private kitchen, a space often reserved for women and associated with the figure of the female domestic cook. An informal business often provides enhanced flexibility. And by operating their businesses within the private realm, women are able to combine income-generating activities with care work. This highlights the imperative task of examining the relationship between the role of women as culinary entrepreneurs and family dynamics, with particular attention to motherhood, which I do in further detail in the following chapter.

¹⁸⁹ A *picantería*, is a traditional lunchtime restaurant in Peru, and predominates in and around the cities of Arequipa and Cuzco. These establishments are usually run by women and serve an *almuerzo* (the main meal of the day, served around lunchtime) which represents the traditional gastronomy of the region (Comejo Velásquez 2008).

So far in this chapter, I have highlighted how gender, combined with other stratifying factors, may be a disadvantaging force for women in business and particularly in the culinary business space. In the following section, I complicate this picture, and underscore that women's social location within gendered and other intersecting social hierarchies may sometimes also work to their benefit.

Intersectional Resources and Situated Intersectional Agency: Commodifying Cultural, Gendered and Classed Experiences

Popular images of the traditional Latinx household portray women as the *cocineras* [cooks] in the kitchen, responsible for covering husband's and children's basic needs. A glance at the web sites of Peruvian restaurants in the Greater Los Angeles area reveals the same perceptions of the kitchen and cooking as a gendered skill.

Inka Grill was founded in 1996 by my mother, *Ana Sr.* She was born in a small fishing village in a Northern Province of Peru and was fascinated with the daily meal preparations lovingly done by my grandmother, Fortunata, and great grandmother, Juanita, where her love for culinary arts was born (Inka Grill n.d.; emphasis in original).¹⁹⁰

We wanted to provide our customers with the same quality, authenticity, and freshness that Mom, her mother, and her mother's mother had served at the dinner table day after day for over four generations (Inkas n.d.).

We are a family restaurant we love to cook our passion is that each of our guests can enjoy one of the best gastronomies in the world like the Peruvian. we [sic] have our own recipes as the recipe of our mother and each of us are committed to this passion (El Incomparable Peruvian Cuisine n.d.).

The three excerpts above reflect the prevailing image of the mother and grandmother providing the daily, home cooked, authentic meal to their families. And though the three restaurants above have different owners—the first a woman owner, the second and third are family owned—their marketing strategy revolves around the notion of authentic female cooking as the principal ingredient they offer their customers.

¹⁹⁰ It is important to note that these restaurants were not among the ones I have focused on in this study.

I began my fieldwork with some of these presumptions. Hence, one of the hypotheses behind this study was that Peruvian female immigrants open culinary businesses capitalizing on knowledges about and experiences with preparing Peruvian food, and that these skills are not just linked to cultural experiences from growing up in Peru, but rather to gendered dynamics. My preconceptions were based on the assumption that cooking skills are primarily passed down from mother to daughter, a cultural schema documented by other scholars (Oleschuk 2019).¹⁹¹ Although such cultural schema are highly present in the Peruvian women's narratives, some life history accounts suggest a more complex reality and demonstrate that ethnic-cultural background and gender intersect with social class in shaping women's access to and exploitation of such knowledge.

When I conducted observation in the field and interviewed Peruvian women and some of their husbands, I learned that many businesses were constructed around the women's food knowledges. As a woman, daughter, wife and mother, Victoria, whom I have mentioned before, was familiar with culinary practices from a young age. These skills had provided her with the opportunity to start an informal culinary business in Los Angeles. Other Peruvian women shared similar stories. The increasing demand for and popularity of Peruvian food allowed these women to capitalize on skills they had brought with them from growing up in Peru. As girls and women, they had learned to master the secrets in the kitchen, helping out their mothers, caring for their siblings, husbands and children, complying with gendered expectations. Many women reported that also their brothers knew how to cook, but that their mothers had taught them, and the model they had for gendered division of domestic labor was the mother in the kitchen and the father providing economically for the family. Another informal business owner, Noelia, recalled her mother lecturing her about why women need to know how to cook and provide for their future husbands. She imagined Noelia getting married, and feared that people would be talking about how she failed as a mother for not teaching her daughter how to be a wife and how to cook for her future household. Though sons also

¹⁹¹ In her article "Gender, Cultural Schemas, and Learning to Cook", Oleschuk (2019, 611) claims that the mother more often than the father teaches her children how to cook. She also highlights that more girls than boys receive training in cooking from their parents.

learned how to cook Peruvian food, in many families there was still an androcentric bias regarding expectations to who was responsible for the daily family meals.

Peruvian gastronomy and cooking have gained renewed value and status in Peru, which might have led men to engage more with domestic cooking. However, research shows that although more equal gender relations have developed in Peru, its impact on everyday practices has been slow, and reproductive labor is still highly gendered (Fuller 2005, 2012). It is hence likely to presume that also in Peru “culinary masculinity” is primarily linked to creative leisure rather than to daily domestic chores (Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann 2010), as discussed in Chapter 1. The majority of the women in this study belong to an older generation than those who today grow up with the narrative of the Peruvian gastronomic boom, and they had left Peru before Gastón Acurio and other elite chefs extended their influence on perceptions around food and cooking. Many of them came to the United States with gendered skills and experiences acquired through the many hours they had spent in the kitchen under their mothers’ or grandmothers’ supervision, and for some of the women, these skills and experiences became an asset for business in the society of settlement.

Not all women, however, complied with such gendered expectations which were often mediated by social class. Whereas many had never imagined themselves working with food or running a restaurant, as I have discussed in the preceding chapter, some relayed that they did not even know how to cook before they came to the United States, mainly because they grew up in middle-class homes in which the housekeeper was responsible for domestic chores, like preparing family meals. Pilar studied to become a nurse in Peru and was able to exploit her profession in the United States. Growing up in Peru in a household with chauffeurs and housekeepers, Pilar had never learned how to cook. Her stepfather was a chef, however, and had run several restaurants in Peru. He came to the United States and helped her out with the food in the restaurant. This did not imply, however, that Pilar had no knowledge whatsoever about Peruvian cuisine. Yet, while her class position limited her knowledge about food preparation, access to financial resources allowed her to assume a primarily managerial role in the business.

Rocío’s story is a bit different and points to how changes in socioeconomic status through transnational migration also shape the gendering of domestic labor. Like Pilar,

she enjoyed middle-class privileges in the country of origin. In her household in Peru the house-keeper was responsible for the family meals. Rocío did not know how to cook, though she always used to curiously watch her mother and the housekeeper in the kitchen. When she got married, her husband made fun of her attempts to prepare traditional Peruvian dishes. When she came to the United States, however, she could not afford the privilege of domestic help, and had to learn how to cook herself, as was expected of her. She received a Peruvian recipe book from her mother, and kept contact on Facebook with her housekeeper in Peru. Hence, little by little she began to master the arts of Peruvian gastronomy, which ended up being one of her favorite hobbies. When I met her in 2018, she was the owner of an informal catering business in a suburban neighborhood of one of Los Angeles's surrounding counties.

The migration experience also influences gendered patterns of food preparation within the family. As Pilar and Rocío, Carolina came to the United States without a clue of how to prepare a decent meal. She even told me that her brother knew how to cook, while she did not. Her brother came to the United States before her, and as many other Peruvians, he missed homemade Peruvian food. Over the phone with his mother back home, he learned some secrets and the basics of Peruvian cooking. When Carolina joined her brother in the United States, he became her teacher in the kitchen, which along with the many conversations she had with her mother over the phone, provided her with recipes and advice on how to master the art of cooking.

Knowledge and skills linked to ethnic cuisine are thus mediated by gender and social class, as well as by the migration experience, prompting scholars to look beyond ethnicity in order to fully understand why immigrant women start ethnic themed culinary businesses. Hence, it becomes imperative to acknowledge how intersectional systems of oppression and privilege shape immigrants' access to knowledges, skills and resources as well as their ability to exploit these. Rocío, Carolina and Carolina's brother's experiences highlight the important role migration plays in shaping immigrants' cooking skills. Being a migrant far from Peru and with limited access to Peruvian restaurants and home cooked Peruvian meals, contribute to push both male and female Peruvian immigrants to learn how to cook. Change in socioeconomic status in the receiving society is another important factor, as Rocío's story exemplifies. Whereas

her middle-class status in Peru exempted her from traditionally female obligations in the kitchen, the family's less privileged economic status in the United States obliged her to take on domestic responsibilities traditionally reserved for women. In the encounter with a complex opportunity structure in the receiving society, Peruvian immigrant women are constrained by, but also capitalize on their social location within intersecting social power hierarchies when establishing and running culinary businesses. Consequently, many of these businesses are constructed around Peruvian women's culinary knowledges which achieve market value in the receiving society. The women draw on these resources in order to negotiate a position within the family and the household, assuming the role as head of businesses.

Globalization and economic restructuring have produced bifurcated, segmented labor markets in post-industrial economies in which immigrant workers find jobs and create businesses that provide services to the well-to-do population. Many of these workers and entrepreneurs take on time-consuming activities that were previously performed by families themselves within the private realm, like child care, cleaning, gardening and cooking. The gendered character of such activities has often remained uninterrupted through the commercialization of these previously private domestic chores.¹⁹² A recent, but important body of scholarship has explored how Latinxs in the United States participate in the gendered markets that have emerged in the wake of such processes offering jobs to female domestic workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001) and male gardeners (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009). While emphasizing how gendered dynamics channel women and men into these low-paid jobs, these studies also demonstrate that gendered experiences seem to constitute a market capital under certain circumstances. Sociologist Anna Veronica Banchik (2019) argues that while gendered mechanisms are often understood as disadvantaging to women, they may sometimes also work to their benefit. In her study of business inheritance among self-employed women in Zacatecas, Mexico, she explores how household structures and gendered expectations shape daughters' self-employment. She demonstrates how daughters sometimes inherit their parents' businesses and other business-related assets, not despite

¹⁹² One exception is the restaurant in which *cheffing* has assumed masculine connotations, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter.

of, but because of their gendered position. She calls this phenomenon “gendered inheritance”.¹⁹³

I build on Banchik’s work and highlight how many Peruvian women also capitalize on gendered skills linked to food and food preparation. However, the women’s mastering of Peruvian cuisine and cooking is not only gendered, as gender intersects with cultural background and social class in shaping their access to such knowledges and skills. Following sociologist Zulema Valdez’s (2011) theorization on how an entrepreneur’s market capital is conditioned by an individual’s social location, I call these knowledges and skills “intersectional resources”. Secondly, the Peruvian women’s stories draw attention to the migration experience, as well as to how the complex context of reception and local opportunity structure they encounter as migrants in Southern California prompts them to draw on such intersectional resources in order to open culinary businesses. The market value of the Peruvian women’s intersectional resources is thus temporally and spatially situated in the intersection of discursive, political, economic and social structures.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, like Banchik’s concept of “gendered inheritance”, a focus on resources remains rather static and does not capture the women’s agency and active role in employing these knowledges and skills strategically in business. I argue therefore that the Peruvian women exert “situated intersectional agency” to succeed in Southern Californian culinary markets.¹⁹⁵

Intersectional resources were often acquired in the domestic kitchen as a result of the women’s home-making labor in the country of origin. Despite feminist’s long struggle to make the unpaid labor of home-making more visible, it has still not gained the value it deserves. And as migration research has overemphasized the labor migrant, such skills and efforts continue to be ignored in the migration literature (Lauster and Zhao 2017). The same can be said about the ethnic entrepreneurship literature, which

¹⁹³ Banchik found that the Mexican daughters she interviewed acquired business-related assets such as skills, financial capital, and property through their participation in their parents’ businesses. Their contribution to the business was linked to gendered mechanisms within the family that often prompted daughters to remain closely connected to the business also after they entered adulthood.

¹⁹⁴ Sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis proposes a situated intersectional analysis which is “highly sensitive to the geographical, social and temporal locations of the particular individual or collective social actors examined by it” (Yuval-Davis 2015, 95).

¹⁹⁵ Here, I am further inspired by sociologist Susanne Y. P. Choi and her colleagues’ concept of “situated agency” which they employ in order to highlight the agency of children in migration, and the way children’s agentic endeavors are situated in relation to significant others as well as within broader socio-economic dynamics, frictions, and opportunities generated by geographical borders and social boundaries (Choi, Yeoh, and Lam 2019).

considers human capital primarily in light of formal education and occupation,¹⁹⁶ despite the fact that many immigrant and ethnic minority women capitalize on such resources in order to establish businesses. This study challenges the prolific use of the term “skilled/highly skilled/low-skilled/unskilled migrant/worker” in scholarly publications, in the media and in political discourse. In the book *Skills of the Unskilled*, sociologist Jackeline Hagan and colleagues (2015) demonstrate how informal learning and skill development are difficult to identify and measure, and hence overlooked when determining an immigrant’s human capital. The Peruvian women’s stories bring gender and culture into this discussion. The culinary experiences, knowledges, and skills these women bring with them are invisible on formal records, and hence not recognized by the many visa regimes in the Global North that favor the so-called “highly skilled”.¹⁹⁷ These policies are gendered in the way they prioritize a masculinized productive subject, and devalue other aspects of citizens’ and immigrants’ lives as well as the role of social reproductive processes and the skills accumulated through the hard work of home-making.

Business, Family and Household Dynamics: Navigating Gendered Expectations

The notion of family is central in the Peruvian women’s businesses. This is consistent with research on ethnic entrepreneurship which often highlights family labor as an important resource (Light and Gold 2000, 137; Zhou 2004, 1043). Whereas many of the Peruvian women in this study hired paid employees outside of the family, most of those who had kin in the United States also drew on family members for labor in their

¹⁹⁶ See for example Portes and Rumbaut’s elaboration of the Modes of Incorporation framework (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Chapter 3: Making It in America). See also Light and Gold who view human capital as a class resource primarily composed by education and work experience, but also broaden its scope by arguing that human capital is conditioned by financial, cultural and social capital (Light and Gold 2000, 87, 96, 99). Skills such as cooking ethnic food is rather considered an ethnic resource (Light and Gold 2000, 107), a view that overlooks how gender intersects with culture and class in shaping access to knowledge and the development of skills. Sociologist María Verdaguer’s study of Peruvian and Salvadoran entrepreneurs in Washington D.C. represents an exception here. She highlights what she sees as gendered cultural capital, which she recognizes is conditioned by class (2009, 125). She refers to culinary skills, but argues that such skills channel women into gendered occupations, such as restaurants, overlooking the fact that the culinary business realm is highly masculinized (2009, 117).

¹⁹⁷ Unlike many other Western countries, the United States has not endorsed educational requirements for entry, as most lawful permanent residents enter as family members. The Trump administration and some Republican members of Congress, however, have called for new immigration laws that adopt a more merit-based system that favors highly educated migrants. And according to the Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, the majority of Americans supports high-skilled migration, as does the majority of people in other countries with advanced economies (Connor and Ruiz January 22, 2019).

businesses. Informal business owners relied exclusively on help from family or friends. In the literature, family labor is often considered an ethnic resource that is rooted in social capital and facilitates entrepreneurship. Since family members constitute a source of trusted workers and reduce operating costs, ethnic entrepreneurs often rely on paid and unpaid family labor instead of hiring non-family wage workers (Sanders and Nee 1996, 233). Valdez (2016, 1621), however, claims that scholarship that considers family labor as an ethnic resource overlooks the role of family and the household in generating these resources and in conditioning access to these, often producing differences across gender.¹⁹⁸ In a study of Korean family businesses in New York, sociologist Eunju Lee (2006, 118) further highlights how patriarchal structures within the family constrained Korean women in the family enterprise, since they were often considered family workers instead of business owners, despite being as involved as their husbands in running the business.

In line with these studies, this dissertation considers the family and the household as important levels of analysis. Whilst acknowledging the constraints women often face within patriarchal family relations and within individual and family businesses, as the aforementioned studies point out, and as the Peruvian women's stories have demonstrated earlier in this chapter, I also find that under certain circumstances, women may enjoy a privileged position. I demonstrate how many Peruvian women employ situated intersectional agency to exploit these privileges in ethnic business. I contend that intersectional resources derived from culinary skills combined with an increasing market demand for Peruvian gastronomy, provide Peruvian women with a bargaining power within the family and within the household economy, often giving the wife the upper hand in family-run businesses. By comparing women and men, and by focusing on Latinx women's vulnerable and precarious structural "social location at the bottom" (Valdez 2011, 159), Valdez and other scholars (Verdaguer 2009; Vallejo and Canizales 2016) have emphasized how being a Latinx woman often is a disadvantage in ethnic enterprise. Hence, they run the risk of reproducing "a dualistic perspective of male

¹⁹⁸ Drawing on life history interviews among middle-class Mexican-origin entrepreneurs in El Paso, Texas, Valdez finds that regardless of social class, women faced greater constraints to their socioeconomic mobility and integration than men. Daughters and wives were expected to privilege marriage and childbearing over paid labor, and were also more prone to contribute to family businesses than their male counterparts. Moreover, while enjoying broader possibilities of entrepreneurial capital than girls, boys were also more likely to inherit the family business.

privilege and female subordination” (Messner, Zinn, and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005, 2).¹⁹⁹ In this study, however, I highlight Peruvian women’s agency, and argue that women also “bargain with patriarchy”²⁰⁰²⁰¹ and use their social location along axes of difference like gender and ethnicity strategically to negotiate their position within the family and within the culinary business world. The Peruvian women’s stories, thus, shed light on how gender intersects with other axes of differentiation in shaping not only disadvantage in business, but also privilege for women.

Wives at The Helm and Husbands as Employees

In many of the businesses I studied, Peruvian female entrepreneurs worked alongside their husbands or their husbands were involved in some of the business activities, and, as I have detailed in Chapter 3, some husbands also contributed with financial capital. Other women ran their businesses without any involvement from husbands or other family members, either because they did not have family in the United States or because their financial position allowed them to hire paid employees outside of their intimate social networks. In general, Peruvian women’s husbands were quite engaged in the women’s ventures, and the majority occupied an assisting role under the wife’s leadership. Previous scholarship on Latinx entrepreneurship has argued that women and children experience higher expectations to contribute to the family business than men (Valdez 2016, 1623) . Although this study limits its focus to businesses in which the Peruvian women are identified as either the sole owner or co-owner, and hence does not compare female and male owned businesses, its findings seem to go against these patterns.

¹⁹⁹ Sociologist Steven Gold argues that women are not only oppressed by gendered relations in families, in communities and in social networks, but draw on resources and support within such social institutions. With a reference to studies by Fernández-Kelly and Garcia (1990) and by Gabaccia (1994), he urges scholars to “transcend the trope of female versus male opposition” when studying women entrepreneurs (2014, 230).

²⁰⁰ Gender scholar Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) uses this concept in her article “Bargaining with Patriarchy” to refer to the ways in which women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define “the blueprint” of what she refers to as the “patriarchal bargain” of a society, which may vary across class, caste, and ethnicity. She contends that such patriarchal bargains contribute to shaping women’s gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts, while also affecting women’s active or passive resistance to oppression. Political scientists Anwar Mhajne and Crystal Whetstone who have studied the use of political motherhood in Egypt’s Arab Spring uprising and aftermath, adopt the phrase to illustrate how female participants in Egypt’s January 25th revolution used nationalism, motherhood and traditional gender roles to “bargain with patriarchy” (2018, 61).

²⁰¹ Referring to the collective efforts of women to resist, challenge, and subvert repressive practices, Chandra Mohanty (1991) has argued that women are not passive victims of structural forces, but active agents of change.

The Peruvian women's strategic endeavors of exploiting intersectional resources often placed them at the helm of informal family businesses. As Victoria's story earlier in this chapter demonstrates, culinary knowledge offered her a privileged position within an informal family business in which she was the boss, while her husband and children contributed as paid employees. Juliana's informal venture serves as another example of how such intersectional resources had provided Peruvian women with a bargaining power within the family. The first time I met Juliana and her husband, Rigoberto, was at a big Peruvian event outside Los Angeles where folklore musicians and dancers, as well as a range of informal food vendors, provided guests with a variety of Peruvian culinary specialties at a big outdoor location. Juliana was busy taking care of big casseroles of homestyle dishes like *arroz con pollo* and *seco de cordero*, and lining up desserts like *crema volteada* and *arroz con leche*²⁰² on a big table where customers were met with the warm demeanor of her husband and a friendly smile from her oldest daughter who juggled between taking care of her own two daughters and serving the clients. This was obviously a family business in which everyone pitched in to feed hungry customers with homestyle Peruvian delicatessens. I witnessed the same patterns at Juliana's house, which during weekends turned into a semi-restaurant, where Peruvians and other Latinxs stopped by to enjoy her culinary specialties. Tables were set in the big living room where soccer was broadcasted from a big flat screen on the wall, as well as in the garden where a party tent protected clients from the burning California sun. Juliana was in charge of the food, while her husband and daughter were running around following her orders and making sure that customers were comfortable and well fed. My observations confirmed what Rigoberto later would tell me; that although he had a day job, he often worked alongside his wife in her informal business, but that it was Juliana's business and that she was the boss. After all, she was the one who possessed the primary market capital—mastering the art of Peruvian cuisine.

I witnessed similar dynamics in formal culinary businesses. Some husbands had even quit their job to help out in the wife's venture. As mentioned earlier, when Gerthy and Jorge came to the United States, it soon became clear that Gerthy had better

²⁰²*Crema Volteada* and *Arroz con Leche* are typical Peruvian desserts. While *crema volteada* is a Peruvian version of Crème Caramel, *Arroz con leche* can be defined as a Peruvian style rice pudding.

economic opportunities than her husband, whose irregular migration status prevented him from landing a job related to the career he had studied in Peru. Exploiting her abilities with Peruvian pastry making, Gerthy started a formal cake and pastry business, which became well known in her neighborhood and beyond. When the business expanded, Jorge left his job in construction to help his wife in the business. Although they identified the venture as a family business, and although he was in charge of the administrative tasks, Jorge presented his wife as head of the business, since they had built the venture around her name and her skills. “If I had been the representative for the business, it would not have advanced as much as with her, because... she is the creative mind behind the pastries. She has the knowledge and the education for this type of business.”²⁰³ Whereas Jorge’s undocumented status prevented him to capitalize on his educational background, it did not prevent them from taking advantage of Gerthy’s experience with food and pastries. As these stories exemplify, not only do husbands lend their labor to their wives’ businesses, they also take on subordinate roles as assistants and workers, and often recognize the important skills and resources their wives possess in a market with an increasing demand for Peruvian cuisine.

Among the seventeen female entrepreneurs in this study who reported that their husbands were actively contributing to the business, only two did not consider themselves, but their husband as the boss. These two women both owned 50 percent of the shares in the family restaurant, but saw themselves as managers and not head of the business. Interestingly, it was not the women, but their husbands who were head chefs of these restaurants. This supports the argument presented above; that culinary skills provide individuals with a bargaining power within Peruvian culinary family businesses. Since culinary skills are gendered, women often assume a primary role in such ventures.

Ethnicity is hence mediated by gender and social class as well as by immigration status in these processes. Some husbands who due to their irregular legal statuses and to racialization suffered blocked mobility in the labor market found working in their wives’ culinary businesses more lucrative than wage work. Conversely, women who, often owing to their class position, did not know how to cook, capitalized on class resources

²⁰³ “Si yo hubiera sido el representante del negocio, no hubiera caminado tanto como de ella, porque ella tiene... la creatividad de los pasteles. Tiene el conocimiento y la preparación para ese tipo de negocio.”

to start culinary businesses, taking on managerial roles and hiring skilled chefs. These patterns corroborate previous scholarship that demonstrates that social class mediates familistic or individualistic ideologies and practices (Vallejo and Lee 2009; Valdez 2016) and illustrate how this is manifested in business. Furthermore, women who experienced downward mobility from a middle-class background in Peru to a less privileged socioeconomic position in the host country, saw the need to overcome what can paradoxically be considered a disadvantage based on a previously privileged class position, and found ways to educate themselves in the culinary field to be able to capitalize on their cultural background. In all cases, Peruvian women exert situated intersectional agency to overcome structural constraints in the economy and in culinary markets, and negotiate a more privileged position within the family and in the business world. The responsibilities that come with this role, however, they often have to juggle with that of being a mother which I will delve further into in the following chapter. However, as mothers they also often capitalize on their children's labor in the businesses.

The Role of Children in The Business

In the Peruvian women's businesses, adolescent and adult children often lent their work to their mother's venture, both as paid and unpaid labor, performing a variety of tasks. In restaurants, I observed the women's children work as waiters and bus boys. I also witnessed informal business owners' children contributing with transportation, monetary transactions or serving food to customers. Whereas some children formed part of the daily operation, others only pitched in when there was a need.

Scholars have highlighted the important and often critical role children play in family businesses, as they contribute to the family's economic survival and mobility (Lisa Sun-Hee 2009; Estrada and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2011; Estrada 2019). And whereas scholars claim that there are higher expectations to lending their labor to the family business for wives than for husbands and children, as I have mentioned above, studies have also found that daughters are more prone to participate in the family business than their brothers (Estrada and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2011; Valdez 2016). This study, however, finds no evident gender bias related to girls' and boys' participation in their parents'

ventures, neither with regard to formal nor informal businesses. Sons and daughters alike worked by their mother's side. It is beyond the scope of this study to explain the reason for this pattern among the children of Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs. Yet, the overall findings suggest that although culinary business spaces are gendered, they do constitute an arena in which both traditional notions of femininity and masculinity tied to food may be articulated. Future research of a more comparative nature, however, may shed light on diverging experiences among daughters and sons within these culinary business spaces.

Negotiating Femininity and Masculinity within Culinary Businesses Spaces

Although husbands and sons are highly involved in several of the Peruvian women's businesses and often occupy subordinate roles, these men also negotiate gender within the culinary space. Observing a range of different businesses, I witnessed husbands and sons performing all sorts of tasks from cooking and decorating cakes, to waitering and doing the dishes. However, sons and particularly husband's roles were primordially linked to what is often considered "masculine" tasks. Husbands were often involved in monetary and legal transactions, as well as administrative work. They also helped out with heavy loads, transportation, serving beer and alcohol as well as with cooking tasks linked to meat, barbeque and *saltado*.²⁰⁴²⁰⁵

Husbands' involvement varied among the different types of businesses included in this study. In many formal ventures, the husband adopted a less prominent role. Some contributed with financial capital and/or figured as co-owner, but were not involved in the daily operation. Other formal businesses were defined as family ventures where husband and wife worked side by side. And as previously mentioned, two husbands worked as chefs in restaurants that they co-owned with their wives. Moreover, some women ran their formal business without any family involvement, as they were either sole owners and managed the business independently or with a non-family partner. In

²⁰⁴ A few informal businesses owners reported that they often hired men to help them with the *saltado* (the "jumping" of the ingredients as you stir-fry the dish *lomo saltado*).

²⁰⁵ Scholars link certain foods to masculinity. Sociologist Jefferey Sobal (2005, 137) for example, highlights beef, hamburgers, potatoes, and beer as foods that are considered masculine in the United States and in many other Western post-industrial societies.

many informal businesses, however, husbands, sons and daughters occupied vital roles for the survival of the business. Yet some informal enterprises were run without any male involvement.

The informal business space often overlaps with the domestic realm which exacerbates gendered meanings linked to informal food businesses, reflecting the traditional image of women in the kitchen and domestic cooking. Observing the range of Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs who operated informally, there was a clear majority of women. However, also some men had established informal culinary businesses. These men often served meat-based dishes, char grilled food, or dishes that required physical strength to prepare such as *lomo saltado* and *chancho/carnero al palo*.²⁰⁶ A few had also an educational background in culinary arts and experience from formal culinary businesses, which was seldom the case for female informal culinary entrepreneurs.



Image 4.1. Men working with meat, as they prepare *carnero al palo* at a cultural event.

Diana and her husband Marco's home-based venture exemplifies how many informal entrepreneurs negotiate normative perceptions of femininity and masculinity

²⁰⁶ *Chancho/carnero al palo* refers to a Peruvian pork/lamb dish consisting of roasted/smoked pork/lamb. Large pieces of meat are arranged on steel racks and roasted on wood fire.

within informal business spaces. They ran two different but merging ventures, operated within the realm of their own rented apartment. In Peru, Marco worked as head chef in a distinguished restaurant in Lima. A friend, who had lived on the US East Coast for several years, convinced him to make the transnational move and apply for a job at one of the many emerging Peruvian restaurants there. During almost a decade on the East Coast, he worked at a variety of Peruvian restaurants. Diana, however, did not like it there. They decided hence to move closer to her family who resided on the American West Coast. In Los Angeles Marco found a job at a Peruvian restaurant, but soon discovered that while his experience as chef had provided him with a decent pay on the East Coast, despite his undocumented immigration status, the Peruvian restaurants in Los Angeles did not recognize his title and experience, as everyone in the kitchen were paid a minimum wage.²⁰⁷ He opted thus for quitting his job in the formal labor market to expand the informal business which he had already been running on the side of his restaurant job. Together with his wife they opened a semi-restaurant in their home where they over the past decade had served a mainly Latinx customer base with backgrounds from a variety of countries. While Marco was main responsible for the informal restaurant business, Diana had her own home-based business making Peruvian *tamales* and *alfajores*, which she sold in large quantities to formal Peruvian restaurants.

Marco and Diana's trajectories are yet another story of how undocumented status often lead immigrants to experience downward social mobility in the receiving society. However, while Marco entered the informal culinary market due to his professional experience as chef, Diana capitalized on her background as a stay-at-home mother with long experience from preparing the family meals. Marco moved from the public sphere and formal economy into the private, domestic and informal domain, while Diana extended her work in the kitchen. Despite running a joint family business and performing similar tasks, their experience was gendered, and reflected two distinct roles within the culinary space, men as chefs and women as domestic cooks. In this case, both drew on human capital—in form of educational and occupational background (Marco)

²⁰⁷ Other studies have documented similar differences between Los Angeles and other parts of the country due to the bifurcated labor market and the availability of low-wage Latinx immigrant labor. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001, 3-4) states that families from Los Angeles who move to cities like Seattle or Durham are surprised to find that it is much more expensive to hire a full-time housekeeper in these cities than in Los Angeles, where such work is dominated by Latinx immigrant women.

and informal intersectional resources (Diana)—to overcome the disadvantage of being an undocumented immigrant. And though Marco entered a space traditionally reserved for women, he capitalized on his role as chef, traditionally linked to masculinity. The informal culinary business space is hence gendered. Yet, it also constitutes a space in which both men and women can fulfill normative expectations to femininity and masculinity.

When the line between these imaginaries of the feminine and masculine is crossed, however, discrimination based on gender may occur. Jorge and Gerthy had built their business around Gerthy's skills and name. They had hence prioritized her education over his, and she occupied a protagonist role in the business management. Jorge, stated that he “[h]ad to occupy a secondary role”,²⁰⁸ since it was an important strategy to place Gerthy as the “face of the business”.²⁰⁹

She is the visible figure everywhere. I am like her agent behind the camera, behind the carpet, doing all the necessary things so that she can progress. To me that is not a problem. Sometimes... when *machismo* is a very strong force in a person, it would have been an obstacle, right, to see that the woman progresses, or that she is the one that has more authority and everything, right. But not in my case, because it was something we had expected.²¹⁰

Instead, Jorge found a role in the business that he could be comfortable with, by taking responsibility of administrative tasks, although he also worked hands-on in production. Earlier, such work was associated with women and with gay people, he told me. But now, there are so many male chefs, so those prejudices have changed, he stated. But although he had found a way to occupy a role that conformed with masculine ideals, he had also experienced negative reactions and had received denigrating comments about his secondary role in the business.

²⁰⁸ “[t]enia que ocupar un papel de Segundo termino”.

²⁰⁹ “el rostro de la empresa”.

²¹⁰ “Ella es la que sale en todos los lugares. Y yo soy como su actor detrás de la cámara, detrás del telón, haciendo todas las cosas para que ella pueda salir adelante. Por mí no hay problema. A veces... cuando el machismo está muy prendido en uno, hubiera sido un obstáculo, no, al ver que la mujer sale adelante, o que ella es la que más tenga autoridad y todo, no. Pero en mi caso no, porque era algo que ya habíamos previsto.”

Gender Relations Reproduced, Challenged and Changed

Examples provided in this chapter, as well as in the previous, show that migration as well as the business experience challenge gender relations. In Chapter 3, I highlighted how deskilling and legal immigration status inhibited Elisa's husband, Carlos, to land a satisfying job. Thus, he ended up working in the low-wage construction sector. Later, his undocumented status prevented him from renewing his drivers' license, which cost him his job. Elisa, who consequently found herself obliged to contribute to the family economy, capitalized on culinary skills and landed a job in a Peruvian restaurant, where she gained valuable experience which she later exploited in order to start a family business. Consequently, Elisa went from being a stay-at-home mother to become the family's breadwinner. Carlos, on the other hand, became the primary caregiver in the family, a role that in Peru had been reserved for the mother and the housekeeper. As they opened a restaurant, the culinary business space facilitated the division of parenting responsibilities, which were largely exercised within the business realm.

Family stage migration contributed to alter gendered dynamics in the family. Some of the Peruvian women came to the United States only after their husbands had resided in the country during a considerable period of time. Others spearheaded the family's migration process and had already established important relationships with US society and its institutions when their husbands decided to reunite with them. Gloria, whom I introduced in Chapter 3, reported that transnational motherhood as a result of family stage migration challenged gendered practices and further shaped her entry into self-employment. When her husband moved to the United States he took their oldest son with him, leaving Gloria behind in Peru with their daughters, before they all reunited in the United States five years later. In the country of origin, Gloria worked outside the home, also when her children were small. In the receiving society, however, she did not want to leave her children with anyone else. Prolonged separation from her oldest son made her realize that she needed to be physically close to her children, which prevented her from taking on wage work. Their economic situation, however, required Gloria to work, prompting her to open a home-based informal business, which she later managed to formalize

and convert into a brick and mortar restaurant. Transnational motherhood changed her perceptions of the centrality of mothering work. This experience led Gloria to take on a more physically and temporally intensive mothering role in the United States. Running a home-based business facilitated such gendered practices.

Other Peruvian women reported similar experiences, corroborating previous studies that claim that migration reconfigures gender relations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Pessar and Mahler 2003). Although most of the Peruvian women identified gender relations in the receiving society as more equal than in the country of origin, the changes reported by Elisa, Gloria and other Peruvian women do not seem to be exclusively related to their encounter with what they perceived as “American” gender norms. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) argues that patriarchal gender relations do not automatically disintegrate or break down in the process of adaptation to the host society. They undergo, however, a continual renegotiation process, and are reconstructed on different levels, conditioned by the context and patterns of migration, promoted not by a modernizing influence or acculturation process through the encounter with Anglo-feminist ideology, but by structural rearrangements that foster social change in spousal relations. She highlights family stage migration as one such factor. Whereas family stage migration had an impact on Gloria’s mothering practices, downward economic mobility in the receiving society, as well as the family’s lack of legal status influenced the division of productive and reproductive labor²¹¹ among Elisa and her husband.

Moreover, Elisa and Gloria’s stories illustrate how the reconstruction of gender relations shape and is shaped by their participation in the labor market and in business. With its emphasis on mobility outcomes, the ethnic entrepreneurship literature has in large part ignored such non-economic effects, although a few scholars have pointed to similar dynamics. In her study of Korean family business owners, which I have alluded to earlier in this chapter, Lee (2006) notes that wage work or working in family businesses may place women in new situations where change in

²¹¹ Feminist theorists, particularly those adhering to a Marxist tradition, have employed the term “social reproduction” or “reproductive labor” when referring to a range of activities, tasks, and resources related to taking care of children, the elderly, the sick and the home. Other feminists prefer to use terms like “caring” and “care work” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001, 23). In this dissertation, I use these terms interchangeably.

family relations and renegotiation of norms would take place. Among the Korean families she studied, however, she found little evidence of such process. The husbands continued to exercise authority in the family, and in the business, women were considered as workers, not co-owners, despite their high involvement in business operations. Their participation in business did not give them enhanced power in conjugal relations either. The fact that Korean women participated in the venture actually allowed their husbands to exercise authority over the wife both at home and at work. The Peruvian women I interviewed were not all engaged in family businesses, but some were. These women considered themselves as owner of the business, and most of them figured as owner on official paperwork. As I have argued earlier in this chapter, some of them even saw themselves as owner, and their husbands as paid employees or just unpaid family help. Hence, contrary to Lee's findings among Korean family businesses, the Peruvian women's stories suggest that while migration impulses a process through which gender relations are renegotiated, women's involvement in culinary businesses intensifies this process.²¹²

The reconstruction of gender relations in the context of migration and entrepreneurship is further demonstrated by how the Peruvian women negotiate decision-making within the family as well as spatial mobility. Jaqueline, a restaurant owner whom I introduced in Chapter 2, came to the United States with her children, while her husband stayed on for one year in Peru. Although she worked in the country of origin, her husband made the family decisions, since he earned more money than her. This changed with migration.

The fact that I came here one year before him, this might be the most important factor. Because during this year, one gains more experience and learns how life is here. So, when he comes, he has to look for a job and everything. But I am in a more secure position. I am one step ahead of him... So, since both of us have an income, both of us have to pay rent... [A]lthough unintended, it makes you change your ways. Because, first, there [in Peru] we had a car, and he drove us everywhere. And then, here we each have our car, so you become more independent, I with my things and you with yours. You work in your business, and I work in my restaurant. I think this is what makes it change. It is not like one says:

²¹² It is important here to note that I specifically sought out businesses that were run by women, or in which women at least saw themselves as owner or co-owner of the business. My findings might have varied a bit more if I had explored gender relations in Peruvian family businesses exclusively. However, Verdager's study points in a similar direction. While not the focal point of her study, her findings suggested that entrepreneurship granted Peruvian and Salvadoran female entrepreneurs in Washington DC an escape route from patriarchal power relations (2009, 174).

“Enough! In Peru you decided, so here we will... no.” It is the situation you live, I think that is why this happens.²¹³

Family stage migration seems to have reconfigured gender relations also in Jaqueline’s family. Contrary to Gloria’s story, however, it was not her husband but Jaqueline herself who migrated first together with her children. This experience had given her a bargaining position in the family, which had weakened patriarchal relations and challenged the balance of family power and authority. Jaqueline also mentioned how she in the United States enjoyed enhanced spatial mobility. In Peru, she was more dependent on her husband for driving her around. In the United States, however, she had obtained a drivers’ license, and felt more independent since she could drive her own car.

The aspect of spatial mobility is indeed a recurrent theme in the Peruvian women’s narratives. On the one hand, they relayed about husbands who lost or were not able to revalidate their drivers’ licenses due to their irregular migration status, which had impacted the men’s spatial mobility, and thus also made it hard for them to land a job. On the other hand, women who did not drive in Peru, had felt the necessity to obtain a license in the United States, especially in Los Angeles which lacks a well-developed public transportation system. Such infrastructure restricted the spatial mobility for Peruvian women who were used to easily get around with public transportation in Peru.²¹⁴ Carla’s story is an example of her resistance to unequal gender relations in her marriage. With laughter and a sense of pride she told me about how she went behind her husband’s back, and took the car when he was away. First just around the block, then around two blocks and finally she was able to drive, which gave her a convincing argument when trying to persuade her husband to let her take the driver’s test. Her driver’s license was pivotal for her to be able to run her informal

²¹³ “El hecho de que yo haya venido un año antes, eso es lo que dice más. Porque como en ese año uno gana más experiencia, ya sabe más como es la vida aquí. Entonces, cuando él viene, él va a buscar un trabajo y todo, pero yo estoy más segura. Yo estoy con un pie más adelante que él, entonces, siempre hay eso... Entonces, como cada uno gana, hay que pagar la renta, pues. (...) [Q]ue te hace cambiar, sin querer, tu forma. Porque primero allí tuvimos un caro, donde él nos llevaba por todo lado. Y después, acá cada uno tiene su carro, entonces cada uno se independiza más, yo en mis cosas y tú en las tuyas. Tú trabajas en tu transporte, y yo trabajo en mi restaurante. Yo creo que eso hace que cambie. No es que uno diga: ‘Hasta aquí ya! En Perú tú mandabas, y acá vamos a... no.’ La misma situación que uno va viviendo, yo creo que es por eso que pasa eso.”

²¹⁴ Though the transportation system in Peruvian cities is not very well organized (this has changed considerably during the last decade, especially in Lima with the construction of *La Metropolitana* [bus line] and *El tren eléctrico* [light rail]), low standard public transportation is available and for many the only option to get around, since owning a car is a luxury for many families.

home-based business independently, since she often made food deliveries at people's houses.

Conversely, after several decades in the United States, Victoria still found herself spatially limited to her house since she did not have a drivers' license. In Peru, she had been able to move around with public transportation, and as I have described in Chapter 3, she had managed to open her own travel agency. When migrating to the United States, she became more dependent on her husband, Juan. Although she was head of their informal business venture and considered herself as the boss and Juan as a paid employee, her mobility was conditioned by Juan's availability and work schedule, since he had a day job. "the big limitation that I have had and have still is that I do not drive",²¹⁵ she told me sadly. When they put up their booth at different events and venues, Juan transported her and all the equipment. He bought a big car that fit plastic tables, portable stoves, chairs and big casseroles in addition to big boxes of cooked food and fresh ingredients. Yet, since large parts of the business operation was performed within the confines of their house, Victoria still felt that she was better off this way. The first years in the United States she had spent cleaning houses, bringing her children with her while walking long distances. Los Angeles is a car city, and in the suburb where Victoria had settled with her family, public transportation was scarce.

The examples above demonstrate that gendered experiences are mediated by place and the physical environment which changes with migration. The infrastructure of urban areas like Los Angeles and cities around transformed Peruvian immigrant women's "geographical habitus" (Schmalzbauer 2014)²¹⁶ and shaped their entrepreneurial opportunities and practices. Access to a driver's license and a car enhanced some women's spatial mobility and extended their independence in their business ventures, not having to rely on their male kin for transportation. Limited access to public transportation, on the other hand, restricted women's spatial mobility enjoyed in the country or origin and reinforced spatial immobility experienced in Peru, which in some cases conditioned entrepreneurial practices. Whereas owning car is not

²¹⁵ "El gran límite que yo he tenido y tengo hasta ahora es que yo no manejo".

²¹⁶ Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus,²¹⁶ sociologist Leah Schmalzbauer develops the term *geographic habitus*, which she defines as "a disposition they [immigrants] have developed through their relationship with the natural landscapes and built environments that have contextualized their lives" (Schmalzbauer 2014, 76). Though Schmalzbauer employs the term in relation to immigrants' connection to nature and to rural/urban landscapes, I find the concept useful here.

always a necessity in Peru, and Peruvian men and women alike come to the United States without driving experience, it is much less common for a Peruvian woman to have a drivers' license than for a man. Apart from gendered differences, access to a driver's license in Peru was further mediated by social class, and in the United States it had also been conditioned by legal immigration status. This left many Peruvian women with a disadvantage in a geographical context such as Southern California, and resonates with what was stated by one of the Mexican-born women who participated in migration scholar Rafaél Alarcón and his colleagues' study of Mexican immigrants in Metropolitan LA: "In Los Angeles, learning to drive is more important than learning English" (2016, 83).

Hence, the ruptures that Peruvian women experienced with migration challenged gendered dynamics within families, as well as gendered orientations to space. As this affected the women's business opportunities and practices, business ownership also reinforced these processes, and contributed to the reconfiguration of gendered family relations.

* * *

Gendered orientations to space linked to business and to the culinary realm inform women and men's experiences within Peruvian food ventures, and, as previous scholarship has noted, gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class and legal immigration status in shaping entrepreneurial practices. Whereas intersectional male/female comparative studies often find that Latinx women occupy a more precarious social position in business than their male counterparts, I have demonstrated that under certain circumstances women also benefit from their gendered position. Their social location facilitates and constrains their access to important resources. Yet, a favorable opportunity structure for Peruvian gastronomy allows Peruvian immigrant women to exert situated intersectional agency and to draw on gendered, classed and cultural experiences from the country of origin to occupy roles as head of independent and family businesses. Hence, the women also challenge intersecting oppressive social structures.

The nested approach reminds us to look beyond the economy and the market in order to understand the factors that shape ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. This chapter has highlighted the often-ignored skills that are acquired outside the formal education system and the labor market, as many of these Peruvian women possessed valuable skills for business accumulated in the private domestic sphere, forcing us to broaden a rather limited view on individual human capital attainment and reductive categorical divisions between so-called skilled/unskilled labor/migrants. In tandem with previous scholarship, I have shown that migration challenges gender relations through continuing renegotiation processes. Expanding on this, however, I have argued that immigrant women's entry into business ownership informs these negotiations, and contributes to the reconfiguration of gender relations. Hence, with its emphasis on broader socio-spatial processes, the nested approach, enables us to notice business outcomes beyond those of economic incorporation, financial profit and upward mobility.

Chapter 5: Precarious Entrepreneurship or Resistive Mothering?²¹⁷

In this chapter I show how mothering responsibilities not only contributed to push these women into self-employment, but also shaped their entrepreneurial practices as well as their understanding of business success. During my time in the field, I often observed family interaction within the business space, and I got to know some of the women's children (and grandchildren) as they worked alongside their mothers in informal ventures, waited tables at their mother's restaurant, or spent time in the business after school, sitting down at a table to do homework or to eat. While these were mostly school age children and young adults, I also witnessed mothers and grandmothers taking breaks from their work to feed their toddlers in the restaurant, as well as preschoolers and younger children tugging their mummies' clothes, demanding attention of mothers who were too busy with informal business matters in the domestic kitchen to attend to their requests. As they complement the women's own narratives, these observations enhance the insights that I present in this chapter, in which I focus on how Peruvian women negotiate motherhood in culinary businesses. I argue that gender intersects with life course, and particularly with motherhood, in contouring broader life projects and hence also entrepreneurial objectives and strategies.

It is well established in the gender and entrepreneurship literature that self-employment has become a strategy for women who struggle to combine work with child rearing (Jennings and Brush 2013; Gabaldon, De Anca, and Galdón 2015). Scholars who focus on mothers and work-life balance primarily point to the failure of the state to develop family friendly policies that could potentially facilitate women's work-family conflict. Scholarship on entrepreneurship and motherhood has emphasized the role of neoliberalism in shaping women's entrepreneurial actions (Vandenbeld Giles 2014), as women are often pushed into self-employment in order to mitigate the limitations of the neoliberal economic model which fails to resolve family-related issues (Wilton 2017;

²¹⁷ In line with anthropologist Melinda Vandenbeld Giles, I employ the term mothering as "a universal discursive device" (2014, 2). While recognizing the multiplicity of forms of mothering, I highlight that mothering is not limited to women's practices, since acts of mothering can be performed by fathers, grandparents, LGBTQ parents etc. The term refers to "the work of primary caregiving, being responsible for the economic, educational, and social care of another human being" (2014, 2). Mothering, however, is highly gendered, since it is primarily performed by women on a global scale.

Anderson and Moore 2014). As sociologists Gillian Anderson and Joseph G. Moore observe, “[n]eoliberal policies have offloaded the costs and responsibilities of social reproduction onto families, women, and especially mothers” (2014, 96). Anthropologist Melinda Vandenbeld Giles (2014) argues that the neoliberal model is inherently paradoxical in the way it, on the one hand, prioritizes the role of mothers, while, on the other hand, the only subject that is recognized is the individual market actor. She also draws attention to how placing mothering within the market realm reinforces dualistic conceptualizations of motherhood linked to the public/private divide ingrained in liberal economics. She claims that under the conceptualization of the working mother as an exclusive subjectivity in which social reproduction and caregiving is neglected “[m]others must be neoliberal self-optimizing economic agents in the ‘public’ realm *and* maternalist self-sacrificing mothers in the ‘private’ realm” (2014, 4). Mothers’ participation in the labor market hence entrenches essentialist conceptualizations of mothering. Under neoliberal economic regimes, mothers—often the primary caregivers in the family—are left to themselves to unravel how to reconcile work with care responsibilities. Under the US liberal welfare regime, social welfare benefits constitute a privilege and not a right, and are often only accessible for a limited elite (Collins 2019).

I extend the critique against the neoliberalist model, and contend that the public assistance the aforementioned scholars are advocating for, such as affordable quality child care, paid parental leave, etc., may facilitate work-life balance for these Peruvian mothers in a way that entrepreneurship cannot. I argue, however, that the critique of neoliberalist policies must be accompanied by a less homogenizing view of mothering/motherhood and a rethinking of the boundaries often traced between work and family, between the private and the public sphere. I demonstrate how Peruvian entrepreneurial mothers negotiate these boundaries as they juggle business ownership with mothering responsibilities in a complex context shaped by transnational migration as well as by the opportunity structure in the receiving society.

Informed by a feminist view of power relations as central to understanding gender, I draw on recent approaches that seek to decenter a geopolitically, racially and classed bias within feminist epistemology. Employing intersectional (Crenshaw 1991) and decolonial feminist (Lugones 2010; Oyěwùmí 2016) lenses allows me to maintain

a sensitivity to the Peruvian women's own lived reality of motherhood, and to avoid reproducing Western bourgeois feminist universalist treatment of concepts such as "gender equality", "female emancipation" and "motherhood/mothering". Inspired by decolonial theory of resistance (Lugones 2010), I explore Peruvian women's agency when navigating competing expectations to motherhood/mothering, on the one hand, and to providing economically for the family, on the other.

The majority of the Peruvian women take on gendered roles as primary caregivers in the family. Hence, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, they reproduce gendered relations, which also further entrench neoliberal values of individualism. Yet, I argue that the women simultaneously draw on familistic values, and contest deeply ingrained structures in the capitalist economic system and in the individualist neoliberal model by challenging dichotomous constructions of oppositional work/family and "female" domestic/"male" public spheres. The women's resistance toward the neoliberal economic order forms part of a broader feminist resistance to how the economy and labor markets are structured according to masculine templates, which has constructed an imagined boundary between work and family, by valuing production over reproduction, and by leaving social reproductive tasks to be solved by the individual.

Furthermore, while Latinx immigrants face a racialized discourse through which they are constructed as a threat, Latinx mothers and particularly those who are undocumented immigrants are discursively portrayed as not complying with US ideals of motherhood and neoliberal, capitalist economic and sociocultural frames. They have been labelled breeders—culturally predisposed to have a lot of children—and are often pejoratively represented for dropping so-called "anchor babies" on US soil (Chavez 2013, 202).²¹⁸ Undocumented Latinx mothers are further described as bad parents for bringing their children to the United States without authorization. As a judge uttered in a court battle in which a Latinx mother tried to regain custody of her son who had been separated from her as she was detained on immigrant charges: "illegally smuggling herself into the country is not a lifestyle that can provide any stability for the child"

²¹⁸ Anthropologist Leo Chavez (2013, 80) points out that in the video game "Border Patrol", players can shoot at a character called "the breeder".

(cited in Ross and Hill July 18, 2012). The findings in this study counter these negative portrayals, as Peruvian mothers, also those with undocumented status, go to great extents to care for their children, to give them a stable home, and to get them through college in order for them to access opportunities that many of the women themselves were deprived of. Culinary entrepreneurship forms part of these strategies.

“I was always there with my children”—Negotiating Notions of Motherhood

Among the Peruvian mothers in this study,²¹⁹ motherhood and mothering were salient themes that frequently emerged when they talked about their business, also when not asked specifically about this. In general, the Peruvian women’s experiences echo socially enforced notions of the cisheteronormative family adhering to conventional ideals of femininity and masculinity that present the mother as the caretaker who sacrifices herself for her family and the husband as the primary economic provider. This role, however, may be privileged over, but not opposed to a function of contributing financially to the household economy. In Peru, most of these women worked outside the house, though a privileged social class position permitted some of them to stay at home and take care of young children. In the United States however, all of the women entered the work force; most of them worked as paid employees before they started their own entrepreneurial venture. And, as I have discussed in the preceding chapter, a few of the women took on the main responsibility of providing economically for the family, prompted by their own or their husbands’ experiences of marginalization as Latinx immigrants in the United States, also linked to undocumented status. As business owners and primary caregivers, the women engaged in an array of socio-spatial arrangements linked to child rearing and work. The physical presence of the mother in children’s upbringing emerged as an ideal among the Peruvian women, though several also agreed with what Victoria told me: “being a mother is important, but it is not everything”.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Thirty-one of thirty-five women had children. As more than half of the women were aged fifty and older, several relayed about previous experiences of motherhood or referred to their experiences as grandmothers expected to care for their grandchildren.

²²⁰ “Ser madre es importante, pero no es todo”.

The women often compared their experiences with juggling work and mothering responsibilities to their conceptions of US mothers. Gloria elaborated,

I was lucky to be able to work many years from home since I was selling food from my house. I see that it is different here. Many mothers do not have the same opportunity to stay home with their children and educate them. Out of the twenty-four hours they only see their children in the evening and during weekends. I did not want that for my children. Some ask why their children have succumbed to drugs and to gangs, but there were no one at home with them. I was always there with them. I was always there with my children. They came home from school and had someone to talk to.²²¹

Similar to Gloria's statement above, conceptualizations of motherhood tied to temporal and physical presence were frequently articulated by the Peruvian women, as many of them were preoccupied with "being there for [their] children" while also running a business. Gloria's perception of mothering in the receiving society is represented by the working woman who outsources care responsibilities and prioritizes paid work over social reproduction. Gloria, however, resisted such practice. She even felt sorry for US mothers whom she presumed did not have the same opportunities as her; to be able to be physically and quantitatively present in the children's lives. She provided a social causal analysis of North American children's inclinations to drugs and gangs, and referred to her own way of prioritizing working at home as the reason why her children were doing so well as adolescents. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, her actions were not solely rooted in cultural conceptions of motherhood and mothering in the country of origin, since she used to work outside the home in Peru. They were rather shaped by migration, particularly influenced by her experiences with transnational motherhood, and reinforced through her encounter with forms of mothering in the receiving society, from which she distanced herself. Conversely, some of the Peruvian women who had time consuming roles in their restaurant business expressed sadness over not having been able to be more "present" in their children's upbringing. Running their own culinary businesses, however, opened up the possibility for some to combine

²²¹ "Tuve la suerte de poder trabajar en mi casa durante muchos años, ya que vendía comida desde mi casa. Veo que aquí es diferente. Muchas madres no tienen la misma oportunidad de estar con sus hijos y educarlos. De las veinticuatro horas, solo ven a sus hijos en la noche y en fin de semana. Yo no quería eso para mis hijos. Algunos preguntan por qué sus hijos se han ido a las drogas y a las pandillas, pero no había nadie en la casa que estaban con ellos. Yo estaba siempre allí con mis hijos. Llegaban de la escuela y tenían con quién conversar."

work with child-rearing, particularly for women who had established home-based culinary ventures, but also for those who ran businesses separated from the domestic space.

Motherhood has been related to reproductive practices of preserving, nurturing, and training children for adult life, and the physical presence of the mother is a central element (Illanes 2010, 205). Employment is hence considered in opposition to mothering (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997, 551), and mothering an obstacle to women's liberation, only achieved through parity with what can be seen as an ideal corresponding to a male template. Prevailing myths about the family as separated from society continue to shape gendered expectations and are reflected in cultural ideals and public policies (Messner, Zinn, and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005, 283). When women enter the labor force the physical proximity between mother and child is constantly interrupted for long periods of time. Working mothers challenge this culturally inherited image of motherhood. Hence, the working mother has emerged as the ideal feminine subject in Western feminist struggles for gender equality and women's emancipation from patriarchy, which has long centered around freeing women from the constraints in the domestic sphere, like mothering practices and care work. However, critical scholarship has warned against "examining motherhood as if there is a universal maternal subject who is oppressed by the institution of motherhood in homogenous ways" (Mack 2018, 11). As with gender, the notion of motherhood and gendered ideals of mothering are also socially and historically constructed, and vary across time and space, as well as across determinants as race, class and culture. And as Gloria's story illustrates, they can also change with migration.

In the preceding chapter, I highlighted how ideals of femininity and masculinity have been forged in Latin America, especially though not exclusively through colonial structures—which introduced patriarchy to a variety of pre-existing gender practices. Through the same processes, imaginaries of motherhood have been produced with certain features and symbolic dimensions that emphasize the mother's role in the family

linked to sacrifice, devotion and physical and emotional presence (Illanes 2010, 207).²²² Sociologists Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila note that many Latinx working women consider the woman's possibility to be home with the children as the ideal. They relate this ideal to both White, middle-class ideology as well as to strong Latinx traditions, cultural practices and ideals that are rooted in cultural institutions of industrialization and urbanization, as well as to preindustrial, rural peasant arrangements that made it possible for women to work and care for their children simultaneously (1997, 551). Scholars have also highlighted the role familism plays in Latinx culture, referring to how individual ambitions often yield to more important family and collective needs (Ovink 2014; Valdez 2016; Desmond and Turley 2009).²²³ Familist values can both ease and increase an individual's care responsibilities, since these may include expectations to care for other family members' children or elderly parents-in-law, while the extended family network also provides individuals with help to care for their own children. Studies have revealed, however, that a familistic or individualistic ideology may present itself differently across gender (Ovink 2014; Valdez 2016)²²⁴ and social class (Vallejo and Lee 2009).²²⁵²²⁶

However, as detailed in Chapter 1, although motherhood has been the pillar of feminine identity in Peru, the working woman is progressively gaining status as the ideal, though this process varies in terms of region, race, ethnicity, social class, education level etc. Given that the working woman is often perceived as more emancipated than the domesticated maternal subject, some feminists would view this as a linear progress toward a more gender equal society. In Western feminist tradition, maternity has been

²²² Sociologist Javiera Cienfuegos Illanes (2010, 107-8) presents these features and symbolic dimensions as follows: (1) The mother as the representation of origin and the foundation of the Latin American family as an institution. (2) The image of the mother is linked to sacrifice—the mother as someone who sacrifices herself for her children. (3) The mother as a 'present mother'—who cannot be physically and emotionally distanced from her children and husband.

²²³ Desmond and Turley (2009, 314) define familism as "a social pattern whereby individual interests, decisions, and actions are conditioned by a network of relatives thought in many ways to take priority over the individual".

²²⁴ In her study of young Latinxs' college pathways, sociologist Sarah Ovink found that familism, often exclusively associated with culture, is also gendered, as "[t]he intersection of gendered cultural schemas and familistic beliefs led to gendered college pathways" (2014, 283).

²²⁵ Sociologists Jody Vallejo and Jennifer Lee have studied patterns of giving back to poor relatives and to the ethnic community among 1.5- and second-generation Mexicans in the United States. They observed that a collectivist ideology was more present among study participants who had grown up as poor, but who had later entered the middle class, than among those who had grown up with a middle-class lifestyle.

²²⁶ A collectivist family ideology in Peru is not only a cultural construct, but rooted in structural causes. Peru ranks low on the welfare development index and behind other Latin American countries (Cruz-Martinez 2014), while Latin American welfare regimes in general rely heavily on family and community (Franzoni 2008). Hence, Peruvian families' well-being depends largely on women's paid and unpaid work as well as on the labor market.

treated as an inherent institution that needed to be rejected by women for them to be able to achieve gender parity with what can be seen as a masculine ideal embodied by the male worker. In her seminal work *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) noted that women's oppression is anchored in her role as primary caretaker of young children. White second wave feminists in the United States highlighted the maternal experience in the traditional nuclear family as oppressive, and fought an important battle to provide women with access to the work place (Mack 2018, 3), which was previously reserved for men. In *The Feminine Mystique*, for example, Betty Friedan (1963) criticizes the dominating belief that women's only fulfillment was tied to their role in the domestic sphere (cited in Mack 2018, 3). These struggles, however, centered around a universalized feminine subject constructed in relation to the experiences of White middle- and upper-class women. Black American feminist scholars (Hooks 1984; Hill Collins 2005) as well as decolonial gender scholars (Oyěwùmí 2016) have challenged Eurocentric views of motherhood, and have contributed to a more complex understanding of the relationship between family and work. This has further challenged the private/public dichotomy rooted in "the cult of domesticity" as a cultural variant of motherhood facilitated by the industrial revolution and "by particular configurations of global and national socioeconomic and racial inequalities" (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997, 551). Hence, "the glorification and exaltation of isolationist, privatized mothering is historically and culturally specific" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2017a, 550) and linked to the lived experiences of White middle-class women, while women of color and of lower social strata have always participated in the public sphere and in labor processes. Such racial and classed differences are also prevalent in Latin America and in Peru.

Radha Hegde (1999) contends that due to a Western bias, feminist theorization has failed to approach motherhood from the perspective of the margins. It has hence not been able to view mothering as resistive. Such experiences from the margin are also often overlooked in scholarship that focus on motherhood and work-life balance, as well as in those works that study entrepreneurial mothers, which often omit the experiences of minority mothers in their study samples.²²⁷ In this study, I employ the critical and

²²⁷ See for example Ekinsmyth (2011, 2014), Jacocks (2016), Anderson and Moore (2014), Collins (2019).

decentered lenses presented above in an attempt to avoid reproducing colonial epistemologies of gender and naturalized discourses on motherhood. Such critical examination of the Peruvian mothers' life history accounts elucidates how these women negotiate notions of motherhood/mothering in a complex context in which the circulation of multiple ideals of mothering is tied to racialized and classed subject positions, and is further intensified by transnational South-North migration, as Gloria's story above has elucidated.

“You can notice the difference when the mother is at home”: Reproducing Gendered Mothering Ideals

Assuming the role as primary caregivers, Peruvian women reproduce gendered conceptions of mothering. As business owners, however, they constantly negotiate the boundaries between work and mothering responsibilities. With reference to her informal home-based cake and pastry business, Veronica told me: “I had the opportunity to do both, where I could work and be with my children. You can notice the difference when the mother is at home. I am thankful that I was able to work from home”.²²⁸ The gendered norms of mothering that Veronica's statement represents, are echoed in several of the Peruvian women's stories. Veronica did not challenge gendered notions of mothering, as she assumed a role as primary caregiver, which exempted the father from such obligations. Veronica even earned more money than her husband, but decided to leave her job when her son was born with special needs. When I met her in 2018, her business, as well as a part-time job, provided her with an income, yet the salary and business revenue combined were not even close to her husband's remuneration, let alone to what she herself used to earn. Running home-based businesses in order to be able to juggle their primary role as caregivers in the family with work and an income, Peruvian mothers, like Veronica, contribute to reinforce gendered inequalities tied to mothering and to gendered divisions of social reproductive labor. While gendered mothering acts limit their business practices, many women willingly accept these limitations, since their primary priority is their children and family's well-being.

²²⁸ “Se nota la diferencia cuando la madre está en la casa. Gracias pude trabajar en la casa”.

An emergent scholarship has engaged in debates about mothers who leave paid work for business in order to configure their work around mothering obligations. While some scholars argue that such practices have potential for social transformation and emancipation, others view this kind of entrepreneurial labor as precarious, and claim that these practices only contribute to further entrenching existing gender inequalities (Ekinsmyth 2014, 1231).²²⁹ These latter scholars overlook, however, that the dichotomization of family and work and of the private and the public sphere is culturally produced across a variety of contexts. Many of these studies base their evidence on the experiences of White middle-class women in the global North, and fail to acknowledge the multiplicity of mothering practices and forms.²³⁰ Such limited sample prevents scholars from moving beyond the narrative of “intensive mothering”²³¹ as an obstacle for work/life balance and hence also an obstacle to gender equality. As they illuminate how immigrant mothers from the Global South negotiate notions of mothering in the United States, the Peruvian women’s experiences complicate these debates. Their narratives demonstrate how ideals of mothering and of the “good mother” as well as the dichotomization of the private and the public sphere are historically and culturally constructed. And as I have argued in the previous chapter, they also demonstrate how the migration experience reconfigures and sometimes also reinforces gendered relations.

Gloria’s story sheds light on how transnational migration reconfigured gendered mothering practices within the family, but also how these experiences challenged her views on mothering. Whereas her husband had taken on mothering responsibilities for her son during the time they were separated, transnational mothering practices did not

²²⁹ Many of these debates depart from the concept of the “mompreneur”. Although the Collins English Dictionary Online ascribes the term mompreneur to all women who combine business with mothering responsibilities, geographer Carol Ekinsmyth (2014, 1231) limits the definition to mothers who configure their enterprise around their role as caregiver. Although many of the Peruvian women could be labelled mompreneurs according to Ekinsmyth’s definition, mothering is not a push factor behind all the women’s ventures. Moreover, for those who do report juggling work and mothering as an important motivating factor for self-employment, other aspects have equally or sometimes even more strongly influenced the women’s choices. Given these circumstances, the mompreneurship label may be essentializing. Hence, I do not employ this label when I talk about Peruvian mothers who are entrepreneurs, although I do engage with some of these discussions and debates.

²³⁰ Studies that focus on entrepreneurial mothers who seek enhanced work-life balance through entrepreneurship and organize their businesses around care work—what many of them label mompreneurship—tend to base their research on White, middle- and upper-class educated married and heterosexual women (Wilton 2017, 201) as they perceive this option as a middle-class phenomenon (Ekinsmyth 2011) and an option only available to this segment of the population (Wilton 2017, 201). Some researchers, however, call for future scholarship to explore the experiences of members of other social groups (Ekinsmyth 2011, 113) and to attend to race and culture (Jacocks 2016, 78).

²³¹ Sharon Hays coined the term “intensive mothering” in her book *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood* (1998) referring to what she viewed as contemporary standards of good mothering. In Hays’ own words, intensive mothering is “constructed as *child-centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive*” (1998, 8; emphasis in original).

satisfy Gloria's ideas of the mother's role in her children's lives. Moreover, when they reunited, Gloria encountered a US labor market with limited prospects for an undocumented Latinx woman. Confronting these multilayered experiences, she opted for self-employment. Despite low revenues, she felt lucky for the opportunity to run a home-based business, which enabled her to "be there" for her children during work hours. Work-life balance was hence one of the reasons behind her home-based informal business, but not the only one.

Despite long work days and countless hours invested in their businesses, few women in this study challenge unequal power relations within the family in terms of sexual division of social reproductive labor. Indeed, Gloria and Veronica's stories exemplify the ways in which many Peruvian women reinforce gendered norms of mothering through entrepreneurship as they strive to reconcile gendered expectations of reproductive care work with business obligations. Yet, the experiences of juggling mothering and work vary significantly among the women in this study. In the following, I elucidate how many of them also challenge deeply ingrained gendered structures in the capitalist economic system by blurring the historically and culturally constructed separation between the domestic and work space. I highlight four different practices: (1) making clear spatial separations between work and family life, (2) starting home-based informal businesses, (3) postponing formal entrepreneurship and brick and mortar business ownership until the children have grown, and (4) bringing children into the business space.

Leaning In—and On: Separate Spheres

Some of the Peruvian women report that they had the opportunity to work because they were able to outsource child care and other domestic responsibilities. Access to child care and domestic help was related to financial means, but also to the possibility of having family members close who could lend the women a helping hand. To many this entailed bringing a family member from Peru. The class aspect of *leaning on* as a way to *lean in* is well documented in the literature on gender and work (Collins 2019;

Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001).²³² For these immigrant women, however, border regimes, and particularly legal status, intersect with financial capacity in conditioning their possibility to bring family members from Peru who can assist them with social reproductive tasks.

Sofía is among the few mothers who state that having children did not affect her role as a business owner. “I haven’t felt it much, no family alteration”,²³³ she told me. The managerial role she occupied in the restaurant was very time consuming, and it was difficult to find time for an interview. Her children were now grown and were pursuing their own careers, while helping out their mother in the restaurant from time to time. This was Sofia

’s second restaurant, both of which she ran together with her husband who besides the restaurant also had his own company. It soon became clear that, in the restaurant, Sofia was the boss. When she opened her first Peruvian restaurant twenty years ago in one of Los Angeles’ burgeoning business districts, the smaller size and its strategic location close to her house allowed her to leave the daily operation to her employees. Hence, she was able to continue working in a large Los Angeles corporation while checking in on the restaurant after work. During weekends, Sofia and her husband took turns supervising the functioning of the business.

So, maybe I missed out on something, but this loss is not very big, and between staying here and sacrificing my time, my career, oh no, I would prefer, so, yes, there is a loss. But I also had a good manager who did all the purchases and he spoiled me. (...) And no, really, with the other restaurant I did not feel the restaurant work so much because the employees did it. (...) So, when it is a small restaurant, I think that, no, you don’t feel it so much, although my daughter was young, ten years. Well, on the other hand, when she was born, my mother-in-law arrived... So, she also helped with, because she could look after her, and I had always a person who worked in the house and who took care of the house, she took care of my girl. So, my mother-in-law managed [the household], right. So, whatever, she was there. (...) So, a

²³² In her book *Making Motherhood Work*, sociologist Catlin Collins (2019) demonstrates how US based mothers to a greater extent than mothers in other Western countries, like Sweden for example where affordable care work is facilitated by the state, *lean on* other women to assist them with child care so that they can *lean in* to their careers. In *Domestica* (2001), sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo sheds light on the lives of Latinx women who often perform remunerated domestic care work in the United States. She also explores the view of the employers.

²³³ “Yo no he sentido mucho, ninguna alteración familiar”.

small restaurant, I don't really see that it affects, except if you have small babies, right, two-three years, oh, no. Impossible right, a restaurant with babies like that.²³⁴

Sofía's statement is illustrative of how axes of privilege, opportunity and constraints like class resources, immigration status and life-stage intersect with gender in shaping the women's possibility to balance work/business ownership and motherhood. While the small size of the restaurant and the location close to their home facilitated Sofía's business obligations, what really allowed her to both have children and run a business was *leaning on* other people (women) in terms of child care and domestic chores, in addition to the increasing independence of her children as they grew older. Moreover, class position along with financial business returns allowed her to occupy a less time-consuming role in the business and *lean on* employees in terms of management. Financial funds along with legal resources also enabled the family to bring the mother-in-law from Peru so she could help out in the home and with the children.

Contrary to Sofía, Pilar occupied a time-consuming role in the restaurants she was running in different middle-class suburbs in the Greater Los Angeles area. Similar to Sofía, however, legal and financial resources allowed Pilar to bring her aunt from Peru. Being able to *lean on* her aunt for child care allowed Pilar to spend sixteen hours a day at the restaurants. When I met her in 2018, Pilar's children were grown. Reflecting back on those years, though, tears filled her eyes as she revealed that she later realized that for years she almost did not see her children, since they were in bed when she came home. Those were the sacrifices she had made. But at least the children were at home with a family member.

In all cases in which the women reported *leaning on* another person in order to *lean in*, that person was almost exclusively another woman (except in a few cases it was the husband). To many of the women it was important that the person to *lean on* was a relative or a trusted person. Angelika, a restaurant owner stated:

²³⁴ "Entonces quizá haya algo de pérdida, pero la pérdida no es tan grande y entre quedarme ahí y sacrificar ese tiempo, mi carrera, no pues, prefería que, pues sí hay un poco de pérdida. Pero también tenía un buen manager que él me hacía todas las compras y me tenía engreída. (...) Y no, realmente con el otro restauaran que no lo he sentido mucho el trabajo de restaurante porque los empleados lo hacían. (...) Entonces cuando es un restaurante chico, yo creo que no, no se siente mucho, a pesar de que yo tenía mi hija chica de diez años. Ahora, por otro lado, cuando ella nació, mi suegra llegó... Entonces ella también ayudó en, porque podía verla, y yo tenía siempre una persona en la casa que trabajaba y se encargaba de la casa, se encargaba de la niña. Entonces mi suegra no más dirigía, no. Cualquier cosa entonces, ahí estaba ella. (...) Entonces, realmente un restaurante pequeño, yo no veo que pueda afectar, salvo que tengas bebés chiquitos, no, dos-tres años, ah, no. Imposible no, un restaurante con bebitos así."

I had the luck, from God, that I got an aunt to me from Peru, I brought her over here and she was taking care of my kids.

Yeah, that's good, so you had somebody who...?

Someone to watch my kids. Somebody who was a relative. (...) If you don't have the luck to have somebody that you trust to take care of the children, that's absolutely no, no, no. That's something that I would absolutely never recommend to anybody. Because trusting your children to somebody who is a stranger, you hear horror stories, horror stories about what happens to children... And so, if you are going to take care of a business and you have to leave your children with people that you do not trust, you never...

In order to be able to dedicate herself to the different restaurants she had been running together with her husband over the years, Angelika saw the need to bring a trusted relative from Peru. Only then did she feel safe to leave her children so that she could work outside the home. Such practices are consistent with the findings in economist Patricia Araceli Saenz-Armstrong's dissertation (2020) in which she explores how issues like gender and legal status affect Latinx immigrant women in the US labor force. She reports that Latinx mothers tend to rely twice as much on family members to care for their children than on commercial child care (2020, 17). These practices are particularly interesting since the delegation of caregiving responsibilities to paid domestic help has been a regular practice in Peru since colonial times among urban middle-class women and has later expanded across class segments in urban areas (Fuertes Medina and Rodríguez 2013). Nevertheless, the use of paid domestic work exists along with informal family arrangements through which women delegate childcare within female-based extended family networks (Freyre Valladolid and López Mendoza September 2011, 31). When confronted with the same alternatives in a migrant context, however, Peruvian mothers seem to prefer to delegate such tasks to family members. To undocumented immigrants, on the other hand, bringing a family member to the United States entails a lot of risk. Legal status, thus, facilitates such practices.

In her book *Making Motherhood Work*, sociologist Caitlyn Collins (2019) compares the opportunities, strategies and experience of working mothers in Sweden, Italy, Germany and the United States. She demonstrates how the lack of an explicit national family policy—which fails to guarantee support for working mothers—prompts US

families to individualize social problems. “Because the state generally doesn’t offer supports for care, people have to turn to the market to purchase this care” and “middle-class women who pay for nannies and housekeepers come to rely on other women’s low wages to enable their own paid labor” (2019, 199). Under such conditions, “the ‘haves’ doing well depends on the ‘have-nots’ having less” (2019, 199). In the US context, class is thus an important factor that intersects with gender in shaping mothers’ opportunities to work and start businesses. However, as the examples above have elucidated, Peruvian immigrant mothers seem to prioritize family members instead of hiring a “stranger”, and bringing a family member from Peru is facilitated by class resources and legal immigration status. As Collins also underscores, working-class mothers are often obliged to work, and do not enjoy the privileges of paying for child care. Many of the Peruvian women who do not have the means to pay for such services or the legal resources required to invite a family member to the country, thus, find other solutions to these problems, as I will discuss in the following.

“I had the opportunity to do both”.²³⁵ Home-based Culinary Businesses

By taking jobs close to home women manage to meet gendered expectations of domestic and reproductive work. Hence, they demonstrate how the organization of work life is influenced by gendered orientations to space (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997, 552; Massey 1994). As I have discussed above, some of the women have started home-based businesses to be able to exercise gendered expectations of motherhood/mothering while contributing to the family’s income. Although they share many of the same values on mothering, their experiences vary substantially. Carla and her husband, Ernesto, grew up in rural villages in the Peruvian Andes. Carla was the most socially marginalized of all the women in the sample. As described in Chapter 3, Carla was obliged to work, to be able to send money to her son. As an undocumented Latinx woman without higher education, her options were limited, but she found a job in agriculture. When her daughters were born, however, she had no other choice than to stay at home and take

²³⁵ “Yo tuve la oportunidad de hacer los dos”.

care of them. So, she started a home-based catering business, and as such juggled her domestic and transnational mothering responsibilities with earning an income.²³⁶

Veronica's story is very different. Her urban, middle-class, educational and professional background provided her with a variety of experiences related to gender, and years of considerable contribution to the family economy gave her a bargaining power in her marriage. However, it did not alter gendered expectations to mothering, which led Veronica—and not her husband—to quit her job in order to care for their children. Although factors such as rural/urban inequities, class and education shape these two Peruvian women's gendered positions within their families differently, their stories merge in their experiences of motherhood. Gendered expectations to mothering mediated their limited mobility and spatial restriction to the domestic sphere, which prompted them to start home-based businesses, as Gloria's story, presented earlier in this chapter, also corroborates. Gloria, Veronica and Carla's stories serve as examples of how very different circumstances may lead immigrant women to opt for a home-based business venture over paid work. Gendered conceptions of mothering, however, shaped all of these women's entrepreneurial trajectories. Veronica and Gloria expressed that they felt lucky to have been able to work from home, since it provided them with "the opportunity to do both". Many Peruvian women, however, juggled formal business ownership in brick-and-mortar businesses separated from the domestic sphere with mothering responsibilities. While some enjoyed financial privileges that allowed them to hire a nanny, or had close family members nearby who could help out with child care, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter, others were more reluctant to "go all in" while their children were small.

Prioritizing Mothering: Postponing Formalization and Start-up

Many of the Peruvian mothers who participated in this study postponed the establishment of (formal) food businesses until their children were grown. Gabriela, whom I have referred to in the preceding chapters, was very proud of running a Peruvian

²³⁶ Within the migration literature there is a range of scholarly work that treats the topic transnational motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Illanes 2010). Some of the participants are also transnational mothers, which I mention in different occasions in this dissertation. However, this is not a salient topic in the data, and will not be treated as a separate discussion.

restaurant that was well received in an affluent suburban neighborhood. Before starting her culinary venture, she ran a home-based PR firm which provided her with the flexibility she needed in order to be able to juggle mothering responsibilities and work. Her husband held a well-paid white-collar job, and also took on a considerable share of domestic chores. In the process of opening the business, her then adolescent children played an important role in helping out with whatever was needed during the first difficult start-up years, before they left for college. When I asked Gabriela about her experiences with being a mother and running a restaurant business, she admitted that she could never have done this when her children were small. Elisa also expressed that “maybe if my children had been small children, it would have been very difficult”.²³⁷ These statements resonate with Sofía’s mention of babies and business earlier in this chapter, and refers to the many hours she daily put into her businesses in order to succeed financially. The women’s declarations draw our attention to the role the children’s age plays in shaping mothers’ engagement in business, reminding us to pay close attention to life course when trying to understand the dynamics of gender, work, and business ownership.

Life course intersected with gendered mothering practices in shaping also Gloria’s entrepreneurial trajectory, temporally constraining expansion and formalization. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, when Gloria came to the United States she started a home-based business, which enabled her to spend more time with her children while they were young. When they grew older, however, her children became more independent, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, her home-based business had provided her with resources that benefitted the establishment of a formal brick-and-mortar restaurant. Consistent with Gabriela’s experience, Gloria also told me that it would have been difficult to run a restaurant while her children were younger. She claims that she would probably not have taken the risk, even if she had possessed the financial means. On my many visits to the restaurant, I observed the family dynamics unfolding within the business place. Gloria managed her crew with gentle firmness, and her husband and son followed her orders, waiting tables and assisting her with other pending tasks. Gloria had moved from being the primary caregiver in the family to

²³⁷ “quizás si mis hijos hubiesen sido niños pequeños, hubiese sido muy difícil”.

becoming the primary economic provider. As her children had entered adulthood, care responsibilities had become less demanding, thus she could dedicate more time to her business, which had led her to expand and formalize it. The fact that her children could earn their own income and be financially independent, also enabled her to invest her savings in the restaurant business.

Resonating with Gloria's story, Veronica told me that she saw a lot of potential in her informal pastry business, and that maybe later on she would expand it and employ someone to help out with production. When I met Veronica in 2018, her son had just received his driver's license. Veronica disclosed that with her son's increased independence—recall that her son required special attention—she would eventually have time to think about business growth:

I have not managed to make my business grow, since I have many responsibilities related to my son. But in six months [he will start working, so] it will be easier, and I will expand the business. I'm conducting a market analysis. I want to have personnel and machineries. But I have had to put my family first. When my son is independent I can dedicate myself more to the business.²³⁸

Gendered mothering practices clearly constrained Gloria and Veronica's opportunities of expansion and formalization, and led them to postpone such business strategies until entering a different life-stage in which care responsibilities were less demanding. The narratives they constructed around their decision to prioritize mothering over ambitions linked to financial business outcome, however, remind us that business goals may vary across the entrepreneur's life course, intimately linked to gendered expectations to social reproduction. While some of the Peruvian women *leaned on* other women and family members to be able to run businesses also when their children are small, other women found their own solutions in order to be able to “be there” for their young children

²³⁸ “No he podido crecer mi negocio, ya que tengo muchas responsabilidades con respecto a mi hijo. Pero en seis meses [él va a empezar a trabajar, así que] va a ser más fácil, y quiero agrandar el negocio. Estoy haciendo un estudio de mercado. Quiero tener personal y maquinaria. Pero he tenido que poner mi familia primero. Cuando mi hijo esté independiente puedo dedicarme más al negocio” [For privacy reasons, I have changed a few minor details in this quote].

Bringing Children into the Culinary Business Space

During my time in the field, I learned that the business space was often a central place for family interaction, since many of the women spent most of their time there. As mothers and grandmothers feeding their (grand)children, helping out with homework, or working alongside their offspring, their businesses provided a space where intergenerational care could be carried out during work hours. Culinary businesses often offer material and spatial resources for nurturing which facilitates such practices within the business space. Moreover, the ethnic profile of the business and the fact that some businesses mainly serve Peruvian and Latinx customers, among whom many are familiar with familistic values, also facilitates these practices. In her study of garment workers in New York's Chinatown, sociologist Min Zhou (2004, 1044-1045) notes that immigrant Chinese women with little English proficiency and low educational level preferred low paid-jobs in Chinatown over higher salaried options elsewhere, since the enclave enabled them to combine work with care responsibilities. Businesses in the Chinese enclave were often more tolerant of the presence of children. Similar to these Chinese enclave enterprises many of the Peruvian culinary businesses also provide spaces for particular cultural practices.

When I visited Lorena's restaurant, I witnessed the regular practice of cross-generational family interaction that occurred within the culinary business space. One day, as I munched on a crispy yet creamy *papa rellena*, I observed how she was able to practice her role as a grandmother while also taking care of customers and running the restaurant kitchen. Her grandchildren had occupied a table in a corner, where the oldest sister assisted the younger with homework. When the restaurant was less crowded, and Lorena was able to take a well-deserved break, she sat down to enjoy a soup with her granddaughters. The easy atmosphere of this simple but impeccably clean and ample business, located in an ethnically diverse working- to middle-class neighborhood, welcomed families and customers of all stages of life, and did not prevent Lorena from combining work and (grand)mothering.

Some Peruvian women, however, needed to balance the presence of children with the image they wanted to transmit to their customers, some aiming beyond a coethnic clientele and towards the higher end of the culinary scene. Pilar, who had opened

multiple upscale Peruvian restaurants in different upper middle-class neighborhoods, was also sometimes obliged to bring her children to work. However, for her it was very important that the restaurant preserved its elegant style, and children running around did not match with such expectations. When her children were present, she kept them in a separate room where they could play.

I did not like that they went there. I felt uncomfortable... I was not the kind of person who, sometimes I have seen, in some Peruvian restaurants, that the children are playing. They are there, sitting at a table doing their homework... That's not for me. The restaurant had to be impeccable, my children behind and not at all coming out. They used to come out to ask me about something... but I also felt uncomfortable keeping them in a room, although it was well adapted to them... with their TV, with air-conditioning... But I did not like that they were in there for a long period of time either, so, I felt relaxed when they were here in the house.²³⁹

Lorena's casual restaurant mainly served a working-class and ethnically diverse clientele. Pilar, on the other hand, targeted an affluent White customer base, which conditioned mothering practices in the business space. Class resources and legal status, however, allowed her to bring her Peruvian aunt to the United States to take care of her children, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter. Liberating her from mothering responsibilities, such arrangement enabled her to meet the expectations that came with competing on this level of the Angelino food scene. It also ensured that her children were taken care of by family. Such a privileged position, though, did not prevent Pilar from feeling that she had missed out on important moments in her children's lives, but these were the sacrifices she had to make in order to be able to run a financially successful Peruvian restaurant business catering to a White affluent clientele, less accustomed with the blurring of the boundaries between family and work. While Peruvian mothers develop a range of strategies in order to challenge these boundaries and to be able to juggle mothering and business ownership, such strategies are shaped not only by gender, but also by business profile and target clientele. Aspirations of

²³⁹ "A mi no me gustaba que vayan allá. Me incomodaba... Yo no era el tipo de persona que, a veces he visto algunos restaurantes peruanos, que los hijitos están jugando. Están ahí y en una mesa están sentados haciendo sus tareas... Para mí nada. El restaurante tenía que ser impecable, mis hijos atrás y para nada estar saliendo. Salían para preguntarme algo... pero también me incomodaba tenerlos metidos en un cuarto, aunque estaba bien acondicionado para ellos... con su televisor, con su aire acondicionado... Pero no me gustaba tampoco que estén ahí metidos tanto rato, entonces yo me sentía tranquila cuando estaban acá en su casa."

reaching a non-ethnic and high-end clientele place constraints on such practices and push women to accept socially constructed boundaries between work and family.

Resistive Mothering: Contesting Masculine Norms and Work-family Dichotomies

As the stories I have presented in this chapter demonstrate, motherhood shapes the women's entry into self-employment, informs different stages in the entrepreneurial process, and influences a range of entrepreneurial practices. Some of the strategies these women undertake in order to balance mothering with business obligations reinforce gendered divisions of social reproductive labor and fail to challenge gendered inequalities that are deeply entrenched in the family as well as in individualist notions of so-called motherwork under neoliberal regimes and the liberal welfare state. While other studies of entrepreneurial mothers often dwell with this argument, I go further and highlight the resistive character of the Peruvian women's actions, as they claim the right to act on a more flexible image of the ideal mother through self-employment—resisting and transgressing work/family dichotomies. Hence, I contend that, by blurring the boundaries between the public/work environment and the domestic sphere, the Peruvian women contest deeply ingrained gendered inequalities in the capitalist economic system, as well as liberal feminist ideals of the working mother and the neoliberal ideal of individualism and self-realization.

Social scientist Shauna Wilton (2017) has examined a range of studies that focus on different strategies mothers in Western Anglo-Saxon states, like the United States, undertake in order to balance competing demands of family and career. One of the strategies she discusses refers to mothers who balance mothering with entrepreneurship, many of whom start businesses that enable them to be with their children during work hours.²⁴⁰ She rejects such entrepreneurial strategies as viable solutions for mothers who

²⁴⁰ In her article "Momprenuers, Leaning In, and Opting Out: Work/Family Choices under Neoliberalism", Wilton employs the term *momprenuership*, but acknowledges that the term is defined in a variety of ways from "a woman who balances the role of motherhood with being an entrepreneur, a woman who becomes an entrepreneur after having children, work-at-home moms, a mother who runs her own business out of her home while caring for her children, or a woman who runs a business from her home that focuses on selling goods and services to other moms" (2017, 197). Though I do not employ the term *momprenuership* to refer to the Peruvian women's businesses, their entrepreneurial experiences are highly relevant to the discussions that Wilton raises in this article.

seek better balance between work and family. According to Wilton, these strategies are rooted in intensive mothering models, reflect neoliberal understandings of motherhood, and constitute “manifestations of the neoliberal discourses of individualism and free choice and the limited ability of these discourses to address the real challenges mothers face in their efforts to balance work and family” (2017, 192). Rather than emancipating practices, she views these actions as responses to the absence of state policies that should provide support to women for them to be able to participate in the work force on equal terms with their male counterparts. According to such view, mothers’ choice to take up self-employment in order to balance family and work is exclusively understood as a gendered decision within a political system that offers limited support (2017, 195). She argues further that such entrepreneurial practices fail to challenge barriers to gender equality, and rather “reinforce them under the logic of neoliberalism” (2017, 197). Thus, in Wilton’s view, these entrepreneurial practices do not pose a critique of market capitalism or the laissez faire state. She claims that those who support such models of motherhood “appear to have accepted the premises of neoliberalism and neoconservatism that focus on women’s duty to home and family as well as the individual responsibility (versus a societal responsibility) to provide and care for their families” and, thus, undermine the role of capitalism in the oppression of women (2017, 201).

As the preceding chapters have elucidated, gendered mechanisms contribute to push many Peruvian immigrant mothers in Southern California into starting their own business. Their entrepreneurial strategies are often influenced by a need to balance mothering and work, as their actions are embedded in a political system in which support for families and working mothers is limited. Wilton’s analysis, hence, sheds light on the constraints these Peruvian women encounter as they open culinary enterprises and invest many long hours to make their businesses grow. Left with limited public support, the women rely on their own individual efforts to meet the competing expectations of “the liberated woman and the nurturing mother figure” (Wilton 2017, 198), an ideal that aligns with neoliberalist values.

I point to limitations of Wilton’s analysis, however. First, the multidimensional factors that often inform mothers’ decision to start their own businesses are often

overlooked in other studies of self-employed mothers. As Wilton points out, these studies tend to rely on a limited sample based on the stories of White, educated, married, heterosexual, middle or upper-class mothers, many of whose husbands work in well-paid white-collar jobs that provide the family with economic stability. These studies often reinforce the image that popular media portrays of mothers who balance entrepreneurship and mothering, as they base their analysis on entrepreneurial mothers featured in blogs or in magazines (Anderson and Moore 2014), as well as on mothers who participate in so-called “mompreneur” conferences and networks (Ekinsmyth 2014, 2011). While analyzing studies that rely on such a limited sample, Wilton concludes that the option to balance work and family through strategies such as building a business around care responsibilities is only available for an elite few; “women with the education and personal and financial resources to make them work” (2017, 197).

The fact that these choices are not equally available for less privileged women, however, does not mean that these women do not employ such strategies. As the Peruvian mothers in this study demonstrate, similar practices are found among women across a variety of socioeconomic strata, also among Latinx and Peruvian immigrant women, some of them even undocumented immigrants. I have shown that although desires of work-life balance shape and inform Peruvian women’s entrepreneurship, their entry into self-employment is a response to multiple and intersecting micro, meso- and macrostructural factors linked to individual and collective resources, neoliberal social policy, legal and migration regimes as well as to the economy and to markets, which often do not provide Latinx immigrant women—let alone undocumented immigrants—with alternative options beyond individual agency. To fully understand the relationships between motherhood and entrepreneurship, hence, it is important to move beyond the constructed image of the entrepreneurial mother as produced by popular media and reproduced in existing scholarly literature. The Peruvian women’s stories inform these debates, and illustrate how gender intersects with other axes of differentiation in enabling and constraining these mothers’ entrepreneurial projects. While Peruvian mothers’ self-employment often contribute to reinforce gendered inequities in the family, their entrepreneurial actions are also resistive in the way they carve out a space in the marketplace for racialized and sometimes also illegalized subjectivities often

discriminated against in the labor market. A gender analysis of entrepreneurial mothers must hence be accompanied by a broader lens that takes these intersectional differences into consideration.

Secondly, I contend that Wilton's analysis rests on a Eurocentric understanding of women's emancipation, of gender equality, and of motherhood/mothering, which obscures the fact that the feminist project is constructed within a specific historical and geopolitical context. Peruvian entrepreneurial mothers' narratives inform debates about work-family balance by adding an immigrant perspective. Their stories call for these debates to acknowledge more diverse conceptions of family and motherhood, not limited to those defined by Northern middle-class feminist thought. Latinx familistic values were previously perceived as an impediment to socioeconomic success. Recent scholarship, however, points to the positive effects of extended family networks, family cohesion, and high levels of social support in offering protection and reducing the consequences of poverty. (Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan 2006). Similarly, familism is frequently viewed as an impediment to gender equality, since familistic values often shape Latinx women's role as mothers, and inform their priorities, as they tend to put family needs over individual ambition. The Peruvian mothers' stories, however, demonstrate that although familistic values are gendered and often reinforce unequal family relations, they may also be drawn upon as an act of resistance to gendered macro-level structures deeply ingrained in the capitalist economic system.

As Wilton stresses, neoliberalism plays a central role in shaping and constraining women's emancipatory projects by moving the responsibility of ensuring gender equality from the state onto individuals and families. Social policies that cater to families, hence, may facilitate mothers' participation in the labor force, as they contribute to ease work-family conflicts. Some countries have implemented state measures to mitigate the "burden" that having children is for the worker/woman, in terms of publicly funded quality childcare, paid parental leave, economic supplements for families etc., ensuring that working age individuals' productivity is not interrupted, at least not longer than the time it takes to get through maternity leave, and become a fully valued worker again. In the neoliberal US model, there is no federal system ensuring families and mothers such

benefits (Collins 2019, 2), which depend on state legislation.²⁴¹ Social welfare benefits are hence often conditioned by the employer and vary across labor segment. According to Collins, it is a privatized system that “exacerbates inequalities among workers” (2019, 3). These benefits are important in order for women to *lean in* and participate in the work force on equal terms with men. However, when such policies are not accompanied with the acknowledgement of different mothering ideals and practices in which family and mothering is valued along with production and economic growth, they may contribute to reinforce the ideal of the male worker norm in Western capitalist societies. This ideal constitutes the foundation of the neoliberal capitalist model in which the only subject that is valued is the productive economic subject.

By configuring their work around care responsibilities, Peruvian mothers negotiate and often challenge the socially constructed and historically specific boundaries between family and work, and between the private and the domestic sphere. As participation in the work force has been emphasized as the only way for women to achieve parity with men, dominating Western feminist approaches to gender equality often obscure the ways in which becoming a parent (and having to care for elderly family members) influences people’s—and particularly women’s—lives. Such a view understands the working subject as separated from the domestic sphere and from family life and considers the worker exclusively as a monolithic economic subject from entering working age to exiting on the other end of the tunnel at retirement. Relationships and interactions between the economic sphere and the private realm are downplayed. To achieve parity with men, women need to move into the work sphere, and reject mothering responsibilities.

Consequently, although Peruvian mothers’ entrepreneurial actions mirror neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies that seek to preserve the mother’s role as primary caregiver in the nuclear family, they also challenge patriarchal structures within neoliberal logics of market rationality embedded in a view of business as governed by the laws of market and competition. While these structures are perceived as static and embedded in an economy and markets that have only allowed women to participate if and when choosing to fit into these structures which are organized around the male ideal

²⁴¹ In 2002 California passed a paid family leave policy as the first US state to do so (Green Brown 2019, 119).

worker norm—a template molded around subjects who are exempt from and able to outsource social reproductive tasks. By prioritizing mothering and balancing care work with business obligations, the Peruvian women accept a position within gendered power hierarchies in the family as primary caregivers. Simultaneously, however, many contest gendered economic structures by configuring their businesses around socio-spatial routines of everyday child-rearing. Hence, they blur boundaries between work/business realms and the domestic sphere, boundaries that are deeply ingrained in the liberal capitalist model. Through the narrative they create around their priorities and obligations, they both reinforce and contest patriarchy, while they simultaneously claim the right to define femininity and motherhood according to their lived experiences. As such, they also contest Western feminist conceptions of the working and less maternal woman as the ideal. While many of them do not challenge gendered notions of the institution of motherhood per se as essentially different from fatherhood, they do contest the dichotomy between employment and mothering, and the notion of mothering as an institution that should be rejected in order to achieve female liberation and gender parity.

Looking at gender “through the prism of difference” (Messner, Zinn, and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005), informed by intersectional and decolonial lenses, guides our understanding of the Peruvian entrepreneurial mothers’ lived realities of motherhood as well as of how these experiences mediate work-family relations within the business context. First, it sheds light on how Peruvian women draw on coexisting and sometimes competing ideals of motherhood/mothering when negotiating a space for themselves in the US marketplace and in the business world. These ideals are constructed within a complex Peruvian context shaped by “Andean civilization heritage, the old Castilian Mediterranean imperial power, as well as by modern / colonial / global Western capitalism” (Ríos Burga 2015, 44), and are further influenced by transnational migration which, on the one hand, challenges, reproduces and reconfigures gender relations, while also producing new encounters between multiple motherhood/mothering imaginaries in the receiving society. Rather than arguing for a “Peruvian ideology of motherhood”, I highlight how Peruvian immigrant mothers negotiate but also resist dominant Eurocentric views of White motherhood. Familist values seem to mediate such resistance. Secondly, these perspectives inform our understanding of how Peruvian

women contest mothering/work and domestic/public sphere dichotomies. Eurocentric White bourgeois feminist tradition has reproduced a view of family and society as separate, and the family as the primary site of women's oppression, since women's autonomy was to be achieved through participation in the labor force. As I have argued, scholarship on mothers who configure entrepreneurship around mothering responsibilities often overlook the resistive character of these mothers' acts by employing a monolithic and Western feminist understanding of the liberated female subject as economic and productive. Recent scholarship, however, has contributed to broaden our understanding of the complex relationship between family and work (Messner, Zinn, and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005, 283), and the Peruvian women's stories enhance these insights.

Decolonial scholar and philosopher María Lugones encourages researchers to be very careful with how we read gender and hierarchical dichotomy into post-colonial societies.²⁴² "If we only weave man and woman into the very fabric that constitutes the self in relation to resisting, we erase the resistance itself," (2010, 749) she states. According to Lugones, "the decolonial feminist's task begins by her seeing the colonial difference, emphatically resisting her epistemological habit of erasing it. Seeing it, she sees the world anew, and then she requires herself to drop her enchantment with 'woman,' the universal, and begins to learn about other resisters at the colonial difference" (2010, 753).²⁴³ Decolonial perspectives acknowledge the lived experiences of colonialization—the coloniality of being, as decolonial scholar Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007) coins it.²⁴⁴ Lugones urges us to view gender in light of coloniality to understand the intimate relationship between global euro-centered capitalism and

²⁴² Here she builds on sociologist and decolonial scholar Oyeronke Oyewumi's criticism of a colonizing reading of Yoruba society.

²⁴³ To Walter D. Mignolo the colonial difference is produced by the coloniality of power and constitutive of processes of knowledge production. He presents it as "a connector" that "refers to the changing faces of colonial differences throughout the history of the modern/colonial world-system and brings to the foreground the planetary dimension of human history silenced by discourses centering on modernity, postmodernity, and Western civilization" (2002, 62). The difference is produced between "center and periphery, between the Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism and knowledge production by those who participated in building the modern/colonial world and those who have been left out of the discussion" (2002, 63). He states that the colonial difference "marked the limits of thinking and theorizing, unless modern epistemology (philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences) was exported/imported to those places where thinking was impossible (because it was folklore, magic, wisdom, and the like)" (2002, 90).

²⁴⁴ "Coloniality of being" refers to how colonial power relations mark our understanding of being—"the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language" (Maldonado-Torres 2007, 242). Although the term is coined by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, he refers to philosopher and semiotician Walter D. Mignolo's earlier mentions of the idea. He also highlights similar thinking within liberation philosophy in Latin America, pointing to the works of Enrique Dussel and Juan Carlos Scannone.

heterosexuality and masculinity. The intimate relationship between gender oppression and Western capitalism is reproduced in Western feminist understandings of family/work and domestic/public as separate spheres, as gender constitutes capitalism through processes of colonialization. Lugones also claims that “[o]ur possibilities lie in communality rather than subordination; they do not lie in parity with our superior in the hierarchy that constitutes the coloniality” (2010, 752). In tandem with these perspectives, I have demonstrated throughout this chapter that many Peruvian women resist the limited view of the emancipated woman as less maternal and act on a more flexible imaginary of motherhood/mothering not opposed to and separate from, but compatible with, and imbricated in, the economic subject and the public business sphere. These dynamics must also be addressed when evaluating the outcomes of these Peruvian mothers’ businesses.

Successful Mothers’ American Dream: Non-economic Business Outcomes

Many Peruvian mothers evaluated the success of their businesses according to non-economic parameters. Among these they underscored the flexible schedule and the way their business allowed them to spend more time with their children, as well as their contribution to securing their children’s future by providing them with a college education. Hence, motherhood and their role in ensuring their family’s well-being were often alluded to when they talked about business success. Exclusively financial outcomes were mentioned less frequently, and individual self-realization seemed to be secondary to more collective ambitions linked to the family.

While some Peruvian women reported that they appreciated a more flexible schedule, the tough demands of their businesses left many with minimal time for leisure, rest and family socializing beyond the business space. As Elisa relayed:

It is very enslaving. Here there is no such thing as Mother’s Day, birthdays. When we told my kids that we were going to start the business: “Here you have to forget that it is my birthday, that it is your birthday... The restaurant will not be closed, it has to advance. Here you will not have Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Christmas, New Year’s Eve. There will be nothing... On someone’s birthday we greet

them in the morning and hope to close at nine pm and search for a restaurant that is open until midnight to go out for dinner after nine. It is very enslaving.²⁴⁵

Though her priorities were different from Elisa's, Veronica phrased her experiences in a similar way: "It is an enslaving job, requiring many hours of work."²⁴⁶ Despite acknowledging that their job was extremely demanding, and in Veronica's case not being able to move her business to the next level while she was still caring for her son, both women felt that their businesses were successful, and both linked their view of success to outcomes related to their role as mothers. As she ran a part-time informal home-based business, Veronica enjoyed a more flexible schedule. Hence, she considered her business a successful venture because it gave her an income that helped the family uphold a certain lifestyle and standard, as I have detailed in Chapter 3, while it simultaneously enabled her to take care of her children. Elisa's restaurant business, on the other hand, constituted the family's main income. Although running a restaurant did not provide Elisa with a flexible schedule, being head of her own culinary business had allowed her to spend time with her children during work hours, which she had not been able to do when they were younger and she had a day job in another Peruvian restaurant. Like Veronica and Elisa, other self-employed Peruvian women highlighted their role as mothers in their narratives on success. They considered their businesses successful, not just because it gave them a flexible schedule, but because it allowed them to be physically close to their children during work hours, either because their businesses were home-based or because they brought their children to the business.

Scholars who study women's entrepreneurship have suggested that since women tend to enter self-employment to improve the balance between their productive and reproductive lives, objectives linked to such a balancing act should also be reflected in the ways we measure the success of these ventures (de Bruin, Brush, and Welter 2007, 328). Economist Patricia Gabaldon and her colleagues advocate for evaluating success of self-employed working mothers "using measures that are more adapted to their work-

²⁴⁵ "Es muy esclavizante. Aquí no hay que día de la madre, que cumpleaños. A mis hijos cuando les dijimos que íbamos a poner el negocio: Aquí se olvidan que es mi cumpleaños, que es tu cumpleaños, que es el tuyo. No se cierra el restaurante, el restaurante tiene que salir. Aquí no hay día del Padre, Día de la Madre, Navidad, año nuevo, no hay nada... Cumpleaños de alguien lo saludamos en la mañana y esperamos cerrar a las nueve de la noche y buscar un restaurante que esté abierto hasta las doce de la noche para ir a comer después de las nueve. Es muy esclavizante."

²⁴⁶ "Es un trabajo esclavizante, son horas de trabajo".

life choices and expectations, beyond the traditional measures” (2015, 140). They suggest that in addition to regular economic factors like income or revenue, it is relevant to add the time factor to measure outcomes in terms of time allocation given to different tasks in the women’s lives.²⁴⁷ This study goes further by demonstrating that not just the time factor, but also other accomplishments and benefits related to their role as mothers are highly important indicators of success for the Peruvian women.

Providing their children with a college education was a top priority for many of the women, and giving their children a better future was often mentioned as a reason for migrating to the United States. To some, the women’s entrepreneurial ventures enabled them to work hard to save up the money needed to get their children through a college education they themselves did not have, to others it was the extra income that allowed them to send their sons and daughters to private schools and to the country’s best universities. When I asked Veronica if she was living the American Dream, she did not mention her two-story house in a middle-class neighborhood, nor did she refer to monetary achievements: “I have been able to give my children an education. That has been the greatest achievement.”²⁴⁸ Victoria also highlights her children’s accomplishments. She was in the middle of narrating her life story, when she recalled a conversation with her daughter who a couple of years earlier had asked her mother if she felt that she had failed professionally. As I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, Victoria had left her dream job as head of her own travel agency in Lima, and was now running an informal catering business in Los Angeles. Silent tears escaped Victoria’s eyes while she recapitulated the conversation to me:

And I told her: “I feel accomplished. Truly, although, it’s not like I did it through you, but I feel accomplished because I was able to discover many other things that I could do. And if not, I would not have been able to discover that I can do other things. But I do feel accomplished, because I came to this country to progress. And I believe that I did progress because your dad and I, with a lot of effort, helped our daughters progress, who are studying, who are doing an effort and who are... This allows me to say:

²⁴⁷ Gabaldon, De Anca, and Galdón (2015) refer to a number of studies that identify two main reasons for women to undertake entrepreneurial activity: career achievement and life-family balance. Moreover, they cite other studies that illustrate how women with younger children seem to have a higher propensity for choosing self-employment, while this correlation does not seem to be significant for men. They find, however, that although women choose self-employment to improve work-life balance, self-employment does not seem to free up more non-work time, but give women more freedom to decide how to balance their time between work and family.

²⁴⁸ “he podido educar a mis hijos. Esto ha sido lo más grande.”

¡Oh! It was worth the sacrifice, it was worth what we left behind. No, I did not fail. As a mother I have not failed, and neither as a human being because I have discovered other things in me that I can give, and I can even help people with what I am and with what I can do. So, I feel very proud.”²⁴⁹

Though it often required working long hours for low returns, running an informal home-based business allowed Victoria to fulfill her dream of giving her children opportunities she believed they would not have had in Peru.

Although getting their children through college is closely linked to economic income, it is not economic prosperity or upward mobility that stand out in the women’s narratives on success, but the way their business enables them to live up to expectations of motherhood, and fulfill the family’s ambition of providing their children with a better future. Providing is hence viewed as part of mothering responsibilities by many Peruvian women.²⁵⁰ Corresponding with Valdez’s (2011, 94) findings among Latinx business owners in Houston, most of the Peruvian women take up self-employment to improve their individual or their families’ earnings. The stories that I have presented above demonstrate that women who report considerable economic gains through entrepreneurship, as well as women who report that culinary entrepreneurship is merely a way of survival, highlight alternative and non-economic indicators of success. Although some of the women’s businesses do not produce the necessary financial returns to move the family upward on the mobility ladder and into the American middle-class, they are considered successful by the women since they have provided them with the money needed for their children’s education.

Valdez challenges the celebrated relationship between ethnic entrepreneurship and social mobility, and illustrates through an intersectional analysis that middle-class Latinx men in financial terms benefit disproportionately from self-employment in comparison with their Latinx women and lower-class Latinx male counterparts (2011, 92). However, her findings reveal that less privileged Latinx entrepreneurs still consider

²⁴⁹ “Y yo le digo: ‘yo me siento realizada. Y plenamente, a pesar de que, no es que yo lo hice a través de ustedes, pero yo me siento realizada porque pude descubrir muchas cosas que yo podía hacer. Y si no, no las hubiese podido descubrir que puedo hacer otras cosas. Pero me siento muy realizada, porque en este país vine a salir adelante. Y me considero que salí adelante porque tu papá y yo, con mucho esfuerzo, sacamos a nuestras hijas adelante que están estudiando, que se están esforzando y que están ... Eso me deja decir ¡Oh! Valió la pena el sacrificio, valió la pena lo que dejamos. No que yo fracasé. Como madre no he fracasado, y como ser humano tampoco porque he descubierto otras cosas en mí que las puedo dar, y hasta puedo ayudar a otra gente con lo que yo soy o con lo que yo puedo hacer. Entonces me siento muy orgullosa.”

²⁵⁰ Similarly, sociologist Patricia Hill Collins illustrates how, contrary to “the cult of true womanhood” as defined by Eurocentric views on motherhood, providing forms part of black American women’s mothering (Hill Collins 2005, 288-289).

themselves successful, particularly relative to alternative and non-economic indicators. She highlights business survival and longevity, autonomy and job satisfaction as non-economic meaning of success. Though these factors go beyond financial success, they are still very much linked to individual work matters. The Peruvian women's stories, hence, complement this research by emphasizing success factors that are embedded in a wider context beyond the work realm, linked to motherhood and outcomes related to their children's accomplishments. Their stories corroborate sociologist Steven Gold's findings from his study of Vietnamese, Russian-speaking Jewish, and Israeli women entrepreneurs. Gold underscores that for many migrant women, self-employment is much more than a strategy for financial success and social mobility, since many immigrant women become self-employed in order to meet multiple obligations linked to family and community (Gold 2014, 249). Traditional measures of business success are hence not always aligned with the entrepreneur's business goals.

A narrow focus on financial indicators runs the risk of overlooking important success factors linked to women's obligations, as well as to their goals and ambitions for their family and for their children. Such aspirations may change through the entrepreneurs' life course. The salience of familist cultural values as well as of the importance given to motherhood/mothering in the Peruvian women's narratives, suggest that scholars should look beyond traditional perceptions of economic mobility and American middle-class ideals as the parameter of successful social and economic integration. Although these women aspire to improve their financial situation, to expand their businesses, to be able to buy a house, achieve autonomy and self-realization, many of these women came to the United States to create better opportunities for their children,²⁵¹ and through their culinary businesses they have found a way to achieve these goals. Hence, they consider themselves successful.

To the Peruvian mothers in this study, self-fulfillment is hence linked to two spheres: family and career. Peruvian sociologist Norma Fuller notes that as women's participation in the Peruvian labor market²⁵² has increased and educational attainment

²⁵¹ Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) also found that Mexican migrant women's entry into the work force was meaningful because it supported their families, and particularly because it elicited social mobility of their children.

²⁵² Women's labor market participation rates are higher in Peru than in all other Latin American countries: 63 % in 2015 (Gutiérrez Espino November 2016, 15).

has provided urban middle-class women with economic independence and social mobility, the career woman has progressively gained value (Fuller 2001, 229; 2005, 115). The sources of self-fulfillment for many Peruvian women, however, continue to be linked to the family realm (Cieza Guevara 2016, 102). While the Peruvian women's self-fulfillment is mediated by social class status—which sometimes changes with migration, it is also embedded in the tension between cultural norms from the country of origin linked to familistic values and the individualist model they encounter in the receiving society. Familistic and individualistic objectives may also change throughout an individuals' life course. How successful the entrepreneur considers her business to be, as well as her emphasis on individual/familistic objectives and pecuniary/non-pecuniary indicators of success, align with broader life projects that fluctuate relative to life stage, tenure in the country and in business.

Although the women's stories indicate that the social mobility of the next generation through their own sacrifices is proof of their own success as mothers, reflecting familistic ideals and socially constructed perceptions of mothers as self-sacrificing subjects, their stories are not without contradictions. Behind some of these success stories one can trace shattered dreams of individual goals that had to be abandoned in favor of the family and mothering. Their stories also demonstrate how structural barriers and multiple and intersecting forms of inequality prevent many of them from prospering and achieving their goals as business owners and individuals. Gendered expectations of motherhood may constitute one of these barriers. As Indira, an informal business owner, expressed:

[O]ne wants their children to prosper, so you make sacrifices, you sacrifice yourself to care for the grandchildren... So, I said to myself, "it doesn't matter, it's for their good", I always said that. But... I always dreamt of opening my own restaurant, but, well no, it was not possible.²⁵³

Whereas care responsibilities put constraints on many of the women's dreams of expanding or formalizing their businesses, the sacrifices they made for their children and grandchildren also made them feel successful according to non-economic

²⁵³ "[U]no también quiere que sus hijos salgan ellos adelante, entonces uno se sacrifica, se sacrifica por cuidarle a los nietos... Entonces, entre mi decía, "Para el bien de ellos, no importa", yo siempre decía así. Pero... siempre ha sido mi sueño tener un restaurant, pero no pues, no se pudo."

parameters. The often-conflicting objectives linked to family and to work may prompt women to feel accomplished along one dimension, and less successful along the other. Hence, while blurring and transgressing boundaries between family and work, the Peruvian women continue negotiating these social constructs.

The ethnic entrepreneurship literature has often celebrated self-employment as an alternative way for immigrants to achieve the American Dream through hard work, determination, perseverance, and facilitated by ethnic resources. As detailed earlier, scholars have challenged this relationship, and contend that the American Dream and success through business ownership is only possible for a few (Verdaguer 2009; Valdez 2011, 2016). Their studies have demonstrated how race, class, gender, and other social group formations shape entrepreneurial outcomes and condition immigrant and ethnic minorities' potential to achieve these objectives through entrepreneurship. The Peruvian women's stories support these scholars' criticism of a celebrated pathway to the American Dream through ethnic entrepreneurship. However, although these women are limited by structural constraints, they do not consider themselves as victims, but active agents in their own and their family's process of social and economic integration. As I have demonstrated above, most of the women's American Dreams seem to go beyond the ideal of a middle-class life with a big house and a neatly trimmed garden behind white picket fences, although some of the women also identify with this dream, and some of them have already achieved it. Indeed, quite a few of these Peruvian women live the conventional American Dream, and culinary entrepreneurship has been an important factor to achieve upward social and economic mobility. But while some dream of expanding their business, opening a second restaurant, or formalizing their informal venture, many also include family values and accomplishments related to their roles as mothers as an essential part of their American Dream. Rocío, also an informal culinary entrepreneur, noted:

I will tell you that I live it [the American Dream] with my own constant struggle, that is my American Dream. And it will be when my children triumph, when I see they have found stability and self-realization, that will be my American Dream. Not me, I think I now have moved to a second level, I

would like to see mine grow and be someone in this life, because of what I did I will see the fruits and they show they can do it on their own.²⁵⁴

Rocío's statement echoes other Peruvian women's American Dreams as these are intimately linked to their children's achievements, and hence also often related to why they migrated to the United States in the first place.

Most of these Peruvian women do feel successful and claim that they are living their own American Dream, many of them exactly because they are able to fulfill expectations to motherhood through their culinary ventures. Hence, they declare the right to redefine orthodox perceptions of business success and the American Dream incorporating familistic values to this individualist American ethos. Valdez (2011) concludes that motivations for and expectations to entrepreneurship are mediated by the entrepreneur's social location, and that entrepreneurs who are not successful in financial terms create discourses of success that stress their unequal position. Whereas many Peruvian women also construct narratives of success around a disadvantaged social location, I argue, however, that through redefining the meaning of success and reconstructing orthodox understandings of the American Dream, these women contest instrumental understandings of success and normative conceptions of immigrant's social and economic integration, as well as Eurocentric feminist notions of motherhood/mothering.

Some of the Peruvian women's businesses operated under precarious conditions and brought little revenue, which constrained the women from achieving upward social mobility. Restaurant owners described self-exploiting work conditions, and formal as well as informal business owners reported "enslaving" circumstances, using the strongly exaggerated metaphor of slavery to refer to how their business obligations chained them to the work place. To many of those who operated home-based businesses, their mobility was often limited to the domestic sphere, and low revenues prevented them from expanding and formalizing their ventures. Other women had managed to establish financially successful businesses which provided them with an income above the

²⁵⁴ "Te diré que lo vivo con mi propia lucha constante, ese es mi sueño americano. Y va a ser cuando mis hijos triunfen, cuando los encuentre ya estables y realizados, ese va ser mi sueño americano. No yo, yo creo ya pasé a un segundo plano, ahora me gustaría ver a los míos surgir y ser alguien en esta vida, porque lo que yo hice quiero ver frutos y demuestren que ellos pueden solos."

national median, enabled them to live comfortable lives, to buy a house, to send their children to good schools—all indicators of middle- and upper-class conditions. Some of these women were able to invest in more than one venture, and occupied managerial roles in the business while hiring employees to do the manual work. Earlier approaches to ethnic entrepreneurship serve to explain these differences, which are rooted in individual and collective factors such as access to human and social capital, resources available within the ethnic community as well as macrostructural factors linked to the opportunity structure in the receiving society. These factors are all contingent on the individual entrepreneurs' location within the American social structure. What these earlier approaches have not been able to explain, however, is how the individual entrepreneur's business activities enmesh with broader social and everyday life as well as with socio-spatial dynamics linked to the family and to divisions between the private/family and public/work sphere. The nested approach that I have developed and employed here guides our attention to these issues that lie at the center of the Peruvian women's American Dream.

* * *

This chapter has highlighted how gender not only intersects with ethnicity, race, class and legal immigration status, but also with life course and motherhood in shaping the women's experiences with entrepreneurship. The Peruvian women's business ventures form part of broader life projects which include responsibilities and obligations to other family members and concerns, hopes and dreams for the family and for their children's future and well-being. How immigrant women work to reconcile competing expectations to motherhood/mothering, on the one hand, and to contribute to the family economy, on the other hand, is a neglected topic in studies of ethnic entrepreneurship, and studies of motherhood and entrepreneurship have often overlooked this segment of the population, since they tend to focus on White middle-class women. The Peruvian mothers in this study counter several myths produced around Latinx motherhood.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ Bette Hammond, one of the organizers behind Proposition 187 (see chapter 2), stated: "They come here, they have their babies, and after that they become citizens and all those children use social services" (Cited in Chavez 2013, 75).

Peruvian mothers—American citizens, legal permanent residents and undocumented immigrants alike—go to great extents to care for their children and to work. Some of them start businesses through which they strive to fulfil often competing demands to their role as mothers and business women.

So, is entrepreneurship, and configuring business around care work, a viable strategy for immigrant mothers who suffer multiple disadvantage in the labor market? Some scholars have rejected such possibility, and have argued that these strategies only serve to obscure the deficiencies of a neoliberal regime that fails to provide assistance to families and place the responsibility of social reproduction onto families and individuals—often on women. The Peruvian entrepreneurial women’s stories support this stance. Yet, they further suggest that such entrepreneurial practices contest deeply entrenched gender inequities within the neoliberal capitalist model. By employing approaches to gender that seek to decenter biases within Eurocentric feminist epistemology, as well as a socio-spatial lens to the Peruvian mothers’ practices, I have demonstrated how they draw on the circulation of multiple notions of motherhood/mothering and act upon cultural familist values in which collective gain is prioritized over individualist self-realization. Hence, they also blur socially constructed boundaries between work/family and the public/private sphere. Entrepreneurship emerges as an act of resistance against an economic structure and labor market in which the women are perceived as racialized Others (some also illegalized), on the one hand, and which, on the other hand, is constructed with men in mind (Ballakrishnen, Fielding-Soingh, and Magliozzi 2019). Hence, whereas reinforcing gendered notions of mothering, Peruvian mothers’ entrepreneurial actions are simultaneously resistive. Their acts of resistance, however, are far from activist struggles that foster social transformation and broader female emancipation. They rather represent everyday practices of accommodating, negotiating and resisting unequal gender structures that affect their own and their families’ daily lives. And although I highlight the women’s agency, their actions should not be interpreted as a solution to, but rather as a symptom of powerful systemic injustices constitutive of the capitalist and neoliberal order.

By allowing different ideals of motherhood to gain value, future feminist scholarship on ethnic entrepreneurship and motherhood/mothering will be able to further

explore entrepreneurial mothers' resistive acts. Such endeavors need to be accompanied by further examination of the structural relations between family and work; by critical scrutiny of how state policies can cater to families; and by acknowledging that dominating economic and labor models are deeply rooted in gendered structures developed around masculine subjectivities. These gendered structures have not evolved in tune with the increasing participation of women in the work force (Christopher 2012) and are pending issues that need to be attended to for women to achieve full parity with men, *and* to be valued as mothers.

The Peruvian mothers' stories complement recent voices within the literature on motherhood and work. Collins found that across national/cultural contexts (The United States, Germany, Italy and Sweden), women shared one specific desire, as they all wished to "feel that they were able to combine paid employment and child-rearing in a way that seemed equitable and didn't disadvantage them at home or at work" (2019, 8). This study adds yet another layer of context to this, namely experiences of South-North migration. I have argued that many Peruvian women's practices are not only rooted in gendered notions of motherhood/mothering and the lack of public support, but also in cultural familistic values. In tandem with Collins' (2019), I contend that social policies are imperative to solve the problem that working women are grappling with in today's North American society. But they are not enough. Remedying gendered inequities related to mother's work require a deeper understanding of cultural notions of motherhood and fatherhood as well as of the relationship between employment, family and mothering.

Chapter 6: A Culinary Conquest: Claiming the Right to Home and Reproducing the “Homeland”

In the documentary *Peru Sabe: Cuisine as an Agent of Social Change* (Santos 2012), the high-profile Peruvian restaurateur Gastón Acurio maintains that “In Peru, food is a social weapon loaded with future”.²⁵⁶ The narrative that has been created in the wake of the Peruvian Gastronomic Boom echoes such belief in the power of food, and underscores the significance of Peruvian culinary success globally as well as locally, and how it can be employed as a means to “heal the wounds inflicted by long histories of colonial violence, exclusion, and inequality” (Matta and García 2019b, 2). In another documentary, *Peru, Nebraska* (Marca Perú 2011),²⁵⁷ Acurio and a team of Peruvian celebrities set out to conquer the small town of Peru in Nebraska, USA, seeking to acculturate its inhabitants through food, music, dance and other elements of Peruvian culture, “[i]nverting the common North-South hierarchy”, and suggesting that “Peru is now the one bringing civilization to the world” (Matta and García 2019b, 1). The culinary conquest stands in sharp contrast to the imperial, colonial and militant operations that once conquered the American continent; conquests that shaped Peruvian cuisine, as well as the societies in which the Peruvian women in this study unfold their culinary and entrepreneurial activities. Albeit nonbelligerent, such a conquest is not detached from the deeply ingrained inequalities upon which Peruvian as well as US society are constructed in which ethnic, racial, class and gender relations are rooted in colonial processes and perpetuated through postcolonial and what is also identified as neocolonial structures.

While Peruvian elite chefs capitalize on a privileged position within the Peruvian social structure and embark on a conquest of foreign culinary markets, Peruvian migrants around the globe engage in parallel processes of exporting Peruvian cuisine abroad, as their culinary traditions travel along with dreams of a better future and of creating a home for themselves and for their families in their new societies. They ride the tide of the hype of Peruvian food and its increasingly global recognition. And as the

²⁵⁶ “En el Perú la cocina es un arma social cargada de futuro.”

²⁵⁷ *Peru, Nebraska* is a documentary that formed part of the nation-branding campaign Marca Perú. The documentary, which is quite short (only 15 minutes), was launched in 2011 and went quickly viral (Alcalde 2018).

Peruvian Gastronomic Boom has captured the attention of Californian foodies, the discourse of social inclusion and unity through food meets a different narrative in the United States. Rooted in similar colonial structures that produce divisions between a whiter and wealthier Peruvian population in coastal urban areas associated with modernity and progress from an indigenous, rural and marginalized population in the Andes and Amazon regions imagined as backwards and less civilized, the “Latino threat” narrative reinforces socially constructed boundaries between racialized Latinxs and the dominant White Anglo population. In this context, discourses of status and *haute cuisine* enmesh with negative depictions of Latinx immigrants as a threat—of a Latinx *(re)conquista* ((re)conquest).²⁵⁸ Despite a complex context of reception, Peruvian women develop belonging to their new environments. To many, Peru has become a place they left behind many years ago. However, memories of their country of origin remain an important part of their lives, and in their culinary businesses they continuously engage with “homeland”²⁵⁹ culture. Armed with cultural and culinary skills, Peruvian women conquer Californian culinary markets in which they commodify *peruanidad*, and hence also negotiate home and belonging based on distinction in the receiving society.

The nested approach draws the researcher’s attention to how immigrants’ entrepreneurial practices are nested within broader processes of home-making as well

²⁵⁸ The term reconquest usually refers to the South-Western US territories that belonged to Mexico before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, which put an end to the Mexican-American War. Peruvians and most other non-Mexican Latinxs have no specific land area to reconquer from the US, but have all been affected by US economic, political and/or military intervention. A reconquest may hence be interpreted as a way of contesting the unequal structures that constitute the relationship between the Global North and South, and particularly between the United States and its Latin American “backyard”. In an interview conducted with Gastón Acurio, author, reporter and cultural critic Mirko Lauer pointed to the tension between a discourse of Peruvian food as unifying on a national level, but in relation to Peruvian cuisine abroad the narrative is filled by terminology of war, invasion, advancement, growth, defeat and destruction. Acurio answered something like: “bueno, pero qué cosa quieren, nos han jodido tanto tiempo, nos han aplastado [well, but what do they want, they have fucked with us for a long time, they have crushed us]” (Matta 2019, interview with Mirko Lauer). Sociologist Raúl Matta interprets this line of thought as a response to the negative image of Peru on a world stage, as a country plagued by political violence and economic precariousness, particularly linked to the civil unrest of the 1980s and 90s. Moreover, since Peruvians and other Latinxs often find themselves conflated with Mexicans, as I discuss in the following chapter, the consequences of a supposed threat of a Mexican *reconquista* affects all Latinxs who are racialized as Mexicans.

²⁵⁹ The term “homeland” is often employed in scholarly work on migration when referring to migrants’ country of origin. The use of such terminology, however, reinforces assumptions of migrants’ sense of home as intrinsically linked to the country of origin, and overlooks the processual character of home as something that is in constant becoming, and that can be linked to one or more places (Bocchagni 2017). In this dissertation, I have primarily employed other terms, such as country of origin or sending country. In this chapter, however, I do apply the term “homeland” in quotation marks. I do so in order to emphasize the country of origin as a temporal, spatial, material, emotional, relational and symbolic dimension linked to what once was, and for some may still be, home. I further intend to highlight the ways in which immigrants often draw on memories of a place left behind as building blocks to make a new home in a new place. The quotation marks indicate that the country of origin is not necessarily where migrants feel most at home. I talk about “homeland” culture, referring to cultural expressions that they bring with them from the country they left behind. I also acknowledge that these cultural expressions are not exclusively linked to national scales, but sometimes also to regional, local and ethnic dimensions.

as to business owners' spatial practices. This chapter sheds light on how ethnic entrepreneurship not only serves as an alternative way to economic incorporation and social mobility, but how culinary entrepreneurship enables Peruvian women to reproduce cultural elements from the country they have left behind, and hence also to construct home-like places in a migrant context. I also turn the attention to material culture, sensory experiences and to immigrant place-making, often ignored in ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship. Building on Boccagni's (2017) framework on home as a window on migrants' integration, belonging and circulation, as presented in Chapter 1, I explore the Peruvian women's home-making processes in the receiving society. I ask: How do Peruvian women reproduce "homeland" culture through culinary entrepreneurship? How does engagement with Peruvian food impact their experiences of home in the receiving society? How do the women navigate space and produce meaning in the culinary spaces they inhabit? And what role do these food spaces play in the development of a Peruvian immigrant community?

Home-making in Southern California

As I have detailed in Chapter 3, most of the women did not migrate to the United States with a dream of opening culinary businesses and introducing Peruvian gastronomy to a North American public. They were primarily searching for a better life and increased opportunities for themselves and their families. Full of hope they traveled with the desire of constructing a new home and a promising future. In the receiving community some of these dreams were fulfilled, while others were challenged, deferred or changed, and new aspirations emerged prompting a range of practices aimed at home-making, hope-making, and future-making.²⁶⁰

The Peruvian women's experiences of inclusion and exclusion in the receiving society varied along lines of class and legal status and relative to divergent experiences of racialization. Despite such diverse experiences, however, and despite differences related to pre-migration aspirations and to tenure in the United States, almost all of the women I interviewed had developed a sense of home and belonging to their new

²⁶⁰ In the Sociological Stars Lecture at the Pacific Sociological Association's annual meeting in Long Beach (March 28, 2018), sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo talked about home linked to security, familiarity, and control referring to sociologist Paolo Boccagni (2017), but added the importance of looking at immigrant's home-making, hope-making and future-making.

environments. Indeed, I was surprised by the way many of them responded instantly without even claiming a second of reflection before expressing that their home and their future was now in the United States. To most of them, however, home-making had been a rough struggle during the initial years. Hence, I was curious to find out how and why this had changed over time. Six central and sometimes intersecting factors seemed to have mediated the women's home-making processes, as they labored hard to manage the ruptures that migration had produced, and to bring continuity into their lives and environments: (1) security in terms of protection from crime and economic hardships, (2) family and intergenerational bonds particularly linked to parents and children, and to possibilities of a better future for their children, (3) individual opportunities for professional fulfillment, (4) temporalities such as age, life course, length of residence and repetitive/habitual everyday practices, (5) control over built environments which facilitated the engagement with and reproduction of material culture from the "homeland", as well as (6) the symbolic representation and recognition of their distinctiveness as Peruvians in the society of settlement. Culinary entrepreneurship and the business space played an important role in facilitating and shaping these broader processes of immigrant integration.

Many Peruvian women found a safer place for themselves and for their families in their Southern Californian communities, which underscores the fact that most of them had been able to settle in neighborhoods with lower crime rates than in their community of origin. Lorena, a restaurant owner whom I have introduced in Chapter 3 noted: "I am a total supporter of my home country, but unfortunately there is so much crime and insecurity (...) I could not live in Peru [again], but I love Peru (...) I feel that my home is here [in the receiving society], because here I have my two daughters, (...) I have five grandchildren and I am always here for them".²⁶¹ According to anthropologist Ghassan Hage, security is "one of the most basic feelings we aim to foster in our homely space" (2010, 418). The security the women feel, however, is also tied to the opportunities and more secure future they see for their children in the United States. Elisa articulates this quite compellingly:

²⁶¹ "Soy hincha totalmente de mi país, pero lamentablemente hay tanta delincuencia y hay tanta inseguridad (...) yo no puedo vivir en Perú [de nuevo], pero me encanta Perú (...) siento que [mi casa y mi hogar] está aquí, porque acá tengo a mis dos hijas, (...) tengo cinco nietos y yo siempre estoy ahí para ellas."

The desire of giving my children a better future. This is what counted the most. Because we could have stayed. He [her husband] would not have earned badly either. But... I didn't want that for my children. I wanted that my children, what my daughter is now... I know that soon she will be more, because she will do her masters', you know. But I wanted... like my daughter is now, this is what I wanted, you know. For her to have a professional career, that she would live as she does here. That she is not afraid that they are going to rob her, or pay so much for university only for her to graduate from university and then receive a miserable salary.²⁶²

Seeing their children succeed in the receiving country and perceiving a safer and better life for them there seems to be central to Peruvian mothers' sense of home. Hage claims that theorizations of the home often overlook the importance of the home as a space open for opportunities and hope. He notes that "[a] home has to be an existential launching pad for the self", and "a homely space is a space where we feel we are 'going places'" (2010, 419). The Peruvian women's stories suggest that for mothers, home is not only about opportunities for the self, but also for their children, as many of them migrated primarily to provide their children with better opportunities. To many of them their culinary businesses were key to achieving these goals, as I have discussed in Chapter 5.

However, to women who did not have children, but had parents in the country of origin, their emotional notion of home seemed to be divided, as Sara's story exemplifies.

I believe I will always feel that my home is in Peru, because I am always returning for some reason (...) I cannot let my roots go (...) I am always going, arriving, since lately the restaurant has practically been running itself, now I have the possibility to be with them [my parents], because basically my travel is to be with them. (...) But I know that I would never move back to Peru because I don't know, there I would have to do office work. I don't think that I would be good at that anymore.²⁶³

²⁶² "Las ganas de darles un futuro mejor a mis hijos. Eso era lo que primordiaba más. Porque nos hubiéramos podido haber quedado. [Mi esposo] no hubiera ganado mal tampoco. Pero... Yo no quería eso para mis hijos. Yo quería que mis hijos, lo que mi hija es ahora... Yo sé que ahorita va estar más, porque va a hacer el master, no. Pero yo quería... como está mi hija ahorita, eso es lo que quería, no. Que se haga profesional, que viva así como vive acá. Que no está asustada que le estén robando, o pagar tanto universidad para que salga de la universidad y le paguen una cochinada de dinero."

²⁶³ "Creo que mi casa siempre la voy a sentir en Perú, porque siempre estoy regresando de alguna u otra forma (...) mis raíces no las puedo dejar (...) siempre estoy yendo, viniendo, como éste último tiempo el restaurante ha estado caminando sólo entre comillas, ya tengo esa facilidad de estar con ellos [mis padres], porque básicamente mi viaje es para estar con ellos. (...) Pero yo sé que no me mudaría a Perú porque no sé, habría que hacer allá cuestiones de oficina. Yo ya no creo que sirva para eso."

Physical presence of close family members is tied to the feeling of community, which, according to Hage, “is crucial for feeling at home” and “involves living in a space where one recognizes people as ‘one’s own’ and where one feels recognized by them as such” (2010, 418).

Home was still in Peru for Sara, since that was where her close family lived. Yet, she continued searching for and constructing home in the receiving society, since that was where she found opportunities for an entrepreneurial career as a restaurant owner—an existential launching pad for the self—, which made building a future home in the United States a rational choice. As geographer Marta Bivand Erdal (2014) has emphasized, migrants are “rational decision-makers, who make choices about their lives and their mobility” (364). They also invest hard work into making a new home (Lauster and Zhao 2017).

Many of the women, however, enjoyed the privilege of having most of their nuclear, and also extended family in the receiving society. With less close family in Peru, with the passing of time, as well as with new life-stages developing in the receiving society where they witnessed their children grow up, go to school, succeed professionally and making future plans, a home in Peru turned increasingly into a distant dream for many of the women, which made them realize that they had grown roots in their new communities. Such epiphany was often prompted by return visits to Peru. Carolina’s story voices the experiences of many of the women I spoke to:

At that time, all of my siblings were already here [in the US]. Only my dad and my mom there. My house didn’t feel like my house anymore. My street didn’t feel like that anymore. My girlfriends were not there anymore, and the few girlfriends I had, I came [to the US] when I was eighteen years old when the world was the beach, volleyball, girlfriends. I arrive [in Peru], my girlfriends married with tons of problems that I did not know about. I knew the nice side, but I found myself counting... that on the fifteenth day tears were pouring down my face. You dream so much... I don’t think of myself as American, I am Peruvian, I love Peru. Look, I have been able to travel to so many places, but all these years I go to Peru. I love

everything about Peru, my family. But, do you get it? Without realizing it you have started to grow roots here. To me this is my country, this is my world. It sounds awful, but it's true.²⁶⁴

While many immigrants arrive in a new country with an initial plan of a temporary status of migration and aspirations to return to their country of origin once they have reached their goals of working and saving up money, finishing their studies etc., others migrate searching for a new home and a better future for themselves and/or their families. Whatever the initial intentions were, the ruptures immigrants meet during the migration trajectory often alter these pre-migration aspirations. The Peruvian women's experiences resonate with findings in other studies that have explored the nexus between immigration and issues of home and belonging (Alarcón, Escala, and Odgers 2016; Bivand Erdal 2013; Bygnes and Erdal 2017; Horst 2018),²⁶⁵ which also found that the migration experience produces ruptures that often lead to feelings of alienation in relation to the country of origin, despite strong attachment to and identification with the place they once left behind. In their study of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles, sociologists Rafael Alarcón, Luis Escala and Olga Odgers found that despite the scant opportunity for many of these Mexican immigrants to become full members of the receiving society due to lack of a legal pathway to citizenship, most of them reported that they had made home in Los Angeles, where they intended to remain permanently (2016, 209). Similar to these

²⁶⁴ “Ya todos mis hermanos estaban acá para ese tiempo. Sólo mi papá y mi mamá allá. Mi casa no la sentía mi casa. Mi calle ya no la sentía así. Mis amigas ya no estaban, y las pocas amigas que tenía, yo me vine [a los EE.UU.] a los dieciocho años cuando el mundo es la playa, el voleibol, las amigas. Llego [a Perú], mis amigas casadas con miles de problemas que yo no conocía. Yo conocía el lado bonito, pero me encontré contando... que a los quince días se me caían las lágrimas. Sueñas tanto... Yo no me creo americana, yo soy peruana, yo amo el Perú. Mira, yo he podido viajar a tantos lugares, pero todos los años me voy a Perú. Me encanta todo de Perú, mi familia. Pero, ¿te das cuenta? Sin darte cuenta has echado raíces aquí. Para mí este es mi país, este es mi mundo. Suena feo, pero es la verdad.”

²⁶⁵ In a study of Pakistani and Polish migrants in Norway, Erdal (2014) found that home can be located in one or more, or less places and is either “here”, “there”, neither “here” nor “there”, or both “here” and “there”. She underscores, however, that while a dual sense of belonging and identity seems to persist despite tenure in the receiving society, home in the practical sense is progressively aligned to the place in which everyday life is performed and where the family is located. Moreover, in an article written together with sociologist Susanne Bygnes, Erdal scrutinizes the supposedly “liquid” character of intra-European migration by studying Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway. They find that rather than perceiving a reality in which they would live under “liquid” conditions—implying temporariness, unpredictability, individualization, free-moving lifestyles and a “migrant habitus”, the migrants they interviewed seem to prefer to settle down and live “grounded, secure and stable lives” (2017, 114). Migration scholar Cindy Horst develops the term multi-sited embeddedness in order to challenge binary conceptions of identity and belonging. She illustrates how young Norwegian-Somalis and Somali-Americans experience “feelings of not being ‘at home’ at different times, in different places or with different social groups” (2018, 13), also when returning to the country of origin. She further argues that multi-sited embeddedness both relates to feelings of belonging and acts of civic engagement, and emphasizes the ways in which the young immigrants she interviewed “act in order to belong” (2018, 13, emphasis in original). Hence, she underscores migrant’s agency and the efforts migrants often put into the search for belonging. Reflecting the Peruvian women’s narratives, all of these studies point to the ruptures and continuities that individuals experience through migration, and how notions of home and feelings of belonging are affected and shaped by the migration experience. They also stress, however, the ways in which immigrants actively pursue a sense of home and the right to belong.

Mexican immigrants (2016, 214, 215), the Peruvian women's life projects seemed to be constructed in and oriented towards the receiving society, and also undocumented Peruvian immigrant women had found home in the United States.

“Illegally” at Home

Albeit not an impediment for developing a sense of home, legal immigration status shaped the women's experiences of home in the receiving society, particularly impacting their sense of security. Several women pointed to increasing nativist discourses and anti-immigrant sentiments, as well as to President Trump's utterances about unauthorized immigrants, as factors that affected feelings of belonging. Nevertheless, undocumented Peruvian immigrant women seemed to have developed a narrative of righteous belonging linked to the American ethos of hard work and to the emphasis on citizens as economic subjects who contribute to the American economy. Victoria, who lived in the United States as an undocumented immigrant for twenty-three years, before regularizing her status in 2018, felt that she had the right to a home in the United States since she did what, in her perception, every citizen does; work and pay their taxes. Hence, she distanced herself from the stereotypical narrative of undocumented immigrants as a burden to American society,²⁶⁶ and constructed a positive narrative around her economic contribution. As an undocumented immigrant and informal business owner she operated on the margins of the law. However, working hard and paying her taxes turned her into a righteous and law-abiding citizen.

And I do feel... that I have the right to a home here. Yes, because I have come here to work, not to receive benefits from the government. I have come to work, like every other person from here, that struggles, that works to progress (...) I have contributed with my honorable work. I pay my taxes like everyone else.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁶ In 2018, President Trump said that “Illegal immigration hurts American workers; burdens American taxpayers; and undermines public safety; and places enormous strain on local schools, hospitals, and communities in general, taking precious resources away from the poorest Americans who need them most. Illegal immigration costs our country billions and billions of dollars each year” (TheWhiteHouse November 1, 2018).

²⁶⁷ “Y sí siento... que tengo derecho a un hogar acá. Sí, porque aquí he venido a trabajar, no a sacar ventaja del gobierno. Yo he venido a trabajar, como cualquier otra persona de aquí, que lucha, que trabaja para salir adelante (...) he contribuido con mi trabajo honrado. Pago mis impuestos como cualquier otro.”

Peruvian women who are American citizens, legal permanent residents or undocumented immigrants all highlight their contributions to the labor market and in the business world as important factors in their experience of home, legitimizing their claim to a home in the United States and earning them the right to belong. These claims resonate with narratives on “good citizenship” and the “good citizen” (Bloemraad, Sarabia, and Fillingim 2016) and with citizenship as a multi-faceted concept going beyond political and ascriptive membership in a state (Nawyn 2011, 679). Sociologist Irene Bloemraad claims that “[s]harp distinctions between ascriptive and civic citizenship obscure the degree to which membership narratives are fluid”, and that many immigrants and their children articulate multiple notions of belonging, illustrating that the process of “becoming” American is “neither purely civic, nor completely ascriptive” (2013, 74). The Peruvian women I talked to were not concerned with being nor with becoming American. All of them felt Peruvian and were proud of their national identity, though some of them did hold US citizenship through naturalization. A very small minority also defined themselves as both Peruvian and American. Nevertheless, their stories are testimonies of arduous endeavors of home-making through which they had developed strong feelings of belonging and perceptions of having the right to a home in the receiving community, not because they had shed cultural traits and become “American”, but because they worked hard and contributed to society through entrepreneurial endeavors, creating jobs, but also by introducing Peruvian food to an American public.

The strong emphasis on economic traits and work ethics as attributes of good citizenship and hence also at the core of the women’s claims for the right to belong, relate to the basic tenet of the American Dream and to market citizenship which according to sociologist Stephanie Nawyn (2011) “constructs social welfare usage as dependency on the state emerging from personal shortcomings, rather than a social right provided to members of the state (...) denying those that are poor or require government assistance (...) a sense of belonging in the polity” (Nawyn 2011, 679-80). Previous and contemporary political efforts to limit government assistance as well as access to basic human rights such as health care and education to undocumented immigrants,²⁶⁸ have

²⁶⁸ In California, Proposition 187 is an example of such policies. See Chapter 2.

contributed to reinforce discourses of (un)deservingness, membership and inclusion/exclusion. Under such circumstances, combined with racialized notions of inclusion in the imaginary of what it means to be an American (Bloemraad 2013, 73), and with the negative narrative concerning Latinx immigrants, being able to draw on their endeavors as hard-working entrepreneurs who contributed financially to their families' income and to the American economy, instead of (ab)using state benefits, was central to the Peruvian women's feeling of home and righteous belonging in the receiving society. Despite the fact that economic action was only one determinant within a wider range of factors that had made them feel at home, these women reinforced the relationship between economic contribution and the deservingness of a righteous home.

Not at Home: "*Pero mi sazón y mis manos nadie me lo va a quitar*
[No one can take my culinary talents and my hands away from me]"

Although the majority of the Peruvian women had progressively started to feel at home in their new environments, a few of them did not. Paloma arrived in the United States twenty-four years ago, crossing the border from Mexico without authorization. She wept as she relayed about how she had left her children with a relative in Peru, her two-year-old clinging to her hair and screaming as Paloma turned around and headed toward the plane that would take her to Nicaragua, the first step of a long and hazardous journey. She lost her job in Lima, and as a single mother the only solution she saw was going abroad to earn money that she could send back to her children in Peru. One of her daughters was living in the United States with her, and assisted her mother in her informal food business. The others were still in Peru. When I asked her about home, Paloma was not sure where she belonged or where her home was. But she assured me that she did not feel at home in the United States. "No matter how hard you struggle...and you pay, you never really own anything".²⁶⁹ To Paloma, years of hard work in the United States far away from her children had been a struggle for survival. The United States had not turned out to be a place of great opportunity and hopes for the future. Nevertheless, like many other Peruvian women, she was grateful for what

²⁶⁹ "por más que luchas... que pagues, jamás serás dueño de nada."

this country had given her. “While telling you this, I cannot say that I am angry at this country. Maybe I am [angry] at the system. Maybe. But not at the country. This country provides many opportunities to people when they know how to take advantage of them. Thanks to this country I have been able to help my children. I cannot be ungrateful in any way.”²⁷⁰ She dreamt of one day opening a restaurant in the United States and of bringing her oldest daughter from Peru so she could help her run it. When I asked her if being undocumented was an impediment, she responded: “Of course. God knows how much I could have achieved. I would have gone into it with everything I am. But it is like cutting the wings of the eagle, that is how it is to be undocumented”.²⁷¹ Although she had been able to financially maintain her family in Peru through hard work in an informal business, she had not been able to exploit her full potential. She stated, however, that “soy una guerrera [I am a warrior]”. Her cooking skills and knowledge about Peruvian food had provided her with the means to survive in the host country, and with money to send back to feed her children in Peru. Undocumented immigration status intersected with class position in constraining Paloma’s possibilities for family reunion and limited the financial success of her informal business and as such also her chances for upward social mobility. Her seemingly inescapable precarious situation prevented her from developing belonging to the receiving society.

Legalization could have opened many closed doors for Paloma and other undocumented immigrants who find themselves in similar positions. Legal permanent residency does not, however, automatically generate feelings of belonging. A sense of home and belonging seems to be shaped by, but also detached from the legal production of who is included or not, who is allowed to belong or not in the eyes of the nation state. Laura also struggled with finding home in Southern California. Similar to Paloma, she found herself in a precarious economic situation which led her to settle in one of Los Angeles’s most dangerous areas.

Here one suffers a lot (...) even we who have papers suffer as well (...) you are not well just because

²⁷⁰ “Al hablar esto, no puedo hablar que estoy renegando contra este país. Quizás estoy en contra de su sistema. Quizás. Pero no de este país. Este país da muchas oportunidades a las personas cuando la saben aprovechar. Gracias a este país he podido ayudar a mis hijos. No puedo ser mal agradecida de ninguna manera.”

²⁷¹ “Claro. Dios sabe que hoy más hubiese logrado. Me hubiese desempeñado como lo que soy. Pero es como cortarle las alas al águila, así es ser indocumentada.”

you have papers. With or without papers we are suffering because there are no jobs. And if there is, they try to take the rest of what we have left. The only benefit is that you can travel to your country, but the tickets are expensive as well. (...) Sometimes I say: "Being there". But now, I am also undecided. Here I have my children, and there as well. There I have only one. And I say: "If I leave, now my granddaughter... What can I do? ¡My God!" ... We are mothers. Your children come first.²⁷²

Whereas legal migration status facilitated Laura's travel back to Peru, and had allowed her to bring two of her three children with her, it had not made her feel more at home. Her precarious situation, however, did not prevent Laura from exercising agency. Drawing on intersectional resources in terms of knowledge about Peruvian cuisine she had opened an informal culinary business, and had hence managed to add to the meager income she garnered from other temporal jobs. "Porque mi sazón y mis manos nadie me lo va a quitar [because no one can take my culinary talents and my hands away from me]", she expressed with pride. Insecurity and economic hardships as a single mother, as well as lack of opportunities to improve her situation, had negatively impacted Laura's home-making project in the receiving society. Motherhood, on the other hand, conditioned her dream of returning to Peru for good, since her children had progressively settled and made new family ties in the receiving society. Self-employment in the ethnic economy had not become a panacea to achieve upward social mobility for Laura. Her social location seemed hard to escape, and confined her business to the informal sector while also conditioning business growth and outcomes. Nevertheless, not even the forces that were keeping her from feeling at home in the United States could deprive her of culinary talents which she employed strategically as a means of making a living and continue the laborious process of home-making in the United States.

The Peruvian women's home-making processes reflect Boccagni's view of home as processual and dynamic rather than static. As described in Chapter 1, he defines home as a special and meaningful relationship with one or more places to which people attribute a sense of "security", "familiarity" and "control". He further notes that home is

²⁷² "Aquí se sufre mucho (...) también nosotros que tenemos papeles sufrimos (...) no por tener papeles uno está bien. Con papeles o sin papeles estamos sufriendo porque no hay trabajo. Y si hay, nos tratan de sacar lo último que nos quede. La única ventaja será que uno puede viajar a su país, pero también el pasaje es costoso. (...) A veces digo: 'Estando allá'. Pero ahora ya también soy indecisa. Tengo acá mis hijos, y allá también. Allá no más tengo uno. Y digo: 'Si me voy, ahora mi nieta... ¿qué hago? ¡Dios mío!' ... Somos madres. Lo primero están tus hijos."

about home-making, referring to “the ordinary interactions through which individuals try to appropriate and make meaningful, personal and secure a variety of places” (2017, 9). According to sociologists Nathanael Lauster and Jing Zhao, “home-making is constitutive of the process of settling” (2017, 497). That does not imply, however, that transferring home from one location to another is an easy and linear process. Home-making requires labor, and may be seen as “the active work of stabilization required to produce a reliable base, made up of repetitive configurations of people, places, and things, around which both habits and meaning can come from” (Lauster and Zhao 2017, 6). Such labor and active work is clearly present in the Peruvian women’s narratives. And to many of them, the very reason for migrating to the United States was to search for a better home for themselves and for their families.²⁷³ Despite the negative and less welcoming receiving context for Latinx immigrants, Peruvian women find home in their new environments, and not even undocumented status seems to prevent the women from developing feelings of belonging. While most manage to attribute familiarity, security, control (Boccagni 2017), as well as community, possibility and hope (Hage 2010) to their new environments, some still grapple with one or more of these pillars of home. However, as Laura’s statement above reveals: they still have their culinary talents and their hands with which they can work. Memories of a home in Peru constitute important building blocks for home-making practices in the society of settlement. And through their businesses, they conquer urban spaces into which they bring meaning by reproducing “homeland” culture and plant seeds of Peru in US soil.

Conquering Palates: Reproducing the “Homeland” through Material Culture and Sensory Experiences

Although most of the Peruvian women had developed a sense of home and belonging in the United States, Peru was highly present in their everyday lives and played an important role in the ways they made home in a migrant context. Pilar, a restaurant owner whom I have introduced earlier, expressed that not a day would pass by without the word “Peru” coming out of her mouth. Through her restaurant business, she was

²⁷³ This lends support to another claim made by Lauster and Zhao (2017) who, counter dominating views on markets as primary drivers of migration by demonstrating that homemaking also motivates migration.

able to engage daily with “homeland” culture, which she commercialized and offered to a US based clientele, reproducing memories from Peru in her local US environment. To all of the Peruvian women I interviewed and observed, their entrepreneurial venture was an important source of income. The way they commodified Peruvian culture was hence a business strategy they employed to attract Peruvian and non-Peruvian customers who were looking for a familiar and what some may perceive as an “ethnic” or “exotic” culinary experience—a strategic plan to boost revenue. However, it also served other purposes and sometimes even yielded unintended consequences. Through culinary entrepreneurship the women were able to constantly engage with the “homeland”, represent their cultural heritage and act as ambassadors of their country of origin. Culinary businesses hence constitute a site not just for economic incorporation and enhanced earning capacity, but also for negotiating inclusion based on distinction as an ethnic minority in the society of settlement.

The commodification of Peruvian food and food practices through culinary entrepreneurship contributes to Peruvian women’s constant engagement with cultural artefacts, practices and social relations from the country of origin, and impacts constructions of home in Southern California. Boccagni highlights the “*spatialized social practices through which migrants... try to reproduce, reconstruct and possibly rebuild meaningful home-like settings, feelings and relationships* (2017, 26; emphasis in original). Running a culinary business allows the women to exercise a set of home-making practices within the work space and in the public realm, where they reproduce material culture, food ways and practices from their country of origin. As I explore the relationship between power and inequalities of immigrant business ownership, on the one hand, and the experiential, practical, cultural and agentic aspects of immigrant home-making, on the other, it is imperative to address the often overlooked material, sensual, and multisensory aspects of running an ethnic culinary business.

During the first interviews, I found myself a bit impatient when the women seemed more interested in telling me about the food they prepare and offer in their businesses. I was more curious about their experiences as women and business owners and how gender and migration shape their entrepreneurial practices and search for home. Gradually, however, I came to understand that the materiality and sensory dimensions

of ingredients, products, dishes and the space in which these are prepared and served play an imperative role in these processes. As Boccagni asserts, home and home-making is about “setting specific social relationships that are negotiated and reproduced over time, more or less successfully, against a variety of material backgrounds” (2017, 12). “Homeland” culture, and particularly Peruvian food, formed part of the materiality against which Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs negotiated a position in the social fabric and searched for home and belonging in the receiving society.

Many restaurant owners wanted their culinary business to constitute a home for other Peruvians in the area, which they aimed to achieve by reproducing “homeland” culture within the business realm. Andrea notes that “[i]n general, everyone feels very good when they come [to the restaurant]. I mean, they like it. They feel like at home. They say... in [Pachamama], when you come, you think that you are eating in your own house, because that is the feeling that we have wanted to give, and they are embracing it, people perceive it”.²⁷⁴ Several Peruvians that I talked to confirmed that Peruvian culinary businesses made them feel at home. The smells, tastes and textures of the food combined with other aesthetic elements used for giving these food spaces a “Peruvian” atmosphere contributed to transport many Peruvian immigrants, if only for a short moment, to the country they had left behind, and provided them with a home in the public. As one Peruvian that I talked to informally put it: “Es un pedacito de mi país en Los Angeles [It’s a piece of my country in Los Angeles]”. Another talked about entering a Peruvian restaurant as an alternative to taking a plane to Peru. Anthropologist Teresa Mares contends that “[f]ood is central to the longing for home and the often-painful struggle to accommodate, to new ways of being in the world; and preparing, eating and sharing meals that are resonant with one’s foodways (...) is a vital piece of maintaining a sense of self in a new environment” (2012, 335). Such close connections between home and food is also articulated by Peruvian migrants in other countries. In an online survey that anthropologist Christina Alcalde conducted with Peruvian migrants who had settled in a variety of countries around the world, several respondents expressed that Peruvian restaurants made them feel connected to Peru (2018, 145). Alcalde’s findings

²⁷⁴ “En general, todos se sienten muy bien cuando viene. Ósea les gusta. Se sienten como en casa. Ellos dicen... en [Pachamama], cuando tu vienes, piensas que estás comiendo en tu casa, porque esa es la sensación que nosotros hemos querido dar y lo está agarrando, la gente lo percibe.”

lend support to my own observations among Peruvians in Southern California which suggest that visiting Peruvian culinary businesses contribute to maintain a sense of biographical continuity linked to experiences in the country of origin among all the ruptures Peruvians have experienced through transnational migration.

Apart from constituting a domestic space for the family and household, a home is a place to which one can bring guests. This is echoed in marketing campaigns, as Peruvian restaurants often promote themselves as a home for their guests. On one Angelino restaurant's website one can read: "Our kitchen is an extension of our home, and our guests are an extension of our family" (Inka Grill n.d.). Many of the Peruvian women highlighted their business as a space in which they could take on the role as hostess, pointing to how they saw themselves as ambassadors for their country of origin. They worked hard to represent Peruvian culture in the business space, and the specific historical moment of the Peruvian gastronomic boom and the recognition of Peruvian cuisine provided them with pride. Gloria referred to her restaurant business as she noted: "Wherever I am, I am very proud of being Peruvian. And particularly now, I am very proud of being able to transmit my culture and my food here". Some women relayed about discrimination, racialized experiences and exploitation in the labor market, referring to experiences linked to their appearance and Spanish language use. Peruvian culture, however, and particularly Peruvian food, made them proud. Drawing on food discourses linked to Peruvian food as *haute cuisine*, the women were able to capitalize on their national identity and cultural heritage despite a challenging context of reception for Latinx immigrants. Lifting their culinary sword, sharpened by a positive discursive opportunity structure, the women set out to conquer local palates. Hence, they actively contributed to influence and shape such discourses, by educating a diverse Californian customer base about Peruvian food, making Peruvian cuisine and other cultural articulations increasingly familiar to multiple sectors of the population, not only to a high-end clientele.

In the women's businesses, "homeland" culture was primarily reproduced through the flavors and tastes their businesses offered, but also in the way they decorated the business space, in marketing strategies, in the clothes they and/or their employees wore, in the music they played, as well as in the way they treated their customers. When

you enter many of the Peruvian restaurants in Southern California, *peruanidad* is often presented in ways that appeal to all the senses. Smells, tastes and textures of the food were frequently accompanied by the spectacular landscape and ruins of Machu Picchu, replicas of the mysterious Nazca lines or of ancient Inca ornaments, colorful textiles representing pre-Columbian weaving techniques, as well as national symbols as flags, celebrities, cultural and historical heroes. Some had put writings on the wall alluding to archetypical Peruvian sayings and witticisms, or to regions, cities and archeological sites. Those who offered *pollo a la brasa*²⁷⁵ sometimes displayed wood fired ovens where chickens were roasted at the display of customers, creating an atmosphere of visual images and aromas that evoked memories of the traditional *pollerías*²⁷⁶ that Peruvian immigrants used to frequent in their societies of origin.



Image 6.1. Chicken roasting on fire behind a wall decorated with symbols from Peru's precolonial period.

The women picked selectively from prevailing imaginaries of *peruanidad* in order to represent their country and their culture to customers in the receiving society and in order to make clients feel at home. Sara highlighted home-made food as a way of making customers feel at home in her restaurant:

²⁷⁵ Marinated rotisserie chicken roasted over fire wood. It is typically served with French fries, salad, and a selection of creamy sauces.

²⁷⁶ A typical Peruvian food venture where *pollo a la brasa* is served as the main dish on the menu.

I always try to remember the food in my house, especially when they [the customers] are Peruvians. The environment is familiar. It will never be similar to what mum makes, but it will seem familiar. That's why I never changed the food, I never minimized it, nothing of that. That is fashion now in Peru. I want them to feel at home, do you understand? I always wanted it to be a familiar environment and that Peruvians feel...²⁷⁷

Similarly, when I talked to Victoria about the role of Peru in her informal business, she relayed about particular Peruvian ingredients that she used when preparing certain foods and the familiar Peruvian dishes that she offered to her clients. However, she also highlighted other artefacts through which she could convey a notion of Peru to her customers:

For example, when we dress (...), now that I have traveled from Peru, I have brought table cloths, in all my events I use my Peruvian table cloths. I have brought a crock pot, I would like to always have that, I hope that I will be able to have more later, but important elements, to have the typical things that we display, so that people can see.²⁷⁸

To Victoria it was important to complement Peruvian flavors with artefacts that represented a Peru that she carried with her in her memories, but also in material culture. Many entrepreneurs adopted similar strategies in their efforts to symbolically convey *peruanidad* to their customers through material and sensory experiences.

Peruvian culinary businesses, hence, contribute to shaping the women's and other Peruvian immigrants' sense of home in the receiving society. Memories of a Peru left behind play an essential role in such processes. Women who after years in the United States still felt that Peru was their home, and that they still did not belong in their new communities, drew on memories of homely experiences in what could be perceived as an emotional "lost" home to settle for a rational and practical home in the receiving society, because their culinary talents, their hands, and their memories of a place of

²⁷⁷ "Yo siempre trato de recordar la comida de casa, especialmente cuando [los clientes] son peruanos. El ambiente es familiar. Lo que te preparaba la mamá no va a ser nunca parecido, pero se te va a ser familiar. Por eso nunca cambié la comida, no la achiqué, ni nada de eso. Ahora es la moda en Perú. Yo quiero que se sientan en casa, ¿me entiendes? Siempre quise que sea un ambiente familiar y que se sientan los peruanos...".

²⁷⁸ "Por ejemplo cuando nos vestimos (...), ahora que yo he venido de Perú, me he traído mis mantas, que uso en todos mis eventos mis mantas peruanas. Me he traído una olla de barro, me gustaría tener eso siempre, ojalá que pueda tenerlos más adelante, pero elementos importantes, tener tus cosas típicas que las mostramos, para que la gente vea."

origin could not be taken away from them. Peruvian women who had found home in their new communities kept engaging with “homeland” culture as a means to make sense of themselves and to build a home which was in constant becoming in a migrant context. Other Peruvian immigrants sought out these food spaces with a hope of experiencing “a piece of Peru” in their local environment.

So, what is the relationship between the entrepreneurial practices of culinary business owners and immigrant integration? Are the Peruvian women selling nostalgia to coethnics in ways that contribute to restrain themselves and others to a “lost homeland” impeding social integration in the society of settlement?²⁷⁹ Hage makes a distinction between homesickness and nostalgia. Employing a Bourdieuan perspective, he relates homesickness to “a state emanating from a dysfunctional habitus, that is, a habitus that finds itself unable to strategize and improvise in the face of a radical newness” (2010, 417). Challenged by such radical newness, immigrants take refuge in past memories to cope with the potentially traumatizing circumstances of the present, in which migrants may feel disempowered by their inability to do certain things. Nostalgia, on the other hand, is a way of activating memory in order to construct the present and the future. He criticizes migration scholarship and theorists of diaspora for a “miserabilist” tendency of presenting migrants as “passive pained people” who yearn for a home that they have left behind, and contends that “not all intimations of homeliness are memories of lost homelands” (2010, 419). He further stresses that intimations of “lost homelands”, as well as of “new homelands” represent affective building blocks that migrants employ, not necessarily as a means to seek an imagined homely past in order to escape or hide from the reality of the present time and space, but as part of settlement strategies in migrants’ effort to make themselves feel at home where

²⁷⁹ Sociologist Lorena Muñoz argues that to Latinx female immigrant street vendors these informal activities are more than just an “illegal economic survival strategy”. For the women who participated in Muñoz’ study, “productive nostalgia” was a business strategy, as they offered typical food from the country of origin to coethnics who were able to consume “nostalgic imaginaries of home through food” (2017, 296). The author argues, however, that the constant reminder of home which these activities entail becomes a form of “unpaid emotional labor” since the activation of emotions linked to a lost home, requires the hard work of managing such emotions. Contrary to Muñoz’ findings, however, the Peruvian women seemed to evaluate the emotions linked to memories of the “homeland” as exclusively positive. Indeed, they viewed it as an opportunity to maintain the memory of a home left behind. Such differences may be embedded in the different socio-economic position of the Latinx women in Muñoz’ study compared to the majority of the Peruvian women in this study. The empirical examples she presents in the article suggest that most of these women were undocumented immigrants and socioeconomically marginalized, some of them also transnational mothers who had left their children in the country of origin. The fact that selling Peruvianness was something that made the Peruvian women extremely proud due to the status of Peruvian cuisine, may also have influenced their positive attitudes toward the emotional labor of selling nostalgia. All of the Latinx women in Muñoz’ study had migrated from Mexico and Central America and were self-employed in the stigmatized street vending sector.

they actually are. Migrant memory is like any other memory. People invest in memories of “an imagined pleasurable past to produce and construct a pleasurable present and the future” (2010, 427). What is particular of migrant memory is that “this attempt to construct the present is located in a space that marks a radical discontinuity with the remembered past” (2010, 427).

Peruvian women who have established culinary businesses in Southern California engage with such intimations of the “homeland” through continuous interaction with Peruvian food. The strong attachment they have to their places of origin is reinforced and perpetuated through culinary entrepreneurship and validated through a positive discourse around Peruvian food and hence also around *peruanidad*. However, these entrepreneurial and culinary practices, like other everyday practices, are spatially situated, and the notion of *peruanidad* and national identity does not seem to be something that is articulated in a deterritorialized “transnational social field” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004),²⁸⁰ but bounded to space and spatial practices. Rather than perpetuating a persistent belonging to the territory the Peruvian women left behind, they seem to form part of the women’s settlement strategies within the host society contributing to the development of a sense of home and belonging there, and to the conservation and production of a sense of self in a migrant context.

The Peruvian women, hence, seek to integrate into US society by negotiating distinction, and culinary business ownership is a means through which they can do so. Alarcón, Escala, and Odgers illustrate that the Mexican immigrants who participated in their study seek incorporation into the receiving society through “negotiating the inclusion of immigrant particularities within the broader society” (2016, 157). The authors highlight reproduction of cultural elements through artistic, religious, and civic/community practices as part of such strategies. I expand on this by demonstrating

²⁸⁰ Sociologist Peggy Levitt and anthropologist Nina Glick Schiller argue that “migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields encompassing those who move and those who stay behind” (2004, 1003). They urge scholars to explore the ways in which migrants live simultaneous lives in two contexts referring to their engagement with daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in the receiving society and in the society of origin. Anthropologist Pnina Werbner (2013) criticizes the illusion of simultaneity assumed and taken for granted in the transnational approach. She points to the limitations of migrants’ simultaneous engagement in two or more countries, underscoring the inevitable ruptures that migration produces. According to sociologist and cultural theorist Stuart Hall (2008), an immigrant can never really return home, because home will never be the same anymore. Other scholars have highlighted the strong influence of national borders, state policy and the power of nation states in facilitating and constraining movement across borders and in shaping migrant’s cross-border social action (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004) and hence their possibility of living simultaneous lives in two geographical contexts.

how Peruvian women in Southern California engage with *peruanidad* through culinary business ownership. By reproducing Peruvian food, foodways and other Peruvian artefacts and symbols in the food spaces they create, the women engage with the country of origin in ways that go beyond efforts of assimilation and transnational practices, as they claim the right to cultural representation while creating home-like places for themselves, for their families and for the wider Peruvian community.

The women's engagement with familiar ingredients, tastes, textures and smells, along with the visual aspect of other material artefacts used in the business space to reproduce "homeland" culture, evoke feelings of home and belonging for Peruvians in the area including for the entrepreneur herself whose labor allows her to continuously revisit the "homeland" in the work space. The culinary conquest of local palates in which immigrant entrepreneurs participate alongside the efforts of Peruvian elite chefs and governmental marketing campaigns, legitimize claims for home and shape immigrants' home-making processes in Southern California. Apart from bringing attention to the reproduction of material culture in the business realm, however, I also highlight the spatial dimension of the Peruvian women's entrepreneurial practices. Because in order to conquer palates by reproducing and commodifying "homeland" culture, there must be space.

Conquering Space: Peruvian Territories in Southern California

While the Peruvian women legitimize their right to a home in the United States by reproducing discourses of "the good citizen" linked to the American ethos of individualism and hard work, observation in the field, however, reveal a subtler and silent claim in the way they navigate, appropriate and shape space, and thus also seek membership of the urban community. Through culinary entrepreneurship, Peruvian women interact with urban spaces as economic, but also as spatial actors, and claim the right to space and to home for themselves, their families, and for the wider Peruvian community. Boccagni views home-making as "a significant instance of place-making" (2017, 12), and refers to how a particular set of social relations that interact at a specific location shapes place. While anthropologist and geographer Nicholas De Genova (2009)

has suggested that migrant subjectivities are primarily articulated through their occupation of public space, Hondagneu-Sotelo claims that “inhabiting public place is a key dimension of immigrant integration” (2017b, 113). Yet some public places are less accessible for immigrants, and for undocumented immigrants fearing deportation some are even unsafe. How immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurs interact with and shape public space has not been given sufficient attention within the political-economic paradigm of the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. The nested approach seeks to fill this void, and the stories that I present here illuminate how Peruvian women navigate access to public and semi-public spaces in Southern California, how they produce meaning into the spaces they inhabit, and how they create home-like places in the urban environment. As they claim the right to space, to representation and to membership of the urban community, the women also contribute to the everyday transformation of urban spaces.

Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs occupy space in the public sphere in order to commodify and present *peruanidad* to a wide range of consumers. Anthropologist Karsten Paerregaard (2008a) has illustrated how Peruvians in global metropolises around the world occupy public space through Catholic processions, celebrating the Lord of Miracles, and thus reterritorializing the religious icon outside Peru. He argues that “the icon represents a vector pointing from Lima and Peru into the world, which migrants use to navigate and construct meaning when moving in a social space that they do not control and to identify at once with a specific place in the world and feel at home anywhere else”. Hence, they can “introduce ‘a part of Peru’ wherever they go, and thus (...) claim a particular identity as Peruvians while simultaneously broadening the symbolic meaning of that identity” (1087-88). As food has become a primary identity marker for Peruvian transnational communities (Imilan 2015, 232), immigrant culinary entrepreneurs in Southern California reterritorialize Peruvian cuisine beyond Peruvian borders. Unlike Peruvian Catholics who participate in religious processions around the world, however, they construct meaning into social spaces over which they do exert certain control.

Peruvian cultural and religious events are organized in several US cities to which Peruvians have migrated in large numbers. In addition to constituting temporary phenomena, cultural events are often, though not exclusively, confined to a coethnic

public, and religious events to a wider, but also limited and primarily Catholic audience. And although religious processions that take place in the streets are observable to a wider group of non-coethnic and non-Catholic bystanders, the growing number of Peruvian culinary ventures has left a more visible footprint on Californian territory. Though Peruvian food businesses far from tower over the Angelino urban landscape, like, among others, Mexican, Chinese and Korean business ventures do, they are considerably more visible than a couple of decades ago. And the inhabitants of the Greater Los Angeles area and beyond increasingly associate certain tastes and smells, in addition to particular ethnic symbols and artefacts articulated in these businesses, as “Peruvian”.

How culinary businesses commodify and display *peruanidad* becomes a request for visibility in the public sphere demanded through spatial appropriation and place-making. According to Saint Blancat and Cancellieri minority groups’ various forms of requesting “visibility implies a demand for social recognition which entails becoming full actors who can display their own identity and specificity in public space” (2014, 4). While the non-profit organization Peru Village fights a political struggle to convince the city council to assign a stretch of Vine street to the Peruvian community, Peruvian culinary businesses fight a subtler battle for representation of *peruanidad* in the public space. Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs’ ability to construct “Peruvian” places in which they can invest meaning and to which they can claim belonging rely less on political demands than on their ability to attract customers, which again influences the type of spaces business owners make use of or gain access to. A complex set of power structures facilitate and constrain the women’s ability to access space in culinary markets. Food discourses and consumer demand mediate the processes through which food businesses gain social recognition and hence also target clientele, while financial and legal resources, among other factors, condition the institution, viability, revenue and location of the businesses.

Regardless of structural constraints, however, Peruvian female entrepreneurs from different class backgrounds, lawful permanent residents and undocumented immigrants alike have sought to bring urban food spaces under their control. By exerting situated intersectional agency, they have appropriated a space in culinary markets in

which they can produce and recreate material culture and food practices from the country of origin. Hence, they also claim the right to exercise power over space and attribute security, familiarity and control (Boccagni 2017) to it, performing home-making practices in the public realm. Anthropologist Mary Douglas notes that “[h]ome is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space (...) it need not be a large space, but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control” (1991, 289). In Chapter 3, I described how Gerthy and Jorge had been able to formalize their business despite irregular immigration status. As undocumented immigrants, a physical space acquired under legal conditions facilitated business outcomes, but also their ability to control a semi-public space into which they can produce meaning and present themselves as Peruvian immigrants in Southern California. Gerthy explained:

My kids know that when they enter here [the business] they enter Peru, with our customs. In my house they also know that they are in Peruvian territory. There is no “I will leave”, that “I will go out”. Here you respect me (...) Also, when their friends come, they come in... I tell them: “Listen! Listen! Come! Tell them to come in, to greet.” There always has to be respect for dad, mom, at least a greeting. (...) I see that here [in the US] they say: “Oh, my parents do not respect me”. If you come in here [pointing her index finger toward the front door of the business], you enter Peruvian territory.²⁸¹

The explicit use of the term territory underscores how Gerthy and her husband, who were undocumented immigrants, exerted agency not only within the confines of the private domestic realm, but also in order to manipulate semi-public spaces. Navigating legal and business regimes, undocumented Peruvian immigrant women find ways to overcome structural constraints in the labor market, and instead of assimilating into mainstream local cultural practices, they reproduce “homeland” culture within the food spaces they create. Hence, they also construct home-like places in the public, in which they, at least to a certain extent, are able to impose their own “laws”.

Peruvian women, however, do not only build homes for Peruvian and non-Peruvian customers and guests. Their businesses often turn into home-like places for the entrepreneurs themselves and for their families. Through culinary business ownership,

²⁸¹ “Mis hijos saben que entran aquí [el negocio] entran a Perú, con nuestras costumbres. En mi casa igual saben que están en territorio peruano. No hay que ‘yo me voy’, que ‘yo salgo’. Aquí me respetas (...) Incluso cuando vienen sus amigos, entran... les digo: ‘¡Oye! ¡Oye! ¡Ven! Diles que entren, saluden’. Siempre tiene que haber un respeto a papá, mamá, al menos un saludo. (...) Yo veo aquí que dicen: ‘hay no me respetan mis padres’. Entrás aquí, [señalando la puerta principal del negocio con el dedo índice] entras en territorio peruano.”

Gerthy and Jorge had created a homely place for their family in the public sphere. Their business was a family venture, and apart from Gerthy and Jorge, their three children also worked in the business. While laboring side by side, most of the family socializing happened within the confines of the business realm. As I have described in previous chapters, Elisa had also strategized to overcome the constraints of her irregular migration status and had opened a formal brick and mortar restaurant business. Similar to Gerthy, she spent most of her time in the restaurant where most of the family interaction occurred. Hence, she felt more at home in the restaurant. In her own house, there was almost no food in the refrigerator. She only kept disposable plates and plastic cutlery for the few times she or other family members dined at home, and not at the restaurant. Like Elisa and Gerthy, many Peruvian women had constructed their homes and family life around the restaurant, often because the profitability of the businesses required them to invest long hours. Other women drew sharper lines between the business as a work place and their house or apartment as a place for leisure. As discussed in Chapter 5, gendered expectations intersect with class position and target clientele in shaping such divergent practices. Nevertheless, the Peruvian women continue negotiating the boundaries between the private and the public, reinforcing, blurring and sometimes erasing work-family/business-home boundaries.

Apart from gender and class, however, legal status plays a significant role in mediating processes of home-making in the public sphere. To undocumented immigrants, like Gerthy and Elisa, who navigate the constant risk of detention and deportation, formal business ownership enables them to produce “safe spaces” (Bloemraad, Sarabia, and Fillingim 2016)²⁸² that provide a sense of security from the “legal violence” (Menjívar and Abrego 2012)²⁸³ many experience in the labor market

²⁸² In a study of second-generation teenagers from Mexican-origin immigrant families living in the San Francisco Bay area, sociologists Irene Bloemraad, Heidy Sarabia and Angela E. Fillingim (2016) focus on civic “safe spaces” in which youth from immigrant families can find a space to engage in active, compensatory political and civic participation while also “staying out of trouble”. By “safe spaces” they refer to “institutional locations that were somewhat more violence-free than neighborhood streets and relatively ‘safe’ for undocumented families because the activities and people involved turned a blind eye to or mitigated the importance of legal status” (2016, 1538). The Peruvian undocumented women’s food spaces do not, however, represent institutional locations and civic “safe spaces”, but alternative work places that provide a sense of safety either because of their resemblance with formality and legality, or because of their lack of visibility in the public sphere.

²⁸³ Sociologists Cecilia Menívar and Leisy Abrego (Menjívar and Abrego 2012) develop the term legal violence referring to how the legal context of reception shapes immigrants’ everyday lives in a way that produces immigrant vulnerability in the society of reception. They emphasize the potentially long-term injurious effects such vulnerability may have on immigrants’ incorporation, as many immigrants often spend longer periods of time living under unauthorized or uncertain legal statuses. They particularly point to the violent character of current practices in which immigration law and criminal law are gradually intertwined, making already vulnerable immigrants’ everyday lives even more precarious.

and in society. Undocumented Peruvian immigrant women who have been able to draw on their social network in order to establish formal brick and mortar businesses, construct a work space in which they find a safe haven, since such places, despite their visibility in the urban space, are associated with legality. Although she was obliged to invest too many hours of the week to make her business profitable, Elisa told me that she preferred self-employment over paid work, since the business offered a “safe space” in the public sphere:

It [running a restaurant] is very enslaving. It is very stressful. But now we are here, as I keep telling my husband. Because this is the only work we have. Because going out to search for work outside now is not possible. With this president who is searching for us even worse. So, the more covert, the better. If you want another possibility, you close a couple of days. Going where? To another state? But the fear does not permit it. I am afraid of taking a flight and going to Hawaii or Miami. I will not do it.²⁸⁴²⁸⁵

Fear of deportation limited Elisa’s spatial movements in the urban landscape. This does not mean, however, that she lived a life in “the shadows” withdrawn from public life, hiding in her private home behind closed curtains. On the contrary, she measured her movements carefully and limited her mobility to safe(r) spaces, such as her house, her children’s school and the restaurant. Because of its resemblance with formality and legality, a formal brick and mortar business provides undocumented immigrants with a sense of security and protection from the perils they perceive and which many have experienced in the regular labor market. Moreover, as detailed earlier, other undocumented Peruvian immigrant women (and a few Peruvians with American citizenship or lawful permanent residency) had established informal home-based businesses, through which they commodified Peruvian food within the realm of their private homes, which constituted less visible spaces. Such commercializing of the domestic space allows undocumented Peruvian immigrants to withdraw from the public sphere and into the more protected domestic space. Hence, by creating less visible

²⁸⁴ “[Dirigir un negocio] es muy esclavizante. Es muy estresante. Pero ya estamos acá, como le digo a mi esposo. Porque esto es lo único que tenemos como trabajo. Porque ahorita salir a buscar trabajo fuera no se puede. Con este presidente que nos está buscando peor. Entonces, mientras más escondido estás mejor. Si quiere tener otra posibilidad, cierras dos días. ¿Poderte ir a donde? ¿A otro estado? Pero el miedo no te deja. A mí me da miedo subirme un avión e irme a Hawaii o Miami. Yo no lo voy a hacer.”

²⁸⁵ While some undocumented Peruvian immigrants relayed about similar concerns, others expressed less fear. Several undocumented Peruvian immigrants also told stories about travels to other cities and to other states nearby which they could reach by car.

commercial spaces, or visible business spaces that convey legality, undocumented Peruvian women construct their own sanctuary zones in the urban landscape. As such, the business space constitutes an asset for Peruvian immigrants, and particularly for undocumented immigrants, who work hard to avoid being associated with illegality.

Although basic to the development of a sense at home, Hage argues that the feeling of security is not enough to provide homeliness to a space. He claims that “home is a place governed by what we consider to be ‘our law’” (2010, 418). Through appropriation of a space in culinary markets, Peruvian women have gained control over urban spaces in which they exert their own laws. As Gerthy’s quote above demonstrates, people who entered the Peruvian territory she had created through her business had to follow her rules. As culinary business owners, Peruvian women appropriate thus a space in the public realm, impose their own government of such spaces, create safe spaces and reproduce home-like environments of food practices, social practices as well as material culture from the country of origin, appealing to the senses and to emotional, relational, material and symbolic aspects of home.

Such control over small “patches” in the urban landscape facilitates home-making practices beyond the domestic realm and may potentially produce a sense of belonging. Sociologists Alejandro Miranda-Nieto and Paolo Boccagni (2020) have studied Ecuadorian restaurants in Madrid. Their ethnographic field observations uncovered forms of domestication of space within the business realm.²⁸⁶ In keeping with my findings among Peruvian culinary business owners, they point to how boundaries between the private and the public are often blurred within these spaces. Similar observations are presented in a study conducted by Hondagneu-Sotelo (2017a) who claims that Latinx immigrants perform important home-making practices in Los Angeles inner-city community gardens where they reproduce a material environment of plants, vegetables and herbs from the places they have left behind, while they also develop a righteous sense of belonging to that place and that city, turning these spaces into what she calls “hybrid-domestic places” in the public realm. Akin to these Latinx

²⁸⁶ Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni found that Ecuadorian restaurants were often turned into a site for mundane routines of family life and further observed the ways in which material culture was arranged in certain manners and in certain areas within the business location as a way to perform domesticity in the semi-public restaurant space. As an example, they highlight the ways in which artefacts that conveyed personal and intimate meaning to the owner were arranged in the back bar of the restaurant— a space reserved for employees, while visible but out of reach for customers.

gardeners, Peruvian women who run formal culinary businesses construct hybrid-domestic places in the public, as they create homes for themselves, for their families and for the Peruvian community by domesticating public spaces. Analogously, informal business owners open semi-restaurants, take-away ventures and catering businesses within the domestic realm, bringing social practices generally performed in the public into the domestic sphere. Elaborating on Hondagneu-Sotelo's concept, I call these spaces hybrid-public places.²⁸⁷ The women thus negotiate and blur boundaries between the public and the private sphere, and consolidate the understanding of the private home and the domestic realm as a political site. By constructing hybrid-domestic and hybrid-public places, Peruvian immigrants are not only able to create homely and familiar spaces, they also produce safe(r) spaces, either because of the resemblance of such spaces with formality and legality, or because of their limited visibility in the public sphere.

Although a formal brick and mortar business or a home-based informal business venture may constitute a safe(r) haven for some undocumented immigrants, the safety these spaces convey is still precarious and the business owner's authority and control conditioned by a range of factors. Having to rely on a family member who figures as the legal owner of formal businesses may be both time-consuming and limits autonomy. To informal home-based business owners, the blurring of the boundaries between the private and the work space often constitutes an advantage. However, bringing public life into the private realm also makes it difficult to separate family/private time from work hours. Diana and Marco's informal home-based semi-restaurant often posed a variety of dilemmas. Sometimes it could be difficult to distinguish between customer-relations and friendships. When customers arrived late in the evening to dine, their meals often turned into a party, and it could be difficult to usher them out at closing hour. Mothers who did not have access to daycare for their children, came to their semi-

²⁸⁷ Professor of Landscape Architecture Jefferey Hou (2010) coins the term "hybrid public spaces" with relation to abandoned public and private properties that are occupied by communities and turned into places for personal and collective use, such as cultivation, recreation, gathering, and education. In contrast, with "hybrid-public places" I stress the difference between space and place, and refer to how Peruvian immigrant women exert spatial agency and construct place by bringing public life of commerce and consumption into the domestic realm, as a way of claiming the right to participate in public life and economic entrepreneurial activities without formal access to the usual public and semi-public urban spaces in which such commercial activities are usually performed. By claiming the right to public and economic life in the domestic realm, they are able to produce new meanings into these spaces beyond the significance of family life and practices. Thus, the production of "hybrid public places" contributes to blur the boundaries between the private and the public, and demonstrates how economic- and private family life are often intrinsically connected.

restaurant in order for their children to play with other kids. Hence, the apartment often turned into a semi-kinder garden and people tended to stay for the whole day. Moreover, many home-based informal businesses were operated from rented apartments or houses. Hence, the landlord's attitude toward their irregular business activities became a crucial factor in enabling entrepreneurial practices. In Lorena's case, her home-based semi-restaurant was so successful that multiple cars were lined up outside the house at all hours, particularly during the weekend. Fear of repercussions from the landlord, in addition to a couple of unpleasant visits by health inspectors, prompted her to pool resources with her son in law in order to buy a house, which provided her with a more secure business environment. Diana and Marco, on the other hand, did not possess the financial means required to purchase their own property. They told me, however, that they had been lucky with the landlord of the apartment building within which they ran their businesses. "[W]e have to be very discrete, because sometimes... it is complicated", Marco relayed, "Because when you do not have a license."²⁸⁸ When I asked them if they had experienced any problems with the police, he continued: "Thank God, no. Here, even the manager eats Peruvian food, (...) even the janitors". Yet, he told me that they were still quite selective with their clientele, and took good care of the apartment, making sure it looked less business-like. "As I keep the apartment well painted, I take care of it. I make sure it does not look like I sell food",²⁸⁹ he stated.

Hence, while occupying a variety of spaces in culinary markets and negotiating the right to attribute familiarity, security and control into these spaces, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs negotiate visibility by establishing their businesses in public, semi-public and private spaces. As they seek visibility in order to represent *peruanidad* in the public sphere, on the one hand, they simultaneously navigate visibility relative to the perils they perceive and experience when moving their bodies through the urban landscape, even when their business activities are performed within the private realm, since such spaces are rendered public through a set of domesticated commercial activities. Sociologists Chantal Saint-Blancat and Adriano Cancellieri highlight the importance of adopting space as a key lens when studying how minoritized groups navigate visibility

²⁸⁸ "[T]enemos que tener bien discretamente porque hay veces... es complicado. (...) Porque uno no tiene licencia."

²⁸⁹ "Como tengo el departamento bien pintadito, y lo cuido. Trato de que no se note que vendo comida".

in the urban space as they negotiate their presence in the receiving society (2014, 646). In an article written together with migration scholar Elena Ostanel, Cancellieri further claims that “[e]ntering public space implies trespassing physical and symbolic as well as institutional and informal thresholds which question the usual spatial order of urban territory” (2015, 652). In the process of navigating the urban landscape, most formal Peruvian culinary businesses comply with “the usual spatial order”, while other businesses, many of these informal, balance on the threshold of “hypervisibility” (Cancellieri and Ostanel 2015, 500).²⁹⁰ Thus, culinary entrepreneurs exercise agency as spatial actors and negotiate with hegemonic discourses tied to space and to racialized, classed, gendered and illegalized bodies. Intersecting dimensions of inequality shape the visibility of their bodies in the public, and limit and constrain their presence in the urban landscape. Legal immigration status per se is an invisible position. However, stereotypical representations of certain immigrant groups—like constructed link between Latinx bodies and undocumented status, as well as between undocumented status and informal economic activities—render some immigrants a more visible target for police raids as well as for ICE enforcement and removal operations.²⁹¹

Some of the Peruvian informal business owners that I observed during my time in the field navigated informality within the confines of less marginal spaces as they sold Peruvian food at cultural events, delivered food to lunch clients in white-collar business neighborhoods, or operated home-based businesses within middle-class homes. I met Veronica in her suburban house in an upper-middle class Orange County neighborhood. The living room resembled the photos in a designer catalogue with luxurious furniture complemented by large paintings and decorative art on the walls. The kitchen where she used to spend most of her work day preparing Peruvian pastries was spacious, and big windows gave her a perfect view toward the green and neatly manicured garden. The privileged business environment contributed to distance the business from the popular image of business informality, also linked to illegality. Like

²⁹⁰ Cancellieri and Ostanel (2015) explain how racialization as well as spatial movements mediate the ways in which immigrants often enter into “a realm of hypervisibility”. Their bodies are often considered different and they may use the urban space in unconventional ways. This may challenge the often taken for granted “spatial order” – i.e. what is considered the “right way” of moving through the urban landscape (500).

²⁹¹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) claims that through Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) the agency “identifies and apprehends removable aliens, detains these individuals when necessary and removes illegal aliens from the United States” (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement n.d.).

Veronica, other informal business owners benefitted from similar middle-class privileges while also profiting on other advantages such as legal immigration status, lighter skin color and English proficiency which helped them avoid trouble with immigration authorities as well as with the health department.

Many Peruvian informal business owners, however, operated within marginal business spaces and navigated thus the risk of being associated with stereotypes linked to informality and illegality. Noelia's humble business environment stood in sharp contrast to Veronica's work space. The kitchen had no windows and barely enough counter space to allow her to unfold her culinary talents. Yet that did not prevent her from preparing an array of dishes of which she was well known within the poor and working-class neighborhood she resided in. Late one evening we sat by the tiny kitchen table, my chair pushed as close as possible toward the edge to avoid pushing over the pile of casseroles that Noelia had neatly stored in the corner. She relayed about the many workshops to which she daily used to drive her old car to deliver lunch to hungry workers. She also explained how sometimes when the police would come, she used to bring her car inside the workshop and pretended like it was in the garage for service. She had built relationships with Mexican and Salvadoran street vendors in the neighborhood, and they all watched each other's backs and warned the other when the police or migration authorities appeared:

“The police are there! Migration authorities are there! Don't come here!” Or sometimes I come and the police come, and I enter the workshop, lock my car, and I pretend like I am there. The police come, my car is inside of the work shop. They can't do anything, they can't say anything. If I am outside, ok. It's a risk, and I have a license, insurance, everything in order in case something happens to me. If they stop me, everything is ok, there is no problem.²⁹²

The ethnic/racial and classed dimension of street vending of food in Los Angeles, and the fact that street vending has been an illegal activity up until 2018, has rendered Latinx immigrants who sell food on the street to be hypervisible,²⁹³ and as such also easy targets

²⁹² “¡Esta la policía por allá! ¡Está migración por allá! ¡No te vayas por acá!” O a veces llego y la policía llega, y me meto a un taller, cierro mi carro, me hago como que estoy ahí. Viene la policía, el carro esta metido ahí en el taller. Ellos no pueden hacer nada, no pueden decir nada. Si estoy afuera, ok. Es un riesgo, y tengo licencia, aseguranza, todo bien por sí algo me pasa. Me paran, ahí está todo tranquilo no hay problema.”

²⁹³ As with street vending in general, Mexicans and Central-Americans dominate the street food scene in Los Angeles.

for police raids and ICE.²⁹⁴ Peruvian informal business owners, like Noelia, who operated in marginalized spaces and prepared meals in humble apartments or sold food at manual workshops in poor and working-class neighborhoods were less visible than other informal business owners, such as stigmatized, racialized and hypervisible Latinx street vendors.²⁹⁵ Nevertheless, their movements in the urban landscape were not without risk. Carolina, whose story I presented in Chapter 3, also hit the road to deliver home cooked food to lunch clients. Contrary to Noelia, however, the middle-class house in which the food was prepared, the newer car and designer clothes, in addition to the white-collar clients and the business neighborhood in which they worked, did not attract the same stigma.

Peruvian undocumented immigrants and informal economic actors seem, thus, to navigate their relationship with space in ways that mitigate visibility in the urban landscape. Their spatial actions are shaped and constrained by a negative discursive context for Latinx and undocumented immigrants as well for Latinxs who work and run their businesses in certain sectors of the informal economy. Nevertheless, the Peruvian women exercise “spatial agency” (Cancellieri and Ostanel 2015, 503), and render themselves less visible, and thus also less informal and less “illegal” through spatial entrepreneurial practices. Noelia operated in a less visible manner than many of her street vending colleagues from El Salvador and Mexico, and most of the work day she spent in her studio apartment, where she prepared the food, or inside her own car while doing delivery, both spaces protecting her visibility. However, the highly policed neighborhood in which she operated her informal business was very different from the business district where Carolina made her deliveries. It also differed from the tranquil suburban avenues in Veronica’s neighborhood where informal business activities were performed and protected behind the walls of her two-story multiple bedroom house. Consequently, informal culinary entrepreneurs like Veronica and Carolina who enjoy certain privileges linked to middle-class status, whiteness and mainstream Americanness (like English language fluency) did not need to worry about police raids

²⁹⁴ Sociologist Emir Estrada (2019), who has studied children who help their parents out in their Street vending businesses, argues that “[s]treet vendors are the most vulnerable representatives of undocumented immigrants since their work exposes them so publicly” (Estrada 2019, 79).

²⁹⁵ Such practices are not particular for Peruvian immigrants. Mexican, Central American, as well as people from other minority groups and from the majority population, open home-based businesses and sell food at a variety of events.

or racial (and classed) profiling. And to many, legal immigration status offered the protection needed if something were to happen.

Peruvian undocumented immigrant women in Southern California do not live a life “in the shadows”. On the contrary, they employ a range of strategies to mitigate the effects of their unauthorized status. To some, business ownership becomes a tool for what sociologist Angela García calls “legal passing”, which she defines as “a strategic presentation of the self”, referring to a variety of practices undocumented immigrants engage in when navigating everyday life in unwelcoming places by presenting themselves in ways that resemble dominant cultural practices in the society of settlement, rendering themselves less “illegal” in the public eye (2019, 134).²⁹⁶ However, whereas García emphasizes behavioral, material and mental adaptations,²⁹⁷ I argue, that legal passing is also linked to the ways in which undocumented immigrants²⁹⁸ navigate space, particularly through business ownership as exemplified in this chapter. García further claims that legal passing constitutes a form of coerced assimilation, as undocumented immigrants see themselves forced to behave in ways that are similar to the dominant culture and hence distance themselves from their ethnic and cultural identities. Interestingly, however, I observe that acts of adaptation to dominant cultural practices and to “the usual spatial order” go hand in hand with the ways in which Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs negotiate inclusion through distinction based on national identity, in which ethnicity and cultural specificity in fact is emphasized. The women’s business, hence, provide them with an income while protecting them from risks inherent to the regular labor market, providing a “safe(r) space” in which the women are able to mask their undocumented status and convey notions of legality, while also enabling them to reproduce “homeland” culture. The women’s spatial practices,

²⁹⁶ In her book *Legal Passing: Navigating Undocumented Life and Local Immigration Law* (2019), García challenges the constructed narrative of how undocumented immigrants supposedly live their lives “in the shadows”. She demonstrates how Mexican immigrants who reside in the United States without authorization navigate a life shaped by federal, state, and local immigration laws by finding ways to obscure their unauthorized immigration status. She labels such practices “legal passing”, drawing on Erving Goffman’s (1963) term *passing*, which in the US context is often linked to *racial* passing, particularly referring to how Black people under certain circumstances have been able to pass as White.

²⁹⁷ With regards to behavioral adaptation García refers to how undocumented immigrants try to act American. Through material adaptations, on the other hand, they tried to look like an American, for example through the way they dressed. Mental adaptations refer to how these adaptations start to become normal, routine and accepted.

²⁹⁸ I also observe that legal permanent residents and American citizens who experience racialization—and are hence often perceived as undocumented immigrants due to a profiling of them as Latinx/Mexican—also engage in similar practices.

however, produce impacts beyond the individual entrepreneur, and contribute to the development of community ties among Peruvians in the area.

Community-making in Culinary Spaces: Unifying but Contested Sites

Peruvian culinary businesses constitute a space in which Peruvian immigrants in the area can meet and experience community. As I have detailed earlier, the Peruvian population in the Greater Los Angeles area is rather small and quite dispersed. Accordingly, instead of clustering in an ethnic enclave, Peruvian businesses are scattered across different neighborhoods. With an increasing number of Peruvian immigrants, however, a range of Peruvian non-profit organizations have emerged. Sociologist Min Zhou notes that “[e]thnic organizations are pillars of the ethnic community” (2009, 89). Yet, only one of the Peruvian organizations offers a physical space for community gatherings. Casa Peru—a non-profit organization built around a private property in a neighborhood located North East of Downtown Los Angeles—hosts a range of Peruvian cultural events, and some of the cultural organizations also use their facilities for meetings and events. Apart from Casa Peru, however, the community is dependent on other spaces to gather and build communal ties. The Catholic church constitutes one of these spaces in which Peruvian religious organizations, such as the different “*Hermandades [Brotherhoods]*”, meet and organize religious events. Due to few physical spaces of encounter, however, culinary businesses function as a unifying force and play a pivotal role in the development of a Peruvian community in the Greater Los Angeles area.

In this context, important relationships have developed between culinary ventures and cultural and religious organizations. During my time in the field, I witnessed how the different organizations cooperated with Peruvian culinary businesses in myriad ways. Some held monthly meetings and organized larger events for their members and others in Peruvian restaurants. Also, at Peruvian cultural events, informal food businesses were invited to sell their food, and often had to pay a fee to the association to be able to put up a stand. Whereas events organized by Peruvian non-profit organizations, hence, constitute important spaces in which informal culinary

businesses can commercialize their food and market their venture, such businesses contribute both by attracting participants and by shaping the content, meaning and atmosphere of such events. Alberto, one of the Peruvian immigrants that I interviewed during my time in the field told me that people come to these events primarily because of the food. Formal and informal business owners alike were involved in community fund-raising events, and often participated by volunteering, donating food, or by providing a convenient space for the event. Moreover, formal and informal culinary businesses play a key role when the two largest Peruvian events are organized annually in relation to the celebration of Peruvian independence in July. These are major events that attract big crowds of Peruvians and other Latinxs, but have also succeeded in reaching a large non-Latinx audience.

Furthermore, Peruvian culinary businesses constitute a space in which other ethnic businesses may promote themselves or sell their merchandise. To keep me informed about the Peruvian community, events and other issues that mattered for Peruvians in the area, I used to read the different Peruvian newspapers that were published and circulated in Southern California. These newspapers were distributed at the Peruvian consulate and a few were also online. However, like me, I assume that many Peruvians and other customers found and read these newspapers when dining at Peruvian restaurants where the newest issue was available for customers to pick up for free. Whereas the restaurants promoted Peruvian newspapers, formal as well as informal culinary business owners marketed their ventures in these papers, and as such contributed to funding their issue and distribution. A similar mutual business relationship was found between Peruvian music bands and culinary businesses, given that the business space was often used as venue for concerts, and since concerts helped attract customers to the restaurant. I also witnessed restaurants that offered products confectioned and/or commercialized by other Peruvian businesses, particularly by informal businesses. And at some of the events that were organized by informal culinary entrepreneurs, other businesses – formal and informal – could rent a space in which they could promote their business and their products. At a garden event at Victoria's house for example, four other businesses had put up booths where the guests could purchase

Peruvian clothing, sweets, dessert and soft drinks while enjoying Victoria's dinner menu.

Hence, culinary businesses impact the development of a Peruvian community beyond providing Peruvian immigrants with a place where they can dine when craving food from the "homeland". They also contribute to create unity and a space in which social relations as well as business relations can be forged. A variety of scholars have emphasized how ethnic businesses in ethnic enclaves enhance social structures and create social capital. Yet, the way ethnic entrepreneurship contributes to community building is still underexplored. A recent, but scant body of scholarship has brought attention to this gap in the literature (Zhou and Cho 2010, 85; Liu, Miller, and Wang 2014, 566). Similar dynamics to the ones I have described above are for example observed in Los Angeles' Chinatown and Koreatown, where upscale restaurants are used by the ethnic community to organize a variety of social activities (Zhou and Cho 2010, 91).²⁹⁹ Whereas the diversity and density of local businesses in these ethnic enclaves offer greater "institutional completeness" (Breton 1964)³⁰⁰ and a variety of options within a concentrated geographical space, I argue that the unity and institutionalization of a small and dispersed Peruvian community is highly dependent on these culinary spaces. However, while food spaces may provide a home for the Peruvian community, and prompt unity among Peruvians in Southern California, structures in the highly stratified Peruvian society are also reproduced in these spaces, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Claims-making: Seeking Membership of the Urban Community

Gerthy, Elisa, Veronica, Noelia, Carolina and many other Peruvians who run food businesses in Southern California have conquered a space in culinary markets. And though their entrepreneurial practices are shaped and constrained by intersecting

²⁹⁹ Light and Gold (2000, 167) also note that a symbiotic relationship often develops between ethnic economies and ethnic communities.

³⁰⁰ Sociologist Raymond Breton noted that ethnic communities represent two extreme types of social organization. At one extreme, the community is composed by a network of interpersonal relations not bounded by any formal organization. At the other side of the continuum, one finds communities that have developed a formal structure through a variety of institutions. Institutional completeness is located at the extreme of this side, referring to communities that have developed institutions that satisfy all needs of their members. Few, if any, ethnic communities have reached the stage of full institutional completeness.

dimensions of gender, ethnicity, race, class as well as immigration-, labor- and business regimes, the business space provides them with a sense of control that makes them “*feel empowered to seek* the satisfaction of [their] needs and to remove or exclude threatening otherness” (Hage 2010, 418; emphasis in original). As the title of this chapter suggests, I employ the concept “culinary conquest” in order to capture the processes through which Peruvian immigrants gain the recognition of local palates, occupy physical space, and gain access to American culinary markets in which they create home and through which they develop belonging to public spaces and seek membership of the urban community by drawing on distinction. Hence, I refer to a grassroots-manifestation and counter-process to earlier imperial invasions of American territories. While colonization played a pivotal role in producing the economic and social structures that condition these women’s mobility, entrepreneurship, and right to home, the women navigate these structures and find ways to contest them. A diverse group of Peruvian immigrant entrepreneurs, including women, undocumented immigrants and informal business owners, form part of a complex assemblage of actors who conquer and shape culinary spaces in Southern California. As if in a conjoint venture with a similar mission, undocumented immigrants, lawful permanent residents, American citizens, formal and informal business owners establish a social contract between the entrepreneur and the consumer—or on a more symbolic level, between the Peruvian immigrant community and mainstream US society—through which they claim the right to commodify a commercial product, but also, the right to representation as an ethnic minority group in the urban landscape.

These actions also lead to “a collective experience of city-making” (Holston 2009, 254). The social contracts that are established move beyond the dichotomy of the state and the citizen, and are linked to people’s right to the city they are making, independent of legal residence. Within such everyday individual and collective struggles for recognition, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs who find themselves disenfranchised on the grounds of intersecting dimensions of race, ethnicity, class, gender and legal immigration status, contest historically and legally produced structures that signify and articulate power, like borders, migration regimes, labor markets, as well as regulations and norms for the commodification of assets and skills.

Through appropriation of space and through everyday entrepreneurial practices Peruvian women claim the right to the city they contribute to shaping. The slogan “The right to the city” can be traced back to the French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre. An important argument that Lefebvre developed is “the city as an *oeuvre*—a work in which all its citizens participate” (Mitchell 2003, 17; emphasis in original). The right to the city may be seen as an overarching form of rights, through which other rights manifest themselves, like the right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit, the right to the *oeuvre*, to participation and appropriation (2003, 18). It is the *oeuvre* of those who inhabit the city that provides them with the grounds upon which they claim these rights, also the very right to continue with the *oeuvre*. And as the Peruvian women’s *oeuvre* contributes to the (re)making of the city, they also provide other Peruvian immigrants with a resource for claims-making.

The public realm is hence a space in which individual and collective needs and desires as well as their recognition may be claimed. Geographer Don Mitchell argues that “[i]n a world defined by private property... *public space* (as the space for representation) takes on exceptional importance” (2003, 34). In continuation, he states:

...what makes a space *public*—a space in which the cry and demand for the right to the city can be seen and heard—is often not its preordained “publicness”. Rather, it is when, to fulfill a pressing need, some group or another *takes* space and through its actions *makes* it public. The very act of representing one’s group (or to some extent one’s self) to a larger public creates a space for representation. Representation both demands space and creates space. (2003, 35; emphasis in original)

Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs’ appropriation of space and their claim to govern, shape and manipulate these spaces, turn their venture into a “culinary conquest” through which they seek representation and recognition; claim the right to home and to belong; and as such negotiate and contest ethnic/racial, gender and class hierarchies that are constitutive of the political economy of the globalized capitalist system, and hence also of entrepreneurial processes.

Nevertheless, neither sanctuary-like business spaces nor legal passing can prevent undocumented immigrants from being deported the way that legalization and a pathway to citizenship can. And although informal businesses that are operated within realms associated with formality and legality may protect culinary entrepreneurs from

the violence and marginalization experienced by informal business owners who operate their ventures within less safe spaces linked to racialization, lower-class and stigma, these business owners lack the legal protection that comes with formality. Whereas Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs continue to claim the right to home, and to membership of the urban community through appropriating spaces in culinary markets, legal immigration status intersects with other axes of inequality in facilitating and constraining the women's agency and claims. Sociologist Irene Bloemraad (2018) underscores that the flip-side of claims-making is recognition and that immigrants' agency is structured by relations of power. Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs make claims on membership beyond legal citizenship and independent of legal immigration status. While their claims, however, are constrained by legal frameworks, institutional practices and public discourse, the status of Peruvian food provide the women with a social weapon that legitimizes their conquest and grants them recognition.

* * *

The nested approach highlights the role of home-making and spatial practices in ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. In this chapter, I have explored these dimensions. Most of the Peruvian women have found home and a sense of belonging in the society of settlement, not because they have assimilated into a majority culture, but through the hard work and complex processes of home-making. They seek inclusion through distinction by conquering local palates and a physical space in Californian culinary markets through business ownership. Within these spaces they exert certain control and claim the right to making home by filling these spaces with material, sensory and aesthetic elements that evoke notions of *peruanidad*. Hence, they also contribute to shaping the local environments they inhabit and claim membership of the urban community. Their businesses put them into daily contact with cultural artifacts, practices and symbols from “the homeland”. As such, business ownership allows them to construct homely places in the private and in the public sphere for themselves, for their families, and for other Peruvians in the area, and their businesses constitute an important

space for community building for a Peruvian immigrant population and community that lacks institutional completeness.

Moreover, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs see themselves as ambassadors of their country of origin, and the businesses represent Peruvian “territories” into which non-Peruvians can enter as guests. These “territories” often transgress boundaries between the public and the private sphere as the women construct hybrid domestic places in the urban space as well as hybrid public places in the private realm. Some of these business spaces, turn into safe havens for undocumented immigrants. However, legal immigration status and the stigma associated with informality intersect with experiences of racialization in shaping how these women navigate space in order to represent their distinctiveness through business ownership. Thus, these entrepreneurs emerge as not only economic but also spatial actors, as they seek not only economic incorporation but representation and recognition through culinary entrepreneurship. Peruvian cuisine arises as an important social weapon of contestation, but can it also, as Gastón Acurio claimed, become an agent of social transformation and turn over deeply ingrained inequalities rooted in colonial processes? The following chapter digs deeper into this question.

Chapter 7: Peruvians in a “Mexican” City: Reimagining and Redefining *Peruanidad*

Spring had already permeated the dry Southern Californian air as I loaded my family into the car and headed for Bakersfield where the annual celebration of *Yunza*³⁰¹ was taking place at a large venue in the outskirts of the city. We started by checking out the six trees that stood tall, but with various branches bent to their limit by the heavy burden of decorations—from ladies’ hats and Peruvian textiles, to children’s toys and teddy bears—as is the custom during this celebration. Afterwards, we headed over to the stage where a group of Peruvians in traditional Andean outfits performed folk dances accompanied by an ensemble playing Andean music genres such as *Huayno* and *Huaylas*. Pleased to see a group of familiar faces, I presented my husband and daughter to Susana, Ignacio and their son, Fernando, whom I had met at a Peruvian event in Los Angeles a couple of weeks earlier. Together, we headed over to the food stands to grab a bite, and I convinced them that we had to try Rosa’s ceviche. I was there to observe Rosa in her informal business and preferred hence to dine at her tables. We were enjoying our meals and a friendly conversation when the topic suddenly turned toward political issues, and Ignacio burst out a degrading phrase about undocumented immigrants whom he called “illegal aliens” and with whom he did not want to be associated. After all, he had entered the country the “right” way. I glanced at Rosa, who was standing near enough to have heard our conversation. I was not sure how to react, so I remained silent, but uncomfortable. After years of living in the United States as an undocumented immigrant, Rosa had finally obtained a temporary protected status. Navigating the migration regime, Rosa had moved in and out of legal categories. Contrariwise, many of her friends who were lined up in the booths next to her, offering a variety of Peruvian treats, grappled still with the disadvantages that accompany an unauthorized immigration status.

³⁰¹ *Yunza* is a Peruvian custom linked to the *Carnavales* that are celebrated in the Peruvian highlands in February every year. While food, music and dance are important elements in the celebration, a distinguishable feature is that trees are decorated with objects and a ritual is performed in which people dance around the tree taking turns of chopping the tree with an axe. The person who manages to chop down the tree is the *padrina/o* (sponsor) of next years’ celebrations.



Image 7.1 (top). Trees decorated with presents at *Yunza*, Bakersfield 2018. **Image 7.2 (bottom).** Food stands lined up for informal businesses at the *Yunza* celebration, Bakersfield 2018.

* * *

This ethnographic moment revealed some of the power relations that unfold among Peruvian immigrants in Southern California. On the one hand, the provisional culinary spaces that Rosa and other informal culinary entrepreneurs had created in form of rented

booths and wooden picnic benches that were filled with familiar tastes from Peru, united Peruvian immigrants from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural backgrounds. It even made Peruvians travel all the way from Los Angeles to Bakersfield to enjoy food, music and dances from the “homeland” while waiting for the big happening—the dance around the trees, which were soon to be cut down one by one in a matter of determining who would become *padrina/os* of next year’s event. While uniting Peruvian immigrants abroad, however, these spaces also constitute contested sites in which deeply ingrained divisions from the country of origin are made visible. Susana, Fernando and Ignacio represented light skinned upper-middle class Peruvians who had possessed the legal and financial means to enter the United States through “the front door”. Their position in the receiving society was very different from Rosa’s social location, as Rosa had spent many years as a Peruvian immigrant in the United States struggling to overcome structural barriers linked to race, class, and immigration status. Ignacio’s comment also reminds me of a phrase I later stumbled over in the Netflix series *Gentefied* (Cosio et al. 2020), in which a Mexican girl who works in her grandfather’s restaurant in Boyle Heights sarcastically states: “They may love our shit, but they don’t love us”. The quote was uttered in the context of a Mexican-dominated East Los Angeles neighborhood heavily affected by gentrification, and referred specifically to Mexican food and to the experiences of Chicanxs and Mexicans in Los Angeles. Yet, it resonated with my findings among Peruvian immigrants in Southern California. It illuminated the complex power relations that were at play in the incident at the *Yunza* celebration in Bakersfield where Ignacio was sitting at a table enjoying food from the “homeland” served by Peruvian immigrants many of whom resided under precarious legal statuses and whose right to be there was denied by Ignacio himself. It also underscored the role of food in forging and maintaining such power relations.

In the previous chapter, I argued that Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs negotiate inclusion through distinction. In this chapter, I demonstrate that distinction is not only negotiated in relation to the dominant White Anglo population, but also in the encounter with other minorities, including other Peruvian immigrants. As a small minority within the larger Southern Californian Latinx population, predominantly made up by people of Mexican descent, how do Peruvians make sense of themselves and their relationships

with other Peruvians, with other Latinxs, and with other immigrants and non-immigrants in their local societies of settlement? And what role do food discourses play in shaping these processes? Is there a way to win America's heart through the stomach? Or is there a juxtaposition between the demand for Peruvian food, and the rejection of certain Latinx racialized and in many cases also illegalized bodies?

Other scholars have demonstrated how Peruvian social divisions are re-inscribed across borders (e.g. Alcalde 2020; Berg 2015).³⁰² The Peruvian women's stories, however, emphasize the role food plays in these processes, as well as how Peruvian culinary businesses offer a particular space for a variety of encounters, not only among Peruvians, but also between Peruvians and other immigrant and non-immigrants in the society of settlement. The exceptional status that Peruvian food holds in the receiving society, as well as the important position that Peruvian cuisine has obtained as a primary marker of national Peruvian identity (Imilan 2015), turn food and food spaces into particularly interesting sites for understanding processes of inclusion and exclusion. Similar to many other Latinx immigrants, Peruvians in Southern California often face discrimination based on intersecting dimensions of differentiation such as race, ethnicity, class, gender and legal immigration status. At the *Yunza* celebration in Bakersfield, Peruvian undocumented immigrants' deservingness of a home and a place in the polity was denied, not only by members of the established US population, but also by other Peruvian immigrants.

In one of the chapters of her recent book, *Peruvian Lives Across Borders*, anthropologist Christina Alcalde addresses some of these questions as she explores the importance of food and food spaces among Peruvians abroad. She places her argument along the same lines as other Peruvian scholars (e.g. Cuevas-Calderón 2016; García 2013) who have criticized the Peruvian gastronomic boom for reinforcing the privileges of middle- and upper-class Peruvians, but extends such criticism by demonstrating how

³⁰² Anthropologist Cristina Alcalde (2020) has explored contemporary middle-class Peruvian identities across borders, and finds that middle-class Peruvians seek to mark their status through racialized discourses of indigeneity and migration. While such discourses trace their origin from Peru, they are reproduced in a migrant context by middle-class Peruvians' everyday practices. Similarly, anthropologist Ulla Berg has studied the performances and expressions of peruvianness in the annual Peruvian national parade in Paterson, New Jersey, and claims that the parade constitutes a "key site for and register of collective self-refashioning for U.S.-based Peruvian migrants in their varied claims to citizenship and belonging" (2015, 178). She observes that although such parades evoke a sense of national unity, their production contributes to open and revive ethnic, racial, gender and class divisions deeply ingrained in the societies of the country of origin.

these processes are reproduced across borders linked to how middle- and upper-class Peruvians seek to maintain their social status abroad. While expanding on Alcalde's argument, this chapter demonstrates a more complex picture of the role of Peruvian food and food spaces among Peruvian migrants abroad, particularly linked to the specific geographical context in which the Peruvian culinary businesses are embedded. Drawing on a broader sample of culinary ventures linked to both the formal and informal economy, and not limited to middle- and upper-class Peruvian migrants and culinary business owners, I demonstrate how the status Peruvian food has achieved provides Peruvian immigrants with a bargaining power in the place of settlement, where they draw on food as a material and symbolic resource to negotiate a position in a complex ethnic/racial and classed landscape and claim recognition based on ethnicity and a reimagined national identity. I elucidate the important role that Peruvian food and food spaces play in shaping how Peruvian migrants challenge social inequalities. However, in line with Alcalde's criticism, I also show that the Peruvian women's agency is structured by the same social injustices they are trying to contest.

Not Mexican, but Peruvian: Experiences of Racialization

October is a busy month for Peruvians in Los Angeles. Apart from a range of religious processions and celebrations of the Peruvian patron *el señor de los Milagros*, it is also the month in which the non-profit organization Peru Village gathers Peruvians who wish to participate in the traditional Mexican celebration *Día de los Muertos* [Day of the Dead]—the largest outside Mexico, organized at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. The 2017 festival, in which I participated, was a spectacular event—festive while also scary. It was filled with people dressed in colorful costumes and painted faces who moved through the cemetery among countless altars that were scattered all over the place. The altars were decorated with sugar skulls and orange and yellow marigolds that honored and saluted photographed images of dead heroes or loved ones who had passed on to the afterworld. In a corner of the enormously vast cemetery, almost hidden among the radiant colors that represented Mexican culture, I found the Peruvian altar. It was decorated in red and white, symbolizing the Peruvian flag, and was not just less

flamboyant, but also much smaller in size compared to most of the Mexican structures. The Peruvians I met there, however, seemed proud to be part of such a big event where they were able to transmit their culture. The altar was made in the honor of Nicomedes Santa Cruz, a Black Peruvian poet and folklorist who was an important representative of Afro-Peruvian culture. People who visited the alter were entertained by Peruvian dancers and offered the fresh purple corn drink *chicha morada* as well as Peruvian bread. It was an important moment for Peruvians who happily transmitted their cultural heritage to Angelinos and other festival participators. However, I couldn't stop thinking about how the Peruvian altar constituted a visual representation of what it was like to be Peruvian in a "Mexican" city, an experience often alluded to by many of the Peruvians that I had talked to during my time in the field.



Image 7.3. Peruvian altar at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, *Día de los Muertos* 2018.



Image 7.4. Mexican altar at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, *Día de los Muertos* 2018.

Sociologists have highlighted how many Latinxs experience “othering” in the United States, and how an immigrant shadow is present among Latinxs, particularly in relation to certain stigmatized jobs such as domestic work (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2001), gardening (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2009) and street vending (Estrada 2019), but also across a variety of socioeconomic contexts (Vallejo 2015, Vallejo and Canizales 2016), making them forever foreign (Jiménez 2008). In chapter three, I have described how some Peruvians experience such othering in labor markets, and how this may push them into self-employment. However, their narratives also illustrate that otherness can be an advantage in culinary markets. Indeed, the ethnic entrepreneurship literature has demonstrated how ethnicity can be beneficial in business because of resources found within the ethnic community (e.g. Light 1972; Light and Gold 2000). The Peruvian women’s life histories, however, elucidate how ethnicity is not only a resource for economic incorporation, but a source by which immigrants negotiate representation and recognition through culinary business ownership. Ethnic businesses that offer ethnic themed products and services constitute spaces in which otherness is stressed, and in which entrepreneurs negotiate and manipulate such otherness to their own benefit.

Peruvians, hence, navigate a complex context of reception in which ethnicity becomes an advantage *and* a constraint.

Shared cultural and linguistic traits tie Latinxs from a variety of national origin groups together in the United States, and within the large Latinx population in Southern California, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs find a range of resources that benefit their businesses. Whereas several women had managed to break through to a diverse clientele—some of them catering to an affluent and predominantly White customer base, others serving in more ethnically and racially mixed neighborhoods—many, particularly informal business owners, relayed that the majority of their customers were Latinxs. The size of the Southern Californian Latinx population constitutes an extensive coethnic market, and in Peruvian businesses, other Latinxs often find Latinx music melodizing from loud speakers as well as TVs on the walls broadcasting Spanish-language channels. And since many of the Peruvian business owners prefer to hire Latinx employees, immigrants from Latin American countries are often attended to in their native tongue.

The Mexican and Central American communities enjoy a higher level of institutional completeness than the Peruvian community, particularly the Mexican population, due to its size and to its deep historical roots in the area. The links that Peruvians develop to these ethnic communities are beneficial for the development of a Peruvian community as well as for business owners who take advantage of extended coethnic ties through panethnicity. Peruvians' presence at Mexican events, like the one I have described above, illustrates this. Similarly, in the process of establishing a political campaign for creating a Peru Village in Hollywood, the board of the Peru Village association was in contact with Salvadorans who were responsible for the institution of el Corredor Salvadoreño (the Salvadoran corridor, a Salvadoran enclave in Los Angeles) to learn about the political process behind such recognition. Also, important ingredients that enter in some Peruvian dishes are not found or not legal in the United States. Some of these can be purchased through social network links to Mexicans who bring these or similar products across the border. Finally, a range of programs, events and organizations supporting entrepreneurs are specifically directed toward the Latinx population in the area, and Latinx commodity chains in which Spanish is the main language also benefit Peruvian entrepreneurs. A large Latinx population

contributes hence to facilitate the integration of Peruvian immigrants in Southern California, constituting an extended panethnic social network through which Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs may obtain information and knowledge about markets and business regulations, as well as supplies, cheap labor, important business contacts and a large customer base. However, as noted earlier, ethnic communities may provide important resources for business, but coethnicity does not guarantee solidarity and trust, and may even give place to exploitation and oppression.

Verdaguer (2009) cautions researchers against an uncritical use of panethnic labels,³⁰³ and stresses the importance of understanding the heterogeneity of endeavors and outcomes among Latinx entrepreneurs from different national and ethnic backgrounds. She refers to her study of Salvadoran and Peruvian entrepreneurs in the Greater Washington metropolitan area, and to the very different trajectories and resource bases she observed between these two ethnic groups. Although a strong Latinx presence in Southern California facilitates social and economic incorporation for newly arrived Peruvian immigrants, the identification with such panethnic label is complex. And while a large Latinx population in the receiving society constitutes an important advantage for Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs, being identified as Latinx often places them in a disadvantaged position.

As I have already mentioned, ethnic/racial and class markers determine whether Peruvians experience discrimination or not. Lighter skin color, phenotype, and English language proficiency place some Peruvian immigrants in a more privileged position in the receiving society. Several women, however, spoke of how they constantly grapple with people's conflation of Latinxs with Mexicans and with the negative stereotypes

³⁰³ Other scholars have also argued that a panethnic Hispanic or Latinx label often obscures the immense heterogeneity that exists among immigrants of Latin American descent in the United States. Sociologist G. Cristina Mora (2014) has studied the emergence of a panethnic Hispanic census category in the United States. She describes how efforts to unite Latin Americans from different ethnicities in the early 1970s often failed due to the vast differences among the three dominant groups. Cuban Americans, who were concentrated in Florida, were wealthier and had more education than Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. While Puerto Ricans mainly settled in the Northeast, Mexicans dominated in the Southwest. In contrast to the majority of Cubans, who often auto-identified as White, among the Mexican population a nationalist movement emerged, advocating for a "brown" racial category. Despite such differences, however, the emergence of panethnic organizations prompted the development of a mutual and interactive social cultural structure among state officials, social movement activists, and media firms, who endorsed and popularized the idea of a Hispanic category. The panethnic Hispanic category is hence not only a top-down imposed label, nor exclusively a product of grass-root self-identification, but a result of negotiations among a variety of actors.

often attached to the Mexican label.³⁰⁴ The interview I had with Yessica, a restaurant owner introduced in Chapter 3, demonstrates how Peruvians experience this issue:

Have you experienced any kind of discrimination? (...)

[A]ll my life they have mistaken me for being Mexican, so, since we didn't know anything about Mexico, we didn't speak English. No, they are not people who do not aspire to improve. (...) I worked with Chinese, and the Chinese discriminate a lot... Americans also a little bit, I think.

So, this image of Mexicans...?

Yes, they think that one is from Mexico and discriminate people (...). They have always asked: "what part of Mexico are you from?" Straight forward: "I am Peruvian". (...)

And when you say that you are from Peru?

Then they change (...) Then they ask you other things, as if they are treating you more like a friend.³⁰⁵

Victoria's statement below corroborates Yessica's experience:

I believe that very sadly, because they are like that with Mexicans, because when you say that you are Peruvian a little bit like they change, like if they see you as more cultivated, more different. They feel more that the Mexicans invaded them, that is what I believe, like if they feel invaded by them.³⁰⁶

During one of the conversations I had with Gerthy, she described a similar experience from when her husband, Jorge, surprised her with tickets to a concert. The tickets included a nice meal, and the couple were seated together with only non-Latinxs, among them a Spanish lady and her Arabic partner as well as an American couple. First, no one

³⁰⁴ As I am writing these sentences (December 6, 2019), a debate among Latin Americanist scholars in the United States is dominating my Twitter feed. UCLA's Cesar E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies has recognized the pressing issue of research on Central American immigrants in the region, and thus, recently, faculty voted 15-1 to change the name to Cesar E. Chávez Department of Chicana, Chicano and Central American Studies. The name change has led to a heated debate, particularly stirred by an op-ed in *The Daily Chela* in which the Mexican-American writer, speaker and essayist Brandon Loran Maxwell (December 3, 2019) argues that such name altering contributes to the erasure of the specific history that Mexican-Americans have with the United States that other Latinxs do not share. The fire sparked by Loran Maxwell has been further nurtured by scholars who criticize such stance and who contend that "(...) the histories of Central Americans, Caribeños and South Americans in the U.S. are intrinsically linked because all of these people are racialized as Mexican and dismissed in the ways Mexicans are dismissed" (Trujillo June 12, 2019).

³⁰⁵ *¿Has experimentado algún tipo de discriminación? (...)*

Toda la vida han confundido como si yo fuera de México, entonces como de México no sabíamos nada, no hablábamos inglés. No, son personas que no tienen deseos de superación. (...) Yo trabajaba con chinos, y los chinos son bien discriminantes, el americano también un poquito, yo pienso.

¿Así que esta imagen de mexicanos...?

Sí, piensan que uno es de México y discriminan a la gente (...). Siempre han preguntado: "¿de qué parte de México eres?" De frente: "yo soy peruana" (...)

¿Y cuando dices que eres de Perú?

Ahí sí cambian (...) Ya te preguntan otras cosas, como que se te hacen más amigos.

³⁰⁶ "Yo pienso así muy tristemente porque son así con mexicanos, porque cuando dices que eres peruano un poco cambian, como que te ven más culto, más diferente. Sienten más que el mexicano los invadieron, esto es lo que yo creo, como que se sienten invadidos por ellos."

spoke to Gerthy and Jorge, nor did they speak to anybody either, since their English was quite limited. However, when they noticed that the lady from Spain spoke Spanish, Jorge started to make conversation to break the ice. To their surprise, the American lady also spoke Spanish, and had even lived in Peru. She asked them where they were from, and when they revealed their origin, she turned to the husband and told him that they were not Mexicans, but Peruvians. “As if that was something positive?” I asked Gerthy. “Exactly,”³⁰⁷ she answered and continued:

[H]ere Americans see a Latino, and immediately they think that they are from Mexico... like if you look at a Latino and you do not even know where she or he is from, and you say “She/he is Mexican” (...) They do not want to look at you, like you do not exist, right. Until they start to talk, and they ask me: “In Mexico. Where?” Right, and I tell him: “Mr., I am not from Mexico. I am from Peru. And then they change. “Oh!! From Peru. Machupicchu? Inca?”³⁰⁸

Being conflated with Mexicans led these women to experience racialization and discrimination. Drawing on their Peruvian heritage, however, seemed to help them counter such experiences.

Gerthy highlighted the archeological treasure, Machu Picchu, and the historical heritage of the Incas as something that helped draw the attention away from her seemingly Mexican appearance. The fact that Machu Picchu was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World in 2007, had an impact on tourism to Peru (Marsano Delgado 2016, 161). Increasing tourism as well as the enhanced status of Peru’s cultural and historical patrimony on a global scale, has made Machu Picchu and Inca heritage part of people’s imaginary linked to the nation, and has been an important component in the construction of a national narrative in Peru. Since then, however, not only historical attractions and archeological treasures pull tourists to the country. Its increasingly recognized culinary scene impulses gastronomic tourism as foodies from all over the world travel to experience the richness and variety of Peruvian gastronomy.

³⁰⁷ A, ya, ¿cómo si fuera algo positivo? Exacto.

³⁰⁸ “[A]quí el americano ve a un latino, y ahí mismo piensan que son de México... como que tú miras a un latino y tú ni siquiera sabes de dónde es, ya te están diciendo ‘es mexicano’ (...) No te quieren mirar. Se hacen... que no existes, no. Hasta cuándo comienzan a conversar y me preguntan: ‘Y en México, ¿En qué lugar?’ No, yo le digo: ‘Señor, yo no soy de México. Soy de Perú.’ Y ahí cambian. ‘¡Ah! De Perú. Machupicchu? ¿Inca?’”

In fact, according to research psychologist Judith E. Fan (2013, 33), a recent survey demonstrated that Peruvians felt more proud of their cuisine than of archeological treasures such as Machu Picchu and that food represented Peruvian culture better than significant cultural identifiers as music, textiles, folkloric dance and soccer.

Several Peruvian entrepreneurs told me that many non-Peruvian customers seemed to be quite familiar with Peruvian food by now and often knew exactly what to order. Many have traveled to Peru as tourists and experienced Peruvian food first hand.³⁰⁹ Others have been exposed to Peruvian cuisine in the United States through foodie discourses or because they have visited the increasing numbers of Peruvian restaurants that keep popping up in their local communities. Yahaira, an informal culinary business owner, who recently moved to Los Angeles from a city in Northern California, told me that “particularly here in Los Angeles...everyone here knows about Peruvian food”.³¹⁰ Hence, apart from alluding to Inca heritage, Peruvian women draw on the increasing familiarity and demand for and elevated status of Peruvian food in the area as a way of demonstrating national pride and to make sense of themselves as Peruvian migrants in a complex context of reception.

Counter-narratives: Food as a Material and Symbolic Resource

The narrative created through the Peruvian gastronomic boom has positioned Peruvian cuisine as a symbol of the nation and of national pride. Food and foodways are mobile products and transgress borders in myriad ways, often reproduced in the society of settlement by immigrants who open culinary businesses. Such entrepreneurial projects and practices are thus subject to a complex set of power structures linked not only to migration and business regimes, but also to food and food discourses. In line with other scholars who have highlighted the power of food as a tool of distinction, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, historian Katharina Vester argues that “[t]he images, narrative strategies, and concepts [food expert discourses] produce help to shape the ideas and images a culture has about masculinity and femininity; sexual, racial, and class identity; and about the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, all of which we literally incorporate when we eat”

³⁰⁹ In 2015, only Chilean tourists surpassed the number of US tourists in Peru (Marsano Delgado 2016, 159).

³¹⁰ “sobre todo acá en Los Ángeles... todo el mundo acá conoce la comida peruana”.

(2015, 196). She talks about a “culinary cultural power” and claims that when people comply with these multilayered and complex discourses, they situate themselves as gendered, racialized, and sexualized subjects, and accept that their subject position conditions access to privileges and disadvantages (2015, 199). Hence, the power of food does not only manifest itself in relation to gender and class, as I have discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, but also in the construction of individual, collective and national identities (Takenaka 2017, 119). It constitutes an important ingredient in nation building projects and in the development of an imagined national “We”.

Although immigrants’ food ways have often been subject to stigmatization and even to efforts of coerced assimilation, food, food ways and food spaces are not just areas in which power is exerted and oppression felt. They also constitute a site in which power and resistance are intertwined (Vester 2015, 198). As an important marker of national identity and “a key identity reference for Peruvian transnational communities” (Imilan 2015, 228, 232),³¹¹ Peruvian cuisine contributes to shaping how Peruvians in Southern California counter experiences of racialization. Anthropologist Walter Imilan has studied food-related practices and discourses of Peruvian immigrants living in Santiago de Chile, and argues that by appropriating the official narrative developed in relation to Peruvian gastronomy, Peruvian immigrants in Santiago reconstruct a migrant identity in the local society of settlement linked to national markers, particularly food. He argues that food narratives serve as a mode of self-representation and mediate recognition of the Peruvian migrant community in Santiago (2015, 228). Though conducted in a very different geographic context, the findings in this study resonate with Imilan’s observations. I point to the situatedness of such identity reconfiguration, however, and contend that Peruvians use food as a “material and symbolic resource” (Cancellieri 2017) through which they reimagine and redefine *peruanidad*, and distance themselves from the dominating negative narrative on Latinx immigrants, often conflated with Mexicans and with undocumented status, and thus depicted as a threat. Hence, by drawing on food discourses, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs, negotiate a

³¹¹ Similarly, Alcalde (2018, 148) observes that “food and language[have] become central markers of Peruvianness among transnational Peruvians”.

position within complex and intersecting power hierarchies that constitute the social structure of the receiving society.

The national narrative of the Peruvian gastronomic boom is exported to the United States, not only through governmental and private marketing campaigns and celebrity chefs who open gourmet restaurants, but through Peruvian immigrants' appropriation, adoption and reproduction of the narrative in a migrant context. The Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs that I talked to in the field had embraced this narrative and lifted their social weapon in a response to experiences of othering and racialization that often shaped their incorporation into the society of settlement. Andrea's experience illustrates how, at this specific historical moment, *peruanidad* had become a symbolic asset that immigrants could draw on to position themselves in a society in which Latinxs are often faced with a negative discursive opportunity structure:

There is one really strange thing. Before, it was like I didn't want to, or I didn't mention that I was Peruvian. Maybe people would say that, they didn't ask me either. I mean, no one cared if I was Peruvian, maybe pure Latina and that's it. They didn't ask me if I was Peruvian, Mexican, whatever, right. But now they do ask. I don't know, maybe these are different times. Maybe it's because Peru is more important now? (...). I learned to love Peru more, or to be proud that I am Peruvian. Because before I was not proud, now I really am proud of Peru because, I see that I represent a part of Peru, and I like to represent it well. I mean, that is my intention, I always work so that everything here [in the restaurant] is the best that one can do with the food.³¹²

The historical shift that Andrea was alluding to is linked to the positive framing Peru has received in the media and in public discourse during the past two decades. Peruvian cuisine forms an important part of such discourses, which are very distinct from the narrative on Latinx immigrants, a negative framing that might have influenced Andrea's earlier attitude towards her cultural heritage—of which she had not felt proud. When I met her in 2018, she was the owner of two restaurants, one of these in a majority White and affluent suburban neighborhood, while the other served a more ethnically and socioeconomically mixed clientele. Experiencing that her Peruvian food was accepted

³¹² “Hay una cosa bien curiosa. Antes como que no quería, O no lo mencionaba que yo era peruana. De repente decían las personas que, no me preguntaban tampoco. Ósea, a nadie le importaba si yo era peruana, de repente pura latina y ya. No me preguntaban si era peruana, mexicana, lo que sea no... Pero ahora si preguntan. No sé, serán otros tiempos. ¿Será porque Perú es mas importante ahora? (...). Yo aprendí a querer mas al Perú, o estar orgullosa de que soy peruana. Porque antes no era orgullosa, ahora sí soy orgullosa de Perú, porque, yo veo que yo represento una parte de Perú, y me gusta representarlo bien. Ósea, eso es mi intención, siempre trabajo para que todo esté aquí [en el restaurante] lo mejor que se pueda en la comida.”

and praised by a diverse customer base filled Andrea with pride, and like many other culinary entrepreneurs she proudly promoted her cultural heritage, and relayed about the superiority of Peruvian national cuisine.

Food discourses in the receiving society give further value to the women's narratives, like the following excerpt from a feature article published in *LA Weekly* titled "Wy Peruvian Ceviche is Better than Mexican Ceviche":

Mexico, mi amor, *te amo*, I swear. But I need to come clean. I've been cheating on you. I ate some *ceviche mixto* from Peru and fell in love. (...) I mean no disrespect to the wildly diverse world of traditionally prepared raw seafood from Mexico's costal states, a cuisine that has long had a home in L.A. (...) But Mexico's traditional chopped-shrimp-and-avocado *tostadita* has had a monopoly on L.A.'s ceviche game for too long. Peru's ceviche is just as colorful, and its circus of flavors and delicate approach to seafood sheds light on not only the origins of the North American form (historians say the dish originated there) but also the diverse country's 100-plus years of Japanese influence. (...) I will never forget you, Mexico, for introducing me to the concept of refreshing lime-cured seafood in the first place. But it's hot outside and the *chocolo* is calling (Bennet June 2, 2015, emphasis in original).³¹³

Mexican food also conquered American palates.³¹⁴ However, it has long been denied social status and has been associated with working-class vendors, fast-food chains, and street food. Despite Mexican food making its way upscale in the United States from the 1980s onwards, and despite the recent interest in improving the status of street food as well as the upsurge of a range of high-end Mexican restaurants, stereotypes of Mexican cuisine have endured in the North American imagination (Pilcher 2008, 538). In Chapter 2, I described how the entry of French cuisine into US culinary realms was mediated by White middle-class US citizens who contributed to the celebratory status French gastronomy received in the United States. Peruvian food, on the other hand, was primarily presented to the US public by Peruvians, most of them immigrants. Yet, the proliferation of immigrant businesses that have brought Peruvian food to a range of neighborhoods in Southern California has been accompanied by powerful food discourses. Peruvian cuisine has been presented as a novelty and marketed as *haute*

³¹³ *Chocolo* is corn from the Peruvian highlands and different in form, color and taste from the typical North American corn. *Ceviche* is one of Peru's signature dishes based on raw fish that is marinated in lime juice, red onions, salt and pepper. It is often served on a bed of lettuce and accompanied by cooked sweet potato and toasted corn.

³¹⁴ Columnist and author Gustavo Arellano has written a book about Mexican cuisine in the United States titled *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America* (2013).

cuisine and fine dining. And while foodies and foodie culture have embraced Peruvian gastronomy and celebrated Peruvian ventures that have emerged in the high-end restaurant scene, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs across social sectors all benefit from the discourses they produce. It is not only for commercial purposes that they capitalize on the popularity of Peruvian cuisine. Drawing on food discourses, they create counter-narratives to negative portrayals of Latinxs as a means to position themselves as righteous members of their local Southern Californian communities, some of which are predominantly Latinx, while others are predominantly non-Hispanic White or even majority-minority communities.

Hence, the Peruvian women do not only draw on imaginaries of the “good citizen”, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, but on *peruanidad* and a reimagined national identity linked to the symbolic power of food in order to distance themselves from the hegemonic discourse on Latinx and Mexican immigrants. As I have detailed earlier, Gabriela started her franchise restaurant in a bustling shopping center in an affluent neighborhood. In the process of converting the business into a Peruvian style culinary venture, she received several comments from passers-by. One asked her why she was painting the walls. And when she answered that she was opening a Peruvian restaurant, he exclaimed: “Another Mexican restaurant? Ugh!” Later, she learned that people had given her six months, doubting that this type of business would be able to attract customers in the neighborhood. Gabriela, however, proved them wrong. At one of the many meetings I had with her at the restaurant, we sat down and enjoyed a delightful meal of *Anticuchos* with a side of *Yucca fries*³¹⁵ which we dipped in creamy *Huancaína sauce*. In the middle of our eager conversation, she suddenly hushed me and made me aware of the composition of her clientele:

This is what I like! This makes me happy. Look at my restaurant. What did you hear? What did you hear?

English, right?

Yeah, just English.

And that’s what I wanted. I wanted my culture to be known.

³¹⁵ *Anticuchos* refer to marinated grilled beef heart skewers often found in *anticucherías*, at outdoor events, or among the many informal vendors who fill the streets in Peruvian cities. *Yucca fries* are similar to French fries, but made of cassava instead of potatoes.

She was referring to the White Anglo and fluently English-speaking lunch crowd who had filled the dining area while I had been sitting in a corner next to a large picture of Machu Picchu on the wall listening to Gabriela who revealed with engagement the story of her entrepreneurial trajectory. It was with pride that she could not only tell about, but show me in person, her achievement as a culinary entrepreneur serving Peruvian lunch to wealthy White Californians. The Peruvian brand constituted a symbolic resource which filled Gabriela with pride and provided her business with an important asset in the encounter with an exigent clientele. In a neighborhood in which she herself had experienced racial discrimination she had managed to convince affluent White Americans that Peruvian food was worthy its reputation. The restaurant was certainly not Mexican, it was Peruvian.

Peru has become a brand on the Californian food scene, and culinary entrepreneurs who serve Peruvian cuisine benefit from such hype, making it an essential part of their business strategy. Alina ran an informal home-based business in which she offered cakes and pastries in addition to home-made party supplies. She was very preoccupied with the branding of her products as Peruvian.

I even brought boxes from Peru that very clearly state Peru. Stickers all with the logo of Peru, because I offer everything personalized as Peru.

That is important to you?

Yes, everything. Yes, of course.

That it is Peruvian.

Aha, everything, yes.

And why?

Because the products that are from Peru have to be personalized. The brand must be displayed.

So, you feel an obligation to promote your country in a way you could say?

Yes, because even here they also sell *alfajores*, And I say: "And these *alfajores*?" And it's a Mexican who sells them.

Oh, so they are not...?

They are not from Mexico, I mean someone is copying that from Peru.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ Inclusive me traje de Perú las cajas que dicen ahí bien claro Perú. Stickers todo con el logo de Perú, porque todo lo entrego personalizado como Perú.

¿Eso es importante para ti?

Sí, todo. Sí, claro.

¿Que sea peruano?

Aha. Todo sí.

¿Y, por qué?

Porque tienen que ser personalizados los productos que son de Perú. Se tiene que mostrar su marca.

¿Así que sientes una obligación de promover a tu país digamos en cierta forma?

Sí, porque inclusive acá también están vendiendo alfajores. Y yo digo, "¿y esos alfajores?" Y lo vende un mexicano.

A ya, ¿que no es...?

No es de México, ósea, alguien lo está copiando de Perú.

Though made in slightly different ways, *alfajores* biscuits are common in several Latin American countries, as well as in Spain and Southern France. For Alina, however, who was preoccupied with displaying *peruanidad*, they were exclusively Peruvian.

Such commercial business strategies, however, enmesh with the desire to be ambassadors of the country of origin, and with efforts of countering negative narratives around the Latinx label. As for Alina, to Gerthy it was also important to brand her cakes and pastries as Peruvian. “I had the idea of disseminating my Peruvian pastries. I want to let people know that there is also Peruvian pastry”,³¹⁷ she told me. Her eyes sparkled as she enthusiastically relayed about how she started out at an out-of-state expo putting emphasis on the peruvianness of her merchandise while promoting her business. “My slogan is: ‘Taste the difference! Try Peruvian pastry!’”.³¹⁸ Her husband, Jorge explained how *peruanidad* had not always benefitted their venture, but had now turned into an asset, as well as something that mitigated the negative impact that their Latinx heritage previously had on business operations.

There was a time when we did not utter much the name *peruano* [Peruvian] initially, because there was a certain reaction toward what was Latino... right. But as the product penetrated economic markets, now, we have to put... Peruvian pastry or Peruvian bakery, or Peruvian products. Or just the word “Peru”... So, when people recognize, “Oh, you are from Peru”. And there is a difference from regular pastry. And we take advantage of that. Before, many times, as Latinos, we felt inferior when saying that I am Latino. But this is helping us a bit more now.³¹⁹

These Peruvian entrepreneurs commodify culinary knowledges and skills from the “homeland” and use the name Peru and *peruanidad* for what it is worth, primarily because it sells, but also because it fills them with pride, and because it grants them a certain status that the Latinx label does not.

Despite having found a home in the United States, national pride is highly linked to the country of origin and takes on salience in the Peruvian women’s narratives about

³¹⁷ “Yo tenía mi idea de difundir mi pastel peruano. Quiero que se sepa que también hay pastel peruano.”

³¹⁸ “Mi eslogan es ‘¡Prueba la diferencia! ¡Prueben pastel peruano!’”

³¹⁹ “Hubo un tiempo que no pronunciamos mucho el nombre ‘peruano’ inicio, porque había cierta reacción contraria a lo que era latino... no. Pero conforme a que fue entrando el producto al medio económico, ya nosotros ahora tenemos que poner... pastelería peruana o *Peruvian bakery*, o productos peruanos. O solamente la palabra ‘Peru’... Entonces cuando la gente reconoce, oh, son de Peru. Y hay una diferencia entre la pastelería regular. Y estamos aprovechándolo. Antes que muchas veces los Latinos nos sentíamos menos al decir que yo soy Latino. Pero eso nos está ayudando un poco más ahora.”

entrepreneurial experiences. While the Peruvian women's sense of home and belonging is linked to a variety of scales—from local environments to the national and transnational—the discourse around the material and symbolic aspects of food are clearly produced in terms of national dimensions. And though many of the dishes embody regional and ethnic boundaries—also linked to earlier immigrants who settled in Peru and shaped Peruvian cuisine—, these dimensions seem to be erased or less important in the society of settlement. To the women, the food they prepare is *Peruvian*. Thus, they negotiate inclusion through distinction, and the primary marker of such distinction is Peruvian food. Drawing on the cultural power of national cuisine they negotiate a position as a national minority among the larger Latinx panethnic population. By positioning themselves away from other Latinxs they also negotiate a position vis-à-vis the majority population and mainstream American culture.

Materiality and Space: Commodifying and Performing *Peruanidad* in the Business

Peruvian culinary business owners reproduce, reimagine and redefine *peruanidad* by drawing on available ethnic representations. They negotiate subjective memories, experiences and beliefs, dominating food discourses as well as the perceived preferences of a target clientele. Ethnicity is hence performed within these food spaces, in which culinary entrepreneurs simultaneously negotiate and produce ideas about their ethnic identities, as embodying and performing ethnicity provides them with a material and symbolic resource that is conditioned by public perceptions and acknowledgement of such collective representation. In relation to their study of Ecuadorian restaurants in Madrid, alluded to in the preceding chapter, Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni claim that “the ‘ethnic card’ can be played in different ways, and be informed by remarkably different views on ethnicity or national belonging” (2020, 5). Rather than applying the notion of ethnic to restaurants, and as such essentializing what is ethnic or not, as often common in academic practice,³²⁰ the authors urge researchers to explore the ways in

³²⁰ This is particularly prevalent in the ethnic entrepreneurship literature in which businesses are often defined as “ethnic” because they are run by immigrants or other ethnic or racial minorities, even when they operate businesses that are not ethnic themed. See discussion in Chapter 1.

which the restaurant setting serves as a space in which multiple ways of evoking, claiming, enacting and displaying meanings linked to the country of origin—what they refer to as “Ecuadorianness”—are translated. While performances of ethnicity in ethnic culinary businesses may be a way of displaying cultural pride and symbolize a form of self-expression, it may also epitomize a boundary between “the collective self and the other” (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993, 3). Due to the commercial character of ethnic culinary businesses, the boundaries between the collective self and the other become sites in which power relations are articulated among a variety of actors, and performances of ethnicity are conditioned and constrained by the entrepreneur’s need to attract a diverse customer base. Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs engage in such meaning-making processes by articulating *peruanidad* in the business space. These processes, however, are not unidimensional, but rather dynamic interactions created by the encounter between the entrepreneur and multiple social group formations in the receiving society. Whereas Peruvians produce and perform ethnicity in the business spaces they create in order to make sense of themselves in relation to other Latinxs, as I have discussed above, similar meaning-making processes are produced by Peruvians vis-à-vis other immigrant groups as well as in relation to the established non-Hispanic White population. Besides, the food spaces the women create also provide a contested site in which existing power structures from the country of origin are negotiated among Peruvian immigrants from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural backgrounds.

In Chapter 6, I discussed how the Peruvian women reproduce “homeland” culture within the business space. How to define “homeland” culture and *peruanidad*, however, is subject to complex processes of negotiation in a migrant context. Traditional art and adornments from the more indigenous rural Peruvian highlands are often used as decoration in Peruvian food spaces in Southern California, as photos and descriptions in earlier chapters illustrate. Not everyone agrees, however, that this represents the Peru they remember and cherish, which is relative to divergent upbringings in a country divided by race, ethnicity, class, as well as regional and rural-urban differences. Leonardo was a Peruvian I interviewed who had spent the last two decades in the United States. He came from what would be perceived as a whiter middle-class background in Lima. And although he had little contact with the Peruvian immigrant community in

Los Angeles, he used to frequently visit Peruvian restaurants in order to get a taste of the “homeland”. In one of the many conversations I had with him about Peruvian culinary businesses in the area he asked me: “Can’t they just leave the Inca alone? Why do they have to bring the Inca into everything?”³²¹ None of the restaurants he used to frequent in Lima before migrating to the United States had names in Quechua or were decorated with ethnic symbols. “Here, all the restaurants are called ‘Machu Picchu’, ‘Nazca’, ‘Inca’, or something in Quechua. However, many of the proprietors have never set foot in the highlands or been to Machu Picchu”,³²² he claimed, accusing restaurant owners of cultural appropriation. Ernesto, one of the community leaders that I interviewed, was of rural Andean heritage. He came with similar accusations: “Here they try to abuse the image of Peru, that means they use Inca symbols or other things in order to ensure that there will be clients from Peru”.³²³ While Leonardo was less interested in seeing his country represented by a Peru that was unfamiliar to him—a rural and indigenous Peru associated with backwardness and poverty, Ernesto accused White middle- and upper-class culinary entrepreneurs from the coastland for appropriating “his” Peru and presenting it as if it formed part of their own experiences.

The tensions between the constructed idea of a cosmopolitan and modern Peru linked to whiteness, elevated socioeconomic status and *haute cuisine*, on the one hand, and a non-White indigenous heritage linked to backwardness, on the other, are reproduced in a migrant context, and articulated in the culinary business space. The narrative of the Peruvian Gastronomic Boom claims Peruvian cuisine to be a unifying force that has the power to erase deeply ingrained structures of inequality in Peruvian society. Scholars have argued, however, that the *peruanidad* that is presented by nation-branding campaigns, such as the Marca Perú documentary *Peru, Nebraska* that I referred to in the previous chapter, is limited to a particular and exclusive national “We” tied to economic resources, cultural capital, and consumption of the merchandise that Marca Perú promotes, such as Peruvian food presented as fine dining in cosmopolitan, and quite expensive establishments that have recently popped up in affluent Limeño

³²¹ “¿No pueden dejar al Inca en paz? ¿Por qué quieren meterle al Inca en todo?”

³²² “Aquí todos los restaurants se llaman ‘Machu Picchu’, ‘Nazca’, ‘Inca’, o algo en quechua. Sin embargo, muchos de los dueños nunca en sus vidas han pisado tierra en la sierra o han estado en Machu Picchu”.

³²³ “Acá tratan de abusarse de la imagen del Perú, ósea que poner símbolos del Inca o de otra cosa para poder ganar de que haiga clientes que son del Perú”.

neighborhoods (Cuevas 2016; Alcalde 2018). Hence, it reinforces persisting colonial structures through which whiteness is equated with happiness and success.

As culinary entrepreneurs who seek profit by attracting Peruvian and non-Peruvian clients while also aiming to transmit cultural heritage as self-pronounced culinary ambassadors, the Peruvian women negotiate such tensions and draw selectively on available imaginaries of *peruanidad* as they reproduce “homeland” culture in their businesses. Although such production and performance of ethnicity make the women themselves and other Peruvians feel at home in these spaces, it is also a strategy for commercial and marketing purposes aimed at meeting the expectations of a perceived or desired target clientele. These objectives influence the decisions made by business owners in terms of aesthetic articulation and (re)production of ethnicity and *peruanidad* in the business space. Most of the restaurants in Los Angeles that aim for a high-end clientele looking for fine dining and *haute cuisine* have toned down the use of ethnic symbols, or employ more neutral elements, or they employ cultural symbols that are designed in a stylized and less traditional, sometimes almost not recognizable way. Other more casual and less extravagant restaurants, many of these with more modest prices, do put emphasis on what they perceive as traditional Peruvian elements, in an attempt to attract Peruvians as well as other customers looking for an “ethnic” and “exotic” experience.

When I asked Peruvians in the area if they knew any Peruvian restaurant in the “higher” end of the Los Angeles culinary scene, two restaurants were more frequently referred to than others: “Los Balcones” in Hollywood and “Rosaliné” in West-Hollywood.³²⁴ I visited these two restaurants at different occasions. None of them evoked an immediate feeling of having arrived in another country or invited the customer to believe that she or he would be served an “exotic” or “ethnic” meal. The trendy interior design resembled other Angelino-based restaurants aiming for a middle- and upper-class clientele, and the food was served according to standards of fine dining—small portions carefully plated and aesthetically adorned—very different from

³²⁴ Restaurants owned by both women and men were mentioned. Los Balcones and Rosalíné, however, were run by Peruvian men, the first by three brothers – Jorge, Eduardo, and Walter Rodríguez – and the second by Ricardo Zárate, who often appears in Angelino foodie magazines and columns, since he has made a name for himself through a variety of previous restaurant projects.

conventional restaurants in Peru, but similar to the many restaurants that have popped up in affluent urban Peruvian neighborhoods in the context of the Peruvian gastronomic boom. According to their website, Los Balcones serve “Modern Peruvian cuisine”. The production of dominant ideas of modernity linked to fashion and style is also noticeable in the visual design of the website and in the business interior. A pattern repeated itself in both mediums, however, and the eye that is familiar with Peruvian textiles and symbols could perceive the Andean allusions of the decorative design. Behind the counter at Rosaliné, a quite large painting was hanging on the wall representing the Peruvian flag, but blurred in a way that made it almost merge into the color of the wall paper, converting the Peruvian prime national symbol into an almost non-figurative contemporary piece of art. Moreover, at the busboy’s counter, I could eye a small *ekeko*, which is a figure meant to bring prosperity and abundance, according to conventional Andean beliefs. The menu at Rosaliné, though printed in a fashionable, minimalist design, had meals named in Quechua, but no aesthetic allusion to the Andes or to Andean art and culture. While other Peruvian restaurants often play Latinx music and broadcast Spanish TV-channels on screens on the wall, at Rosaliné soft instrumental background music soothed the ear. At Los Balcones an English-speaking jazz musician entertained customers with live performances.

Although small drips of Andean indigenous culture were reproduced in these business spaces, it was a translated version of conventional cultural and national expressions. Such practice resonate with the way scholars have analyzed and criticized the claim of inclusion raised by promoters of the Peruvian gastronomic boom, referring to how Peruvian elite chefs include food culture from the Andes and Amazon regions by transforming previously unaccepted food ways into celebrated dishes, making them almost unrecognizable to those who usually consume such foods, but acceptable and familiar to a White urban and cosmopolitan consumer base (Alcalde 2018, 149).

Similar practices were also found in some businesses run by Peruvian women, particularly those who also aimed for an affluent, non-Peruvian and non-Latinx clientele. Other culinary entrepreneurs, however, grappled with balancing their own experiences and memories of *peruanidad* with what their customers expected them to display and perform. Gabriela’s restaurant, which due to its location was mostly

frequented by a high-class but casual clientele, displayed paintings of Machu Picchu and other Andean images on the walls, as well as pictures of typical Peruvian products at the counter. Gabriela explained that these images had been the starting point of many interesting conversations with clients who had either traveled to Peru or wished to do so. While her well-off and well-travelled clientele was happy to dine under the shade of one of the world's seven wonders, and chat with Gabriela about their dreams of one day visiting her country of origin, she displayed her roots carefully in the business space, always, in her own words, "subject to public taste". One day, when I was visiting Gabriela at her house, she pointed to a religious painting of "The last supper" on the wall. Since Gabriela assumed a managerial role in the restaurant and left much of the kitchen work to her Peruvian cook and to her other employees, she was happy to be able to work from home some days. One of the perks of home-office, in her opinion, was being surrounded by religious paintings and a variety of Catholic crucifixes that she kept around the house. "[I]f you walk around there is crosses that represent my religion or my faith, but at the restaurant I tried to do that and then people go 'aw!'". She learned that in the restaurant she needed "to be neutral". In Peru, restaurants are often adorned with Catholic symbols and images. While some Peruvian restaurants in Southern California had reproduced this tradition, others, like Gabriela, had been reluctant to display their Catholic faith in the business space because they were afraid that would scare away non-Latinx and non-Catholic customers.

Music is another important ingredient that is carefully exposed by business owners with the target clientele in mind. In some restaurants, Peruvians and other Latinxs may enjoy familiar musical rhythms from Latin America like salsa, bachata, merengue, and cumbia while champing on their favorite Peruvian dish. In other food spaces, particularly in some informal home-based ventures and at Peruvian events where informal business owners sell their food, customers may enjoy more traditional Peruvian folklore music. Elisa, however, had opted for what she evaluated as "neutral" music.

The music is not necessarily Peruvian. There are some that work, but this kind of music. Soft. One time, a Peruvian client came and asked me: Why don't you play salsa? I tell her: "Because this restaurant we don't run with this type of music." We want that when the client comes, soft, relaxed, feeling that she/he came here to relax. (...) And she told me: But you have to play what the client wants, not what you want.

So, I told her: “Pardon me, but 95 percent of my customers love this music.” Do you know what she did? She gave me a “bad write” on Yelp.³²⁵

The incident illustrates that Peruvians may visit a Peruvian restaurant with an expectation of a “Peruvian” experience beyond the culinary, and how Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs often have to juggle the expectations of a mixed clientele, aiming to target Peruvians, but also other Latinx- and non-Latinx customers.

Displaying *peruanidad* in the business space is hence a juggling act. And sometimes culinary entrepreneurs misjudge the power of ethnicity. At different occasions, I visited both of Fabiana’s restaurants that were located close to each other, in an ethnically mixed, but predominantly Latinx neighborhood that was now under rapid gentrification. She identified the first restaurant as more traditional Peruvian, both in terms of how the food was prepared and served, as well as in relation to décor. Raised in a family that had migrated to the United States from a middle-class background in a predominantly White Limeño neighborhood, she had preferred to display a range of Andean images and had chosen to include Inca heritage in the business name, for it to represent what she perceived as her country’s cultural roots. The second restaurant, however, had a slightly different concept. Targeting a younger and more trendy lunch clientele, she had played with the image of a conventional Peruvian *pollería*, but adapted it to a broader US customer base. Initially, her strategy for the second venture had been to downplay Peruvian and ethnic cultural expressions, which made her choose a neutral business name. The difference between the two restaurants was striking; whereas dining at the first business brought me back to the many visits I had made to restaurants in Cusco and other cities in the Peruvian Southern Highlands,³²⁶ the second business was like walking into any casual and fashionable lunch place in Los Angeles, New York—or even newer establishments in Miraflores or San Isidro.³²⁷ However, now, after reflecting on the increasing popularity of Peruvian food in mainstream Californian

³²⁵ “No necesariamente la música es peruana. Hay algunas que salen, pero este tipo de música. Suave. Una clienta una vez vino—peruana—y me dijo: ‘¿porqué no pones salsa?’ Yo le digo: ‘Porque este restaurante no lo tenemos con ese tipo de música.’ Queremos que el cliente cuando venga, suave, se relaje, que sienta que venga acá a relajarse. (...) Y me dijo: ‘Es que tú tienes que poner lo que los clientes quieran, no lo que tú quieras.’ Entonces yo le dije: ‘Discúlpeme, pero el 95 por ciento de mis clientes les encanta esta música.’ ¿Sabes lo que hizo? Me puso un *bad write* en Yelp.”

³²⁶ Where restaurants tend to be decorated with Andean and indigenous symbols, often to attract tourists that come for an experience of the Andes.

³²⁷ Two affluent neighborhoods in Lima.

society, and the status that Peruvian gastronomy had obtained, Fabiana had begun to understand that a Peruvian name could actually have been a strategic move and may have attracted more customers to her business. While most of the women aspire to display “their own” Peru within the business space, they often find themselves grappling with the same issues as Fabiana, and often adjust their strategies to the demands of the market, which again are influenced by dominating food discourses. These food discourses intersect with constructions of race and ethnicity linked to ideas of indigeneity and to whiteness that are deeply rooted in colonial processes. While the indigenous is often perceived as more authentic Peruvian, it is also something that must be translated into a whitened and more urban version of national identity in order to be accepted by the world outside of rural Peru (Alcalde 2018).³²⁸ Hence, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs aim to seek incorporation through distinction, but also negotiate distinction in the encounter with a varied target clientele.

“*Nosotros somos comida bien auténtica* [We are very authentic food]”:³²⁹ Culinary Negotiations of *Peruanidad*

Whereas *peruanidad* is displayed through interior aesthetics and other strategies employed to create a Peruvian-like environment in the business space, it is primarily

³²⁸ Alcalde points to how the narrative of the Peruvian gastronomic boom constructs an image of Peruvian cuisine as “the space through which to represent *all* of Peru” (2018, 146; emphasis in original). She illustrates, however, that although the version of Peruvianness that is presented and celebrated through these discourses receives its inspiration from indigenous food ways, such traditions have been “transformed via Lima at the hands of White-mestizo chefs to present a whitened (largely male) urban version of national identity to the world” (2018, 149). She also points to how Peruvian tourist packages are increasingly designed to meet the expectations of foreign tourists in search of “indigenous ‘authenticity’ in the spaces often dismissed as backward by *limeños*” (2018, 149; emphasis in original).

³²⁹ Notions of authenticity often appear in popular discourse concerning the value of aesthetic articulations such as music, the visual arts and cuisine. Authenticity, however, has also been subject to scholarly scrutiny from a range of fields, often with a particular focus on the relationship between authenticity and processes of commodification and consumption. Within the social sciences, the authenticity of food has harnessed great debates. Ideas about authentic foods are often linked to symbolic meanings of place and culture, producing an intimate relationship between food and place, as well as between food and ethnic identity. Earlier theorizations often treated authenticity as an “objective” concept linked to the understanding of place and culture as static and unchanging phenomena (Sims 2009, 324). More recently however, scholars have pointed to the changing nature of the cultural world, highlighting the ways in which authenticity is manufactured and performed. Human geographer Peter Jackson (1999) has even urged scholars to abandon the notion of authenticity, and rather examine questions of “authentication” pointing to the various ways in which authenticity is staged through strategic performances of essentialized notions of the local, the native, the different, the exotic etc. However, in keeping with sociologist David Grazian, who has examined the concept of authenticity in relation to contemporary urban blues clubs in Chicago, I choose to employ the concept of authenticity, acknowledging that “authenticity itself is never an objective quality inherent in things, but simply a shared set of beliefs about the nature of things we value in the world” (2003, 12). Like Grazian, I am not interested in engaging in the impossible effort of evaluating the authenticity of Peruvian cuisine. I rather seek to understand the ways in which Peruvians in Southern California employ the term authenticity and negotiate notions of authenticity in relation to Peruvian cuisine in their everyday lives as immigrants and culinary entrepreneurs.

articulated through food. Particularly, the idea of an authentic Peruvian cuisine seems to be a highly contentious issue among Peruvians in a migrant context. As I have discussed above, culinary food businesses created by immigrant entrepreneurs, provide a space in which immigrants as well as members of majority and minority communities meet, interact, and make sense of who they are and of how they relate to each other. Sociologist Marie Sarita Gaytán has studied performances and consumption of authenticity in Mexican restaurants on the East Coast, and notes that authenticity informs such encounters, and “provides the opportunity to determine and communicate one’s place as an individual in an increasingly global marketplace” (2008, 314). She also states that “consumption serves as a means through which authenticity becomes a measure of the quality, efficacy, and legitimacy of one’s experience in a particular setting” (2008, 315). The specific experience of being a Peruvian immigrant in Southern California shapes how Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs employ food as a material and symbolic resource through which they negotiate a position within a complex ethnic/racial landscape. In keeping with Gaytán’s argument, authenticity informs these processes.

During my time in the field, I listened to Peruvian immigrants’ diverging opinions on what they perceived as authentic Peruvian food, and observed how culinary entrepreneurs employed a range of business strategies in order to navigate notions of authenticity. Whereas some Peruvians were more open to processes of alteration and adaptation of Peruvian food in the receiving society, others adhered strictly to specific images of traditional Peruvian cuisine, nurtured by memories of a Peru that many of them left behind years, and even decades ago. Whatever their stance was, everyone I talked to seemed to have a strong opinion on the matter of authentic Peruvian cuisine.

The aim of targeting a non-Peruvian clientele prompts many business owners to alter Peruvian dishes. While serving to reach a broader customer base, such practices may also drive away Peruvians who come with an expectation of finding “a piece of the homeland”. Elisa’s restaurant was located in a neighborhood with a large Asian population. To attract Asian customers, she had adapted some dishes. As an example, she had added the option of broccoli to the traditional Peruvian signature dish *Lomo Saltado*. Based on marinated strips of sirloin, *Lomo Saltado* is normally served with

potato, but with broccoli it resembled an Asian style stir-fry. The option of potato was also available for those who preferred the traditional Peruvian style. That did not prevent Peruvian customers, however, from complaining and advocating for preserving what they perceived as authentic Peruvian cuisine. Some were furious that these practices represented their culture in the host country. Carolina, who, as mentioned in earlier chapters, delivered food to lunch clients in a white-collar business district, had also adapted the products she offered. Drawing on knowledge about young professionals' eating preferences, she had moved on from offering customarily prepared Peruvian food, to emphasizing healthy choices, altering some Peruvian dishes by adding *quinoa*³³⁰ instead of rice, or vegetables instead of fries. This proved popular with a young and highly educated non-Peruvian clientele preoccupied with keeping a healthy diet.

Other women had made similar strategic choices in order to attract a broader clientele. On the menu in Sofia's first restaurant, which primarily served lunch clients from the many surrounding movie companies, she had included *lomo saltado burritos*—a blend of the *tex-mex burrito*³³¹ and Peruvian *lomo saltado*. In her second restaurant, which, at least in an initial face, was serving a clientele searching for fine dining, she had maintained some, in her own words, “traditional” dishes, but altered others. An example of such alteration was a dish composed by salmon served with a sweet, but spicy sauce made with passion fruit and *aji amarillo*. Such food practices were not common when she grew up in Peru. “[N]ow I believe there is more fusion. But in the time when I grew up, there was traditional food and Peruvian gastronomy was not on the top of the world”.³³² Sofia had learned that to be competitive, you had to move away from what she considered “traditional” Peruvian food. “[N]owadays, one does use basic Peruvian food, but now, to grow in the gastronomic world there has to be fusion. (...) The Peruvian restaurants, those who win gold medals on a global level, it is no longer traditional food. It is Peruvian ingredients, the essence yes, the root yes. But now, what

³³⁰ *Quinoa* is a protein packed grain originating in the Peruvian highlands. It is normally used as a main ingredient in the main course, or in soups or hot drinks. Traditionally, rice and/or potato are served as a side in Peruvian food, quinoa is not.

³³¹ The burrito has remained rather unknown in large parts of Mexico, but its origin is traced to the northern borderlands (Pilcher 2012, 46).

³³² “[A]hora yo pienso que hay mas fusión. Pero en la época donde yo crecí, era la comida tradicional y la gastronomía peruana no estaba por arriba en el mundo”.

you put into the presentation is very different”.³³³ While fusion food is increasingly common in Peruvian urban dining—particularly in restaurants located in affluent Limeño neighborhoods—, fusion has become an important strategy for culinary entrepreneurs in Southern California who target a clientele that expects Peruvian food to be *haute cuisine*.

Lack of available ingredients has also contributed to prompt fusion and to the invention of “new” Peruvian products. One example is the increasingly popular *aji verde* (Peruvian green chili) also called *salsa huacatay*³³⁴ in Peru, but often referred to as “the green sauce” or “the green stuff” in reviews by non-Peruvian customer on the US website Yelp. While similar to the original *aji verde* in Peru, “the green sauce” served in Peruvian-US restaurants is actually a product that is not only reproduced, but also recreated in the United States as it is made with jalapeño instead of the Peruvian *rocoto*. Paolo, one of the male restaurateurs that I interviewed told me that he had begun to prepare bottles of sauce so that his clients could purchase it for home use. “They call it magic sauce”,³³⁵ he told me. Imitating his clients, he continued: “‘You got the green sauce? Can I get more green sauce?’ They are like if it was a drug. All the delivery orders... ‘extra green sauce’”.³³⁶ His restaurant was located in a popular upper middle-class neighborhood outside of Los Angeles, where he catered to a predominantly White American clientele. He estimated that less than 10 percent of his clients were Peruvian. His non-Peruvian customers, however, loved “the green stuff”, ignorant about its little resemblance with the *salsa huacatay* that one is usually served in restaurants in Peru.

Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs hence, adopt a variety of strategies in order to perform, produce and manipulate the imaginary of a national Peruvian cuisine, confronting diverging perceptions of authenticity among Peruvian customers, while keeping non-Peruvian customers satisfied with an illusion of authenticity. “Hybrid

³³³ “[E]n estos días ahora, la comida peruana la básica sí se usa, pero ya, para crecer en el mundo de gastronomía tiene que haber mucha fusión. (...) Los restaurantes peruanos, los que ganan las primeras medallas a nivel mundial, ya no es la comida tradicional. Es los ingredientes peruanos, sí la esencia, sí la raíz. Pero ya, en la presentación toda la infusión que se hace es diferente”.

³³⁴ *Huacatay* refers to black mint, a common herb used in a variety of dishes in Peru. In Peru, restaurants often serve *salsa huacatay* (creamy black mint sauce) with the food.

³³⁵ “Le dice ‘magic sauce’”

³³⁶ “‘You got the green sauce? Can I get more green sauce?’ Están así como que es una droga. Todas las ordenes de delivery... ‘extra green sauce’(...)”.

inauthenticity”³³⁷ as Gaytán (2008) labels the practices that many of the Peruvian immigrants in Southern California call “fusion”, is a business strategy employed by many Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs. Others, however, remain loyal to what they evaluate as traditional Peruvian food. Through central actors and institutions linked to the gastronomic boom, and with the development of *la cocina novoandina*, Peruvian food has not only been presented as a rich and varied gastronomy, but also as *haute cuisine*. By drawing on knowledge about French gastronomy and *haute cuisine* in general, Peruvian elite chefs have altered the way conventional Peruvian dishes are served, adapting a variety of dishes as well as their presentation to the demands of an upscale fine dining clientele. Andrea, who migrated to the United States years before the boom stalled and hence experienced the Peruvian gastronomic revolution from afar, expressed her opinion about this process in the following way:

We want that, not restaurant food, but food like the one we ate at home. So, this is our standard. That’s why here there is no Gastón Acurio (...). Here you will not find much fusion, because that is not our profile. So, some Peruvians come and say, “Hey, why do you make it like this? Why don’t you make it like that?” That is fusion. Authentic food is what we are.³³⁸

Similar to Andrea, other Peruvians also talked about what they perceived as “glamorized” Peruvian food and *la cocina novoandina* as less authentic, perceiving authenticity as something fixed in time and limited to their personal experiences of Peruvian food and the way it was prepared and presented in the private kitchen as well as in culinary businesses in a Peru they left behind many years ago—what Gaytán calls “commemorative authenticity” (2008, 322).³³⁹ Akin to Mexican restaurant owners that Gaytán interviewed, some Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs rejected fusion as a strategy, and drew on commemorative authenticity in order to educate their clientele about Peruvian cuisine, displaying it as much more diverse than the food presented to the

³³⁷ Gaytán develops the concept of “hybrid inauthenticity” referring to how Mexican restaurant owners adjust to customer demand and depart from tradition “in its pristine form” through altering Mexican cuisine, while simultaneously honoring the tradition by drawing on traditional cultural forms to create something new.

³³⁸ “Nosotros queremos que, no comida de restauran, sino comida como lo comíamos nosotros en casa. Entonces esa es nuestro estándar. Por eso que acá no hay de Gastón Acurio (...). Aquí no hay mucha fusión, porque esa no es nuestra línea. Entonces hay peruanos que vienen y dicen, ‘Ay, ¿por qué lo haces así? ¿Por qué no lo haces así?’ Eso es fusión. Nosotros somos comida bien autentica.”

³³⁹ Gaytán refers to “commemorative authenticity” as an effort to evoke authenticity based on loyalty to cultural traditions from the country or origin, and a way of countering the stereotyped versions of ethnic foods often found abroad. Authenticity is hence seen as “a significant and essential aspect of ethnic identity” (2008, 323).

public through official marketing campaigns which adopt a “stylized” version of Peruvian cuisine constructed by financially successful White-mestizo elite chefs. Thus, they also contributed to expand their customers’ knowledge of the existing variety of Peruvian cultural expressions through food.

Alterations to what many perceive as authentic Peruvian food, and to the traditional way of serving it, challenge ideas about Peruvian national cuisine as a static phenomenon. According to Gaytán, “[i]n commemorative presentations of authenticity, ethnicity is depicted as both challenging and conforming to a dominant set of ideas that portray identity as fixed, stable, and recognizable” (2008, 326). Ironically, the history of the development of Peruvian cuisine, illustrates that it is all but static. As detailed in Chapter 2, Peruvian gastronomy, as we know it today, is highly characterized by external influence, particularly from Spanish settlers as well as from Chinese and Japanese immigrants. Similar to how migrants from different parts of the world arrived in Peru and shaped Peruvian cuisine as we know it today, Peruvian emigrants who start culinary businesses abroad reimagine and redefine Peruvian cuisine by adopting culinary customs encountered outside Peruvian borders, as well as by adapting Peruvian food to the ingredients available to them in the society of settlement and to the preferences of local palates. Personal integrity with relation to culinary entrepreneurs’ own convictions of what authentic and good Peruvian food is, linked to an individual as well as a collective experience of national identity, plays an important role in their performance of ethnicity within these food spaces. Yet, Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs in Southern California constantly negotiate with consumer desire as “an influential set of social forces” (Gaytán 2008, 317). They juggle between the desire to display “their own” Peru to the public, the objective of keeping a Peruvian customer base, and the aim to attract a wider clientele beyond Peruvian and Latinx communities.

Apart from remaining loyal to tradition, one can also observe from Andrea’s statement above that she associates authentic Peruvian food with the food one would eat at home in one’s own kitchen. She relates it to the objective of making customers feel at home in the restaurant. Hence, the concept of authenticity merges with the concept of home in the business space. The Mexican restaurant owners in Gaytán’s study also linked authentic Mexican food to the “kind of food you find at Mexican kitchens at

home, not so much at a restaurant” (2008, 322). Moreover, home-made food is also increasingly celebrated in foodie discourses. In this context, Peruvian restaurants capitalize on marketing themselves by claiming that they serve “home-style” food. Camila, relayed that the restaurant she ran together with her husband offered “comida casera” (home-style food) because everything was made from scratch. She told me that the primary objective was to provide the customers with a good meal, offering them “a piece of Peru”. Hence, she also linked home-style food to the “homeland”.

Some Peruvians argued, however, that only the informal businesses offered “real” authentic food. These informal culinary ventures often served Peruvian dishes that were rarely found in Peruvian-Angelino restaurants. *Chainfanita* is a dish made of beef lungs—an ingredient that is difficult to purchase through legal means in Los Angeles. Informal entrepreneurs used their ties to the Mexican community, and purchased beef lungs smuggled across the border from Mexico. By preparing different and more home-style dishes, in addition to the fact that many of them also welcome their clients into private domestic spaces, the informal culinary ventures play a particular role in offering a “commodified nostalgia” not found elsewhere in the region, to which many Peruvians in Southern California can develop attachment and a sense of home in Los Angeles.

Some informal entrepreneurs draw on the imaginaries of authentic Peruvian food to negotiate their social position within a stratified culinary landscape. Carolina told me about the experience of one of her regular American customers at her son’s work place where she used to deliver lunch. The man had visited a Peruvian restaurant with his girlfriend. They had ordered *aji de gallina*, but were disappointed. To Carolina’s son, Dylan, he had later expressed that the food was not like his mother’s food. Dylan had then explained to them that a Peruvian restaurant could never produce the same experience as his mother’s home-made food. Being able to provide “real” home-cooked food is thus linked to quality and to “good” food.³⁴⁰ By constructing a narrative that connects informal business activities to authenticity and quality, Carolina and many other informal culinary entrepreneurs were able to turn their informal venture, often associated with negative stereotypes, into a touted one.

³⁴⁰ Restaurant reviewers that Gaytan (2008, 321) interviewed also emphasized authenticity as an important indicator of quality.

Moreover, some Peruvians argued that informal culinary businesses offered the most authentic Peruvian cuisine because the food was prepared by Peruvians. Diana's husband, Marco, stated that "here [in our home-based restaurant] they try the real Peruvian food, and they are disappointed when they go to a restaurant."³⁴¹ About informal culinary businesses he expressed:

[A]nd at least they give you authentic Peruvian food. That's why there are many people. Look, I will tell you an anecdote. Here [in the building] there are two guys who are Honduran. They love eating here [in my informal restaurant] every day. One of them likes *parihuela*.³⁴² And they just arrived at a restaurant here to which we sell *tamales* and *alfajores*. They go and order *the parihuela*, and they did not like it. "I don't like this." And they asked them: "Is the cook Peruvian?" "No, the cook is not Peruvian, he is Mexican." That explains why he does not know how to prepare Peruvian food. "I will call for the owner." He did not settle for that. He made them call the owner. "In the building where I live, we have a chef who is Peruvian. And he prepares food for the whole building." The lady asks him: "What's the name of that chef?" He tells her: "[Marco]"... "[Marco]". She asks him: "Isn't that the one whose wife also makes *alfajores*?" "Yes," he answers her. [laughter] And the lady knew who I was.³⁴³

The practice of many Peruvian restaurants to hire Mexican or Central American cooks, provides informal Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs with an authority and legitimacy to claim that their food is more authentic Peruvian than many of the formal businesses, since these entrepreneurs prepare the food themselves.³⁴⁴ Moreover, when prepared at home and not at an industrial kitchen, the food is also considered more authentic. Informal entrepreneurs hence capitalize on food discourses linked to authenticity and market themselves as of high quality and superior in taste. Thus, imaginaries about authenticity provide informal culinary entrepreneurs with an elevated status within culinary hierarchies. Sociologists Emir Estrada and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, who have studied Latinx street vendors in Los Angeles, illustrate how the development of

³⁴¹ "[A]quí prueban la verdadera comida peruana, y se decepcionan cuando van a un restaurante."

³⁴² *Parihuela* is a spicy Peruvian-style seafood soup consisting of fresh seafood and Peruvian hot peppers.

³⁴³ "[Y] por lo menos te dan la auténtica comida peruana. Por eso hay muchas personas. Mira, te voy a contar una anécdota. Aquí [en el edificio] hay dos muchachos que son hondureños. Ellos mueren por comer todos los días acá [en mi restaurante informal]. A uno de ellos le gusta *la parihuela*. Y justo llegan a un restaurante acá que les vendemos los tamales y alfajores. Agarran y se piden *la parihuela*, y no les gustó. 'Esto no me gusta.' Y les dice: '¿El cocinero es peruano?' 'No, el cocinero no es peruano, es mexicano.' Con razón que no sabe preparar la comida peruana. 'Me le llamo a la dueña.' No se quedó así. Mandó a llamar a la dueña. 'En el edificio donde yo vivo, tenemos un chef que es peruano. Y él prepara comida para todo el edificio.' Agarra y la señora le pregunta: '¿Cómo se llama ese chef?' Le dice: '[Marco]'... '[Marco]'. Le dice: 'No es uno que su señora también hace alfajores?'" 'Sí', le dice. [risas] Y la señora me conocía" [For privacy reasons, I have changed a few minor details in this quote].

³⁴⁴ Other studies also highlight the relationship between authenticity and ethnicity/race of employees (e.g. Grazian 2003; Gaytán 2008).

foodie culture and the growing interest for authentic ethnic and cosmopolitan dining in recent years have provided these informal Latinx entrepreneurs with a tool through which they translate street vending from a disparaged activity into a positive one (2011, 123). Similar to these Latinx street vendors, Peruvian informal culinary entrepreneurs draw on food discourses linked to the status of Peruvian cuisine, but also to authenticity, in order to make sense of themselves within the culinary scene, as well as within a society in which they often constitute a stigmatized minority, and produce a positive narrative around their irregular activities.



Image 7.5. *Causa limeña*, a treat from an informal home-based business owner during our interview. It resembles the way this dish is conventionally served in Peruvian homes and restaurants.



Image 7.6. *Causa limeña* ordered at a mid-range priced restaurant, stylized, but recognizable.



Image 7.7. *Causa limeña* ordered at an upscale Peruvian restaurant in Los Angeles. It had slightly different ingredients, was served in an unrecognizable way, layered in a different order, and in a glass instead of on a plate.

As the stories above have demonstrated, narratives and ideas of *peruanidad* and authenticity inform the performance of ethnicity within these food spaces. While Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs draw on available constructions of ethnicity and authenticity, they simultaneously contribute to produce new ideas about what *peruanidad* and authentic cuisine is in a migrant context. In keeping with Gaytán’s (2008) findings concerning the Mexican restaurant industry, Peruvian food spaces are important sites in which identity is consumed and ideas about Peruvian culture are produced and preserved through relational processes between culinary business owners and their customers. While Gaytán explored Mexican restaurants that catered primarily to an Anglo clientele, this study examines a range of culinary food businesses, some targeting an affluent White clientele, while others serve a more socioeconomically and ethnically diverse customer base. Such approach allows me to understand how performances of ethnicity and authenticity are subject to a set of complex processes

through which Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs negotiate a position within structural and relational hierarchies in the receiving society, but also in relation to deeply ingrained structural inequalities in the country of origin. Notions of *peruanidad* are negotiated in encounters with the majority population and with other minority groups, but also among Peruvian immigrants from a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic-cultural backgrounds. Ethnic themed food places provide a space for such encounters, and culinary entrepreneurs navigate food discourses and narratives of authenticity in order to claim status within culinary hierarchies.

Place-based Identities and Multiple Layers of Internal and External Others

As the stories in this chapter have demonstrated, how Peruvian immigrants reimagine and redefine *peruanidad* is intimately linked to place and to local experiences in the society of settlement. How Peruvian culinary entrepreneurs navigate the specific historic and geographic context in which they live their lives and run their businesses—as Peruvian immigrants in a “Mexican” city in the United States—influences processes of incorporation, and how they negotiate a sense of self in relation to other minority and majority groups in their local environments. However, Peruvians also bring with them a set of experiences and notions of who they are in relation to other Peruvians. These notions of individual and collective selves are challenged through migration and through the encounter with the complex and intersectional power dynamics that constitute the social fabric against which Peruvian migrants negotiate membership, and recognition in the society of settlement. The various forms of racialization that Peruvian migrants experience and enact mediate how Peruvian identities are forged across borders, and hence also impact processes of incorporation in the society of settlement. As Peruvians grapple with making sense of themselves in a new environment, they move in and out of a range of intersecting ascribed and self-avowed subjectivities (ethnic/racial, pan-ethnic, classed, legal, gendered etc.). Culinary entrepreneurship forms part of these processes.

Gabriela’s story serves as an example of how these complex dynamics shape the Peruvian women’s experiences and practices. Racial discrimination in form of an

ascribed Latinx identity, often linked to stereotypes on Mexican immigrants, informed Gabriela's decision to open a Peruvian restaurant. Drawing on the social recognition of Peruvian cuisine she was able to benefit from her Peruvian background in order to negotiate higher status as a Latinx woman in a predominantly White and affluent neighborhood. Yet, she was not perceived as a Latinx in all settings. "I used to feel... a minority in the Hispanic world", she told me, referring to how she was perceived by other Latinxs and other Peruvians. Gabriela came to the United States as a teenager and had spent thirty-nine years in the country. She held a master's degree from a US university, was married to a native English speaker, and lived in a predominantly White and affluent neighborhood. Albeit with a distinct accent, Gabriela spoke English fluently, and English was her language of preference, also when communicating with other Latinxs and Peruvians. She exemplified her statement by imitating the voice of a Peruvian supplier who reacted to the way she always replied to him in English: "Gosh! You're so American!".

Other women saw themselves as Peruvian, but were not perceived as such by non-Peruvians in the receiving society. Camila, for example, self-identified as *Nikkei*-Peruvian, and explained that her Japanese ancestry had shaped her experiences of racialization in the society of settlement. "[T]hey don't see us as Peruvians because of our appearance",³⁴⁵ she told me. To Camila, displaying *peruanidad* in her restaurant was an important business strategy for maximizing revenue. Yet, it was also a way of expressing that she felt Peruvian and that her Peruvian roots were important to her. To give the restaurant a "touch of what Peruvian culture is"³⁴⁶ and because they wanted "a name that demonstrates that we are Peruvians",³⁴⁷ Camila and her husband, who was co-owner, decided to give their restaurant a name in the Peruvian indigenous language *Quechua*, despite growing up in Lima, and despite not personally identifying with an indigenous background and experience. Hence, Camila and her husband, on the one hand, benefitted from being racialized as Asians. This protected them from discrimination based on their background from Latin America, since certain Asian

³⁴⁵ "[A] nosotros no nos ven como peruanos por la cara".

³⁴⁶ "un toque de lo que es la cultura peruana"

³⁴⁷ "Queríamos un nombre que muestra que somos peruanos".

groups are perceived as the model-minority.³⁴⁸ On the other hand, they drew on *peruanidad* in order to succeed in the culinary business world, while also negotiating their right to express a Peruvian heritage linked to high status within culinary markets, despite the fact that their bodies were not acknowledged as Peruvian or Latinx.

Gabriela and Camila's experiences complement other stories that I have presented throughout this chapter about how *peruanidad* is negotiated among Peruvians in a migrant context, and about how Peruvian immigrants draw on peruvianness in order to negotiate distinction from the negative stereotypes that are often associated with the Latinx, and particularly the Mexican label. Together, these narratives shed light on the complex ways in which intersections of race and ethnicity shape the Peruvian women's experiences with immigration and business ownership, and the role Peruvian food spaces, and particularly culinary businesses play in forging transnational identities.

Peruvian food, as well as other material and sensory artefacts articulated within the business space in order to display *peruanidad*, play a central role in the development of such place-based individual and collective identities. Peruvian women who have opened culinary businesses in Southern California operate within a multifaceted grid of power relations in which the legacies of varying colonial histories intersect. On the one hand, they struggle to make sense of their position within a stratified social structure in the society of settlement. Simultaneously, they also grapple with racialized discourses from the country of origin in their new environments. Hence, they negotiate a position against multiple layers of internal and external Others,³⁴⁹ linked to the various ethnic/racial labels the Peruvian women navigate, which are also mediated by class and

³⁴⁸ Stereotypes of Asian Americans as a model minority portray Asian Americans as "academically successful, hardworking, obedient, family-oriented, and entrepreneurial" and have reinforced the belief that equal opportunities are for all, also for non-White immigrants and minorities. (Lee and Hong 2020, 165).

³⁴⁹ Inspired by Alcalde's (2020) article "Coloniality, belonging, and indigeneity in Peruvian migration narratives", I employ the concept of "internal Others" developed by anthropologist Briones (2005). Alcalde draws on Briones' conceptualization of the term linked to an indigenous internal Other within the nation, but illustrates how class intersects with racialization and notions of indigeneity in creating internal Others in Peru. She extends the concept of internal Others by referring to "internal forms of differentiation and hierarchies as a way to examine how some Peruvians embody and exert racism vis-à-vis other Peruvians both in Peru and as they settle in these new spaces" (2020, 2). Like Alcalde, I employ the concept of internal Others in light of the decolonial critique raised by scholars such as Quijano (2000), Grosfugel, Oso and Christou (2015) and underscore that the forms of discrimination and racism that Peruvians experience and enact abroad are manifestations of coloniality linked to the conceptualization of non-Europeans as backwards, ignorant and an obstacle to the constructed modernity and progress associated with the West. However, while Alcalde primarily relates the concept internal Others to how intersecting Peruvian class and racial hierarchies are reproduced across borders, the Peruvian women's stories elucidate how ethnicity/panethnicity as well as constructions of immigrant illegality intersect with race and class in producing internal as well as what I call external Others. The concept of external Others serves here to explain how immigrants and minorities' positions are also negotiated and produced in relation to other minoritized groups to which these individuals do not claim membership.

legal immigration status. While Peruvian middle- and upper-class migrants, many of whom benefit from lighter skin color and legal immigration status, distance themselves from the non-White, indigenous and sometimes illegalized and less well-off Peruvian Other, Peruvians also distance themselves from the stigma linked to the societal construction of a Latinx and Mexican Other. Some Peruvians also benefit from passing as more privileged non-Latinx minority or majority group members. And, in relation to Peruvian food businesses, culinary hierarchies add yet another layer of stratification to the multifaceted power relations that are at play as Peruvian migrants search for home and belonging in a complex context of reception.

Whereas ethnicity has been celebrated by the ethnic entrepreneurship literature as an asset for business success and upward social mobility, race has often been overlooked in the explanations that scholars have provided in order to understand the dynamics of ethnic entrepreneurship among minoritized groups (Gold 2016). The Peruvian women's experiences, however, demonstrate the intimate relationship between processes of racialization and the production of ethnicity, and elucidate the ways in which these processes intersect with other axes of differentiation. Sociologist Ayumi Takenaka (2017) has demonstrated how food played an important role in processes of representation, recognition and integration for Japanese immigrants in Peru. The Peruvian women's narratives, as presented throughout this chapter, corroborate and extend such findings by elucidating how experiences of racialization in the society of settlement shape how these culinary entrepreneurs commodify *peruanidad*, and how such entrepreneurial processes contribute to the development of place-based individual and collective identities, negotiated in the encounter with multiple layers of internal and external Others, as they seek incorporation based on distinction.

Ironically, while contesting racialization and exclusion faced by many Latinx immigrants in Southern California, the women simultaneously reproduce the unequal social relationships within which food discourses and practices are constructed. Consequently, social inequalities are upheld. As such, the Peruvian women's "culinary conquest" serves as a means to contest unequal relationships produced by colonial processes and reinforced through governing regimes linked to South-North migration,

the economy, the business realm and to culinary hierarchies. It does not, however, reformulate the dominant controlling images of race, ethnicity, class and legal status.

* * *

Whereas Peruvian cuisine's distinction has become a powerful tool for negotiating legitimate belonging, distinction is negotiated against multiple layers of internal and external Others. As Peruvian in a "Mexian" city, culinary entrepreneurs draw on the status of *peruanidad* in order to create counter-narratives to and distance themselves from the negative discourse concerning Latinxs and Mexicans, linked to undocumentedness and lower class-status. As various chapters in this dissertation have demonstrated, the Peruvian women operate within a complex context of reception in which *peruanidad* becomes both a disadvantage *and* an asset. On the one hand, the larger social structure conditions the Peruvian women's market capacity, and thus also their entry into self-employment as well as entrepreneurial practices, experiences and outcomes, as the embedded market approach (Valdez 2011) so importantly underscores. On the other hand, the women enact agency and interact with these structures in order to manipulate them to their advantage. Food is employed as a material and symbolic resource in these processes, as the women draw on food discourses linked to the status of Peruvian cuisine in order to negotiate a position within these complex and intersecting power hierarchies.

These dynamics underscore the importance of moving beyond limited economic analyses, and to acknowledge how ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship is nested within larger social processes that inform business owners' experiences and interactions with the economy and markets. Previous scholarship's emphasis on the context of reception and opportunity structure contributes to enhance our understanding of the macrostructural factors that shape the establishment and operation of the Peruvian women's businesses. However, how the women respond to and contest larger macrostructural forces by drawing on material culture and by manipulating the physical business space is rarely captured by existing theorizations, with a few exceptions of recent efforts to remedy this void. In concert with these recent voices, the nested

approach nudges us to see beyond the entrepreneur as economic actor, and recognize her (or him) as a living human being who engages in home-making practices and searches for belonging in the spaces she inhabits. It illuminates how immigrant entrepreneurs' business practices span multiple spheres, institutions and social processes beyond the economy, the market and beyond economic incorporation, as these practices form part of the entrepreneurs' endeavor to establish a new life, a home and to make sense of who they are in a migrant context.

Chapter 8: Ethnic Culinary Businesses and Immigrant Integration

During my stay in Los Angeles, I juggled my time between activities in the Peruvian community and interviews with culinary business owners and others, while also touring the LA restaurant scene with my family or with Peruvians in the area who wanted to show me their favorite eateries. I also attended classes and other events at the University of Southern California (USC), where I was lucky to be a visiting graduate scholar. As a member of the USC immigration graduate group, affiliated with the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), I was invited to a meeting with anthropologist Jason de León. He talked about his new book, *The Land of Open Graves* (2015), which visualized a bit too intensely—and probably a bit too accurately—the journey that a few of the Peruvian women in this study had undertaken, as they had made their way across the US-Mexican border without authorization. At the beginning of the meeting, we all introduced ourselves. When it was my turn, I provided the mandatory personal details of name, nationality, affiliation, research interests etc. As I disclosed my Norwegian nationality, Manuel Pastor, economist and director of the center, interrupted me and declared: “just the kind of immigrants we want here, apparently”. I didn’t know whether I should feel embarrassed by the fact that my privileged position was made visible among an audience consisting of migration scholars, some of them with roots from marginalized immigrant backgrounds. But since everyone else was laughing, I decided to laugh along. After all, these were scholars I admired a lot. When I came home that night, I learned that the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, had met with President Trump the day before, and that the President had expressed that he preferred more people like Norwegians to migrate to the United States, as White and mostly middle-class Scandinavians obviously represented the ideal migrant better than people from African countries and Haiti, which the President referred to as “shithole countries”. But as the Norwegian media mocked his statement, I was well aware that President Trump put a face on a set of attitudes and migration policies that were prevalent in the Global North—including my own country —, and which primarily consider migrants in a cost-benefit perspective, privileging certain groups, while excluding others.

The labor migrant, embodied by the individualist masculinized economic subject is at the center of such privilege, and has also been the main subject of scrutiny in research on migration. An important body of scholarship includes women and families in their studies, and gender perspectives have achieved increasing importance. However, scholarship on gender and migration remains “balkanized” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013), and a gender lens is often exclusively employed when women are in focus, which ignores that gender is a main structuring force of social processes, and that “gender and immigration are reflexively intertwined” (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994, 2). Also, both the migration literature and policy makers the like have overlooked the significance of the gendered work of home-making (Lauster and Zhao 2017) as well as skills developed outside the labor market, for example in the domestic kitchen. As migration researchers, how do the questions we ask contribute to reinforce the privileged individualist masculinized *homo economicus*? And how do the approaches we employ limit or enhance our understanding of processes of immigration and immigrant integration? Prior to fieldwork, I presented my project proposal to a set of Norwegian gender scholars. As my study was at its embryonic stage and my theoretical framework still remained poorly developed, I agreed to most of the criticism I received. I was struck by one remark, however, as one of the commentators told me that I should just forget about entrepreneurship, a topic obviously too closely related to neoliberalist principles to deserve the scrutiny of a wannabe gender scholar. As the preceding pages have already exposed, I did not listen to the advice. Yet, it pushed me to examine the topic through a critical lens, and to search for methodological and analytical tools that would allow me to obtain a broader understanding of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship, and the role entrepreneurial endeavors play in migrants’ lives beyond serving a neoliberal and capitalist economic system and values. Because immigrants do open businesses, and entrepreneurship does shape their everyday lives. Besides, their entrepreneurial actions have an impact on the world outside business and the market. Ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship is not a topic constrained to capitalism, neoliberalism, and to market exchanges. And it is certainly not only about the so-called “highly-skilled” immigrant men that some American politicians prioritize in their policy designs. It is a matter of

everyday life and individual and collective well-being. It is also about immigrant integration and about making home in a new place.

Every morning in Southern California, Peruvian women wake up, get dressed, and set out to feed an array of customers who search for a piece of the “homeland”, an “exotic” meal, or a taste of the celebrated Peruvian cuisine. As the women work hard cheffing in the kitchen, waiting tables in the restaurant, entertaining their clientele, confectioning *tamales* and *alfajores* by their own private kitchen counters, or filing taxes and running pay checks in their offices, they also engage in home-making. By domesticating public spaces or bringing the public into the domestic realm, these women practice place-making and interact with material culture from the country they once left behind, not only as a strategy for economic incorporation and upward social mobility, but also in order to create, represent, and develop a sense of home. This study set out to lift the gaze beyond the economic subject, the market place and the capitalist economic system, by exploring the nexus between Peruvian immigrant women’s culinary entrepreneurship and how they negotiate gender, home and belonging. In this chapter, I revisit the questions examined throughout this dissertation and direct the attention to how the Peruvian women’s stories can contribute to broaden our understanding of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship, and the particularities of the culinary business realm.

Listening to the women’s life histories with a particular attention to narratives of gender, home and belonging, and acknowledging their emphasis on the material, sensory and spatial aspects of food and food places, enabled me to perceive the larger story of migration and culinary entrepreneurship. The everyday practices and complex social relations and processes within which the Peruvian women’s entrepreneurship is nested facilitate and constrain their agency and shape their aspirations, dreams and quest for *salir adelante* [progress]—and for home. The German adage *Mann ist was er ißt* [We are what we eat] has become a familiar cliché, but also a strong statement, and the relationship between food and identity is theorized by scholars from a range of disciplines (Gabaccia 2009; Ferguson 2004; Matta and García 2019a; Ray 2014a; Imilan 2015). Food is loaded with gendered, classed and ethnic/racial meanings, and food discourses linked to national cuisines contribute to reinforce deeply rooted inequalities between people, countries and regions. In culinary businesses, food hierarchies intersect

with economic-, trade-, labor market-, business- and mobility regimes, and with the gendered divisions produced between the private and public realm. In the midst of these complex intersections, Peruvian women make homes for themselves, for their families, and for the wider Peruvian community. Culinary entrepreneurship arises as a central strategy for home-making. So, is entrepreneurship a viable option for immigrants as they settle into their new environments and seek membership of these societies?

Entrepreneurial Motivations are Rooted in Broader Life Projects

Previous scholarship has developed increasingly complex frameworks in order to explain why immigrants and other ethnic/racial minorities open businesses, paying attention to the interaction between individual-, group- and macrostructural factors, with a particular emphasis on the context of reception and opportunity structure. The context of reception that Peruvian immigrants encounter in Southern California is shaped by the presence of a large Latinx population, in which residents with roots in Mexico dominate. The large population of undocumented immigrants, many of them also of Latinx and Mexican descent, contributes to fuel the so-called “Latino threat narrative” (Chavez 2013). This negative discursive context shapes Peruvians experiences in Southern California, since many of them are ascribed a Latinx and often also Mexican identity. Hence, regardless of legal immigration status, they are often conflated with Mexicans and as such also with an unauthorized immigration status. Within this context, negative experiences and blocked mobility in the regular labor market prompted some Peruvian women in this study to search for opportunities elsewhere, and the favorable opportunity structure for Peruvian food businesses attracted many to venture into self-employment in Californian culinary markets. Moreover, common cultural traits and linguistic practices across national Latinx groups, and more established Latinx and Mexican community ties and institutions, provided an expanded coethnic community that offered important resources also for Peruvian businesses.

A complex context of reception and opportunity structure, hence, facilitated and constrained culinary business ownership for Peruvian women. But contextual factors alone do not push immigrants into self-employment, let alone motivate them to continue

as time passes by. As I listened to Peruvian women's life accounts and observed practices usually not associated with the marketplace, I came to understand that the motivations for business ownership were rooted in broader objectives that these women had for their own and their families' lives, as well as for the wider Peruvian immigrant community. Whereas economic progress and upward social mobility were only some among the many factors that informed the women's decision to migrate, pecuniary motives constituted some among the various others that motivated them to run culinary businesses. Ambitions of *salir adelante* [progress] were deeply rooted in larger life projects linked to individual, family, and community aspirations of well-being and the quest for home and belonging.

Despite emphasis on the social embeddedness of ethnic entrepreneurs, dominant theorizations have overlooked these social dimensions of immigrant and other ethnic/racial minorities' business ventures, as they have primarily focused on the entrepreneur as an economic actor and limited the analysis to the economy and the market. And although scholars have highlighted the important resources found within social networks, particularly within ethnic communities, they have not lent sufficient attention to the sophisticated ways in which entrepreneurial practices enmesh within broader processes of social life and immigrant integration. With an emphasis on the entrepreneur as *homo economicus*, they have often failed to consider her/him as a living human subject embedded in families, communities, and in everyday life. This dissertation builds and improves on existing thinking about ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. By introducing a nested approach, it nudges scholars to look beyond the economy, the market and the economic subject, and directs the attention to how entrepreneurial practices are nested within larger life projects and broader processes of home-making, place-making and immigrant and other ethnic/racial minorities' quest for home and belonging to their local environments.

Gendered Spaces, Situated Intersectional Agency and Reconfigured Gender Relations

Despite a long tradition of emphasizing the role of ethnicity, ethnic entrepreneurship scholarship has recently begun to pay attention to how ethnicity intersects with other axes of oppression and privilege such as gender, race and class. This has shed light on important aspects of female immigrant and ethnic minorities' business ownership. However, since many of these studies rely on research designs in which women entrepreneurs' motivations, business strategies, access to resources and experiences are compared with those of male business owners (e.g. Valdez 2011; Vallejo and Canizales 2016), they often overlook how gender is negotiated within the business space, and the effects business ownership may have on gendered relations. Moving beyond male/female comparative frameworks, this study extends previous attempts to examine how gender and other intersecting dimensions of inequality shape immigrant and ethnic/minority women's experiences with culinary entrepreneurship, and pays specific attention to gendered orientations to space.

It is by now well established that immigration reconfigures gender relations. Yet, the role immigrant entrepreneurship plays in shaping these processes is less explored. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, immigrant entrepreneurship intersects with the migration experience in reconfiguring gender relations within the family as well as the gendering of space and spatial practices. These changes are primarily a result of continual renegotiation processes informed by experiences of migration, as argued by other scholars (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), but also by immigrants' engagement with business in the society of settlement.

Although the business realm as well as food spaces are gendered spheres associated with the success of the business man and the male chef, women have played a central role in the development of a Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California. They occupy roles as head of formal, informal, independent and family businesses, and open a variety of enterprises such as restaurants, cake and pastry ventures, catering businesses and markets. Most importantly, they often provide the culinary knowledge and skills behind these business ventures. These are skills that many of them have acquired in the domestic kitchen through the labor of home-making in Peru. I call these

skills “intersectional resources”, since gender, class and culture intersect in producing them. Despite long lasting feminist struggles for its recognition, home-making is still not recognized as labor, neither are skills accumulated through such labor. As certain labor migrants are favored within migration regimes in the Global North, which are increasingly privileging so-called “skilled” labor, immigration legislation contributes to reinforce the division between market processes and home-making, since only skills acquired through formal education and experience in the regular (and primary) labor market are valued.

Intersectional resources are often produced as a result of gendered divisions of domestic labor within families in which women take on the primary responsibility of social reproductive tasks. However, in a context of migration they also grant Peruvian women an advantage within the family in terms of business opportunities. As the family confronts a challenging context of reception, but also a favorable opportunity structure for Peruvian food ventures in Southern California, Peruvian women exert what I call “situated intersectional agency” and draw on these skills to bargain with patriarchy as they occupy roles as head of independent and family businesses. Hence, the findings in this study advance existing scholarship on the intersectional dimensions of ethnic entrepreneurship. While previous studies have employed an intersectional lens to show how immigrant Latinx women without access to middle-class resources occupy a “social location on the bottom” (Valdez 2011, 159), this study complicates the picture painted by such studies and demonstrates that Latinx women’s gendered experiences may also constitute an asset for business.

Furthermore, it is well documented that gendered factors often push women to seek self-employment in order to be able to meet multiple obligations such as juggling care work and household responsibilities while also contributing to the family income. Existing scholarship disagrees on whether these mothers’ (often home-based) businesses constitute emancipative solutions or further oppress women (Ekinsmyth 2014; Wilton 2017). Peruvian entrepreneurs’ stories nuance such debates and point to a more complex reality. I contend that while Peruvian mothers often take on the primary responsibility for child care, and hence fail to challenge unequal gender relations within the family, they simultaneously contest deeply ingrained gendered structures in the

economy by blurring the boundaries between market processes and family relations. Many of these women reject employment in a labor market and economic regime that does not value the ways in which their economic actions and objectives are nested within broader social processes of family and community everyday life.

As I studied the broader segments that make up a Peruvian culinary scene in Southern California, I came to understand that legal immigration status intersects with gender, race, ethnicity and class in shaping Peruvian immigrant's entrepreneurial activities, and I also learned that these intersections play out within and across boundaries traced between the formal and informal economic sector and between the private and the public sphere. Undocumented status is often associated with lower class segments and low levels of human capital. This dissertation defies such stereotypes, and demonstrates that also members of the middle classes reside in the United States without authorization. It further illustrates that undocumented immigrants also open businesses in the formal economy. Bonding social capital and class resources combine in facilitating entrepreneurship in the formal sector for undocumented immigrants. In the absence of such resources, however, undocumented immigrants are confined to informal business activities. Gendered parenting roles and family obligations, on the other hand, as well as moments of crisis in the family or in the economy, prompt lawful permanent residents and naturalized Peruvian immigrant women to opt for businesses in the informal sector. Some bring business into the private sphere, since this allows them to combine mothering responsibilities with work, and to many women, informality constituted a first step on the way to an entrepreneurial venture in the formal economy. Thus, in tandem with recent scholarship, this study challenges the conception of undocumented immigrants and informal business owners as confined to the lower social strata of the immigrant population.

By elucidating processes normally considered separate from the market, the nested approach complements the intersectional approach, and extends our understanding of how gender and other intersecting axes of power facilitate and constrain ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. As this study has shed light on important intersections between informality/formality, authorized/unauthorized immigration status, and the blurring of the private/public sphere, more research is

needed across a variety of sectors and contexts to fully understand the role these intersections play in shaping immigrant women—and also men’s—business ownership. For example, how do these processes play out in a context where the labor market is highly regulated and undocumented immigrants’ work possibilities hence more constrained, let alone the possibility of formalization?

Whereas studying an (almost exclusively) woman only group has enabled me to move beyond comparative male/female frameworks when looking at gendered aspects of immigrant business ownership, the study fails to consider how similar gendered dynamics are experienced by male entrepreneurs, and how also men’s entrepreneurial actions are nested within broader socio-spatial processes linked to their own individual life projects, their family’s well-being and to community life. The interviews and informal conversations I had with the women’s partners, particularly those who played an active role in the business, suggest that this may be an important topic of scrutiny for future research. Previous scholarship has highlighted that women tend to report other motives for self-employment than men (Gold 2014; Gabaldon, De Anca, and Galdón 2015; Jennings and Brush 2013), that they more often than their male counterparts highlight non-economic factors of success (Valdez 2011), and that they close successful businesses at higher rates than men (Bates 2005). When providing explanations to this, scholars primarily look at women’s commitment to the family (Bates 2005) or to the community (Gold 2014). But could it be that if we zoomed out a bit and paid more attention to how entrepreneurial action (and economic action in general) is nested within broader life projects, individual, family, and community well-being, and everyday life, we would be able to understand how these dynamics affect both women and men, albeit unequally due to the gendering of these institutions, spaces and processes? Maintaining such a broad gaze allows us to gain deeper insight into how unequal parental expectations/responsibilities often contribute to constrain women’s business ownership at certain life stages, but also how they push women into self-employment and how business ownership enables women to challenge boundaries between economic and social/private realms. Examining how also men move between these spheres and negotiate their boundaries might further extend our understanding of broader aspects of the gendering of immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship. Hence, to fully understand

these dynamics, it is important to include men in the study design, and to pay particular attention to life course and to how important life events, such as parenthood, migration and settlement, but also other life altering processes, influence broader life projects over time. Given the ethnic/racial, gendered and classed stereotypes and stigmas associated with food and food spaces, the culinary business realm constitutes a favorable context for such inquiry, but comparisons with other sectors would also bring important insights.

Culinary Entrepreneurship as a Strategy for Home-making

Ethnic businesses, and particularly food ventures, constitute a unique space for encounter and interaction between immigrants from different ethnic/racial groups as well as the established population in the communities in which they are embedded. In my own country of origin, Norway, immigrants, primarily from Turkey and the Middle East have established a range of kabob businesses, and *kabob* has become an integrated part of urban dining in larger Norwegian cities. This has prompted the popularization of a new term with stigmatized connotations referring to the marked foreign accent and syntax used by certain immigrant groups as they speak Norwegian, namely *kebabnorsk* [kabob-Norwegian]. Despite its stigmatizing effect, this term tells us something about how space and material culture inform the encounter between immigrants and the established population, and the salient role ethnic businesses, and representation in the public space in general, play in facilitating and shaping these encounters. Hence, apart from constituting a space in which dreams of financial success and upward economic mobility are fulfilled, ethnic businesses, and particularly those offering ethnic themed products and services such as the culinary, become spaces through which individual immigrants and groups negotiate membership of the urban community—the right to home and to belong, since the majority population and others increasingly crave to consume the “exotic Other”.

As culinary business owners, the Peruvian women in this study were all economic actors with dreams of financial business success. But they were also spatial actors and home-makers. Through culinary entrepreneurship, Peruvian women claimed their right to control over space. They occupied a site in the Southern Californian food scene and

claimed their right to fill these spaces with meaning. Even undocumented immigrant women exerted control over space, as they navigated legal regimes and drew on resources within social networks in order to open formal businesses. In the lack of such resources, they brought the culinary scene into the private realm, or took advantage of spaces available to them within the Peruvian community. The salience of their agency was palpable as they navigated a variety of constraints that limited their presence and practices in the urban landscape, in the economy and in the business world. And by exercising control over private, public and semi-public spaces, Peruvian women were making homes for themselves and for others.

As they invested meaning into these food spaces, the women practiced place-making, often turning these food spaces into home-like places. The majority of those who shared their stories with me had developed a sense of home and felt that they belonged in the society of settlement. Despite such feeling of belonging, however, there were still spaces, predominantly in the public sphere, that were less hospitable for some of them, particularly for those with an undocumented immigration status. To these women, the business space often constituted a safe haven, and a hiding place from the perils lurking in the regular labor market.

The brick and mortar business space took on a function of home to many of the women and their families, particularly to those who lacked the financial means to leave the daily business operations to employees. Many women spent long hours in the business, and often most family interaction unfolded in the business space. Within the precariousness of such demanding work days, however, the business emerged as a homely place that also gave room for domestic practices and social life. In general, the women were preoccupied with creating a home for other Peruvians, as well as with presenting their Peruvian heritage to a wider public. Hence, the women's businesses constituted a space in which Peruvian immigrants could experience a sense of home and where other clients could enter as guests and experience "a taste of Peru", allowing the entrepreneurs to create a home in the public for the Peruvian immigrant community, on the one hand, and to be ambassadors for their country of origin and their cultural heritage, on the other.

Peruvian culinary businesses played a central role in community building among Peruvians in Southern California. Lacking other physical spaces in which Peruvian immigrants could gather, culinary businesses provided such spaces, or played a central role in other spaces of encounter such as Peruvian community events, where primarily informal businesses (but sometimes also formal) catered to and attracted participants. Peruvians told me that they visited these culinary spaces to find a “piece of the homeland”. Other scholars have demonstrated how the Chinese and Korean ethnic enclave economies in Los Angeles contribute to community development (Zhou and Cho 2010). As Peruvians constitute a small and socioeconomically diverse population dispersed across Angelino neighborhoods, however, they have not established an ethnic enclave. But precisely in the absence of a spatially concentrated ethnic neighborhood, and due to the lack of “institutional completeness” (Breton 1964), culinary businesses spaces become vital places of encounter and community building. Whereas these businesses combine with Peruvian community organizations in uniting a dispersed Peruvian immigrant community and produce encounters across class divisions, they also constitute contested sites in which deeply ingrained inequalities from Peru are reproduced. And due to commercial forces and price range, not all food spaces are equally accessible for every member of the Peruvian immigrant community.

Exerting control over a space in the culinary market through business ownership facilitates and supports individual and collective home-making and community building. Access to space, however, depends on the ability to build financially viable businesses and to attract a substantial customer base. In order to appeal to Peruvians, Latinxs and other non-coethnic customers, the women drew strategically on notions of *peruanidad* and conceptions of authenticity. The ways they reproduced or reconfigured traditional Peruvian dishes, the artefacts they used in order to decorate the business space, and the music they played to sonically produce an appealing atmosphere were often deliberate business strategies that sprung out of a desire to create a home-like place for coethnics and to present their own experiences and memories of Peru, but were also modified according to the expectations of the target clientele. Non-indigenous entrepreneurs from Lima and other coastal cities drew instrumentally on symbols of indigeneity from the rural Peruvian highlands as they juggled between presenting “their

own Peru” and selling an “exotic Other” to their customers, whereas those who aimed for a high-end clientele negotiated notions of modernity and class. As such, economic and non-economic objectives alike mediated the women’s business strategies as well as their home-making practices.

Home-making, place-making and entrepreneurs’ engagement with material culture are overlooked topics in the literature on immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship, as scholars often employ a narrow focus on economic processes and outcomes. Moving the gaze beyond the economy and the market, and beyond entrepreneurs as monolithic economic subjects allows the researcher to capture important social, spatial and material aspects of ethnic businesses. This dissertation aligns with recent voices who have called for more attention to home-making, place and material culture in migration research in general (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2010, 2017b) and in ethnic entrepreneurship (Wang 2013; Munkejord 2017; Ray 2014a). It also extends the recent focus on the home/migration nexus (Boccagni 2017) to the ethnic entrepreneurship literature. Whereas the Peruvian women’s stories have pointed to the role of place and material culture in culinary businesses, further studies should explore other realms in order to enhance our understanding of how materiality, space and place shape entrepreneurial practices and experiences.

The Peruvian women who participated in this study were culinary entrepreneurs. This defined part of their subjectivity. But they were so much more than that. They were mothers, wives, someone’s friend, mentors, community leaders, volunteers at schools and community activities. They identified themselves as Peruvian and Latinx, and a tiny minority saw themselves as both Peruvian, Latinx and US-American. Some resided as lawful permanent residents, some had obtained US citizenship, whereas others were undocumented immigrants and/or formed part of mixed status families. The majority came from middle-class backgrounds in Peru and occupied a privileged status within Peruvian social hierarchies due to lighter skin color, Spanish mother tongue and class status. In the United States, some of them would pass as White, while others experienced racial discrimination. As Peruvians in a “Mexican” city, racial discrimination was often based on an ascribed Latinx and also Mexican identity, as Peruvians are often conflated with being Mexican and hence exposed to the same unfair stereotypes and

discrimination that Mexican immigrants face. In their everyday lives, they moved in and out of these socially constructed or legally produced categories, as they navigated social, economic and political life as immigrants in the United States.

Culinary business ownership offered them a space in which these subjectivities were negotiated, as well as a space for contestation. The elevated status of Peruvian cuisine, however, provided them with a bargaining power in a receiving society in which an immigrants' social status and recognition is closely linked to established ethnic/racial and class hierarchies. Food discourses provided Peruvian immigrants with a powerful tool employed to create counter-narratives to prevailing hegemonic discourses that shaped popular perception of the Latinx subject. By drawing on food discourses, the women claimed inclusion through distinction and distanced themselves from the stereotypes tied to the Mexican and Latinx label. While contesting racialization, however, these counter-narratives also contributed to reinforce ethnic/racial hierarchies. How the consumption of ethnic themed products and services intersect with immigrant businesses in creating spaces of contestation and claims-making, as well as sites in which existing inequalities are reinforced, needs further scrutiny beyond the culinary market and beyond Peruvian and Latinx ethnicities. What role do such businesses play as spaces of encounter in more homogenous societies in which immigrant and ethnic/racial minority groups constitute a tiny fraction of the population, such as in less multicultural cities, in rural areas, and in new immigrant destinations? Businesses with specific profiles linked to minority issues in general may also constitute a space of encounter and contestation for marginalized groups beyond ethnic/racial categories. A relative who lives in Ottawa, Canada, recently told me that a local organic food business with an activist profile had become a place of encounter for LGBTQ activists. Control over physical spaces in the public and semi-public urban landscape may be a powerful tool for building resilient communities, and small business owners have access to important spaces in which encounters between groups occur. Hence, research on a variety of businesses and group formations may bring new insights on non-economic dynamics of entrepreneurship.

As for ethnic and immigrant businesses, the context of reception and opportunity structure shape motivation, practices and outcomes. Yet, these and other macrostructural

factors do not explain how immigrants and other ethnic/racial minorities respond to structural constraints and navigate the challenges they confront when settling into their new environments and incorporating into the economy through self-employment. By employing insight on home as a lens to understand immigrant integration to the analysis of immigrant, culinary, and women's entrepreneurship, I have highlighted human agency with a particular attention to practices of home-making, place-making, and the formation and pursuit of life projects. I have also extended existent thinking of the social embeddedness of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs. While previous research has demonstrated how entrepreneurs are embedded in important social relations and networks that provide resources that facilitate enterprise, I show that entrepreneurial motivations, practices and outcomes are nested within broader socio-spatial processes, particularly linked to aspirations of feeling at home and to the basic need of belonging.

Revised American Dreams

In line with previous scholarship that has celebrated ethnic entrepreneurship as an alternative pathway to upward social mobility for certain immigrant groups in the United States such as Chinese (Min and Portes 1992), Koreans (Light and Bonacich 1988), and Cubans (Portes and Rumbaut 1990), sociologist Jody Vallejo (2012) found that entrepreneurship facilitated the upward trajectory for many Mexican immigrant families who had managed to climb the ladder into the US middle class. The American Dream is often embodied by immigrants who can demonstrate a record of working their way from rags to riches through business ownership. However, ethnic entrepreneurship is not a panacea for achieving the conventional American dream. Valdez (2011) and others have demonstrated how other intersecting social categories of differentiation such as race, class, and gender intersect with ethnicity in conditioning the financial success of ethnic businesses. And although many of the Peruvian women were living the orthodox American Dream of a middle-class life, and a few had made their way from precariousness to financial success, the findings in this study corroborate Valdez's claims. An intersectional approach to ethnic entrepreneurship constitutes a very important step forward in order to understand the complex processes of ethnic

enterprise. However, as Valdez also points out, to many ethnic entrepreneurs, business success is about more than financial profit and business growth. As the Peruvian women's life stories unveiled before me, it became clear to me that the American Dream many of them were pursuing, went beyond social mobility and a middle-class life, and was rooted in broader aspirations they had for their family and for their community—for their nest. While such dreams are intimately linked to financial and individual achievements as well as to upward mobility, particularly intergenerational social mobility, they also encompass a dream of feeling at home in their new environments.

Few of the women in this study dreamt of working with food or opening culinary businesses when they migrated to the United States, and some even considered working with food a vocation not worthy to a person of their rank. However, as many settled into their new local environments, and as they garnered experiences and saw the results of their work, new dreams were developed, also including culinary business ownership and business expansion. As these dreams were influenced by the financial viability and pecuniary success of the business, as well as by food discourses, they often went in tandem with the development and reconfigurations of broader life projects linked to individual, family, and community needs and experiences, as well as with experiences of inclusion/exclusion/recognition and with the development of a sense of home and belonging in the society of settlement.

* * *

Most of the Peruvian women who participated in this study were eager to tell their stories, and shared of their time, despite the fact that this was the one thing they lacked the most, as to many of them running a culinary business was a twenty-four seven job. Many were excited about the fact that I was going to write about them, and now a few years later some still contact me to ask when my book is coming out. They were happy that someone noticed the work they themselves see as so important, but also preoccupied with showing me the dark side of their migration projects and business ventures, and the many challenges they had confronted.

This dissertation is about Peruvian women in Southern California, but it is also a homage to immigrant women and men who set out to cross borders, with or without authorization, bringing skills and experiences with them that might not be recognized by employers, migration legislation, policy makers, and researchers the like who bunk them into the familiar categories of the “unskilled” or “low-skilled”. Some of these immigrants are women who bring with them talents and resources acquired through long lives as home-makers. Drawing on such knowledges, these women contribute to shape the diverse culinary markets found in large metropolises such as Los Angeles. These endeavors are facilitated and constrained by micro-, meso- and macrostructural factors such as individual human and class capital, the composition of, and resources found within, the family and the ethnic communities they form part of, as well as the context of reception and opportunity structure they encounter, all factors conditioned by individuals’ social location within a stratified American social structure. But first and foremost, their endeavors are facilitated by the agency these women exert as they respond to these structural opportunities and constraints.

The preceding chapters have highlighted the paradox that many of these Peruvian women experience every day. As they navigate an inhospitable discursive context of reception and a welcoming culinary market, the women develop place-based identities and in the encounter with multiple layers of internal and external Others, they seek representation in the urban landscape and negotiate membership of the societies they inhabit. Food arises as a powerful tool of contestation, and culinary business ownership provides a space for these actions, as the women search for home and belonging in “the land of the free and the home of the brave”.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Notes on Fieldwork and Reflexivity

Incorporating decolonial feminist thought in the research project requires the researcher to engage deeply with “how the *self* is involved in the research process and encourages researchers to question their relationship with the social world and the way in which we understand our experiences” (Cunliffe in Manning 2018, 315; emphasis in original). As detailed in the chapters of this dissertation, to many of the Peruvian women who participated in this study, particularly to undocumented immigrants, the migration trajectory as well as their incorporation into American society and into the American labor market have been heavily marked by racialized experiences and discrimination. Hence, there were few reasons for many of them to give me their trust. I self-define as White, middle-class and I am citizen of a country in the Global North that often tops lists of best countries to live in for health, life expectancy, education and high incomes (Henderson December 15, 2015). More than one time, a participant referred to me as *gringa*,³⁵⁰ positioning me as “the Other” in the relationship that developed between researcher and interlocutor. The racialized experiences and precarious situations that some of the Peruvian women were facing, are hence, distant to my personal experiences. I also resided temporarily in the United States on legal grounds, and cannot personally relate to the hardships and sufferings of undocumented immigrants whose mobility is constrained, and who cannot return to the home country to visit their loved ones. In this context, it is easy to imagine the research situation from an archetypal insider-outsider divide (Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati 2014). Sometimes, emphasizing my identity as a researcher—which I often did so that people would be aware of the reasons behind my presence in “Peruvian” spaces—reinforced this divide. A sunny fall day, Belén, a leader of one of the Peruvian non-profit organizations in the area invited me for lunch at a restaurant in Los Angeles since she wanted to present me to the owner as well as to another culinary entrepreneur that she had invited to join us. The four of us were enjoying our meals and praising the food while Belén expressed that someone had to come from abroad to be able to appreciate the value of the work these migrant women and culinary entrepreneurs perform and for their important story to be told. Thus, she

³⁵⁰ According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *gringa/o* refers to “a foreigner in Spain or Latin America especially when of English or American origin”. Broadly it refers to “a non-Hispanic person” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary n.d.).

was situating me on the outside of the community, as someone viewing them through an outsider perspective.

Yet, I do speak Spanish fluently, and I am married to a Peruvian with whom I have two children who are hence also of Peruvian descent. The presence of my family when I was in the field, in addition to the knowledge and experiences I could share with people in the Peruvian community from my one year stay as well as from numerous shorter travels to their country of origin, allowed me to spark a cultural connection and often provided me with the position as an “honorary insider” (Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati 2014, 50). Similarly, my genuine love for Peruvian cuisine, as well as my interest in the interlocutors’ experiences as women and as mothers, identifying as a woman and mother myself, seemed often to be more important than racial and classed markers in order to gain the interlocutors’ trust. In some cases, my position as an “explicit third party” (Carling, Erdal, and Ezzati 2014, 49)—as not Peruvian and not American—allowed me to gain particular access, and made the women feel that they could talk about both Peru and Peruvians as well as the United States and Americans to a trustworthy “outsider”. During the interviews, I often nodded and added a comment about my husband, who, as an immigrant in Norway, also went through experiences similar to the ones the Peruvian women were sharing with me. I had to be very careful though to not take for granted that the experiences of these women and their families were similar to my husband’s and our family’s experiences with migration. Not only were his experiences accumulated in a very different receiving context, he also came to Norway together with his Norwegian wife, and though we too have had our struggles with visa regimes and the Norwegian as well as the US immigration bureaucracy, we never had to worry about issues like deportation or access to basic rights for denizens and citizens.

Most of the women were happy to share their stories with me, and some even thanked me afterwards, since they realized that it was the first time, for some in decades, that they were able to sit down with someone and narrate their life story and voice their lived experiences as migrants and self-employed; some crossing borders without authorization, some having experienced gender-based violence or exploitation in the labor market, while other stories were more similar to my own privileged trajectories. While some women were grateful for the opportunity to share their experiences with

someone who was willing to listen to them, others expressed gratitude that I had undertaken the task of disseminating their stories to a wider audience, so that their experiences in some way could help other women in similar situations. Others, however, were more skeptical when I approached them, fearing that I represented the health department, which could have repercussions for their informal businesses, or they were afraid of too much attention directed to them as undocumented immigrants, as the fear of deportation informed their trust in strangers. Still, the length of time spent in the field, enabled me to gain also many of these women's trust, while others preferred to keep a distance to me throughout my stay.

This highlights how the insider status may evolve over the course of the projects' life cycle, as migration scholars Paula Pustulka, Justyna Bell, and Agnieszka Trąbka (2019) argue. They state that "trespassing constitutes an inherent part of in-depth or narrative biographical interviews due to asking intimate and sometimes difficult questions" (2019, 249). Some women may have felt that I was trespassing in an initial face, but my prolonged presence in the field, as well as my participation in Peruvian organizations, at events and in other Peruvian women's businesses, seem to have provided me with a degree of "insider" status developed over time. Yet, women who were not involved in activities linked to the Peruvian community, would still consider me as an outsider, and by some I was also perceived as a threat. Some of the entrepreneurs I only met once for the interview. The majority of them, however, I met two or more times, and a few of them I met regularly either at community events, when dining with family and friends in their businesses, or because I got to help out from time to time in their enterprise. Since I spent so much time in the community over a prolonged period, some relationships extended the context of research, and some turned into friendship.

The different types of relationships developed through ethnographic field work—some more prolonged and intimate, other more ephemeral and distant—underscore the power relations I form part of as a researcher. It is sometimes difficult to know where the line is drawn between friendly socializing and research, between the role as a researcher and that of a friend, and between loyalty to the people I study and to the study I am conducting, as well as to the institutions within which the study is embedded. All

the participants with whom I have conducted a formal and/or tape-recorded interview, however, were informed about the study and their right to withdraw at any stage of the project. Most of the interviews were scheduled and planned prior to the actual interview, yet some were held rather spontaneously. Hence, most of the participants signed an Informed Consent Form (Appendix F), whereas others were informed orally about the project and their rights as participants.

Positionality as well as accountability become particularly salient when analyzing, writing, publishing and disseminating the research findings. Besides influencing relationships of trust between the interlocutors and myself, my positionality also affects the way I interpret their stories, their actions as well as the historical processes and social relations within which they are embedded. Researchers' attempts to "lift up the voices of the silenced Other" have been met with sharp criticism by postcolonial scholars (e.g. Spivak 1995, Said 1979). They argue that Western academics' self-claimed epistemological authority over "the Other" only serves to reproduce the othering one aims to overcome in the first place by trying to represent those who are unable to represent themselves. Taking this criticism seriously, however, requires me to reflexively question my position as a (re)presenter of the Peruvian women's experiences and views, reminding me that I am not writing *about* them, but *with* them, as critical management studies scholar Jennifer Manning (2018, 320) underscores. Nevertheless, I constantly find myself struggling with the tensions between decentering my own position—resisting othering—and the powerful position I adopt when (re)presenting the women's stories which entails the constant danger of legitimizing "my voice rather than that of the women" (Manning 2018, 320). During our conversations, I sometimes brought up themes that had come up during observation or in interviews with other women or I referred to the findings of other scholars working with ethnic entrepreneurship and Latinx immigrants in the United States in order to be able to discuss the women's views on these issues. These discussions contributed to guide my analysis. Despite a reflexive practice, however, it is difficult and maybe impossible to escape the position of power and privilege in which I find myself as a researcher. Ultimately, I am the one who controls the data analysis and final presentation

of the project findings. Nevertheless, a reflexive praxis on positionality and accountability is an important commitment.

As I aim to contribute to the decolonization of academia, it is also important to reflect upon the theories and literature I engage with. I recognize hence, that in large parts, this dissertation reproduces the voices of the West and engages less with literature produced in and by scholars from the Global South. I have, however, made a conscious effort to analyze the Peruvian women's narratives and practices in dialogue with a variety of scholarly perspectives also developed in and by scholars from non-Western contexts.

Appendix B: Form used to collect personal data among women entrepreneurs

Personal data

Name: _____

Age: _____

Nationality:

- a) Peruvian b) USA c) Other _____

Marital status:

- a) Single b) Cohabiting c) Married d) Separated/divorced e) Widow

Number of children: _____

Do you own a house/apartment or rent?

- a) Own house/apartment
b) Rent house/apartment/room
c) Other _____

Education level

- a) Some primary school
b) Completed primary school
c) Some high school
d) High school diploma
e) Some college but no degree
f) Bachelor's degree
g) Master's degree
h) Ph.D. degree
i) Professional degree
j) Vocational and technical degree

Where did you study?

- a) In Peru
b) In the United States
c) Both
d) Other _____

Work experience:

In Peru:

In the United States:

Family income: _____

Your contribution: _____

Migration experience

Did you speak English when you arrived in the United States?

- a) Nothing
- b) Very little
- c) Some
- d) I communicated well
- e) Fluent

Do you speak English now?

- a) Nothing
- b) Very little
- c) Some
- d) I communicate well
- e) Fluent

When did you arrive in the United States?

Did you travel alone or with someone?

- a) Alone
- b) With partner/friend
- c) With children
- d) Other: _____

What is your legal immigration status? Has this changed since you arrived?

Business

Type of business:

Zip code:

Type of neighborhood:

Year of establishment:

Number of employees (ethnicity/gender):

Target market:

Type of business:

Zip code:

Type of neighborhood:

Year of establishment:

Number of employees (ethnicity/gender):

Target market:

Appendix C: Interview guide – Women Entrepreneurs

PARTE 1 (PART 1): La historia de tu³⁵¹ vida (The story of your life)

PARTE 2 (PART 2): FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS (if not touched upon in part 1)³⁵²

Experiencia migratoria (Migration experience)

¿Dónde has crecido? (Where did you grow up?)

¿Puedes contarme un poco (más) sobre el proceso de migrar a EE.UU.? (Could you tell me a bit (more) about the process of migrating to the United States?)

Empresa (Business)

¿Podrías contarme (más) sobre el proceso de establecer tu propio negocio? (Could you tell me (more) about the process of starting your own business?)

¿Podrías explicarme cuál es tu rol en el negocio? ¿Hay otras personas que están involucradas en decisiones importantes de la empresa? (Could you tell me a bit about your role in the business? Are there other people who contribute when important decisions are made about the business?)

¿Podrías contarme sobre las personas que trabajan para ti? Son Peruanos, Latinxs, mujeres, hombres, familiares? (Could you tell me a bit about the people who work for you? Are they Peruvian, Latinx, women, men, family members?)

¿Tus familiares juegan algún rol en el negocio? (Do family members play a role in the business?)

¿Quién es jefe de la empresa? (Who is head of the business?)

¿Puedes contarme sobre tus clientes, tus proveedores y otras relaciones comerciales vinculadas al negocio? (Could you tell me a bit about your clientele, your suppliers and other commercial relations linked to the business?)

¿Cuáles han sido los retos u obstáculos más grandes en el proceso de empezar y administrar tu propio negocio? (What have been the biggest challenges or obstacles during the process of opening and operating your own business?)

¿Qué rol juega el negocio en tu vida y en la de tu familia? ¿Has podido lograr algunas de tus metas y expectativas? (What role has this business played for you and for your family? Have you been able to achieve some of your goals and expectations?)

³⁵¹ Depending on the level of trust at the time of the interview, as well as on the age of the participant, I sometimes used the polite form usted/su/sus instead of tú/tu/tus.

³⁵² Since the focus was on the women's life histories, the questions in Part 2 served as a guide and varied between interviews and across time spent in the field.

¿Tu situación económica y la de tu familia ha mejorado después de constituir tu negocio?
¿Cómo? Y ¿por qué? (Has your and your family's financial situation improved after you established the business? How? Why?)

¿Cómo describirías tu estatus socioeconómico cuando vivías en Perú y aquí? ¿Ha cambiado?
¿Cómo y por qué? (How would you describe your socioeconomic status when you were living in Peru, and here? Has it changed? How and why?)

Home-making

¿Dónde está tu casa? ¿Dónde sientes que perteneces? (Where is your home? Where do you feel that you belong?)

¿Puedes contarme sobre el proceso de crear un hogar para ti aquí? ¿Cuándo empezaste a sentirte más en casa? ¿Y por qué? (Could you tell me about the process of creating a home for you here? When did you start to feel more at home? And why?) / ¿Por qué crees que todavía no te sientes en casa aquí? (Why do you think that you still do not feel at home here?)

¿Has experimentado situaciones en las cuales no te sentiste en casa? (Have you experienced situations in which you did not feel at home?)

¿Qué rol juega Perú en tu vida diaria y en tu negocio? (What role does Peru play in your daily life and in the business?)

¿Qué has extrañado más de Perú? (What have you missed most about Peru?)

¿Qué de lo peruano ofreces a tus clientes? (What is it that you offer to your clients that is Peruvian?)

¿Tu negocio juega algún rol para la comunidad peruana aquí? (What role does your business play for the Peruvian community here?)

¿Tienes planes de quedarte aquí o volver a Perú? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuál era el plan cuando llegaste? (Do you have any plans of staying here or returning to Peru? Why? And what was the plan when you arrived?)

Relaciones de género (Gender relations):

¿Podrías describir los roles de mujeres y hombres en la familia y en la sociedad, aquí y en Perú? (Could you describe the roles of women and men in the family and in society, here and in Peru?)

¿Podrías contarme sobre tu experiencia de ser mujer migrante y empresaria? (Could you tell me about your experience of being a migrant woman and business owner?)

¿Podrías contarme sobre tus experiencias de ser madre y a la vez propietaria de un negocio? (Could you tell me about your experience of being a mother and a business owner?)

¿Qué importante consideras tu contribución económica a la familia? (How important do you consider your economic contribution to the family?)

¿Quién es la cabeza de la familia? ¿Quién toma las decisiones? ¿Quién se encarga de las tareas de la casa y del cuidado de los hijos? ¿Siempre ha sido así? (Who is head of the family? Who makes the decisions? Who takes on the responsibility of domestic chores and of caring for the children? Has it always been like that?)

Experiencias de discriminación, de migrante y de empersaria (Experiences of discrimination, migration and business ownership)

¿Has experimentado algún tipo de discriminación en Perú o aquí? (Have you experienced any type of discrimination in Peru or here?)

¿Cómo es ser peruana en EE.UU.? (How is it to be Peruvian in the United States?)

¿Cómo es tener un negocio de comida peruana en una ciudad como Los Ángeles? (How is it to have a Peruvian food business in a city such as Los Angeles?)

El sueño Americano y experiencias del éxito (The American Dream and experiences of success)

¿Cuál es el sueño americano? ¿Vives el sueño americano? (What is the American Dream? Do you live the American Dream?)

¿Te consideras una mujer exitosa? ¿Qué significa el éxito para ti? (Do you consider yourself as a successful woman? What does success mean to you?)

¿Cuáles son tus ambiciones y sueños? ¿Esas ambiciones y sueños han cambiado después de llegar a los EE.UU. y constituir tu propio negocio? (What are your ambitions and dreams? Have these changed after migrating to the United States, and after opening your own business?)

Appendix D: Interview guide – partners

¿Puedes contar la historia de tu esposa desde tu perspectiva? ¿Como ha sido para ella ser inmigrante y empresaria? (Could you tell your wife's story from your perspective? How has it been for her to be an immigrant woman and a business owner?)

¿Cómo ha sido tu historia? ¿Similar o diferente? (What is your story? Similar or different?)

¿Qué rol juega este negocio para la familia? (What role does this business play for your family?)

¿Qué rol juegas tú en el negocio? (What is your role in the business?)

¿Quién es jefe de la empresa? (Who is head of the business?)

¿Qué importancia tiene la contribución económica de tu esposa para la economía familiar? ¿Y cuál es tu contribución? (How important is your wife's economic contribution to the family economy?)

¿Quién es la cabeza de la familia? ¿Quién toma las decisiones? ¿Quién se encarga de las tareas de la casa y del cuidado de los hijos? ¿Siempre ha sido así? (Who is head of the family? Who makes the decisions? Who takes on the responsibility of domestic chores and of caring for the children? Has it always been like that?)

¿Qué retos has enfrentado en relación con la empresa de tu esposa? (What challenges have you encountered in relation to your wife's business?)

¿Cómo ha cambiado la vida de la familia después de migrar a EE.UU.? (How has your life as a family changed after migrating to the United States?)

¿Hay algo más que te gustaría contar sobre tu esposa y su negocio o sobre la experiencia de ustedes como inmigrantes aquí? (Is there something else you would like to tell me about your wife and her business, or about your experiences as immigrants here?)

Appendix E: Interview guide – key participants

Historia de la comunidad peruana (the history of the Peruvian community)

¿Podrías contarme sobre la comunidad/las comunidades peruana/s aquí? Pienso en su historia, cómo se ha desarrollado a través de los años etc. (Could you tell me about the Peruvian community/communities here? I am thinking about its history, how it has developed through time etc.)

¿Qué es lo que une a los peruanos aquí? ¿Hay una comunidad peruana unida? (What is it that unites Peruvians here? Is there a united Peruvian community?)

Lugares de encuentro y el rol de las empresas (de comida) (Sites of encounter and the role of (food) businesses)

¿Qué tipo de instituciones y lugares de encuentro piensas que han sido importantes para la población peruana aquí? (What type of institutions and sites of encounter would you say have been important for the Peruvian population here?)

¿Qué elementos son los más importantes en estos eventos/sitios para los peruanos? (What elements are most important in these events/sites for Peruvians?)

¿Qué es lo que extraña más el peruano cuando llega a EE.UU.? ¿Cuáles son los más grandes retos? (What is it that the Peruvian misses the most when she/he comes to the United States? What are the biggest challenges?)

¿Qué rol juega la comida en la vida de peruanos aquí? (What role does food play in the lives of Peruvians here?)

¿Qué rol juegan los restaurantes peruanos en la vida de los peruanos aquí y para la/s comunidad/es? (What role do the Peruvian restaurants play in the lives of Peruvians here and for the community/ies?)

¿Qué rol juegan otras empresas de comida para la/s comunidad/es peruana/s aquí? Por ejemplo las empresas que ofrecen catering o venden comida en el sector informal. (What role do other food businesses play for the Peruvian community/ies here? E.g. those who offer catering or sell food in the informal sector.)

¿Cómo contribuyen los peruanos aquí a la comunidad local? (How do Peruvians here contribute to the local community?)

Entiendo que muchos peruanos tienen empresas aquí, ¿En qué rubros establecen los peruanos sus empresas? (I have learned that many Peruvians have businesses here. In what areas do they establish their businesses?)

Unidad y divisiones (Unity and divisions)

¿El pueblo peruano en su país de origen es unido, o hay elementos en la sociedad que los dividen? (Is the Peruvian people united in their country of origin, or are there elements in the society that divide them?)

¿Estas divisiones que mencionas se ven también aquí en la/s comunidad/es? ¿O se borran cuando el peruano se encuentra en un contexto de migración? (These divisions that you mention, are they visible also here in the community/ies? Or are these erased when Peruvians find themselves in a migrant context?)

¿Cómo es ser inmigrante peruano aquí? En comparación con otros grupos de migrantes? (What is it like to be a Peruvian immigrant here? In comparison with other immigrant groups?)

¿En Perú se habla mucho del boom gastronómico? ¿Cuál imagen tienes tú de este boom? ¿Se refleja este boom aquí? ¿Hay procesos similares aquí o es diferente? (In Peru they talk a lot about the gastronomic boom? What is your image of this boom? Is the boom reflected here? Are the processes similar here or are they different?)

¿Qué asociaciones, clubes, instituciones peruanos hay aquí? (What Peruvian associations, clubs, institutions are found here?)

¿Los peruanos se juntan con otros grupos de inmigrantes? ¿Con otros latinxs? (Do Peruvians get together with other immigrant groups? With other Latinxs?)

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

Participation in Research Project

“Peruvian Women and Culinary Entrepreneurs in Southern California”

Purpose of the Study

In this project I seek to build up a biographical profile of Peruvian female immigrants in California who have started an independent economic activity on the culinary market. I wish to see how their migration project and entrepreneurship have contributed to shape gender relations on an individual level, on a family level and in the local community. The project is part of my Ph.D. studies at the University of Bergen in Norway, and will result in a publication at the end.

I therefore look for Peruvian women in California who are working with food-related independent economic activities.

What does participation in this project imply?

Participating in this project will imply one interview (about 1-3 hours), as well as the possibility for me to interview family members both in California and in Peru, in addition to giving me permission to observe you in your daily work (about one week). The questions and conversations will be centered around your experience as a female migrant and entrepreneur, especially related to processes of change in your life and thoughts about gender roles in the family and in general. I will record the interviews and make written notes from our conversations.

Confidentiality

The study is anonymous. All information about you will be treated confidentially. Only I as a researcher will have access to personal information about you and your family. I will anonymize personal information like name and address and use pseudonyms to preserve your anonymity. I will use an assistant for transcribing the interviews, but this person will not have access to personal information like your name and address. Information produced by this study will be stored in the investigator’s file and identified by a code number only. The code key connecting your name to specific information about you will be kept in a separate, secure location.

If you wish I will publish the information in a way so that you and your family members will not be recognized in the publication. All names will be anonymized, and if you wish to remain completely anonymous, facts that might identify you will be altered to preserve your anonymity.

The plan is to finalize the project August 31st, 2020. The information that you have given through recorded interviews and notes taken from our conversations, will be anonymized and stored in a locked place.

Voluntary participation

Participation in the study is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the project at any time without having to give any reason. If you withdraw from the project, all information about you will be anonymized.

If you wish to participate or have questions to this study, contact Ann Cathrin Corrales-Øverlid at (213) 357 9091, or ann.overlid@uib.no.

The study is reported to the Norwegian Center for Research Data (Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS - NSD), which is a center for protection of personal data for research.

Consent for participation in the project

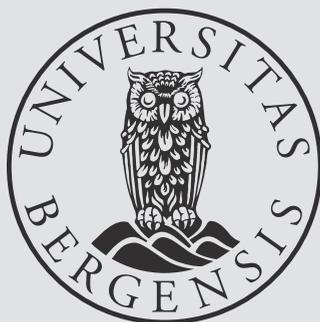
I have received information about the study, and I am willing to participate

Name print

(Signature, date)



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