

## *Mujeres en el Cruce: Remapping Border Security through Migrant Mobility*

ANNA OCHOA O'LEARY

There is little doubt that the migration of women out of Latin America has been steadily increasing since the 1980s. Their increased participation in the labor market is best understood in the context of global restructuring in what been referred to as the feminization of international migration (Ramírez, García Domínguez, and Miguez Morais 2005). Yet, little is known about their actual migration experiences. We know, for example, that migration for women is becoming increasingly hazardous. Recent research on human remains recovered in the Tucson sector since 1991 by researchers at the Binational Migration Institute at the University of Arizona<sup>1</sup> has not only determined that migrant deaths due to exposure have increased since 1994, when harsher measures to enforce the border between the United States and Mexico border were implemented, but also that women migrants, when controlling for age (younger than 18 years of age), are 2.70 times more likely to die of exposure than all other causes when compared to men (Rubio-Goldsmith et al. 2006). The hazards inherent in the migration process were also brought to public attention in March 2007 with an outbreak of armed violence in Arizona, allegedly between rival bands of human smugglers. Five undocumented immigrants, two of them women, were killed in these incidents (Quinn and McCombs 2007). Other types of risks including greater reliance on coyotes (Donato et al. 2008), abandonment in the desert (O'Leary 2008, 2009a) have also only recently become more visible. Since 1993 there have been several high-profile cases of sexual assault against migrant women by Border Patrol agents (Cieslak 2000; Falcon 2001; Steller 2001; Urquijo-Ruiz 2004). These highly publicized cases have been instrumental in raising public questions about the risks migrant women face and how common they are. These issues inspired the research project "Women at the Intersection: Immigration Enforce-

ANNA O'LEARY OCHOA is assistant professor in the Department of Mexican American and Raza Studies, University of Arizona.

*Journal of the Southwest* 51, 4 (Winter 2009) : 523–542

ment and Transnational Migration on the U.S.–Mexico Border.” In the spring of 2006, this study began systematically to document migrant women’s border-crossing experiences. Interviews with migrant women have provided greater understanding not only of migrants’ encounters with U.S. immigration enforcement agents, but also of the broader economic and social environments in which migration takes place.<sup>2</sup> These experiences have been analyzed in order to render as complete a portrait as possible of migrant women who are temporarily suspended in a global “intersection” of diametrically opposed processes on the U.S.–Mexico border: immigration enforcement and transnational movement.

After summaries of the political and historical bases for the research and the research itself, I highlight portions of some of the narratives of migrant women that provide insight into how oppositional forces are reworked at this conceptual intersection. Toward this end, I focus on the tension between family separation and family reunification as perhaps the most salient of the issues brought up by migrant women. By focusing on these related but contradictory processes, I flesh out a prominent feature of the intersection, following a relational thinking approach that incorporates subjects and subjectivity into discussions about more abstract processes and concepts such as the state and markets (Marchand and Runyan 2000). Multiple accounts suggest that family separation is inextricable from its opposite, family reunification. Indeed, they can be considered as opposite sides of the same coin, so to speak: the result of both poverty and the involuntary migration that can help relieve that poverty. The maintenance of such oppositional categories is further problematized by global actors who simultaneously represent both categories via transnational family forms: the extension of family relations and support networks across households and international boundaries (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2002). Emergent transnational family forms provide the basis of cross-border social networks upon which migrant mobility and settlement ultimately depend (Donato et al 2008). This process by which mobility and settlement are facilitated opens migration opportunities for still more people, until it becomes a generalized social and economic practice (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994: 96). As migrant mobility is facilitated, however, oppositional border enforcement systems are correspondingly challenged. The intersection, as an analytical tool, is like a window into how contradictory categories are thus brought together and destabilized. Indeed, the intersection thus reveals the historically entrenched relationship between capital, gender, and migration (Meil-

lassoux 1981), and makes visible the role of essential social processes, such as women's roles in the reproduction of the labor force, which are ignored when only economic and border enforcement policies are designed (Wilson 2000). A focus on how contradictions are reworked moves us from looking at the effects of macro-structural processes on subjects—a growing number of which are women—to an examination of how subjects impact the macrostructure.

#### **BACKGROUND TO IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT IN THE AGE OF INCREASED BORDER (IN)SECURITY**

Since the implementation of the Southwest Border Strategy<sup>3</sup> and the adoption of measures to seal the border were implemented beginning in 1993, Nogales, like other Arizona-Sonora border cities, has experienced exponential growth in migration-related activities due to the “rechanneling” or “funneling” of migration traffic through Sonora that these measures produced (Cornelius 2001; Rubio-Goldsmith et. al 2006). To date, many undocumented migrants who are apprehended in Arizona are “voluntarily” removed<sup>4</sup> from the United States at the Nogales, Arizona, port-of-entry. According to the Department of Homeland Security website<sup>5</sup> the Tucson Border Patrol sector, which includes Nogales, led all other sectors with 439,090 apprehensions in 2005. The Tucson sector was three times busier than the second busiest Border Patrol sector, Yuma, which is adjacent to the west. The process of removal varies. Some migrants are removed from the United States without appearing before a judge, a procedure known as “voluntary departure.” Arizona also had the most voluntary departures when all field offices were considered: 395,597 out of a total of 887,115 reported by all field offices for 2003. Other migrants are deported after an immigration court hearing or after having served time in any of Arizona's immigration detention centers. Of those migrants who are removed or deported, it is estimated that more than one-third reenter the United States without authorization.<sup>6</sup> Undocumented migrants who illegally reenter the United States following voluntary departure and are re-apprehended are charged with illegal entry after removal, and depending on the number of times they have been charged with this violation, serve progressively longer prison terms in Arizona's immigration detention centers (Alvarado 2004). The high recidivism rate attests to the economic imperatives that outweigh

the risk of serving progressively longer prison terms if reapprehended. In Arizona, about 31,000 individuals—the vast majority of whom are Mexican nationals—were imprisoned in 2004, and the number is growing (Abramsky 2004).

### THE RESEARCH

The present research was conducted at a migrant shelter, Albergue San Juan Bosco, in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. Nogales, Sonora, a Mexican border city fifty-five miles south of Tucson, Arizona, lies within the funnel, or channel, created by the Southwest Border Strategy. Like many other border cities along the Arizona-Sonora border, Nogales is experiencing rapid growth due to the high influx of migrants (Castro Luque, Miranda, and Zepeda Bracamonte 2006). Up to 48 percent of all migrants moving to or through Nogales are estimated to be women (Castro Luque, Miranda, and Zepeda Bracamonte 2006; Monteverde García 2004).<sup>7</sup> Many studies suggest that gendered migration patterns, those in which the initial movement of unaccompanied men is followed by that of wives and other family members, are undergoing change (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993). These studies suggest that recent female migration is less likely to follow a “stages” pattern, where the husband migrates first (initial stage) and women migrate later. Instead it is more likely to resemble patterns established by unaccompanied males (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). For example, the growing research on domestics, one of the fastest growing labor sectors and one that undocumented women are most likely to engage in, shows that more Latina women are leaving their own children behind to take care of the families of others in the United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2002; Ibarra 2003). Indeed, Castro Luque and her colleagues (2006) have documented a dramatic increase of 32 percent in the percentage of women migrating through Nogales, Sonora: from 4.9 in 1994 to 37.1 in 1998. It can be argued that this dramatic rise in female migration is related to the neoliberal structural adjustment policies introduced by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, which is similar to policies that have resulted in the feminization of poverty in many other developing countries (Sadasivam 1997). In addition, like their male counterparts, once women begin migrating, it is virtually assured that they will migrate again (Donato 1994). The increase in the migration of women unaccompanied by spouses and fam-

ily, and the cyclical nature of migration, also increase the chances that women will experience multiple apprehensions and detentions and will be victims of violence (Monteverde García 2004).

## METHODS

Like other migrant shelters that have sprouted up along the U.S.–Mexico line, Albergue San Juan Bosco aids repatriated migrants who, upon their release from the custody of U.S. immigration enforcement authorities, find themselves without a support system in the area. Albergue San Juan Bosco is a nongovernmental organization that accommodates both male and female migrants.<sup>8</sup> Guests at the shelter typically stay only one to two days before attempting either to reenter the United States or to return to their communities of origin.

Because of this, a rapid appraisal (RA) method was chosen for the research. RA emerged initially from development research (Carruthers and Chambers 1981), but it has increasingly been used in the design and assessment of public health interventions.<sup>9</sup> Consistent with RA methods, a topic guide was used to interview migrant women who arrived at the shelter and to help document more fully the various systems that facilitate and encourage migration, such as social networks, employer-employee relationships, and the arrangements for the unauthorized crossing of the U.S.–Mexico border (O’Leary 2009b). The topic guide was also designed to investigate the enforcement system and, in particular, the trajectory of women migrants as it intersects with immigration enforcement systems, how this experience affected the women, and how it influenced their decisions either to cross again or return to their communities of origin. In this way, the decision to migrate and the migration experience were situated within broader social and economic processes.

Between February 2006 and June 2007, I interviewed one hundred women at the shelter. The shelter managers, volunteers, and migrants allowed me to gather data through in-depth interviews (the majority of which were tape recorded), informal conversations, and other shared activities such as eating or assisting with shelter tasks. Interviewing subjects was challenging due to the limited time that I had to solicit their voluntary cooperation and establish a measure of trust. However, I found nearly all of the potential respondents willing to talk to me about their border-crossing experiences. The shelter opens its doors at 7:00 P.M. every

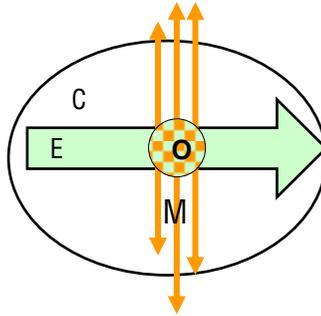
evening, and during a span of about three hours, migrants register, eat, wash, and bed down for the night. Few stayed beyond one night. A few respondents were reluctant to be tape-recorded, in which case I wrote notes during the interviews and attempted to capture as many quotations as possible. Beginning in September of 2006, I visited the shelter every two weeks, which provided for the systematic data collection that was a goal of the research. With more visits to the shelter, I fell into the shelter's rhythm, and gained rapport with the managers and volunteers. My being of Mexican heritage, while not a guarantee that I could be trusted, was, I believe, also helpful in projecting myself as trustworthy (*de confianza*) among shelter guests.

#### MAPPING OUT FAMILY SEPARATION/FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Cunningham and Heyman (2004) argue that national borders are particularly well suited for empirically examining the diametrically opposed processes of enclosure and mobility. "Horizontal" processes of enclosure are better understood by the challenges that impede their implementation. Conversely, "vertical" processes, understood as the various mobility systems that facilitate the movement of people, jobs, trade, goods, information, culture, and language, are better understood in the context of the barriers that restrict them. I have reworked this framework to help me map out the intersection of the "horizontal" enforcement mechanisms that embody U.S. "enclosure" (for example, the Border Patrol, barriers, policing, surveillance), and "vertical" mobility systems (figure 1). This approach also follows Hannerz's (1998) suggestion for organizing transnational research. Instead of the conventional community study of migrants at the end or beginning of their migration journey, migrants are viewed as somewhere in between two points: temporarily suspended in an interstitial space represented by the "O" in figure 1, where systems that regulate or impede mobility intersect with transnational movements.

Interviews with women at the shelter advance our understanding of the border as a place where opposite processes converge, not only theoretically but in concrete terms as well. For example, the processes by which families are separated, processes that can fall under the broader immigration enforcement rubric, converge with the process by which its opposite, family reunification, is realized (Wilson 2009). The salience

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework  
Horizontal and Vertical Processes**



C = Context: The U.S.-Mexico border region  
 E = Enclosure: Enforcement systems  
 M = Mobility systems  
 O = Outcome (the intersection of competing processes)

of the family separation-reunification issue is not surprising given that for decades, the notion of “family reunification” has been central to determining quotas under U.S. immigration policies. Quotas for different sending countries have reflected the value of family reunification in that immigration laws have accommodated the fundamental desire of residents to be reunited with nonresident family members (Ngai 2004; Zolberg 2006). The United Nations Convention for the Protection of Migrants and Their Families and a 2004 protocol jointly adopted by the U.S. Border Patrol and Mexico’s Instituto Nacional de Migración (INM), “Procedures for the Safe and Orderly Removal of Mexican Nationals” also reflect a universal respect for family unity. The latter agreement also specifies that officials will take measures to ensure that families who are arrested and later deported remain together. If we follow the logic upon which guidelines have been founded, we recognize family reunification as a fundamental right and its antithesis, family separation, as objectionable. Indeed, both are part and parcel of powerful transnational mobility systems that are revealed at the intersection and can be used to understand more fully the entrenched relationship between mobility and enforcement. As an analytical tool, the intersection can be

thought of as a window into how contradictions are worked out. The transformative quality that migrant women impart, on both the migration process and the enforcement paradigm, consists of challenging the distinction between these binaries and recognizing that the force by which one is implemented (e.g., mobility) is contingent on the other (enforcement). In other words, by increasing enforcement, the likelihood of family separation is intensified, which in turn, invites the emergence of supportive familial relations. The expansion of transnational familial relations facilitates transnational mobility of family members through transnational exchanges of valuable information and resources. The facilitation of migrant mobility challenges the development of a culture of national security (Sadasivam 1997), which in turn reacts by becoming invigorated, resulting in the increased potential for family separation.

*Women Migrating to Join Their Husbands: The Case of Azucena*

Recent studies have suggested that gendered migration patterns, those in which the movement of unaccompanied men is generally followed by that of their wives and family members, are undergoing change (Cerrutti and Massey 2001; Donato 1993; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). The findings of the present research bear this out. Of the forty women interviewed between September and December 2006, only three reflected the traditional migration pattern, where women's migration is motivated by the need or desire to join their husbands. In fact, almost all women who had children considered themselves mothers made single by the abandonment of their partners (*madres solteras*). Even for those few whose motive for migrating to the United States was to join their husbands, however, their stories revealed more complex realities. First, it is important to note that women who migrate to reunite with their husbands most often leave other family members behind, including children (Wilson 2000). Thus, as women embark on the journey to spousal reunification, they are simultaneously being separated from other family members by migrating. Family reunification and family separation are thus often simultaneous experiences. The case of Azucena shows the relationship of these two contradictory processes.<sup>10</sup>

Azucena (age twenty-five) set off from her hometown in Guanajuato with a friend from her community who was also en route to join her husband in the United States. Others accompanied the two women, including Azucena's uncle, an aunt (his sister), another friend (Jorge),

and Azucena's mother-in-law. They were all part of the larger group of about sixty migrants who were apprehended by the Border Patrol the night before I met them at the shelter. Azucena had hoped to reach Ventura, California, where her husband worked. This was Azucena's second trip to the United States. On the first trip north, she had not encountered any problems.

This time, however, was different. The encounter with immigration enforcement authorities began shortly after they were detected and detained by a helicopter that flew down low over their heads and began shining a light on the group. It was night and they were in a grassy area. As the helicopter approached, their guide<sup>11</sup> shouted for everyone to lie flat and to pull the grass over themselves and to cover their faces, but this advice had been nearly impossible to follow. The helicopter thundered overhead too quickly, shining light, blowing debris, and instructing them in Spanish over a loudspeaker to come out from hiding. When the helicopter flew over their heads, it seemed so close that they feared it would hit them.

When the helicopter descended, everyone fled in a panic. According to Azucena, the children traveling with the group scattered and were not found. The uncle of these children disappeared into the night in an obvious attempt to keep the children from getting lost. When Border Patrol agents arrived in vehicles and on horseback minutes later, the children's mother notified them that her children had scattered into the desert and asked them for help. The Border Patrol searched the immediate area but did not find anyone. No one knew if the children were eventually found. In addition, Azucena's mother-in-law had tripped in the dark during the scuffle and been injured, quite possibly suffering a sprain. The Border Patrol might have taken her to a hospital, but at that time no one knew of her condition or whereabouts.

During the detention phase, Azucena had become separated from those she knew. She nervously tried to discern where her file was relative to the others in the stack that was accumulating on the agent's desk. She grew nervous as she saw the agents casually sitting around talking or eating. Another woman in the cell with her protested because her companion had been released but she had not. Because she complained, the agent yelled at her and threatened to take longer to process her release. Azucena did not want her own release delayed, so she did not protest, even though she felt the same separation anxiety as the other woman in the cell.

In retrospect, Azucena thought that by provoking this anxiety, the Border Patrol was sending a clear message: “a esto se atienen al cruzar” (this is what is in store for you on crossing). What’s more, she had already learned that not only are companions released at different times, but they may be dropped off at different locations along the line.<sup>12</sup> This makes it even more difficult for them to find each other after their release. After their release and before arriving at the shelter that night, Azucena and Jorge spent the better part of that day looking for her mother-in-law. They had gone to the bus terminal when someone told them that many repatriated migrants—many of them injured—took shelter there at night. They found the bus station, but did not find her mother-in-law nor her friend from Guanajuato.

The interview provided a space in which Azucena reflected on her agency and subjectivity. When asked if she would try again to enter the United States, Azucena said yes. She was uncertain as to when because she was still looking for her mother-in-law. However, her husband was waiting for her and she had not been able to notify him of her delay. She insisted that she was not afraid: “Yo no tengo miedo,” now that the agent’s strategy to evoke fear had somehow become transparent to her. She recalled critically the fear of her friend, whom she said had cried on the bus ride north from Guanajuato. Then she had wept uncontrollably on the trip to the detention center. She said that now she was disgusted by her friend’s lack of courage.

This experience illustrates how family reunification efforts are complicated by simultaneous family separation events as women move through the intersection. Azucena’s case supports claims that once women begin migrating, they may migrate multiple times between the United States and their native communities. The nature of the cyclical movement of women is still under-researched, as is the number of repatriations women will tolerate before succeeding or deciding to return to their home community. The length of the stay in the intersection of movement and enforcement also appears to be a function of the delays caused by family separation in the course of migrating, in terms of the time it takes for family members to try to relocate their traveling companions who have become separated. If successful, a migrant woman’s efforts at reunification may in fact create separations of other kinds, as did Azucena’s separation from her children, whom she left with her parents in Guanajuato. The following narrative illustrates this process further.

*Women Migrating to Join their Parents: The Case of Rosita*

Rosita (age eighteen) is one of several women interviewed who were migrating to rejoin parents who left them when they were small to migrate to the United States. She, her husband and her child were at the shelter on a cold February night after being repatriated. Rosita's mother and father had left their children in Paracho, Michoacán, about ten years earlier when they migrated to the United States. At that time, Rosita was nine and the eldest of four children. The children were left with Rosita's grandmother and aunts, and Rosita helped raise her younger siblings, the youngest of whom was a little over one year old at the time. Over the years, Rosita's parents had arranged for the children to journey to the United States, one at a time, to be reunited with them. This process illustrates a "stage" approach to migration in which the initial migration of men is followed later by more permanent settlement of their wives and children (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Rosita was the last of the siblings to make the journey. At eighteen, she now had an infant child of her own, which complicated the journey north.

In the preceding few months, Rosita's father had phoned her and her husband, urging them to make the journey to Oregon because there was much work there. Rosita's father worked in the agricultural sector, routinely working the potato harvest. In an all-too-common pattern, the couple's decision to follow her parents to the United States was based on economic need. She stated, "A veces ni de comer teníamos" (At times we did not have anything to eat). Rosita's father borrowed the necessary money and arranged for the coyote to help them make the journey. Because he was a friend of the family, they were charged only \$1,100<sup>13</sup> and because she would be bringing her baby, he agreed to arrange for the shortest route possible. They had managed to cross into the United States without being apprehended and had been hiding in a safe house waiting for their ride to Oregon when they were discovered by a police officer. Rosita thought that they had been discovered when another coyote who had placed his group of migrants in a room across the hall had been followed by the police back to the safe house. The coyote had apparently attracted the attention of a police officer who saw him enter a nearby bank covered with dust. The official followed the coyote back to the safe house, and when he stopped by the door to the room where Rosita's group were harbored, the officer apprehended him then proceeded to arrest the group hiding in the room.

Rosita's reunification with her father and mother was thus indefinitely postponed. Rosita recounted that on their trip from the detention center to Nogales there were two young girls on the Department of Homeland Security bus who could not stop crying because their guide had separated them from their parents and they did not know where they were. For Rosita, the trauma of her fellow passengers forced her to consider the danger of separation from her own child, which in part convinced her not to reattempt to cross. Her mother-in-law had offered to keep the baby but Rosita had refused. Her parents had long before left her and her siblings to go to the United States, and this experience might have had some bearing on her decision. She said that many others had left their *chiquitos* behind, but she could not bring herself to be separated from her little one. Like the other women, Rosita's story further illustrates how the separation/reunification binary might be made less distinct over the years, leaving in its wake a transnational family form that facilitates movement between sending and receiving communities.

*Women Leaving Family Behind: The Case of Araceli*

There are indications that women are assuming the role of primary providers for their households, resulting in the feminization of migration (Ramirez, García Domínguez, and Miguez Morais 2005). Araceli and Yudi Dalia (both eighteen) were cousins on their way to the United State in October of 2006 with Araceli's mother (who was not present) and her maternal aunt, Esperanza (forty-two). All four women had been apprehended by the Border Patrol but had been released at different times. They feared that because Araceli's mother had been apprehended on a prior occasion, she would have to serve additional detention time before being released. They hoped that she would show up at the shelter soon. The four women had come from the state of Guerrero and, like the majority of the women who came through the shelter, they had left a primarily agriculturally based community. Consistent with other complaints about the agricultural economy in Mexico, they stated that they were migrating because there were unable to subsist in that economy. The work there was seasonal, "por temporada," and poorly paid. Esperanza explained, "Mucha gente pues, se muere de hambre. No hay nada. No tienen dinero. Allá mucho niño anda descalzo. . . ." (Many people, well, they die of hunger. There is nothing. They have no money. Over there, many children go barefoot.) Yudi Dalia added, "Muchos no van

a la escuela.” (Many do not go to school). Araceli then elaborated, “Y aunque uno quiere trabajar, no hay trabajo.” (Even if one wants to work, there is no work.) Esperanza further explained, “Siembra maíz pero no alcanza. Está muy barato el maíz. Lo venden por la necesidad que tienen, y luego se acaba y allí se quedan.” (One plants corn, but it is not enough. The corn is too cheap. They sell it because they need to, but then it is gone, and they are left [with nothing].)

Also consistent with other accounts of agricultural economies in Mexico, the women reported there are virtually no economic opportunities for women. Women with families and husbands are responsible for preparing meals for their family’s consumption. For women with husbands, this work includes taking meals twice a day to their husbands at work in the fields. At times, all families have to eat is tortillas with nothing else. Some women may make tortillas to sell to the men in the fields who do not have women to do this for them. For women who do not have husbands, such as Esperanza, there were only poorly paid jobs, such as taking in laundry.

Before coming north, Araceli had begun to take courses in English until she was forced to help support her family. The third oldest of seven siblings, she had been in the first semester of a two-year program. Then her father became disabled after suffering two gunshot wounds, one in his eye and one in his leg. He had refused to tell his family why he had been shot for fear that any information he divulged might jeopardize his family’s safety. Because he was unable to work, Araceli took on the responsibility of coming north in search of employment. She was on her way to Florida to join other relatives when she was apprehended. She said women have increasingly left their communities to search for work in the United States for the same reason. Now, they suffer here, she said, as well as over there, “No hay trabajo allá . . . y ahora estamos sufriendo aquí.” (There is no work there, so now we suffer here.) At the time of the interview, the women were in the process of calling family members to borrow money to pay for their return home. Although Esperanza and Yudi Dalia no longer wanted to attempt the crossing, they agreed to wait a few days to see if Araceli’s mother would find her way to the shelter.

Thus, the separation of these women, previously united through family ties and mutual suffering, seemed inevitable. As Araceli’s case illustrates, the intersection is full of anxiety as family members become separated, temporarily suspended in time as they relocate each other and decide what their next step will be. Similar to Azucena’s case, their stay in the

intersection was prolonged due to family separation upon repatriation. On the other hand, Araceli, Yudi Dalia, and Esperanza might also be considered representative of a growing number of women without male partners who have been incorporated into a culture of northbound migration, once considered a primarily male rite of passage (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994: 191).

### THE INTERSECTION AS SPACE OF CONVERGENCE OF OPPOSITIONAL FORCES

The conceptual intersection helps map out how an apparent contradiction, family separation and family reunification, is no contradiction for migrants who find themselves simultaneously in both states. As the distinction is blurred, the power it holds over the decision to migrate is weakened. The vacillating and changing positionalities of women within this hybridized sphere of social interaction are both indicative of and a means of greater independence from the strictures of conventional family forms (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Thus, increased international interactions within families not only facilitates the migration of women but also aids in the transmission of ideas and discourses that call into question traditional ideas of gendered practices and transform them (O'Leary, González, and Valdez Gardea 2008). In effort to move beyond the extensive research already done in this area, I submit that in contributing to emergent cultural practices that facilitate migrant mobility, women migrants also actively challenge the culture of border security. Focusing on emergent cultural practices in this way moves us from looking at migration as a mechanical response to macrostructural processes to an examination of how subjects impact the macrostructure.

We begin by examining the idea of enclosure (Cunningham and Heyman 2004): how a culture of security dictates U.S. border enforcement measures and how this culture counters mobility processes, one of which is migration. Although enclosure and mobility appear to be opposite forces, the processes that each embodies are complimentary when examined under the lens of global economic restructuring. The border enforcement system along the U.S.–Mexican border complements a global restructuring process by helping select for—through family separation—individual workers who can be mobilized or discharged quickly in response to market trends. The steady increase in the num-

ber of migrants that cross international boundaries in search for work is best understood within this context. The intersection thus allows us to view all migrants as simultaneously situated within the flow of these two macrostructural and seemingly oppositional forces, enforcement and global restructuring. However, such macrostructural schemes ignore the role of micro-level relations key to the reproduction and maintenance of labor power. Household reproductive (childbirth and child care, shopping, cooking, and housework), maintenance (material, ideological, or symbolic), and distribution processes that make a labor force possible are thus rendered invisible (Sadasivam 1997). In this regard the intersection is particularly useful because it helps more accurately reveal the effects of macro-level schemes on micro-level relations. At the intersection, the power sources that produce family separation are circumvented by social mechanisms—the very ones through which labor power is reproduced. In a process that then comes full circle, transnational family forms—which facilitate migration by providing members valuable information, loans, and contacts—counter efforts to enforce national boundaries, which in turn increase the probability that migrant family members will become separated.

The intersection is thus a window into a space where contrasting cultural ideas are made visible as they are reformulated (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). The growing importance of transnational family forms suggests that their relationship to immigration enforcement policies is deeply entrenched, so much so in fact that the intensity of one may provoke matching intensity in the other. By examining the intersection of fundamentally contradictory processes: enclosure (immigration enforcement) and movement (transnational mobility), family reunification and family separation, we consider women migrants as more than mere reflections of the macrostructural economy but rather as instrumental in contesting the relations of power and dominion that impinge on their lives.<+>

## NOTES

1. The Binational Migration Institute at the Mexican American Studies and Research Center (MASRC) at the University of Arizona seeks to comprehensively document and analyze the interaction between migrants and immigration enforcement authorities.

2. Support for the initial pilot study for this research was provided by a Social and Behavioral Science Research Institute (SBSRI) Small Grant at the University

of Arizona. The research subsequently was made possible by a Fulbright Grant awarded for 2006–2007.

3. This strategy involved the intensification of border enforcement known as Operation Hold the Line (1993), Operation Gatekeeper (1994), and Operation Safeguard (1995).

4. Not all migrants who are apprehended are charged with a crime; some are simply “removed” from the United States; “removal” is thus differentiated from “deportation.” Migrants may be apprehended and released several times before being charged with “illegal reentry after removal.” Migrants found guilty of this charge serve a jail sentence, after which they are deported. The vast majority of the detainees in Arizona, roughly 75–90 percent, are serving sentences for illegal reentry after removal.

5. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2005, Data on Enforcement Actions, Table 36, available at [www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics](http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics) (accessed 3/11/07).

6. This figure is taken from a June 9, 2005, article in the Tucson *Arizona Daily Star*.

7. This figure is consistent with the percentage of female migrants in Latin America and North America (Zlotnik 2003).

8. Albergue Plan Retorno, a governmental organization discontinued in the spring of 2007, sheltered only men, and Albergue Menores Repatriados typically only shelters unaccompanied minors under the age of eighteen, although on occasion, women may also be sheltered there.

9. Robert Chambers might be the scholar most commonly associated with pioneering “rapid rural appraisal” techniques. Beebe (2001) provides a comprehensive history of the adoption of the method in a wide range of disciplines. Although known by various names, RA remains consistent with the early procedures advanced by Chambers and others.

10. This name, like all the other women’s names, are pseudonyms.

11. Guides are individuals who help migrants navigate the desert to their pick-up point. They are often referred to as *polleros*, and also often (although erroneously) as *coyotes*, although the latter are usually the individuals who negotiate the terms of the crossing.

12. Nogales has three gates through which pedestrians can enter or exit Mexico. The Department of Homeland Security buses generally unload repatriated migrants at Garita 3, the Mariposa Port-of-Entry, although on occasion they will unload them at Garita 1, the main port of entry near the Nogales city center.

13. By most standards, this is a discounted price, especially in light of the fact that the traveling party includes a small child who would normally be considered a liability, and accordingly, increase the fee.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramsky, Sasha. 2004. "Incarceration, Inc." *Nation* 279 (3): 22–28.
- Alvarado, Jeanette E. 2004. "The Federal Consequences of Criminal Convictions: Illegal Reentry after Removal." Unpublished manuscript prepared for the State Bar of Arizona. Photocopy.
- Beebe, James. 2001. *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira.
- Carruthers, Ian, and Robert Chambers. 1981. "Rapid Appraisal for Rural Development." *Agricultural Administration* 8: 407–22.
- Castro Luque, Ana Lucía, Jaime Olea Miranda, and Blanca E. Zepeda Bracamonte. 2006. *Cruzando el desierto: construcción de una tipología para el análisis de la migración en Sonora*. Hermosillo: El Colegio de Sonora
- Cerrutti, Marcela, and Douglas S. Massey. 2001. "On the Auspices of Female Migration from Mexico to the United States." *Demography* 38 (2): 187–201.
- Cieslak, David J. 2000. "Border Patrol Agent Accused of Sex Abuse." *Tucson Citizen*, August 22, C-1.
- Cornelius, Wayne A. 2001. "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of U.S. Immigration Control Policy." *Population and Development Review* 27 (4): 661–85.
- Cunningham, Hilary, and Josiah McC. Heyman. 2004. "Introduction: Mobilities and Enclosures at Borders." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 11: 289–302.
- Department of Homeland Security. 2005. "Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2005, Data on Enforcement Actions." Available at [www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics](http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/statistics) (accessed 3/11/07).
- Donato, Katharine M.; Wagner, Brandon; Patterson, Evelyn. 2008. "The Cat and Mouse Game at the Mexico-U.S. Border: Gendered Patterns and Recent Shifts." *International Migration Review*, 42 (2):330-359.
- Donato, Katherine M. 1993. "Current Trends and Patterns of Female Migration: Evidence from Mexico." *International Migration Review* 27 (4): 748–72.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1994. "U.S. Policy and Mexican Migration to the United States, 1942–92." *Social Science Quarterly* 75 (4): 705–30.

- Falcon, Sylvanna. 2001. "Rape as a Weapon of War: Advancing Human Rights for Women at the U.S.–Mexico Border." *Social Justice* 28 (2): 31–51.
- Gupta Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1997. "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era." In *Culture/Power/Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 1–29. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1998. "Transnational Research." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard, 235–56. London: Sage.
- Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 1994. *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*. Los Angeles, Berkeley, and London: University of California Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. "Families on the Frontier: From Braceros in the Fields to Braceras in the Home." In *Latinas/os: Remaking of America*, ed. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco and Mariela M. Páez, 259–74. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.
- Ibarra, María de la Luz. 2003. *The Tender Trap: Mexican Immigrant Women and the Ethics of Elder Care Work*. *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies*, 28(2): 87–112.
- Marchand, Marianne H., and Anne Sisson Runyan. 2000. "Introduction. Feminist Sightings of Global Restructuring: Conceptualizations and Reconceptualization." In *Gender and Global Restructuring: Sightings, Sites, and Resistances*, ed. Marianne H. Marchand and Ann Sisson Runyan, 1–22. London and New York: Routledge.
- Meillassoux, Claude. 1981. *Maidens, Meal and Money*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Monteverde García, Ana María. 2004. "Propuesta de campaña preventiva contra la violencia hacia la mujer inmigrante y operadora de la industria maquiladora en la ciudad de Nogales Sonora." Ph.D. diss., Universidad de las Américas, Escuela de Ciencias Sociales, Departamento de Ciencias de la Comunicación, Cholula, Puebla, Mexico. Available at: [http://catarina.udlap.mx/u\\_dl\\_a/tales/documentos/lco/monteverde\\_g\\_am](http://catarina.udlap.mx/u_dl_a/tales/documentos/lco/monteverde_g_am) (accessed 3/15/07).
- Ngai, Mae M. 2004. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- O'Leary, Anna Ochoa, Norma González, and Gloria Ciria Valdez Gardea. 2008. "Latinas' Practices of Emergence: Between Cultural Narratives and Globalization on the U.S.–Mexico Border." *Journal of Latinos in Education* 7 (3): 206–26.
- O'Leary, Anna Ochoa. 2008. "Close Encounters of the Deadly Kind: Gender, Migration, and Border (In)Security." *Migration Letters* 15 (2): 111–122.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009a. "In the Footsteps of Spirits: Migrant Women's Testimonios in a Time of Heightened Border Enforcement." In *Violence, Security, and Human Rights at the Border*, Kathleen Staudt, Tony Payan, and Z. Anthony Kruszewski (Eds.). Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 91–112.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2009b. "The ABCs of Unauthorized Border Crossing Costs: Assembling, *Bajadores*, and Coyotes." *Migration Letters* 6 (1) 27–36.
- Quinn, Dale, and Brandy McCombs. 2007. "2 of 23 in Truck Killed." *Arizona Daily Star*, March 31, 1
- Ramírez, C., M. García Domínguez, and J. Miguez Morais. 2005. "Crossing Borders: Remittances, Gender and Development: The Case of Women Migrants from Vincent Noble, Dominican Republic." Working Paper, UN-Instraw. Available at [www.un-instraw.org/en/images/stories/remittances/documents/crossing\\_borders.pdf](http://www.un-instraw.org/en/images/stories/remittances/documents/crossing_borders.pdf) (accessed 6/26/07).
- Rubio-Goldsmith, Raquel, M. Melissa McCormick, Daniel Martínez, and Inez Magdalena Duarte. 2006. "The Funnel Effect and Recovered Bodies of Unauthorized Migrants Processed by the Pima County Office of the Medical Examiner, 1990–2005." Immigration Policy Center Brief. Available at [www.aifl.org/ipc/ipc\\_index.asp](http://www.aifl.org/ipc/ipc_index.asp) (accessed 2/18/07).
- Sadasivam, Bharati. 1997. "The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women." *Human Rights Quarterly* 19 (3): 630–65.
- Steller, Tim. 2001. "Border Unit Fights an Enemy Within." *Arizona Daily Star*, June 16, A-1.
- Urquijo-Ruiz, Rita E. 2004. "Police Brutality against an Undocumented Mexican Woman." *Chicana/Latina Studies* 4 (1): 62–84.
- Wilson, Tamara. D. 2009. *Women Migration Networks in Mexico and Beyond*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. Anti-immigrant sentiment and the problem of reproduction/maintenance in Mexican immigration to the United States. *Critique of Anthropology*, 20(2), 191-213.
- Zlotnik, Hania. 2003. "The Global Dimensions of Female Migration." Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C. Available at [www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=109](http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=109) (accessed 7/26/05).
- Zolberg, Aristide R. 2006. *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.