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**Las complejidades del retorno: A Xicana Perspective on the Social
Impacts of U.S. Deportations in Mexico**

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**Las complejidades del retorno: A Xicana Perspective on the Social
Impacts of U.S. Deportations in Mexico**

by

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Thesis

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Dedication

Para todos los y las migrantes cruzando las fronteras, que han cruzado y que seguramente cruzarán, esto es para ti, ambulante, nómada, volador/a, esto es por ti buscador/a de la esperanza¹.

For all migrants crossing borders, those that have crossed them, and those that surely will cross, this is for you, wanderer, nomad, journeyer, these pages because of you, searcher of hope.

"Yo soy un puente tendido/ del mundo gabacho al del mojado,/ lo pasado me estira pa' atras/ y lo presente pa' 'delante..."- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

¹ The names of all individuals whose experiences are related here have been changed out of respect for the trust they placed in me as they told their stories.

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“Yo soy chicana por mis padres inmigrantes, voy rompiendo las barreras soy un fandango sin fronteras!”- Verse from a protest song of the Chicano Movement

Abstract

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The United States Department of Homeland Security reported 354, 982 deportation events in 2010. This number has fallen short, though not by much, of the 400,000 deportations per year “goal” cited by DHS. Though many have begun research on the subsequent repercussions of this well oiled deportation regime, not many have asked questions about the effects south of the border. Those questions are the subject of the pilot research study on which this thesis is based.

This document is the narration of the findings and occurrences while conducting fieldwork in Jalisco, Mexico, the goal of which, was to inform on the social impacts of deportations from the U.S. to Mexico on three levels, the individual, the familial and the institutional. The particularities of this thesis stem from the perspective taken by the author. Finding the author’s very own return to Mexico as an educated Xicana, an important part of the story she would set out to find about deportees , their families, and the reality they face upon experiencing a deportation event, this thesis is heavily

concentrated on the experiences of the author and the narrations of the interviewees. Discovering her own epistemological and methodological postures on social science research while in the field, the author discusses the importance of these shifts to the future of her work and that of social science research. Taking on the pivotal questions on the effects of a social phenomenon , namely deportation, from a sociological perspective was the intention of the author, yet it was those questions and the process of attempting to gain insight on those inquiries that incited questions about the forms of knowledge production, the results and usefulness of social science research as tools for activism and social change and legitimacy of the subaltern voice within the academe. While the author does draw on her own experiences and that of interviewees to discuss the situation lived in Mexico by deportees, the base of much of the analysis also lies in data-driven questions and conclusions.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"We depend on misfortune to build up our force of migratory workers and when the supply is low because there is not enough misfortune at home, we rely on misfortune abroad to replenish the supply." – Former President Harry S. Truman, 1951

Not much has changed since these words were stated in 1951, as a country dependant on the labor of migrants, the United States receives hundreds of thousands of migrant laborers each year, many of which are, by virtue of the limitations of the current immigration system, undocumented. Different from the context of 1951, is the fact that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in accordance with the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) and many laws since, is deporting hundreds of thousands of migrants yearly and the numbers have not slowed. Because Mexico and Central America are the sending regions with the highest numbers of emigrants, the deportations too are the highest for Mexicans and Central Americans.

The increasingly high number of deportations from the United States², has prompted several responses in almost all social spaces: in the media, in legislature, in public discourse, as well as within the academe. For several reasons, some of which have little or no scientific support, this topic of forced migration is a highly debated issue. Because there are severe social repercussions that stem from the institutionalized and structurally violent form of migration that is deportation, there is an imperative to study the impacts on the lives of the thousands of migrants and their families as well as the

² According to numbers reported by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, in 2009, 393,289 "removals" took place, which if compared to the number reported in 1995 (50,924), prior to IIRAIRA, a dramatic increase is evident (DHS 2010, table 38).

states receiving them. Research in this vain can in turn be used to inform policy regarding this important issue as well as provide some of the scientific data that is missing within the general public discourse as well as academic discussions. One of the areas regarding migration that is most lacking in research attention is that of the impacts on the other side of the border or in the societies receiving the deportees. In the case of Mexico, where repatriations by DHS reached 354,982 making up over 90% of total removals in 2010 alone³, this research is of particular importance. It is imperative that we investigate the needs of this already large population that under the Obama Administration has not ceased to grow. This growth has not only increased vulnerability at the border and that of an already marginalized population, but has also presented a situation of unprecedented circumstances that remain unknown to those in positions of power. It is this situation that this study looks to investigate and analyze in order to identify the gaps in information and attempt to fill them, while providing a study and form of analysis that is as unique to the academe as it is to its author.

As an initiative funded by the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, a collaborative research team including researchers from various institutions has been initiated to develop a pilot study on the issue of deportations. Focusing on the social issues that arise as consequence to mass numbers of deportations from the United States, the study aims to provide the preliminary data required for analysis and support for a larger study grant proposal. As an associated researcher, I assisted in the gathering and analysis of data as well as recording deportees' experiences. The fieldwork and analysis

³ DHS Yearbook of Statistics 2010, Table 37

is compiled into this thesis in the hopes of contributing to the available knowledge on the subject. The fieldwork experience ignited a learning process that was only the beginning of my personal analysis of social science research that would take me to new places academically, intellectually, and overall, emotionally. This thesis is only one-half step in the direction I wish to go with the process that this work has incited in me as a researcher and individual.

The purpose of this introduction is to lay out the main research questions and concerns, discuss the research instrument, provide an outline of the organization of the project, briefly describe the research site, acknowledge the contributors to the collaboration as well as the ways in which they participated and discuss my methods in the field and my analysis. As a newcomer to large collaborative research initiatives, the project discussed in this thesis is my first step into many new processes as well as a new form of analysis and thus, it is in many ways as much about myself as it is about the subject. In addition to providing insight to the project, included in this thesis are other thoughts and concerns that are particular of my own interests in regards to the project, but that out of limitation of the time and budget of this pilot could not be investigated first-hand. I have also included my personal experience of my own return to Mexico and how that has changed me as a researcher and the learning process my fieldwork spurred.

COLLABORATORS

First and foremost, I'd like to thank all of the collaborators including my thesis advisor Nestor Rodriguez for inviting me to be a part of the larger project. The additional collaborators were very helpful in preparing me for this experience as well. The

collaborators thus far are Dr. Ceclia Menjivar of Arizona State University, Rodolfo Casillas of FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales) México, and Dr. Bryan Roberts and Dr. Nestor Rodriguez of the Department of Sociology UT Austin, Christine Wheatley, Allison Ramirez and myself students at the University of Texas at Austin. Additionally, Mexican researcher Daniela Jimenez of CIESAS Occidente (Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social) joined me as my counterpart and indispensable collaborator and friend in the field. The larger project includes three research sites (Mexico, El Salvador and Honduras), but because my fieldwork site and personal interest is in Mexico, I will only discuss findings and analysis as related to Mexico. Because of the multi-level collaboration in this project there is opportunity for many sources of information and resources. By being a member of the larger project, all information collected in the field, any data analysis, as well as any information that can be useful to any part of the project is shared with all collaborators via a collective database. The collaborative nature of this project has allowed me to interact with peers and experienced academics in the field of migration studies. This project has enriched my own development as a scholar and most importantly, it has indelibly changed me as a researcher and individual.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

“All movements are accomplished in six stages, and the seventh brings return.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

The principal issues with which the project is concerned lie in the questions of the social consequences of deportations. This includes the question of the ability of receiving states to meet the needs of the deportees, the ability of deportees to reintegrate socially and economically into their current location and the effect of the deportee's return on the family unit and on the community. We are also interested in how the return of mass numbers of people is sustained (or not) within already fragile economies and in a context of meager resources for social institutions (churches, non-profits, government welfare programs, etc.). Finally, we are also concerned with the patterns found among cases of deportation.

Because there is limited information about Honduran migrants and even less about deportees, Honduras too has been selected as a research site. El Salvador, because like Mexico sends a high number of migrants and an even higher proportion of its population, is also included in the study given that it has the second highest number of deportations. Additionally, concerns over organized crime being supported by the constant inflow of deported gang members in El Salvador, have prompted several research studies on the subject, but the question regarding to what extent this may be true for Mexico and/or Honduras is yet to be answered. In light of the current situation of exacerbated power among Mexican drug cartels, we wondered if recruitment is happening among the jobless and sometimes homeless deportees.

In addition to the concerns that have been stated for the project in general, I have my own set of questions that I hope to inform through my thesis. As a result of stricter border enforcement, cyclical migration between Mexico and the U.S. has been made

much more difficult and dangerous (Cornelius 73). This has prompted migrants to stay in the U.S. for longer periods of time or for men to bring their families from Mexico (Cornelius 76, 80). This in turn results in making the issue of deportations much more serious for families since, once deported, a family member may be bared temporarily (5+ years) or permanently, causing indefinite family separation. In some cases, the deportee has never lived in Mexico and is not familiar with the culture or the language, causing serious problems with adaption and integration. In addition, this creates saturation at the border since many have no social capital to help them move away from the border area. Along with the increasing numbers of women and children migrating is the occurrence of women being deported and of U.S. citizen children. This presents another set of issues in the detention and removal processes set out by the Department of Homeland Security. For this reason, I am concerned with the treatment of women and children in the detention and deportation process as well as their reintegration or integration into Mexican society upon their deportation.

Currently, we do not know of any social services that are available to target women and children as most shelters and homes are capacitated to serve mainly men, and to a limited degree women and children. I am very concerned with the repercussions that deportation events can have on the individual as well as the family and the larger social fabric of Mexican society. For this reason, my thesis will take on a narrative nature at many points in order to relegate the experiences of deportees and their families and the reactions of social institutions to my questions and to the impact that deportations and the increasing number of these events has had on all levels of society. I will also be

positioning myself in this work through discussion and analysis of my own experiences in Mexico and discussing my role as researcher and responsible citizen as well as how this relates to my identity as a Xicana also returning to Mexico.

In addition to the questions regarding the social impact of deportation on the various levels aforementioned and social resources for reintegration into Mexican society, there is a serious concern with the state of human rights of deportees and their families. Many times the case has been made for the right to human dignity as a human right and within this definition of dignity is the right to a family and the right to live free from fear of persecution from unjust causes. The deportation and subsequent separation of families often with no hope of reunification is in direct violation of this right, especially when the process is not a dignified one or one that is not executed humanely. Reports of violence against detainees for deportation have come out of several redadas or workplace raids, as well as from detention centers. Especially vulnerable are women, children and queers. I hypothesize that a person's ability to integrate or reintegrate themselves into society will not only be dependent on their networks in the receiving country and availability of work, etc., but also on their detention experience prior to deportation as well as the experience of the deportation process. In essence, their level of trauma and mental health state will subject them to a more difficult (or not) adaption to deportation. The human rights of deportees are violated at many stages and psychological impacts that the deportation process can have serious ramifications. I will discuss some of the ways in which human rights treaties and bi-national agreements on the dignified and safe repatriation of Mexican citizens have been violated and the gaps

that still desperately need to be filled in regards to the needs of the deportee population. Because the current system fails to evolve with the changing face of deportees and the changing geopolitical and economic situation in both countries as well as the increasingly precarious security issues in Mexico, information such as that discussed in this document is necessary to make the case for new proposals in immigration policy and bi-national relations with Mexico.

Another important aspect of the research I believe is the shifting of gender roles or family dynamics upon the return of a deportee. How this will affect women and children when the “head” of the household has returned after several years? How will the deportee’s return affect the gender roles that were assumed while the migrant was gone (in the case that either a man or a woman has left and returned by deportation)? Additionally, how will children react to a family member returning? How does family separation affect families with a deported member? All of these questions of gender and human rights are an underlying driving force that motivates my involvement in research related to migration and specifically the larger collaborative project. I am interested in the elements of structural violence that impede individual and family stability economically, socially, emotionally or psychologically and the steps that can be taken in order to better the situation of migrants and specifically of deportees. The question that because of time and resource limitations I will not be addressing, but is not any less eminent, is with regard to the issue of the mental and emotional health of deportees. What are the mental health conditions of deportees and how does this affect their ability to reintegrate into society after detention and deportation? I feel it is our (researchers) responsibility to

investigate this in order to denounce it against the state and enforce change. This question is very important also in terms of human rights and the rights of women and children.

ORGANIZATION OF PROJECT

Throughout the course of the summer (2011), the research team, in their respective sites, gathered research data which was then pooled together to facilitate a comparison and determine the differences in the cases as well as inform the research questions concerned with the impacts in each country. With various researchers at work, the pilot project established good groundwork upon which to build a larger project that will address the aforementioned questions and issues at a much larger scale. I was personally in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and thus my thesis will discuss the fieldwork performed in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara. After the summer experience, I decided that for my own purposes of this thesis and out of further interest in the project, that I would return to spend the entire fall semester continuing the fieldwork started in the summer. It was this longer stay that ignited the process of analysis that I will later describe in this document. Since my stay in Guadalajara, I have not broken ties with those I have met and intend on continuing with this subject at the doctoral level.

RESEARCH SITE

The larger metropolitan area of the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco was chosen as the general research site. This was on the basis of accessibility to research collaborators and the historical precedent of the state of Jalisco as a traditional sending state. The specific areas in which my research collaborator, Daniela Jiménez, and I decided to take our study to were chosen on the basis of INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía), the

Mexican census data produced for 2010. We looked at the areas with highest levels of economic instability and recorded migration rates. We came to the conclusion that the areas we would first search for deportees would be Mesa Colorada and the nearby colonia of San Esteban. For interviews with non-deportee interviewees we went to the organizations in contact with migrants and with institutions including government agencies that could possibly provide information about the deportee population and these were throughout the city.

The city of Guadalajara is a major urban epicenter of commerce and is currently inhabited by approximately 4.5 million people according to INEGI census results for 2010. Because of Guadalajara's importance to the Mexican economy and its position within the main western train routes, it has historically seen large numbers of internal migrants, conversely as was previously stated, Jalisco is one of the states known as a traditional sending state and thus many migrants have transited through the city and many others migrated out from the outskirts where there are high levels of marginalization and economic instability.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT⁴

The fieldwork consisted of 25 interviews total. I along with my fellow collaborator, Daniela Jiménez, conducted 8 interviews with deportees, 5 interviews with family members of deportees and 12 members of social institutions (health centers, government and civil organizations, etc.). We fell below our target with the families of deportees because many had lost touch with family, their family was in the US or they no

⁴ To view the full research instrument see appendix A for Spanish and appendix B for English

longer had social ties in Mexico. The research instrument used is a general interview guide for the interviewers to follow and draw upon for the interviews which were to be conducted in as a conversational mode as possible. The instrument begins with general demographic information that will be used to classify respondents. Information requested includes sex, age, number of children and level of education among other basic information. The proceeding questions include inquiries about how the deportee feels upon returning and how they have perceived their welcome and reintegration, in addition to questions about employment and family dynamics. For the family members the questions are also similar, but focus on the family dynamics post-deportee return. Finally, the questions for the members of social institutions helped inform us on how institutions have been affected or have seen a strain in resources as a result of heightened numbers of deportees. Such questions include, inquiry into the changes they have seen within their own position (as priest, municipal governor, director of resource center or health clinic, etc.). After conducting interviews, information was aggregated for analysis to determine patterns and trends in the information gathered and use it to further the process of knowledge production in this research area.

METHODS

Our first hypothesis was that in order to find deportees we would have to look for the civil organizations that are in contact with migrants and would in theory, have contact with deportees. To our dismay finding deportees was not as direct as they were father under the radar in this urban megalopolis than we expected to find in a large city with many resources. After visiting with the very few civil organizations that had contact with

migrants (FM4, Aremos, Intercambio Sin Fronteras) and with the member of one organization in contact with internal Mexican migrants, EAMI (Equipo Apoyo a Migrantes Indigenas), we found that these are the very few organizations in contact with migrants in general and that many don't have any contact or even knowledge of the current situation with regard to deportees as was the case of Intercambio Sin Fronteras. This created a series of difficulties in finding deportees, but provided insight into what the current climate of attention to the migrant population.

FM4 was the only organization that came in contact with deportees daily, although because it is an organization that provides food, clothing and temporary shelter for migrants, the deportees they see are in transit and thus our interviews with deportee migrants were not able to extend to family members or to questions that pertained to longer term adaptation to life in Mexico. Aremos is an organization that is involved with the waning Bracero population and their fight for unpaid wages and thus, was not the site of interviews with recent deportees. In sum, these organizations were not helpful in determining the whereabouts or specific condition of the recent deportee population, yet our interviews with them did help paint the larger picture of the migrant population and history of Guadalajara while allowing us to see just how aware or unaware civil organizations were of the growing deportee population and of the needs of this population.

After looking for organizations that worked with migrants in hopes that these organizations would be able to direct us to those who might be willing and met the general profile we were looking for (deportee of no more than five years more or less and

of Mexican origin), we went to INEGI records to search for colonias that had characteristics that we considered to be possible indicators of high migration levels and thus in theory a higher population of deportees, making it easier to find interviews with deportees and their families. After searching for poverty indexes, levels of population considered migrant under INEGI, areas with highest levels of marginalization and economic instability and several other factors we determined that we would look to find deportees in Mesa Colorada, a barrio in the Guadalajara metropolitan area that used to be part of the colonias that were considered to be on periphery of the city, but now have been engulfed by the growth of this megalopolis. This area continues to be on the periphery, not geographically, but because of marginalization from social services, basic sanitary services as well as schools, health centers and experience of high levels of crime and domestic violence.

In order to enter this community safely we were able to locate a key collaborator, resident of Mesa Colorada, that would be able to introduce us to the community and accompany us to meeting possible interviewees. Without this woman's help we would not have been able to speak to as many people as we did. Because of safety measures we had to take, we did not enter the community before light and did not stay after dark. This created two issues. The first being that many of those who could be candidates for the interview left for work before light and did not return until after dark. The second is that in the middle of the day we would lose several hours because of the Mexican lunch time where everything shuts down and the streets of the community are desolate. Our collaborator was also not able to always accompany us and thus, leaving us to have to

remember as much as possible about how to get around the community. Needless to say we did get a bit norteadas a few times, causing us to lose time in the field. After a few days walking through the community asking around we came upon some people that were very willing to speak to us and share their story, while others simply closed the door on us; others said that there were no deportees in their household. We met the latter response in two cases even though two or more of the neighbors assured us, that indeed that pair of brothers had been deported earlier that summer and that So and So's son had been returned last year. With the mixed response many questions arose for me. This is so in many cases and specifically one stands out. After knocking on another of the many doors we had knocked on that day we were received by a retiree aged woman who barely opened the door to hear our reason for knocking. Her short stature and my two feet above her allowed me to see that behind her was a semi-new vehicle with U.S. plates. The woman assured us that there were no deportees and furthermore, that there was no one that had even travelled to the U.S. Our first reason for deciding to knock on the door is that we had decided that another possible way of finding migrants and therefore possibly deportees is to knock on doors that had vehicles with U.S. plates parked outside of them. This was a decision we made in the field after noticing the surprising number of U.S. plates on cars in that colonia. Whether out of fear or simply resentment towards anyone with affiliation to the U.S. or maybe even because she had no time to talk to us, we do not know her reasons for shutting the door on us almost mid-sentence after having only cracked the door open to peek through instead of opening it even after we had identified ourselves. It was this and several other encounters both in working in the field and in

living in Guadalajara that made me very self-conscious of my identity and how fellow Mexicans may see me. Skepticism and a strong degree of judgment were what I felt while working in the field. I was never sure if it was my Spanish, my pocha identity or my UT ID (and hence direct affiliation to a U.S. institution of some authority). Yet, it was in the more intimate interviews, those conducted with deportees themselves, that were the most comfortable, two of these were not surprisingly with women. The interviews where I did not feel ostracized or rejected in any way by fellow Mexicans were with those that I was able to connect to and share a migrant identity. For many, there was either a refusal to identify with that identity or they did not see me as having claim to that identity or even to a *real* Mexican identity. When we moved on to find institutions such as health clinics, churches and government agencies, the experiences were quite different.

After many visits to Mesa Colorada and getting to know the area, we searched for the local priest of the local church several times, to no avail. We asked around and it seemed as if no one knew where he was. This seemed odd, but after looking for him several times on our visits to Mesa Colorada we decided to try finding other nearby institutions and thus, went to the local health clinic⁵. The health clinic visit was quite revealing of the situation that migrants and specifically, deportees might face in attempting to gain medical attention. According to the nurse we spoke to, the only way they know if the person looking to receive services is a migrant is if they do not have a card that indicates their current job and employer. Other than that, usually if the person is

⁵ We did the same in San Esteban, but the trips to the church and the clinic were unsuccessful in finding anyone to speak to.

a migrant or the family is a migrant they will still have the health care card to the Seguro Popular that is valid at any government health care clinic, therefore if they are migrants it is not known unless they do not already have this card or a card with proof of employment. The problem that we foresee deportees having with this system is that you have to have some kind of documentation in order to receive attention at the government system clinics and many deportees do not have any kind of documentation, even identifying documentation. Getting this and other types of identification documents can sometimes be a difficult, time consuming and onerous process, especially for someone not familiar with the system or the documentation needed to receive services. If as in the case of deportees you are not a registered worker you don't have access to the government health clinics, known as IMSS. If you are unemployed or have informal work then, you only have access to the Seguro Popular, but the resources are scarce and the attention is quite limited. The attention is more basic than aspirin and bandages, is how it was described to me. This is the same level of health care that is available to children if they are properly registered in school, but as we later learned at the DIF Jalisco⁶ and DIF niños⁷ that not having proper documentation can be a very heavy burden sometimes even impossible task for deported families or children of deportees.

After speaking with a few employees at the DIF Jalisco we came to the very stark conclusion that children not only face discrimination on basis of language and culture, but they are also often times set back in school because they are not allowed to enter

⁶ The state level agency that is part of the Sistema Nacional del Desarrollo Integral de la Familia/National System for Holistic Family Development

⁷ Same as the aforementioned, but the social services offered are directed are specifically for children

school for months or even longer as a result of being deportees or children of deportees. This was one of the most impacting findings that we came upon, given that Mexico offers education at the primary through high school level (and even at the college and graduate level) at no cost with relatively little requirements for registration (at the obligatory levels K-12). Furthermore, if the child or children have at least one Mexican parent the child is under the constitution defined as a Mexican citizen and therefore privy to the benefits of said citizenship, including education. Yet, the problem is that this is a de facto citizenship and in order to prove legal citizenship children have to be registered to the state and to do this they have to have a birth certificate. To register them in school, they need to be registered to the state and a document stating their grade level notarized is necessary. When deported or being deported, sometimes these documents are unattainable, get lost, are stolen or simply never cross the deported parent's mind. When I proceeded to ask to speak someone on the subject of what services were offered to the migrant and deportee population, I was directed to two different personnel. The first, the director of one of the family development programs at the state DIF, gave me the roundabout to my questions and gave me a lot of *other* information about what her branch of the agency does. Unfortunately, it was not very useful for our purposes.

It did not surprise me that a government bureaucrat would give me the roundabout, and it definitely wasn't the last time it would happen. It was an interesting experience though, the feeling of having to change the way I was relating to people because of the place, space, and person I was talking to. At times it felt so odd that with just showing my UT ID I was let right in to speak with directors and project managers. It

felt odd because I am sure that if I went in as an ordinary citizen, I would not have been given the time. Yet, this is not the way things are supposed to be. People should be able to access information easily, that is not the case for the ordinary citizen as I observed during the various visits to the state DIF. Hours of waiting to see a social worker, cases deferred, attention is less than agreeable in some cases. It was an odd position to be in being treated well while the citizens, who have a right to the representatives' time are not given it. This is not to say that I was never left waiting hours, having to return in some cases day after day to reach someone or having to insist several times before being able to see a particular person as in the case of the director of the INM (Instituto Nacional de Migración) or as in the case of one of my visits to the DIF where I was confused for another type of investigadora. In the latter case, I was sent to three different persons and one of them thought I was a government auditor checking in on the agency. That was an unparalleled experience, asking an employee questions for the sake of my research that seemingly had nothing to do directly with her person and then wondering why the woman's lip quivered as she held her hands nervously while not answering my questions. It was not until it was clarified why I was there, that she sent me to the right person. It seems she was to be a filter between the social workers and the higher-ups, yet she didn't quite understand why I was there and apparently neither did her superiors. According to this woman, she was not told clearly why I was there and thus, came the confusion and the thought that I was some auditor of sorts.

The experience at the INM was quite different, I had to insist to speak with the director in hopes of salvaging the two hours it took me to get there having gotten lost on

the bus and arriving at the lunch hour therefore, having to wait another two hours before the administrative offices would open again. Again it was my UT ID that got me in the door, but the director as any good bureaucrat, simply said he could not give any information, but would be glad to send a letter to Mexico City about my concerns. I then asked a few questions in a slightly different manner, but I fumbled my Spanish in an attempt to sound more on “his” level, someone worth his time. In other words, I tried to sell him the pitch and he didn’t buy it, proceeding to thank me for my visit and sent me on my way. Just as I was feeling like a respected person for my “researcher capabilities” and cultural capital, I was let down by bureaucratic politics and my pocha Spanish. The experiences at the interviews with the government agencies were usually less than smooth and often involved quite a bit of identity negotiating on my part, which is part of the reason I began to question the validity of my claim to mexicanidad and the way that I was seen by every person I spoke to. I did not want to be perceived as a selfish US-centric researcher Mexican sell-out to deportees and their community members and did not want to be perceived as less than Mexican and less than capable to higher authorities. This is because it would make my work that much more difficult, but also because I too was going through a process of returning to Mexico and feeling rejected and in some cases lied to and taken advantage of by my own gente was emotionally challenging.

In the case of our interview with the director of the state INM’s Programa Paisano, it was hard to hear the negative response towards deportees. This person went so far as to say that as long as deportees continue to be sent to Mexico, the violence in Mexico would continue to rise. This would indicate a more than substantial lack of

understanding of the country's larger issues with immigration and organized crime as well as a deeply racialized construction of illegality, both of which are telling of the long standing prejudices of the Mexican middle-class towards migrants and particularly undocumented migrants. If one is to travel to the U.S. by Aeromexico, it is evidence of extreme privilege and thus any other (aka, unauthorized) form of travel to the U.S. is seen as "prole" doings, not for the well-to-do. This may be another reason for which I was not necessarily received well by the few well-to-do professionals I met, I was studying a subject that to them was useless and unnecessary. After all, who does that? Who spends time with and studies the country's proletariat?

In sum, both civil organizations and government institutions helped us come to the conclusion that the deportee population remains largely invisible or invisible-ized, rather to the general public as well as to state and national institutions. While deportees are directed upon deportation to their state DIF⁸ for basic things such as help finding employment and food back assistance, there is no attention or resources specifically for deportees. Migrant status information is currently not data that is currently collected on in-take forms when individuals or families go to the DIF for assistance. This means that the only available help is limited at best. Only recently has there been more attention on the issue and in November of 2011, while I was still in Guadalajara a news article in *El Economista* circulated stating that a state senator from Oaxaca, Adolfo Toledo proposed a deportee assistance program that would be administered through the state DIFs. According to the article, Toledo proposed "una iniciativa para que se otorguen incentivos

⁸ Information shared by director of Programa Paisano, INM

económicos a los DIF de los estados donde se promueva la asistencia social para los menores que son repatriados de Estados Unidos” (El Economista 2011). This would be the first social service program that would specifically attend to deportees. Unfortunately, this is only a proposal and has not been moved forward. There is also the possibility that the funds would get tied up in bureaucracies and end up in the pockets of funcionarios del gobierno. The program would allow funds for state DIFs like that of Jalisco to assist deported minors, but the proposal stops there.

FORM OF ANALYSIS AND EXECUTION OF RESEARCH

The long standing debate on the validity and rigor of qualitative studies against quantitative studies was a debate that I was privy to quickly after initiating my graduate studies. As a part of the many heated discussions in my introductory seminar, the debate stood out as one of the most useless. There is no questioning the importance of both qualitative and quantitative studies; it is the weight and validity, prestige and rigor that is either deemed inherent in quantitative studies and questioned in qualitative studies. This is how I was introduced to qualitative methods at the graduate level. This is when I decided that the debate was much larger than the qualitative versus quantitative, it was the humanizing versus the coldly scientific.

Traditional sociological studies are heavy in statistical analysis and hence are valued for their empirical data. In general, I found, that it is the method of gathering this data and subsequently analyzing it that is dehumanizing. The key point here is that I decided to try to speak to the migrant not to the “informant” or the “interviewee.” I feel there is a lot of value in getting close to the person not as your research subject, but as the

person not from the perspective of researcher. To do this, I had to draw not just from Sociology and Anthropology, but also from Literature, knowledge production of the Other as well as from my own subalternity and place of annunciation as a valid source of scholarly production and form of knowledge. The downfall of academics, I feel is that because disciplines tend to be exclusive of one another, many scholars championing the purity of the sciences or of the disciplines, that we do not get the richness of the full picture. This is why throughout this thesis, I use quotes by people I met, quotes from literature, quotes from theoretical and scientific sources and in sum, a mixture of sources. This work in many ways represents me. I am a mixture, a blend with no easily definable origin or identity. In her work *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, states, “Insularity [of disciplines] protects a discipline from the ‘outside’, enabling communities of scholar to distance themselves from others and, in the more extreme forms, to absolve themselves of responsibility for what occurs in other branches of their discipline, in the academy and the world” (67). This one of the reasons why I decided I had to write a narrative style analysis for a traditionally sociological subject of research.

Rosaldo Renato advocates for the use of narrative analysis outside of areas in which it has usually been restricted to (case histories and within the discipline of History) stating that it is useful and enriching because of its “affinities with the ‘historical understanding’ and with questions of ‘human agency’” (Renato 127). He continues, “The former refers to the interaction of ideas, events, and institutions as they change through time. The latter designates the study of the feelings and intentions of social actors” (Renato 127). It is the latter that I am particularly interested in. He goes on to discuss the

oscillating “double vision” that is at issue with narrative analysis, the idea that neither the view point of the researcher nor the viewpoint of the “subject of study” are complete on their own. What I do in my own narrative analysis hopes to accomplish what Renato states as the product of the oscillating “double vision’ between my own perspective and that of those I interviewed that is not an “omniscience nor a unified master narrative but complex understandings of ever-changing, multifaceted social realities” (128).

Chapter 2: The Making of a Researcher- Deportation and the Heart

“Because I, a mestiza, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time, alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro, me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio. Estoy norteadada por todas las voces que me hablan simultaneamente.”- Gloria Anzaldua⁹

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Step 1: Decolonization, Starting with the Xicana Self

My time living in Mexico during the course of my investigaciones para mi tesis, was one that I often felt was not being lived by me. I felt it lived through the stories and the people I met. This was quite tiring because on any given day I could have been Mauricio, who worked as a carpenter; Miguel, a guatemalteco transiting north; or Paola a government bureaucrat. When speaking to these people I wondered what they thought I was. I felt at odds with myself having to present my credencial or UT ID stating I was a “legitimate” researcher and not la migra or a government auditor. I felt that I was always just wanting to be “one of them” (in the case of the migrants) and I found myself bringing up my own family history of migration and our own struggles. This might not have been “correct” academic interviewing as the rule of thumb is usually to let your research subject do the talking while you scribble away on your note pad intently listening, caring more about patterns and “interesting” stories than the process the person is going through by sharing such delicate details of their life. But that’s the thing, I didn’t want to follow the traditional rules and I did not see those I spoke to as “my research subjects” nor did I want to see myself as the “RESEARCHER” and wanted even less for them to see me as a “RESEARCHER.” This was quite a task because from the very instant I began my

⁹ From 3rd Ed. *Borderlands/La Frontera*, pg. 99

relationship with every single person it was on the pretext of “Hello, my name is Roxana Rojas and I am a researcher from the University of Texas at Austin (promptly show ID) and I am conducting an investigation on migration, do you mind if I ask you a few questions?” And right there I was instantly being placed in a social category, with a particular level of privilege and a particular world-view (U.S.-centric, traditional anthropological and exploitative position). I knew this by the way certain people then spoke to me. One migrant in particular completely avoided speaking Spanish with me and spoke almost entirely in English stating the education he had attained in the U.S. and the fact that he did not belong in Mexico. Yet, this is after he was violently told by U.S. government agencies- ICE and Border Patrol- that he did not belong in the U.S. Another migrant I spoke to also often made references to his jobs at Hewlett Packard and in the technology industry in the U.S., also often speaking in English. In other cases I was allowed to get interviews with government bureaucrats that I am certain that if it weren’t for my UT ID, light skin and *almost* perfect Spanish, I would not been given even the two minutes of introduction.

Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, robust writer on decolonial processes, states that it is “lo no dicho,” “what is not said” that within colonial structures (and by extension, I add any hierarchical situation because I believe that colonialism is the root of today’s contemporary inequalities) what is not said becomes a violent negation of reality. She states that colonialism is exacerbated in “este universo de significados y nociones no dichas, de creencias en la jerarquía racial y en la desigualdad inherente de los seres humanos” and that these structures, “van incubándose en el sentido común” and often

manifest themselves violently “estallan[dose] de vez en cuando de modo catártico e irracional” (Cusicanqui 20). Cusicanqui here is arguing that there is importance in what is *not* said; she is stating this in her claim for visual forms of communication in images, but I am extending this same argument for what I am attempting to do, which is to elevate the emotive and the tension, discomfort, tone of voice and the non-verbal communication that occurs in a conversation to the same level of importance as the words that are being said because it is in that space, de “lo no dicho” that an entire world lies. There is a world of judgment, of mystery, of things left unsaid, but understood. For this, I can provide an example.

“To live in the Borderlands means you/ are neither hispana india negra Espanola ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed/caught in the crossfire between camps/ while carrying all five races on your back/not knowing which side to turn to, run from;”¹⁰

I was treated like an “americana” a “gringa.” “Que se chingue,” was what I could hear them subconsciously (or maybe consciously) saying.

When I found myself needing to change my housing situation a few weeks into my second stay in Guadalajara, by a friend of a contact, I was told of a possible living situation in la Colonia Americana. This is the hipster area with the artists and the language schools and the cafes and trendy yogurt shops only a walk from the U.S. Consulate. Clearly, I was being filtered and they weren’t going to suggest I live in the barrios (for security purposes?) So in this first instant, the friend of a friend suggested this

¹⁰ The use of borderlands here does not signify a physical borderland (only) it includes the transnational space that is created when relationships are made that transcend national political borders. For more conceptualization of the borderlands see Gloria Anzaldúa- *Borderlands/La Frontera*. This excerpt was taken from “To live in the Borderlands means you” on page 216 of *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

area because of the “amenities” that they likely assumed I (as a gringa) would like. I was told it was a good place for me since it is the area where a lot of foreign particularly U.S. students reside when studying in Guadalajara. I mostly moved because of the better public transportation and the desperate need to move out of the posh neighborhood I unintentionally landed in. I felt terribly far from those I wanted to talk to and knew that living there wasn’t going to get me any closer. My living experience in both the first and the second housing situation was mitigated by my consumer power that was perceived by the housemates I ended up living with. Coming from the U.S. and from a well known, prestigious program in an institution of higher education made them assume I also brought with me money and lots of it. I was often asked or forced to pay for things that in any egalitarian situation, I had no place paying for. For example, my housemate in the first living situation went on vacation and left knowing there was no more gas for the stove and the water heater. I found myself having to pay to have the gas tank filled and was not repaid even though the rent I paid included all utility costs. I later found out the cost of the monthly rent for the apartment and realized that I was paying the rent entirely, less approximately 1,000 pesos or about 80 dollars. The second living situation proved the same treatment; I found a rent receipt in the living room and I quickly noticed I was paying more than three fourths of the rent, while occupying only a small room (with furniture I paid for). In conversation with a friend totally confused as to why I would be treated this way I asked, “Hadn’t I been forthcoming in the most honest of ways? Wasn’t I open to friendships and lasting connections with fellow Mexican women? Why was I being treated so dishonestly?” He quickly responded, “te trataron como gringa, tal cual.

You see, here there is a lot of animosity towards the gringo, you are understood to come with money so here, Mexicans try to cash in on the historical debt. It's like an implicit understanding." Whether this was actually out of wanting to cash in on a historical debt or just plain bad luck with ending up with the wrong people, there was clearly a treatment that was particularly directed at me given the fact that I was coming from the U.S. and particularly from a highly respected university.

In the narrative provided, I was clearly subjected to a prejudice de "lo no dicho." I was denied a Mexican fellowship despite my family ties and my origins in a small rural Mexican town of Zacatecas. I was treated as a gringa, I was interacted with as if I were a gringa. My cultural capital as a mexicana had no value. It is interesting though because if I had been from a Mexican university and of Mexican indigenous identification, I would have experienced another kind of treatment based on racial discrimination. Mexican society, in many ways like the U.S., places people on a "white-black" scale except it is more a "white-indio" scale. According to Ong, "in mechanisms of regulation, hierarchical cultural evaluations assign different populations places within the white-black polarities of citizenship" ("Cultural Citizenship" 745). Achievement of full or first-class citizenship is dependent on where on the "white-black" spectrum of citizenship one is placed by the dominant society. The further on the "blackened" side of the spectrum, the farther from full citizenship an individual is. When discussing the experience of immigrants in the U.S., Ong states that it is because "human capital, self-discipline, and consumer power are associated with whiteness" that immigrants are re-racialized and normalization into whiteness is a preferred racial quality ("Cultural Citizenship" 739). This same marking of

citizenship and racialization is applied to deportees given the stigma that accompanies deportation. In my case, the situation in Mexico is that although whiteness is preferred, gabacho whiteness is disdained and even more so if the gabacho or gringo whiteness is embodied by a person of Mexican descent. I am indeed an anomaly and as many Chican@s before me, I have also dealt with the “sell-out” label on both sides of the border: I am not Mexicana enough for Mexico and not white enough for the U.S. This of course creates conflict of identity while working in Mexico. One thing I do have clear though, is my commitment to the immigrant cause and the needs of migrants, immigrants, and deportees.

Estamos viviendo en la noche de la Raza, en tiempo cuando el trabajo se hace a lo quieto, en lo oscuro. El día cuando aceptamos tal y como somos y para en donde vamos y porque –ese día será el día de la Raza. Yo tengo el compromiso de expresar mi visión, mi sensibilidad, mi percepción de la revalidación de la gente mexicana, su mérito, estimación, honra, aprecio, y validez.

- Gloria Anzaldúa

We are living in the night of the Raza, a time when work is done in the stillness, in the dark. The day we accept who we are and where we are going and why- that day will be the day of the Raza. I have the responsibility and the commitment of expressing my vision, my sensibility, my perception of the revalidation of the Mexican people, its merits, esteem, pride, appraisal and validity.

– Gloria Anzaldúa (translation is my own)

Step 2: Decolonizing Science, Knowledge and the Academe

It is important, because of the particular nature of my politics, work with migrants and personal transnational experience, that I place myself in a horizontal relationship with those experiencing the realities of institutionalized violence, a reality many do not see or will never come to experience. Sandra Cisneros once put it in this way, “I am convinced that the power of an oppressed group is its vision, its ability to see pain where

others might not see it because they have not experienced it.” I too am convinced that my vision, redacted in this writing is a result of my “ability to see pain where others might not.” I have not been forcefully taken from my home and taken to another country, but as a Xicana I have felt the treacherous by-products of years of misogyny, sexual domination, colonization, in sum...white, male power politics. This, I feel, is something I have in common with my *de facto* compatriotas¹¹.

Freedoms are measured by degrees; power is enacted upon the body according to regional morals and laws. The decolonial imaginary remains intangible, unseen, yet quite "real" in social and cultural relationships between the colonizer and the colonized, where the ambivalences of power come into play. In other words, one is left to ask, Who is really the colonizer or the colonized? Who has agency in this political and cultural arrangement? The difference between the colonial and decolonial imaginaries is that the colonial remains the inhibiting trace, accepting power relations as they are, perhaps confronting them, but not reconfiguring them. To remain within the colonial imaginary is to remain the colonial object who cannot be subject until decolonized. The decolonial imaginary challenges power relations to decolonize notions of otherness to move into a liberatory terrain.
-Emma Perez, *Decolonial Imaginary* (110).

For me the “decolonization of the academe” began in my project, my scholarship, and myself as an academic and person (woman, student, scholar, socially responsible citizen, immigrant, migrant) with the research methods. I attempted to not impose the typical researcher-research subject relationship in my interactions with those I was interested in knowing more about, but then I take it further in the writing and analysis

¹¹ Compatriots or fellow countrymen/womyn. I say “de facto” because I am acknowledging the fact that I was born on the northern side of the contemporary border and thus was not born a Mexican citizen, yet I consider myself a Mexican and the idea is endorsed by most. I also say “de facto” because as a daughter of two Mexican born citizens I am legally entitled to Mexican citizenship and am considered as such, but because of difficulty to attain certain documents I have not been formally instated as a Mexican citizen. In other words, I am an undocumented Mexican citizen (pun intended).

that is not scientific in nature, but more emotive. This paper is the manifestation of the decolonial beginnings in my academic and social work.

****THOUGHT:** The question is not, “why break down the hierarchy of researcher-research subject relationship” (I think it is clear why this relationship carries with it an unequal balance of power and this has been brought into question before), but the real question lies in why is it questioned when writers (like myself) attempt to write for an academic audience using “non-scientific” and “non-academic” forms of analysis.¹²

Even the very act of writing out the experiences of *mi gente* in English is painful. It is contradictory in some ways to write about the entrenched violence of white male nationalism in ENGLISH. The violence is hard to digest more so to translate it. Pain has its own language, I have my own language, *mi gente* has its own language which is why this work, while it was started in Spanglish, developed in Spanish, researched in English and Spanish and analyzed in *pocho*, its final form shall be in Spanish though the version here is in English¹³. Not only the language is problematic, but also the fact that I find myself struggling to write for an academic purpose or for those whom made this writing possible. I am sure you will find inconsistencies in the voice I am using and the audience I am attempting to speak to at different times and this is because I too am not completely without fault when attempting to practice what I preach.

Not only am I placing myself in an emotionally vulnerable position alongside my compatriotas, but I am also placing myself and my humanity in the same vulnerable place

¹² This was a thought that was purposely left, it is not an oversight.

¹³ It's no wonder why Xican@ academic production takes longer.

as best I can. I understand that there are certain privileges that can be perceived by those who shared their stories. The reason I was even talking to them was partially because of my affiliation with (and financial support from) an institution of higher education. I was also coming from the very same country that had rejected them or their family member. The very act that I was there physically in their presence while both they and I knew that I could and would go back to the U.S. (mostly) effortlessly was a burden for me and very likely for them as well. I often felt like I was some kind of ambassador for their stories saying, “yo puedo contar historias como las tuyas para que se den cuenta del daño que causan y quizás cambiar la situación.” I can take your story across the border meant, *I can cross the border and this access to mobility was a privilege that I struggled with in the face of immobility. Like walking amongst paraplegics, like white guilt. I struggled at first with my perceived privilege and then came to realize that I, worried about my own privilege as a barrier, was creating yet another barrier...re-victimizing the victim. Hence, I had to deconstruct the perceived privilege and construct a bridge, a sort of bonding, on the basis of resilience and hope.*

“Hay tantísimas fronteras que dividen a la gente, pero por cada frontera existe también un puente.” - Gina Valdés

“There are so many borders that divide people, but for every border there is a bridge.”
- Gina Valdés

Moving aside my “credenciales” or U.S./ UT identification, which I had to present in order for those I was attempting to interview to not take me to be some kind of undercover “migra,” I placed something else on the table, myself, my identidad, my

mexicanidad. This is another way in which I deconstruct the researcher-research subject relationship. I chose to relate to those I was speaking with on the basis of culture and experience and not on the basis of the researcher-research subject relationship. Acknowledgement of all your identities-(i.e. being Mexican AND female AND educated AND Xicana)- the crossing of race, gender, class, etc., and knowing that one does not exist exclusively from the others and that one does not exist without the other is fundamental to knowing how history either separates or brings you closer to others. This is what I believe allows me to not only hear, but also listen to and understand the stories being gifted to me. It is what allows me to joke about la migra when I am told about a “comeback” after an insult by an ICE agent, it is what allows me to see through the chronological description of events and see an emotional journey taking place. By relating to people expressing my own immigrant and transnational experience via openly discussing my own experiences with “el norte” – the other side- I felt more like we were friends getting to know each other sharing our experiences and at times even laughing about our dismay. This is why I choose to write about the experiences of deportees not from a researcher’s perspective, but from the perspective of a concerned global citizen, of a migrant, a fellow Mexican. I also am not above those who shared their stories, I am no one to *retell* their stories. I am honored to even have been privy to the experiences I was told. So who am I to place someone else in a vulnerable position or ask them que se vulnerabilizen, while holding a microphone to their face? No soy nadie para pedir eso. I am no one to ask that of anyone, which is why if I had to, I did not and am not going to

let them be on their own. Punto. This is why I too am making myself vulnerable to these pages, and to you, reader.

Step 3: Telling the (his)Story

My responsibility to those with whom I spoke to does not end at listening and “retelling” their stories, it begins there. I am responsible for not reproducing deportees as research subjects or their stories as data. I am responsible for making intricate connections between their experiences and the institutionalized forms of oppression that have gone too long unquestioned by the larger majority of “citizens”¹⁴ in this country.¹⁵ Statistically there is also support for this correlation between, for example, a person’s race and the likelihood of facing deportation proceedings.¹⁶ In the case of Mexicans, they “eventually became the prototypical illegal aliens against whom much of the machinery of the deportation system has been directed” (Kanstroom 159). As you will see in Chapter 2, I will discuss a few of the stories of experiences shared with me by deportees

¹⁴ The requirements for becoming a citizen in this country include “good moral character” and “attach[ment] to the principles of the Constitution,” yet US born citizens are often not held accountable with these very same characteristics. It seems very “un-American” to disintegrate the family, if a citizen is also supposed to be “disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States” (Kanstroom 3). If we question the viability of the character of possible legal citizens why do we not question the character of other citizens? I question it here and thus place quotation marks on the word “citizens” in reference to those who claim citizenship on birthright.

¹⁵ The questioning of national sovereignty and the legitimacy of the claim for protection of the state at the cost of lives and human dignity is scarcely endorsed when it comes to immigrants (on a national level). (Nazi Germany yes, pero Capitalist U.S., NO). There have been tools put out to help heal the effects of the system, but not to challenge the system itself (Interamerican Human Rights System, for example). Xicana indigenista feminist writers make the connection between race, gender, sexual orientation and class and violence, where violence is sourced from the protection of white, male power and power politics. See Emma Pérez *Sexuality and Discourse: Notes from a Chicana Survivor*.

¹⁶ Daniel Kanstroom *Deportation Nation* pg 3 “There is also a critical linkage among deportation, race, and ethnicity. The case majority of those who face deportation proceedings are young people of color.” I suggest that it is not only the fact that the majority of undocumented and quasi documented persons (or those legally susceptible to detention and deportation) are people of color that the “vast majority” of those deported are persons of color, it is also the fact that there is a system that has been designed to keep out “undesirables” (read: person of color).

and in some cases their family members. The intention is that the stories, more than an illustration of the results of the “machinery of deportation,” will enlighten the reader on the struggles and reality that a deportee often faces upon return and will be a voice for those I had the privilege of hearing tell me their experiences.

PART II: TRANSNATIONAL, TRANSFRONTERIZA (TRANSBORDER) SELF AND SPACE

“Transborder living is a way of emotionally, cognitively, socially, economically, and, most importantly, culturally deciphering and living out the multitude of cultural scripts that transect daily existence because of border influences.” – Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez¹⁷

Living the experience of growing up Mexican in a non-Mexican environment was difficult, but I learned to cope and it contributed to who I am today. Living the experience of being Mexican-American and Xicana in a Mexican environment, was completely different experience and it has changed who I am and who I will be as a researcher. Working with individuals and family members who have lived through a deportation experience (or many), an experience I have not lived for myself was difficult to cope with not only because I was unsure about my feelings in regards to myself and the intersectionality of my identities (mexicana, Xicana, graduate student, immigrant) and how those play out in a place I was completely unfamiliar with. This is also because of the privilege I was aware I carried while visiting with deportees and their families. I did everything I could to make sure it did not get in the way, but I *personally* felt that burden of privilege. Being mexicana helped me see things that maybe the me that was raised in

¹⁷ From “*Fronterizo and Transborder Existences*” in *Global Mexican Cultural Productions*, 2011. Eds. Rosana Blaco-Cano and Rita Urquijo-Ruiz

the U.S. couldn't, but the U.S. me also caught on to other things the Mexican me would not have seen. (This is of course if these identities were exclusive of each other.) As a woman or as a child of immigrants, I noticed certain things and the researcher or U.S. raised me saw other things. In sum, it is this multiplicity of identity that allowed me to see a bigger, though nowhere near complete, picture of the situation deportees live. My privilege was not a detriment to my work, it was more so the source of a deep auto-crítica that only helped to better my relationship with the process of conducting social science research with a vulnerable population. My Xicana identity allows me un lugar de anunciación, that is unique and allowed me to live out my work with deportees and their families in a way that was positive and beneficial, but not without responsibility.

PART III: THE EXPERIENCES

“In the Borderlands/ you are the battleground/where enemies are kin to each other;/ you are at home, a stranger,/ the border disputes have been settled/ the volley of shots have shattered the truce/you are wounded, lost in action/dead, fighting back;”

– Gloria Anzaldúa¹⁸

Treatment by la Migra: Implications of race and ethnicity, legality and citizenship

“La posición de la migra ya le tenemos bien clara, si necesitan trabajo al obrero dan entrada, y cuando no lo necesitan lo botan de una patada.”- Gina Valdés

“La migra’s stand we know all too well, if they need labor they let workers in, when they don’t need it they boot them out.” – Gina Valdés

¹⁸ From “To live in the Borderlands means you” in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 2007.

*“Implicating much more than just border control, deportation is also a fulcrum on which majoritarian power is brought to bear against a discrete, marginalized segment of our society.”- Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation**

It is not only a concern that la Migra is actively in pursuit of a particular segment of our population, it is also of concern that the treatment received once apprehended is often times in violation of human and civil rights as well as bi-national agreements on the protocol in place for handling cases of undocumented presence in the U.S. Such is the case of one of our interviewees, Miguel. Our interviewee described “la humillación” that he felt at being treated like a felon or worse, stating the over exaggeration of military presence in the form of tanks, soldiers, helicopters and the fact that he was chained at the ankles, waist and wrists. He was also asked to walk what he approximated at 3 miles to get to transportation after having been translated by plane. “Nos trataron muy mal,” we’re his last comments on the subject.

Brushes with la Migra have a bad reputation among migrants, often being the source of physical, psychological and verbal violence. There is a reason for this reputation. La Migra has its ways of “dealing” with this sought after population that dehumanize migrants into head counts and “A” numbers, many agents assuming an animal hunter state of mind. Another deportee I spoke to at FM4, the albergue for migrants in transit, stated the insults he was privy to while being held in detention before deportation. He shared that the agent’s treatment was uncalled for and in response he insulted the agent only to receive worse treatment. Both Miguel and his experiences are indeed product of a system that is designed to dissuade migrants from further violations

of the border, not unlike the many tactics that have been used in the past as deterrents such as deportation by boat so that deportees would get so sea sick they would want to commit suicide.¹⁹

The workings of the “white-black” spectrum of citizenship that I discussed earlier or the complex politics of belonging, transnational citizenship and racial/ethnic prejudices, apply to people like myself, a returning Mexicana, but also work against the returning citizens through forced repatriation. The returning undocumented population is criminalized and is considered on many level to be an amalgam of “second-class citizens.” They are considered “less desirable” and are continually and purposely “blackened,” that is, racialized into a less preferred category as a way of upholding the “ideological formation of whiteness as the symbol of the ideal legal and moral citizenship” (“Cultural Citizenship” 742). Because of their situation as returned (as opposed to return) migrants, they are seen as failed citizens in both countries. They are marked as not only deserters of their own country, but also the “ones the U.S. doesn’t want.” In speaking with the director of the Programa Paisano (ironically formally named *Bienvenido Paisano*)²⁰ of the Instituto Nacional de Migración, I was made very aware of the negative perception the government has towards the deportee population. She was very clear to delineate Mexican citizens from deportees. Stating that those who are returned are criminals and not suited for Mexican society as well as citing a correlation between increased deportation events with the increase in violence in Mexico This

¹⁹ For a history of the U.S. Border Patrol and its enforcement tactics, see Kelly Lytle Hernandez’s *Migra!*

²⁰ The INM or the Instituto Nacional de Migración, is the agency which is the first to have contact with deportees after having been deported via the Programa Paisano after of course, being processed by Mexican Border Patrol.

correlation as I mentioned earlier, completely ignores the six-year war Calderon has placed on the people of Mexico that has caused the death of an underestimated 80,000 persons. The criminalization of deportees clearly does not end with the drop off on the other side of the border, it carries on with them to the point that many of those I spoke to were reluctant to admit having been deported and some even denied having been deported. When asking around for possibilities for interviews of deportees a friend of a friend was very eager to tell me about his brother who would be very happy to share his story. This friend went on to share bits of his brother's story and insisting that he would be a good interview. He was excited to tell parts of the story and said that I he would be happy to ask him to participate. I mentioned how hard it was to find deportees and the work we had already done going to several organizations for leads. He never once mentioned that he had recently been deported. I found out through my friend who only after I returned from Mexico told me in a casual conversation that it was interesting his friend volunteered his brother for an interview, but never once mentioned he had been deported himself. Clearly, even the most confident and seemingly open of people have reservations about sharing this particular type of experience given the social stigma associated with it. Having legal Mexican citizenship does not automatically confer the benefits of said citizenship nor does it guarantee the social acceptance that comes with cultural citizenship.

Because "the concept of cultural citizenship goes beyond the dichotomous categories of legal documents," there are multivariate factors that contribute to cultural citizenship that accompany an individual's potential to claim, or to be granted rather,

cultural citizenship (Renato 57). So even if deportees are legal Mexican citizens, their situation as returnees who are in many cases coming back to Mexico without Spanish language skills, no home to go to, no social networks or cultural capital to rely on; they are not deemed full citizens or even desirable citizens. This would explain why there is such little attention given to this population by the state and even civil organizations in Mexico. This was evident by the lack of organizations a deportee could go to for assistance. There is no “ventanilla de atención” for deportees. In one interview with one organization that presented its mission as advocates to migrants flat out denied the existence of the deportee situation. There is a negative perception (a top-down perception) of those who migrate illegally; stating a culture of illegality that permeates society that should be corrected, this organization stated it worked for the promotion of legal migration. Certainly, those who founded the organization meant well, but deeply misunderstood the current system of immigration and the fact that the “culture of illegality” was created by the very system that it defies. That it arose out of a system that does not work and a geopolitical situation of disadvantage and exploitation that was imposed upon not only the people of Mexico, but of all Latin America. The politics of belonging in an increasingly globalized neoliberal reality que otorga ciudadanía on the basis of what a person can give to the state, results in a system of institutionalized marginalization of the poor, of the homeless and of those who cannot participate fully in the economic modes of production. As Ong argues, a certain level of neoliberal criteria are required for admittance into cultural citizenship, “citizens who are judged not to have

such tradable competence or potential become devalued and thus vulnerable to exclusionary practices” (“Neoliberalism as Exception” 7).

Chapter 3: The Age of Deportation- A Gender Perspective on Forced Removal

The increased levels of border security as well as a rise in the efforts for the deportation of undocumented migrants have created a set of new problems of unprecedented circumstances. In 2009, the U.S. reported a record setting 393,289 deportations (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010, table 38) and according to the INM this number rose to 476,405 for 2011. Last year alone (January to September 2011) the Mexican authorities recorded a total of 321,505 deportation events (Instituto Nacional de Migración, Estadística Migratoria Síntesis 2011, table 5.1). A number of legislative changes have caused a shift in the migration patterns of the populations that makeup the largest percentage of migrants to the U.S., namely Mexicans. By extension, Mexicans make up the largest percentage of those deported²¹. Because the migration patterns of migrants from Mexico (and Central America) have increasingly shifted from cyclical return migration to permanent settlement, a shift that is a result of stricter border enforcement making cyclical return migration less possible and more dangerous, there have been higher numbers of involuntary repatriations. Because of these large numbers, there are significant social effects on the families and communities receiving deported migrants as well as the communities and families left behind in the U.S. For this reason, there is imperative need to research the social impacts of said patterns and determine the various areas of need for those returning and their families.

²¹ Of the 476,405 deportation events that Homeland Security enacted (in 2011) 354, 982 were to Mexico making Mexico the country with the highest number of deportation events (Instituto Nacional de Migración 2011).

Because communities and families are in large part formed and maintained by women, the question of the social (and psycho-social) effects of deportations must have a gender component. Although a higher number of people deported is among men²², women also undergo the experience of deportation and its effects whether directly or indirectly. The trials women face are different to those of men. Because as Maria Bianet Castellanos states, “What it means to be a man, woman, child, that is a ‘person’ in one’s community, and the social relations within which personhood is configured, constitute the framework...mediates their migration experiences” (2003). This same idea applies to deportation experiences. The detention and deportation process for women is different than that for men, along with the differences in reincorporation back into their community. Additionally, women who are not deported themselves, but experience the deportation of their spouse or partner also experience the effects of deportation on various levels socially, economically and psychologically.

In this respect, taking a close look at how women and by extension the family cope with a deportation event is vital to understanding holistically, the impacts of deportation on a community and the long term effects of such an event at various levels including the individual, the familial and the communal. The transnational space migrant women create and live in must also be taken into consideration when discussing the issue of deportation because this too is affected by this form of forced migration. Another element important to the discussion of deportation is the relationship of the state with its

²² Instituto Nacional de Migración reports that only about 10% of deportation events are comprised of women (2011).

repatriated citizen. This part of analysis is necessary to examine the role of the state in the well-being of the family and reincorporation of families into Mexican society and conversely, it is important to see how the American citizen deals with the repatriation of parents, spouses, etc., when his or her country is responsible for the removal of a vital family member.

The scope of this chapter is much narrower than that of the aforementioned. This work focuses on the analysis of a gender perspective on deportation and more generally to U.S. – Mexico migration, covering specifically the concepts of transnational space, citizenship (as it relates to gender) and power within hierarchies of gender and the state (including the crisis of Mexican masculinity). By reviewing some of the statistical data available as well as the literature on the subject of deportation and the gendered perspective on migration, an introduction into the U.S.- Mexico deportation situation will be provided and exemplified by cases of deportees and/or family members interviewed in Jalisco, Mexico. As with any work of research, the identities of those included in this work will be kept anonymous and for their protection the names have been changed. The interviews were collected over a period of four months from July through November 2011.

Until recently, researchers (with a few exceptions) have yet to study and analyze the impacts of deportations on the receiving country or on the families affected here in the U.S. With Mexico receiving more than 300,000 deportees a year, this process has resulted in an increased demand for resources on the Mexican side of the border, the physical location where deportees are deposited and left to determine the route home or

back into the U.S. (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2010, Statistical Yearbook). So the questions remain, *what social services and options are available to deportees specifically, women once deported and left at the border? What dangers do they face?* This question will aim to determine how Mexican government agencies as well as civic organizations are responding to the large returning population and particularly, how women are responded to (or not). In regards to the family and how the family is affected, there are many questions that arise as well, *how are women being reincorporated (if deported) and adapting to their situation (if they themselves have not experienced a deportation event)?* This question aims to look at the family dynamic both as an institution socially and economically as it is affected by a deportation event. Many of those deported especially those who have resided in the U.S. for extended periods of time, established strong roots, have had children in the U.S. and consider the U.S. their home, undergo severe effects of uprooting. By looking at these questions, we can achieve a better understanding of the shortcomings of institutions meant to assist such a vulnerable population as well as determine what actions can be taken (for now) to mitigate the effects of a broken, ineffective, failed system. Yet, the work does not end there; answering these questions should also prompt us to take steps towards building alternatives so we do not have to rely on simply attempting to keep men, women and children from utter vulnerability and in the eyes of the world, becoming yet one more social “problem.”

Though for the scope of this thesis I do not intend to fully answer the aforementioned questions, I do address them and provide a brief review of the existing

literature that will allow me to build the frameworks and knowledge that will help inform future work in the area of migration and immigrant rights. In addition, this chapter aims to provide an overview or diagnostic on the current deportee situation in Mexico, specifically as it relates to women and children. By providing some first-hand accounts and primary research sources, this work will also give case study analysis for the illustration of said overview.

MORE THAN NUMBERS- A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEPORTEE SITUATION IN MEXICO

“U.S. Repatriates 44 Children a Day” is the headline of a national newspaper in Mexico after the INM (Insituto Nacional de Migración), the government immigration agency (also agency responsible for official (government) migration research), reported the annual summary of migration statistics (El Economista 2011). This is only one of many reports in the media in reference to the growing numbers of deportees to Mexico. Yet, the Mexican public is made aware of the effects of U.S. policies without the need of media as deportation is becoming increasingly common and an experience lived by more and more families each year. Indeed, since 2005 the numbers of deportees have increased at an alarming rate (DHS Statistical Yearbooks). In 2011 alone (January to September), 321,505 deportations are reported by the INM. Taking a looking at Figure 1 below, the graphic shows that of these 321,505 deportations 31,870 or approximately 10% were of women and 12,215 were of minors (INM Síntesis 2011, table 5.6). The highest numbers of women were deported were from the states of Oaxaca, Michoacán and Guerrero, indicating that most of the women had come from both traditional and non-traditional

sending states (see Figure 1). Another important data to note is the higher percentage of female deportees is among minors (see Figure 2).

Although the percentage of men is much higher than that of women, the numbers are astounding when compared to those in the years leading up to significant changes in immigration policy, including the formation of ICE and the subsequent operatives to locate and remove undocumented migrants. For example, in 2006 after the initiation of “Enforcement and Removal Operations” by ICE there was an increase of 34,543 removals²³ from the previous fiscal year (DHS Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, table 36). In the years following 9/11 the highest jumps in number of removals from one year to the next are recorded with the difference between 2002 and 2003 being 45, 930 removals (DHS Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, table 36). Clearly, there is a correlation between stricter border policies (i.e. increased funding for “homeland security” in light of 9/11) such as militarization of the border, high-tech border surveillance initiatives (drones, subterranean motion sensors, heat sensors, etc.), programs such as Operation Streamline that follow a long legacy of border enforcement operatives²⁴ and the increased numbers of deportees.

²³ Removals are defined by DHS as “the compulsory and confirmed movement of an inadmissible or deportable alien out of the United States based on an order of removal. An alien who is removed has administrative or criminal consequences placed on subsequent reentry owing to the fact of the removal.” (DHS Yearbook of Immigration Statistics:2010).

²⁴ This legacy of U.S.-Mexico border policies includes, but is certainly not limited to: Operation Wetback - 1954, Operation Blockade (later renamed Operation Hold the Line)-1994, Operation Gatekeeper 1994, Operation Rio Grande-1997, Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act-2004, Secure Fence Act-2006, Operation Streamline-2008: For a brief timeline of U.S.- Mexico border policies see PBS’ Frontline World: Mexico- Immigration Timeline at <http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/mexico704/history/timeline.html#>.

5.6 Eventos de repatriación de mujeres mexicanas desde Estados Unidos, según entidad federativa de origen, enero-septiembre 2011^{P/}

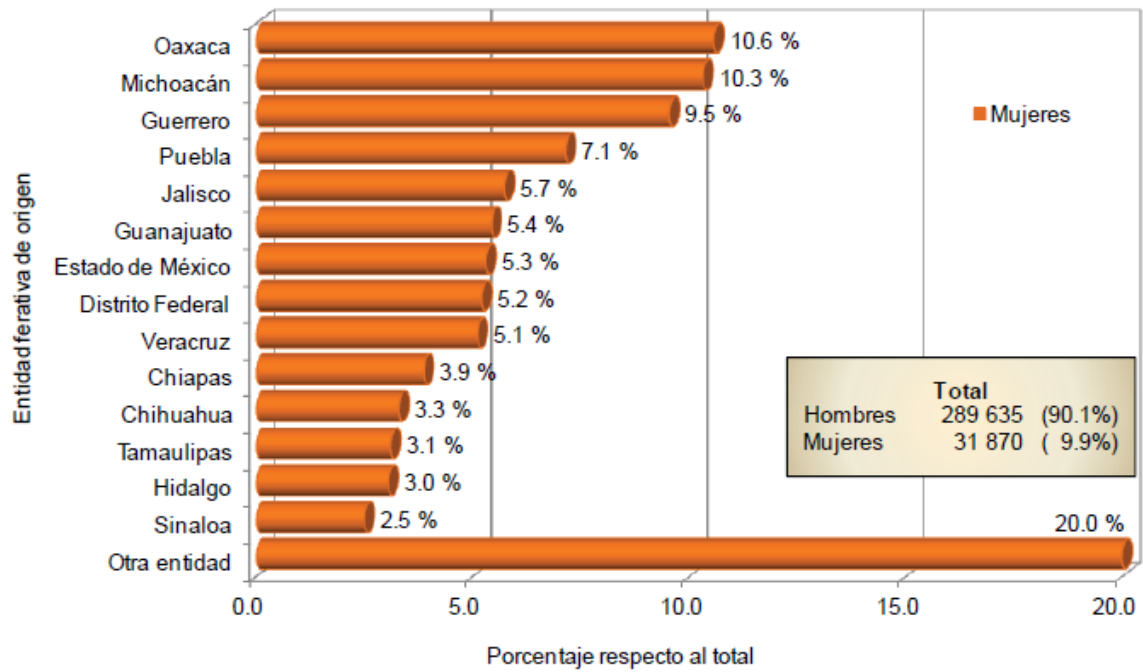


Figure 1- Taken from the Instituto Nacional de Migración, Estadística Migración, Síntesis 2011

5.3 Eventos de repatriación de mexicanos desde Estados Unidos, según grupo de edad y sexo, enero-septiembre 2010-2011^{P/}

Edad y sexo	Enero-Septiembre		
	2010	2011 ^{P/}	Var. %
Total General	376 388	321 505	-14.6
18 años y más	359 452	309 290	-14.0
Hombres	322 072	279 469	-13.2
Mujeres	37 380	29 821	-20.2
Menores de 18 años	16 936	12 215	-27.9
Hombres	13 763	10 166	-26.1
Mujeres	3 173	2 049	-35.4

5.4 Eventos de repatriación de mexicanos desde Estados Unidos, según grupo de edad y sexo, enero-septiembre 2011^{P/}

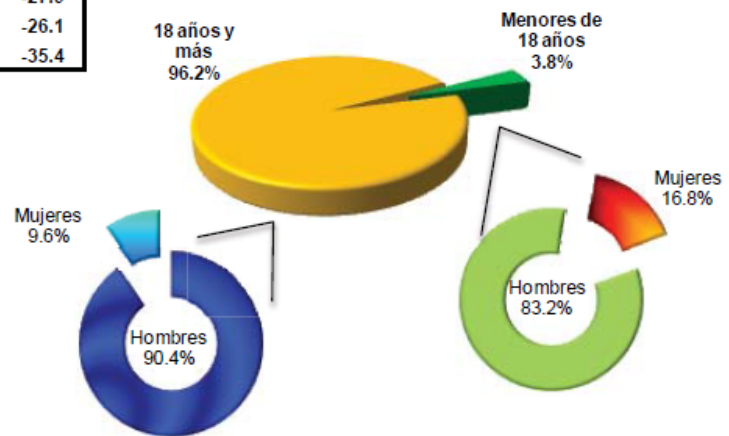


Figure 2-Taken from the Instituto Nacional de Migración, Estadística Migración, Síntesis 2011

PROTECTION OF AND WOMAN’S RIGHTS- BINATIONAL AGREEMENTS, MEMORANDUMS AND CONVENTIONS

“We were held with another woman who was coughing so badly that she threw up violently, over and over. The others in the cell called for help. An officer came over and said, ‘Que se muera!’- ‘Let her die!’” That is an excerpt from an interview cited in “A Culture of Cruelty: Abuse and Impunity in Short-term U.S. Border Patrol Custody” a report released by No More Deaths (2011). The detention and deportation process is for no one. According to a report by No More Deaths, an activist group dedicated to eradicate abuses by Border Patrol and ICE, there are significant violations to agreements set between the U.S. and Mexico on the repatriation of Mexican nationals. The

“Memorandum de entendimiento entre la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores y el Departamento de Seguridad Interna de los Estados Unidos de America sobre la repatriación segura, ordenada, digna y humana de nacionales mexicanos,” is one such agreement that states that not only should repatriation follow processes that maintain the security and dignity of migrants it also states that the processes are to uphold human rights of detainees.

The excerpt above documents the institutionalized violence lived from the point of arrest and detainment and through the deportation process. As mentioned earlier, the traditional migration pattern of migrants from traditional sending communities in Mexico has been cyclical male migration, with the change in this pattern the pattern for return migration changes dramatically. Because of heavy border enforcement operatives such as the militarization of the border and the establishment of ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement) by the also relatively new Department of Homeland Security, undocumented migration has become thousands of dollars more costly and exponentially more dangerous. This has lead migrants to settle more permanently in the U.S. Because migrants are increasingly settling, they are bringing with them their families and due to legislation in the late 80s and early 90s such as IRCA that allowed for legalization of migrants, more women had the “pull factor” to come to the U.S. In reference to studies done on Mexican migration, Donato states, “Reichert and Massey argued that women's increased participation among undocumented migrants reflected a pattern of family migration, whereby women entered without documents after someone in their family received permanent residency” (750). With longer settlement in the U.S., the higher the

numbers of longer term undocumented residency in the U.S. and hence, the reason why we are seeing more women and children being included in the numbers of deportees. Clearly, migration from Mexico is no longer a journey fulfilled solely by men.

The report mentioned above, documents that among those involved in their study 1,051 women, 190 teens, and 94 children were repatriated after dark, which is in direct violation of the Memorandum for the safe repatriation of vulnerable persons (No More Deaths 2011). The lack of ICE and border patrol compliance with international agreements is clearly an issue across the board as this was also documented by *La Jornada*, a well respected national newspaper in Mexico. According to this particular report, almost half of the deportations do not follow local and international accords for the repatriation, one of which is the “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Secretariat of Governance and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States and the Department of Homeland Security of the United States of American on the Safe, Orderly, Dignified and Humane Repatriation of Mexican Nationals,” yes, big name, but little arm. The news report states that Mexico is currently demanding that the U.S. revise its deportation policies and to revisit the particular agreement mentioned above.²⁵ According to the agreement, the policies and understandings asserted within the accepted document, should be revised at least annually (Article 1. Section B. Memorandum 2004). To the date of this writing there has not been a revision that has been made known.

²⁵ *La Jornada* 31 October 2011 “Mexico demanda a EU revisar convenios de repatriación, ante operativos ilegales”

Article 3, Section E of the accord also states that the “unity of families should be preserved during repatriation” (Memorandum 2004). Yet, No More Deaths reports that of the 4,130 interviews conducted with persons in Border Patrol custody they found that the “Border Patrol deported 869 family members separately” including 58 minors (2011). The vulnerability that a person faces regardless of gender is great and is of even greater concern at the ports of highest deportation flows, which in some cases happen to be some of the most dangerous border cities including Tijuana, Baja California. Unfortunately, because information on the situation of deportees is so scarce rarely do we find gendered information, indeed “the task of quantifying and characterizing it [women’s migration] is far from straightforward, largely because the data available on flows of international migrants are seldom classified both by sex or other characteristics” (Zlotnik 589). Because of this gap in information it is hard to determine the specific needs of women, yet the information that has been gathered such as what was discussed above, illustrate the grave circumstances under which all deportees are repatriated and as most would agree, the vulnerability of women is higher because of lack of gender sensitive protections. To this end Piper and Satterthaithe state, “Existing international instruments specifically providing protections to migrant workers in general lack gender-specific clauses, such as references to female migrants being prone to sexual harassment or sexual violence. The lack of explicit mention of women in the major human rights treaties does not mean that they are not covered by the protections afforded by those texts, but may reinforce the invisibility of gender-specific violations” (248). The story to follow clearly

shows the type of harassment and discrimination women migrants face in the deportation process.

One interviewee in the No More Deaths Report stated that she and the other women she was detained with were separated from their spouses at the time of apprehension and when she asked to be deported with her husband she was asked to present a marriage license, when she could not present it, she was ridiculed and deported without any knowledge of the whereabouts of her husband (2011). Clearly the absurdity of asking for proof of marriage in this situation and the violence accompanied by the questioning of the truthfulness of the woman's claim is a directly discriminatory action based on gender. Furthermore, her vulnerability is increased by being deported alone. The experience of a woman being deported is quite different than that of a man because a woman has different needs and vulnerabilities given the dominance of male deportation and male agents in the deportation process. The experience at the border is defiantly not without implications of gender, Nyers states, "borders are 'polysemic' in the sense that it does not have the same meaning for everyone, and the experience of the border varies quite dramatically according to race, gender, class, and national origin" (Nyers 437). There are currently in place general local and bi-national agreements for the repatriation of Mexican nationals that generally state that the human rights and dignity of the repatriated must be respected. Among the rights that both the Mexican and U.S. government would have to respect include the right to consular notification (Vienna Convention), the right to the protection of health (American Convention), right to dignity and life (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the protection of women against

violence (Convention of Belém do Pará) and the women's right to protection against discrimination (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) yet with such high numbers of deportations, the context of fear in which migrants are held, and the requirement that any complaints must be made while migrants are under custody, the enforcement of these rights is often overlooked as many of the deportees I spoke to myself also attested to the ill treatment by ICE and/or Border Patrol agents.

An extension of this vulnerability is that of the family, as was noted above the integrity of the family is often not respected. Both of these vulnerabilities placed on migrants impact the ability of re-integration into Mexican society and of course, is a terrible setback in the lives of those who have made the U.S. their home. The report by No More Deaths reported that the average amount of time their interviewees had lived in the U.S. before being deported was fourteen and a half (14.5) years and the majority reported having U.S. citizen children (2011). Evidently, the implications for the family are grave, especially when the main breadwinners or the parents of citizen children are deported.

CASOS- ILLUSTRATIONS OF IMPACT, VISUALIZATIONS OF DEPORTEE REALITIES

Not only are women's rights often not respected, placing women in unnecessarily vulnerable situations such as being deported after dark into cities and areas in high-risk zones, but the psychological and oftentimes even physical damage that women go through in a deportation event is another serious concern. While conducting interviews for this project, I was privy to Evalyn's story, who though considered lucky since she was

allowed to stay with her husband through most of the deportation process, was not able to tell me her story without having to pause several times and regain composure. Her story although not one of the most violent I have read or heard about, is one that has clearly impacted her life so deeply that it brings her shame. She often repeated, “I don’t know why I went in the first place, my husband was the one who wanted to go.” She felt embarrassed and even reproached herself about having made the decision to go along reaffirming to me many times that she had a steady job that she enjoyed very much and had “no reason” to leave. In this particular case Evalyn stated that it was her husband that wanted to make the trip and at the urging of her family who told her she best not let him go alone (possibly out of fear that he might be unfaithful or simply might not return), she made the decision to go along with him. She later noted that it was her husband who lacked stable job opportunities and hence the reason for his push to leave to the United States. As an outsider, I felt that Evalyn’s self-confidence was severely affected because not only did she feel embarrassed that she would risk her life “over a few extra pesos,” but that she experienced a very degrading and criminalizing event. She said that although they (her and other detainees) were fed while under custody, most were kept from communicating with relatives or anyone at all.

Evalyn further confided stating one of the most embarrassing moments was that of the return to Guadalajara. Her and her husband had sold everything in order to have money for the coyote and start-up cash for their temporary stay in the U.S. She stated that they lied about having been deported and simply said that they decided to turn back. I also might add that she was concerned and even somewhat upset that her husband (whom

my research collaborator and I had interviewed before her) had told us that she had been deported. It was made clear that Evalyn feels a sense embarrassment towards this particular part of her life. For an evidently strong woman of pride, even sharing the story was difficult. Having had no counseling and stating that she had never opened up to anyone to talk about the situation, she was on one hand, grateful that someone would take interest in her story and allowed her a safe space to “desaugarse” or “let it out,” but on the other hand still had penetrating issues with the event. Her re-integration after the deportation event was difficult emotionally because she stated she fell into a sort of state of depression, but economically she said she was lucky because the school she worked for allowed for her to retain her job as she was only gone a week. She was very proud of the fact that she was able to recuperate her job stating that she is good at what she does and that her demonstrated abilities are what have helped her get ahead.

Evalyn’s story brings out one of the most underreported effects of deportation, the psycho-social and psychological effects of having undergone such an event. This opens up only one more area of studies that has not been looked at. Although some researchers have begun to investigate the mental health of detainees, the mental health of deportees is still unevaluated. Yet, a positive note in Evalyn’s story is that she felt economically stable and not dependant on her husband, one of her points of pride. It is clear that when this changed with the deportation experience, she felt this in a way that her husband did not. The act of giving up her job in order to save the integrity of her family meant relinquishing her economic independence. Having no stable job, Evalyn’s husband was not being taken from a professional network on the contrary, he went looking for one out

of a different kind of pressure, the pressure of Mexican masculinity to be the breadwinner, yet at the cost of his wife's economic independence. There is a kind of violence that is playing out that is not directly coming from ICE or Border Patrol agents, it is the structural violence of having to choose between keeping your family intact or maintaining economic independence.

This brings me to Gerardo's story, whom I introduced in my first chapter under a different pretext, a single father with two U.S. citizen daughters. He was deported after having lived several years in the U.S. Though his story is much longer than what can fit in these pages, the most relevant parts of his story to this discussion are the facts that he stated that his wife (mother of his daughters) left him because he could no longer support the family after having been deported. He went through a long and arduous process of getting custody of his daughters, which he successfully obtained and is now struggling, but reunited with his daughters. Gerardo claims that it was his deportation that "destroyed his family." While saying this, his thin face looked at me and then at my field partner with such pain that then was turned into almost resolute anger. He acknowledged that his situation was one of outright injustice and presented me with documents sent to him by the INS (now, Office of Enforcement and Removals of the Dept. of Homeland Security), that stated a pending date for an interview for his naturalization process that he was to be later informed of. He was never sent a second notice or any type of instructions, he was simply picked up and detained for not having "complied" with requirements and therefore not having legal status within the country. Currently, those who are awaiting a naturalization process cannot be deported yet, he was detained and

subsequently deported. His daughters both of which are U.S. citizens live with him and he states that they adjusted quite well, but his face, tone and posture when he said “it destroyed my family” is one that I will never forget. He has taken up the role of both father and mother, but because of his English and technical skills he gained while living in the U.S. he has been able to fare fairly well in the Mexican job market.

Though the scope of my interview did not allow me to get into the details of his re-adjustment including his role as a single father, he was very proud of the fact that he was raising two daughters on his own and seemed very well adjusted in his role as single father (at least economically). Because of the pressures of Mexican society for a man to take on masculine, mobile and non-domestic character, it is interesting to see how well adjusted he had become, although it is clear that he felt his family remained “destroyed.” His story is not a common one as usually the mother is left with children, but it is important to document cases such as that of Gerardo because it shows that a gendered analysis does not always have to be about women. In fact, according to Waters, there is little work in the area of documenting men’s personal migration experiences, she goes on to say “the focus has been on the woman as mother...in contrast, there has been a conspicuous lack of research on fathers in immigrant settings” (Waters 2010). Though Water’s work focuses on migrant fathers or fathers whose wives have migrated, I would add as an extension that there is very little if any research on the experience of men left behind when a wife is deported or as in the case of Gerardo, being deported and having to raise a family without the support of a wife or partner.

It is important to note the cultural context in which I found myself working while meeting deportees. The level of masculine dominance of Mexican society made the research process difficult because there were often dynamics of the family that had to be very carefully mitigated especially in cases where both parents or partners were present. This was very evident the case of Mireya. My research collaborator and I arrived at the home of one of the deportees we were going to interview, when his wife came out to greet us behind the counter of their store-front home. She was quite shy and though both my collaborator and I attempted to make conversation she was very reluctant to speak to us. Then I realized that one of her husband's "compadres" was sitting right outside the storefront. Once we were invited inside, she as a bit more talkative, but would not ask questions about why we were there or why we wanted to speak to her husband. So in order to ease her mind I spoke up describing what we were doing and the nature of our work. Several minutes went by and her husband had still not shown, so I proceeded to ask her permission to interview her in the meantime. She looked at me very hesitantly, I knew I was going out on a limb asking because being familiar with machista family dynamics I didn't want to step on anyone's toes, but it was getting late and leaving this particular community unaccompanied and after dark was not proper fieldwork safety protocol. Her husband finally arrived in the midst of my explanation of the consent form and so we quickly shifted our attention to him so as not to cause discomfort and possible problems for this woman. We continued with our interview of the husband, but as the night drew closer, I became impatient and not wanting to cut short the man's story, I asked if my research partner could continue the interview without me while I asked his

wife a few questions. The man, deep in story telling mode, paid no mind so I signaled to his wife to accompany me to a separate space. She chose her bedroom and while she changed her youngest child's diaper she slowly and softly began to explain the difficulties she faced having a husband who had been deported...several times.

Her story was one of violence and severe injustice. Her small land inheritance was the only thing she had to her name, but when her husband decided to make one of his many treks north he, without her consent, sold the property for the money he needed for the trip. He said that she would be repaid in remittances. Unfortunately, this was not so. Because the property had been family property, her husband sent the money to Mireya's brother and not directly to her. This meant that not only had she lost her land, but was also being cheated of payment. Having no way to have access to this money she found herself without a home and no way to support her children, she had to resort to moving in with her parents who almost blamed her for the situation. Yet, when her husband was deported for the seventh time he needed bail money and funds to cover judicial costs for being a repeat offender (she did not mention if he had been deported for a criminal offense). For this Mireya had to take out a loan, which to this day she is in debt for.

This story exemplifies the machista context that women often face. Although Mireya had not directly experienced a deportation event her and her children were very directly affected. The deportee is never the only victim and in the case of Mireya, her husband was making her a victim on behalf of his actions both in his migration and his machista ways. The violence was evidenced even in the way she began to tell me her story, she whispered and kept looking to the curtain substitute for a bedroom door. I was

surprised that she would so openly share her experience and I was honored to have been able to be a sounding board for her troubles. The problem is that we can't let her story and stories of thousands of other women who have suffered the injustices of a broken immigration system that men often take advantage of in order to get out of paying child support or to not have to take on responsibility for their actions, or simply use to enact violence on women as was also seen in the cases of the women interviewed by No More Deaths. I hope that my research is only one more step in reaching a further understanding of the trials and tribulations of all of those affected by deportation.

In the aforementioned stories, there are gendered nuances to the experiences of Evalyn and Gerardo as Puetz states, "deportation's disruptions- of family, (re)production, work- are often gendered ones" (385). Indeed, there are gendered factors that are often overlooked when looking at the situation of a deportee partially because there is still such little work being done on determining the needs within the lives of those who have lived a deportation experience, even less follow-up work on the re-insertion of deportees into Mexican society. One of the many things that goes unstudied is the access that deportees have to services that they as citizens have the right to obtain. This was one of the main goals of my research in Jalisco. We wanted to determine what was or wasn't made available to deportees and whether or not there was state support for their repatriated citizens. What we found was that there was very little government support for deportees and particularly for women. As Piper states, "women are likely to have different requirements and demands toward their state of nationality than, men given their position within the global economy" (Piper and Satterthwaite 252). Although men are offered the

possibility of a job placing through social services, and families are allowed a pantry, difficulty enrolling children in schools for lack of the proper documentation and lack of access to health care are very troubling. From what I found in my work searching for support for undocumented migrants within civil organizations, government organization and even churches, in the greater metropolitan area of Guadalajara there was very little that could be called support. The state DIF (Desarollo Integral para la Familia), the agency responsible for administrating some of Mexico's social services, gave me a run through of the services they offer, but none are geared towards deportees. I was told that deportees are categorized in the general "vulnerable population" category and no intake information asks about migratory status. Although, a representative shared with me that many voluntarily state that they are at the DIF because they were sent by another state agency, Instituto Nacional de Migración, which is the first state entity to have contact with deportees post-deportation.

According the director of INM's Programa Paisano, the particular program that deals with repatriated citizens, return migrants, and any Mexican (Paisano) returning to the country for any reason, in a more formal interview stated that the reason for a lack in services is the high number of deportees and that many who find themselves at the border for any given reason often want to take advantage of the system and get a free ride home to the interior of the state.²⁶ This sheds light not only on the marginalization of migrants,

²⁶ What the representative was referring to is the collaborative program (along with the U.S. program "Safe Send," which sends deportees to Mexico City if they are from a southern state) to reduce the vulnerability of deported migrants by allowing them a small monetary allowance for a bus ride back to their hometown or state. The state has a difficult time allotting funds for programs for return migrants and because of the criminalization of this particular returning citizen, the state has a generally negative stance on the

but of deportees who are *citizens*, yet because of the criminalization of this particular population there is very little attention, resources or support of any kind. This of course, places deportee women in an even higher state of marginalization as some studies have documented that it is common for deportees to be deported along with their families (Hagan, et al. 73). Usually this is the case of mothers with young children.

Another area in which women are affected by the deportation process is in the case of child welfare. As I mentioned earlier, there are structural difficulties that keep children who have been deported with their parents out of school, but there is another difficulty when trying to claim child support from men that have been deported. In one of my informal conversations with a Mexican citizen, I was told that there is only one office that takes complaints from Mexican citizens living abroad (Dirección general de protección a Mexicanos en el exterior) and this office is overwhelmed with cases of women attempting to file cases against husbands or partners for failure to pay child support (*pensión alimenticia*). Yet, this is also the office where a citizen may go to file a grievance for ill treatment abroad including the U.S. The *one* office is supposed to take on a whole slew of cases and the result is a backed up system of claims.

As with any research project there are many questions that are left unanswered. There are many gaps within the research and there is still much more work to be done. My research was part of a larger pilot study on the social effects of deportation and thus

“character” of the persons returning. For this reason deportees wanting this assistance are required to show official deportation documents in order to have access. Yet, this does not take into consideration the amount of violence that occurs in the deportation process that includes documentation of any kind not being returned or simply outright stolen. Of the migrants I spoke to only two persons stated having had this information given to them and funds allotted for their trip back.

there were many questions that I did not have the time or space to ask. There are many more areas that need attention such as those mentioned in this chapter, the mental health of deportees, the social re-integration of deportees, the access to resources, schooling and experiences of the U.S. citizen children who often know no Spanish and many more areas. I hope that my work and my experience help to contribute to the knowledge necessary to know the needs of this vulnerable population in order to urge state and social action. If we for now, are to be bound to the reality of the nation-state and the existence of a political border, we can still work to heal this wound between our two nations, as Gloria Anzaldúa calls it. And as Gloria Anzaldúa calls for a healing of this wound, I too call to academics, activists and all of us to help work towards mending the violent and gaping tear in our two societies that work to maintain a level of exclusivity and discrimination. This *frontera*, this wound that is the subject of so much pain should not be dealt with by rubbing salt into it with harsh anti-immigrant legislation and discriminatory actions of institutionalized racism, we need to become cognizant of the reality that undocumented immigrants face, especially if they have been deported and uprooted from their home.

Chapter 4: Conclusion- Cerrando Ciclo

“Yo no nací sin causa. Yo no nací sin fe. Mi corazón pega fuerte para gritar a los que no sienten y así perseguir a la felicidad, y así perseguir la felicidad. Que es un derecho de nacimiento. Es el motor de nuestro movimiento. Porque reclamo libertad de pensamiento. Si no lo pido es porque me estoy muriendo!”

- Protest song of the Mexican youth *Un derecho de nacimiento*, 2012

PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE

“To survive the Borderlands / you must live sin fronteras/ be a crossroads.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*²⁷

We need to be freed of the ideas that keep us apart such as nationality, legal status, etc., in the words of Ricardo Bracho, “How will our lands be free if our bodies aren’t?”²⁸ Saving the “nation” or protecting the “nation” at the cost of life and direct violation of human rights is never justified. We should work towards a complete devaluation of the argument of state sovereignty as reason for a “border control regime” and its legitimacy. Kanstroom describes the deportation system as having two types of border control mechanisms, “extended border control” and “post-entry social control” (5). The first he states, “implements the basic features of sovereign power: the control of territory by the state and the legal distinction between citizens and noncitizens,” this is done through laws, “laws that most directly support the border control regime and their

²⁷ From “To live in the Borderlands means you” found on page 216-217 of the 3rd *Borderlands/La Frontera*

²⁸ Quoted by Cherrie Moraga in *The Last Generation* (145). Cherrie Moraga conceptualizes “land” as inclusive of workplaces, cultural spaces, public spaces, the border etc.,

legitimacy, such as it is, is most closely linked to that of sovereignty itself” (Kanstroom 5). We should aspire to look beyond the nation and not just in a transnational sort of way as some scholars have theorized, but in a fully POST- national, free-of- borders world. The basis for this is the level of human rights violations, the denigration of human dignity and the violence that exists at the border. If these are not severe enough reasons to make a case for an alternative world, then I don’t know what is. Maybe paying that understood historical debt? As Kanstroom states, “If one is uncomfortable with the border regime itself- as many are in the case of Mexico-then extended border control laws are mere adjuncts to an unjust historical structure” (Kanstroom 5). Yet, I feel that putting an end to a history of unequal relationship is only the first step and we are more than just “*uncomfortable*”.

If the current DREAMer movement is not telling of the moment of serious crisis and deep concern, anger and activist energy that this country is currently living with respect to the immigration system and the deportation of thousands of young people, many with college degrees conferred in the U.S., there is nothing more full of voice and empowerment that can accomplish that. Young people across the globe in Mexico with #YoSoy132, in Spain with the Indignados, in Chile with the students fighting for the right to education and many more examples of student and youth movements that have sparked larger movements that have ignited the flame to the much needed energy and unified hope for change. This is accompanied with a strong critic of the current world system of neoliberal-ultra capitalist system that consequently fuels the immigration system. The coup in Paraguay in July of this year is the system’s deep desire to fight back on the ideas

of liberal presidents that also voice their ideas to find alternatives to the current system of hyper-consumerism. The speech by the president of Uruguay at this summer's Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (interestingly held simultaneously to the G20 summit in Mexico) is also evidence of leadership outwardly expressing the need for a serious change in our political economic practices . Clearly, the larger critic is of the world system, but it is this system that is indelibly connected to and fuels the U.S. system of immigration control and control of the movement of people in general worldwide for the benefit of the military industrial complex of the U.S. and other global mega-players of neoliberal practice. The current economic crisis tells us that the Chicago Boys were wrong and all systems tied to the practice of *laissez faire* economics are also inevitably not exempt from failure including the immigration system of the U.S.

The transnational relationships that are built among the immigrant population in the U.S. and those left behind in Mexico forms part of a supranational exercise of citizenship, but a truly postnational reality is something most of us do not conceive of. Indeed, there are limits within the academe and current scholarship for this. One scholar notes, “the unauthorized enactment of social citizenship by those outside of the state as well as the application of a human rights discourse to the situation of undocumented Mexican immigrants remove the latter from the parameters of the states and invite a postnational approach to the challenges posed by undocumented immigrants” (del Castillo 12). Yet, this does not go far enough in two ways. One, it reflects the serious need for research on the sending community side of the deportation and illegality of migration discussion and two it does not go so far as to consider an actual post-national

(not only supranational or transcendent of lo nacional) reality. Many studies that have been done on the deportee situation are focused on the effects the deportation regime has in the U.S. and the implications of illegality for the undocumented population in the U.S., but there is no large scale theoretical (academic) or sociocultural (activist) push (that I have seen) to know more about what happens to those who face deportation after they have been deported. There is no existing “theoretical framework” to work with, there is no basis of research with which to start because most research on the deportee or deportable population has been U.S.-centric. This is the beginning of the work that I hope will contribute to the understanding of the impacts that deportation has not only on the receiving country (in this case Mexico), but also on the individual, the family and on those left behind in the U.S. including myself.

Although in the preceding months leading up to the completion of this thesis, there has been increased media attention given to the issue of deportation, thousands of cases remain in the dark and injustice, falling through the cracks of a broken system that fails to provide answers and alternatives. The undocumented youth, many of which are college students, have taken the scene and made visible another particularly vulnerable population subject to deportation, undocumented educated youth. Though President Obama’s executive order in June of 2011 to prioritize deportations of criminals and allow for more prosecutorial discretion among non-priority cases, was announced there has not been much adherence to this order. Such is the case that once again Obama has announced another executive order of Deferred Action designed to keep undocumented students out of the deportation detention and proceedings temporarily and the possibility

of permanent legal residency. This is the closest step towards anything that resembles the DREAM Act , but police and ICE agents have not been adequately trained on how to handle these cases. The result is a lack of enforcement and compliance with both of these orders. Because of this lack of compliance DREAMers and activists in solidarity have become more vocal and organized in order to pressure for change. In some cases even gathering legal teams and activists as well as NGO support for specific cases that would fall under non-priority or deferred action orders and should not be open, achieving for some, freedom from detention and deferment of deportation.

It is time that we move into a new stage, un nuevo ciclo, to make real in our everyday and political decisions, an alternative; a challenge to the current system as Emma Perez posits, a decolonial imaginary of sorts. This work, I hope, is a step towards this ideal where power relations are challenged in an effort to reconfigure them y poner el mundo de cabeza.

A few afterthoughts:

I wonder if any one of those people I spoke to ever thinks about that day when they shared their stories and pause to reflect, asking themselves if having shared their story will ever make a difference or if our efforts will ever make a difference. I hope that by sharing this with you, we have.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT-SPANISH

Consecuencias Sociales de Deportaciones Estadounidenses para México y Centro América

Guía Para Entrevistas

Migrantes Individuales

1. Experiencias del regreso:

Información básica: Edad, nivel de educación (en el país y preguntar si estudió en Estados Unidos también), estado civil, numero de hijos, donde viven los padres

- a. Experiencias en los EEUU
 - i. Cómo era su vida allá, en Estados Unidos? Qué hacía? Y Cómo fue que se regresó?
 - ii. Cuénteme, cómo fue? Lo/a detuvieron? Dónde? Cuando? Qué paso después?
- b. El Regreso
 - i. Cómo llego aquí de regreso?
 - ii. Aquí llego primero o fue a algún otro sitio antes?
 - iii. Y aquí se va a quedar o se va a ir para otra zona/region?
 - iv. Tiene familiares, amigos, aquí? Dónde esta la mayor parte de su familia?
 - v. Cómo le ha parecido todo esto aquí ahora que ha regresado?
 - vi. Cómo se siente? Cómo siente que la han recibido? Cómo ve su vida aquí?
- c. Empleo al regresar
 - i. Está trabajando ahora?
 - ii. Cómo consiguió el trabajo? Le gusta?
 - iii. Ha tenido dificultad para encontrar trabajo?
 - iv. Cree que es fácil conseguir trabajo al regresar de Estados Unidos?
 - v. Cuanto tiempo le tomó empezar a trabajar?
- d. Proceso de reintegración
 - i. Cómo ha sido su reinserción aquí?
 - ii. Ha sido más o menos fácil? Cuales han sido los retos mas grandes?
 - iii. Cómo la/o han tratado en general desde que ha regresado en su casa, trabajo, vecindario (barrio/colonia)?
 - iv. Cómo es su vida familiar ahora? Es diferente a cuando se fue? De qué forma?
- e. Vida Familiar al Regresar

- i. Cómo ve a sus hijos? Esposo/a? Padres? Dónde están ellos?
 - ii. Ud. les mandaba dinero/regalos de allá a su familia?
 - iii. Siente que les hacen falta estos recursos en su familia?
 - iv. Algunos cambios que ha visto en su vecindario? Comunidad? País?
 - 1. Han habido sorpresas?
- f. Planes Para el Futuro
 - i. Se quisiera regresar a Estados Unidos? Porque?

Entrevistas con miembros de la familia

Información básica: Edad, nivel de educación, número de niños, dónde vive la familia?

- a. Cuando se fue XX de aquí para Estados Unidos?
- b. Ud. vivía aquí o en otra parte cuando XX estaba fuera? (Si vivía en otra parte: porque se vino a vivir aquí?)
- c. Ud. trabaja? Trabajaba antes de que XX se fuera? Y cuando XX estaba en EEUU?
- d. En que siente más el efecto del regreso de XX? (económico? en cosas de la casa?)
- e. Cómo era su vida cuando XX no estaba aquí? Era diferente? De qué forma?
- f. Si hay niños: Cómo se portaban los niños cuando XX estaba fuera? Y ahora, es igual?
- g. Si hay esposa/o: Cómo se siente ahora que XX ha regresado? Ha cambiado su rutina diaria?
- h. Y su vida en general ha cambiado desde el regreso de XX? En qué? Y Cómo?

Entrevistas con personas en instituciones:

Cómo ve la situación de las personas que han regresado deportadas de Estados Unidos?

Cómo se están adaptando?

Desde su punto de vista Cómo (sacerdote, pastor, médico, maestro, etc.) Cómo ve el efecto de estas deportaciones? Tienen efecto en su trabajo?

Han beneficiado a la comunidad? Porque? De qué forma?

Estaba preparada esta comunidad para recibir a estas personas?

Y Cómo ve el efecto a largo plazo? Para la comunidad? Para el país?

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT- ENGLISH

Social Consequences of U.S. Deportations to Mexico and Central America Interview Guide

Individual Migrants

1. Return Experiences

Basic Information: Age, educational attainment (within the country of origin as well as ask if they have studied in the U.S.), marital status, number of children, current location/home of parents

- a. Experience in the U.S.
 - i. What was life like for you in the U.S.? How did you make a living? How was it that you came upon returning?
 - ii. Tell me, how was it? Were you detained? If so, where and when? What happened after?
- b. The Return
 - i. How did you return?
 - ii. Did you return to this location first or did you return elsewhere first?
 - iii. Will you stay here or move to another region/area?
 - iv. Do you have family or friends here? Where is the majority of my family?
 - v. What are things like here for you now that you have returned?
 - vi. How do you feel? How do you feel you've been received? How would you say your life is going here?
- c. Employment upon return
 - i. Are you working now?
 - ii. How were you able to get work? Do you like it?
 - iii. Have you had difficulty finding work?
 - iv. Do you think it is easy to find work after returning from the U.S.?
 - v. How long was it before you were able to find work?
- d. Reintegration process
 - i. How have you felt you've been reintegrated here?
 - ii. Has it been more or less easy? What have been the biggest challenges?
 - iii. How do you feel you've been treated at home, work, neighborhood since your return?
- e. Family Life Upon Return
 - i. How would you describe your family life? It is difference from when you left? If so, how?
 - ii. How do you see your children? Your wife/husband? Your parents?
 - iii. Did you send your family money or gifts while you were in the U.S. ?
 - iv. Do you think that these resources are now lacking for your family?

- v. Have you observed any changes in your neighborhood, community, country?
 - 1. Have there been any surprises?
- f. Future plans
 - i. Would you like to return to the U.S.? If so, why?

Interviews with family members of deportees

Basic information: Age, educational attainment, number of children, where is the family?

- a. When did XX leave for the U.S.?
- b. Did you live here or somewhere else when XX was in the U.S.? (If interviewee lived elsewhere: Why did you move here?)
- c. Do you currently work? Did you work before XX left? Did you work when XX was in the U.S.?
- d. In which area of life do you feel there has been more impact upon the return of XX? (Economic sense/ home finances? Dynamics of the home?)
- e. What was your life like when XX wasn't here? Was it any different? If so, how?
- f. If there are children in the family: What was the children's behavior like when XX wasn't here? Is it the same now?
- g. If wife/husband: How do you feel now that XX is back? Has it changed your daily routine in any way?
- h. In general has your life changed at all as a result of XX's return? If so, in what respects and how?

Interviews with institutions

- a. What is your take on the situation of persons deported from the U.S.?
- b. How do you see them adapting?
- c. In your opinion as a [clergyman (priest), pastor, doctor (medic), teacher (professor), etc.], what would you say are the effects of these deportations? Does this have any impact on your work?
- d. Has the community benefited? Why? In what way?
- e. Was this community prepared to receive these persons?
- f. What do you see as the long term effects of this in general and for the community and country at large?

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