Women's *Testimonios* of Life and Migration in *el Cruce*

by

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ABSTRACT

This study was done in collaboration with the Kino Border Initiative. The Kino Border Initiative is a Catholic, bi-national organization run by Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, Jesuit priests and lay people. The organization is dedicated to providing services to recently deported migrants and migrants-in-transit through their soup kitchen, women's shelter and first aid station in Nogales, Sonora. Based on their experiences in the women's shelter, the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist and researcher sought out to further understand migrant women's experiences of gender-based violence prior to migration. Using data collected by the Sisters, it was decided to use an analysis rooted in *testimonio*, and, in this way, use the women's words as a foundational basis for understanding the migration of women. The analysis is based on 62 testimonies related to women's histories of violence and their migration experiences, and the information from 74 intake questionnaires that were all analyzed retroactively. The analysis of data and *testimonios* has led to the realization that violence suffered by migrant women is not limited to the journey itself, and that 71% of women report having suffered some sort of violence either prior to or during migration. Often times, the first experiences of violence originated in their homes when they were children and continue to repeat itself throughout their lifetimes in varied forms. Their stories reveal how the decision to migrate is a consequence to the transnational and structural violence that pushes women to seek out ways to survive and provide for their families.

DEDICATION

For *las mujeres migrantes*. We thank them for their testimonies of life, faith, strength, courage, and hope.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I set out to write this thesis, I didn't understand what a life changing experience it would be for me. Working with migrant women in Casa Nazareth and building community with my co-workers helped me learn how to better listen to and serve people. As I connected with others, with their stories, and with their lives, I also learned to connect to myself and began to confront my own prejudices, sexism, privilege and ignorance. I continue to question myself in these areas by reflecting on my ideas and behaviors. However, I feel that I am more aware than I once was, and, for that, I am grateful.

Throughout this journey, many people whose guidance has made this research possible have supported me. First, I want to thank Dr. William Paul Simmons and Dr. Michelle Téllez. In 2009, they allowed me to work alongside them while they conducted research looking at migrant women and sexual violence. Their research is the founding stone of this work, both for revealing to me the connection between violence and migration in women's lives and for introducing me to the work of the Kino Border Initiative. It was during this time that I met the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, and I immediately fell in love with the ministry in Nogales. Two years later, I started to work for them as a volunteer, then a contractor, and, now, I am working for them in a full time position as an advocate and volunteer coordinator.

Specifically, I would like to thank the Sister Missionaries of the Eucharist who, from the very beginning, have been a part of this project. From the first day that I arrived to Nogales, they have worked with me gathering and analyzing information. However, my gratitude does not end with the research itself. From them, I have learned what are quite possibly the most important lessons of my lifetime and in my formation as a human being. While being a constant support to me in my growth and the pursuit of

my goals, they taught me the meanings of community, service, authenticity, and sisterhood. Specifically, I would like to thank Sister María Engracia Robles Robles. Arriving to the Kino Border Initiative, she immediately became a mentor to me, being an example of a woman rooted in practical realism, radical service, and feminist liberation theology. She advocated on my behalf so that I could continue to work with the Kino Border Initiative as an employee, and, many times, she believed in me more than I believed in myself. Friend and mentor, I am indebted to her for all her support throughout my two years in Nogales. I also thank Sister Lorena Reyes Leyva, who provided me with the example of joyful and overflowing love in service; Sister Rosalba Avalos, whose example showed me the importance of providing spiritual hope to the migrants that we serve, and Sister Alma Delia Isaias Aguilar who was my first contact with the congregation, and the person who first welcomed me as a lay person into their community. The Sisters were crucial to the development of this thesis, including the collection of testimonies and data, interviewing women, discussion and analysis of women's stories, and support for providing me with space and time to write. In essence, without the help of Sisters Engracia, Lorena, Rosalba, and Alma, this thesis would never have come to fruition.

I want to thank my mentor and committee chair, Dr. Alejandra Elenes, for all of her guidance, advice, time, dedication, and for never giving up on me. I value and admire her ability to be present with each student that she comes in contact with and the ability to transmit sincere concern for our well-being and success. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without her support. I also want to thank Fr. Sean Carroll, SJ who gave me the opportunity to work, grow and learn with the migrants and with the project, and Father Ricardo Machuca, S.J. for his flexibility and support, especially in the last days of writing the thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A Personal Migration

I have spent 10 years of my life observing and interacting in a social work role with immigrants, families of emigrants, migrants-in-transit, and recent deportees[1]. My first confrontation with migration began while on a trip to Morocco in 2000. We were travelling through a rainstorm a few days after having entered into Morocco. As I looked out the window, I noticed the limited visibility on the road and began to wonder whether or not it was safe to be driving a bus full of people in these weather conditions. Suddenly, we heard a desperate banging from the bottom of the bus. We realized that there were three teenage boys tied to the bottom by their shoelaces with the hope that they could arrive to Spain. Although I did not completely understand what I was witnessing at that time, it was my first look at the inequalities that exist when some people are allowed to cross international boundaries and others are not. Soon after that, I worked for over two years in Honduras and witnessed how poverty, violence, corruption and globalization conspire together in order to expel people from their homes, leaving their families behind in the hopes that the United States will provide opportunities for a better life. Returning from Honduras, I worked for 5 years with unaccompanied immigrant children and immigrant families in Phoenix, Arizona as a case manager, helping children to reunite with family members, integrate into the United States, and regularize their status. I listened to stories of difficult crossings into the United States and the struggles to live in Arizona, a state where anti-immigrant politics have, nationally, been the most polemic of recent years.

Currently, I am living on the U.S-Mexico border working with the Kino Border

[1] Explanation of terms: Immigrants refers to foreign-born citizens that live outside their country of birth, emigrants refers to those who have left their country of birth, and migrants-in-transit refers to people who are actively in the process of leaving their country of birth.

Initiative in Nogales, Sonora. The Kino Border Initiative (KBI) is a bi-national organization that is located on the Arizona-Sonora border. Our mission is to promote US-Mexico border and immigration policies that affirm the dignity of the human person and the spirit of bi-national solidarity through direct humanitarian assistance and accompaniment with migrants in the migrant kitchen, women's shelter (Casa Nazareth), and first aid station. Additionally, we provide social and pastoral education with communities on both sides of the border and participate in collaborative networks that engage in research and advocacy to transform local, regional, and national policies. The project consists of 15 permanent staff and many volunteers who help the project for varied amounts of time.

In 2011, I came to work with the Kino Border Initiative when they received a grant from Catholic Relief Services. The duration of the grant was from October 2010 to 2012. The goal was to address gender-based violence in Nogales, Sonora by providing KBI with resources to offer more comprehensive services to migrant women, as well as funding for advocacy related activities. Through the 2-year grant, KBI served nearly 900 women in the shelter and led daily discussions regarding issues related to gender-based violence with over 21,000 male migrants and over 5,000 female migrants in the migrant kitchen.

In 2009, when I went to the border for the very first time, I was immediately drawn to it as a transitory space for crossing - in all of its aspects – including physical, emotional, and intellectual crossings in both the lives of the migrants and in the lives of those who meet them. Now, I am working as a migrant advocate with the KBI, and I have been permitted to have direct contact with deported migrants on a daily basis. I am witness to what migrants are facing as they are in the in-between space of coming and going, and, in the midst of the transition and confusion, the migrants share their stories of past and present, and of pain and hope.

Those of us who work with the migrants have seen consistencies in their stories. Of the migrants we surveyed in the migrant kitchen, 80% state economic need as the principal motivator to cross to the United States, 17% state family reunification as their top motivator, and 5% state that they are fleeing from violence as their primary reason for migration (Kino Border Initiative 2012, 3). Both men and women express deep sadness regarding poverty, violence and the lack of opportunities in their countries, all which prompt them to make the difficult decision to migrate. They share the dangers that they face in the crossing, including extortions, robbery, beatings, being lost in the desert, near-death experiences due to lack of food and water or exposure to extreme heat and cold, kidnappings, rape, and killings. Of the migrants who pass through the kitchen one in four report to have suffered some type of physical or psychological abuse during their migration experience (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 1), and, for those who have lived in the United States, they lament the separation from their families and the difficult circumstances that do not allow for reunification.

When confronted with the humanness of survival and progress, the questions related to "right", "wrong"/"legal", "illegal" are not nearly as defined as the wall that divides the two countries. The gray area between these polar opposite terms are where the injustice of prevalent inequalities lie - injustices that allow some people to have access to everything while, at the same time, preventing others to have access to anything.

Migrant Women in Casa Nazareth Shelter in Nogales, Sonora

Migrant women, specifically, are more at risk to dangers *en route* to the United States because they are female. In a study completed by the Kino Border Initiative, a quantitative analysis shows that women migrants are at greater risk of suffering physical, verbal, or other type of abuse during their journey (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 25). The

mixture of quantitative and qualitative data has caused us to take special notice of the aspects of the migration experience that increase women's vulnerability to violence.

In previous years, Nogales, Sonora was marked as a dangerous border town, and the U.S. Department of State issued travel warnings for U.S. citizens so that they would be cautioned not to visit Nogales, Sonora for their safety. This violence was due to conflicts between the Beltran-Leyva group and the Sinaloa Cartel, two competing organized crime groups in the area. The violence peaked from 2009-2010, however, in 2011, the drop of violence indicated that the conflict between the two groups subsided, leaving the control of Nogales to the Sinaloa Cartel. Since then, tourism has picked back up, and there is less concern of tourists that they may find themselves in precarious situations of violence (Stellar 2011, 1). Unfortunately, safety for visitors and inhabitants of Nogales does not extend to migrants. Desperation, displacement and ties to the United States contribute to migrants continued vulnerability in a city that is clandestinely controlled by organized crime. Regularly, migrants are targeted, beaten, kidnapped, extorted, robbed, disappeared, raped, trafficked, and killed. Increasing their vulnerability, migrants are easily identified by the clothing they wear, including camouflaged backpacks they buy from Altar, Sonora or the plastic bags they are given prior to deportation by Immigration Customs Enforcement. The city swarms with people who are connected to organized crime and human smuggling networks and who make a living by taking advantage of the dreams and desperate situations that migrants bring with them.

There are several migrant shelters in Nogales, Sonora. However, migrants are not allowed to stay in the shelters during the day. From 8am to 6pm, migrants wander the streets looking for solutions to their problems and expose themselves to exploitation and abuse. This was the basis for founding Casa Nazareth shelter. It is designed to provide a safe place for migrant women where they can rest, heal, reflect and rejuvenate

themselves. Many times, women also struggle to make the "right" decision regarding crossing again, returning to their place of origin, or looking for work in another part of Mexico. We hope that the safe space aids the women in being able to ground themselves, look at their situations, consider the risks, and make decisions that have been carefully thought out instead of being instigated by desperation and survival instincts. They are allowed 8 days in the shelter (sometimes more depending on their situation), and they are encouraged to form community with one another through daily prayers, discussions, and sharing responsibilities of cooking and cleaning together. We have found that through community and mutual support, the women feel more secure in their decisions once they leave the shelter.

In this process of creating community and sharing, we naturally hear the many stories of women, many of whom have suffered different types of violence throughout their lives, including physical, sexual, economic, and psychological abuse. Together with the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist of KBI, we have explored the connection between gender-based violence and migration, trying to understand how these experiences influence a woman's decision to migrate to the United States, and how their experiences reflect the systemic injustice that makes women more vulnerable to violence.

In 1992, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees stated, "it may be assumed that unless he [sic] seeks adventure or simply wishes to see the world, a person would not normally abandon his home and country without some compelling reason" (UNHCR 1992, 1). By understanding that there are "compelling reason[s]" to migrate and that there are differences between the migration experiences of women, men, children, indigenous, gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals, we can better understand the push factors that motivate migration. Taking on the task to deepen our understanding of the particular reasons that women migrate, we see that violence is structural, systematic, and, largely, invisible (because "it's just the way things are"). As

stated by psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman, MD in “The Violences of Everyday Life,” “it is the hidden or secret violence out of which images of people are shaped, experiences of groups are coerced, and agency itself is engendered” (qtd. in Menjívar 2011, 1). Specifically, we begin to see how this violence is impacting women. We see that women are given fewer opportunities and are, generally, disadvantaged just for “being” women. Women now represent more than half of international regular and irregular migrants (Caritas 2012, 4), and, by listening to their stories, they provide us with valuable insight to help us understand the conditions that they live in and the ways that they are treated.

When talking about migration issues, the Kino Border Initiative’s bilateral, cross-border educational approach is to “change hearts and minds” by creating spaces for connection, because, as aptly expressed by Robert J. Alvarez Jr., “it is necessary to re-draw the borders of our cultural areas and look to the boundaries and connections of behavior” (Alvarez 1995, 468). The space of connection that KBI provides is a proverbial crossroads where all people who are on the journey of life can meet to serve and share experiences. Since we are all born into the world and are travelling through life until the moment of our death, we are all, essentially, migrants, albeit migrants with different levels of socially-constructed privilege[2].

Undoubtedly, there is growing interest in women’s migration experiences, and an increased awareness that, in order to better understand the migration phenomenon, it is necessary that our understanding be grounded in real people’s migration experiences. However, it is common for the media to simplify this complicated and multi-dimensional issue, and can often be an obstacle to obtaining the awareness needed to make

[2] There is an extensive and significant literature related to the “Other”. However, in this case, we believe that there is more value to opening spaces that allow us to reflect on how we are similar with those who are experiencing suffering. This can stimulate empathy and give way to that moment when we can see ourselves in the face of a migrant who is seeking a better life and connect to their experience, and this helps to reveal the systematic violence that allows for inequality.

meaningful changes in immigration policies. Unfortunately, this limitation of the media has far-reaching and painful consequences in the millions of lives that it affects. Certainly, the media's over-simplification of migrants (legal vs. illegal and victim vs. perpetrator) prevents the general public to understand the full scope of migrants' experiences and fails to recognize the complexity of human existence. By ignoring these complexities, the media, who is a gatekeeper of people's stories, helps to maintain a status quo that is limited in scope and that benefits the structures that permit the constant exploitation that migrants face from the moment they decide to leave their homes.

A good example of the media's support of the "accepted boundaries" of power structures were two articles that were written by *The Arizona Republic* opinion columnist, Linda Valdez, in 2012. The first article, "Deportee a Sad Stranger", follows the "victim" script and presents the story of a woman who lived in the United States since she was 2 months old, only speaks English and is deported from the United States leaving her two small children behind. Soon after, she writes a second article, "Deportee Left Out Unsettling Details in her Story", in response to a message she received from Immigrations Customs' Enforcement (ICE) defending the deportation. In her second article, she follows the "perpetrator" script and justifies Zayra's deportation because of an arrest that was instigated when, during a work raid in Phoenix, it was discovered that she was using someone else's social security number. In the reporter's eyes, this incident quickly converts Zayra from victim to criminal. However, both these scripts are limited and simplify the life and experience of Zayra. Neither representation allow for analysis of the power structures that are in place an that have treated Zayra as a commodity that can be used and moved around without any consideration of her personhood[3].

[3] Zayra was living in Casa Nazareth shelter at the time of the interviews and publication of the articles.

Migration Trends

According to Jacqueline L. Angel and Ronald L. Angel, "migration can not be conceived of as a single event. Rather, it is a process that occurs over time and affects all aspects of the migrant's life… [M]igration entails both significant life events and numerous chronic strains" (480, 1992). Undoubtedly, the decision to uproot oneself from one's place of origin is accompanied by a history of events, experiences, culminated with cultural norms and personal and social ideas and values that lead an individual to the decisive moment of leaving everything that is familiar in exchange for the unknown. Especially in today's context of irregular migration through Mexico, arriving to the U.S border means risking ones life in order to cross to the United States. In recent years, unauthorized migration from Mexico to the United States has changed dramatically. What was once run by non-violent mom-and-pop operations is now completely controlled by cartels. The cartels have taken control of the territory surrounding the borderlands. Once they arrive to the border, every migrant that is en route to the United States must pay a tax to the cartels ranging from $150 USD - $300 USD in order to cross. If they do not pay the tax, they risk being spotted by hired outlooks and being tracked down by assassins who are capable of killing the guide, and extorting, torturing, raping and/or killing the migrants. The tax does not include the price of arriving to their home, which, if they are from Mexico ranges from approximately $1500 USD - $4000 USD if they are going to cross through the desert, and is more costly if they are going to purchase a fake visa to cross through the legal port of entry. The financial costs coupled with the added risks of humiliation, psychological abuse, extortion, kidnapping, torture, death, and difficulty to denounce these abuses prove that migrants have no protections from human rights violations.

From the moment they leave their home, they are treated only as a commodity for the financial gain of others. This reality is a clear reflector into the lives of the

migrants and their desperation. Whether they see no hope for improvement of their economic situation in their place of origin, or they are running from violent situations in their towns and/or homes, or trying to reunite with family members that they left behind after living years in they United States and being deported, they will try to cross over and over again, risking their lives each time just for the slight chance that their situation can improve.

Trying to understand this phenomenon of "risking-it-all" (especially from the women migrants, who additionally risk the constant threats of sexual harassment and rape), together with the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, we collected 62 testimonies related to women's histories of violence and their migration experiences, and analyzed the information from 74 intake questionnaires that were taken in the women's shelter. From that work, I have chosen to analyze the basic data from the intakes as well as four longer testimonies related to women's histories of violence prior to migration so that we may further understand the factors that motivate women to migrate.

Learning to Listen to Migrant Women

When I first started working in the women's shelter and we started implementing intake interviews, I was astounded by how quickly some women began to share their stories. Although some women were guarded during interviews, more often than not, women were eager to talk and share their experiences, sometimes talking for over an hour about their present and past experiences. I remember clearly on one occasion, a woman who I was interviewing reached out to me and said, "thank you for listening to me. No one has ever listened to me before." It was at that moment that I had the sad realization that, although migrant women are sharing their stories, they are not being heard. There is a popular saying that is often used in humanitarian and human rights circles that says, "we must speak for those who do not have a voice." However, the truth

is that we live in a society where only a selected few are being heard. Our work should be to listen, and create spaces where women can speak for themselves to be listened to by others. In her book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development,* Carol Gilligan states, "the way people talk about their lives is of significance, that the language they use and the connections they make reveal the world that they see and in which they act" (1993, 2). It is in this context that we are trying to understand the specific experiences of migrant women that pass through our shelter.

Through the Catholic Relief services grant, we realized that through the process of listening to women's stories and creating more spaces for these women's stories to be heard, women were becoming political actors speaking out on their own behalf. According to Hannah Arendt, "Action…no matter what its specific content always establishes relationships and therefore has an inherent tendency to force open all limitation and cut across all boundaries" (1958, 190).

The women who arrive to Casa Nazareth shelter have had different life experiences – many rooted in the gender-based violence that is imbedded into daily life. The decision to migrate can be seen as a way to look for something new, liberate oneself from the daily stressors that surround them and compel them to pursue a "new beginning." Arendt stated that

> The disclosure of the "who" through speech, and the setting of a new beginning through action, always fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt. Together they start a new process which eventually emerges as the unique life story of the newcomer, affecting uniquely the life stories of all those with whom (s)he comes into contact. It is because of this already existing web of human relationships, with its innumerable, conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose; but it is also because of this medium, in which action alone is real, that it "produces" stories with or without intention as naturally as fabrication produces tangible things (Arendt 1958,184).

In essence, the staff of Casa Nazareth has become an ally to the "heroes"[4] that pass through the shelter and leave their footprints behind through the stories that are shared and recorded. However, it should also be noted that by trying to create a space for women's stories to be heard, and by writing this document, I take the risk of not presenting the true nature of their stories, and I risk "speaking for the Other" as cautioned by Linda Alcoff (1991). As Arendt fittingly points out:

> …These stories may…be recorded in documents and monuments, they may be visible in use objects or art works, they may be told and retold and worked into all kinds of material. They themselves, in their living reality, are of an altogether different nature than these reifications. They tell us more about their subjects, the "hero" in the center of each story, than any product of human hands ever tells us about the master who produced it, and yet they are not products, properly speaking. Although everybody started his life by inserting himself into the human world through action and speech, nobody is author or producer of his own life story (1958, 184).

For Arendt, the combination of "action" and "speech" are essential in order for human beings to be seen in the world. By shining light on the stories of the migrant women that pass through the shelter we can gain more perspective into the personal meanings of migration. We can literally change how we see history, "how human story is told, and also who tells it" (Gilligan 1993, xi).

Thesis Description

This thesis offers an analysis of the experiences of recently deported migrant women who received services through Casa Nazareth shelter in Nogales, Sonora. Our

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[4] I appreciate Arendt's explanation of the meaning and origin of the word "hero" in which I would like to present in the context of the migrant women's stories: "The hero the story discloses needs no heroic qualities; the word "hero" originally, that is, in Homer, was no more than a name given each free man who participated in the Trojan enterprise and about whom the story could be told. *The connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero, is in fact already present in a willingness to act and speak at all, to insert one's self into the world and begin a story of one's own* [author's emphasis]. And this courage is not necessarily or even primarily related to a willingness to suffer the consequences; courage and even boldness are already present in leaving one's private hiding place and showing who one is, in disclosing and exposing one's self. The extent of this original courage, without which action and speech and therefore, according to the Greeks, freedom, would not be possible at all, is not less great and may even be greater if the "hero" happens to be a coward" (Arendt, 186-187).

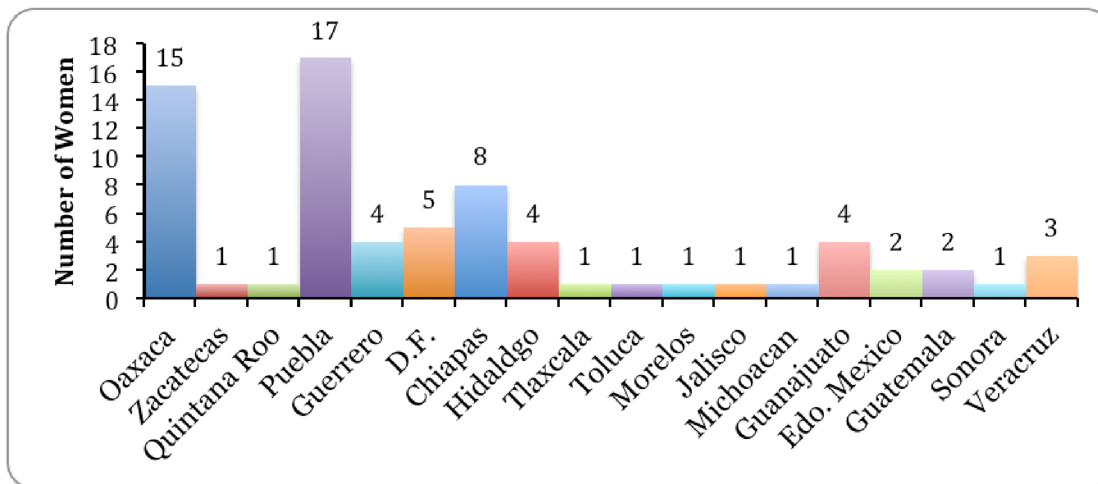
analysis attempts to explore how these experiences are rooted in systems of structural violence that follow women throughout their migration journey. The hope is that this understanding can better prepare us to enter the immigration debates on both sides of the border and work towards developing strategies for implementing just and informed political reforms.

The analysis is based on 62 testimonies related to women's histories of violence and their migration experiences and the information from 74 intake questionnaires that were all analyzed retroactively. As part of the standard intake process in the shelter, a questionnaire is used in order to assess women's most immediate needs, as well as to learn about the women's personal histories and migration experiences. The questionnaire is used as part of a standard process for intakes so that the shelter may benefit from a more thorough understanding of the women they work with while being a source of data for human rights advocates, researchers and students who wish to learn more about women's migration experiences. Prior to conducting the intakes, the women are informed of the possibility of sharing their answers with researchers and advocates, and they are asked for their consent to use the intakes for this purpose. The women know that they are free to decline to answer any question that they do not want to answer, and they also know that their personal identification information will remain anonymous.

In order to act in solidarity with the women that we work with, and considering the data that was available in the shelter, it was determined that the best form of analysis would be *testimonio*. An analysis rooted in *testimonio* allows us to use the women's own words as the foundation of understanding for their experiences. The women wrote all the *testimonios* in Spanish, and I translated them into English for the purpose of this thesis. In order to maintain the original meanings of these *testimonios* intact, I have also included the original texts in the appendices.

Prior to beginning the analysis, we wanted to understand the general demographics that were being represented in the shelter, and we decided to analyze the data from interviews that were conducted with 74 women who received services from Casa Nazareth. What we found was that the majority of women who stay in Casa Nazareth are Catholic, between the ages of 25-31, in civil unions, and from Puebla, Oaxaca and Chiapas. They have some primary school education and, mostly, identify economic need as their principal motivation to migrate. Many women are mothers and leave behind their children in the care of a grandparent so that they can look for work to provide for the family. Seventy-one percent of the women report having suffered some sort of violence either prior to or during migration. Specifically, the surveys completed with 74 women we found the following trends:

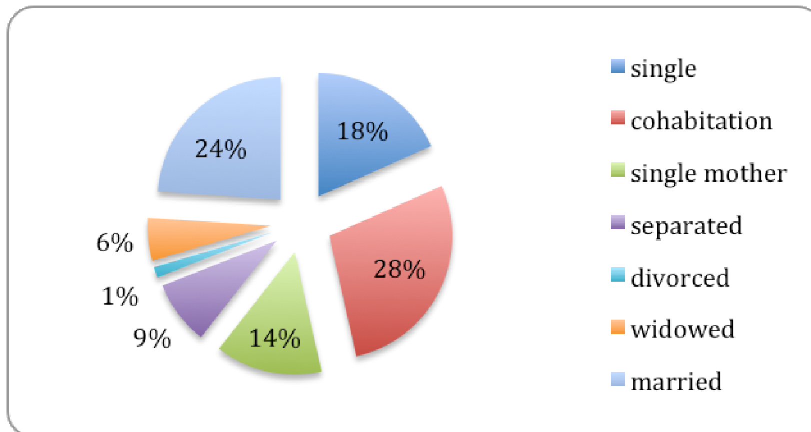
Figure 1. Migrant Women's Place of Origin



Of the 74 women who were interviewed, the majority of women came from Puebla and Oaxaca (Figure 1). However, it is important to note that in other data collected from the Kino Border Initiative, in a larger sample study then the one that is done here, show that the majority of women come from Oaxaca, and, second, Puebla. In addition, according to the Consejo Nacional de Población, the States that traditionally

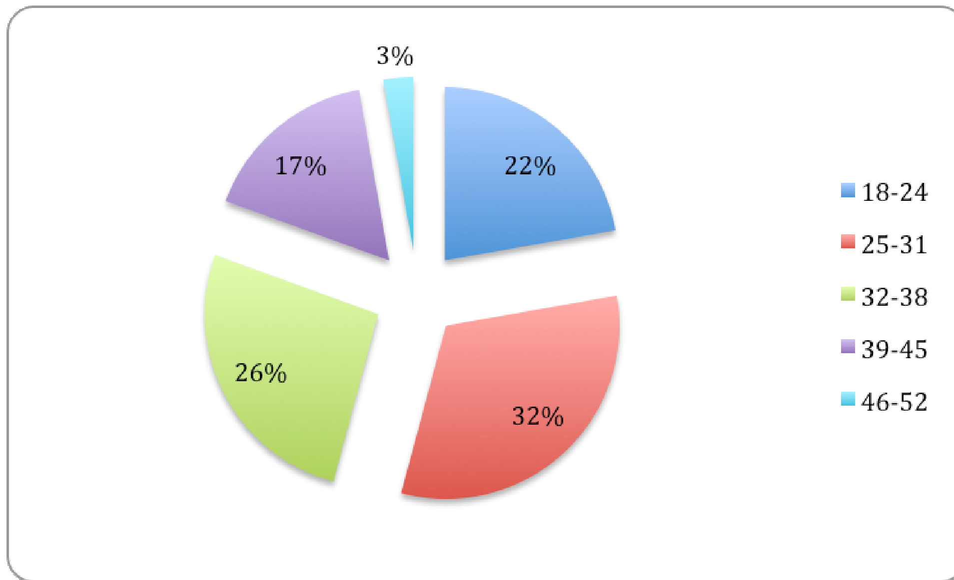
have had a high number of emigrants are Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit and Zacatecas. These are also the states that participated most in the Bracero Program (1942-1964), had high incidence of unauthorized migration (1964-1986), and the states that had the highest number of beneficiaries through the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, reaching a little more than 500,000 immigrants who were originally from these states. After the 1980s, we began to see other states that began to draw attention to the numbers of people leaving their communities in order to go to the United States. These states include Guerrero, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, State of México and, more recent, the states of Hidalgo, Veracruz and Chiapas, with the exception of Oaxaca and Guerrero due to their participation in the Bracero Program (CONAPO, 2010, 16-18). While Oaxaca is listed in within the top ten list of states with high incidence of migration, Puebla is actually considered in the list of states that have mild incidence of migration, and Chiapas is located on the list of states with low incidence of migration (CONAPO, 2010, 32-36). According to the National Institute for Migration, the greatest number of migrants that were repatriated to Mexico in 2012 came from Michoacán, Oaxaca and, then, Guerrero (INM, 2012). Finally in similar study by Anna Ochoa O'Leary done in 2006 and 2007 in Nogales, Sonora, she found the majority of women came from Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Puebla (O'Leary 2012, 146). Seeing that the data is varied among the different sources and that none make a gendered analysis of the place of origin of migrant women, a more in-depth study would be necessary to be able to understand women's migration routes and why greater number of migrant women from Puebla, Oaxaca, and Chiapas are passing through Nogales, Sonora.

Figure 2. Migrant Women's Marital Status



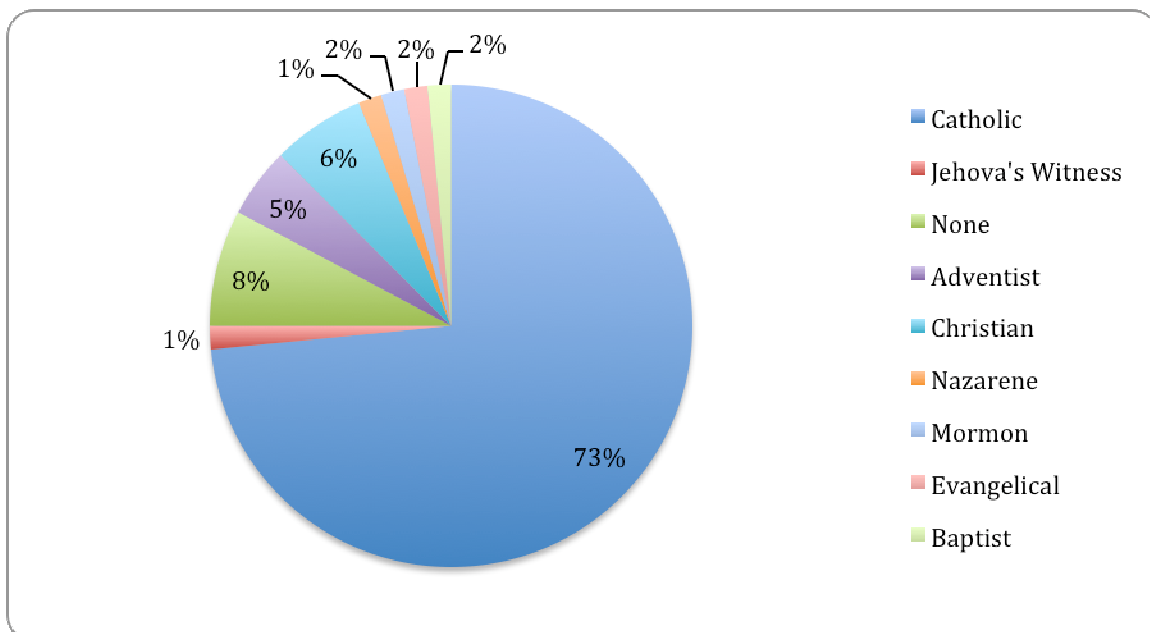
Twenty-eight percent of women who were interviewed reported that they were living in a cohabitating relationship (Figure 2). Many of the women who passed through the shelter were migrating in order to reunite with a partner who lived in the United States. Some were also migrating with their partner, but they had been separated during deportation and were in the shelter waiting to reunite with their partners. Twenty-four percent of the women reported that they were married, 18% reported that they were single and 14% reported that they were single mothers, meaning that the father of their child had abandoned his responsibility as a parent and the woman was acting as the sole provider of her children. However, not all women who were sole providers for their children self-identified as "single mothers." Many women, who were single, separated, divorced or widowed were also the sole provider of their children. In a study by Anna Ochoa O'Leary, she states that "an overwhelming majority of women are 'madres solteras' (single mothers) so it can be assumed that more women are coping alone with increased poverty by migrating" (O'Leary 2009, 30).

Figure 3. Migrant Women's Ages



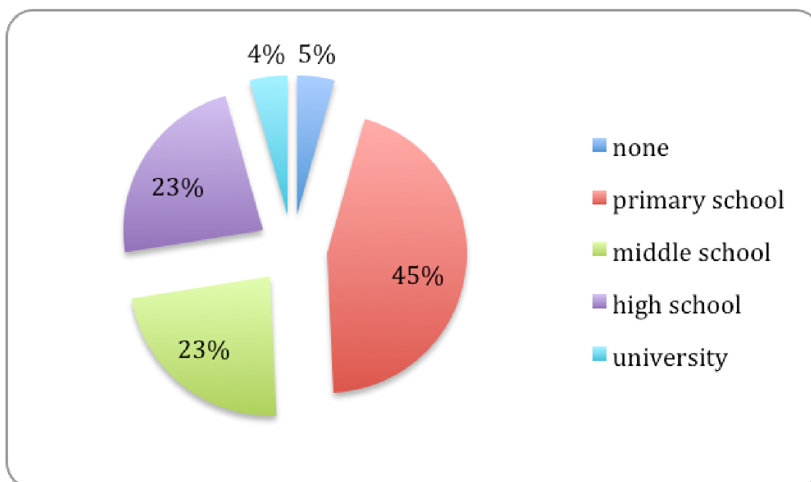
Of the women interviewed, 32% of women were between the ages of 25-31, 26% of the women were between the ages of 32-38, and 29% of the women were between the ages of 18 to 24. Decline of migrants after age 38 is probably due to decreased physical stamina to withstand difficult desert crossings.

Figure 4. Migrant Women's Religion



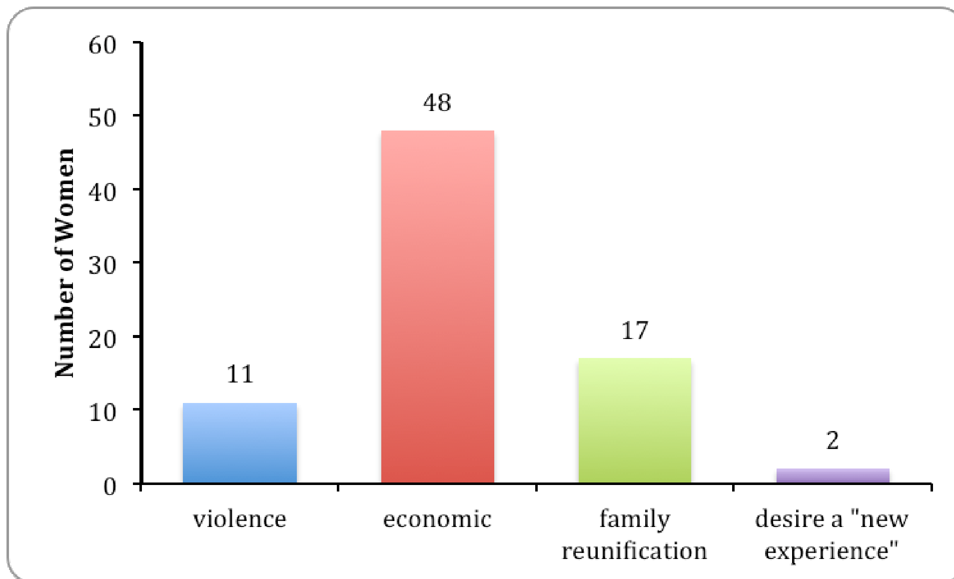
Nearly three-quarters of the women who stayed in the shelter identified themselves as being Catholic (Figure4). While this could indicate that women who are Catholic feel more comfortable staying in a shelter run by nuns, it is also true that Catholicism is the dominant religion in Mexico. Culturally, Catholicism and its symbols make up an important part of the migration experience. In the few belongings that the women carry with them, often times, they carry prayers or religious symbols. For example, many carry images of the Virgen of Guadalupe or Saint Toribio Romo, the patron saint of migrants crossing the Mexico-U.S. border. These symbols help to ease uncertainty about the future, and their faith helps them to make important decisions. Even the journey itself is reminiscent of Jesus' 40 days in the desert. According to Sociologist, Jacqueline Maria Hagan (2012), religion plays an important part of the migration experience throughout the entire journey of Mexican and Central American migrants, and aids in the decision-making process all the way to the moment that they arrive to the United States. Many times, women express their faith as a *pozo de agua* – a water well - in which they pull strength to help them to withstand long, dangerous walks through the desert, and give them the courage to risk their lives so that they can reach their goal of providing their families with a better life.

Figure 5. Migrant Women's Education



Forty-five percent of the women surveyed had some primary school education (Figure 5). The high percentage of women with a primary school education indicate that there is a certain demographic of women who are unable to find work, or find work that allows them to earn enough to care for their families. Father Pete Neeley, SJ from the Kino Border Initiative says that the idea that lack of jobs in Mexico leads to emigration is misconstrued. However, the fact that there are not enough schools or qualified teachers to teach in the schools, that poor families are forced to make decisions between their children going to school or working in order to contribute to the low income of the home, and that gender inequality within households makes women less-likely to be the children chosen to go to school are all large factors in the causes of emigration.

Figure 6. Migrant Women's Principal Motivation for Migration

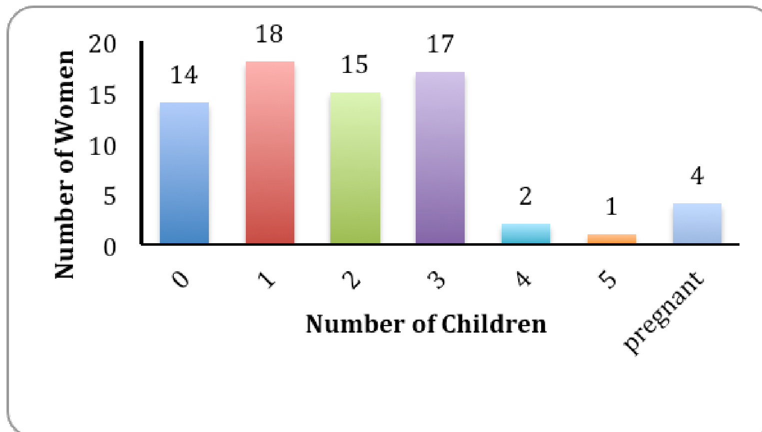


Women's participation in migration has increased greatly and, in addition to migrating together with family members it is also now more common for women to migrate alone (CONAPRA 2010, 13). In the 1990s, the migration of women from Mexico to the United States stayed stable between 5 to 10 percent (13). However, from 2007 to

2010, women migrating from Mexico to the United States increased, making up 12 to 26 percent of the total number of migrants (13). In addition, previously women have been viewed as migrating to the United States in order to reunite with their families, but the number of women migrating in order to find work is now greater than those who are choosing to migrate in order to reunite with family (13). This data supports the findings of the survey taken in Casa Nazareth shelter, showing that 48 of the 74 women interviewed, stated economic need as the major motivator in their decision to migrate (Figure 6). Twenty-three percent (17) stated family reunification as their main motivator to migrate, and 15% (11) of the women reported violence as a major motivator for their migration.

According to Steven Elías Alvarado and Douglas S. Massey, "The literature reflects a paucity of research on the relationship between violence and migration" and there is little research that focuses on how violence affects migration (Alvarado and Massey 2010, 138). They state that this lack of information "reflects the lack of data and other methodological constraints rather than a lack of interest in violence as a factor influencing migration" (139). There is a need for more studies that look at migration and migrants holistically. Instead of looking at the migrant and making an analysis based on one moment in their lives, the life story of the person should be considered when looking at events that lead to deciding to migrate.

Figure 7. Migrant Women and their Children



Of 71 women surveyed, 20% (14) women had no children, 53 women had between 1 to 5 children, and 4 women were pregnant (Figure 7). The women who had children or were pregnant had very high motivations to cross into the United States. However, although the 14 women did not have children of their own, many stated that they were migrating because they wanted to be able to work and send money to help support their parents and/or younger siblings. Many women indicated that their older siblings were not in a position to help their parents because they had families of their own.

Figure 8. Separation of Mothers from their Children

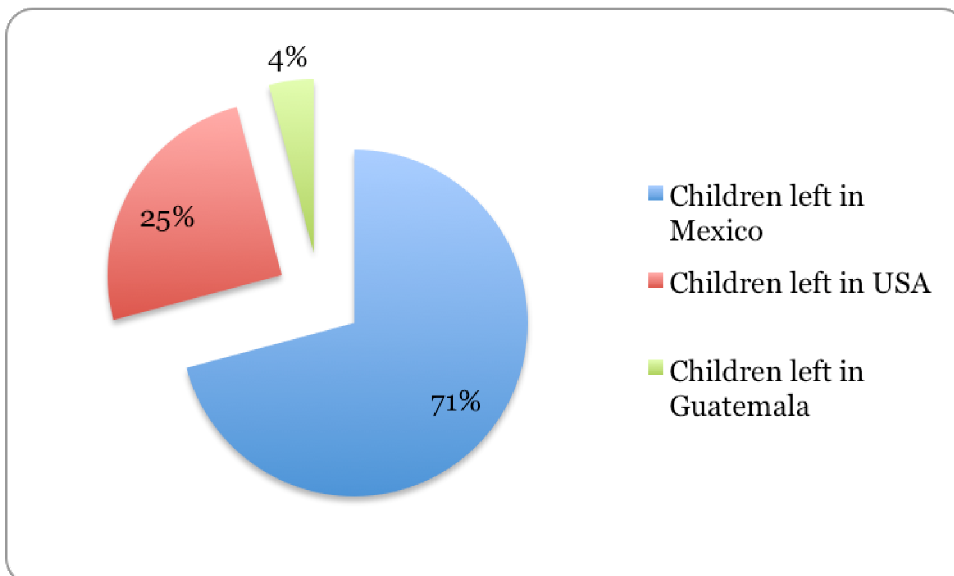
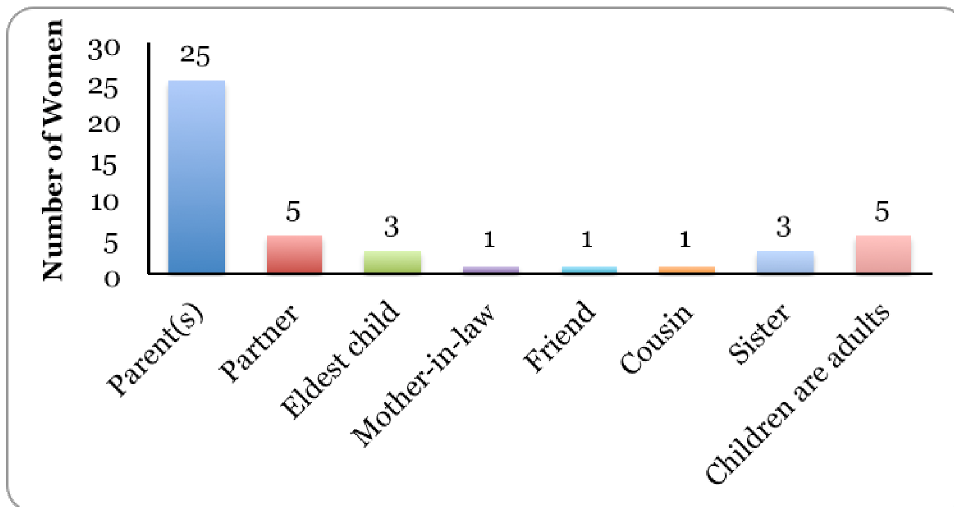


Figure 9. Primary Caretaker after Separation



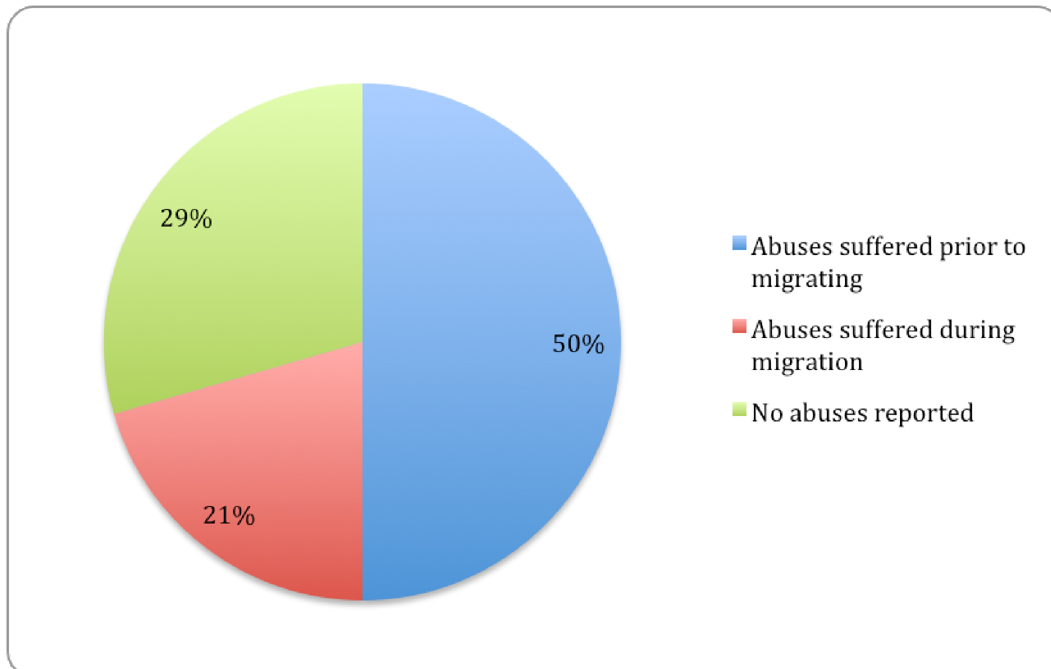
Family separation is one of the most spoken about issues related to migration. According to a report written by the Applied Research Center, in the first 6 months of 2011, 46,000 mothers and fathers were separated from their children due to deportation (2011, 5), and, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, approximately 5.5 million children in the United States live in mixed-status families where one or both parents are undocumented (Immigration Policy Center, 2013).

Of the women surveyed who had children (53), 25% had young children (younger than 18 years old) who had been left in the United States. These women, in particular, feel desperation in their need to return to the United States and reunite with their children. One woman explained that after the group she was migrating with abandoned her she was lost for 8 days in the desert. Suffering dehydration and near death, she said that the only thing that kept her going was the awareness that she had to get back to her children. Even after this experience, she decided to risk her life again and try to make the trek across the desert, convinced that her only option was to get across to her family and determined to keep trying until she made it. Another woman, after sharing her experience of trying to cross 11 times over a period of two years expressed, “I feel like I’m in a spiritual desert, and many times I feel like I want to die. The only thing that keeps

me going is the desire to be with my children again." The other 75% of the women, having felt that their were no opportunities in the countries and no options to help them care from their families, reported that they felt forced to leave their children in their place of origin so that they could look for work in the United States and send their children money so that their basic needs could be met. One woman explained to me with tears rolling off her face that she decided to migrate because she suffered everyday when her 3 children asked her if they were going to be able to eat. Another woman who wanted to go to the United States in order to work so that her children could afford to continue their education stated, "I am going to the United States for my children. I am risking my life for my children. And, I will return to Mexico for my children."

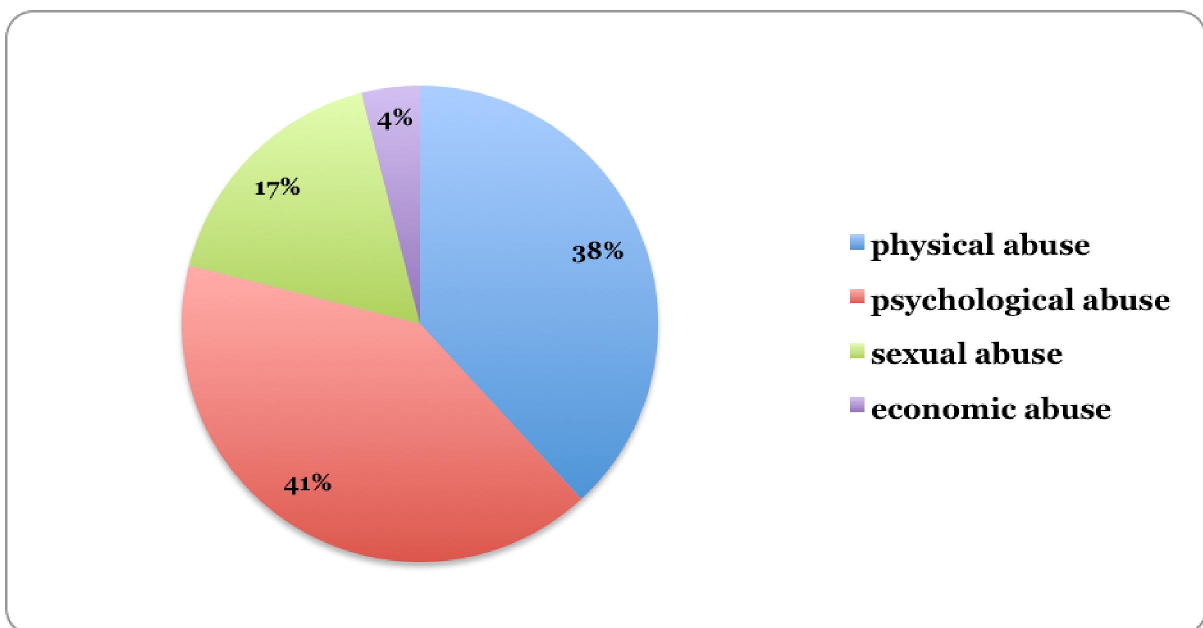
Both these aspects of family separation in migration can be damaging to families and especially to children. On the one hand, women are obligated to leave in hopes to find resources that will satisfy the basic needs of survival for their families and, on the other hand, women are torn away from their children by issues of legality and are put in positions where they feel forced to risk their lives in order to reunite with their families.

Figure 10. Abuses suffered by Women Before and During Migration



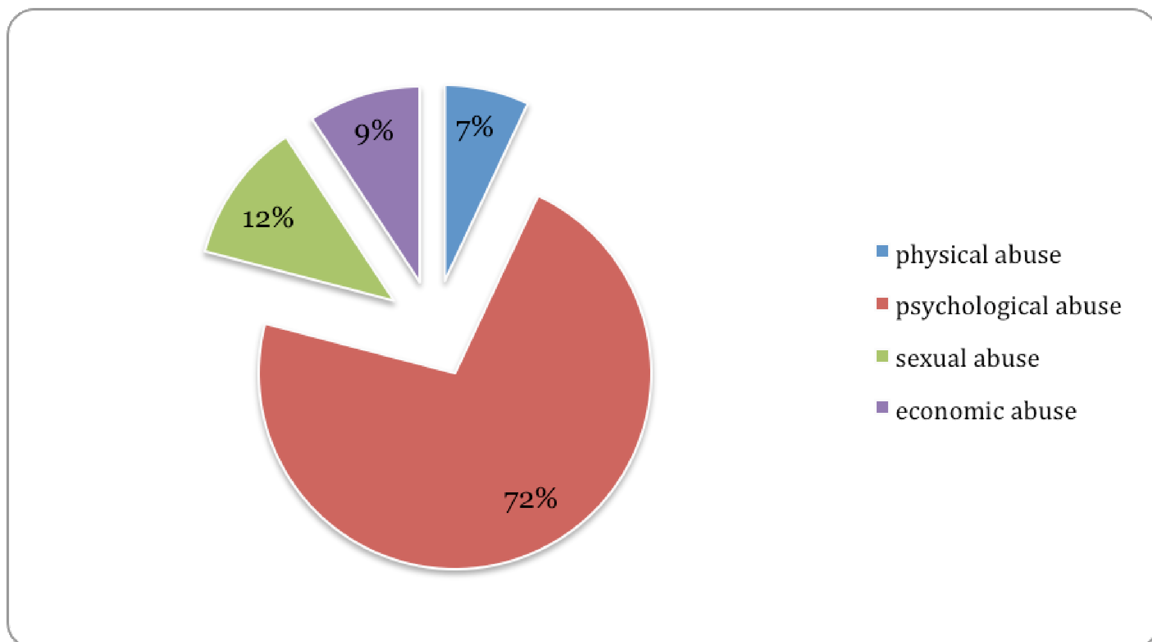
Of the 74 women surveyed, 29% did not make any reports of violence prior nor during migration. Twenty-one percent reported suffering some type of abuse during migration and 50% of the women reported suffering some type of abuse prior to migration (Figure 10).

Figure 11. Abuses Suffered by Women Prior to Migrating



The Kino Border Initiative recently conducted an analysis of surveys taken in the migrant kitchen and found that "women in Mexico are more likely to migrate due to violence" (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 24). In addition, a study in 2013 by the Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos found that 6 of every 10 women in Mexico have experienced some type of violence. In the case of the 74 women surveyed, 50% reported an experience of abuse prior to migrating. Of those women, 41% reported psychological abuse, 38% reported physical abuse, 17% reported sexual abuse and 4% reported economic abuse (Figure 11).

Figure 12. Abuses Suffered by Women During Migration



Of the women who reported abuse during migration, 72% reported that they suffered some form of psychological abuse, including verbal abuse by immigration authorities, smugglers or other migrants; 12% reported some form of sexual abuse, including sexual harassment, rape, and being abandoned in the desert by the guide if they rejected sexual advances; 9% reported some form of economic abuse, including being extorted, robbed, or forced to work without receiving pay (Figure 12). According to

the 2013 report by KBI, women suffer a higher incidence of violence than men by Border Patrol and at the hands of criminals during migration (7).

It is worthwhile to note that many women have difficulty reporting the abuses that they have experienced prior and/or during migration. It is suspected that these numbers are higher than expressed here, and it is necessary to find creative ways of reaching migrant and immigrant women in sensitive ways in order to further research and increase understanding of the violence that migrant women are subjected to.

This thesis consists of five chapters. First, the introduction lays out the motivation behind the decision to study migrant women's life experiences, as well as provide a demographic context in order to further understand the *testimonios* that follow in chapter four. Chapter two provides an historical overview of Mexican migration to the United States and follows the evolution of understanding women's historical contribution to the migration process. Chapter three lays out the theoretical framework of the thesis, placing the women's stories as the fundamental starting place to understand their motivations for migration. The *testimonios* and analysis are found in chapter four. The *testimonios* provide context to understanding the decision to migrate and reveals the gender-based violence that follows women throughout their lives. Chapter five concludes the thesis, providing policy recommendations that should be considered for women migrants in Mexico and the United States. Chapter 6 is a short reflection about how the last two years working on this research has transformed my consciousness.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Migration from Mexico to the United States: An Overview

Especially beginning with the U.S.-Mexico war, the United States has taken an authoritative and imperialist stance in its relations with Mexico. Both countries try to maintain a good public image – the U.S. as the "good neighbor" to the South and Mexico as a proud, strong nation-state. However, in reality, historical events reveal that the U.S. tactics and strategies that forced Mexico into concessions actually went against the best interests of the Mexican people. Immigration, in specific, has been a source of debate both internally and bilaterally. And, especially in the border area, the lines between the U.S. and Mexico have often been blurred due to a merged and shared culture and relationships. According to Ashley Pettus, "a brief look at the history of the Mexican-U.S. labor relationship reveals a pattern of mutual economic opportunism, with only rare moments of political negotiation" (2007, 50).

Tracking the history of immigration between these two countries begins in 1848, after the end or the U.S. American War and with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Treaty resulted in the seizure of 500,000 square miles of Mexican territory, including what is now Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and parts of Utah, Nevada and California and affected approximately 100,000 Mexicans (Griswold del Castillo 2006; Griswold del Castillo 1998, 36). Historian, Richard Griswold del Castillo states:

> The treaty has been important in shaping the international and domestic histories of both Mexico and the United States. During the U.S.-Mexican War, U.S. leaders assumed an attitude of moral superiority in their negotiations of the treaty. They viewed the forcible incorporation of almost one-half of Mexico's national territory as an event foreordained by providence, fulfilling Manifest Destiny to spread the benefits of U.S. democracy to the lesser peoples of the continent. Because of its military victory the United States virtually dictated the terms of settlement. The treaty established a pattern of political and military inequality between

> the two countries, and this lopsided relationship has stalked Mexican-U.S. relations ever since. (2006).

In addition, in 1853, the United States purchased almost 30,000 acres more of Mexican land, including what are now Tucson, Tubac and Tumacácori in an agreement called the Gadsden Purchase (Sheridan 2012, 65). Following the signing of the treaty and the Gadsden Purchase, many Mexicans that already resided in this territory remained in what was newly acquired U.S. land. However, even though Mexicans were given U.S. citizenship, and were long time inhabitants of the land, in the eyes of newly arrived foreign settlers, former Mexican citizens "were almost always considered foreigners" (Griswold del Castillo 2006, 37). They were viewed as second-class citizens, and the specifics of the Treaty were not respected. They were deprived of their property and civil rights, suffering loss of land, lynchings, murders, robberies, and abuse without any protection from the U.S. government (37). According to Griswold del Castillo, "a major consequence of Mexico losing the war with the United States in 1848 was the creation of a pattern of economic subordination that contributed to the impoverishment of the Mexican people in the United States" (1989, 38).

Under the Naturalization Act of 1790, the borders were open and there no quotas to limit the number of people who entered the United States. It was not until 1882 under the Chinese Exclusion Act that employment of Chinese workers became prohibited (SPLC 2013, 3). This was the first time that immigration policy was developed with the intention of excluding particular nationalities. At the same time agriculture in the West was expanding and stimulated the "first major influx from the South" (Riding 1989, 330). Later, in 1907, a few years before the beginning of World War I, provoked the sudden halt of Japanese immigration and further increased the need for Mexican labor to maintain railroads while American workers left the country to fight overseas (Pettus 2007). In fact, it was the combined 'pull' of agricultural and railroad maintenance jobs

during War World I that "coincided with the 'push' of economic hardship and political chaos during the Mexican Revolution" that led to a significant number of Mexican workers immigrating into the U.S. (Riding 1989, 330).

After the war ended in 1918, nativism intensified in the United States and, in an attempt to curtail the number of Mexican entering the United States, the U.S. Border Patrol was created. However, due to the continued economic demand for migrant workers, Mexicans continued migrating north to work (Pettus 2007; Riding 1989). During the Great Depression, the migration flow came to a standstill and immigrants began to be blamed for "taking jobs away from Americans" and "living off public relief" (Massey, Durand, Malone 2002, 33; Pettus 2007, 50). According to historian Kelly Lytle Hernandez, it was "this unique moment of diminished employment opportunities in the United States, more Mexicans returned to Mexico than entered the United States (2006, 424). During this time, Mexicans (both undocumented and legal residents) were targeted by federal authorities, and - in cooperation with state and local officials - were deported by the thousands (Pettus 2007, 50). Without a doubt, history is repeating itself. The implementation of programs like 287(g) (1996)[5], Secure Communities (2008)[6], and SB1070 (2010)[7] all allow state and local officials to cooperate with the

[5] According to the Immigration Customs Enforcement's (ICE) "Fact Sheet: Updated Facts on ICE's 287(g) Program," the program "allows a state and local law enforcement entity to enter into a partnership with ICE, under a joint Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), in order to receive delegated authority for immigration enforcement within their jurisdictions." The program is currently functioning in more than 19 states and has more than 1,300 trained and certified officers (found at: http://www.ice.gov/news/library/factsheets/287g.htm).

[6] Secure Communities is a "federal information-sharing partnership between ICE and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)." During arrest, "the FBI automatically sends the fingerprints to DHS to check against its immigration databases. If these checks reveal that an individual is unlawfully present in the United States or otherwise removable due to a criminal conviction, and ICE takes enforcement action." Secure communities is currently being practiced in 3000 different jurisdictions (Found at: http://www.ice.gov/secure_communities/).

[7] SB1070 is an Arizona law that was passed in 2010 and caused a great deal of controversy nationally and internationally for being discriminatory. The law was passed in order to permit Arizona to regulate unauthorized immigration at the State level and charge local police with

federal immigration authorities to report unauthorized immigrants. With these agreements in place, deportations have reached all time highs in recent years.

In 1940, the United States entered into World War II, and the need for Mexican workers was renewed. In order to meet the labor needs in the agriculture fields, U.S. growers insisted that the U.S. government respond to their demands (Riding 1989, 330), and, in 1942, the Bracero program[8] was established in order to "facilitate the migration of short-term Mexican contract laborers into (and out of) the United States" (Hernandez 2006, 422). However, many Mexicans continued to travel without work permits because they were ineligible to for the program (425). Kelly Lytle Hernandez states that:

> Only healthy young men with agricultural experience, but without land, who had secured a written recommendation from local authorities verifying that their labor was not locally needed, were eligible for the *bracero* contracts. Many poor Mexicans who were too young or too old, too sick, or female, were turned away by Mexican authorities (2006, 425)

At the same time as the implementation of the Bracero program, the U.S. Border Patrol also began to work in collaboration with Mexican law enforcement officials in order to deport unauthorized workers and control migration. These deportation programs increased over the next 10 years and gradually built up to what is now know as Operation Wetback of 1954 – a law enforcement campaign made up of eight hundred Border Patrol agents that "swept through the southwestern United States performing a series of raids, road blocks, and mass deportations" and deported approximately 1 million people in just one year (Hernandez 2006, 421). However, despite the mass deportations, the Bracero Program had allowed 4.6 million Mexicans to work in the United States, and, by 1964, "a

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investigating legal status when there is "reasonable suspicion" that a person is in the United States without legal documentation.

[8] The Bracero Program was a program instituted from 1942-1964 that allowed for millions of Mexican workers to enter the United States with agricultural contracts. However, as noted by Segura and Zavella, these policies did not provide work opportunities to Mexican women and "strongly influenced gendered migration patterns" (2007, 6).

strong tradition of working north of the border had been reinforced in much of rural Mexico" (Riding 1989, 330).

Many of the issues surrounding immigration were ignored throughout the 70s and into the 80s. Finally, in 1986, the United States passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), granting amnesty to approximately 2.3 million Mexicans in the United States (Pettus 2007, 50). Of course, amnesty had its costs. As part of the deal to give status to millions of immigrants, efforts were made to increase border security, and, now, the idea of building a wall would turn "a pattern of circular migration into one of permanent settlement" (50). After IRCA passed, border policies "had less to do with stopping undocumented migrants than with pushing them into remote sectors of the border where they will be neither seen nor heard, and most important, where they will not be videotaped" (Massey, et al 2002, 106). As part of a strategy of "targeted enforcement," the U.S. Border Patrol began to implement Operation Gatekeeper in San Diego, California and Operation Blockcade in El Paso, Texas (107). This caused immigration flow to be pushed into Arizona, "a state that had experienced no significant immigration since the 1920s" (108), and soon Border Patrol would implement similar operations in other border cities, continuing to push migrants out towards more isolated and dangerous terrain (109). Dougles Massey, et al state that:

> By pushing migration away from urbanized areas and toward sparsely populated sectors, the Border Patrol had effectively channeled migrants toward portions of the border where they would less likely be caught, for in addition to being less inhabited, the new crossing points were also less patrolled. In other words, the enforcement strategy pursued by the United States after 1993 functioned to *reduce* the odds of arrest by directing larger numbers of migrants toward border locations where enforcement resources were scarce and apprehension was less likely (109).

Even though, apprehension was less likely, crossing became more dangerous, while at the same time increasing the likelihood that men and women from Mexico would

migrate (113). It seems that "[d]espite the fanfare along the border, the deterrent effect has been nil" (112).

Following the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, the heightened sensitivity pointing towards "border security" continued to close borders, turning the United States into a virtual prison for those forced to decide between seeing their families and providing for them. The economic need persisted, and Mexicans still could not find economic opportunities in their country. In 2005, sociologist Douglas Massey told the Senate Judiciary Committee that "from 1965 to 1985, 85 percent of undocumented entries from Mexico were offset by departures and the net increase in the undocumented population was small. The build-up of enforcement resources at the border has not decreased the entry of migrants so much as discouraged their return home" (qtd. in Pettus 2007 50).

Now, it seems that we are living the same history over again. It was reported in 2012 that "net migration from Mexico" fell to zero. Both President Obama and former Mexican President Calderon wanted to credit their administration's policy decisions for the reduction in migration. However, it is more likely that the decrease is due to the failing economy coupled with increased border security, mass deportations, increased collaboration between local and federal authorities, abuse by Border Patrol agents and other police authorities, nativism, prejudice, discrimination, more dangerous crossings, and increased organized violence in Mexico. Certainly, it is a repeated history and a damaging precursor to paving the way to another, desperately needed reform that will, most likely, lead to greater border enforcement, followed by more deaths of migrants.

Gender and Migration

Historically, migration has had a male face. Men have been recognized for their participation in the labor market and for events that marked periods of crisis and

instability in Mexico. Most notably, large waves of male immigrants from Mexico arrived to the United States during the time of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the Cristero War[9] (1927-1929), and, later, the Bracero Program (1942-1964). Women were also a part of this history, but they were not paid attention to by researchers because they were seen as companions of their husbands or other male relatives, and not direct actors influencing the economic market (Woo Morales 2007, 19).

In the 1960s, the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) was instituted on the U.S.-Mexico border and led itself to the development of factories (*maquiladoras*). Contrary to the Bracero Program, of which women were not eligible for, the factories actively sought to hire women because they were seen as having "nimble fingers," being good at "tedious tasks" and were preferred for their "docility"[10] (Segura and Zavella 2007, 12; Davidson 2000, 26). Nogales, Sonora was also a part of this initiative, opening its first factory in the mid-1960s, and attracting hundreds of thousands of people from outside Nogales, tripling the population by the mid-1990s (Davidson 2000, 10-24).

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[9] The Cristero War was a popular uprising of Catholics against the ruling Mexican government in response to religious persecution, during which time, as much as 5% of the population sought refuge in the United States (Jrade 1985).

[10] The use of the adjective "docile" reflects the works of Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben and to their ideas related to the "bestialization" of the person. Gamben states that "the development and triumph of capitalism would not have been possible…without the disciplinary control achieved by the new bio-power, which, through a series of appropriate technologies, so to speak created the "docile" bodies that it needed" (1998, 3). In the case of the women that Davidson refers to in her book, she mentions the "social upheaval" that was caused by women beginning to work in the *maquiladoras* in Nogales, Sonora. The cause of this was the amount of control that the girls' fathers had on their daily life, such as keeping track of the days they worked, the times that they left, to the extent that managers needed to go to the women's homes personally in order to inform the families of the women's work hours (Davidson 2000, 27). From this perspective, we can see how patriarchal structures create the "docile" bodies that are so sought after in the *maquilas*. Rosalba Robles Ortega also mentions "docile bodies" in her essay "Cuerpos Martirizados, Mentes Ausentes" ["Martyred Bodies, Absent Minds"] saying that society has "put itself in charge of giving meaning to a culture that gives way to the production and reproduction of bodies in the form of submissive and dominated women (docile bodies), thereby creating a favorable space where gender violence can materialize…without the slightest coercion" (Robles Ortega 2007, 174) [translation by author].

According to Woo Morales, it was during the 1980s when women were finally recognized as important agents in the migration process (qtd. in Segura and Zavella 2007, 19) because it is when "hundreds of foreign, mostly U.S-owned factories...moved to the border to take advantage of Mexico's low wages and lax environmental regulations" (Davidson 2000, 5). In addition, according to Segura and Zavella, the number of women migrating from Mexico to the United States grew steadily after the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was passed by Congress and granted amnesty to almost 2.7 million "unauthorized" immigrants (Orrenius and Zavodny 2012, 89). This increase in the number of women emigrating to the United States includes both documented and undocumented women – percentages growing from 5% in 1920's to 7% during the years of the Bracero Program, and quickly shooting up to 20% after the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, an act which gave preference to family members and skilled workers while increasing the cap of the number of immigrants that were allowed to enter into the United States (Kennedy 1965, 138).

Later in 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was passed and became an important factor to the domestic migration of Mexican women to the Northern border region, which, as noted by Segura and Zavella, can be "one indicator of possible future transnational migration" (2007, 7). A year following the implementation of NAFTA, there was a "disastrous devaluation of the peso" in Mexico (Davidson 2000, 41). The price of setting up factories lowered so much that U.S. companies quickly decided to take advantage of low costs by building and expanding factories, doubling the workforce from approximately half a million to a million following the collapse (2000, 41). The devaluation of the peso was followed by a 42 percent increase in Mexican emigration (Philip 2004, 125), and the factories continued to recruit large numbers of

women, preferring "young, single women who still lived at home with their families" (Davidson 2000, 26).

Currently, there is no question as to the importance of women migrants in the international economy. In 2012, women made up over 50% of the number of international immigrants worldwide (Caritas 2012; Segura and Zavella 2007).

There are now a growing number of researchers, from a range of disciplines, studying the different ways in which women are part of the migration phenomenon (Woo Morales 2007, 19; Hondaganeu-Sotelo and Cranford, 1999). Studies conducted by Woo Morales have shown that women are migrating for more reasons than to find work - motivations which are not necessarily mutually exclusive to one another (i.e. work *and* family reunification) (2007, 20). Stefanie Kley suggests that the decision to migrate comes from a multi-layered decision-making process that evaluates resources and compares opportunities of the current residence with that of other possible destinations, and is influenced by "significant others" and significant life events (2011, 469). She proposes that "migration intentions are based on the perception that reaching important life goals might be easier elsewhere than at the place of residence. Therefore migration decision-making is assumed to be strongly influenced by life-course events and to be especially likely during life-course transitions" (Kley, 2011, 469)[11]. Shawn Malia

[11] In a report on National Public Radio (September 20, 2012), scientist Joshua Green from Harvard University was interviewed about studies that are being conducted looking at how human beings make moral decisions. They have seen that, in some instances, humans' brains switch into "rational mode" that allow for "cost-benefit analysis" while, other times, the brain switches into "emotional mode", causing decisions to be based on physical and emotional reactions that originate from the body. The results of these studies are leading scientists to believe that the images that the brain creates when confronted with a decision can be the deciding factor of what mode the brain will switch on. If we have "vivid images in our head" of a particular situation or event, we are more likely to make a decision based on an emotional response. As our brain takes in images (movies, news, T.V. advertisements, etc.), "hidden circuits in [the] brain are literally changing the ground rules in which [we] judge events" and "the movies playing in [our] head(s) might be making [our] decisions for [us]" (Vedantum 2012). Therefore, the decision to leave families behind and migrate to the United States could also being influenced by "vivid images" that flood their minds. With the advent of globalization, it could be the overwhelming amount of images showing "prosperity" in the United States, coupled with the absolute paucity of

Kanaiaupun also recognized that there is an agreement among the literature regarding the motivating factors of migration, including greater opportunities abroad, family considerations, social networks and economic need, but he is astute to point out that "a further analysis of the social forces underlying these relationships reveal fundamentally different migrations patterns, in particular who migrates and why" (2000, 1312). However, there is still more to learn and there should be a "larger effort to make gender and gender oppression central to the studies of migration" while, at the same time, building "understanding of how gender as a social system contextualizes migration processes" for all migrants (Hondageneu-Sotelo 1999, 566) by including "the voices and experiences of Mexican women" (Segura and Zavella 2007, 18).

Structural Violence

Currently, there is a great deal of research that focuses on immigrant women, work and experiences of post-migration integration (Hondaganeu-Sotelo 1999; de la Pena, 2007; Maier, 2006; Mattingly, 2006). Certainly, economic need is a big reason why many women migrate to the United States. However, other contributing factors such as gender discrimination in the forms of corruption and violence cannot be ignored. It is true that both men and women – especially migrants - suffer from different forms of violence throughout Latin America, but it is also true that women suffer from a greater threat of violence and are at greater risk simply because they are women. Marcela Lagarde y de los Rios explains that "worldwide" all women have suffered some form of gender violence and that this violence stems "from the subaltern social status and political subordination of gender that affects them" (2010, xix). Specifically, it is in this context that women are migrating.

images that reveal the life-threatening risks of clandestinely crossing through Mexico and into the United States, that also contribute to this decision to emigrate.

In her book *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma,* Anna Castillo (1995) states that, historically, "Mexican Catholic culture" has "secluded" and "excluded" women "at all levels of society," including society's economic system of exchange" (70), and that "since women have had no real social status in and of themselves; they have had to count on whatever status they may receive as possessions of men" (72).

Paul Farmer defines structural violence as "a series of large-scale forces…ranging from gender inequality to racism and power – which structure unequal access to goods and social services," and, according to Mary K. Anglin, "through structural forms of violence persons are socially and culturally marginalized in ways that deny them the opportunity for emotional and physical well-being, or expose them to assault or rape, or subject them to hazards that can cause sickness and death" (qtd. in Segura and Zavella 2007, 2-3). It is the structural violence that exists in the form of patriarchy and is intersected by lines of race, gender and class status that further exposes women to incidences of violence and creates obstacles for securing state protection (Fregoso 2007).

María Cristina Morales and Cynthia Bejarano explain that the U.S-Mexico border, specifically, is a space where the consequences of neoliberal policies such as the termination of the Braceros program, NAFTA and BIP have allowed violence called "border sexual conquest…to surface" by simultaneously "pushing" and "pulling" women to the Northern Mexico border (Morales and Bejarano 2009, 420). They state that "[b]order sexual conquest occurs when nation-states, along with transnational corporations, exacerbate sexual and gendered violence through the exploitation of local places and their people (particularly women), whom they perceive as marginalized…and 'marginalizable'" (424).

Policies from both the United States and Mexico that cause of poverty and violence push people out of their homes and towards the border, and the clash of policies and needs has created the explosion of violence that we see today. Additionally, the

United States has responded to this self-inflicted surge of migration and violence by increasing border enforcement, a strategy that former Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff stated would likely result in even more violence at the border (426). It is in this context in which migrants respond to "society's macro-level inequalities" by leaving their homes (423). Certainly, violence is "central to the organization of power in everyday life" (Bourgois 2009, 17), and it is necessary to take notice of the different forms of violence that surround women prior to migrating in order to understand the context in which they decide to leave their homes.

Literature Review of Gender and Migration

Researchers have made a call to further examine the role of gender in migration (Kanaiaupun, 2000; Pedraza, 1991; Hondaganeu-Sotelo, 2007; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2007; Segura and Zavella, 2007; Castro Soto, et. al, 2010). For example, in "'Nunca he dejado de tener terror': Sexual Violence in the Lives of Mexican Immigrant Women" by Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez, she writes "recent studies have argued that gender relations are crucial for understanding the immigration and settlement experiences of women and men" (Gonzalez-Lopez 2007, 225). In 1999, Pierrette Hondaganeu-Sotelo and Cynthia Cranford wrote, "In spite of the focus on women and migration, gender and migration does not receive commensurate attention. Feminist scholarship shows that gender—that is, the social and cultural ideals, displays, and practices of masculinity and femininity—organizes and shapes our opportunities and life chances. The concept of gender as an organizing principle of social life, however, has encountered resistance and indifference in immigration scholarship" (106). Since this time, however, there has been greater attention given to migration and gender and we have been provided with scholarly works that bring deeper understanding to migrant and immigrant women (Salzinger, 2007; Castaneda & Zavella, 2007; Falcon, 2007). The paucity of literature that explore

connections between migration and gender-based violence indicate that further scholarship is needed so that we may more fully begin to understand the factors that influence migration.

More recently, some scholars have been focusing their efforts by studying violence that is suffered by both migrant and immigrant women. However, due to the delicate nature of working with, specifically, undocumented women and women migrants who have suffered abuse, this research is slow in coming. In spite of these challenges, several researchers have been working arduously to uncover injustices that are suffered – often in silence - by migrant and immigrant women. In Mexico, Rosalba Robles Ortega worked on a study examining the domestic violence suffered by women in Ciudad Juarez. In her analysis, she uses the experiences of 12 women who suffer from domestic violence, 11 of whom were migrant women from other parts of Mexico. In her work, she affirms that women are victims of "tacitly explicit" violence that begins with the construction of [their] disciplined bodies that are produced for gender violence, and "are receptacles for insults, punches, hair pulling, sexual abuse, and, even, feminicide" (2007, 167-169) [translation by author]. She states that the "lack of autonomy that women have over their bodies is one of the reasons why [they] are treated like territory that can be disputed and occupied" (181). It is within this context that she explores the *mecanisimos de resistencia*[12] that women use to manage their experiences of domestic violence and discovers that "in order to survive" some women's brains seem to disconnect from their body in order to avoid registering the suffering that they experience (167). She cites Judith Butler saying, "the mind does not only subjugate itself to the body, instead, it sometimes plays with fantasy in order to escape its' corporeal nature" (169).

[12] Spanish for "mechanisms of resistance"

In addition, there are studies that look at the experiences of violence suffered by transmigrant women crossing through Mexico from Central America (Castro Soto, et. al, 2010). In their book, *Mujeres Transmigrantes* [*Transmigrant Women],* Oscar Arturo Castro Soto, et al. state that, in the case of these women, "almost every aggression has a sexual connotation…. There is a constant threat that that her body and sexuality is at the mercy of the will of a vague masculine power and she must satisfy his need for affirmation and control" (119). In the United States, research investigating the links between immigration and violence include the work of Cecilia Menjivar and Olivia Salcido (2002) whose articles have helped increase awareness about violence against immigrant women and the need for special protections in the United States, such as what is provided in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) [13]. However, they state that continued research is needed because the link between immigration and domestic violence has only begun to emerge.

Also, thanks to the efforts of William P. Simmons and Michelle Téllez there is now a growing awareness of the complex nature of the violence that migrant and immigrant women experience (Forthcoming). In their interviews with service providers in Arizona, U.S.A and Sonora, Mexico, there is an indication that many migrant women and girls arrive to their facilities having experienced sexual abuse prior to migrating, many times by a male member of the family. They state that their "research reveals that this vulnerability leads to numerous incidents of sexual violence" converting the "event" of abuse into a "condition." While Menjívar and Salcido study violence suffered by immigrant women in the United States and Simmons and Téllez study the violence that occurs in-transit, the researcher, Gloria Gonzalez-Lopez has directed attention towards an exploration of how sexual abuse motivates migration. She affirms that

[13] The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is a federal law that provides protection to undocumented immigrants who are victims of domestic and sexual violence. The law's protections also extend to men and gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals.

"…narratives…illustrate how and why gender and migration become mutually interconnected processes as women cope with the social and cultural prescriptions that promote injustice and…violence against Mexicanas" (Gonzalez-Lopez 2007, 227).

With so few published research that explores gender-based violence as a motivating factor of migration, it is necessary to broaden our understanding of the factors that are pushing women to migrate by listening to women's stories and learning about the different types of abuses they have been exposed to prior to migrating.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In preparing to write this thesis and present migrant women's stories, I struggled with the "best" way to present them within a theoretical framework. I read through Arendt, Foucault, and Butler. I even sorted through the debate of Free Will, just trying to make sense of the stories that were shared with me by the women that I met. I wanted to find a respectful way to share their stories with others, and I felt like I was watering down their experiences. I was afraid that the "Truth" of what was being told would be lost within the theoretical blather. It was then that I began to question the reasons for this research – why did I want to share these women's stories and what were my motivations? Clearly, I felt (feel) a need to be in solidarity with the women that cross my path on a daily basis and who share their stories of *dolor*[14] and their testimonies of *fuerza*[15]. The need to share these stories in a way that respected and honored these women gnawed at me to the point of making me immobile. It wasn't until I began to read about *testimonio* that I finally felt that I had found the theoretical framework that would provide me a basis for understanding these women's stories and would actually allow me to use the women's words as the theoretical foundation. It was then that I decided that by "standing with" migrant women in solidarity and using their "lives and interests" as a starting point, together we could "make the workings of power visible" and expose the forces that motivate women to migrate (Mohanty, 231, 2003).

In this way, *testimonio* is a particularly appropriate choice if we want to understand women's reasons for migrating. *Testimonio* began in the 1960's as a way to resist oppression and violence in Latin America and quickly became to tool for political activism (Beverley 2005). Dolores Delgado Bernal, Rebeca Burciaga, and Judith Flores Carmona (2012) state that

[14] *Dolor* means "pain" in Spanish
[15] *Fuerza* means "strength" in Spanish

> *testimonio* challenges objectivity by situating the individual in communion with a collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression or resistance. These approaches have resulted in new understandings about how marginalized communities build solidarity and respond to and resist dominant culture, laws, and policies that perpetuate inequity (Delgado Bernal 2012, 363).

The women who share their *testimonios* resist the forces that try to control their mobility and access to opportunities by both defying laws that impede their freedom of movement and by sharing their stories that reveal the true state of the world they live in. The partnering of the narrator and "an ethnographic interlocutor" who, acting in solidarity, "offers to bring the situation [of the narrator] to the attention of an audience – the bourgeois public sphere – to which he or she would normally not have access because of the very conditions of subalternity to which the *testimonio* bears witness" (Beverly 2005, 548). It is also worthwhile to note that as the person who is acting as an intermediary between the narrator and the reader that I have tried to be in a continual state of "reflective solidarity" while also maintaining a practice of constant self-reflective analysis. Undoubtedly, I am cognizant of the fact that my interpretation of the women's testimonies is colored by my position as a privileged, middle-class white woman from the United States. In my analysis, I attempt to be as true as possible to the intention and desire of the woman speaking, however, I fear that there will be moments in the text that my life experiences (and lack thereof) may prevent me from recognizing the heart and soul of the words that the women offer to us. To this effect, I hope that the reader may be forgiving of my limitations as a researcher and I apologize to the women who shared with us their stories if I, in some way, misinterpret their lives.

In particular, the use of *testimonio* is important to our understanding of migrant women's stories since most of what we know about their lives come from filtered, second-hand accounts of what we read or hear in the news. In reality, what we come to know about the migrant experience are merely pieces of people's lives that have been

interpreted by journalists and manipulated to meet the demands of what "sells" by producing articles or other media to meet popular interests[16]. Even so, popular interests don't necessarily answer the questions that the majority of people have about migration – one main question being *why* people migrate. The issues of migration and the reasons why people migrate can be addressed by listening to migrants' *testimonios* and by understanding that the decision to migrate doesn't normally come about spontaneously. There are a series of life events that take place that lead a person to believe that moving somewhere else will improve their quality of life. Stefanie Kley suggests that the decision to migrate comes from a multi-layered decision-making process that evaluates resources and compares opportunities of the current residence with that of other possible destinations, and is influenced by "significant others" and significant life events (2011)[17]. The women's *testimonios* contextualize migration, showing us that the decision to risk one's life and leave all they know behind is a response to the intolerable and inescapable nature of violence that surrounds them ("violence" includes [but is certainly not limited to] poverty, inequality, lack of opportunities for employment, lack of access to education, oppression, and corrupt government). As will be seen in the next chapter, the women's *testimonios* provide a window to understanding this violence and their motivations to emigrate.

Testimonio is born out of the need to denounce injustice and repression by those who are directly impacted by violence (Elenes 2000, 105), and, as stated by John Beverly, it is an "emergency narrative – involving a problem of repression, poverty, marginality, exploitation, or simply survival that is implicated in the act of narration itself" (Beverly 2005, 548). In her book, *Feminism Without Borders,* Chandra Talpade

[16] In a talk by John Carlos Frey in Sahuarita, Arizona on January 19, 2013, he discussed the difficulty of being a journalist trying to inform the public about the "realities on the U.S-Mexican border." He said that media will only air/publish material which is considered marketable, thereby manipulating much of the information that people will receive. Media, in general, does not air what is important, instead it airs what they think will be watched.

Mohanty (2003) argues that in order to "make power (and women's lives) visible in non-gendered, non-racialized discourses…[the] analysis begins from and is anchored in the place of the most marginalized communities of women" (231). She states that "this experiential and analytic anchor in the lives of marginalized communities of women provides the most inclusive paradigm for thinking about social justice" (231).

In my experience of listening to the women's stories in the shelter, I came to a very similar conclusion as to what Fran Leeper Buss states in the introduction to the introduction to the book, *Forged Under the Sun: The Life of María Elena Lucas:*

> Listening to the stories of many women, I have come to the conclusion that memory itself is a political event. Social structures are often so powerful that they actually format memory into accepted boundaries, denying the validity of experiences outside the parameters of accepted social interpretations and distorting and fragmenting experience. Consequently, creating spaces for re-memory may be a profoundly liberating and energizing experience (31).

In listening to these women's stories, I was saddened to hear that, for some, it was the first time that they felt that they could talk about their experiences and be listened to, and, unfortunately, this is the reality of many women who choose to leave their homes in order to search for opportunities and a better life in the United States. They are people whom our laws criminalize, and, by not recognizing them or their experiences, dehumanize them over and over again. They are the "subalterns" that Gayarti Spivak speaks of. John Beverley clarifies Spivak's idea of the "subaltern" explaining that "she is saying that one of the things being subaltern means is not mattering, not being worth listening to, or not being understood when one is "heard." (Beverley 2005, 551). Certainly, it is this "crucial connection between the everyday experiences and structural forms of oppression" that is lacking in today's immigration debate (Elenes 2000,115).

Due to the history of ignoring women's role in the migratory process and a generalized silencing about violence in Mexico and of undocumented migrants in the United States, I have chosen *testimonio* as a way to provide a space for some of these

women's voices to be heard. Through their *testimonios* they reveal accumulated experiences of violence that correlate into the additional factors in their decision to migrate. However, by sharing their stories with others, they also reveal their resistance and strength in the face of this violence. In her book, *The Human Condition* (1958), Hannah Arendt states that:

> With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth.... This insertion…may be stimulated by the presence of others whose company we may wish to join, but it is never conditioned by them; its impulse springs from the beginning which came into the world when we were born and to which we respond by beginning something new on our own initiative. (176-177).

Although not always mentioned in their *testimonios*, in the act of sharing their stories with others as they confront suffering and death, they expose their real selves to us. It is a moment in time when the three Mexican female archetypes – la Malinche (betrayal of one's country by leaving), La Llorona (mourning the loss of the children that they have left behind), and the Virgin of Guadalupe (sacrificing one's self in order to provide for their family)[18]– can converge in a sort of explosive rebellion, revealing themselves as political agents acting in resistance to the structures that attempt to control their bodies and their lives in search for a "re-birth".

The project provided women with a safe place to heal and share their stories, and while this project didn't allow us to help the women who shared their stories any more than what we could provide in the moment of their transition, the women were motivated to share painful experiences in the hopes that the reasons for their migration, as well as the unjust and violent conditions in which they migrate, could be better

[18] The idea of the Mexican and Mexican American, female identity as expressed through traditional Mexican, female archetypes was taken from Dr. Alejandra C. Elenes and her book *Transforming Borders: Chicana/o Popular Culture and Pedagogy*. 2011. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

understood. Although each woman and each story is different, they share their stories with the hope that it will be able to "advance the interest of the community and social groups and classes [the] *testimonio* represents" (Beverly 2005, 553).

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S *TESTIMONIOS* IN *EL CRUCE*

Testimonios in *el Cruce*[19]

> *It was this choice to speak which interested me… releasing women's voices and making it possible to hear what women know. It was like seeing under the surface or picking up the undercurrents of the human conversation: what is known, and then not known, felt but not spoken (Gilligan 1993, x).*

The *testimonios* that follow were all collected from women who arrived to Casa Nazareth Shelter after being deported for trying to cross into the United States. There are a mix of stories and experiences. Some women were going to the United States for the first time. Others had lived several years in the United States and were trying to return after either being deported or after they were trying to return to the United States after they had chosen to come back to Mexico in order to visit their families, and, the majority of the times, because someone close to them was sick or dying. Especially in these cases, women only chose to return to Mexico because they had wrestled with the dilemma of not being able to pay their respects to a loved one and say "goodbye" for the last time.

When the women are deported into Nogales, Sonora, they come into contact with several different governmental and non-governmental groups. When they first arrive to Nogales, they are dropped off by U.S. immigration officials at the entry to Mexico. They are received by employees from the Instituto Nacional de Migración [Institute of Mexican Migration] who work in the division of Repatración Humana [Human Repatriation]. Established in 2008, Human Repatriation is part of the National Institute of Migration, and is a program that was implemented in order to respond to the needs of the high number of Mexicans being repatriated from the United States. Specifically,

[19] *El cruce* is Spanish for "crossing," and usually means or refers to crossing the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Human Repatriation was meant to fill the need of receiving migrants and helping with "medium-term integration" (Paris Pombo 2010, 5). In order to access services in Nogales, Human Repatriation provides migrants with a document that identifies them as having been recently deported. This document allows them to receive discounted bus tickets to their place of origin, shelter, free medical assistance at the General Hospital, and food at the migrant kitchen. The collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations in Nogales, Sonora allows migrants to be directed to local services, and this is how the migrants arrive to the migrant kitchen. The way migrants receive information varies, and some may not receive the information at all. Those who do arrive to the soup kitchen often get the information from Human Repatriation, other migrants, community members or Grupos Beta, a governmental agency that also forms a part of the National Institute for Migration and is dedicated to serving and protecting migrants in Mexico[20].

Normally, the women who arrive to our shelter hear about us when they come to eat at the migrant kitchen. We inform the migrants of the services that we provide, which include a shelter for women and children. Many women who are travelling alone or who have been separated from their families during the deportation process may decide not to go to our shelter due to limited space, distrust, or because the insecurity of the border impels them to move as quickly as possible in order to cross again or to return to there place of origin. However, the women who do arrive to the shelter, often share their stories of *lucha* from past to present. Their stories are representative of many women who we have met in the shelter, and, although, the stories themselves are very different, the experience of generalized and extreme gender-based violence is a common thread throughout all of them.

[20] Grupo Beta was established in 1990 in order execute rescue missions for migrants that were lost in the desert, without any distinction to their nationality. Currently, Grupo Beta also provides support to recently repatriated Mexicans (Paris Pombo 2010, 24).

I have chosen four *testimonios* that provide some depth of the women's past experiences of violence and their migration situation at the time of the writing of their stories. The stories are not complete, nor do we know what happened to these women once they left our shelter. However, the stories they offer us are the parts of their lives that they wanted to purge and to share, and, they allow us to have a clearer look into the life of a woman migrant.

When collecting the *testimonios,* the Sisters who run the shelter asked the women to write their stories as a way to document violence they suffered prior to migrating. The effort was part of a grant that was awarded to the shelter by Catholic Relief Services in order to address violence against women in the migrant population. Some women did not want to write their stories, and they were not obliged to do so. Others wanted to share their stories as a way to help them heal from the past. Some women requested additional support after sharing their stories and received spiritual accompaniment and therapy. The women wrote all the *testimonios* in Spanish and I translated them into English for the purpose of this thesis. I thank the Sisters from the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist and the Kino Border Initiative for allowing me to have access to these stories in order to share them with others through this thesis. It is important to note that Spanish is my second language, and a language that I have been speaking for only 10 years. Because Spanish is not my native language, there is a risk of "reproducing language marginalization" by translating literally instead of conceptually, and losing important cultural nuances imbedded into the language (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, and Flores Carmona 2012, 365). Translation carries with it the responsibility to be aware of the "culturally specific knowledge that can shift meaning and reproduce negative connotations associated with gendered and racialized terms of endearment" (365). In many instances, I was able to refer to the Sisters in order to have clarification

of dubious terms, however, there is also the possibility that some terms were overlooked during the translation. (See Appendix A for original *testimonios* in Spanish).

The women highlighted in the following pages are anonymous. They all are women who are migrating irregularly and who have a desire to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Due to the temporary nature of their stay in the shelter and the women's desires to remain anonymous, there is no way for us to know what happened to the women after leaving the shelter, nor was it possible to contact the women in order to do follow up with questions to clarify parts of their stories. As confirmed in the following *testimonios*, memory is always fragmented and life is often contradictory.

In the moment of writing their *testimonios*, they have all confronted the barriers of political and social inequality. For a brief or not-so-brief moment, they feel that their dreams for a better life have been unjustly trammeled and shattered. Their hearts are broken because they want to make a better life for themselves and cannot comprehend how they and others can be criminalized, belittled, humiliated, shackled, and imprisoned for wanting to work in order to provide their families' food and opportunities for education. In the moment of writing their stories, there is a mix of emotions: sadness, renewed strength, devastation, hope, anger, and sisterhood, just to name a few. In the midst of this collision of opposing sentiments, it is as if the act of digging into one's past is a reminder to the women that they are survivors. In fact, the act of "sharing" can actually "begin a process of empowerment" (Latina Feminist Group 2001, 1). This process of remembering and sharing can help to ground the women in their present reality and motivate them to keep moving forward.

Fernanda[21]

I'm going to tell you a little about my life. I am from Chiapas. My childhood was very sad. There were ten of us. I was the only girl in the house, and the rest were boys. My mom was really strict with me. When I was six years old, I learned how to make tortillas by hand. At first, I couldn't make the tortillas, and my mom burned my hands so that I would learn. My mom hit me a lot. When my father arrived from work, I would complain, but he never defended me. He loved my brothers more because they were men and I was a woman. Maybe my dad didn't love me. I don't want this sad childhood for my children. I don't want to do to them what was done to me. And, even though my parents were very rough with me, I learned how to do a lot of things like how to work and be responsible. I started to work when I was nine years old. I worked and went to school, but I felt very alone because I slept in the house where I worked and my mom only came in order to take my earnings, and she didn't leave me with anything to take to school. The person that I worked for gave me clothing, and I was very grateful, but, at the same time, I felt very sad because, when I had a birthday, no one remembered me. I have never had a hug for my birthday.

I got married when I was 15 years old thinking that my life would change. The person that I got together with was a very bad person. He hit me a lot and even though I was pregnant, he didn't care. He hit me; he kicked me. I lived in fear. When I would hear him come home, I would prepare myself. After he hit me, he would ask me to forgive him, and I would forgive him because I said that I loved him. He was twice my age. Time passed and he continued hitting me. We went to Monterrey to live in his aunt's house. My suffering continued to grow. So that men would not look at me with desire, they cut me with scissors. I didn't defend myself because of the fear I had of him, but this suffering was so great that I don't desire it for anybody.

I met a woman that saw me beaten and with a black eye. This happened frequently – he hit me, kicked me. She told me that I shouldn't let anyone hit me. One day, I escaped from the house where I was living and I went to the home of the woman that I had met. She provided me with a place to stay and her friendship. She told me that I was going to be okay. From this moment, my life changed. The man I lived with became angry and called the police, but the woman that had received me in her home told me "Leave him. You'll see how it will go for this son-of-a-bitch." She took me to the police to file a complaint against him, there were witnesses that testified about how he hit me and there was the evidence on my face of how he treated me. He had threatened to take my children away, but he didn't win. They asked me what I wanted to do with him, and the only thing that I asked for was that he not bother me anymore - I just wanted him to leave me alone.

Since then, my life changed a lot. The woman I met allowed me to stay in her home, she helped me to find work and the nightmare came to an end. I worked a lot in order to get ahead with my children. I never thought of myself. Since then, I have been a mother and father for them.

[21] All names and other identifying information have been changed.

Five years went by and I met the father of my youngest daughter. However, when I met him, I felt scared that the same thing that happened with my first husband would happen with him. I gave myself time to get to know him. In the meantime, I worked in order to have land, and there I built my wooden house. I said, "it's poor, but this is my house." I told the father of my daughter that I had two children and he accepted me this way.

I was scared because I thought that he would do something to harm them, but I told him, "If you do something to them, I'll kill you." He told me that he would never touch them. I feel that no one will ever touch, humiliate or hit my children. I work hard for them but I also feel that I expect a lot from them in the area of education. They are doing well and don't have bad grades. I have always worked for them in order to get ahead in life. And, as long as God gives me life, I will be with them because they are my priority. I would like to be a better mother. I would like the three of them to have professional careers since I couldn't. My parents were very poor and I had 10 brothers and sisters.

In my current relationship, sometimes I feel like I can no longer withstand the situation. He is very jealous, he yells at me and it could be that he never changes. Sometimes I think about leaving him, but, while he is good to my children, I will continue to tolerate him. I ask God to give me strength.

Now that I came and crossed through the desert, I experienced many things. I suffered hunger, thirst…I walked for 9 days. I was able to have strength to keep going because I thought about my children, and, when I was caught by Border Patrol, I learned a great lesson, I learned that men and women are equal and we have equal value.

I talk to and encourage my children. Even though they are far away, I carry them in my mind and my heart. I know that they miss me as much as I miss them. Sometimes, I feel like I shouldn't leave them, but they are getting good grades and I want them to do well in life.

Sometimes I feel old and that I have never given myself time for me. I have always worked hard and thought of my children, but, maybe in the future, I will have more time – or, even, too much time.

Finally, my goal is to work for my children, buy some land for my dad so that he can do what he wants with it because even though we were always poor, I have always loved my father because he taught us how to respect others and how to believe in God.

In this *testimonio*, Fernanda shares her struggles in childhood, the pain that she felt because of the neglect of her parents, and the physical and emotional abuse that she suffered due to her status as a woman. In her essay, "*Cuerpos Martirizados, Mentes Ausentes*" ("Martyred Bodies, Absent Minds"), sociologist Rosalba Robles Ortega explains gender as a social construction that is determined by sexual differences and by the cultural meanings that are built into sex and inscribed onto the body (Robles Ortega

2007, 171; Butler 1993). The cultural meanings etched onto the bodies contain necessary clues required (socially) to carry out the specific gender roles that are imposed on and assigned to those bodies (Butler 1993; Robles Ortega 2007, 171). Women's bodies in particular are viewed as something unattached from a human being, and as something to be owned, used, enjoyed, and abused by those that assume ownership. The social devaluation of women's bodies very clearly marks Fernanda's upbringing, and the violence that she suffers as a consequence of being female, begins in her own family. She states that her father "loved her brothers more because they were men." As a young child, her parents instill within her a sense of inferiority and unworthiness, and she conforms to the outside messages that she must accept second-class citizen status. These teachings and beliefs are what enable Fernanada to endure the abuse inflicted on her by her first husband. The abuse of her husband is extreme, to say the least. He treats her as his property, and permanently scars her face by cutting her with scissors so that other men don't "desire" her. Her body is "a receptacle" where her husband "deposits insults, punches, and kicks" in attempt to maintain control over her (Robles Ortega 2007, 169). However, Fernanda recognizes that this is a harmful, and she states that she doesn't want her children to suffer the treatment that she suffered.

Through her *testimonio* we can see Fernanda's strength and we see her drive to find solutions to life's difficulties. Living in a community that favors marriage and dependence of women on a male partner, she acts within the cultural norms of where she lives and, at 15 years of age, she seeks refuge from her family by marrying an older man. Unfortunately, this decision leads her to an excessively abusive relationship that leaves her scarred for life. However, she eventually finds refuge once again, but this time through the relationship of a female friend that provides her support as she decides to flee a relationship that could have resulted in her death. In this case, "the presence of other women" provided Fernanda with the "potential to create oppositional spaces,"

leave her husband, and make a new beginning for herself and her children (Menjívar 2011, 5). Fernanda is a survivor, and she has the ability to keep fighting in the face of great adversity. Much of what she identifies as her motivation in life is her desire to care for her children and to provide them with a life that is different than the childhood that she herself experienced.

We can clearly see how the violence suffered by Fernanda throughout her life helped to motivate her to migrate to the United States. She repeats that she wants her children to have a different life than what she experienced, and she never wants anyone to "touch, humiliate or hit them." For Fernanda, the life she wants for her children lie in the opportunities that she can find in the United States. She is in search of a life for her children where they are free from violence and have professional opportunities. It is precisely this desire to provide her children with a better life that helped her to keep her going after walking 9 days in the desert. She says, "I suffered hunger, thirst…I walked for 9 days. I was able to have strength to keep going because I thought about my children." In this moment of desolation, she feels that her children accompany her and are an inspiration to her. The responsibility that she feels to care for her children and even her father who treated her with disdain and valued her less for being a woman, will keep her moving forward to search for ways to make a better life for her family.

Elisa[22]

> My childhood was very difficult. I lived in extreme poverty; my parents beat me. I wondered why my parents didn't love me. My life didn't have any meaning. I tried to kill myself three times. One time I went behind the house with a knife, but my sister saw me and stopped me. Another time I mixed together fabric softener, bleach and floor cleaner and drank it…. It affected me and suddenly they thought that I was drunk and didn't

[22] At the time of this *testimonio*, Elisa was migrating a second time to the United States, but this time she was by herself. She returned to Mexico to see her children and her mother, but she saw that she was unable to help her family with the low wages in Mexico. With the help of her brother, she decided to try and cross again.

pay attention to me. Then, they saw that I was foaming at the mouth. As soon as they realized what I had done, they took me to the hospital. I was unconscious for four days.

When I was 9 years old, I was raped by a man from my town. When I was 11 years old, I went to work in Mexico City. Then, when I was 15 years old in Mexico City, one time someone followed me, grabbed my left arm, grabbed my shoulder, and with his right hand, threatened me with a knife to my neck. He took me to some trees, he ripped open my clothing with the knife, and he raped me. I lost consciousness, so I don't remember the rest, but they say that I went to my boss's house dripping blood and with a strange smile. I had lost consciousness and went crazy. They took me to the doctor and later to a mental hospital. I was there for more than a year.

Since grade school, I had a friend. One time, my parents beat me because of him, and that's when I wanted to kill myself. When I was 17 years old, I got together with him and then I had a child with him. Then, I had two children with him. We lived in a house that was my mother-in-law's and also ours. My partner went to the United States. A year later, he told me that he had another wife but that he would continue to care financially for our children. He never fulfilled his promise.

My daughter got sick with a heart murmur. My mother-in-law told me that if I left the house that I could never come back, and, indeed, I had to leave the house in order to take my daughter to the doctor. When I returned to the house, my mother-in-law didn't even allow me to enter the house for my belongings. Some things she gave me through the window. She threw me out on the street, and I went to my mother's house with my three children. She had a very small, poor house made out of mud and maguey.

In order to sustain my children, I went to the United States and I left my children with my mom. I went with my brother, and we passed through Matamoros. They robbed us, and we suffered intense cold temperatures. The smuggler that was taking us turned us over to some guy that took us to a hotel. At night, he said that I was going to go with him to go shopping. There, he raped me and threatened me that if I said something to my brother that he would kill both of us. When we returned, my brother noticed that I had been crying. He asked me how I was, but I couldn't tell him anything.

There was another man who had tattoos and who used drugs. The smuggler took me with him and asked him if they were going to make the deal and that it would be what had been agreed on. The deal was to sell me. He said, "Let me see how good she is." He came close to touch me, and I started to scream. My brother and the other men came in, and a tattooed woman accompanied them. She entered and told them to calm down. If it hadn't been for the men and the woman, I don't know what would have happened to me.

To my great misfortune, arriving to Carolina, I encountered the smuggler again. My mom had entrusted him to care for me and he felt like he owned me. The same person that had caused me such pain and wanted to sell me was making decisions for me, didn't let me go out, and was on a mission to dominate me. I lived in an apartment with 10 men,

> and I slept in the closet. I saw him again when I went to my town in Mexico and I slapped him.
>
> I was dry. I never left the house. I wanted to start drinking, and, sometimes, I beat my children. I thought about killing myself. I didn't even have the strength to laugh.

Elisa's story highlights the abuse that many women suffer prior, during and after migration, as well as how violence can be reproduced. Beginning with her childhood, she is treated as though she doesn't exist, and at the young ages of nine and eleven, she was raped. The rapes that she experiences are traumatic episodes that damage her "sense of safety in the world" (Herman 1997, 51). Judith Herman, M.D. says that

> Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis (Herman 1997, 51).

These traumatic experiences and the neglect of her family cause her to "feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life" (52). She attempts suicide three times, possibly because "traumatized people feel that they belong more to the dead then they belong to the living" (52), and when she tries to kill her self by drinking a mixture of cleaning products, her family doesn't take notice of her until they see her foaming at the mouth.

Into her adolescence and adult life, she continually confronts violence because of her gender. She experiences rape, psychological and economic abuse, and inhumane living conditions. She never seems to break free of the threats of violence that lurks around her. These threats are compounded by lack of community and familial support, and, such as seen in her relationship with her mother-in-law, her community acts to perpetuate and support gender-based violence that she wants to escape. Still, she is a courageous survivor. She is responsible for her children and, even despite the violence

that constantly surrounds and threatens her, she keeps looking for ways to make a better life for her and her family.

Although the moment she decides to migrate is catapulted by poverty and the need to care monetarily for her children, we can see how each experience of violence leads her to the final decision to migrate. The trauma of two rapes during her formative years destroys “her fundamental assumptions about safety of the world” and “the positive value of the self” (Herman 1997, 51). The lack of support from her community and family aggravates the trauma caused by the violence, and, rather than mitigating its effects, leaves her feeling without the support that she needs to help her improve her and her children’s situation (61). In reality, her decision to migrate is a response to the violence, and the lack of trust she has in her community.

During her migration, Elisa provides testimony to the realities that many migrant women face. She is raped by her smuggler and, seemingly, almost becomes a victim of human trafficking. At the moment that she thinks she is going to be raped a second time and sold, others that she is migrating help her by intervening. Unfortunately, she sees the smuggler again when she arrives to the United States, and because her mother “had entrusted” her to him, the cycle of gender-based violence continues in the United States under the watchful and controlling eye of the smuggler. She doesn’t not indicate why she goes to live with the him and ten other immigrant men, however one can venture to guess that the difficulty of being an undocumented immigrant in the United States led her to accept such an unsafe and compromising living arrangement where she is “dominated” and controlled by the smuggler, and even forced to sleep in the closet.

While there are many unknown elements of this *testimonio*, Elisa shares the elements of her life that she feels are the most important. However, even with the gaps of the story, we can conclude from her words that she has reached her limit, because,

interestingly, her story ends abruptly by telling us that she slapped her smuggler when she saw him again in her hometown, as if ending her story with a "Ya Basta!"[23]

Ximena

> I am the daughter of parents who were raised with old school values. My mom married my dad when she was in the 8th grade. I also saw how my father beat my mother.
>
> A man sexually abused me when I was 12 years old. He was 22. I got pregnant. I do not regret my child. I spoke to the person who had raped me so that he would stay with me. He stayed, but he gave me a bad life. I tried to protect myself so that I wouldn't have more children, but I got pregnant with a second child. He was a womanizer, a drinker and physically abusive. I had to make tamales to sell and to be able to eat. Time went by like this. I could no longer tolerate this life, and I spoke with my family in the United States. They supported me, and I had to emigrate in order to work. Afterwards, I felt sad without my children. I decided to take on new debt in order to cross my children to the United States. Thank God we were there. I worked and they studied.
>
> They told me that my father was sick and that they were going to operate on him. I returned to Mexico in December [2010], and when I got back he had already died. I stayed in Mexico to get a divorce from the person who raped me. Yes, I got divorced.
>
> I decided to return to the United States on November 26th. I made an agreement with the person that was going to cross me, and we decided to meet in Altar, Sonora. To my surprise, I arrived at 4:50 in the morning, and there were other people there. I got off the bus with two other men that I never found out whom they were. We got off the bus, walked about 8-10 feet when someone met up with me and said that they had been sent to look for me. I didn't pay attention to them, but a truck arrived and the men pushed us inside. They yelled at me not to lift up my head, and that's how they took me to a house inside of town. They got out of the truck and I lifted my head and saw a restaurant, a yellow alleyway, and a Telcel phone company. They came out quickly, I got out of the truck and they took my two bags of belongings. I had my money in my pants. They asked me for my family members phone numbers. I called my son, but I had already told him that if I were to have problems that I would call him "friend." I called him "friend" and he told me "look for help, mom, I love you so much." These words gave me strength.
>
> They made me go into the alleyway where we waited for a long time. Inside there were about 20 girls and six women. It was a horrible place. They were looking at me and they quickly took me out of there. It was almost dark and they took me to another house that was in worse conditions than the first. They pushed my head down as I entered the house and they yelled at me to give them my family members numbers so that they could get money. I saw other women there, and I managed to

[23] Spanish for "That's enough!"

talk to them because I kneeled down near to them. I asked her how much time she had been there, and she said one month. I got worried. Then they yelled at me not to talk. Many smoked. Later, a tall, grey-haired man talked to me and told me that if I didn't give them my family's phone numbers that I would pay with my body. When I saw that one was going to pick me to rape, I started to cry, and I asked them how much he wanted. He asked for $8,000 USD. I told him that I was a poor woman who had no one and that I was going to the United States to work with the help of a friend. I told him everything scared and crying. I told him that I only had $5,000 pesos and they told me that was fine and they separated me from the others in a corner. I waited a long time. I heard what they called each other and that they were enjoying themselves with a girl. The girl was crying.

They took me out at night and I got into a truck. We were traveling a long time on a dirt road. There was a lot of dust and rocks. The truck stop, and they yelled at me to get out. I was so scared. They beat me and they left me there. It was a deserted place. I eventually found a person that was walking with a group of people. When I saw them, I pleaded with them that they get me out of there. The young man told me that he would help me but that I needed to calm down and wait for the people he was with to hide. I walked with him to a place where the group he was with hid.

I was injured and walked with a limp. He asked me if I had taken drugs to be able to keep walking. I told him that I had never tried drugs. He said that I wasn't going to be able to make it the way that I was and that it was better that I stayed and returned with the group. I returned. He sent me with someone else, and he took me to a house of hospitality. He gave me $50 pesos. I was able to call my son, and he quickly answered me. He said that he thanked God that I was alive. The kidnappers had already called him asking for the money to rescue me. I went to Ciudad Acuña to stay with a sister and spend Christmas. I recovered, and the smuggler called me to ask if I was ready. I woke up in Santa Ana and from there I went to Altar, Sonora. I went to a hotel. I went out to eat. Some men were following me, and they asked about me in the hotel. The smuggler told me that it would be better to go to Sonoita. I went, and they sent me to talk to someone named Rafa. He told me that I would have to pay $1500 pesos to the mafia. I paid and he told me that I would walk 4 nights and 5 days. He said I would be in the desert for 6 nights. We walked through mountains and more mountains. I started to get tired, I started to walk slower, and little by little they started to leave me behind. I was looking up towards where they were going, but the border patrol was waiting for them below. I had traded my backpack for a man's backpack that was lighter, but I only had a shirt, a pair of pants, one can of tuna and one bottle of water. I walked one night alone by myself without stopping.

Ximena's migration story is a very common of what we have heard in the migrant kitchen and women's shelter. Ximena's childhood experience of being witness to

domestic violence in her home, and even her decision to stay with her rapist for fear of being rejected in her community is a story that we have heard on several occasions. In the eyes of her community, Ximena is now "ruined." At twelve years old, the community now perceives Ximena as "unworthy" of being with another man, and Ximena feels forced to make a decision between the horror of having to live life with her rapist and the fear of being scorned, judged and rejected by an entire community. Gloria González-López notes, that in particular, these narratives illustrate "how and why women are uniquely vulnerable because of poverty and narrow patriarchal notions of honor, wherein women have no right to resist intrusions on their bodies" (González-López 2007, 224). Certainly, these attitudes "contribute to the legitimation of the central element of men's authority that reinforces and nourishes gender inequality and physical violence…and positions women as object and possessions without will" (Menjivar 2011, 101). However, after living years of abuse with her rapist, her family helps her to immigrate to the United States, finally providing her with necessary support she needs to escape and heal from violence (Herman 1997), and is eventually able to "get a divorce from the person that raped [her]."

As seen through Ximena's story, at the time of this *testimonio*, she is trying to cross for a second time after having gone to Mexico in order to visit her dying father and get a divorce. Her children live in the United States, and Ximena is driven to cross to the United States, even if it means risking her life. This is common to see in the women that we serve in the shelter, especially if they have children who reside in the United States. In Ximena's experience in trying to cross, she was kidnapped and beaten. She was threatened with rape and extorted. She was lost in the desert and risked death. Nonetheless, Ximena's desperation to reunite with her family and continue working in the United States is so strong that she is determined to cross until she can be with her

children. Each time she crosses, she is aware that she is risking her life over and over again. However, she sees no other option. She cannot envision life without her children.

As can be seen in her *testimonio*, Ximena is a fighter. She has worked hard, and has not allowed the obstacles in her life to hold her back. It is this same determination that gives her the courage to keep crossing into the United States, even after having experienced being kidnapped, extorted, beaten, and having been lost in the desert.

Camila

> When I was young and my dad arrived to the house drunk, we always left running so that he wouldn't beat us. It rains a lot where I'm from, and we went under a tree where we would wake up wet from the rain, or we would go home to sleep at 11 or 12 at night, soaking wet. Sometimes we went to our grandparents' house. My dad, whom I consider an enemy more than I consider him a father, told us that he would kick us out because he didn't want us at home.
>
> When I was 16 years old, my dad took me to Tehuacán, Puebla, and he abandoned me so that I would work. He "tossed me" to his friend, a truck driver. My dad took the money that I earned in my 2 first weeks of working. When he was leaving, he told me that he would be back, but he never returned. Maybe the truck driver gave him money for me, I don't know. If I asked him about it, he would get angry. My mother never supported me. When my brother got sick, our father said, "Leave him alone. He's going to die like a dog". My father was the reason that my brothers became drug addicts. When we lived in the United States, he gave them marijuana to "make them men".
>
> I got pregnant being in Tehuacán, but he cheated on me with another woman, and I left him. I went to live with my parents in Chihuahua, and that's where my daughter was born. During my pregnancy, I supported my parents. I earned $1000 pesos a week. My father had the nerve to ask my boss for a loan that I would work off later. With my work, I paid the costs for my daughter, clothing and everything else. When my daughter was 20 days old, it was the first time that we tried to cross. From Chihuahua, we went to Ciudad Juarez. We didn't make it across. We finally crossed when my daughter was 8 months old. The second time, we crossed, I was with my dad, mom, one sister and two brothers. In the United States, my father wanted to sell me to an old man that drank with him. My cousin advised me to look for a man that I loved and told me not to turn myself over to a fucking old man. Due to these circumstances, I decided to get together with someone. I was happy like this, but there was always the poisonous scorpion around the corner (my father).

> When I got together with my husband, my father old him, "if you can't control this mule, give her to me, and I'll break her. Hit her. Hit her...."
>
> My dad used to beat my brother terribly. No one loved my dad. My brother used to tell him, "the day you die, and I'm going to get drunk from happiness."
>
> In the United States, I had two children, a girl and a boy. The boy got sick with meningitis. I was lost. We went to Chiapas. There was no work and they tricked my husband with a job with an American company. There were a thousand promises: daycare, school.... They paid us $137 pesos a day, and they deducted $262 pesos a week for food, $300 pesos to take care of the children, well, at the end of the week, we hardly had anything left. They treated us horribly. We couldn't rest. If they didn't let us work one day, or even half a day, they wouldn't pay us, and the worst was that they took our daughter away. They said that they took her away because of domestic violence, but everything was a lie. According to them, my husband used drugs and hit her, but he doesn't use drugs, and he treats the children very well. What happened is that our daughter fell from a tree and someone reported it. She didn't tell us. They asked my husband if they could take her to the hospital and we accepted. That's when they pressured me to sign a paper. I signed without knowing what it was, and they took my daughter away from me.

Seemingly, Camila has always been a migrant. Her story jumps around, mirroring her own movement through life. Her words reveal the high vulnerability of migrants to labor exploitation and trafficking. First, she is exploited as an adolescent. She suspects that the man who her father left her with bought her, and her first two week salary is taken from her. Later, after she leaves the father of her daughter, she is responsible for supporting her parents to the extent that her father asks for an advance on his daughter's behalf, and, finally, when she returns to Mexico, she and her family fall prey to a local trafficker that exploits them and even takes their daughter away.

Her father practices what sociologist Michael P. Johnson refers to as "patriarchal terrorism" which is a "product of patriarchal traditions of men's right to control "their" women, is a form of terroristic control of [women]...that involves the systematic use of not only violence, but economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics" (Johnson 1995, 284). Camila's father treats her as sub-human. She has no personhood, and she is treated as though she were a commodity to be profited from. He

feels at liberty to pass her off to men, to take her salary, and he insists that the men in her life control her even at the cost of physical abuse ("if you can't control this mule, give her to me, and I'll break her. Hit her. Hit her…."). The abuse incurred on her by her father is an example of a "violent patriarchy" that has "normalized violence against women" (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010, 14), and is a contributing factor to her decision to return to Mexico after living with her family in the United States. However, as a migrant, violence is always close. In Mexico, she and her family are victims of labor trafficking, and her daughter is abducted. She does not know who to go to for help, and she sees her only option as returning to the United States where the rest of her family resides. Undoubtedly, Camila's *testimonio* reveals how migration is often the manifestation of the inner desire to find peace and liberation in the physical world.

In conclusion, the common threads throughout all the *testimonios* show an overwhelming "devaluation" of women's lives (Menjivar 2011, 4). Their bodies are abused - "treated as receptacles for insults, punches, sexual abuse, and even feminicide" (Robles Ortega 2007, 169). The lack of autonomy that women have over their bodies is one of the reasons that women can be considered as "territories to occupy" (181). Michel Foucault states:

> The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, or at the intensification of its subjection, but as the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, and its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down, and rearranges it. A "political anatomy," which was also a "mechanics of power," was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies (qtd. in Rabinow 1984, 181-182).

These women migrate attempting to break free of the forces that dominate and oppress them. The act of crossing international borders and confronting U.S. Border Patrol and criminalization is a direct challenge to patriarchy and traditional gender roles. With "word and deed [they] insert [them]selves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth" (Arendt 1958, 176).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These *testimonios* indicate "an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival, implicated in the act of narration itself" (John Beverley qtd. in Elenes 2001, 105). The women who shared their stories did so because they wanted to help others conceptualize the life experiences that were factors in their motivation to migrate. They help give dimension to the complicated issue of migration and, in telling their stories they "break the silence, negotiate contradictions, and recreate new identities beyond the fragmentation, shame, and betrayal brought about by oppression, colonization, and patriarchy" (Moraga 1993, 374).

Each woman is different, however, themes that emerge from the *testimonios* include patterns of extreme gender-based violence, such as discrimination, domination, rape, physical abuse, and neglect. The gender-based violence that the *testimoneadoras* experienced began with the abuse that originated in their youth and within their families, and it follows them into more intimate and personal relationships. The lack of support that they receive from their families, communities, and government is an indicator of the structural violence that surrounds them and prevents them from finding opportunities to improve their situations in Mexico. Another shared characteristic of these women's lives is their resiliency, their desire to overcome the experiences of violence of their past, and their hope that they will be able to provide a better future for their families. They share the same motivation that is the fire source to keep them going - their children. Their children are what motivate them to pick themselves up after experiencing physical violence, kidnappings, and after almost dying in the desert. Their children are what keep them from giving up on life and inspire them to continue searching for solutions, even despite all the obstacles that they face.

Certainly, I am filled with awe at the strength of the women who come into the shelter, who are brave enough to make this journey and share their stories so that they may become agents of action and speak on behalf of the injustices that they have experienced in their lives. However, in addition to awe, I am also left with a feeling of indignation. Realizing that women – for being women - are constantly subject to violence in all its different forms (psychological, systematic, physical, sexual, and symbolic violence). In addition, there are very few resources for help and support and, that, coupled with the necessity of surviving, further puts them in danger of continued violence, objectification and dehumanization.

Based on this analysis, we recognize that solutions to issues related to migration and the well being of all people needs to take on a multi-national approach in the countries of origin, the countries of transit and the countries of destination. We can no longer think of solutions to the exodus of Central Americans and Mexicans without seriously thinking about how internal, external, and interrelated politics impact the lives of those who are obligated to leave their countries in order to survive. I end with the following recommendations of actions that should be taken by the Mexican and U.S. governments that would help create safer communities for women and provide them with resources to better meet their individual needs:

1. Mexico should create programs and public policies to prevent, address, investigate, sanction and eradicate violence against women in the workplace and migrating environments. This must be for Mexican citizens, foreigners and deported women (Catholic Relief Services 2012, 46).
2. The National Migration Institute in Mexico should implement inter-institutional mechanisms through all the Mexican Republic to dialogue, reach agreements and generate common actions between the governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that address the human rights abuses of migrant women. This is

especially important in the cases of discrimination due to nationality and gender, and in the cases of human trafficking, highlighting those that involve the use and abuse of women's bodies (Catholic Relief Services 2012, 46).

3. Both Mexico and the United States should create social programs with a women-centered perspective in order to address the needs of migrant and immigrant populations, giving specialized attention to the cases of violence against migrant women due to their gender.
4. The structural violence that women in Mexico experience needs to be addressed at all levels by implementing programs at the governmental, labor and educational levels, and the Mexican government should increase budgets for these programs in order to help target and address issues related to gender-based violence.
5. Mexico should implement strategies, such as providing visas for transit, in order to curtail violence suffered by migrants at the hands of cartels, gang members, police, and random criminals looking to take advantage of the migrants' irregular and vulnerable situation during transit.
6. The United States Border Patrol should be aware that migrant women have varied histories of trauma, and they should treat individuals with respect and dignity at the moment of apprehension. Psychological, verbal, and physical abuse inflicted on women by border patrol agents can further traumatize them or re-activate trauma from their past (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 3).
7. In order to decrease the abuse suffered by migrants throughout their journey, further efforts should be made by Mexico and the United States to address immigration from the lens of humanitarian assistance and not national security.
8. The United States should pass a comprehensive immigrations reform that respects the unity of families, allows for the 11 million people presently in the

United States to regularize their status, and also allows them to travel back and forth to their country of origin.

9. The United States should increase the options for employment through guest worker programs that prioritize human dignity, respect to human rights and gender equality.
10. The Department of Homeland Security should end Operation Streamline, a program that criminalizes unauthorized entry by charging migrants with criminal misdemeanor or felony charges. The program is costly, fails to respect due process rights, has not proven to have deterrent effects on future crossings, and the charges would make it impossible for families to reunite under any new immigration reforms (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 2).
11. The United States government should end the Alien Transfer Exit Program (ATEP), a program that encourages agents to deport migrants laterally to different ports of entry from those through which they entered. The ATEP program is responsible for separating family members, often times deporting husbands and wives to different borders and increasing migrant vulnerability. In a study conducted by El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, they found that fifty-eight percent of all migrants who traveled north with family members were separated from these family members during the apprehension and deportation process (Kino Border Initiative 2013, 2).
12. The United States government should provide free legal representation in immigration courts in order to ensure that all migrants are fully informed of their rights and have access to continued legal counsel and assistance when someone is identified as being eligible for legal relief.

13. The United States should help Mexico bring criminals to justice by granting refuge to victims that can assist in identifying perpetrators and denouncing cases of kidnappings and torture in Mexico.
14. Further militarization of the U.S-Mexico border should be stopped. Militarization makes the border inhospitable, and increases the risks of sexual and physical violence against migrant men and women (Morales and Bejarano 2009, 426).

Currently, Congress is reviewing and drafting new legislation that will turn into a proposed bill for comprehensive immigration reform. In the case of migrants, both men and women suffer from a system that – on all levels – treats them as a commodity to be profited from. This maltreatment begins from the moment that they leave their homes, and, especially in the case of women migrants, there is little public understanding or even recognition of the realities that they face. Hopefully, new reform will be founded on human dignity and not economic profit, and will be in tune with the serious and complex needs of immigrants and migrants in both the United States and Mexico as a country of transit and origin.

EPILOGUE

"Tú eres mi otro yo".[24]

Working in Nogales, Sonora with migrants and the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist has been transformative both in my understanding of migration issues and personally. From the first time I arrived to the border in Ambos Nogales, I was immediately drawn to it as an "unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition…in-between space" (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002, 1). I wanted to understand what it was like to be stationary while everything around me moved and changed at a rapid-fire pace. Living in this space, I have learned that, even despite the changing faces, joy, gratitude, hope, pain, and desolation are a constant.

The combined experiences of listening to migrants' stories while living in a community that values honest, thoughtful, spiritually-focused reflection changed me. On a deep level, I finally recognized the extent of my privilege and that this privilege is granted to me solely on the basis that I am a white, middle-class female born in the United States. As I internalize their stories, comparing my personal migration story with the stories of the women I meet (many of who are my same age), I see the stark injustice of inequality staring at me straight in the face.

Being on the border opened me to what Gloria Anzaldúa calls "spiritual activism":

> Spiritual activism begins with the personal yet moves outward, acknowledging our radical interconnectedness. This is spirituality for social change, spirituality that recognizes the many differences among us yet insists on our commonalities and uses these commonalities as catalysts for transformation…While identity politics requires holding onto specific categories of identity, spiritual activism demands that we let them go (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002, 18).

[24] "*Tú eres mi otro yo"* means "You are my other me." It is a saying that comes from Mayan philosophy and explains a type of "interdependent solidarity [that] allows people to connect across social positions, across differences, across language, across space, and across time" (Delgado Bernal, et al 2012, 368).

Recognizing that the "differences" between others and myself are actually imaginary social constructs and is an integral piece of the structural violence that is repressing and abusing the women I work with, I understand that there are no *real* differences between us. We are the same, "son mi otro yo."

Throughout this experience, I have become more sensitive to the ways that I myself perpetuate violence through incognizance and acquiescence; I have reaffirmed and redefined the kind of world that I want to live in, and, each day, I become more and more aware of my responsibility as a sister to human beings who are sharing the mutual experience of *life*.

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APPENDIX A.

ORIGINAL TEXT OF *TESTIMONIOS*

Fernanda

Voy a contar un poco de mi vida. Soy de Chiapas. Mi niñez fue muy triste. Eramos diez. Yo la única mujer en casa. Los demás eran hombres. Mi mamá fue muy estricta conmigo. A los 6 años, aprendí a tortear a mano. Mi mamá me quemó las manos porque no podía hacerlo y así aprendí, pero mi mamá me pegaba mucho. Cuando mi papá llegaba del trabajo, me quejaba, pero él no me defendía. El quería más a mis hermanos porque ellos eran hombres y yo era mujer. Mi papá tal vez no me quería. Esa niñez tan triste que tuve, no la quiero para mis hijos. No quiero hacer con ellos lo que hicieron conmigo. Y aunque mis papás hayan sido duros conmigo, aprendí a hacer muchas cosas, como a trabajar y ser responsable. Comencé a trabajar a los 9 años. Trabajaba e iba a la escuela. Pero me sentía muy sola. Porque yo dormía en la casa donde trabajaba y my mamá solo llegaba cada mes para cobrar mi sueldo y no me dejaba nada para mí, para llevar a la escuela. La persona con la que trabajaba me regalaba ropa. Yo estaba agradecida, pero a la vez me sentía muy triste porque, cuando cumplía años, nadie se acordaba de mí. Nunca tuve un abrazo de cumpleaños.

Me casé a los 15 años pensando que mi vida iba a cambiar. Con la persona que me junté me iba muy mal. Me pegaba mucho, y aunque estuviera embarazada, a él no le importaba: me golpeaba, me pateaba. Yo vivía atemorizada. Ya cuando lo oía llegar…me preparaba. Y después que me pegaba, me pedía perdón y yo lo perdonaba porque yo decía que lo quería. El tenía el doble de mi edad.

Pasó el tiempo y él seguía pegándome. Nos venimos a Monterrey a vivir en casa de su tía. Mi sufrimiento seguía cada vez más. Para que los hombres me vieran fea, con unas tijeras me trasquilaron. Yo no me defendía por el miedo que le tenía, pero ese sufrimiento era tan grande que no se lo deseo a nadie.

Conocí a una señora y ella me vió golpeada, con un ojo morado. Esto sucedía con frecuencia.-- Me golpeaba, me pateaba--Me aconsejó que no debía dejarme golpear por nadie. Ese día yo escapé de la casa donde vivía y me fui a la casa de la señora que conocí, quien me brindó su casa y su amistad. Me dijo que iba a estar bien. Desde entonces, mi vida cambió mucho. El hombre con el que yo vivía, se enfureció y llamó a la policía, pero la mujer que me recibió en su casa, me dijo: déjalo. Ya verá este hijo de su chin…como le va a ir. Me llevó a levantar demanda, fueron testigos de cómo me golpeaba y estaba la evidencia en mi cara de cómo me encontraba. El me había amenazado de quitarme a mis hijos, pero en nada ganó. Me preguntaron que qué quería para él. Yo lo único que pedí, que no me volviera a molestar, que me dejara en paz.

Desde entonces mi vida cambió mucho. La mujer que conocí me admitió a quedarme en su casa. Me consiguió trabajo y esa pesadilla dejó de existir. Yo trabajaba mucho para sacar adelante a mis hijos. En mí nunca pensaba. Desde entonces soy padre y madre para ellos.

Pasaron 5 años y conocí al papá de mi hija la más pequeña. Pero cuando lo conocí tenía miedo que me pasara lo mismo que con el primer esposo. Me dio tiempo para conocerlo. Entre tanto, yo trabajaba para tener un patio. Ahí hice mi casa de tabla. Yo decía: pobre pero es mi casa.

Yo le dije al papá de mi nena, que yo tenía dos hijos, que si me aceptaba así. Yo tenía miedo porque pensaba que tal vez podría hacerles daño. Pero yo le dije: “si les haces algo, te mato”. El me dijo que jamás los iba a tocar. Yo siento que a mis hijos nadie los va a tocar, a humillar ni a pegar. Yo me esfuerzo por ellos aunque siento que soy muy dura en el aspecto de la educación en la escuela, pero se han educado bien. No bajan de calificaciones. Yo siempre trabajaré para ellos, para sacarlos adelante. Y hasta que Dios me de vida, yo estaré con ellos, porque son mi prioridad. Me gustaría ser mejor madre.

Yo quisiera que ellos fueran unos profesionistas los tres, ya que yo no pude serlo. Mis padres son muy pobres y éramos 10 hermanos.

Con mi pareja actual, a veces ya no aguanto la situación. Es muy celoso, me grita y tal vez ya no cambie. Me gustaría que me quisiera más, que no me cele ni me grite. A veces pienso en dejarlo. Lo aguanto porque quiere a mis hijos, los dos que no son de él. Y mientras él sea bueno con mis hijos, yo lo aguantaré. Le pido a Dios que me dé fuerzas.

Ahora que me vine y pasé el desierto, viví muchas cosas. Sufrí hambre, sed…fueron nueve días de caminata. El recuerdo de mis hijos me ha dado fuerzas. Cuando sentía que ya no podía, me levantaba y sacaba fuerzas. Y cuando me agarró la migra, he aprendido una gran lección: que hombres y mujeres somos iguales y tenemos igual valor.

A mis hijos les hablo y los animo. Aunque esté lejos, los llevo en mi mente y en mi corazón. Sé que ellos me extrañan como yo a ellos. A veces siento que no debí alejarme de ellos, pero mis hijos sacan buenas calificaciones y quiero que sean hombres de bien en la vida. También mi hija que es muy linda y educada y tiene el primer lugar.

A veces me siento vieja y que nunca me he dado tiempo para mí. Siempre ha sido trabajar pensando en ellos. Pero tal vez en el futuro voy a tener demasiado tiempo.

En fin, ahora mi meta es trabajar para mis hijos y comprarle un terrenito a mi papá para que él haga lo que quiera, porque aunque siempre fuimos tan pobres, yo a mi papá lo quiero mucho porque nos enseñó a respetar a los demás y creer en Dios.

Elisa

Mi infancia fue muy dura. Viví pobreza extrema. Mis padres me golpeaban. Yo pensaba: Por qué mis papás no me quieren? La vida no tenía sentido para mí. Tres veces intenté suicidarme. Una vez me fui detrás de la casa con un cuchillo, pero mi hermana llegó y no me dejó. Otra vez tomé suavitel, cloro y pinol revueltos….me hizo efecto que de pronto pensaron que estaba borracha y no me hicieron caso. Después, vieron que estaba echando espuma por la boca. Se dieron cuenta de lo que pasaba y me llevaron al hospital. Esa vez duré inconsciente 4 días.

A los 9 años fui violada por un hombre del pueblo. A los once años me fui a trabajar al D.F. Cuando tenía 15 años, estando allá, una vez vi que alguien me iba siguiendo. Me alcanzó y con el brazo izquierdo me agarró por el hombro y con el derecho, me amenazaba con un cuchillo al cuello. Me llevaron a unos árboles, me rompieron los vestidos con el cuchillo y me violaron. Yo perdí la conciencia. Lo demás, no recuerdo. Pero me dicen que fui a la casa de mi patrona, llegué estilando sangre y con una risa muy rara. Había perdido la conciencia y estaba como loca. Me llevaron al médico, luego al manicomio. Ahí estuve más de un año.

Desde primaria, tenía un amigo. Fue por el que me golpearon mucho una vez, cuando me quise suicidar.

A los 17 años me junté con él. Cuando me junté, ya tenía un hijo de él. Tuve otros dos hijos. Vivíamos en una casa que era de mi suegra y de nosotros. Ella iba cada mes a estar ahí. Mi compañero se fue a los Estados Unidos. Poco después de un año me dijo que había otra mujer pero que a los hijos no les faltaría nada. No cumplió.
Mi hija se enfermó de un soplo en el corazón. Mi suegra me dijo que, si salía de la casa, ya no volvería ahí. Y efectivamente, tuve que salir a llevar a mi hija al Dr. Y cuando regresé, mi suegra ya no me dejó entrar ni por mis cosas. Algunas me las dio por la ventana. Me echó a la calle. Me fui con mi mamá y con mis tres hijos. Ella tenía una casita muy, muy pequeña, pobrísima, construída de maguey y lodo.

Para sostener a mis hijos, decidí ir a los Estados Unidos y dejar a mis hijos con mi mamá. Me fui con un hermano por Matamoros. Nos robaron. Pasamos frío intenso. El coyote que traíamos, nos entregó a un tipo que nos llevó al hotel. Ya en la noche, él dijo que íbamos a ir de compras él y yo. Los hombres que estaban no dijeron nada. Nos fuimos en un carro. Allá me violó y me amenazó que, si le decía algo a mi hermano, nos mataba a los dos. Al regresar, mi hermano notó que había llorado. Me preguntó si estaba bien, pero nada pude decirle.

Había otro hombre, tatuado y que se drogaba. El coyote me llevó con él y le dijo que si hacían el trato. Y que sería en lo convenido. (El trato era venderme) El dijo: "Déjame ver qué tan buena está". Se acercó para tocarme. Yo empecé a gritar. Mi hermano y los otros hombres vinieron. También vino la mujer del tatuado. Ella entró y le dijo que se pusiera en paz. Si no hubiera sido por los hombres y la mujer, no sé lo que hubiera sido de mí.

Tramo para llegar hasta los Estados Unidos.

Al llegar a Carolina, el pollero que la había sacado para llevársela, y que la abandonó, se lo encontró allá. Fue su desgracia. La mamá lo había encargado con él. El se sentía dueño. Quería decidir por ella. No le permitía salir, quería dominarla. Y era quien le había causado tantos males. Expresó la mujer: "ahora que estuve en mi pueblo, lo cachetee". El era quien había querido venderla.

Cuando estaba sola, sin los hijos vivía en un departamento con unos 10 hombres. Dormía en el closet.

Yo era muy seca. No salía de mi casa. Quise agarrar el vicio de tomar. A veces golpeaba a mis hijos. Pensaba suicidarme. No tenía ganas de reír…

Ximena

Soy hija de padres criados a la antigua. Mi madre como la 8ª. Esposa de mi padre. Yo siempre miraba cómo golpeaba a mi mamá.

Fui abusada por un hombre cuando yo tenía 12 años. El tenía 22. Quedé embarazada. Nunca me arrepiento de mi hijo. Hablé con la persona que me violó para que se quedara conmigo. Se quedó pero me dio una mala vida. Yo me protegía para no tener mas hijos.

Quedé embarazada del segundo hijo. El era mujeriego, tomador y golpeador. Yo tenía que hacer tamales para vender y poder comer. Así pasó el tiempo. Yo ya no soportaba esa vida y hablé con mi familia en Estados Unidos. Sí me apoyaron y tuve que emigrar para trabajar. Luego sentía muy mal sin mis hijos. Decidí volverme a endeudar para pasar a mis hijos. Gracias a Dios estábamos allá. Yo trabajaba y ellos estudiaban. Me avisaron que mi papá estaba enfermo y que lo iban a operar. Me vine en diciembre. Cuando llegué, él ya había fallecido. Me quedé a divorciarme de la persona que abusó de mí. Sí me divorcié.

Pensé regresar a los Estados Unidos. Salí el 26 de noviembre. Acordé con la persona que me iba a pasar, vernos en Altar, Son. Mi sorpresa fue que, al llegar a Altar, a las 4.50 de la mañana, había otras personas ahí. Yo bajé y otros dos hombres que yo nunca supe quienes eran. Bajamos del autobús, caminé como 8 ó 10 pasos cuando se acercaron unas personas diciéndome que los habían mandado por mí. No hice caso, cuando se acercó una camioneta y los hombres nos empujaron hacia adentro de la camioneta. Y me gritaban que no levantara la cabeza. Así me llevaron hacia una casa metida hacia adentro. Ellos bjaron. Yo levanté la vista y había un restaurante y un callejón amarillo. Al lado, una compañía de Telcel. Salieron rápido, nos bajaron y a mí me quitaron dos bolsas con mis pertenencias. Mi dinero lo traía en mi pantalón.

Ellos me pidieron teléfonos de familiares. Sí marqué a mi hijo, pero yo le había dicho que, si llegaba a tener problemas le iba a llamar "amiga". Sí le dije "amiga" y él me dijo: "busca ayuda, mamá, yo te quiero mucho". Esas palabras me dieron muchas fuerzas. Me obligaron a meterme al callejón. Esperamos mucho rato. Adentro había como 20 muchachas y como 6 mujeres, un lugar muy feo. Ellas se me quedaban viendo. Luego me sacaron de ahí, ya casi obscuro y me llevaron a otra casa más fea. Ahí me metieron con la cabeza hacia abajo y ellos me gritaban para qué lugar iba y que les diera información de familiares para sacarles dinero. Ahí vi a otras mujeres y logré hablar con una de ellas, porque me arrodillaron a su lado. Yo le pregunté qué tiempo tenía ella ahí. Me dijo que un mes. Yo me preocupé. Luego me gritaron que no hablara. Muchos fumaban. Luego se acercó un hombre alto, canoso y me dijo que, si no daba tel. de familiares, iba a tener que pagar con mi cuerpo.

Cuando ví que uno ya me iba a escoger, yo empecé a llorar y le pregunté al canoso cuánto quería. Me pidió $ 8 000.00. Yo le dije que era una mujer sola y pobre. Que iba a trabajar a los Estados Unidos con amiga que me estaba ayudando. Yo le decía toda atemorizada y llorando. Le dije que traía solo $ 5 000.00 y me dijeron que estaba bien, que no me iban a tocar y me apartaron de las demás a una esquina. Esperé mucho tiempo. Oí que se llamaban entre ellos y se divertían con una muchacha. Ella solo lloraba.

Me sacaron en la noche, me metieron en una camioneta. Tardó mucho tiempo en terracería. Había polvo y piedras. Luego se paró la camioneta y me gritaban: "bájese". Yo tenía mucho miedo, me pegaron y me bajaron ahí. Era un lugar muy feo, solo, desierto. Luego me encontré una persona que llevaba mucha gente. Cuando los vi, les lloré para que me sacaran de ahí. El muchacho me dijo que él me iba a ayudar, que me calmara y esperara a que escondiera a la gente. Y sí, caminé con él al lugar donde escondió a los demás.

Pero yo estaba golpeada y cojeaba. El me preguntó si yo había tomado droga para seguir o salir. Yo le dije que nunca había probado.

El me dijo que no iba a llegar y que mejor me quedara, regresara. Sí regresé. El me mandó con su compañero de guía y me sacaron de ese lugar, me levaron a una casa de huéspedes y el muchacho me dio $50.00. Con eso le hablé a mi hijo. Rápido me contestó. Me dijo que le daba muchas gracias a Dios por mi vida. Ya le habían hablado pidiéndole dinero de rescate. Fui a Ciudad Acuña a quedarme con una hermana, pues ya se acercaba la Navidad. Me recuperé. Me habló el guía para preguntarme si ya estaba lista. Amanecí en Santa Ana y de ahí me fui a Altar, Son. Llegué a un hotel. Salí a comer y unos hombres me siguieron. Llegaron a preguntar por mí. Algo pasó con esos hombres, total que el guía me dijo que yo mejor pasaría por Sonoíta. Me fui por allá. Me mandaron con un tal Rafa. Me dijo que pagara $1500.00 para la mafia. Pagué y me dijo que caminaría 4 noches y 5 días. En el desierto, me dijo que serían 6 noches. Caminamos montañas y más montañas. Yo me empecé a cansar, aminoré el paso, me fueron dejando. Yo miraba de arriba hacia donde se fueron yendo. Pero ya migración las estaba esperando abajo.

Yo había cambiado mi mochila con la un muchacho, menos pesada, pero sólo traía una camisa, un pantalón, un atún y una botella de agua. Caminé otra noche sola, pero no paraba de caminar.

Camila

En mi infancia, cuando mi papá llegaba borracho, teníamos que salir corriendo porque nos golpeaba. Allá llueve mucho. Nos íbamos debajo de un árbol, allá amanecíamos mojados de las lluvias o entrábamos a dormir a las 11 ó 12 de la noche,

todos mojados. A veces nos íbamos a casa del abuelo. Mi papá, a quien no considero papá sino como un enemigo, le decía que nos corriera, que no quería que estuviéramos en su casa.

Mi papá, a los 16 años, me llevó a Tehuacán, Pue. Y me abandonó para que trabajara, me "tiró" con un amigo de él, trailero. La primera quincena, mi papá se llevó el dinero que gané. Me dijo que se iba, pero iba a regresar. Nunca volvió. Tal vez recibió dinero por mí, no me dijo. Si se le reclamaba, él se enojaba. Mi mamá nunca me apoyó. Cuando mi hermano se enfermó, él dijo: "déjalo, se va a morir como un perro". Mi papá hizo drogadictos a mis hermanos cuando vivimos en Estados Unidos. El les daba a fumar la mariguana que para que se hicieran hombres.

Me embaracé estando en Tehuacán. Pero él me puso los cuernos con otra mujer y lo dejé y me vine con mis papás que se vinieron a Chihuahua. En Chihuahua nació la niña. Durante mi embarazo, yo los mantuve. Ganaba $1000.00 por semana. Mi papá tuvo el descaro de pedirle dinero a la Sra. a cuenta de mi trabajo. Yo, con mi trabajo, pagué gastos de mi hija, ropa y demás. Cuando la niña tenía 20 días, hicimos el primer intento de pasar. De Chihuahua nos fuimos a Ciudad Juárez. No pasamos. Pudimos pasar hasta cuando tenía 8 meses.

A la segunda vez, pasamos: Mi papá, mamá, una hermana y dos hermanos. Allá mi papá me quiso vender con un viejo que iba a tomar con él. Mi prima me aconsejó que buscara un hombre al que yo quisiera y no me entregaran a un pinche viejo. Ante estas circunstancias, decidí juntarme. Y así viví feliz, pero ahí estaba el "alacrán ponzoñoso" (el papá).

Cuando me junté, mi papá le dijo a mi marido: "si no puedes dominar a esta mula, me la das a mí, que yo la voy a domar. Pégale, golpéala…"

A mi hermano mayor lo golpeaba bien feo. A mi papá nadie lo quiere. Mi hermano le dijo (al papá): el día que te mueras, me voy a emborrachar de alegría.
Allá tuve dos hijos: Una niña y un niño. El niño, Esteban, se me enfermó de meningitis. Ya estaba desahuciado. Nos fuimos a Chiapas. Estando allá, como no hay trabajo, "engaratusaron" a mi esposo con una empresa americana. Había mil promesas: guardería, escuela…

A última hora, nos pagaban $137.00 por día. Nos descontaban a la semana $ 262.00 por la comida; $ 300.00 por cuidar a los niños, nuestros hijos…al fin no nos venía quedando casi nada. Nos trataban mal. No podíamos descansar. Si nos sacaban en un día, aunque ya fuera después de medio día, ya no nos pagaban. Y el colmo fue que nos quitaron a una niña. Dijeron que por violencia familiar. Todo es mentira. Según eso, mi marido estaba drogado y la golpeó. Mi marido ni se droga y trata muy bien a los niños. Lo que pasó es que se cayó de un árbol y alguien nos demandó.

APPENDIX B.

INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

Datos Generales			
Fecha de Ingreso:			Fecha de Salida:
Nombre:	Fecha de nacimiento:		Edad:
¿Cuál es su lugar de origen?	¿Es ciudad, pueblo, rancho, aldea o cantón?:		Estado civil:
¿Cuantos hijos tienes?:	Escolaridad:		
Religión:	Idioma(s):		¿Perteneces a algún grupo indígena?
¿Necesitas atencion medica?			
Si hay embarazo, ¿cuántos meses tienes?			
¿Has sido victima o has visto algún tipo de violencia durante tu vida? Favor de explicar			
¿Qué sentimientos tienes en este momento?			
¿Hace cuánto saliste de tu tierra?			
Si es la primera vez que vienes a la frontera, ¿qué te hizo salir de tu casa?			
¿Cómo adquiriste para migrar?		¿Cuánto has gastado en tu migrar?	
¿Con quién viajaste? Sola			
Describa el viaje desde salir de tu casa: (¿Sufriste un asalto? ¿Acoso sexual? ¿Un robo? ¿un secuestro? ¿Te abandonaron en el desierto?)	¿Por dónde entraste?	¿Por dónde te deportaron?	Si viajabas con alguien, ¿dónde se encuentra ahora?
¿Cómo te trató la migra o policía que te detuvo? (si hubo abuso, como era el oficial? Que color traia el oficial?)			
¿Cuánto te iba cobrar el coyote?			
¿Cómo te trató el guia/pollero/coyote?			
¿Cuántos veces has cruzado la frontera?			
	¿Cuantas deportaciones llevas?	¿Viviste en la usa?	¿Dónde? / ¿Por cuánto tiempo?
¿Por qué regresaste a México?			
¿Tienes hijos menores en México?	¿Con quien están?	¿ hijos menores en la USA?	¿Con quien están?
¿Regresarás a tu lugar de origen? ¿o intentarás cruzar otra vez?			
¿Qué derechos reconoces que tienes tu como mujer?			
(para las que regresan)			
Fecha de ingreso:			
¿Regresarás a tu lugar de origen ¿o intentarás cruzar otra vez?			
¿Qué te motiva tomar esta decisión?			