BORDERING ON AGENCY:
FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN MATAMOROS, MEXICO, AND BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS

Kathleen M. Murphy
University of Texas at Austin
kath@ccwf.cc.utexas.edu

Prepared for delivery at the 1998 meeting of the
Latin American Studies Association, Palmer House Hilton Hotel, Chicago, IL, September 24-26, 1998.

Panel: GEN03 Agency and Causality in Repression and Reconciliation:
Gendered Responses to Neoliberal Policies in Argentina, Guatemala and Mexico, Part II

DRAFT: Please do not cite without author's permission.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will discuss female heads of household in Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas, and consider how they exercised agency, as represented in interviews conducted for a research project of the Center for Social Work Research at the University of Texas.[1] I will focus on the effects that neoliberal policies had upon these women's lives, specifically, how the proliferation of *maquiladoras,* or assembly plants, there affected conceptions of "women's work", and yet of the enduring prevalence of the 'informal sector' upon which many female heads of household relied for income. On the U.S. side, the consequences of then-impending cuts in federal assistance programs that would result from welfare reform were the most common effects of neoliberalism, U.S.-style.

A brief note on the data: these analyses are based on a subsample of a data set of 29 interviews, done in low-income households between September 1996 and May 1997. All of the households included dependent children among their members. Usually, it was the senior female of the home who granted the interview, which lasted between two and five hours. The questions, posed either by myself in Matamoros or my colleague Cathy Jackson in Brownsville, gathered detailed information about household expenditures and sources of incomes, as well as more general questions about household members' well-being.

Many of these households were identified by a variety of governmental, non-governmental and religious agencies in Matamoros and Brownsville, though no more than two contacts were used from each source. Occasionally, an interviewee would refer us to another home which fit the study's criteria, so that we also employed the 'snowball' method when looking for candidates to interview, though again, no more than two households per neighborhood were included in the study. From these 29, I focus the analysis on the eleven households which were headed by women, meaning that there was no adult male partner in the household. When helpful comparisons can be made, I make occasional reference to the data set overall.[2]

THE RESEARCH SITE

To reach the U.S. side of the study site, Brownsville -- the southernmost city of the United States -- from Austin you drive down Interstate 35. You'll go through San Antonio and then on into the Rio Grande Valley's agricultural fields. You'll pass stands selling some of the Valley's produce: citrus, vegetables, and pecan products. South Padre Island, an enduringly popular spring break destination for Texas college students, is just a half hour's drive away. Areas of Brownsville boast handsome homes, and the University of Texas at Brownsville and Southmost College are situated along one of the city's attractive palm-lined *resacas*, inlets of water. Entering downtown Brownsville however, the residents' poverty is apparent: businesses everywhere advertise that they accept the Lone Star cards which function as did the food stamps they replaced. *Casas de cambio* cash checks for those who cannot afford bank accounts; the city's main thoroughfare boasts a slew of used clothing stores.

A local contact of ours in Brownsville crosses the border several times a week to visit her parents, brothers and sisters who live in Matamoros. To do so, she crosses one of two bridges. Her preferred short cut is the 'old' bridge, a narrow two-laned bridge that bypasses downtown Matamoros, allowing quicker access to the industrial-area *colonias* where her family lives. Her secret is open, and lines at this bridge are just as long and just as interwoven with street vendors as those at the newer bridge just to the east, which leads into the more touristy, downtown

Matamoros. Traffic at both bridges is thick at peak hours, attesting to the high volume of traffic between these two border cities. Tolls vary daily on the Mexican side, indexed to the *peso's* seemingly chronic devaluation; at the time of this research it was hovering at around 8 to the U.S. dollar. Waiting in traffic, one might tune into the local radio station, "*la Maquiladora*", which indicates the dominance of these U.S.-owned assembly plants on the lives of Matamorenses since Matamoros' industrial park was built in the early 1970s (Sklair 1993:127). The *maquiladoras* have added to the city's growth in past decades; for example, the city went from a population of 186, 146 in 1970 to 238,840 in 1980, with a corresponding jump in Brownsville's population from 52,522 to 84,9997 for the same years, respectively (Sklair 1993:35).

DEFINING NEOLIBERALISMS ON THE BORDER

The *maquiladora* are evidence of one sense in which to interpret 'neoliberalism' of this panel's title, as applied to the bi-national context of Matamoros and Brownsville. They are the result of what might be considered global neoliberalism, which stresses the importance of capital mobility, allowing it to rest where labor costs are cheapest. In the lower Rio Grande Valley, this aspect of neoliberalism predates the current respective national neoliberal policies, as well as the tri-national North American Free Trade Agreement, or "NAFTA".

Since 1965, the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) has brought factories to Mexico's northern border, set up to process, assemble and finish raw materials and intermediate goods, so as to take advantage of the Mexicans there who work for much lower wages than their counterparts in the U.S. (Iglesias Prieto 1997:xxiii). The Mexican President Echeverría established a legal framework for these plants in 1971, which stated explicitly in its official English translation that Mexico's "labor is inexpensive and easily adaptable to productive processes and with a high productive rate" (Sklair 1993:45).[3] Since, in the 1970s, Mexican wages were still double those Asian workers could be paid, the Mexican government in the 1980s controlled wage increases further and repressed trade union activities, a policy which only intensified after the price of oil, a major Mexican export, dropped in 1982, provoking a debt crisis and imposition of fiscal austerity by the International Monetary Fund. By 1990, Mexican workers in the *maquiladoras* were being paid less than those in South Korean and Taiwan (Warnock 1995:56-61).[4]

The BIP is neoliberal in the relationship it promotes between labor and capital. Mexico found in U.S. capital investment -- rather than government-funded employment programs -- a solution to the late 1960s unemployment rate in northern Mexico. The jobless rate in the region rose rapidly with the discontinuation of the U.S. government's *bracero* program, under which Mexican nationals were allowed to come in as temporary workers to harvest produce in the U.S. (Sklair 1993:46). Yet, it should not be overlooked that the program exists due to government intervention -- which is not 'liberal' in the classic sense. The B.I.P. enterprise zones were special areas set up and *protected* in ways to be phased out by the extension of these principles to all of Mexico, Canada and the United States since the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA does not represent the classic free trade of liberalism, but, rather, as Kathleen Staudt observes: "NAFTA *protects* a geographic space from outside competition. It creates a transitional process wherein tariffs are reduced and phased out over ten to fifteen years (Staudt 1998:164, italics added). In the bounding of this free trade zone, and in the active suppression of the Mexican minimum wage both the BIP and NAFTA are evidence of government control over the free movement and expression of labor, despite their label as 'neoliberal'. The 'freedom' promoted by this presumed liberality applies to the interests of capital. "Global" capitalism is in this case a regional trade agreement. It is thus distinct from the two other *national*

neoliberal regimes which affected female heads of households in Matamoros and Brownsville differently, due to the significance of the U.S.-Mexican border.

The noted historian of Mexico, Alan Knight, sums up how neoliberalism has been practiced there by the two recent presidential administrations (or *sexenio*s), those of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and of the current President Ernesto Zedillo de Ponce.

> Salinas accelerated and deepened De la Madrid's neoliberal economic project. The state sector was shrunk; subsidies were slashed; Mexico cut tariffs and entered NAFTA; the ejido -- for year the victim of malign neglect -- was offered the option of euthanasia (Knight 1998).

In addition, until the introduction of the social programs *Solidaridad* in 1987, and PRONASOL in 1990, wages were suppressed nationwide, not only in the *maquiladoras* (Skott and Larudee 1998:288). Whatever good the programs did was reversed by the *peso* devaluation of 1994, which plunged Mexico into its worst economic crisis of this waning century.[5] The consequence was:

> worsened poverty and inequality at least temporarily through loss of formal-sector employment, lower real wages, higher inflation, and big rewards for the wealthy who had managed to get their money out of the country before the value of the currency collapsed. The failure to limit current-account deficits swamped attempted improvements through direct social programs (Sheahan 1997:25).

Another relevant consequence of neoliberalism in Mexico was the growth of the 'informal' sector of the economy, working in labor-intensive activities which do not offer workers access to the Mexican Social Security Institute, known commonly as IMSS" or simply as "*seguro."*[6] Even more common than *maquiladora* work, women earn money in ways that fall into this vague category. It includes, for example, selling food, clothing, housewares in the street or from their homes. Martín Hopenhayn points out the link between neoliberal policies and support for informal sector activities. He notes that Hernando de Soto's book *El Otro Sendero* (1987)[7] extolled the benefits of the free market as evidenced by Peru's informal sector. De Soto, in effect:

> transformed a problem, the informal sector, into a virtue, ignoring the vulnerability of resources and the poverty that accompanies the vast majority of the informal sector's population. The book was heavily promoted in Latin America by neoliberal organizations and the media, and Ronald Reagan mentioned it with enthusiasm in a speech. (Hopenhayn in Beverley et al. 1995:99, fn. 9).

In reading over the transcriptions of the interviews Cathy Jackson conducted for the Brownsville side of this project, however, it is clear that another neoliberalism affects female-headed households in Texas. It is the one implemented by what I've heard sarcastically referred to, rather than the official phrase coined by the Republicans as part of their 1995 takeover of the U.S. Congress -- "Contract *with* America" -- as a "Contract *on* America," casting Congress as Mafia-style hitmen. Either phrase accurately heralded a now-in-effect "end to welfare as we know it." The main thrust of the new assistance programs, administered by the states rather than the federal government, is to require recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) eventually to enter the labor force or training programs.

The 1996 federal "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996" block grants the former federal programs AFDC and the Emergency Assistance and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) into a single capped entitlement to states. States receiving these funds, known as "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families" (TANF) must require recipients to be working within two years. Further, an individual is limited to five years of TANF assistance during his or her lifetime. Adults without children cannot receive more than three months of food stamps during any three year period of unemployment. Legal immigrants and refugees were particular targets, losing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamps under the 1996 law, though the provisions regarding SSI are currently being renegotiated.[8]

HOUSEHOLD SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Given these neoliberal contexts affecting the U.S.-Mexican border, what was the response of female heads of household to the consequent constraints placed upon them?

To answer this kind of question about the kinds of agency exercised by heads of household and their families, academic researchers have focused on household heads' 'survival strategies,' meaning the manners in which they develop various kinds of resources to support themselves and their households (Stack 1974; González de la Rocha 1984, 1991; Selby et al. 1990; Ehlers 1991). Drawing on this literature, I have noted elsewhere that in Guadalajara (Murphy 1998, and forthcoming), several factors can be related to a female head of household's survival, whether part of a 'strategy' or not: a mother's age at her first birth, the impact (if any) on that event and her level of education, and what, in turn, that has to do with her ability to gain formal sector employment and consequent health and housing benefits. Moving beyond the individual as the unit of analysis, there are also variables at the household level, such as its size, the contribution of other members to household income and reproductive labor, and related dependency ratios and what point it is at in the household cycle (with the consequence that children are old enough to be adding to the household income or not).

One can also consider if the household is "matrifocal," meaning comprised of a mother and her children, or "extended", meaning that members of more than two generations are present, which can signify the helpful presence of a maternal grandmother. Among the most striking features of female heads of household I studied in Guadalajara is the prevalence of matrilineally extended household types. For these data, the *maquila* and proximity to the U.S. draw Mexicans from the interior to the border, so that of the 14 households I interviewed in Matamoros, eight were headed by individuals who had been born outside of the city. While one might think that this diminishes the importance of extended family ties, this did not appear to be the case for these female heads; if anything, their need for assistance with reproductive labor (especially child care) might have even strengthened their ties of mutual assistance with their families, particularly with their own mothers.

The important role grandmothers play in the lives of female-headed households is illustrated by one of the few female heads of the sample born in Matamoros, "Luisa."[9] Now age 47, she is the daughter of single mother. Luisa's father was alcoholic and beat her mother, who raised Luisa and five other children with the help of María's maternal grandmother, with whom they lived. By age 4, Luisa was helping her grandmother wash and iron clothes. After five years of schooling, Luisa stopped, and by age 15 was working in a *tortillería* and taco stand from 8 a.m. - midnight. She began working in the crab processing factory when she was 22, which is where she's worked for the past 25 years. Six years later, she married. Although she and her husband lived together for twelve years, he was alcoholic and beat her. Seven years ago, he left

and she has not seen him since. She wouldn't dare sue him for child support; that would embarrass her, she said, to ask him for anything.

Throughout her marriage, while Luisa was working her mother cared for her children -- "I never had to pay anyone," she said, "because I had my mother." The children who remain in her home are now aged 15, 14 and 7; the two older brothers take care of their younger sister. Also, her oldest daughter lives with her partner and child in another house on the same lot. They are able to help each other out, an arrangement which will presumably be beneficial to both of them as the years progress, particularly since they are squatting on land in a downtown *colonia* and pay no rent. Instead, the US$35 or so that Luisa earns each week are spent primarily on food, transportation and school supplies. Most of their health costs are covered by her access to the Mexican health care system "*Seguro",* a benefit provided by her employer. Another resource for Luisa and her daughter is their extended family that still live fairly close by in other Matamoros *colonias.*

The importance of maternal grandmothers is seen also in the other female heads' lives. Cecilia, a primary school teacher, relied upon her mother to care for her son while she was at work, and then moved in with her after she was widowed. Atala lives across the street from her mother, and in the same *colonia* as the mother of her ex-husband, and relies on both to care for her sons when she is off on trips to buy and sell clothes.

Interestingly, the exception to the rule found a surrogate. Born in Coahuila, Sandra grew up in Monterrey with seven siblings. Her parents divorced. When she was 15, her mother left to go care for Sandra's maternal grandmother in Saltillo, leaving Sandra to care for her two younger brothers. By the time Sandra was 17, she was involved with the man who would father three children with her in the five years to come. During that time, they lived together off and on, but the relationship was never stable. He beat her often, and then would start in on their children. She left him and was staying with his sister for awhile, but the house was too crowded with Sandra's three children.

About two months before I met her in September 1996, Sandra was still living in Monterrey. She remembered having met an older woman from Matamoros in 1993, who at the time was a patient in the hospital where Sandra had been working in janitorial services. They had got along well, and exchanged addresses. Looking to start anew for herself, Sandra left her three year old with her 'sister-in-law' [her boyfriend's sister],[10] and headed to Matamoros in July 1996 with her 4 year old son and one-year-old daughter. This older friend took her in, perhaps as part of her evangelical mission to offer charity. They refer to each other as "sisters", meaning in Christ. Sandra found a job in Matamoros at a *maquiladora*, and a sitter across the street for the one-year-old. The four-year-old stayed with the 'sister'. All of these arrangements were apparently temporary until Sandra found a permanent job, secure child care and could then move out.

Another benefit that female heads who lived with their mothers sometimes enjoyed was rent-free housing. In this study, however, except for Cecilia, whose maternal uncles had built the house in which she and her family lived, all of the other female heads were renting or squatting. In contrast, the majority of the male heads of household owned their homes.

In Brownsville, five out of the six female heads of household living were Mexican-born. The distance from their families of origin sometimes meant that female heads of households on the border, unlike those in Matamoros, did not as often benefit from the assistance of the older generation.[11] Another reason for lack of contact was due to the grandmothers' deaths. Where the grandmothers were also in Brownsville, there was close and frequent contact if not cohabitation. Siblings were also at times helpful with loans.

In sum, the presence of a supportive extensive family, with grandmothers as key actors, functioned as the social safety net on both sides of the border -- where it is being stretched thin by the effects of neoliberal policies of whatever kind.[12] This factor also facilitated the female heads' abilities to earn an income.

Matamoros

Overall, the households headed by women in Matamoros do not show lower average incomes than those headed by men, even though more are paying rent. In fact, of all the households in Matamoros, highest household income by far was that of the widowed primary school teacher, Cecilia. Next was Vicki's, though that figure is slightly distorted since it represented contributions sent to her, until recently by her estranged husband, but even without his contributions, her income was the third highest overall. These two also had the most money left over after expenses were taken into account. What does fit the stereotype of the poor, subaltern single mother is the other end of the income scale: the two poorest households interviewed in Matamoros were those headed by Sandra and Luisa, both factory workers. Along with Atala, who sold clothes in Matamoros that she would buy in Leon, Sandra's and Luisa's households were in the bottom third of the fourteen interviewed when measuring discretionary income.

Factory work, then, was not the highest paid kind for women, but it was nonetheless one of the obvious sources of female employment in the minds of those interviewed. Of the 14 households interviewed in Matamoros, seven had female members who were doing or had done factory work, five of these in the *maquiladoras.* Most telling was the comment made by the wife of a couple interviewed, where she identifies a factory job with domestic employment, and both with women and closed doors:

> *And you ma'am, what other kind of work would you do?*
> I like to do men's work, not cleaning houses or in a factory, I feel too closed in.
> *What is men's work?*
> I don't know ... [her husband intervenes, and says 'gardening', and she continues] something that's outside.

Maquila and other factory jobs were preferred because they were perceived to have good pay, benefits, schedules and job security -- at least compared to other kinds of ways women could earn money. Secretarial jobs, for example, often included a two hour break midday, which lengthened the workday, as well as frequent Saturday half-day shifts. Cleaning others' homes and other informal sector activities did not accrue one health benefits. Thus, despite the real exploitation women workers in the *maquila* undergo, the factories had important affects on younger women's perception of their own ability to find a livelihood sufficient to support a household. (The *maquiladoras* do not tend to hire older women, which was common knowledge and has been observed in larger studies of the industry (Sklair 1993; Iglesias Prieto 1997; Peña 1997).[13]

It was known that not all *maquiladora* contracts were the same though; pay varied as well as the length of the work week. One wife, for example, was currently earning around US$55 per week, which was more than her last job with AT&T, where she made around US$44. The other problem was that factory jobs did not make child care easy, unless you were lucky enough to get a spot in one of the free government-run day care centers, or could find a reliable alternative at a reasonable price. So, women often quit when they became pregnant, perhaps looking for another contract between children.

Among the female heads I talked to "Sandra" worked as a machine operator in a Textron *maquiladora.* She was paid around US$31 a week for 48 hours of work, wages that drew her to Matamoros from Monterrey. In Monterrey, she was unable to pay for child care with the wages she was earning there. Her assessment of the job then, is realistic, namely, comparing it to her other viable alternatives. So, her concerns are not with the nature of *maquila* work per se, as much as with its stability and compensation:

> *Would you like to change jobs?*
> If I could, yes.
> *What would be your ideal job?*
> A job that pays well. A lot of jobs require high school.
> *Another factory?*
> Yes, something I'm qualified for.
> *How would you compare your job to those of your friends.*
> Well, they ask me "listen, why do you work so many hours?" "And they don't pay you well." "So much for so little". You work less and get paid more.

In addition to the primary school teacher Cecilia and Luisa and Sandra in the factories, Vicki and Atala both had small businesses in the informal sector, selling *tacos* and clothing, respectively.

Before starting up her *taco* business, Vicki had sold soap and jewelry for five years, between 1988 and 1993. She stopped because her clients, neighbors in the *colonia,* weren't paying her and she was too embarrassed to keep asking them for the money. Then her husband lost his job in 1995, so she began to sell *tacos* to help make ends meet. A teacher at the local primary school invited her to sell them to students there, so she took him up on the offer and now has a steady client base. Her husband soon afterwards found a job in Campeche, moved there, and gradually stopped sending money, and tapered off his visits. She suspects he has become involved with another woman and is going to divorce her, leaving behind rent to pay and six children between the ages of 19 and 4. She plans to continue what she is doing, or perhaps one day running a small store from the home. She considered factory work, she said, "because in a factory they give you a bonus, vacation -- and here no! Here there are vacations, but not paid ones," she said, laughing. Instead, she prefers the kind of activities that enable her to be at home around her children most of the time. They help her out with the *taco* preparation, and accompany her when she goes to sell them. She also had no compunction about her willingness to sue for child support if he was not cooperative. Of all the female heads in the entire sample, she is the only one who might have a chance at getting some paternal support. None of the other women had any; the men were dead, disabled and broke, or had disappeared, at times to the women's relief. [14] Where there were contributions from boyfriend, these usually occurred while some kind of sexual relationship was on-going; if not, the help tapered off.

As for neighborhood-based networks, considered a significant resource for households in other studies of urban Mexican communities (González de la Rocha 1986; Logan 1981; Lomnitz 1977; and Vélez-Ibáñez 1983), it is not apparent that such relationships were significant for the female heads of households in Matamoros. Luisa's response was typical, when asked about the issue:

> I hardly have anything to do with them because I don't see them. I arrive late in the afternoon, take care of the house, waiting for my kids from school, nothing

> more. When they talk to me, they speak nicely, I don't have anything against them. They say hi, I say hi, and that's it. I haven't had problems.

She did, though, find out about the lot on which she is currently squatting from a neighbor, seven years ago. Also, Vicki rents her home from her *compadre*, so she is unlikely to be evicted if late with the rent.

The most striking contrast between the Matamoros and Brownsville samples, is the minimal role the State played as a resource for women heading households. While there are subsidized tortillas and milk for low-income households, run by the Secretary for Social Development and another government agency known as LICONSA, respectively, neither of these benefits is for single mothers per se. Formal sector workers could apply to purchase low-cost government-constructed housing through the Institute of the National Fund for Workers' Housing (INFONAVIT), but as seen, many women in the labor force did not have access to this program. While the Commission to Regularize Land Tenancy (CORRETT) had enabled many households in the study to purchase low-cost lots on which to build a home, few women would have been able to save up enough money to put up the down payment. Most would probably feel they would need male help to do the actual construction work.[15]

Brownsville

What is clear from our conversations with women heading households in Brownsville is that too often the reason they end up relying on federal assistance is not due to the lack of desire to work or experience in having a job but rather poor health. Either the female heads themselves had been injured, or they were primarily responsible for another household member with a serious health problem. Also, as concluded Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein, in *Making Ends Meet,* their study of household economies of A.F.D.C. recipients in San Antonio, Chicago, Boston and Charlotte, N.C., the kinds of jobs former A.F.D.C. recipients could find did not pay enough to support their families. Limited English-language abilities did not help matters. And, unlike the women in Matamoros, women in the U.S. could not just decide to start selling *tacos* from door-to-door, due to government health and commercial regulations. Although, as discussed by Tracy Ehlers and Karen Main, some welfare recipients have been encouraged to start their own home businesses in the 'informal economy' of the United States, only a small minority are likely to succeed. Women often choose to start-up businesses that are "home based, minimally capitalized, and labor intensive, with modest sales volumes and a narrowly defined neighborhood clientele" (Ehlers and Main 1998:430). These "microenterprises" usually utilize their domestically cultivated skills and turn out to be "dead-end, contingent and unstable businesses that reflect women's subordinated social condition and marginal business status" (1998:430-1). Instead, all relied on some combination of federal assistance programs. Those who were not U.S. citizens lived in fear that their benefits would be cut off soon.

Here are some of their stories they told Cathy Jackson during the spring of 1997.

Lupe was age 54 when interviewed. Her mother was a U.S. citizen, so even though five of the twelve children in the family were born in Matamoros, including Lupe, all of them had citizenship. Lupe attended school in Mexico for three years, and then at age 10 began harvesting cotton. She married at age 17, and came with her husband five years later at her mother's suggestion. She and her husband were engaged in factory and migrant labor in Texas and California. In 1974, the couple moved bought a home for themselves and their two children in Brownsville. When the third child came along in 1979, Lupe left her job in a factory gluing sandpaper together, and has not held a job since. Shortly thereafter, health problems hit the

family. Her husband developed diabetes and lost both his legs by 1982. According to Lupe, the disability check is part of what attracted a female neighbor to develop a relationship with her husband, who left Lupe in 1985, a year after their oldest son and his girlfriend added a baby boy to the household. Her ex-husband lives next door with his new wife. After his marriage to this woman, Lupe lost the income from his disability check. Since he is disabled, the courts do not require him to pay Lupe child support and so he does not contribute economically to Lupe's household. Lupe's oldest son and girlfriend by 1990 had added three additional children to Lupe's home, where they left them after moving to Mexico.

Lupe relies on a variety of government programs (AFDC, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and SSI) to make ends meet, and has also received construction assistance on the house from volunteers affiliated with a Mennonite church in town. Her major financial problem, though, in addition to supporting six children, is the nearly US$7000 she owes in taxes on the house to the county and city. She gets by with loans from her siblings, and has high hopes for what might happen when her oldest daughter graduates from the University of Texas at Brownsville. Yet, her daughter is not healthy either; she suffers from lupus. Further, the son next in line, age 13, has a tumor in his arm.

Following the neoliberal line of thinking evident in welfare reform, one might wonder if Lupe herself might look for a job, since all of the six children in the household are in school. As Lupe explained it to Cathy, who asked "*Do you think that you could get a job if you looked for one?,"* she would like to work and has looked for a job in the past, but is concerned about her responsibilities taking care of the children. She also suspects age discrimination, and knows that her lack of English-language ability would prevent her from being able to return to the job she held in 1979. "What do you think?," she asked Cathy. "Do you think that at my age they would give me work?"

> *I think that it would be difficult to find a good job. But not impossible. Have you thought the same? Have you thought about this?*
> I have thought about working, but I don't have any strength. I already don't feel capable. Because I feel very tired. Yes, I would like to work, to earn money. Because I enjoyed working. But lately, because of the children I couldn't and then with these others, the grandchildren, I could even less. And now the illnesses they won't let me. That's why. It's wonderful to work. I think that if, if I had worked I would have. I would be in a better position now. Because they would be paying me. But. Well, I have submitted applications but they have never called me.

Later in the interview, Cathy asked her about the possibility of returning to her previous job. Lupe outlined the different requirements in place now:

> ... Now they have become very strict. Before you could get a job without knowing English but now they want people who know English. And I knew how to do everything there because you had to fill the orders and put everything in order. But not now. Now they don't want people without English.

Lupe was enrolled in an English class three years ago. She said that "welfare put me in it." But, the class lasted only a year, and she was able only to make a start.

Lupe's household is only one example of health problems plaguing families on welfare. Elena, age 49, was the fourth child of six born to a farming couple in Tamaulipas. After three

years of schooling, she started working as a maid and then found a job sewing in a small workshop. She came to the U.S. in the 1970s as an undocumented immigrant, and worked in a textile factory for a couple of years in Houston, before falling and hurting her knee. During this time she also acquired a Texas cosmetology license, certifying skills she had learned in Mexico. She moved to Brownsville where she had a brother, got a job in Levi's factory, and married her husband shortly thereafter in 1978. Their first child arrived the next year, and the second in 1982. The next year, she explains, referring to her husband, "I threw him out because he drank a lot." He has never contributed to her household, although she is pursuing legal action toward that end. Between 1983-1985 she received welfare assistance, which she lost when she became involved with another man. During that time she filed formally for divorce and almost married that boyfriend. But, after she watched him one day break one of her radios, presumably in a rage, she had second thoughts and broke it off. She said that she told him "there will never be a wedding because that hit that you gave to the radio could have been for me or my children." For awhile, she cut hair for a living but then fell and hurt her neck and can no longer legally work; apparently her injury affected her performance and she cut a client's ear. Instead, since 1990 she has relied on AFDC, food stamps, and Medicaid, as well as public housing for the past two years.

The main threat that welfare reform poses to Elena is the provisions that would allow only U.S. citizens to receive full benefits. Elena was living in fear of getting cut off, and had enrolled in an English class in hopes of passing a citizenship class in time. Like Lupe, her other hope was her children. Her oldest daughter was due to enter the University of Texas at Brownsville soon, and planned to pursue a degree in social work.

For "Carolina," it will be a long wait before her children might contribute to the household; in 1997 they were only 4, 2, and 1. Carolina and her mother, who lived with the family, worked together to take care of them. The 2 year old Rogelio was a particular handful since he often had convulsions and exhibited hyperactive behavior. Though the grandmother had never attended school, she had recently been working part-time, cleaning shrimp on-call for a local fishery. The cold working conditions, however, had aggravated her bronchitis and she quit. She has also tried to earn a little money selling snacks to their neighbors. The household relied primarily, though, on AFDC, food stamps, WIC and Medicaid. Also, they chose to live in a low-rent apartment -- which required them to share a bathroom with other residents -- primarily because the landlord did not hassle them too much when the rent was late.

The peculiarity of the border and its effect on citizenship and consequent eligibility for federal benefits is particularly apparent in this case. New citizenship requirements under welfare reform only exacerbate the situation. Another way that the border affects their household is that they find prices lower in Matamoros and purchase all non-food items except for diapers in Mexico. Food has to be bought in Brownsville or surrounding areas since they can only use food stamps in the U.S.

Born in Brownsville, Carolina was 29, the youngest of four children. She has three older siblings. None of them have the same father, and only one of the fathers, helped her mother out. He is now deceased. Carolina was raised by her maternal aunt, because her mother earned money crossing the border back and forth, selling clothes. No one stopped Carolina from dropping out of school at age 14, where she was enrolled in what her mother called 'special classes,' which one might infer were for students with learning problems. Soon after, her aunt died. A cousin of her mother's took her in, in return for Carolina's work around the house, cooking and cleaning. Due to these years of unpaid labor, Carolina has never been in the labor force. When she became pregnant in 1992, her mother was living in Mexico, and encouraged Carolina to deliver the baby in Matamoros, where a friend of the family lived and could help out with the delivery. Since this

little girl was not born in the U.S., and lived in Matamoros until age two, when Carolina moved back to Brownsville, her citizenship papers have not been processed and she was not eligible for Medicaid at the time of the interview. Carolina had been told by her social worker that there was a fee to process the papers; she cannot afford it. Carolina's move back to Brownsville coincided with the birth of her son Rogelio, which Medicaid did cover. His father is not aware of the second child, and Carolina has not pursued any legal effort to obtain child support from him. Soon after, she became involved with another man, who fathered her third child, a year old, but does not pay child support.

Neither are Carolina's brothers helpful; they live in Florida and Chicago and she has little contact with them. Carolina and her mother are entitled to receive a portion of the profits from the sale of some land the family has. The deal, however, is controlled by her mother's brothers, who, according to Carolina's mother, do not approve of their sister's lifestyle and so are trying to prevent her from getting the money, apparently by delaying the transaction.

Despite this lack of family support, and the limited educational aptitude Carolina has so far displayed, she will be required to enter the labor force or a training program once her youngest child enters school. Interestingly, it is not Carolina who opposes the idea; rather, it is her mother who is so dubious about Carolina's capabilities that she does not consider her able to shop alone, and often intervened in the interview, answering questions for her daughter. When Cathy asked Carolina what kind of job she would like to have, she answered that though she was currently enrolled in sewing classes offered by a Brownsville community agency, that really, "I would like to work in a factory that makes earrings or something like that. There ought to be something like that around here." Her mother, though, had other opinions, and thought she'd be better off cutting hair, an idea Carolina did not warm to. Her English is not strong, explained her mother, though she has studied it in the past. Her mother claims that "She is going to classes but she comes home exhausted, weak." Carolina concurred, adding that it's "because I don't understand anything. Nothing." Carolina did not complain about a parenting class offered by another local community agency, in which she was also enrolled at the time of the interview. Perhaps she will succeed in classes that relate more directly, like this one, to her experience and goals.

RETHINKING 'STRATEGIES' AND AGENCY

Assessing agency through an analysis of "household survival strategies" has its limits.[16] What are the assumptions embedded in the notion of "household survival strategies"? Taking each term in turn: 1) 'households' are comprised of numerous members, and should not be treated as a single agent with necessarily uniform interests; 2) not all households are truly struggling to survive biologically; and 3) a 'strategy' implies a conscious and rational weighing of ample alternatives, while the actions of most people to whom this phrase is applied do not necessarily take place under these optimal conditions, since their alternatives are not sufficiently numerous.

Despite the critiques of misapplying neoclassical economics to household studies, presuming the interests of a given domestic unit's members to be uniform, single mothers and female heads of household are often framed in both the popular and academic discourses as altruistic. But, as Nancy Scheper-Hughes observes in her study of maternity in Brazil, "[l]ove is always ambivalent and dangerous. Why should we think that it is any less so between a mother and her children?" (1992:353).[17]

The expression 'household survival strategy' does not take into account a full assessment of women's agency, meaning their ability to act fully as "strategic" agents in ways that control of change their life circumstances, and/or affect social constructions of their identities, as well as their ability to consider themselves as actors. This aspect of personal agency is not often

considered in discussions of female heads of households' "survival strategies" and their consequent well-being. I am drawing here on Sherry Ortner's (1997:146) distinction between, to deploy her shorthand, "empowerment" as opposed to an "active projection of the self toward some desired end." Ortner relates this difference to two traditions in anthropological theory: one associated with Clifford Geertz's focus on *meaning* , and a second which draws on various schools loosely related to Karl Marx, Michel Foucault and Edward Said, such as "critical studies (feminist, ethnic, minority and postcolonial studies, various post-and neo-Marxism" (1997:137). The latter is concerned with *power* and its *effects.* With respect to agency, she writes:

> I view *agency* as a piece of both the power problematic and the meaning problematic. In the context of questions of power, agency is that which is made or denied, expanded or contracted, in the exercise of power. It is the (sense of) authority to act, or of lack of authority and lack of empowerment. It is that dimension of power that is located in the actor's subjective sense of authorization, control, effectiveness in the world. Within the framework of questions of meaning, on the other hand, agency represents the pressures of desires and understandings and intentions on cultural constructions. Much of the meaning uncovered in a cultural interpretation assumes, explicitly or implicitly, an actor engaged in a project, a game, a drama, an actor with not just a 'point of view' but a more active projection of the self toward some desired end. (1997:146).

A necessarily interpretative project, I would nonetheless like to consider what sorts of things seemed to make the women interviewed feel empowered and, perhaps more importantly, gave their lives meaning.

Given the ambiguity of causality in human emotions and actions, the stories I heard in the interviews I believe reveal more about what kind of self-representations these single mothers chose to construct during our interviews than they do about 'what really happened.' An important consideration, then, in 'assessing agency,' is taking into account to what degree the single mothers interviewed were able to generate positive discourses about themselves, their families, and single motherhood in general. This resistance takes a variety of forms, as the women presented themselves as strategic agents, who rationalized and made conscious choices.

For strength, they drew on a variety of sources. Some were self-consciously spiritual. Others were proud of their ability to find work and keep their families fed. All took pride in being good mothers no matter the constraints of their economic situation. As Luisa put it, when I asked, *How does one feel, being a mother alone?*

> Well, I feel, what's it called? Very uncomfortable, because one has to go out to work, and leave one's children alone, to go to work. I feel bad. I'm in the factory, working, and thinking about my children, what's happening to them. They're alone, they get up and get ready, and go to school, she [the older sister] gets the little sister ready and walks her there and leaves her there. They [the older siblings] bring her to school. And in the afternoons when they arrive, I'm home, and I give them supper, talk with them, how they were, how did they behave. They talk to me, I talk to them not like a mother, but like another friend, in the family. But at the same time, they don't forget that I'm their mother, right? Everything with respect.

Or, I could several instances from Cathy's interview with "Magdalena," age 48 and a U.S. citizen. Divorced for six years, her story relates perhaps most directly to the effects of neoliberalism; she had just lost her assembly line job of 23 years because the plant had closed its Brownsville operations and moved across the border. She was living on A.F.D.C., S.S.I., and Medicaid, waiting to hear about a job she hoped would be opening up for her in another factory. If nothing materialized, she would begin to study for her high school equivalency diploma under a federal program designed for workers laid off due to the effects of NAFTA. Despite these somewhat daunting circumstances, during the interview, Magdalena consistently portrayed herself as exercising agency. As a concluding anecdote about how women on the border exercised agency within the constraints of neoliberalisms, take her account of applying for the job. It was back in 1973. She was 25, and had been in the country for 12 years. At age 13, after three years of schooling, she had left her family of 14 behind in Real de Catorce. In Brownsville, she worked through adolescence as a maid, and then switched to waitressing in her early twenties. During those years, she learned some English, but had trouble writing. Although she did not have the advertised qualifications for the job, she applied anyway.

> when they opened the company they put an advertisement in the newspaper that they were only going to hire people who had high school diplomas. And when I went to look for a job, like I told you, I only had 3 years of schooling. And I went and spoke to the person in charge and I told him. And he told me that they wanted people who spoke and could read English, and I knew how to speak English and read English but I didn't know how to write. But of course I never told him that. And I asked him, "Well, why do you want the employees to speak English if the machines aren't going to speak English to you?"

The manager brushed her off, but apparently thought better of it; when she got home, he had called her back in. She started the job the next Monday. By 1996, her pay averaged $US6 an hour, depending on her work group's productivity. Reflecting upon her tenure there, she focuses on how the job had been to her advantage:

> I got as much use out of that as I could because I knew I wouldn't have an opportunity to earn any place else as much money as I was earning there. Because it was one of those places that paid the most. And, yes, it was a wonderful opportunity because without it I wouldn't have this house, I wouldn't have had the assistance that I have had if it weren't for that job. I think it is a blessing from God, to have a job for so many years.

Lest one think Magdalena had illusions about the company's beneficence to its employees, it is clear from her analysis that she understood how neoliberalism had affected her life: "the reason that the company left is due to free trade. Because labor costs are cheaper in Mexico."

---

[1] The study was directed by Laura Lein, of the Center for Social Work Research, at the University of Texas at Austin, and was funded by the Hogg Foundation. The project is part of other on-going efforts by the Center to explore the differences between the experiences of poverty on both sides of the border; this particular set of twin cities is only one of the research sites, which also include San Antonio and Monterrey.

---

[2] Seven women in the subsample were heading households as a result of separation from a common-law husband or legal divorce. Two others were widows. One of the women had never married legally the fathers of her two children; in fact one of the fathers was ignorant of the birth. A second woman had lived for off and on again with the father of her three children, to whom she was not married legally. She left him frequently during their four year relationship due to his abuse, this last time, it seemed, for good.

Depending on the social class of the woman, if she had lived with the father of her children, a common-law relationship (or *unión libre)* might eventually lead to a legalization of the relationship, or become accepted by peers as a socially legitimate marriage. Some couples live together and legalize the relationship with a civil and/or religious ceremony when pregnancy occurs. A related pattern is to have a civil ceremony, and later, a Catholic one when it is clear that the marriage will endure.

See Norma Ojeda de la Peña (1989) for a still-relevant discussion of how Mexican social classes vary in their approach to legalizing heterosexual relationships. Chapter Seven of the book offers breakdowns of the prevalence of common-law arrangements (what she calls a 'unión consensual'), civil, and church unions by class. Her data from the 1982 National Demographic Survey in Mexico show that consensual unions ranged from 9% - 18.9%, based on women's first conjugal union at the time of the interview. Consensual unions were more prevalent among lower-income occupational groups. A slight majority (ranging from 51.3% - 70.6%) in all groups were married with both religious and civil ceremonies. Marriages contracted by civil authorities only ranged from 18.9% - 27.7%. Interestingly, more middle class couples chose a civil ceremony only, suggesting that religious conformity was highest among groups she refers to as bourgeois and peasant (1989:131).

[3] This amendment to the Customs Code also detailed that investors could "establish industrial units within a 20 kilometer strip parallel to the international border line or to the coast line. It authorizes tax free importations of raw materials, parts, components, machinery, tooling equipment, and everything else needed for the transformation or processing, assembly and finishing of products to be entirely exported", and named Matamoros explicitly as site in which factories could be built. (Sklair 1993:45-46). At this time, Matamoros already had 34 *maquiladoras* (Sklair 1993:120). Dussel Peters notes that the *maquiladoras* attract immigrants from the interior of Mexico, and function as a "buffer zone for Mexican migration to the United States" (in Suárez-Orozco 1998:57).

[4] Further, as John Warnock observes, an "unofficial benefit was the absence of Mexican government enforcement of environmental and health and safety regulations" (Warnock 1995:57).

[5] As outlined by John Sheahan, the *peso* devaluation can be linked to political instability in Mexico, due to the Zapatista revolt in Chiapas, and to the assassination of the Institutional Revolutionary Party's presidential candidate Colosio in early 1994. The crash is also due, though, to the administration's monetary policies (Sheahan 1997:20-25). See also Dussel Peters (in Suárez-Orozco, 1998).

[6] In a definition Augustín Escobar offers, an informal enterprise employs less than 20 workers, who work in a labor-intensive production, sometimes alongside the proprietor. Informal sector workers do not have unions or written labor contracts (Escobar 1986:70, 130). Operating informally offers the advantages of low overhead, since little capital is needed, just some tools or things to sell. Tax and social security taxes are evaded, and with the home as work space, family members are put to work or put up money (Roberts in Portes et al. 1989:41).

[7] The book was translated into English as *The Other Path* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989).

[8] This information was taken from "Making Welfare Reform Work -- A Report of the NACo Hearings on Welfare Reform Implementation" (1998), authored by the National Association of Counties. Published on the World Wide Web: http://www.naco.org./programs/social/welfare/report.

[9] All names used to refer to people interviewed are pseudonyms.

[10] She at times referred to herself as a *madre soltera* (single mother, connoting never-married), while calling her boyfriend her "*esposo"* (spouse, partner), and his sisters her *"cuñadas*" (sisters-in-law).

[11] Interestingly, though, in one of the Brownsville cases where the female head had little contact with her own family, who lived in Cd. Victoria, Mexico, her ex-husband's mother and brother frequently offered her and the children financial assistance.

[12] This finding is consistent with Henry Selby's conclusion, after studying households in ten Mexican cities (Matamoros not among them) during Mexico's economic crisis of the 1980s, that "the importance of he household and family has been in now way diminished by the economic depression" (1990:106).

[13] It has also been noted that men are increasing their presence as employees in *maquiladoras* (Bustos Torres in Bustos and Palacio, 1994:20).

[14] In contrast, Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein (1997) found that recipients of the former federal program Aid to Families with Dependent Children (A.F.D.C.) in the U.S. often received contributions from the fathers of their children (with in-kind preferred, rather than monetary which would violate program regulations in a more identifiable way).

[15] The exception to the rule was Cecilia, who felt it important to move out of her mother's home because her adolescent son had psychiatric problems and the crowded living conditions seemed to aggravate his aberrant behaviors.

[16] The following discussion is informed by Daisy Dwyer and Judith Bruce(1991), especially Nancy Folbre's article, "The Black Four of Hearts: Toward a New Paradigm of Household Economics'" pp. 248-264, and Selby, Murphy and Lorenzen (1990), especially Chapter 3, "Households, Strategies and the Economic System," pp. 51-86. I also benefited from several conversations with my research partner Beatriz Bustos Torres.

[17] See especially Chapter Eight, "(M)other Love", (Scheper-Hughes 1992:340-399) for a discussion of the literature asserting and contradicting whether maternal love is 'natural.'

References

Beverley, John, José Oviedo, and Michael Aronna (eds.)
1995 *The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Bustos Torres, Beatriz Adriana
1994 "Introducción: El Trabajo Femenino en América Latina y los Nuevos Debates al Inicio de la Década de 1990." Pp. 15-26 *in* Beatriz Adriana Bustos Torres and German Palacio., (eds.)

Bustos Torres, Beatriz Adriana and German Palacio, (eds.)
1994 *El Trabajo Femenino en América Latina: Los Debates en la Década de los Noventa*. Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara.

De la Peña, Norma Ojeda
1989 *El Curso De Vida Familiar de las Mujeres Mexicanas: un Análisis Sociodemográfico*. Cuernavaca, Morelos: DR Centro Regional de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias. UNAM.

De Soto, Hernando
1987 *El Otro Sendero.* Bogota: Editorial Oveja Negra.

Dussel Peters, Enrique
1998 "Recent Structural Changes in Mexico's Economy: A Preliminary Analysis of Some Sources of Mexican Migration to the United States". Pp. 55-74 *in* Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco (ed.).

Dwyer, Daisy and Judith Bruce, (eds.)
1988 *A Home Divided: Women and Income in the Third World.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Edin, Kathryn and Laura Lein
1997 *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and LowWage Work.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Ehlers, Tracy Bachrach
1991 "Debunking Marianismo: Economic Vulnerability and Survival Strategies among Guatemalan Wives". *Ethnology* Vol. 30:1:1-17.

1998 "Women and the False Promise of Microenterprise." *Gender & Society.* Vol. 12: 4: 424-440.

Escobar, Augustín Latapí
1986 *Con el Sudor de tu Frente: Mercado de Trabajo y Clase Obrera en Guadalajara.* Guadalajara, Jal.: Colegio de Jalisco.

1998 "Men's and Women's Patterns of Intragenerational Occupational Mobility During Mexico's Boom and Crisis." In *The Sociodemographic Effects of the Crisis in Mexico.* Henry Selby and Harley Browning, (eds.) Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies.

Folbre, Nancy
1988 "The Black Four of Hearts: Toward a New Paradigm of Household Economics." In Daisy Dwyer and Judith Bruce (eds.).

González de la Rocha, Mercedes
1986 *Los Recursos de la Pobreza. Familias de Bajos Ingresos de Guadalajara.* Guadalajara: El Colegio de Jalisco/CIESAS/SPP.

González de la Rocha, Mercedes and Agustín Escobar Latapí, (eds.)
1991 *Social Responses to Mexico's Economic Crisis of the 1980s*. SanDiego: Center for U.S. Mexican Studies, University of California.

Hopenhayn, Martín
1995 "Postmodernism and Neoliberalism in Latin America." Pp. 93-109 *in* John Beverley et al., (eds).

Iglesias Prieto, Norma
1997 [1985] *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora: Life Histories of Women Workers in Tijuana.* Trans. Michael Stone with Gabrielle Winkler. Austin: University of Austin Press.

Knight, Alan
1998 "Populism and neo-populism in Latin America, especially Mexico." *Journal of Latin American Studies.* Vol. 30, no. 2, p. 223.

Logan, Kathleen
1981 "Getting By With Less: Economic Strategies of Lower Income Households in Guadalajara." *Urban Anthropology* 10(3):231-246.

Lomnitz, Larissa
1977 *Networks and Marginality.-- Life in a Mexican Shanty Town*. New York: Academic Press.

Murphy, Kathleen M.
1998 "Single Mothers and Double-voiced Words: Popular and Political Discourse in Guadalajara, 1993-1995." Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin.

In press "Female heads of household in Guadalajara, 1993 - 1995: their 'survival strategies' and agency." Research Symposium on The Survival of Families in Poverty in the United States/Mexico Border Region School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin, Feb. 19-20, 1998

Ortner, Sherry B.
1997 "Thick Resistance: Death and the Cultural Construction of Agency in Himalayan Mountaineering." *Representations* Vol. 59:135-162.

Peña, Devon G.
1997 *The Terror of the Machine: Technology, Work, Gender and Ecology on the U.S.-Mexico Border.* Austin: The Center for Mexican American Studies, The University of Texas at Austin.

Portes, Alejandro, Manuel Castells and Lauren A. Benton (eds.),
1989 *The Informal Economy: Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Roberts, Bryan
1989 "Employment Structure, Life Cycle, and Life Chances: Formal and Informal Sectors in Guadalajara." In Alejandro Portes et al.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy
1992 *Death without Weeping: Violence in Everyday Life in Brazil.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Selby, Henry
1998 "Introduction: The Economic and Political Crisis in Mexico." Pp. 10-40 *in* Henry Selby and Harley Browning, (eds.)

Selby, Henry and Harley Browning (eds.),
1998 *The Sociodemographic Effects of the Crisis in Mexico.* Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies.

Selby, Henry, Arthur Murphy and Stephen Lorenzen
1990 *The Mexican Urban Household: Organizing for Self-Defense*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Selby, Henry et al.
1997 "The Women of Mexico and the Neoliberal Revolution." *Anuario de Estudios Urbanos*. Vol. 3.

Sheahan, John
1997 "Effects of Liberalization Programs on Poverty and Inequality: Chile, Mexico, and Peru." *Latin American Research Review.* Vol. 32, No. 3:7-37.

Sklair, Leslie
1993 *Assembling for Development: The Maquila Industry in Mexico and the United States.* San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California.

Skott, Peter and Mehrene Larudee

1998 "Uneven development and the liberalisation of trade and capital flows: the case of Mexico." *Cambridge Journal of Economics.* Vol. 22:277-295.

Stack, Carol
1974 *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper and Row.

Staudt, Kathleen
1998 *Free Trade?: Informal Economies at the U.S.-Mexico Border.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, Marcelo M. (ed.)
1998 *Crossings: Mexican Immigration in Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Vélez-Ibáñez, Carlos G.
1983 *Rituals of Marginality: Politics, Process, and Culture Change in Urban Central Mexico, 1969-1974.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Warnock, John
1995 *The Other Mexico: The North American Triangle Completed.* New York: Black Rose Books.