VITAL TOPICS FORUM

On Latin@s and the Immigration Debate

Arlene Dávila, guest editor, and Leith Mullings, Renato Rosaldo, Luis F. B. Plascencia, Leo R. Chavez, Rocío Magaña, Gilberto Rosas, Ana Aparicio, Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, Patricia Zavella, Alyshia Gálvez, and Jonathan D. Rosa

INTRODUCTION

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If there has been one key "vital topic" in the United States in recent years, it is undoubtedly the immigration debate, particularly in regard to U.S. Latin@s. While immigration is a global phenomenon, and U.S. immigrants hail from a variety of destinations and nationalities, in the past decades the U.S. immigration debate has been largely relegated to a "Latino issue," at the same time that the "undocumented" has become synonym with Latin@s and Mexicans. This is the reason why this Vital Topics Forum focuses specifically on the immigration of Latin Americans to the United States, with the hope of shedding light onto some of the many insights that anthropologists have produced about this heated topic while contributing to larger theorizing about the role that race and racializing processes play in immigration debates more generally and beyond the United States.

Indeed, for decades now anthropologists have engaged in major theorizing around issues of globalization, citizenship, national identity, and race. Anthropologists have produced rich ethnographies of the larger political-economic dynamics fueling immigration as well as examined the everyday processes through which immigrants adapt and transform themselves and society at large. Unfortunately, there continues to be a huge gap between the many insights produced by anthropologists and the current immigration debate. Thus, we ask: What explains the current standstill around immigration reform, and why aren't there any anthropologists at the table? We felt that producing a Vital Topics Forum on the issue would bring attention to some of the work that has been produced in recent years while providing a resource for teaching, research, and social advocacy for anthropologists and others who may wish to learn more about the historical and contemporary immigration of Latin Americans into the United States.

We hope to make amply clear that anthropologists have much to say about immigration and that our insights can help expand the conversation and public debate about this topic. The forum includes a mix of younger and prominent anthropologists who I have asked to voice their insights on a variety of key topics. We start with Past President of the American Anthropological Association Leith Mullings introducing a new AAA public education initiative on the topic of migration. This is followed by a piece by Renato Rosaldo discussing some ways in which cultural analyses can be enriched by insights produced by anthropological research on immigration. We then turn to contributions by Luis Plascencia and Leo Chavez, who explore anthropological studies on changing conceptions of citizenship and nation and how they can best help advance our understanding of Latin American immigration into the United States. Both scrutinize some of the gendered and racial dynamics involved in the debate, as evidenced in media representations of "anchor babies" (Chavez) and in the experiences of immigrants seeking to regularize their citizenship status (Plascencia). These are followed by examinations of the material aspects of the contemporary border by Rocío Magaña, who considers the implications of the growth of militarized border enforcement and its stigmatizing effects, and by Gilberto Rosas, who looks at how immigrants continue to defy the border despite its heightened security. Essays on the growth of Latin@ suburban communities and on the plight of indigenous Latin@s by Ana Aparicio and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera point to the diversity of experiences and backgrounds that are systematically omitted from most representations of Latin@s as an undifferentiated group. The final contributions by Patricia Zavella, Alyshia Gálvez, and Jonathan Rosa explore the racially loaded metaphors and tropes that color the immigration debate in the media, as well as, specifically, the rise and significance of immigrant social movements in expanding debates around reproductive rights (Zavella), the rights for the undocumented youth and their families (Gálvez), and

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issues of linguistic equity (Rosa). All show the importance of sustained ethnographic engagement with communities for exposing continuities and transformations within the debate as well as within pro-immigrant social movements.

Readers should note that the number of anthropologists who are working on immigration is extensive, and I encourage browsing through the Combined References Cited for additional sources. Finally, it is important to note that this Vital Topics Forum was inspired not only by our collective frustration with the poverty of the current immigration debate but also by the activism of our anthropology colleagues working in the area of immigration. Most recently linguistic anthropologists played a key role in transforming the language around immigration, through direct advocacy to eliminate the use of the word *illegal* by the mainstream press. But more and more anthropologists are working alongside undocumented communities to bring about the development of inclusive immigration reforms and to create intraracial and ethnic alliances. Because contrary to what mainstream media would have us believe, we are well aware that immigration is *not* a Latin@-specific issue; instead, all racial majorities and all Americans are affected by the current standstill on immigration. In sum, our hope is that, just like the dreamers, who are coming out of the shadows as "undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic" to demand justice and recognition for themselves and for their families, anthropologists too will be unafraid and unapologetic when addressing vital topics in their work.

MOVEMENT, MIGRATION, AND DISPLACEMENT: WHAT CAN ANTHROPOLOGISTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC DISCOURSE?

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Global migration and displacement are among the most pressing issues of our time and will continue to be for the foreseeable future. The contributions to this Vital Topics Forum not only demonstrate the strength of anthropological scholarship on Latin American migration to the United States but also underscore the need to bring it into the public arena.

Building on the very successful "Race: Are We So Different?" Project, the next AAA public education initiative will give anthropologists a voice in informing public debate about migration by framing these contemporary issues of movement, migration, and displacement in a broader historical and comparative context (see AAA 2011 for information about the process and how to get involved). In April 2013, a working group of anthropologists met at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, to discuss such a project. The working group identified the general overarching topics with which a public education project should engage: the long history of human movement and the history of anthropological research on mobility, why people migrate, and the responses to migration across history and boundaries. They then grappled with the challenge of how to convey the nuanced complexity of scholarly research in an informative, accessible, and interesting manner.

Drawing from research in its four fields, anthropology is uniquely situated to provide an impressive body of historical and comparative scholarship that challenges traditional ways of thinking about migration. For example, although scholars, media, and popular discourse tend to focus on contemporary migrations and displacements, "humans have always been on the move" (Frachetti 2011:196). At least since 150,000 BP, people, culture, language, commodities, disease, flora, and fauna have been in circulation. This project will call attention to the enduring patterns of human movement, countering an "overly presentist orientation" (Sanjek 2003:15). It will also demonstrate how anthropologists construct models of migration and "interpret the lifeways and relationships of past human societies using remnant material artifacts distributed across territories and through time" (Sanjek 2003:15). Throughout its long history, human migration has taken many forms, ranging from enforced transport, as in slavery and trafficking, to labor migrations and trade networks. Anthropologists have traced migrations and displacements that resulted from expansion, colonialism, war, and violence, as well as those related to labor needs and the production of commodities. The anthropological record also provides many historical and contemporary examples of peaceful intermingling, positive interactions, intercultural exchange, and cultural hybridity. Information about the different forms, causes, and contexts of migration—which have produced vastly different consequences, implications, and possibilities—will significantly enhance public discussion.

Migrations and displacements in Africa, Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the United States have frequently resulted in xenophobic, highly charged discourse and the rise of anti-immigrant political organizing. Anthropologists have the knowledge, and the responsibility, to address the core symbols of race and culture that are at the heart of many responses to migration and displacement. While immigrants to the United States contend with a polarized racial framework, anti-immigrant discourse in Europe has seized upon an essentialized concept of "culture." In this setting, popular notions of culture as static, unchanging, and transmitted from generation to generation do the work of race. Anthropologists have made major strides, at least among some international and U.S. institutions, in deconstructing the concept of race. Reclaiming the concept of culture as dynamic, ever changing, and shaped by political economy and relations of power (Mullings 2005:685) would go a long way to unsettle conventional wisdoms.

Anthropologists have created a remarkable body of work, but the formidable challenge is to bridge the gap between knowledge, translation, and communication.

Therefore, like the "Race: Are We So Different?" Project (AAA 2011), this new initiative will utilize such formats as a traveling museum exhibit, curricular materials, and innovative social media. This is an ambitious enterprise but one well worth pursuing. Anthropological knowledge frequently competes with more powerful and hegemonic media and market forces. However, a project grounded in sound scholarship has the potential to interrogate current paradigms, encouraging thoughtful public conversation by presenting a broader picture informed by the long historical record and the rich variety of human culture.

APPROACHES FROM CULTURAL ANALYSIS IN ANTHROPOLOGY TO LATIN@ IMMIGRATION

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What follows discusses six perspectives (or insights) of cultural analysis that anthropological research into immigration brings into view. First, studies of immigration lead scholars to extend the spatial scope of the units of analysis. These works study collectivities, such as binational family networks, rather than seeing the immigrant as a discrete unit to be counted as she or he crosses the border. Such studies explore, for example, how those who stay in the sending country grieve the social death of those who migrate as well as how those who stay reorganize the social relations of domestic labor when household members migrate. These are among the issues that come into view if the unit of analysis is the transnational family network or community rather than the migrant as an isolated individual (Zavella 2011).

Second, anthropological research into Latin@ immigration leads one to explore immigration within longer temporal units than the moment of border crossing. Thus, analysts inquire into the social process of migranthood as a lived experience. How, they ask, do migrants represent their lived experience in video, song, poetry, or gossip, among other modalities? Such is the investigation of what migrants regard as worth knowing and memorializing about their residence in a foreign land. Migrant lives thus memorialized encompass such matters as 15th-birthday celebrations (quinceañeras), births, dwelling spaces, neighborhoods, picnics, soccer, schooling, dreams, hopes, and disappointments. Each event or scenario can be represented differently; each can be told as social realism, comedy, or tragedy. The temporal dimension of immigration can be further extended from one person's experience of migration to the lives of successive generations. One of the more robust and surprising findings of immigration studies is that the health and educational levels of U.S.-born children of migrants are lower than those of their foreign-born parents and siblings (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Third, studies of Latin@ immigration reveal how gender and sexuality shape the life issues of migrants. Forms of emancipation for teenage migrant girls exist side-by-side with new risks and vulnerabilities (Asencio 2009). How young boys display their masculinity can be vexed by the presence of gangs. Gay and lesbian teens face new risks and find unexpected communities of support. In growing up in the United States, migrants live between incorporating the unfamiliar and deploying what they bring with them to create livable spaces. They have also shown remarkable courage and political acumen by coming out in public as undocumented and fighting for the Dream Act.

Fourth, one of the more urgent questions about immigration today in the United States is why in public discourse the unqualified term *immigrants* refers primarily to Latin@s, especially Mexicans, who are implied but rarely named as such (Chavez 2008). "Immigrant" as a general category does not refer, for example, to Anglo-Canadians or northern Europeans. Talk of building a wall along the border refers, as if it were self-evident, to the U.S.–Mexico border, not to the U.S.–Canada border. The racial bias underlying immigration policy makes the deportation of undocumented Anglo-Canadians as unthinkable as the deportation of Mexicans is taken for granted.

Fifth, scholars of Latin@ immigration have also shown that institutions that have flourished under the Obama administration, such as undocumented immigrant detention centers and large-scale deportations, are aimed primarily at Latin@s, and these institutions require cultural analysis of their underlying assumptions (Rosas 2012). They are ostensibly aimed at immigrants who have engaged in criminal activities, but this is not borne out by studies of those detained. For the most part, those detained have not committed felonies or engaged in activities that require incarceration to ensure public safely or national security. These measures are of a piece with calling undocumented immigrants from Mexico "illegal aliens."

Sixth, the growing anti-Mexican sentiment, disguised as anti-immigrant sentiment, is remarkable in its cruelty. States and municipalities have enacted legislation intended to inflict suffering on Latin@ immigrants. The study of U.S. government cruelty toward Mexicans requires, among other things, the serious analysis of fear and threat as cultural categories of public discourse and institutional arrangements. Perhaps increased rates of Mexican migration in the wake of NAFTA have unleashed Anglo-American fear of feeling like foreigners in their own land and even terror at the prospect of being overrun by brown hordes bent on Reconquista. In this context, the U.S.–Mexico border has become a militarized zone with high-tech instruments of surveillance and lethal weapons (De Genova and Peutz 2010). This is odd when one considers that most undocumented Mexican immigrants are unarmed civilians in search of work, not armed combatants. Thus, a crucial topic for scholars today is the study of the social imaginary that is deployed to justify border fences, detention centers, mass deportations, high-tech instruments of surveillance, and lethal weapons.

CITIZENSHIP, RECOGNITION, AND BELONGING

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In the early 1990s, citizenship reemerged as a topic of interest within and outside of anthropology. The formulation of the construct of "cultural citizenship" by Renato Rosaldo and colleagues (see, e.g., Rosaldo 1992) as well as Aihwa Ong's formulation of "cultural citizenship" (1995) are part of the scholarly interest. The former formulation stresses the role of cultural actions in asserting a sociopolitical position and identification, and the latter links biopolitics to citizenship. A common limitation to both formulations is the limited attention to the materiality and juridical complexity of citizenship itself.

The concept of citizenship is a contested construct that indexes a broad set of ideas, such as membership and social standing. Citizenship simultaneously includes and excludes. From 1907 to the present, the United States granted citizenship to over 25 million migrants from multiple nations. However, it also created racial, gender, and class distinctions that made Asians "ineligible to citizenship," excluded Native Americans from the birthright provision in the 14th Amendment until 1924, disenfranchised African Americans convicted of a felony up to the present, and fostered the current birthright citizenship debate.

So what can anthropology contribute toward understanding citizenship? Social anthropology and its qualitative focus on localized interactions allows for the close analysis of how sociopolitical forces shape the everyday lives of individuals. In what follows, I outline one effort to expand our knowledge of citizenship. I draw on research carried out to understand the path to U.S. citizenship for a group of working-class Mexican migrants in Texas (Plascencia 2012).

The group of migrants that participated in the research is unique. Most of the individuals are persons who were formerly "undocumented" migrants but benefited from the legalization provisions in the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Thus, their migrant status trajectory traversed the categories of "undocumented" migrant, temporary migrant, permanent resident, and U.S. citizen. All of the individuals long to become U.S. citizens; they want to belong, to be recognized. They all took time to gain English-language proficiency and enroll in citizenship classes. Moreover, they had a deep appreciation of the opportunities that they found in the United States for themselves and their children.

The acquisition of citizenship in the discourse of Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) officials and national leaders stresses social equality, economic independence, and a bright future. In addition, CIS officials emphasize that in the United States there are no second-class citizens—that native born and naturalized citizens are "Americans" and share all of the rights, benefits, and responsibilities of citizenship.

The story of Señor Alvarez helps us understand how forces in society can shape how new citizens think about the status they acquire. Mr. Alvarez worked at an upholstery shop in Austin, Texas, for 18 years. He made multiple efforts to learn English, took citizenship classes, and completed a GED. At the upholstery shop, the work was organized under a clear hierarchy: European-descent individuals were assigned the small, light chairs; Mexican Americans handled the medium sofa chairs; and Mr. Alvarez, "the Mexican," was assigned the large, heavy sofas. Mr. Alvarez's desire was that once he became a U.S. citizen, perhaps he would be allowed to also do lighter work. He envisioned that his acquisition of citizenship would lead to some sense of recognition and social equality at the workplace. However, in contrast to the official discourse on citizenship, after being granted citizenship he discovered that he remained "the Mexican." He did not lose his appreciation of the United States for what he had been able to achieve and the opportunities that his children received; yet, he was disenchanted with the acquisition of citizenship. He was not recognized as belonging in the circle of membership—he remained "the Mexican."

Anthropology's focus on the everyday experiences and perceptions of individuals allows for the illumination of experiences not evident in data sets or surveys. Ethnographic research allowed for an exploration of how power relations and hierarchies in society can shape the ways that working-class migrants of Mexican descent understand U.S. citizenship. Citizenship is not a neutral category: it fosters social distinctions between "citizen" and "alien," and it ultimately reinforces and reproduces social inequalities in society.

ANCHOR BABIES: MAKING CITIZENS "ILLEGAL"

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The role of the media in helping construct notions of belonging and citizenship has been one of my key concerns. It is through the media that new subject positions often emerge, as the recent case of "anchor babies" exemplifies (see Figure 1). Pundits and politicians have used the media to construct a discourse on anchor babies that justifies exclusionary public policies and attempts to redefine the meaning of citizenship, especially the repeal of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of birthright citizenship for children born to undocumented immigrants. Although such discourse tends toward hyperbole, the unintended consequences of such a change to the U.S. Constitution would be to render this new category of U.S.-born noncitizens as a possible caste of "insider–outsiders" in U.S. society.

As anthropologists, we can and should bring our insights into the public debate by emphasizing the role that media play in creating stigmatizing socially constructed categories such as anchor babies. Representations of the U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants instill in the public imagination that these young people are undeserving citizens with illegitimate claims of belonging to the nation. As anthropologists, we can point out the power of stigmatizing discourses.

FIGURE 1. *Immigrant rights demonstration, May 1, 2006, Santa Ana, California. (Photograph by Leo R. Chavez)*

News stories that receive intense media attention become media spectacles that produce what becomes taken-for-granted knowledge about people: for example, gay men and lesbians, undocumented immigrants, feminists, even students who go wild on spring break (Kellner 2003). Media attention on the relatively newly constructed term *anchor baby* is a case in point. Michelle Malkin, a regular on Fox News, linked birthright citizenship to undocumented immigration and to post–9/11 fears of terrorism. Ironically, Michelle Malkin's Filipino parents were in the United States on student visas, making her an anchor baby. Lou Dobbs, then on CNN television, helped make *anchor babies* a household phrase, emphasizing their part in a plot by their parents to gain U.S. citizenship. Senator Lindsey Graham said, "People come here to have babies. They come here to drop a child. It's called drop and leave" (Barr 2010). Linguistic anthropologists emphasize that referring to humans using language reserved for animals—cats, horses, and so forth that "drop" litters or foals—symbolically and metaphorically associates people with animals; this thus allows Graham to both dismiss the women's humanity and underscore the need to deny them birthright citizenship (Santa Ana 2002).

Susan Coutin (2010) has urged us to look closely at how the law impacts immigrants. Proposals to "do something" about anchor babies—for example, denying them birthright citizenship—provides an example of what Coutin means. The 14th Amendment states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Numerous Congressional bills have proposed ending automatic citizenship for U.S.-born children whose parents are undocumented immigrants (Chavez 2008).

Such changes would create a group of "Americans" who were born in the United States but who are not citizens. Quite likely, U.S.-born noncitizens would continue to reside in the United States, resulting in some 4.7 million unauthorized U.S.-born people by 2050, with one million of those having two U.S.-born parents (Van Hook and Fix 2010). Would these U.S.-born noncitizens be deportable? This ambiguous position, a social and legal limbo, would only add to problems of belonging and social stigma (Gonzales and Chavez 2012).

The "anchor baby" example underscores the power of the media to help construct social categories, disseminate what becomes knowledge about people in those categories, clarify alleged problems, and promote public policies to solve the problems. These issues are not limited to the United States. Anthropologists interested in media representations of immigrants and their children will find fertile

research opportunities in South Africa, Costa Rica, Italy, Japan, and many other countries with increasing immigrant populations.

THE BORDER EFFECT

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The rise of the border as an object of national anxiety, governmental investment, and migrant suffering and stigma stands as one of the most significant outcomes of immigration policies in the United States. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1984 merged immigration management and border buildup in ways not achieved by prior policies. IRCA was supposed to end illegal migration by granting amnesty to unauthorized workers already in the country, instituting employer sanctions to discourage their hiring, and making border enforcement increasingly a national priority. With the eradication of unauthorized migration as a purported end, IRCA privileged border policing over immigration management, reframing the border as a problem and its fortification as a national imperative. The juxtaposition of border policing as migration governance—which I call "the border effect"—still guides policies that are ineffective, costly, and brutal (Jimenez 2009).

The border effect has propelled what some have called the "militarization" of the border region (Dunn 2009; Payan 2006). However, the restructuring of border security surrounding its buildup may more accurately be examined as part of a rising "Border Industrial Complex" (Dear 2013:124), which benefits from the continuous obfuscation of migration, security, and border issues. This can be seen in examples ranging from the assignment of immigration matters to the Department of Homeland Defense to the outcomes of prior immigration reform bills that have only resulted in heftier mandates and appropriations for border infrastructure and policing. The result has been an industry whose profit and growth depend on greater demand for enforcement as much as the continuous unauthorized presence and flow of migrants—a dependence that contradicts the framework of migrant deterrence adopted since the mid-1990s.

The deterrence-based strategy shifted the target of enforcement from the territorial boundary to the migrant's bodies by funneling them to remote regions where topography, distance, exposure, and fatigue became increasingly operationalized for detection, detention, and deterrence. Since the 1990s, border crossing along the U.S. Southwest entails multiple days on foot across inhospitable lands where migrants suffer thirst, exertion, and extortion. Take, for instance, the experience of a man I interviewed in 2013 while doing research among deportees in Mexicali. Joaquin walked ten days across the Yuma desert before Border Patrol detained him. He spent four days in jail as part of Operation Streamline, a program that since 2005 requires and funds the criminal prosecution of detained crossers. The second time Joaquin tried to cross, he was kidnapped. His family wired $5,500 dollars to alleged smugglers for his release. The border Joaquin encountered was not only more policed, criminalizing, and predatory than ever, it was also deadlier (Santos and Zemansky 2013). Still, his U.S.-born one-year-old son and wife, a second-generation Mexican American, awaited him in California (see Figure 2). He was set on crossing even if that meant putting his body on the line. This is precisely what the border effect does: it reduces migrants to bodies: working bodies, warm bodies on surveillance cameras, bodies held in captivity and exchange as commodities, dead and missing bodies in the desert.

This emphasis on migrant bodies leads me to the most consequential aspect of the border effect: its stigmatizing mark. The main problem for people like Joaquin is that others see the border in them. To friends and foes on both sides of the boundary, it mattered little if Joaquin was a father, a machinery worker, or a resident of southern California; he embodied the border and its transgression. The mark of the border is particularly stigmatizing to those who can be tied to it. Although I hesitate to call this the "Mexicanization" of migrant stigma, by reducing immigration governance to border enforcement—which primarily unfolds along the southern border—migrant illegality has been problematically rendered Mexican. The systematic and predatory exclusion, exploitation, endangerment, and stigmatization of migrants are part and parcel of the border effect—that is, what happens with the adoption of intensified border policing qua immigration management.

THE BORDERS OF INSECURITY

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Román explodes from the prison into the streets of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, just across the international boundary from Nogales, Arizona. His powerful shoulders, taut jaw, and furious demeanor capture the vicissitudes of life for the dispossessed and criminalized growing up at the international boundary. Román's descent into a life of crime—from a little boy who was deported with his family to Nogales, Mexico, late in the 1980s to a young man who, as part of Barrio Libre (the Free 'hood), mugged migrants as they sought to pass under the international boundary through a sewer system—crystallizes the stripping away of his potential that the militarization of U.S.–Mexico border enforcement all too often arranges. After serving time in prison, Román went back to mugging migrants, later becoming a player in the drug economy, as I recounted elsewhere (Rosas 2012).

International boundaries are deeply imbricated in the ideological and material operations of power, involving citizens and noncitizens alike (Fassin 2011; Lugo 2008; Zavella 2011). Indeed, it is telling that when policymakers, scholars,

FIGURE 2. *Father and children protest deportations and demand rights at immigration reform rally in New York City, May 1, 2010. (Photograph by Rocío Magaña)*

and other players instrumental in the U.S. security establishment discuss "the border," they are clearly referring to the international boundary between the United States and Mexico—not the U.S.–Canadian border nor the territorial waters of the United States (Plascencia 2012). Such sensibilities are inextricably linked to a profound sense that this particular international boundary is out of control. And such sensibilities emerge in spite of several thousands of new Border Patrol agents, the deployments of the National Guard, the use of cutting-edge technology such as drones in the skies of the southwestern United States, and the increasing reports of official shootings and extraofficial hunting of the undocumented—all of this occurring in an epoch of plummeting undocumented border crossings. Indeed, the U.S. military establishment and defense contractors increasingly promote military tactics, strategies, and technology in the arena of border enforcement. Meanwhile, thousands of the undocumented have died trying to cross into the United States or remain undiscovered in the steep hills and oven-like heat of the killing deserts of the southwestern United States since the late 1990s.

Yet, the securitized border must be recognized asfar more than an exercise in militarized policing tactics, criminalization, and migrant death. The vast majority of the undocumented migrants succeed in defying this enforcement regime. They risk life and limb in order to evade the Border Patrol, vigilantes, and other agents of securitization, and perhaps undermine border enforcement through sewers. And, in so defying the international boundary, migrants intensify widespread anxieties (Chavez 2008). They are imagined as terrorists, drug lords, and other nightmarish figures, fueling calls for greater and greater border security measures.

In climbing over—or tunneling under—the new border-enforcement regimes, or by prying open other passages, migrants reclaim their life from sovereign power. They refashion kin relations, find new ways to love, parent, and collaborate, in spite of the intensifying securitization of the border and its thickening into the interior of the United States (Rosas 2006; Vega 2013). Furthermore, these undocumented border crossers and their allies dream. They demand recognition and alternative pathways to citizenship and beyond (Nuñez-Janes 2013). In so doing, they challenge the pessimism of contemporary intellectual fashion that is currently caging our anthropological imaginations and gesture to antiborder possibilities and postborder worlds.

BEYOND THE CITY: NEW IMMIGRANT GATEWAYS IN THE 21st CENTURY

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Until recently, much of the scholarship on Latin@ immigration has privileged research in the major gateway cities; this is understandable, given that upon entering the United States many immigrants have traditionally taken up residence in urban centers. Over the last decade, however, social scientists and policymakers alike have begun to pay attention to the rapidly growing presence of immigrants in "nontraditional" receiving sites such as rural and suburban areas of the United States. Since the 1970s, when manufacturing industries that remained in the United States relocated to suburbs and rural areas, working-class Latin@ began to move out of major cities in search of economic opportunities. In the 1980s and 1990s, immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean—both the newly arrived and those already living in U.S. cities—moved to secondary cities, rural sites, and suburbs in search of work in the growing service sectors as well. In my own research site in suburban New York, these new arrivals have filled the demand for low-wage labor in industries such as construction and healthcare. Today, more than 50 percent of immigrants in the United States live outside of major cities, and they are not living in enclaves comprised only of people who share their same national-ethnic background. According to the 2005–09 American Community Survey, immigrant populations increased more than 60 percent in rural and suburban areas where immigrants made up less than five percent of the population in 2000.

Immigrants continue to move to locations that have a high demand for workers in the service sector (e.g., construction in suburbs) and in manufacturing (e.g., the poultry industry in the rural South; see Mahler 1995; Odem and Lacy 2009). The burgeoning scholarship on "the New South" reflects the recent, diverse, and increasing immigrant presence in the rural South; those writing about this influx describe the way that immigrants are transforming racial, economic, and political landscapes of the South. Mainstream press has described this shift in migration and settlement patterns as a process riddled with dangerous tensions. Scholarship has focused on the demographic shifts and on the difficult relationships that develop between newly arrived immigrants and long-time suburban or rural residents (see, e.g., Martinez and Valenzuela 2006; Vaca 2004). There is good reason for such an emphasis given increasing violence against immigrants, as well as increasing xenophobic rhetoric in popular discourse and policy in places like Arizona and Florida.

My own research in a suburb of New York grew out of an interest in analyzing the various ways in which Latin@ immigrants encounter and transform suburbia. According to the U.S. Census, over the past two decades, the increase of Latin@s and immigrants in suburban counties of New York has outpaced the states's general population growth twofold. The suburb on which I focus my research is home to Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Peruvian immigrant families. These Latin@ immigrant populations are diverse not only in their national-ethnic backgrounds but also in their class status, educational backgrounds, citizenship status, length of time in the United States, and prior experience in other major cities.

Understanding the multiple negotiations and processes that are at work in these changing sites is garnering federal attention. President Obama "has decried the outdated urban agenda that focuses exclusively on the problems of our cities . . . and pledges a 'strategy that's about South Florida as much as Miami; that's about Mesa and Scottsdale as much as Phoenix; that's about Stamford and northern New Jersey as much as New York City.' His office of urban policy promises to be the generator of that strategy" (Bradley and Katz 2009). Anthropologists have much to contribute to research on the shifting contours of immigration to the United States. We are well equipped to provide a nuanced and complex analysis of the transformations developing in suburbs and rural sites to which more immigrants are moving. Our research can serve to better inform important national discussions taking shape about these contemporary processes.

BEYOND NATIONAL ORIGINS: LATIN@ AMERICAN INDIGENOUS MIGRATION

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On a cool December evening in 2012, I accompanied a friend's family to a *paisano's* (person from the same town of origin) house in L.A.'s Koreatown to celebrate a *posada,* the procession that reenacts Mary and Joseph's quest for shelter awaiting Jesus's birth. As we arrived, members of a brass band typical of Mexican indigenous communities were lining up. Assembling behind them was a group of women, shouldering a platform of saintly idols adorned with flowers. Everyone else followed, carrying either flowers or lighted candles in their hands. The smell of *copal* incense, the sounds of a *chirimiya* flute and drum, and the tones of Zapotec language filled the air along Olympic Boulevard, momentarily transforming one of Los Angeles' busiest corridors.

Posada celebrations may be familiar to many Mexicans and Mexican Americans, however, those like this one, carried out by Zapotecs from the town of Yalálag in Oaxaca, Mexico, strategically include indigenous instruments and other elements to mark ethnic distinction. Yalaltecos are just one of many indigenous Latin@ American groups in the United States. According to the 2010 population census, 1.2 million Latinos in the United States identified as American Indian and Alaska Native (Humes et al. 2011). Although contemporary large-scale indigenous migrations to the United States from Latin America began in the mid–20th century, indigenous migrants were not counted before 2010. Still, their presence has not gone unnoticed.

Indigenous Mexicans, including Zapotecs, are the largest group. Their circular migration to and from the United States dates from the 1960s (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 2004; Kearney 2004; Stephen 2007). Andean indigenous and Central American transnational migrations, by contrast, began during the 1980s and 1990s (Berg 2008; Foxen 2007). Indigenous peoples today constitute significant migrant flows into the United States, creating unique challenges for both sending and receiving communities, and raising important questions about the positionality of indigenous peoples within political imaginaries of belonging, identity, and migration.

Indigenous migrants express multiple racial and ethnic identities, speak many different languages, and uphold a diversity of cultural traditions. Their experiences are thus shaped by racial and ethnic structures atypical of dominant migrant groups. They face racial prejudice and discrimination in both their home countries and the United States because of their indigenous origin (e.g., Kearney 2004; Stephen 2007). Cultural and linguistic differences as well as legal status also shape their reception and adaptation (Foxen 2007). Ethnographic comparisons provide valuable insight into the paths and lifeways that these migrants develop as they respond to shifting political, economic, and social pressures.

Until recently, we have tended to think of migrants in terms of their countries of origin. Given this level of monochromatic distinction, anthropologists question dominant national categories (e.g., Guatemalan, Mexican, Peruvian) for understanding Latin@ American experiences (Gutiérrez Nájera 2010; Stephen 2007). This scholarship demonstrates how obscuring ethnic, class, cultural, and racial difference further marginalizes indigenous subjects. Recent research on indigenous migration also provides fertile ground for reconsidering hemispheric indigenous imaginaries (Castellanos et al. 2012). Ethnographic research on indigenous migration has implications for the treatment of indigenous people at both local levels and beyond. If cultural diversity is considered a key component of any plural democracy, then attention to and respect for indigenous diversity ought to become a priority.

MULTIRACIAL IMMIGRANT ORGANIZING

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Often debates about immigration center on the negative effects on U.S. society, wherein migrants are seen as provoking tensions or conflict with U.S. citizens and adhering to cultural practices at odds with "American" values (Huntington 2004). However, migrants are shifting how grassroots political organizing is taking place on issues ranging from unionization to cultural politics and immigrant rights as well as animating ongoing political debates about social justice (see Figure 3). During the 2006 Immigrant Rights protests, for example, there were between 3.5 and 5.1 million participants in remarkable moments of solidarity between U.S. citizens of diverse racial backgrounds and the unauthorized (Bada et al. 2006). The majority of participants in large cities were U.S. citizens (about one million were children and teenagers), but transnational organizations were also involved.

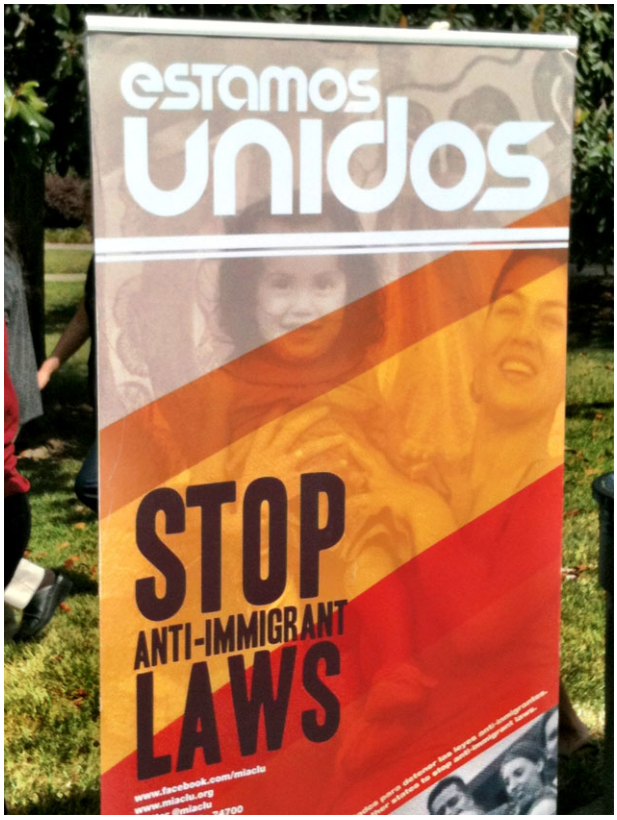

FIGURE 3. *Immigrant Day at the California Capitol, 2012. (Photo by Patricia Zavella)*

One key grassroots political movement that is being transformed by the presence of migrants is the reproductive justice movement. Moving beyond single issues related to reproductive health care, such as access to contraception or abortion, the reproductive justice movement incorporates a human rights framework to advocate for access to many types of resources for purposes of social justice. Reproductive justice advocates incorporate an intersectional approach that suggests women have control over their reproductive lives when organizations address socioeconomic disparities, racial and gender discrimination, criminalization, and insensitivities to nationality, ethnicity, or sexual identities. Reproductive justice organizations often work within specific racial or ethnic communities and incorporate particular immigrant issues (see Figure 3). California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, for example, works with Mexican, Central American, and Peruvian immigrants and the daughters of immigrants, while Forward Together's participants include those from the Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Latin@, and South Indian communities. Yet in coalitions, leaders of these organizations use "women of color" to

emphasize cross-racial solidarity (Nelson 2003; Silliman 2004). Reproductive justice organizations are explicitly inclusive of young men, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transsexuals, and the disabled as well.

Organizations working on reproductive justice advocate for the right to health care access (including prenatal care and preventative care for the unauthorized) as well as the end of reproductive oppression during pregnancy and through contraception coercion or sterilization abuse (Bridges 2011; Roberts 1997). They argue for the right to parent children in nonviolent neighborhoods free from environmental degradation with respect for cultural healing practices. These organizations critique deficit analytics and collaborate on a "Strong Families Initiative" to recognize multiple family formations among people of color that include teen parents, multigenerational households, and same-sex, transnational, or chosen families, and to contest "strong family values" discourse that blames the poor for their lack of conformity to heteronormativity. Based in national and regional coalitions, many reproductive justice organizations are integrating immigrants into their work and negotiating multiracial, cross-generational, and transnational work with organizations working on civil rights, women's rights, and immigrant rights.

The capacity for grassroots organizations to establish affiliations between migrants and U.S. citizens of varied identities working on multiple issues should not be surprising. My own research (Zavella 2011) with Mexican migrants found they had widespread participation in a variety of organizations. Migrants volunteer at elementary schools, work as unpaid shop stewards, and belong to community-based organizations, including those working with displaced workers, LGBT youth, housing, community gardens, cultural festivals, soccer, Binational Health Week, and hometown associations that develop projects in Mexico. Migrants feel a strong attachment to their native cultures even as they desire a strong sense of belonging in the United States. As we examine immigration, we should expect that collaborations regarding human rights, cultural citizenship, and complex identities are flourishing as migrants integrate into diverse communities in the United States.

THE ORIGINAL DREAMERS[1]:UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH ACTIVISM AND THEIR PARENTS' MOVEMENTS

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In the spring of 2010, a group of five undocumented youth activists from several states occupied the offices of Senator John McCain (R-AZ) in Phoenix, Arizona. They risked arrest and deportation as a result of their civil disobedience. The activists, and others that soon followed in other parts of the country, declared themselves "undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic." This willingness to be open and visible

FIGURE 4. *Young participant holds a sign at the Viacrucis of the Immigrant, April 2003, New York City. (Photograph by Alyshia Gálvez)*

was noted by many observers to represent a sea change in activist strategies. Anthropologist Nicholas DeGenova compared their "radically open-ended politics of migrant presence with the similarly abject and profoundly destabilizing politics of queer presence" (2010:103). Yet, analysis of the origins of this movement requires asking the question: Did these activist strategies spring sui generis into being, unanticipated by any prior immigrant movements, or were there antecedents to be found in the immigrant movements of the preceding decade? I would argue that without reducing the radical politics of the undocumented youth activists of this decade, activists themselves and attentive anthropological observation may locate the origins of this movement in the contexts in which many of the activists were raised.

Scholars have written extensively about the massive 2006 nationwide mobilizations against HR 4437, a bill that sought to criminalize humanitarian assistance to unauthorized immigrants as well as undocumented presence itself (DeGenova 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008; Pallares and Flores-Gonzalez 2010). A view broadly shared by analysts is that the 2006 demonstrations altered the political landscape, constituting the first bellwether of the growing clout of Latin@ voters (even while the marches were diverse in national origin, nativity status, and other characteristics; see Chavez 2008 and Dávila 2008, among others). Some have questioned how radical the 2006 marches were, asking whether they in fact made visible not an abject or unassimilable immigrant presence but, rather, "the economically contributing, entrepreneurial, government-services-avoiding neoliberal citizen-subject" (Chavez 2008:18). Nonetheless, the marches anticipated in important ways the undocumented youth activism that would come in 2010.

While conducting ethnographic research from 2000–10, I observed countless demonstrations for immigrant rights in New York City at which families pushed baby carriages or hoisted toddlers on their shoulders while older children walked alongside. Children carried signs reading "No human

FIGURE 5. *Photo from Chicago May Day immigration march on May 1, 2008. This image features a sign with the U.S.-based Spanish language term* polimgra*, a neologism that captures emergent collaborations among local, state, and federal authorities in immigration enforcement efforts. In addition to denouncing these efforts, the sign also challenges presumptions about the relationship between language and national identity. (Photograph by David Flores)*

being is illegal" and "Don't deport my mom." At lengthy meetings of immigrant rights organizations, children often accompanied their parents. In one particularly memorable meeting, a group of three seven- to nine-year-old boys sat in a straight line of chairs in the back of the room, imitating every gesture, head nod, and facial expression made by their fathers—the executive officers of the group—as they led the meeting. At another site, older siblings regularly administered homework help, entertainment, and snacks to younger children while their mothers conducted meetings (Gálvez 2009).

In these settings, children were inculcated into certain messages that have remained constant in the immigrant rights movement: the inherent dignity of all human beings, the nobility of those who sacrifice to provide for their families (even when that sacrifice entails crossing borders), a rejection of the criminalization of immigrants, and the need for immigration reform to regularize the status of those already here. Some of the specific tactics have changed: for example, "amnesty" was explicitly demanded in 2000–02 (see Figure 4), while the word become too controversial later; but the overall message has remained the same. And it is in the framing of the immigration movement around work, dignity, and family ties that the undocumented youth movement has articulated its own claims. Even while their specific situation has garnered widespread sympathy, with the DREAM Act seen as the element of comprehensive immigration reform to marshal the greatest bipartisan support in ongoing legislative debates, they are quick to refuse any special remedy to their own immigration status that does not also regularize their parents, who some of them call "the original DREAMers" (Hing 2013).

LANGUAGE AS A SIGN OF IMMIGRATION?

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Public debates over U.S. immigration often point to language as a straightforward sign of national identity. We see this in the anti-immigrant promotion of English-only policies as well as in pro-immigration viewpoints that celebrate "diversity" and advocate linguistic pluralism. Despite the apparent opposition between assimilationist and multicultural approaches to language, these outlooks generally share the presumption of discrete boundaries separating languages (e.g., English–Spanish), nations (e.g., U.S.–Mexico), and ethnocultural identities (e.g., American–Latin

American). In contrast, linguistic anthropologists analyze ethnolinguistic boundary making as a dynamic process of semiotic differentiation (Irvine and Gal 2000; Rosa 2013).

Ethnolinguistic borders are structured by the remapping of race from biology onto language (Urciuoli 2001), which is reflected in ideological bundles linking the United States, whiteness, and the English language, on the one hand, and Latin America, "brownness," and the Spanish language, on the other. Through this racialization of language, particular bodies and language practices are stigmatized as signs of immigrant otherness regardless of a given person's citizenship status, national origin, or linguistic repertoire.

The stereotypical association of particular language practices with immigrant otherness is invoked in popular discourses that warn of the national threat posed by the Spanish language (Santa Ana 2002). Yet ideologies linking language, race, and nation shore up boundaries between groups and languages by erasing infinite differences within groups and languages. From many outgroup perspectives, Spanish is figured as a homogeneous language that unifies U.S. Latin@s of varying Latin American backgrounds; from many ingroup perspectives, particular varieties of Spanish are the clearest signs of difference between Latin@ national subgroups (Zentella 2009).

Stereotypical equations of the English language with Americanness and the Spanish language with non-Americanness obscure the long history of Spanish in the United States; they also elide the experiences of millions of U.S. Latin@s for whom "English speaker" and "Spanish speaker" are neither distinct nor mutually exclusive identities. The intimate intertwining of U.S.-based English and Spanish language practices disrupts conceptions of "English" and "Spanish" as separate linguistic categories that align with national identities in straightforward ways. These insights reflect the complexity of language socialization among U.S. Latin@s and demonstrate that language should not be viewed as a ready-made sign of assimilation or diaspora (see Figure 5).

Monolingual ideologies that frame Spanish as the singular linguistic emblem of Latin American migration erase the existence of indigenous Latin American languages, which leads to a dire lack of linguistic resources in U.S. courts, schools, and other mainstream institutional contexts. The focus on Spanish also overshadows the ways that Brazilians and the Portuguese language fit into the broader picture of Latin American migration to the United States.

While this discussion has focused primarily on language as an object of immigration discourses, it is also crucial to investigate language as the medium of these discourses. Discourse plays a role in promoting and discouraging migration from Latin America to the United States (Dick 2011a) and also constitutes representations that frame Latin American immigration in relation to conceptions of "illegality" (Dick 2011b). Linguistic anthropologists have recently participated in the successful public campaign to challenge the use of the term *illegal* in immigration reporting among mainstream news media (Rosa 2012), while also noting that language change is not the equivalent of social change. However, a reconsideration of language as an object and medium of immigration discourses provides for the possibility of reimagining migration as a fundamental human right across the Americas.

NOTE

1. A term possibly coined by photographer Carla Chavarria . See http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/03/undocumented_youth_pay_tribute_to_the_original_dreamers.html.

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