



2021

Stigmatization of in Transit Migration and the Devaluation of Humanitarian Aid Resource Labor

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

STIGMATIZATION OF IN TRANSIT MIGRATION AND THE DEVALUATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AID RESOURCE LABOR

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, IL

AUGUST 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my support systems both in the desert and at Loyola University Chicago for motivating me during the thesis process. My committee including Dr. Cristina Lombardi and Dr. Maria Vidal de Haymes were supportive from start to finish and provided me with feedback to evolve my thesis. Dr. Susan Grossman was one of the most important and consistent supporters during my journey of completing this thesis and I am eternally grateful for her patience, support, and knowledge in navigating the process. I have immense gratitude and appreciation for every person who has taught me something in the desert. They have made this project possible and have made me grow as a person in every way.

To every person who has shared something human with me during my time in the desert.

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ABSTRACT

This analysis aims to gain insight into migrant stigmatization and the devaluation of humanitarian aid labor. Building off previous feminist scholarship on unpaid labor, this thesis seeks to add to our understanding of the dynamics of gendered devaluation of not only humanitarian volunteer labor, but also humanitarian aid support to stigmatized populations. The analysis expands on the production of illegalization and highlights the effects of stigmatization highlights the effects of stigmatization upon in transit populations on Tohono O’odham lands. Erin Hatton’s framework of devaluation is applied to humanitarian aid distribution to analyze the devaluation of their labor due to proximity to produced illegal.

INTRODUCTION

On Tohono O'odham lands known as U.S. Mexico borderlands people traveling to the United States without authorized documentation may cross up to 100 miles on foot with few resources and extreme exposure to the elements. Individuals traveling through the borderlands north are avoiding detection from industrial border enforcement practices on both sides of the border. In completing this journey, it is impossible to carry all necessary resources and remain undetected. Due to the human rights crisis that occurs with increased militarization of border enforcement, humanitarian aid practices have been present in the areas for many generations. Indigenous people, border residents, and humanitarian aid workers can be some of the initial people on the U.S. side of the border to witness the human rights crisis of disappearance.

Stigmatization is placed on individual migrant bodies for a number of reasons; however, stigmatization via legal definitions of criminality is an area that is politically charged due to white supremacy and the history of state sanctioned violence including creations such as the prison industrial complex, the militarized state, and the constructed displacement of indigenous peoples (Walia 2013).

The evolution of criminalization and dehumanization placed on migrating bodies is felt on a global level as migratory patterns are increasing due to climate change, political unrest, and economic need that prompt individuals to leave their homes in search of safety and stability (Miller 2017). It is important to remember that migration, and freedom of mobility, have been a human practice for thousands of years. It is my belief that the consequences of enforcement and stigmatization are most felt by those who are migrating and witnessed by those responding to the physical needs of migrants.

This thesis will explore the site of migrant stigmatization specific to individuals who are traveling without legal authorization through what is today considered the Arizona borderlands. Border imperialism, Harsha Walia's alternative analytic framework, will be utilized to

contextualize the occurrence of undocumented migrants traveling through Tohono O'odham lands:

Border imperialism encapsulates four overlapping and concurrent structurings: first, the mass displacement of impoverished and colonized communities resulting from asymmetrical relations of global power, and the simultaneous securitization of the border against those migrants whom capitalism and empire have been displaced; second, the criminalization of migration with severe punishment and discipline of those deemed “alien” or “illegal”; third, the entrenchment of a racialized hierarchy of citizenship by arbitrating who legitimately constitutes the nation-state; and fourth, the state-mediated exploitation of migrant labor, akin to conditions of slavery and servitude, by capitalist interests. (Walia 6)

Border imperialism provides an anti-racist and decolonial framework that best suits the intentional practices of exclusion and violence when viewing the unauthorized migrant in transit through the borderlands. Additionally, the border imperialism framework calls upon topics of racialization, criminalization, capitalism, exploitative labor, disposability and displacement relevant not only to the U.S. Mexico borderlands but other areas of transit globally.

Viewed as disposable, individuals migrating north in the United State confront a process of illegalization and the construction of a high risk journey through the desert. While indigenous peoples and border residents have been responding to individuals crossing for generations, the escalation of enforcement in the borderlands has led to the intervention of humanitarian aid groups in the last few decades. Humanitarian aid groups continue to respond to the needs of those crossing as the situation of human rights violation becomes more dire through militarization and carceral enforcement as well as all of the prevention through deterrence policies practices (No More Deaths and La Coalición para los Derechos Humanos) (Walia 2013). Family members of people crossing also must be included when thinking of humanitarian aid resources. In my personal experience searches, and emergency response coordination for people in transit in the desert is almost always started by the active person in transit, or a family member or loved one in contact with the person in transit. In the case of family members and loved ones,

their labor is also unpaid, like a volunteer, when discussing the distribution of humanitarian aid resources.

This thesis will speak about volunteer unpaid work, or unpaid labor, from the assessment of devaluation in relation to the context of humanitarian aid groups, family members of those traveling, and for people in transit themselves, anyone who participates in humanitarian aid labor. The thesis' focus will evaluate the devaluation of volunteer labor through intersectional analysis based on sociocultural, sociolegal, and sociospatial dimensions. Previously, under the umbrella of unpaid work, volunteer work has revolved around a discourse surrounding the motivations of volunteerism. Little research contributes to the analysis of the devaluation, and lack of recognition that this work produces. Such limitations have left holes in the conversation about volunteer work, especially in connection to stigmatized populations.

As a researcher who also identifies as an aid worker my own presence is filled within this thesis. My own entrance into the work came from volunteering with No More Deaths, a humanitarian aid group in the Arizona borderlands, through university-based programming. I have continued this work on my own time spending years in the southwest participating in direct action. As the daughter of an immigrant, with family histories of migration, I have witnessed the crisis of disappearance and participated in humanitarian aid work for the last six years. As a scholar working within the intersection of Women's and Gender Studies and Social Work, my work is informed by values that strive to uncover human rights abuses and critique racist capitalist structures that place individuals in the margins of society. As an aid worker some of what I write will reflect my own experience of providing humanitarian aid in the Southwest borderlands. These experiences prompt questions in this thesis such as: What does it mean for vulnerable populations to receive support if they are viewed as stigmatized beings? How are those resources and labor working to support them viewed and perceived?

Thesis Outline

The site of this thesis is located in Tohono, O'odham, Hia C-ed O'odham, and Yoeme lands, located in what is called southern Arizona. Transit flows have been present in these areas for generations and it has been relatively recent that this location, and its people have been subject to the project of border imperialism. The production of unauthorized migrant bodies is only one of the many consequences of violence on these lands. People's journeys north and the illegalization of crossing will be described further. Research focused on in-transit migrants can be difficult to complete due to the mobility of the subjects and the precarious nature of their visibility in regard to the transit journeys they are completing. Desert aid workers (unpaid volunteers) that respond to the flow of migrants provide a unique entry point to study the relation of stigmatization while also understanding dynamics of unpaid volunteer work. Since desert aid volunteers respond to migrant presence, the ability to evaluate subjects working directly with a historically displaced and logistically difficult population contributes to research that is often situated pre or post migration journey.

Secondly, my analysis will touch on theoretical understandings of unpaid labor and will include an examination of unpaid labor as a product of a capitalist patriarchal system. Unpaid labor occupies a specific intersection between labor and gender that involves further consideration. The social construction of roles that enforce and ascribe unpaid labor to certain gendered bodies will be examined. Similarities and differences within unpaid labor and volunteerism will be compared from scholarship. Previous literature commenting on the characteristics of unpaid volunteer work will be compared to desert aid workers. The further devaluation of unpaid labor in connection to marginalized populations will be examined.

Furthermore, the ability to critically analyze the devaluation of unpaid work, especially in relation to stigmatized populations or causes, is important to furthering feminist discourse regarding unpaid labor. The increased devaluation and erasure of unpaid work will be analyzed

using an intersectional lens, especially highlighting the sociocultural effects of stigmatization. However, limitations of current dimensions and framework within the context of unpaid humanitarian aid labor will also be examined. The intersectional analysis of unpaid labor in relation to stigmatized populations can elevate previous knowledge within feminist studies and social political fields.

CHAPTER ONE

TOHONO O'ODHAM LANDS

While stigmatization is an ongoing social process, the precedent of surveillance over Black and Brown bodies is enforced by legal, social, and political entities of the United States dating back to the “removal of native peoples from their land and the enslavement of and terrorism against black bodies” (Matos 2019). Surveillance, and its effects, are a major factor while discussing the journey of irregular migrant transit. Especially salient to the borderlands, the presence of surveillance has escalated and intensified due to policy and legislation enacted by the United States. For migrants crossing the desert, the need to travel undetected to reach their final destinations is necessary when enforcement practices are targeted on illegalized bodies. The clandestine nature of their travels involves a level of hiding, invisibility, and undetectability.

In the ever presence of intense current surveillance, it is easy to forget this is a recent change when discussing the history of crossing in the geographical Southwest of the United States. The lands of the Tohono O'odham people include regions on both sides of the international border of Mexico and the United States. and many must go through federal border fences in order to visit their homelands and fellow people (Juan 2018). It is important to note that people who have been traveling back and forth between these lands have been doing so for centuries prior, both to access resources and for religious purposes (Walia 2013). Only since 1858 has the United States gained control and marked an imaginary line through the area, making it an international border (Juan 2018). These legal and political dimensions of the border,

and the U.S.'s effort to control border mobility, have created the prism of stigmatization for unauthorized people both crossing and in the interior of the U.S.

Production of 'Illegal'

A major consequence of the construction of border imperialism is the production of the 'illegal'. While the image of the 'illegal' migrant has been historically linked to Mexican migratory patterns, it is important to contextualize that recent waves of migration include: Central Americans, indigenous peoples from Mesoamerica, Black migrants from Latin America, and African refugees in addition to fluxes of Mexican people migrating north (De Genova 2015). Irregular crossings in this thesis are defined as migratory journeys taken without legal authorization from the United States. Nicholas De Genova and Ananya Roy comment on the practices of illegalization and the "legal production of illegality" (353). For those migrating north in the borderlands the production of illegality is placed upon anybody excluded from United States citizenship and traveling without legal immigration documents. Additionally, the act of migrating multiple times or reentering the United States unauthorized is held as illegal in U.S. law. "Migrants only become 'illegal' when legislative or enforcement-based measures render particular migrations or types of migration 'illegal'—or in other words, these measures *illegalise* them. From this standpoint, there are not really 'illegal' migrants so much as *illegalised* migrants" (De Genova 2015).

In "the legal production of illegality, immigration law must thus be seen as a kind of tactic that, in a very deliberate way, intervenes into the social field and produces conditions of possibility for the production of new categories of people" (De Genova and Roy 354).

Essentially, the production of illegality for people crossing without U.S. documentation ensures a

categorization defined by the “potentially punitive consequences and repercussions, including the ever-looming horizon of deportation” (De Genova and Roy 354). Those who are labeled undocumented are always vulnerable to deportation and removal due to their very categorization as undocumented or unauthorized while crossing. De Genova and Roy reminds us that “deportability is inseparable from the disposability of migrant lives. There is the constant threat of removal, of being coercively forced out and physically removed from the space of the nation-state” (355).

It is important to note that the production of illegalized migrants intentionally shifts the social views of unauthorized crossing and immigrants themselves. Significant to the maintenance of the illegalized migrant in the borderlands are the events of 9/11 and the association of “foreigner, “terror-suspect” as threat to the nation state. Centered on Arab and Muslim individuals, interrogation became directed toward all migrants and noncitizens, and resources were directed to fortifying borders in defense of “national security” (De Genova & Roy 356) (De Genova 78). The narrative of threat is exemplified in Walia’s passage:

“They become stereotyped by politicians, media, and within popular consciousness as floods of people from “over there” who are “disease ridden,” “fraudulent,” or “security threats.” These narratives buttress moral panics about “keeping borders safe and secure” from poor and racialized migrants.” (25)

The use of national security and ‘keeping the border safe’ is connected from past “tough on crime” rhetoric utilized against Black and poor bodies within the interior of the U.S. historically (Walia, Macías-Rojas). The “tough on illegals” narrative, justifies increased border patrols, armed border guards, migrant detention, immigration enforcement raids in homes and workplaces, (Walia 26).

Socially constructed views effectively mark migrant bodies in a greater racialized project and fuel the funneling of resources to their maintenance of the 'illegal'. Additionally, these methods of illegalization can affect the way the public views migrants and their autonomy through inherently "unequal politics of citizenship." By marking migrants as illegalized, they are furthered excluded as viable for citizenship inclusion symbolically and legally. Crossing through methods of human smuggling or trafficking also conjures the image of migrants needing to be protected from other illegalized migrants (De Genova 2015). "The representation of migrants as either 'victims' or opportunistic 'criminals' effectively erases the kind of agency that might count as self-determination" (De Genova 2015). This same assertion of 'victim' or 'criminal' while crossing leads to patronizing views of migrants as opposed to actors in a border spectacle of enforcement and racialization (De Genova 2015). Migrants crossing in the borderlands should be viewed as autonomous beings making decisions in a hyper militaristic border landscape where enforcement practices prompt the need to utilize resources available due to the production of their own illegalization in the area.

As an aid worker one of the biggest devaluations and erasures of humanitarian aid distribution is the labor of those actively crossing. The sharing of tangible resources with others crossing, or the care work involved in supporting others you are traveling with should not be overlooked in the discussion of humanitarian aid resource distribution. Self rescue should be included within this as people take advantage of resources available such as navigation by the stars and moon, knowledge and utilization of natural resources such as plants, wildlife, and natural water sources. In my experience the discourse of humanitarian labor and provision of this labor and life saving support are overlooked and derailed by the production of illegality.

The stigmatization placed upon undocumented persons can be viewed as a social cultural ideology present in the United States and created by legal and political rhetoric. The stigma attached to people crossing the border unauthorized is reenforced through tangible legal and enforcement practices in addition to social ideologies that are influenced by the morality of criminality, racial categorization, and colonial ideologies of conquest and territory. While this thesis is not going to look at this issue in depth, it is also important to point out that De Genova and Roy also provide arguments connecting the creation of illegality of migrants to account for a constant flow of labor to the United States. Migrant bodies are viewed as 'illegal', undeserving and embedded with implied disposability (2019). Walia furthers these assertions noting that border imperialism not only creates displacement in migrants' homes of origin prompting individuals to migrate to resources but also "deliberately construct migrants as illegals and aliens" (24). While this process of becoming 'illegal' is physically manifested during a person's crossing, this is thrust upon the individual every day for the rest of their time in the U.S. due to the threat of deportation which will always be present.

The Crisis of the Disappeared.

In 1994 the US Border Patrol formed an enforcement strategy called Prevention Through Deterrence. In a report produced by No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos, (2021) both organizations state, "...[through] the implementation of this policy, the Border Patrol sought to control the Southwest border by heightening the risks associated with unauthorized entry" (6).

Previously, large city centers such as Tijuana and El Paso were seen as the routes to migrate north into the United States, even without documentation. Border Patrol Agents

increased as did militarized enforcement practices close to these city entry points, including the eventual construction of walls in between major cities. The construction and heightened enforcement inherently pushes anyone wishing to avoid walls or gain access to areas of crossing into wilderness areas. In Tohono O'odham lands this is the Sonoran Desert. Additionally, immigration checkpoints were established, setting up a 'temporary' but federal kiosk where individuals are questioned by border patrol agents on their citizenship status. These checkpoints have been implemented on major roadways headed north and prompt individuals to walk from 20 to 100 miles north into the interior to evade such checkpoints without authorized documentation (No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos 6). This 20 to 100 miles extra distance is located in harsh conditions of the Sonoran desert flatlands, and mountainous terrains of the southwestern borderlands. Because it is physically impossible to carry the appropriate resources necessary, individuals crossing the desert may walk with minimal food, and/or water, for multiple weeks.

As a consequence of Prevention Through Deterrence, thousands of people have perished in the borderlands due to dehydration, heat-related illness, exposure, and other preventable environmental causes. Extreme heat and bitter cold, scarce and polluted water sources, treacherous topography, and near-total isolation from possible rescue are used as weapons of border enforcement. The rugged environment along the border routinely injures those crossing with sprains, blisters, and heat-related illness; many become lost and disoriented in these vast and remote expanses of wilderness, resulting in disappearance and death...The increased danger was intended to then deter other people from considering the journey, with the overall goal of preventing migration. (No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos 7)

As someone who has participated in aid work and spent time with border residents, it unfortunately is not uncommon to come across remains of someone who has passed while crossing. Even for those who have not directly found a person who has passed crossing, the knowledge that this is a reality is ever present.

There will never be a way to quantify the accurate number of people who have died during the journey; however, those making estimates believe that death counts are over 8,600 people since the 1990s (No More Deaths and La Coalición de Derechos Humanos 7). This is the number of people who have been recovered. Often the harsh conditions that lead people to walk in the borderlands are also the conditions that remove forensic evidence of the deceased person, leaving a mass wilderness of unmarked graves (Kielty, Hunte, & Nasser). Many are never responded too or were never able to reach support and lay to rest, permanently, in the desert. This is the crisis of the disappeared.

“Such migrant and refugee deaths cannot be viewed as accidental or even random, but rather are the perfectly predictable and systemic effect of border militarization and physical fortification. They are inextricable, furthermore, from racialized histories of illegalization, exploitation, deportability, and expulsion” (De Genova & Rory 360).

Criminalization and the Funnel to the Prison Industrial Complex.

Using legality to monitor and control state borders has been a well-documented pattern by the U.S. as attempts to control migratory populations are engrained within the conception of the nation state. The criminalization of immigration law, or “crimmigration law,” has evolved to closely intertwine the criminal punitive system of immigrants. “Both immigration and criminal law marshal the sovereign power of the state to punish and to express societal condemnation for the individual offender” (De Genova 60). Crimmigration law effectively defines inclusion and exclusion through both citizenship parameters and criminality (De Genova). Chacon states that “the relationship between immigration and criminal law has evolved from merely excluding

foreigners who had committed past crimes to the present when many immigration violations are themselves defined as criminal offenses and many crimes result in deportation” (63).

Legally, the concept of illegal border crossings in the Southwest is a relatively new phenomenon. Again, it is important here to recognize that the corridors north people are taking have been known migration patterns for centuries.

One of the most significant pieces of legislation that has altered southern border migration to the United States was the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IRIRA). Added weight to the term ‘illegal’ is punitively and explicitly present in the IRIRA, prompting widespread consequences. Specific to undocumented border crossers, code 1325 & 1326 of Section 8 were amended to formally criminalize (federally) entrance or return into the United States without authorization through an official port of entry, thus ensuring that any undocumented migrant could receive a federal charge for entering the United States.

Overall, the 1996 legislation created a least six different ways immigrants, not just border crossers, would face increased confrontation with the criminal justice system (Macías-Rojas). “In short, it put into law many of the punitive provisions associated with the criminalization of migration today” (Macías-Rojas 1). These legislative actions fall into alignment when contextualizing their creation within the “War on Crime” era of the 1990s (Macías-Rojas).

IRIRA condenses and formalizes the legal enforcement and produces the occurrence of undocumented border crossers traveling through the desert in the present. This machine of criminality has not stopped with the IRIRA.

Introduced in 2005, “Operation Streamline” is a program allowing prosecution of migrants ‘en masse’ for unauthorized border crossings (Franzblau 2019). This involves a court hearing for those who have been detained while crossing and group sentencing of up to 20 people at once. People detained are rarely told the full extent of the hearing, enter the court room shackled, and are convicted guilty (Burrige 81). Due to previous criminalization legislation if individuals are found to have crossed and been caught multiple times their prison sentence can be extended up to 180 days or longer (Burrige 81). Operation Streamline has become the most recent way the U.S. government has escalated and maximized its ability to criminalize irregular crossings, geographically implemented in only Southwest borderlands regions such as courts in Arizona, Texas, and Southern California (Burrige 82).

This new rendition of surveillance and enforcement is aligned with the historical context of Brown and Black bodies and the attempts to control their population’s growth, size, and power. As constructed, the previously touched upon legislation has led to the funnel of immigrant bodies from the Global South into the present prison industrial complex through migrant detention centers (Walia 25). The criminality produced from immigrating echoes again a long history of “tough on crime” discourses in the 60s and 70s and the further mass incarceration of Black and Brown bodies. “The social control and criminalization that delineates the carceral network and disappears undesirables is the frequently invisible yet entrenched racist colonial belief that incarceration is a legitimate response to communities that are constructed and characterized innately as being illegals, deviants, criminals, terrorists, or threats (Walia 27).

With creation of illegalized individuals crossing, and practices of enforcement such as prevention through deterrence, aid workers have responded to the crisis of disappearance. A

deadly constructed reality, those who live in the borderlands witness the state sanctioned violence. Border residents often are those who interact with people crossing the hostile desert. The presence of humanitarian aid groups in the area has also become a manifestation of response. Humanitarian groups vary in response and mission from search, rescue, and recovery, resources distribution, and responding to medically comprised and disoriented people. I discuss further the activities carried out by these groups in my discussion of unpaid labor and devaluation below. While this thesis is using the position of humanitarian aid volunteer labor on the United States side it is important to note that family members and support systems of unauthorized border crossers also witness and support migrants from the inception of their journeys before they enter an illegalization process in the states.

CHAPTER TWO

DISCUSSION OF UNPAID LABOR AND DEVALUATION

Discussion of the role of unpaid labor and volunteering has occupied space within Feminist studies based on the socially ascribed roles associated with unpaid care work or labor, along the division of public and private spheres (Aulette & Wittner). Streams of radical and socialist feminists have produced literature that has focused on issues of unpaid labor in regard to capitalism as well as assigned sex and gender roles. A socialist feminist theoretical framework forms and situates unpaid labor in a capitalist patriarchal hierarchy. This theoretical orientation works to understand the “real mix of the interrelationships between capitalism and patriarchy as expressed through the sexual division of labor” (Eisenstein 197).

The definition of unpaid work, and the varying categorizations of measurement instruments and documentation, has limited the amount of research completed on the subject due to that fact that labor has been theorized predominantly in economic dimensions (Beneria). Historically, literature has focused on domestic and household unpaid labor along the sexual divisions of labor (Beneria; Eisenstein). Due to the socially ascribed roles of unpaid labor, research concludes that many participating in unpaid labor are of marginalized gender identities. Within labor discourse there is a discussion around the presence of gendered work called care work. Describing this concept further, Folbre, writes, “most of the activities that fall under unpaid work are in some way or other connected with the social reproduction of human beings

on a daily and generational basis or what others call ‘care work.’” Translated to humanitarian aid spaces, unpaid care work can be thought of as providing humanitarian resources (food and water), providing medical attention, and emotional labor to those directly crossing or their families, who are often the first responders to their relatives in distress. I would argue that the gendering of the specific work has led to its devaluation due to its association as ‘feminine’ scripted behavior and the lack of an economically quantifiable product or capital.

Volunteerism Within Unpaid Labor Discourse

Volunteering is more complex to define due to the fact that it does not fall easily into the historical dichotomy of paid employment (public facing) and unpaid domestic work (private sphere) (Kelemen, Mangan, & Moffat). Often public facing work that is not paid employment, such as volunteering, has been hypothesized through different streams in order to understand its production, motivation, and economic dimensions (Folbre). Past research in unpaid volunteer labor has historically focused on upper middle class white women. This research focuses on the availability for upper class women to participate in ‘sociability’ work such as fundraising or event planning (Daniels). Sociability work has been found to be gendered and associated with women while simultaneously trivialized, sometimes by the women themselves (Daniels; Blackstone). “Daniels suggests that sociability work is trivialized in part because it is ‘women's work’ and assumed to be a natural part of who they are since women are stereotypically thought of as nurturers and caretakers” (Blackstone 39). Thus the connection between unpaid care work and volunteerism is common in the discourse around both the association of gendered assigned characteristics and the discourse of unpaid labor, and volunteer care work. “The gendering of care work... such as the care work that is done by volunteers in formal institutions such as

schools and hospitals or in volunteer agencies and non-governmental organizations, has in effect led to its devaluation” (Folbre). These assumptions of care work being gendered has led to the postulation that care work or volunteer labor is expected from gendered bodies based on socially assigned scripts. “Thus, over time, caring activities became to be seen less and less as economic and more and more as if they were not work at all” (Folbre). For the case of humanitarian aid workers, previous literature on unpaid labor summarizes the gendering of care work through capitalistic patriarchal foundations. Devalued by the lack of economic output, humanitarian aid labor is devalued inherently due to accepted social scripts of exalating the economic production of labor and the simultaneous dismissal of care labor. In the case of humanitarian aid labor and the proximity to stigmatization populations, the devaluation of resource distribution is heightened through multiple dimensions.

Courtesy Stigma, Unpaid Volunteer Labor, and Working With Stigmatized Populations.

Sociologist Erving Goffman describes a concept of *courtesy stigma* and argues “that stigma not only affects the individual bearing the stigma, but also, by courtesy, those who are in close relationship to the stigmatized individual or population; “the problems faced by stigmatized persons spread out in waves of diminishing intensity among those they come in contact with” (Rachel Phillips et al. 682). Previously, the negative effects of courtesy stigma have been documented by valuating stigmatized populations and their family members. Growing from this area of thought, research has also begun to examine the experience of volunteers who are working with highly marginalized and disenfranchised populations (Phillips, Casey, & Leischner; Benoit & Hallgrímsdóttir). Describing the concept of care work with stigmatized populations, Phillips, Casey, & Leischner, state,

The structural and cultural marginalization of persons with stigmatized identities means not only that the demand placed on care providers is greater, and the solutions less obvious, but care providers themselves may experience less social and economic support for their care work, particularly when the population receiving care is a highly denigrated one. (237)

Further based on their work evaluating paid and unpaid work of volunteers working to provide support to stigmatized sex workers, Phillips, Casey, & Leischner note:

“stigmatized populations, because of the intersectional processes of marginalization, experience complex barriers to health and wellness. Intimate care workers to stigmatized populations are charged with the task of addressing these care needs, but they often receive less social support, both at the individual and organizational levels, for their work as negative stigmas suggest that certain populations, such as sex workers, are willfully deviant, burdensome to the community, and therefore undeserving of social resources” (245). Looking at the work and scope of humanitarian aid workers in relation to these findings, we can infer that aid workers are also confronted with similar challenges when supporting migrants crossing the Arizona borderlands and that courtesy stigma affects volunteers, migrant family members and therefore their ability to support marginalized populations. Viewing conclusions about the experiences of those helping sex workers as parallel to the case of those supporting people crossing, whose act of migration is deemed illegal, deviant and equally clandestine from authority figures, one can infer that support and resources would alter the availability of help in a similar way.

Unpaid Labor as Invisible Work: Mechanisms of Devaluation

More recently, ‘Invisible work’ has been closely associated with volunteer work. Erin Hatton provides a framework that “...defines invisible work as labour that is economically devalued through cultural, legal and/or spatial dynamics” (2017, p. 345). Drawing from

intersectional theorists such as Kimberle Crenshaw, Hatton's framework "highlights those types of labour that are 'multiply invisible' (345).

Hatton's framework is particularly advantageous for asserting the devaluation of the 'invisible' unpaid volunteer labor of desert aid distribution responding to the humanitarian aid crisis in the borderlands based on contextual markers. Overall the stigmatization through illegalization of migrant populations directly produces the context in which desert aid labor is evaluated in relation to the spatial and legal dynamics of the unpaid work. Hatton describes three frameworks when assessing the intersectional devaluation: sociospatial, sociolegal and sociocultural devaluation. Previous feminist scholars have demonstrated that labor can be devalued due to where it is performed, historically the domestic sphere. Hatton's work pushes this further suggesting that labor is also devalued when "it is performed in non-traditional worksites (343)." For the case of desert aid workers, the majority of their labor is produced in the desert and mountainous regions where travelers are crossing. Due to Prevention Through Deterrence, humanitarian aid work often takes place in remote nontraditional worksites. The sociospatial dimension of desert aid work therefore further influences its devaluation.

Hatton "describes the first level of sociolegality as questioning if the work is 'noneconomic.'" Unpaid labor and volunteer-based aid work fall into a level of initial devaluation due to their lack of economic production. Hatton further asserts "some types of sociolegally invisible work are also devalued by sociocultural mechanisms. Such is the case for volunteer work, care work and sex work, in which hegemonic gender ideologies obscure the fact that labour is being performed and lend legitimacy to their exclusion from legal definitions of 'employment'" The other dimensions of Hatton's sociolegality relates to whether the work is

illicit and informal. Because humanitarian aid workers do not engage in any form of transaction of economic means, this level of sociolegality is not present. Hatton describes informal labour as “off the books’ work, such as waste picking, street vending, day labour and often home-based work (Duck, 2016; Grant, 2014; Leonard, 1998;). Again, this is not present due to the lack of transactional work.

The biggest of Hatton’s mechanism that affects the devaluation specifically of aid worker labor is the sociocultural dimension. The stigmatization through criminality is placed upon migrant bodies traveling through the Southwest and therefore also upon those who work to support people crossing. They are viewed as adjacent to deviant bodies. The work of desert aid is stigmatized due to its proximity to individuals engaging in ‘illegal’ acts. Although aid workers are not deemed ‘illegal,’ the proximity to people crossing undocumented affect the sociocultural mechanism that affects the devaluation of their labor and support toward in transit migrants.

This thesis’ aim is not to highlight the engrossing stigmatization that aid workers experience due to their proximity to undocumented populations. Rather, it is to prompt a conversation about the need to recognize that unpaid and volunteer-based labor is devalued through proximity to stigmatized populations. Although devaluation is thought of in an economic sense, the devaluation of desert aid work is inherently linked to the fact that it is not producing into the capitalist system. The labor, and care work produced by volunteers does not fall into traditional methods of economic production, and therefore, in short, it is unrecognized labour. Socially, volunteer labor is associated as intrinsically motivated and often related to gender marginalized specific bodies in specific assigned roles. Historically, volunteer and care work is associated with feminine bodies.

Desert aid work is a form of care work or “invisible labor. Initially such work is inherently devalued not only through the prism of gendered work but also by sociospatial dimensions of working to support populations that are subject to an illegalization, criminalization and dehumanization process. People migrating north in wilderness areas where humanitarian aid labor is present, are located in in a hidden and often unseen sociospatial dimension. Hatton’s analysis of devaluation via sociocultural factors parallels previous assertions of courtesy stigma and the lessened effects of support for those interacting with stigmatized populations. These conversations are increasingly important when support given is devalued and erased from social service conversations of accountability. Based on previous research findings we can infer that desert aid volunteers are devalued and questioned due to the proximity or courtesy stigma placed on the bodies of those crossing the desert without legal authorization. In my experience as an aid worker courtesy stigma is most overtly exhibited in humanitarian aid spheres as the escalation in enforcement practices and targeting of those completing humanitarian aid distribution. This can include prosecution of aid workers, threats of ticketing, lack of access to certain areas of wilderness where humanitarian is most needed, and targeting of humanitarian aid project through escalated enforcement practices such as the raid or interference of aid stations.

Limitations of Hatton’s mechanisms of invisibility

Limitations to Hatton’s work in the context of humanitarian aid workers are forthcoming when attempting to evaluate the clandestine nature of responding to undocumented migrants. Inherent in humanitarian aid work is a politicization of acts to respond to those needing humanitarian support. While Hatton’s work gives appropriate levels of evaluation for aid distribution, there are elements to Hatton’s framework that could be added. The political

dimension of stigmatization offers an area that should be further investigated with unpaid volunteering. What are the consequences on unpaid volunteering for individuals related to politically controversial issues such as immigration, sex work, or prison abolition?

Overall Hatton's mechanisms of invisibility "denaturalizes the construct of work by making visible the mechanisms through which only some categories of labour are deemed economically valuable" (346, 2017). Hatton's work is therefore the analysis best fit to evaluate desert aid volunteers due to the need to decentralize paid labor because of the inherent devaluation of being unpaid.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSIONS

The geographic context of the southwestern borderlands is specific to the Sonoran desert but the effects of stigmatization on irregular migrant flows is felt globally. While geographic contexts may shift, the effects of stigmatization upon irregular migrants and the mechanisms of invisibility on unpaid labor can be transferrable to other disenfranchised populations. Border imperialism is a global phenomenon. While this site's focus was on Tohono O'odham lands, the construction of state sanctioned imperialist projects that simultaneously create a stigmatized and disposable flow of labor for colonial wealth is replicated in other parts of the world.

My intersectional analysis also describes that desert aid work is devalued in multiple ways including by visibility and proximity to stigmatized populations as well as by gendered analysis. Gendered analysis can be associated both in terms of socially scripted behavior, and which bodies are actively producing humanitarian labor. The assumption that care work and humanitarian labor is associated with feminine assigned characteristics inherently devalues the production of the labor. This is significant when speaking about the human rights crisis in the borderlands because humanitarian aid labor is needed due to the design of the state. Because of this, it is in the nation states' best interest to devalue and erase the production of humanitarian aid labor and the cause of the need to respond. Additionally, the very bodies producing the labor can be viewed in a gendered analysis. As an aid worker in the borderlands, my own evaluation of who is participating in humanitarian aid is consistent with previous literature as the majority of

volunteers I have interacted with identify within a marginalized gendered spectrum. This is not to infer that all humanitarian aid labor is produced by marginalized gendered bodies, especially in the case of self rescue and family members or loved ones who coordinate humanitarian aid resources from either side of the border. Further research could investigate the positions of people crossing and those on who are also illegalized in the United States in regards to the devaluation of labor. This could include people who are actively in transit, family members further in the interior of the U.S., family members in countries of origin, and any other individual traveling without U.S. citizenship and therefore stigmatized and illegalized through documentation status. This is relevant to discussions within gender studies and sociopolitical spaces that work to acknowledge unrecognized contributions by certain populations, namely socially gendered bodies and stigmatized populations.

Stigmatization through ‘illegality’ affects migrants’ crossing and simultaneously devalues the already unpaid labor of volunteers working to respond. This highlights the insidious nature of stigmatization to those directly targeted as well as anyone working to support them. The expectation of care work on marginalized gender bodies does little to interrupt the social scripts of intimate care work as devalued and under resourced. This thesis echoes previous Gender Studies research that asserts devaluation via the social construction of gendered dynamics of labor and also argues that unpaid desert aid distribution labor is further and contextually devalued based on the stigmatization placed on the populations it works to support. Moving forward, future research should inquire about the effect of resources distribution within the discussion of unpaid labor. What are the highest predictors of devaluation of volunteer labor? How does this affect organizations in maintaining resources for the populations they serve? This

project argues that migrant stigmatization not only devalues volunteer desert aid work but prompts questions of further implications for migrant populations most affected.

Conclusions are significant due to the dynamics of stigmatization placed on undocumented populations whether in transit, arrived, or through methods of deportation. Based on previous research, desert aid volunteering and unpaid humanitarian aid labor follow similar trends of invisible labor devaluation based on the conjunction of socio spatial and social cultural contexts. Further research could examine the erasure of levels of invisibility for people in transit supporting each other through humanitarian resources that can range from orientation, sharing of physical resources, and emotional care work. Areas of study could explore empirical evaluations of devaluation as well as analysis over the resources available to people migrating due to the stigmatization. Conclusions are significant due to the dynamics of stigmatization placed on undocumented populations whether in transit, arrived, or through methods of deportation. Based on previous research, desert aid volunteering and unpaid work follows similar trends of invisible labor devaluation based on the conjunction of sociospatial contexts. Further areas of study could explore empirical evaluations of devaluation as well as analysis over the resources available to migrants due to the stigmatization.

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VITA

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