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International female migration and their labor insertion.

Mexican migrants in Phoenix, Arizona

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Abstract: The participation of Mexican women in the migratory international flow, in the period of 1995-2000, was 24.3 per cent. The reasons and consequences of female migration are not the same as males, since women play a different role in the social and economic life. Nevertheless, it's needed to know the differences of the sexual division of labor markets and the social networks created from this division. Therefore, the objective of this research is to analyze the involvement of the Mexican labor market specifically as workers and / or owners of small businesses in Phoenix, Arizona. It aims to investigate how the immigration policies implemented in this city have affected the economic activities (stylists). In this paper we will present results of the survey 'Mexican Homes in Phoenix, Arizona' (547 questionnaires), made in November 2007 where we analyze the interviews made to hair care business owners.

## **Introduction**

The last two decades has revealed the presence of Mexican small businesses in the United States; they are found where the Mexican population is concentrated. Those businesses offer products serving various demands, such as: restaurants of Mexican food, clothing stores for *quinceañeras* and religious ceremonies (Baptisms, First Communion, Weddings...), Mexican music, retail accessories such as boots and belts, etc. Also, we can observe the presence of informal street vendors offering popsicles, fruit, tamales, churros, candy, and other goods.

There is no doubt that the increased migration has opened a market for ethnic businesses, but this is not the only reason. Female migration has played an important role in the initiation and development of formal and informal businesses. "Women were the first to explore an alternative economy, they become self employed, and they are the ones that motivate the husband to open a business" (Barros, 2006:3). However, women's participation in the creation of small businesses in the host communities is an aspect that requires further analysis currently beyond the present scope of this document.

Arizona, and in particular the Phoenix metropolitan area, in the last decade has seen an increasing, explosive, flow of immigrants, largely undocumented from Mexico. As a result, this state has created laws and policies that hinder the economic, political and social status of Mexicans in the United States. Under the framework of migration policies, Mexican migrants have managed to evade these regulations and they have managed to open small businesses. According to Light (2008:52) "success in violation of regulations or the reduction of its surrender to them are unknown and, occasionally known as antisocial forms of business innovation that deserve greater recognition of the theory than until now have received".

The objective of this research is to analyse the involvement of the Mexican labor market specifically the workers and / or owners of small businesses in Phoenix Arizona. It aims to investigate how the immigration policies implemented in this city have affected the economic activities of hair care stylists.

### **Female migration and labor**

According to statistics presented by the United Nations in 2005, there were 190,633,564 migrant women, this being 49.6% of the total migration (94 million). Although in percentage it didn't increase significantly, it did so in absolute numbers. Since 1960 they have accounted for 35 million (representing 46.8% of global migration) (UN, 2005).

It has been documented that female migration is multi-causal; they migrate for family reunification, economic reasons, to seek asylum, etc. (Morokvasic 1984, Gregory, 1998; Parreanas, 2001; Gabaccia, 2002; Gammage, 2002; Zhou, 2003; Parella, 2003; Weigh 2007). In the case of Mexican migrants there are also several reasons for emigration...the most studied is family reunification and job search, but research also begins to highlight that domestic violence is a cause of emigration for some women (Woo, 2007).

For the purposes of this document we emphasize the participation of Mexican women working in the United States. According to statistics (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008)

participation in employment has increased from 59.5% in 1986 to 65.3% in 2007. Notably, there is greater participation of migrant women in employment in the informal economy as in other parts of the world. Such is the case of women who migrate to Spain for labor as domestic workers and child, sick and elderly care (Ariza 2000; Ariza, 2004, Gregory, 1998, Marroni, 2006; Ariza, 2008) and women from the Philippines who migrate as nurses and maids to the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the United States (Tyner, 1996, George, 2006) and as domestic workers in the Mexican American labor market (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

Migrant women play a crucial role in business; in the United States 28% of businesses are owned by women. In the case of Hispanic businesses, women own 34.9% of all businesses. And within the Hispanic business, Mexicans (men and women) are owners of 45% (U.S. Survey Business Owners, 2002). But in these numbers, little attention has been paid to the role of Mexican women in the development of these businesses.

Apitsch and Kontos (2003) noted that there are studies analyzing the participation of migrant women in the labor market and also on the analysis of ethnic business development. But there are few attempts to link women's participation in developing businesses in their communities of destination. Within the latter, more recent studies do describe women's participation in the genesis and development of businesses and analyze the impacts on gender roles (Barros, 2006, Bear and Ribas, 2007; Hwan, 2007).

In this sense, Barros (2006) analyzes the role of Mexican migrants in small business development in rural California (retail of clothing in the rural swap meets). Women that are reaching the United States are who start the idea of moving into the business sector, and they play a key role in seeking economic alternatives. They are exploring the informal economy (selling items house by house, street vendors, swap meets) and they are beginning to create their own jobs, too.

The author describes how women use their social networks, brought from their home communities (Barros interviews women from different Mexican states, including the testimony of migrants from Michoacan, Colima and Tijuana) and new social networks

formed in their children's school as well as the church to develop their business of selling clothes, including establishing a store in the various swap meets. The author also concludes that the spouses of women are involved in the business when the business grows and increases profits. The spouses may even leave their jobs to devote themselves completely to the family business. In the process of business development, gender relations are changing; the spouses share responsibilities, liabilities and problems, as well as the benefits of having a business: profit, independence and establishing their own timetables.

Oso and Ribas (2007) conducted an investigation similar to that of Barros (2006), but in the context of Dominican migration to Madrid, and of Moroccan migration to Barcelona. The authors analyzed the participation of women in business, with the aim of studying ethnic entrepreneurship from the perspective of gender relations and to determine whether the entrepreneurial path can be an alternative for social mobility and exit from the labor sectors classically reserved to immigrant women, such as cleaning, caring for children and the elderly.

The authors found that mothers often install beauty salons because they do not require high levels of education to learn the craft, or large capital investments, in addition to represent a high demand among Dominican women and Latinas. For these businesses, the Spanish government does not request a diploma to install as a hairdresser. These women Moroccans in Barcelona tend to install a store in the market and stalls of ethnic products. Those stores are working with bigger prices than the big stores, so they are working with smaller profits. These women involve themselves in the development of these companies only as helpers of their husbands. They hold the internal positions within the business and they combine this work with domestic work. However, Moroccan women who have finished their reproductive life can have access to public positions in the business. Also, the location of the business in markets depends on the length of migration and the status of the migrant.

Based on these case studies, Oso and Ribas conclude that women use entrepreneurship as a strategy to labor mobility, to exit the nich working in domestic service. As well, married

women used the business as a family project and help their husbands to increase revenues. They also found that these businesses are used by women as a strategy to continue their professional life and to use their skills they bring from their homes.

In its research, Hwan (2007) explores the importance of social capital in the economic activities of Korean women immigrants in New York. Specifically, the study provides empirical evidence of the businesses of aesthetics established by Koreans and stresses the importance of rotating credit associations in the social and economic support for women entrepreneurs. On the one hand, women reported participating in these partnerships to save and install a business. But, those credit associations (formed by friends, co-workers, family) are acting as a social support for its members who expect and rely on finding support among members of these associations; this reduces stress and anxiety of its members in situations of failure of the business. They are a social support for those members who are lonely or who have culture shock after they migrate or who have conflicts with their multiple roles (such as women who are facing the tasks of being entrepreneurs, wives, and mothers).

Based on those studies, we believe that the categories of migrants and the status of migrants (documented and undocumented) are important for understanding the participation of Mexican women in ethnic businesses. Our hypothesis is that the establishment of business by migrants not only depends on supply and demand for products, but also on the regulatory framework affecting the working lives of migrants. In the context of immigration policies implemented in Phoenix, Arizona, employment opportunities and mobility are limited, and that push migrants to self-employment. Moreover, the migrant families need to have alternative incomes; women are who implement informal economic activities, self employment and setting up their own businesses.

### **Context: The immigration law in Phoenix, Arizona, and Mexican migration**

Previous to focus on the general characteristics of Mexican migration by gender, we should start by contextualizing the politics of migration implemented by The United States that

affect the lives of undocumented Mexicans who arrive to Phoenix. The state of Arizona has become in recent years the main gateway for illegal immigrants from Mexico. In 2000, Mexicans in Arizona accounted for 20% of its population, by the year 2007 they increased their share to 26.3%. The main factor contributing to the growth of the Latino population in general and Mexicans in particular in Arizona, was the militarization of the traditional crossroads of migration in the US-Mexico border with the implementation of the border operations in 1993 "Hold The Line" in El Paso Texas, in 1994, "Operation Gatekeeper" in San Diego California in 1995, "Operation Safeguard" in Nogales, Arizona in 1997, and "Operation Rio Grande" in Texas (Cornelius, 2001).

Immigration in Arizona represents, according to authorities, the main problem to combat, surpassing pollution, crime and job creation. Measures to address this challenge have resulted in creating laws and anti-immigration policies that are affecting the life, work, health and education of all immigrants, especially undocumented workers. In 2000, Proposition 200 passed, which sought to prevent access to undocumented immigrants to public health and education; however, this provision was overturned by a federal court. It approved the 2005 state law "anti-coyote" (Human Trafficking Violation) that enables local authorities to bring charges against not only of the *coyotes*, but also against immigrants who admit having paid for their services--with this law they could be charged with "conspiracy". In 2006, four laws were passed in the same vein; Proposition 100, which denies the possibility of bail for undocumented immigrants who have been accused of committing a felony; Law 102, which prohibits undocumented immigrants from receiving monetary compensation in civil suits; Proposal 103, which declares English as official language of the state; 300 Law, which tripled the cost of college tuition for undocumented immigrants and banned the use of state funds for their scholarships or financial assistance, this law requires undocumented students pay tuition as foreigners in universities and state colleges (Gonzalez, 2005; Duran, 2005).

The year 2008 began with even tougher measures against undocumented immigrants. In January of that year came into force the HB2779 Law, "Legal Arizona Workers Act", which requires employers to verify whether their workers are authorized to work in the United States legally. Also, the local government implements a law requiring legal

residency to business owners and street vendors, this way undocumented migrants are limited in creating a job or a business. Another new measure that directly disrupts undocumented migrants in Arizona is the law of forfeiture of remittances (International Remittances of Monies) sent to the Mexican state of Sonora, with the argument that remittances finance undocumented migration (Gublin, 2008; McKilley, 2008). Under this harsh anti-immigrant atmosphere live and work more than a million and half Mexican (U.S. Census, 2007).

### **General characteristics of Mexican migration by gender in Phoenix Arizona**

Based on the Survey of Mexican households in Phoenix Arizona, 2007<sup>1</sup>, we describe the socio demographic characteristics of Mexican migration by gender and identify and highlight some differences.

The analysis is based on 1582 migrants that resulted from the implementation of the survey to 457 households of Mexicans. The data show that women accounted for 45.3% of this migration (see Table 1). A percentage that is consistent with data from the Census in the United States showing that Mexican migrants are 45% women.<sup>2</sup>

Based on this survey we can see that the migration of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona is relatively new, it begins basically in the nineties and the first decade of the twenty-first century (see Figure 1). While there is a presence of female Mexican migration in Phoenix

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<sup>1</sup> The methodology for the implementation of the Mexican household survey in metropolitan Phoenix was to use a systematic random sampling. The first step was to delimit the geographic or study area, which is constituted by 654 Census Tracts. From this Census Track we chose thae ones what had 25% of Latino population, resulting in 260 Census Tracts wiyh this feature. The concentration of Latinos is important because 90% of them are Mexican. Subsequently, from 260 census tracks we made, randomly selected, a representative sample of 93 census tracks where the survey was implemented. In a second stage, we determined the number of questionnaires to be applied. We estimated the number of Mexican households that are in the 93 selected census tracks, dividing the total Mexican population of the census tract per 4, because we assumed an average composition of four members per household of Mexicans in the United States, resulting in 54, 999 homes. Subsequently, we planned the application of the questionnaire to 561 households to ensure the representativeness of the sample. The next step was to distribute 561 questionnaires to the 93 selected census tracks. The distribution was proportional to the number of Latino households in each census track (Latino population of the CT / 4) and a K of 98 (The K is obtained by dividing the estimated number of Latino households in the 93 census track by the number of questionnaires, 999/561). The minimum number of questionnaires for a census track was 2 and the maximum was 15.

<sup>2</sup> According to the United States Census of 2000 it had a population of 281,421,908, Hispanics being 35,303,818,(12.2% compared to the total population), and, 58.5% of total Hispanics are of Mexican origin (20,640,711), and of which 45 percent are women.

Arizona since the forties, it was not until the eighties when this migration is important quantitatively, and intensifying in the nineties.

Table 1  
Mexican migrant in Phoenix Arizona for sex

Migrants by sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	866	54.7
Female	716	45.3
TOTAL	1582	100.0

Source: Calculations based on Household Surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

The decade of increased migration coincides with the Mexican economic crisis of 1994 which allows us to assume that female migration is part of the strategy for households to increase their income. On the other hand, Phoenix is a destination created by the recent movement of migratory flows due to border control policy as stated in paragraphs above.

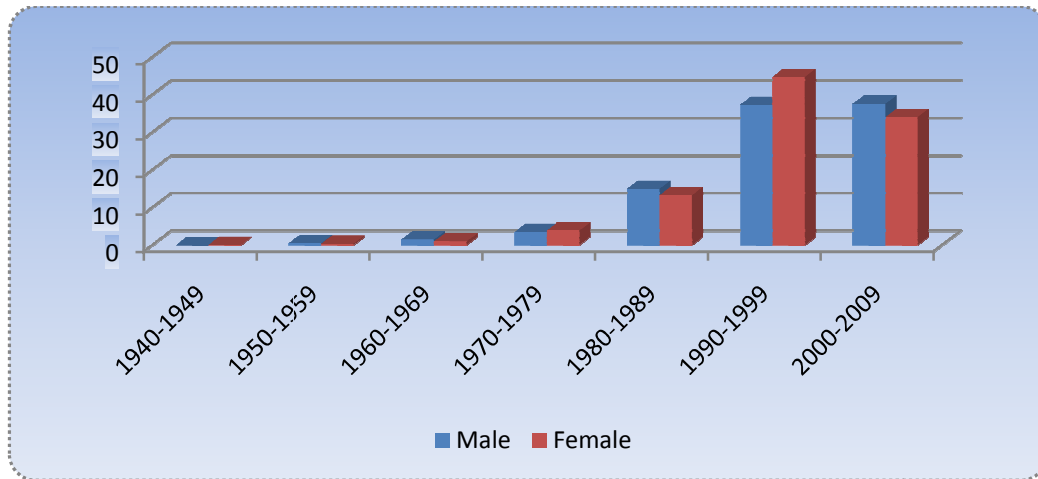
Compared to male migration, women have some differences that we highlight. In the eighties the men had a slightly higher participation in the phenomenon than women (15 and 13% respectively), but in the nineties the women participation was higher than men (44.7 and 37.3% respectively).

The average age of female migration is 32 years, but we can see that women migrate virtually at all ages. There is a significant percentage of women who migrate of not working age; there are women who migrate as infants and aged elderly (see Figure 2). Woo and Arias found, in two neighborhoods of the Guadalajara metropolitan area, that there is a migration significantly of people older than 40 years. This can be explained because the migration of women is for different causes and responds to multi biographical stories. In the case of infants and old age it could mean that migration is a response to an expanded



family. In contrast, the average age of migration of men is 30 years. They have a lower numbers in the ranges of less than 20 years and ranges over 60 years than women.

Figure 1  
Year of migration of men and women in Phoenix Arizona



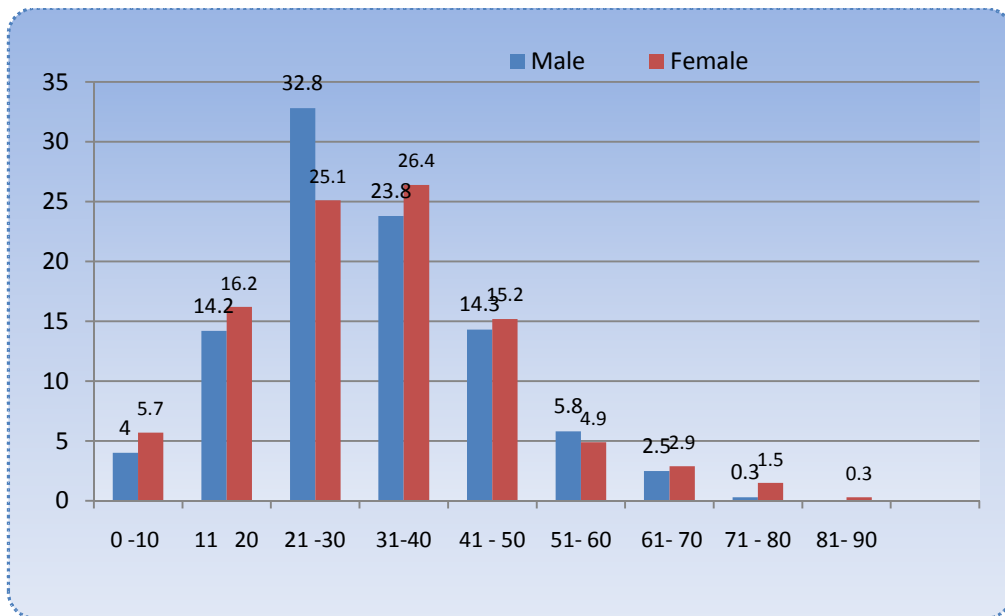
Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

It is important to understand the role of women in migrant households. Based on the survey of Mexican households in Phoenix Arizona, 2007, we find that migrant women are primarily wives (56%), only 7% are heads of household, and 24.4% are daughters of the family. In comparison, men are mostly heads of households (53.9%) and 21% is composed of children. This data suggests that migrant women have a traditional role in migrant households, because they declared to be wives or daughters and non-heads of household.

Mexican migrant women in Phoenix are primarily married (54.7%), followed by single women (26.4%) and a smaller proportion living in common law relationship (12.0%). Patterns of marital status of Mexican men in Phoenix do not vary much compared to women. They are 52.1% married, 33.9% are single, and living in common law 10.9%.

Figure 2

Age of migrant women and men in Phoenix Arizona



Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

In analyzing the states of origin of Mexican migrants in Phoenix Arizona, they are mainly from the states of Sonora, Sinaloa and Chihuahua (14.9, 14.0 and 13.3% respectively). Those three States are providing 42.2% of Mexican migrants in the region. We infer that this is due to the location of the border states of Chihuahua and Sonora. In the case of Sinaloa state, we assume that migration to Phoenix is due to its proximity, as well as to the economic and social links historically established between these states. Harper finds these same evidences in his study in this region (1999).

If we analyze the origin state of migrants by sex, we note a change in the state of origin of migrants. Migrant women are mainly from Sonora, Chihuahua second, and third from Sinaloa (17.9, 15.4 and 13.7% respectively). In contrast, male migrants in Phoenix from Sinaloa are in first place (14.2%), followed by those from Sonora (12.4) and thirdly, those from Chihuahua (11.5%) (See Table 2).

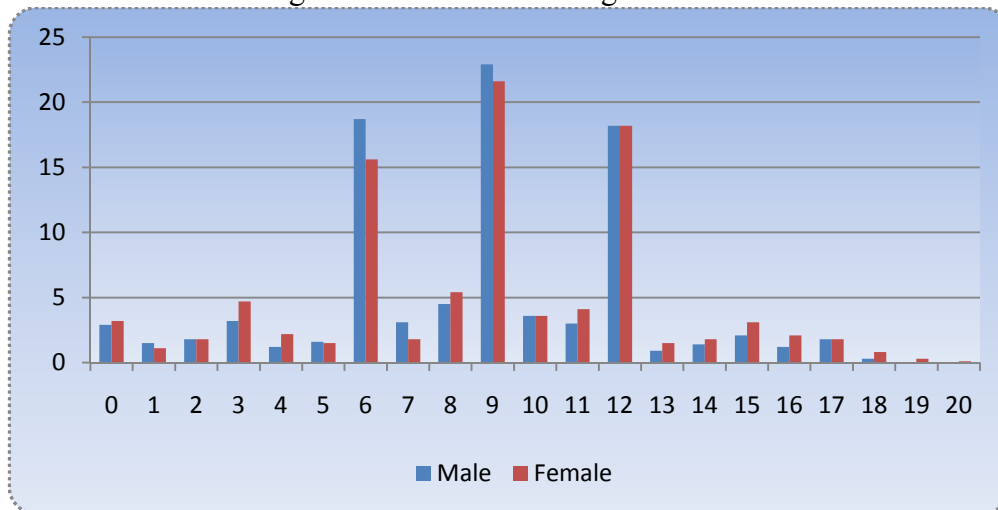
Table 2  
Birthplace of migrant women and men in Phoenix Arizona

State of birth	Percentage of women	Percentage of men
Aguascalientes	.6	.8
Baja California	2.4	1.4
Coahuila	.3	.5
Colima	.7	.6
Chiapas	1.3	1.7
<b>Chihuahua</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>11.5</b>
D.F.	2.9	3.2
Durango	6.0	6.7
Estado de México	1.3	4.6
Guanajuato	3.4	5.2
Guerrero	5.7	6.4
Hidalgo	1.1	3.2
Jalisco	6.0	6.2
Michoacán	6.1	5.2
Morelos	2.5	3.0
Nayarit	2.5	1.8
Nuevo León	.4	.5
Oaxaca	2.1	1.7
Puebla	.8	1.4
Querétaro	.1	.3
San Luis Potosí	.3	.5
<b>Sinaloa</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>14.2</b>
<b>Sonora</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Tabasco	.1	.1
Tamaulipas	.1	.1
Tlaxcala	.1	.1
Veracruz	1.7	2.8
Yucatán	.1	.1
Zacatecas	3.6	2.9
Total	99.3	99.2
no sabe	.3	.8
no respondió	.4	
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

An important feature found in the database of the Survey of Mexican Migrants Homes in Phoenix, Arizona is the educational level of migrants. The average years of education of Mexicans in Phoenix is 9 years, until junior high, but if we split the database by gender we found that women have a higher percentage of participation in higher education, which indicates that more women with levels of BA, master and PhD or specialty (15, 16, 18 and 19 years of study) (see Figure 3). These data are consistent with the findings by Giorguli, Gaspar and Leite (2007).

Figure 3  
 Years of schooling of male and female migrants in Phoenix Arizona



Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

The immigration status of Mexicans in Phoenix becomes relevant because of the policies implemented by state and local governments that have affected the social life, work and education of undocumented migrants. The survey referred to above shows that Mexicans in Phoenix are mostly undocumented (67.3%), and only 9.5 people (22.8%) claimed to be residents. Women are showing a higher percentage as those with legal documents to reside legally. Ten percent of women migrants have citizenship status as opposed to 8.7% of men and 69.2% of undocumented are men, while for women the percentage is slightly lower, 65.8%. But the narrowness of legal channels for migration, makes undocumented migration a constant throughout the United States not only in Arizona, as 67% of Mexican migrants in the United States crosses the border as undocumented (CONAPO, 2008).

Figure 4  
Work situations of men and women migrants

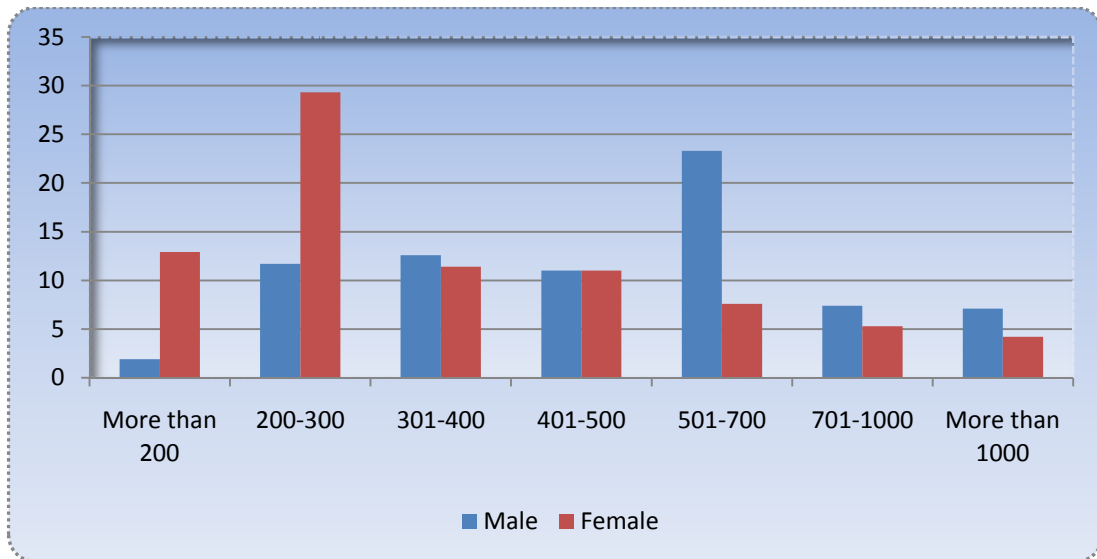


Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

The conditions presented by migrant women, in terms of greater documentation and more years of studies than men, implies that women have better jobs and higher incomes than men. However, the data show otherwise. First, there is little labor participation of women, only 35.8% of them are working. In contrast, 82.6% of men are in the labor market. Second, women in business are also lower than men, only 2.9% claimed to be their own boss and 2.7% are self employed. In return, 6.6% of men reported being their own boss and as well as 7.6% self-employed (see Figure 4). And third, we find that the incomes of working women are lower than those of men. The average salary for women is between 351 and \$ 400 per week; in comparison men have an income between 501 and 700 U.S. dollars a week. Women have greater participation in the lowest income ranges; 42.2% have a weekly income less than \$ 300. Also, men have more participation in the highest income ranges (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Weekly incomes of male and female migrants in Phoenix Arizona, in dollars



Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

In relating the variable of employment and civil status of migrant women, we realize that married women are the least involved in the labor market (37.8%), and the divorced and separated are more involved in labor activities (61.5 and 68.7% respectively) ( see Table 3). This allows us to infer that women have the need to achieve their own economic resources once separated from husband, and they have to enter in the labor force. Moreover, we found that the migration status affects slightly on the type of employment for women migrants. The women migrants whom are citizenship participate in the labor market with 14% of such as employers and selfemployed, while undocumented migrants participate with 8%. The undocumented women present a higher participation as employees than those with citizen migrants women (86 and 74% respectively). Those latter ones are also more self-employed (11%) compared with 7% of undocumented migrants (see Figure 6).

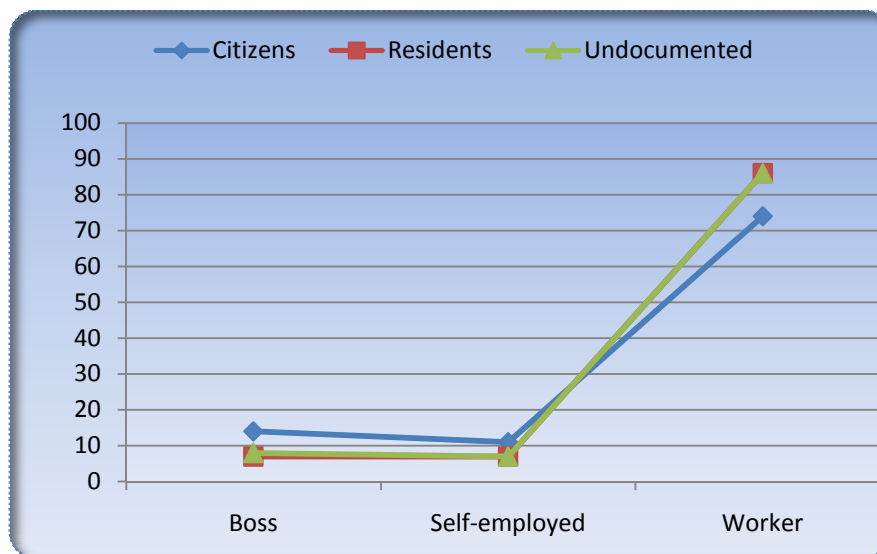
Table 3  
 Percentage of women participating in the labor market in accordance  
 to marital status

	Participating in the labor market (%)	Do not participate in the labor market (%)
Married	37.8	62.2
Widows	44.4	55.6
Divorced	61.5	38.5
Separated	68.7	31.3
Common law union	37.2	62.8
Single	34	66

Source: calculations based on household surveys Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

Figure 6

Situation of migrants in the work according to their migration status

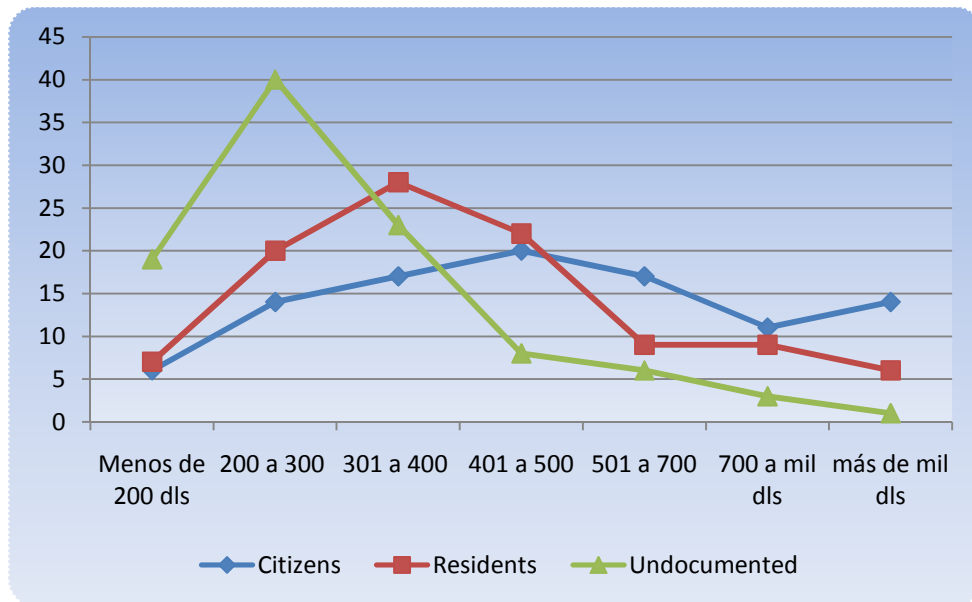


Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

When analyzing the wages of women according to their immigration status, we can see that this variable influences significantly. We found that women with residence and citizenship documents are participating in the high income ranges, while those with no legal documents are concentrated as low wage earners, 59% of undocumented earn less than \$ 300 a week. However, 25% of women who are citizens have a salary greater than \$ 700 a week, only 4% of the undocumented are on this range of income (see chart 7).

Figure 7

Women participation in the income ranges according to their immigration status

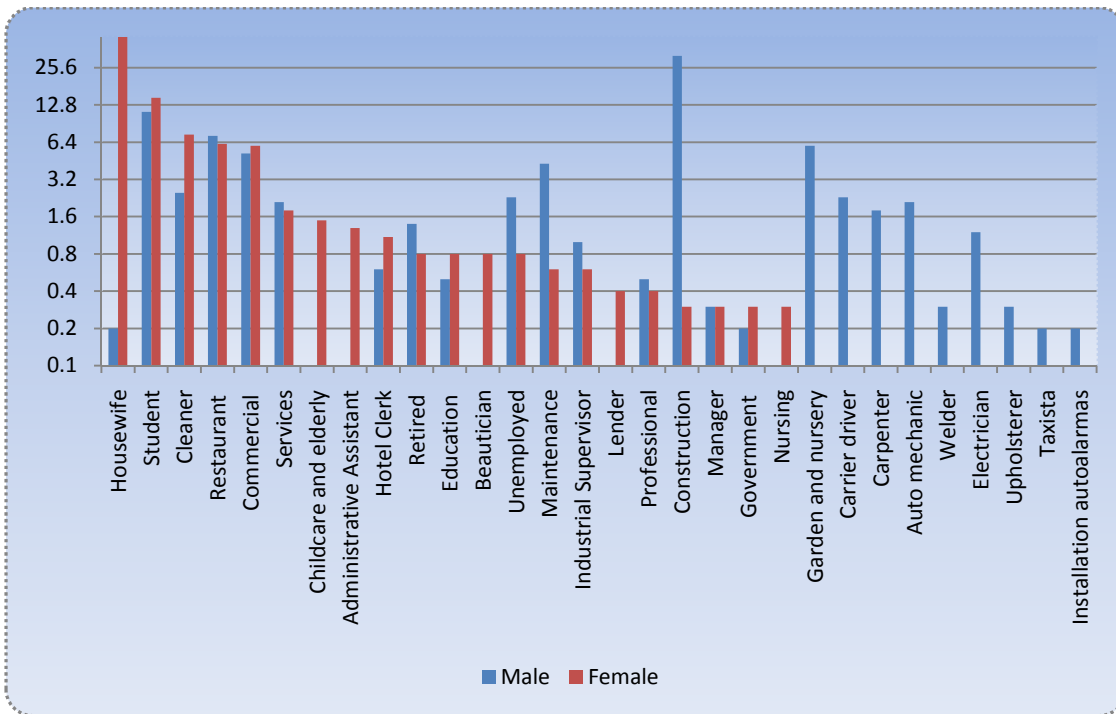


Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

Regarding the economic activities of Mexican women migrants in Phoenix, Arizona we can stress that the Mexican are occupying positions marked by the traditional sexual division of labor...labor in the service sector, as caretakers of children and elderly people, and as cooks in restaurants. They are moving from their domestic sphere into the labor market; this phenomenon has been widely discussed in different contexts of migration (Ariza, 2000; Ariza, 2004, Gregory, 1998, Marroni, 2006; Ariza, 2008, Tyner 2003, Salazar, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). The economic areas that provide involvement almost exclusively to the female workforce are child care and elderly care, beauticians, lenders and nurses. By contrast, male labor is concentrated in the area of construction, restaurants, shops, and maintenance areas. Also laboratory work, carpentry, electrical services, welder, taxi drivers, auto mechanics, and upholsterers are male dominated, as found by Giorguli, Gaspar and Leite (2007) regarding the participation of Mexican migrants in the labor market in the United States.



Figure 8  
Occupation of Mexican migrants in Arizona Phoenix



Source: calculations based on household surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix Arizona, 2007

Regarding the participation of men and women as employers or self employed, 60 Mexican businesses were detected by the household surveys: trade (11 businesses), construction (7), auto mechanic (6), cleaning (6), gardening (6), beauty salon or hair care (5), transport (4), restaurants (6), installing alarms and stereos (2), other (5). Hence, the importance of knowing about the role of migrants in small businesses. In this paper, we choose to focus on immigrant women participation in the business of beauty/hair care salons, either as employed or owners of this kind of business.

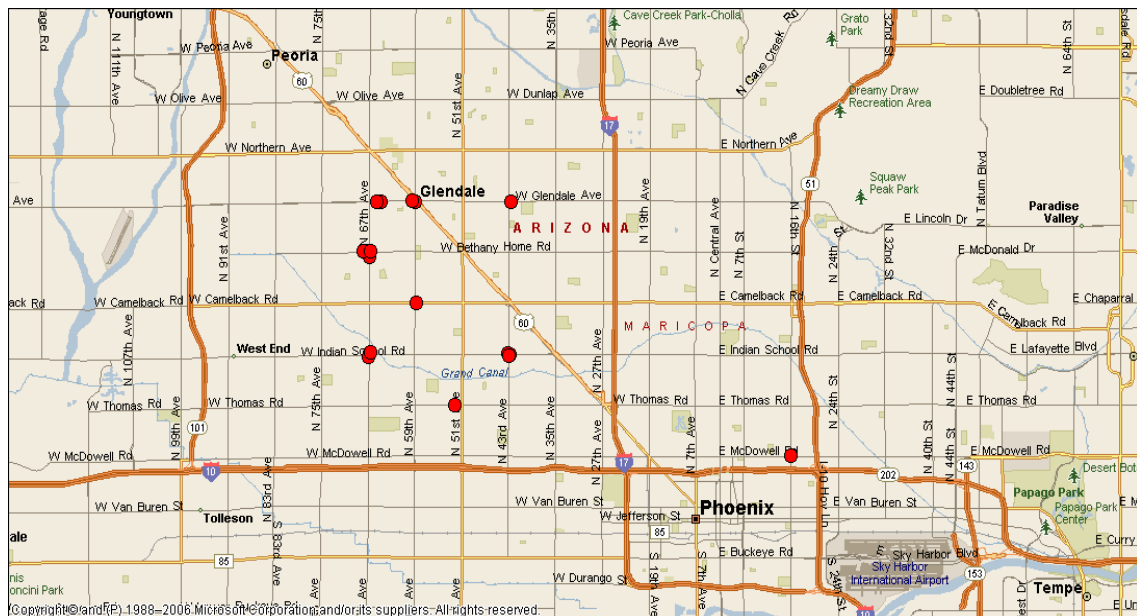
### **The beauty salon, a business of migrants in Phoenix**

The quantitative data we described above draws our attention to female participation in the establishment of companies and the creation of self employment; specifically, the presence of women owners of beauty salons or hair care centers (6 beauty salons). The presence of Latino and Mexican beauty salons is evident in the physical environment of the city. Those are visible in the main streets, they have the name and information in Spanish, and, they

highlight the sign that indicates the language with which they communicate with customers, "we speak Spanish". We were able to locate a concentration of Mexican beauty salons in the streets of Glendale and Indian School, Bethany Home Rd and 67th Ave, as well as some others scattered in McDowell street and 16th street, on the 51th ave and Thomas, Camelback and 53th ave, 43th ave and Indian School. We interviewed 9 women owning beauty salons and hair care<sup>3</sup>.

Map 1

Location of the Latin beauty salons in Phoenix



Source: own preparation, based on fieldwork conducted in Phoenix, Arizona, 2007-2008

### Characteristic of the beauticians interviewed.

Those interviewed were almost all women, we only interviewed a man who owns a barber shop which was not included because we emphasize the presence and characteristics of the female population in this kind of business venture. The interviewees are five owners, one self-employed and three employed. The owners of the beauty salons are over 30 years old and they have over 19 years living in United States. Another feature of the business owners is that they have legal immigration documents<sup>4</sup>. Three of those got residence documents in

<sup>3</sup> Interviews conducted by Erika Montoya Zavala in November 2008 and February 2009.

<sup>4</sup> This is not an indicator that the undocumented are not established business owners of beauty salons, rather that we failed to interview any with these characteristics since the new law requiring legal residency documents for business owners

1986, with the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and two under family reunification. Respondents have studied short careers as secretaries, cosmetology, dental technician, nursing assistant and assistant to accountant.

Table 3  
Features of the beauticians interviewed

Nombre	Status at Work	Origin of the owner	Years of migrant	Age	Marital Status	Studies	Status of Immigration
1. Mireya	Owner	Empalme, Sonora	19	39	Married	Secretariat	Resident
2. Hernán	Owner	Empalme, Sonora	19	34	Married	Hight School, Barber	citizen
3. Idalia	Owner	Mocorito, Sinaloa	31	63	Married	Assistant accountant, Assistant nurse Cosmetologist	Resident
4. Laura	Owner	Chihuahua	32	49	Divorced	Business Cosmetologist	citizen
5. Josefina	Owner	Zacatecas	33	54	Married	Cosmetologist	citizen
6. Karen	Independent Worker	Chihuahua	19	20	Single	Cosmetologist	Undocumented
7. Lolita	Employed	Guasave, Sinaloa	14	34	Divorced	Secretariat, Cosmetologist	Undocumented
8. Martha	Employed	Culiacán, Sinaloa	10	34	Divorced	Secretariat, Cosmetologist	Undocumented
9. Patricia	Employed	Hermosillo, Sonora	3	35	Married	Dental technician, cosmetologist	Undocumented

Source: elaborated based on interviews with owners of hair care salon owners and workers. The interviews were conducted in February 2009 in Phoenix Arizona

### **Work history of the owners and employees of the beauty salons**

Most of those interviewed reported previous work experience in their home communities; however, this experience is related to the sources of jobs in their communities of origin, such as agriculture and industry. Such is the case of Patricia, *“I started working at age 13. My first job was at a chicken farm, then I worked picking grapes, and then I worked in the tomato fields. We moved to live in different places depending on the job”* (Patricia, married, 35 years).

Once in the United States, their experience of labor is key to work where they can combine

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came into force in January 2008. There is a fear among undocumented owners to give any interview. The risk of being inspected and get to closed by the inspectors or to be fined led them to refuse the interview.

their household activities and family responsibilities with their paid work. *"I worked taking care of old persons, I was paid \$ 125 a week from Saturday to Monday, they were very good to me but it was a very heavy work, I was very tired and I worked there no more than 9 months. Later, I worked in a lonchería, selling tacos on Sunday, I was paid \$ 50 a day and also was working on a video shop Saturday from 6 pm to 10, I earned 20 dollars per day. I worked on the video store 2 years, Friday and Saturday, earning \$ 30 daily from 10am to 10pm. In 1993 I got married and I continued working in a restaurant with my sister"* (Mireya, married, 39 years). *"In Los Angeles, I worked in a shoe factory. And later I got out and I worked as a cashier, cleaning houses, caring for an old man, that's why I finished studying as a nursing assistant"* (Idalia, married, 64 years old).

The women interviewed show a constant struggle to improve working conditions, to achieve a technical or vocational study and look for new job opportunities. *"My first job was at a factory here, earning \$ 300 per week at that time (1978), but that was just temporary, it was nothing more for me. I had other plans for study, I was working in the factory while I had my daughters ... and then I worked in a shop while I was studying business, I was working and studying. I went to college and when I graduated then I left the store, it was when I started working as a sales executive at Univision."* (Laura, divorced, 49 years old).

*"I studied to be a secretary and I worked as a secretary for a year ... It didn't look a good future or anything... we went to Mexicali with my family who invited us to go. There I worked in a furniture store, I was 20 years old. I was managing everything. We opened Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so we saved and bought a "pick up" and we filled it with sodas, scrappings, snacks, prepared fruits, then we were going to school, a high school to sell "* (Lolita, Divorced, 34 years old).

The work experience of women pauses when the children arrive. The same is true for Moroccan women in Barcelona, and they are socially pressured to remain at home in their reproductive years, and they accept paid labor when their reproductive cycle ends (Oso and Ribas, 2007). In the case of Mexico they are the ones who decide to suspend their work

tasks when they have children, this illustrates the experience of Lolita and Josefina. *"I was working at McDonald's, I do not remember if three years, I left pregnant of Paola, my second daughter. I was working anyway, and at 7 months I got out of work... could no longer continue working, but they wanted me to stay ... they told me, when Paola is born, you could back to work, but I was sorry to leave her, she was so little, then you think if I had my mother or a sister here, it `s ok, but noo ... my girl with a baby sitter...? noo!* (Lolita, divorced, 34 years old).

*"My first job was assembling bicycles in Chicago, and earned \$ 4 an hour. I no longer worked there because I was pregnant, and until I could take care of all my children. Then I went to California, and then I worked as a house caretaker and childcare with my relatives. So they didn't pay me a lot because they were relatives, I only worked for food and so they gave me, but they didn't pay me a lot"* (Josefina, married, 54 years old).

Some of those interviewed have experience as hair dressers. *"Since I turned 17 years, I studied dental work and hair care. I put my own salon there (in Mexico). I started the business well, then the customers came down"* (Patricia, married, 35 years old). Another of the interviewees tells us: *"When I was a child, since I was two or three years, my dad bought me dolls so I cut their hair, and I made clothes to them. I knew that it was to be my profession. Since I started my career I started to cut hair, I earned for a gallon of milk because my husband didn't give us much money because he did not win much. My first job was cutting hair in a mall that is called Fiesta Mall, I worked a lot for that salon and then I asked for a job in a salon at 75 Street. And then I managed to put my own business"* (Josefina, married 54 years). Karen started to work when she was studying to become a beautician, *" Just when I turned 18 years old, I left school and I started working here "* (Karen, single, 20 years old).

### **Characteristics of beauty salon shops of Mexican migrants**

The businesses we visited are characterized by having very diverse services they offer, ranging from cutting hair to nutrition counseling and rental videos. This is what the women interviewed told us: *"I do all the activities, the management, I am tending the services of*

*the hair cuts and everything, but now I'm diversified, because I am a fitness trainer and nutrition specialist. I have plans to expand elsewhere, that's what I'm doing now, because I'm managing two businesses (beauty and nutrition counseling and exercise), and this is what I like, what it has to do with health" (Laura, divorced, 49 years old).*

*"Here is my video center, I decided to join it with the beauty salon to manage the two businesses, also, we sell athletic uniforms, we send money to Mexico by "Follow Me", and we sell Herbalive" (Mireya, married, 39 years old).*

The business owners provide all the necessary utensils and a place where employees perform their work, and those employed only offer their services without investing anything. The haircut will cost between \$ 15 and 10 and the owners pay employees between 50 to 65% of charges. This percentage varies according to the experience of the stylist and the documents submitted for your profession (license to work). The stylists and barbers need a license which is provided by the state and they need to meet certain requirements to be able to get it. It is necessary to obtain residence papers, social security and pass written and practical exams to take a license of work. On the other hand, in this kind of business it is important to have several employees with the aim of serving multiple clients simultaneously.

The customers of those hairdressers are mostly Latino, *"The majority are Mexican, 80% I say so, the rest are Americans" (Laura, divorced, 49 years) "The customers are Latinos, only about 10 customers do not speak any Spanish, they like coming here, I think they like the treatment given to them, I have clients from 10 years ago, I saw them when they were children and now are quite older."* (Mireya, married, 39 years old).

### **Women entrepreneurs in the business of beauty salons**

#### **a) Self-management**

The women interviewed displayed an interest in becoming their own bosses and concerns to study and prepare. *"... But I wanted to be more than an employee, I had it in mind since childhood, I do not like anyone anyone ordering me, I wanted to be my own boss. I went*

*looking for stands after I knew what I was doing. I liked to search properties because I wanted to make my own business, no to work for someone else, and since then I started to do that.*” (Josephine married, 54 years old).

*"I worked as a sales executive at Univision; I earned \$ 90,000 a year. I left there because I worked there for 8 years; it was very stressful and wanted to be my own boss. We had this business my husband and I. He did not like managing it, he no longer wanted anything, so then I said, well I will manage the business, I decided to leave Univision and I started to study cosmetology and got my diploma"* (Laura, divorced, 49 years old).

#### b) Religion

One of the aspects identified in the interviews was that religious aspects are manifest in the genesis of the professional development of women migrants. Such is the case of Lolita, who was motivated by a group of Jehovah's Witnesses to study and acquire a profession. *"I stopped working when I had my child, I met some friends, they were Jehovah's Witnesses, and they had two hair salons. They visited me and they said to me, you are quite young, why don't you study? You will never regret it. Then, I began to relate to women who worked as stylists and they were Jehovah's Witnesses. Then they put that in my head, they took me to study, and I went to study barbering...with what money? With the money we had saved, had saved some money when I worked in McDonalds, added up what we had gathered from what my husband earned. In that time he earned good money because there were many workers, the construction was very good and everything"* (Lolita, divorced, 34 years old).

#### c) Savings

Having the economic means is crucial to start a business. The Korean beauty salons in New York used as the funding mechanism rotating credit associations (Hwan, 2007), which was not detected among the practices of the Mexican women. The people who manage to set up a business as a barbershop or a beauty salon save their wages for a long time, and they work hard to achieve savings as discussed in the above paragraph by Lolita. Other evidence

also showed that savings was an important element for installing the business. *"I had two jobs, from 9 am to 9 pm, leaving one beauty salon and arriving to the other, I worked for two years while I was saving my money. My husband supported me for the business, he put all my equipment with the money we made and he put the drawers, the mirrors, and put all three stands to start work. We invested about \$ 5000 more or less. That's how the shop began."* (Josephine, married, 54 years old). Also, tax returns are an advantage as extra income to invest, even the family sees it as an economic support and helps workers at the beginning of their business. *"I invested the IRS return, \$ 8,000"* (Mireya, married 39 years). *"The owners of this business have managed to save money because they were very well off when they sold cars in that time. Getting as much money is what counts, besides she also worked, not too much though, selling cars was a good business. The owner invested over \$ 60 000 for everything."* (Lolita, divorced, 34 years old).

#### d) Family

In some cases, business owners are not the hairdressers. One family member starts the business, the one who is concerned with establishing a beauty salon, but there are other people who have the skills and discipline to run it. *"My husband worked the business for three years, he equipped it and everything, but I never saw profit in this time, so there were problems because I never knew what was he doing, I was working here and there. I never knew there were management problems ... there were many problems. Then I get out of Univision to devote to this, because he no longer wanted working in the beauty salon and he wanted to sell it. I said, I do not want to lose the investment, I was tired of working for Univision, I liked it a lot, I worked very well, I earned very good money, I learned a lot, but no longer wanted, it was too much pressure."* (Laura, divorced, 49 years old).

*"My sister was the first in to study cosmetology and I was her model. I also studied cosmetology but I never finished it because my son was small. In 1995 my sister and I opened the beauty salon and in 1996 I started a video center. The business of beauty salon, we started it with the help of whole family, all helped to clean up, my dad made the stations, he is a carpenter. The business was in her name because she was the only one that had the document as a legal resident, but my sister has never worked the business, I have*



*always been responsible for the business. I have helped all; I have helped my sister, my parents, this business has given for everyone. The important thing in this business is the responsibility to be here forever. I so far do not cut hair, I do not like it, I never liked it."* (Mireya, married 39 years old).

*"Look at reality, I just tell you that as I became very ill while I was working with old people, I hurt my back, then I could not keep doing that, my husband told me don't do that anymore, that it'll be better. I will go to schooling in barbershop. I started working at my house; I had costumers, and charged them \$6. My husband began to work as well, he started to work since he took out his license, he began working with a gentleman who had a Cuban beauty salon... my husband did this (the business) alone, he rented the place and was in charge to make the furniture, and everything else, he did. "* (Idalia, married 64 years old).

e) Immigration documents

The migratory status as in other kind of work, like domestic workers analyzed by Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) is a factor that may facilitate or limit the employment of migrant women. As mentioned earlier, the owners who were interviewed have citizenship or residence documents. However, lack of immigration documents has not limited the participation of women as entrepreneurs, but it has hindered this effort. As Light notes (2008:52), undocumented migrants are innovators in their business strategies as they overcome this problem and assume the risk of investing in a policy framework that seeks to isolate and exclude them from the workplace. In the case of Karen, she works in an informal manner because of her undocumented status does not allow her to legally register her business. *"I have room in the house, and there I do all my work. Because I think that suits me better, my costumers are for me, the money that I earn is all for me and this is better to me. I can't drive so I prefer to stay in the house. I do not risk it, I do not have "signs" (ads) or anything, I have presentation cards, no signs above the house or anything, and my costumers are family and friends."* (Karen, single, 20 years old).

It was difficult to get an interview with an owner of a beauty salon that had no formal

residency documents; all those who agreed to give the interview had residency documents. However, through the employees we were able to know the strategies followed by the owners for not being sanctioned by the new law, which came into force in January 2008, and which indicates that to have a business one needs to have residence papers. The person described here is an employee of a beauty salon *"Well, first of all, the owners of this business (where she works) had been working quite some time without a license. She was very worried about the new law. The owner had invested over \$ 60 000 for everything, that's why she had had a headache every day since the new law came into being. But it so happens that she had the idea of associating with someone else who has documents as a resident. He is a relative, she put the business on his name. This is easy with family with documents, and with money."* (Lolita, divorced 34 years old).

Also we interviewed a person who started the beauty salon when she was undocumented and she tells us her strategy to solve the problem. *" The business started with my sister because she was the one that had the document as a legal resident, but in 2000 my sister went to Mexico, and I got my legal papers and now the business is under my name, I never thought I will stay with the business."* (Mireya, married 39 years old).

Other hair stylists who have no license stay as homeworkers. Some of them never placed the business in their home at the risk of being deported. *"I could put my business here at home, but there is much envy ... supposedly, you work only with known people, however, they spread the news and that is dangerous; you can get an inspection and you leave off work. The only thing that we can do is make presentation cards and work in houses, that's why many salons are closing; many unlicensed stylists make the work cheaper in the house of costumers. Many are going to the costumer's home, and the hair stylists charg only 70%. It is best to go to their house so they do not know where you live... just give me your address and I go."* (Lolita, divorced 34 years old).

According to our interviewees, the stylists without business but formally employed in a beauty salon are set to suffer the regulations to obtain licenses for their work. The strategy pursued by the hair stylists who are undocumented, to maintain their license, is that some

already knew that the law would come into effect in January 2008 and they applied for renewal before their license would expire and before the law. Others plan to apply for a license in other states or even submit false documentation.

*"Well, now we're watching this problem. My license would be expired at March 16, 2008, and we knew that when the bill would come, we couldn't get a license if we hadn't an ID. I spoke with a friend and she asked me when my license expired... you have to go now or they no longer are going to give you; it was the 28th of December. I paid \$ 80 and they gave me the license for two years ... not too many hair stylists took out their licenses"* (Lolita, divorced, 34 years old).

*"The licenses, therefore, are being forged, because they have no other, they must work. And many who had their hair care salon had to close it, sell it very cheaply. It was quite easy to get licenses to work as business, and now they can not, they can remove it, they put many obstacles to undocumented immigrants and here we are anyway. They will be regulating more and we are providing all documents, but false. Many hair stylists are sending the request for a fake ID, they give them a different name, they do not put your address clearly, and yet they are coming, the licenses"* (Martha, married, ).

*"... It is in my plan, if there is nothing I can do,, (legalization) in other states there are more possibilities. Are we going to stay with ours arms crossed? Just imagine! Or go find another job, it would also be an option, but I do not think so. What I thought was going to another state such as New Mexico, to get the license."* (Karen, single, 20 years old).

### **Problems affecting the business of hairdressing salons in the Phoenix area**

Some of the stylists argued that the economic crisis and deportations of migrants dropped their clientele. *"It was located at Indian School and 43 Avenue and from there I moved here because my costumers were many, and they didn't fit in that salon. I found a bigger place and now it's calmed down a bit, we had been making 600 cuts in a week, and now we make 200"* (Josephine, married, 54 years old).

Others complain about the constant revisions made by the police on their businesses, they are checking the licenses to practice their craft. *"More people are working and they are not people who are hurting others in the street, why people who are working are being punished? He enters without permission ... checking everything inside, he reviewed station to station ...all were well, in the two rooms. The first one was of the owner of the salon and I was cutting hair and he gave me a fine, because if you do not have a license and bring your scissors you get a fine. I was in my station, he was coming around and checking, if he sees the hair cut and did not see the license he fines you and he tells you you can't work. He fined the owner \$300 and he had to go to court, they send him to court."* (Martha, separated, 34 years old).

*"Once I had a problem with a woman because I employed a person with a false license, but I did not know, then I had a problem, I got a fine for that, I was in court, I had an inspection for years, but thanks to God the city investigated and realized that the error was not mine, that was the person and she was stripped of her license "* (Josephine, married, 54 years old).

The issue of licensing brings forth another problem, the lack of stylists with license. *"The employees have been struggling because some of them have left their work because they don't have documents, ... They need to have residency documents to be licensed to work ... It has been a problem, but no, I was not affected much, because there are always many girls, there are workers. These are occupational hazards of the trade, all businesses struggle in several ways with employees."* (Laura, divorced, 49 years old).

Mireya, argues that employees are facing the same problems present in most of the businesses. *"I do not like to recruit Chicanos, those with papers, because they are very problematic, they have no respect, they have different customs, they don't like to receive orders. But sometimes you need more staff, and the good workers leave the job because they can not renew the license if they have no documents. I once had a problem, they caught me drying hair, and I had no license, because I never finished studying, I was given a fine of \$ 250"* (Mireya, married, 39 years old).

Also the customer base has been reduced by the new law, as perceived by owners of beauty salons. *"This new law has affected us quite because the Mexican people is who start the Hispanic businesses, and if we leave, or we move to other states, the costumers go down. It's something I never thought would happen. The Hispanic's businesses basically are catering to Hispanisc, then for us it is a very big loss that they go to other states because they bring money into the house, they are our costumers, and we are grateful to them."* (Josephine, married, 54 years old).

### **Success factors of business**

The business of beauty salons is based on customer service and the good treatment to people is something that customers value, according to the experience of our interviewees. *"We have been here 10 years, and they recommend us, we have customers who brought their young children, and they're grown now. People always need cut to their hair, although there is little money, people are expected to do so. They always return and we are still in this place. Apart from that I am always promoting the business. Whenever I go out into the street, and wherever I walk, I give my cards, I tell people what I do, if you like, I do a discount pass, wherever I am, I am selling "* (Laura, divorced , 49 years old).

*"I say that what has happened here is that we do not have a lot of customers because we don't have many workers and sometimes the room is filedl and the customers go away because they do not like to wait"* (Martha, separated, 34 years old).

The geographical location is another factor that helps to get more customers into the businesses, according to those interviewed. *"I think we have good customers because we give a very good treatment, so, we have customers since we opened the business. Furthermore, we are well placed; there are not many beauty salons on this side of the city"* (Mireya, married, 39 years old).

The haircut is an essential service, so the businesses of beauty salons are not affected by the economic crisis, according to our interviewees. "The advantage is that it is an essential

service. For example, the restaurants are not services people need, thus we have this advantage...that we offer haircuts, which sooner or later people will need. I'm always working, I'm promoting the business, I'm distributing publicity, but the other thing is this, that service is needed, the haircuts, not the dyes, neither the chemicals, or that, the haircuts we kept, less in bad times, but it allows us to pay rent, but not much " (Laura, divorced, 49 years, old).

## **Conclusions**

The composition of migration, new migration routes, and the involvement of migrants in the labor economy are related in some way with the reform of immigration policies and adjustment in the U.S. economy.

Control of the United States border has redirected the flow of migrants into Arizona, but it was also because migrants who settled in other states like California are suffering from unemployment and the cost of housing. Migrants move internally in the United States. Phoenix is part of the mobility and fate of the new migratory flows that are redirected by the surveillance of the border.

The Household Surveys of Mexicans in Phoenix, Arizona shows the characteristics and profile of migrants, which is a tendency of overall migration of Mexicans to the United States. But, it also highlights the level of education and qualification of the Mexican migrants in Phoenix and the labor niche in the business of beauty salons as employees and owners.

We identified several elements that are highlighted here on the creation, and labor force participation, of these businesses with regard to the women interviewed. In their speeches is the **desire to overcome** which is related to greater autonomy or independence in their businesses and the need for further qualification through a variety of means; another element is the **support of family**, ranging from the economic to moral support, not only by the husband, but by other members such as uncles or sisters who demonstrate their solidarity in different ways; and, the **migratory policy** in Phoenix which is adverse to live

and work--like the policies of the discriminatory kind mentioned in the text. Despite this these women have found several strategies to pursue this economic activity, either informally or through family support.

Several issues are pending to be analysed, such as: to determine whether there exist altering gender relations to establish a business for women; and, how social networks are formed and to how stimulate economic activity; the impact of restrictions of migration policy on business and family projects; and to determine whether the Mexican business of beauty or hair care salons can be considered a form of ethnic business.

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