“Cruces clandestinos y movidas rascuaches: Strategies of Migrant Resistance at the Mexico-U.S. Border”

by

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Abstract

Coyotaje--working with a guide or facilitator of bureaucratic procedures known as a coyote--is one of the principal strategies pursued by undocumented Mexican migrants to successfully cross the country's increasingly militarized northern border with the United States. In the world of Chicano arts and literature, rasquachismo refers to the celebration of the sensibility of los de abajo, whose resourcefulness and ingenuity permit them to successfully confront adversity by stitching together the tools needed to survive from whatever materials they have at hand. In this paper, based on my ethnographic fieldwork along the South Texas-Northeast Mexico border and in migrant-sending communities in the Mexican interior, I explore how movidas rascuaches [rascuache maneuvers] frequently form a crucial element in successful border-crossing strategies, including coyotaje, that are pursued by migrants.

INTRODUCTION

The operation of the system of global apartheid depends upon border enforcement to divide the world into high-wage and low-wage regions, to regulate the movement of workers between high and low-wage regions, and to render them exploitable by capital on an as-needed basis in both (Alexander 1996; Kohler 1978 and 1995). Autonomous migration across national boundaries (i.e., international migration not sanctioned by state policies—see Rodríguez 1996) represents resistance by workers to their confinement within low-wage “labor reserves” in the global system insofar as it involves a collective refusal on their part to “stay put” and accept the wages and working conditions offered to them in their “homelands.” Generally speaking, however, autonomous migration does not represent politically conscious resistance to global apartheid, but rather manifests itself primarily as a survival strategy undertaken by many millions of workers and their families in the absence of effective political movements for structural social change. It is, therefore, consistent with Scott’s (1985) classic formulation of the “everyday forms of resistance” practiced by subaltern classes that make use of social and cultural resources that he termed “weapons of the weak.”

As I have argued elsewhere (Spener 2006 and forthcoming), the history and contemporary reality of Mexican autonomous migration to the United States can be fruitfully
analyzed as an example of everyday resistance to global apartheid that we might call *resistencia hormiga*. Such resistance, insofar as it is effective, depends upon migrants being able to access important resources through their social networks that enable them to undertake cross-border journeys, successfully penetrate the defenses of the apartheid police stationed at the border, and arrive safe and sound in their destinations in the interior of the United States. These resources include money, referrals to reliable guides, knowledge of routes and tactics for evading apprehension, means of transportation, food, and housing. Because migrants depend upon their social relationships for obtaining these resources, we can think of the set of these resources taken together as *social capital* (Bourdieu 1986). As has been well-documented in the research literature on this topic, Mexican autonomous migration to the United States has been “financed” mainly by social capital for over a generation (see, for example, Browning and Rodríguez 1985; Heyman 1998; and Massey et al 1987).

Since early in the twentieth century, *coyotaje* has been one of Mexican autonomous migrants’ principal strategies of *resistencia hormiga* at the border with the United States. Coyotaje is, according to the *Diccionario breve de mexicanismos, “la ocupación y actividad del coyote”* [the occupation and activity of the coyote] (Gómez de Silva 2001). In Mexican Spanish, the term *coyote* takes two colloquial meanings that are relevant to the present discussion of autonomous migration to the United States. On the one hand, it refers to a person who is hired to help his customer get around a bureaucratic obstacle of one sort or another. On the other, it refers to a guide hired by autonomous migrants to lead them across the border into the United States.  

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2 This term is inspired by three sources. First, in an interview I conducted in San Antonio a Mexican man described to me how U.S. border enforcement was ineffective because migrants were like ants, and would always find “some little hole” in the border to get through. Second, the term *contrabando hormiga* is often used in Mexican and elsewhere in Latin America to describe the small-scale, non-commercial, extra-legal smuggling of merchandise across national borders. *Resistencia hormiga* nicely parallels this usage. And thirdly, *resistencia hormiga* resonates with the historical usage of the term *war of the flea* to describe the guerrilla tactics used by anti-imperialist forces of resistance in the twentieth century (Taber 1965/2002).
States and arrange for their clandestine transportation into the interior of the country where jobs and/or family members await them. In the early and mid-twentieth centuries, coyotes played an important role, through extra-legal maneuvers, in enabling Mexican migrants get legal work contracts through government-sponsored agricultural guest worker programs. Since the imposition during World War I of onerous taxes, visa requirements health exams, and literacy tests for Mexicans desiring to enter the United States and creation of the Border Patrol in 1924, Mexicans have also hired coyotes in large numbers to take them across the border surreptitiously, a practice which continues to the present day. Today, coyotes also continue to help Mexican migrants get around bureaucratic requirements related to obtaining a variety of immigrant and non-immigrant visas and work permits from the United States, including by selling them false or impostor documents. Although the term coyotaje typically refers exclusively to acts or practices engaged in by the coyote, here and elsewhere I argue that we can best understand the migration-relevant practice of coyotaje as being undertaken jointly by migrants and their coyotes, i.e., that coyotaje should be construed as including the act of hiring the coyote as well (see Spener 2005 and forthcoming).³ With the dramatic intensification of apartheid policing of the U.S.-Mexico border since the early 1990s, the practice of coyotaje has become ever-more important to the process of Mexican autonomous migration to the United States.

I have been studying the United States’ apartheid policing of its border with Mexico since the mid-1990s, when I worked with a team of researchers from the University of Texas to write a report about the impact of the Border Patrol’s Operation Blockade on the twin cities of El Paso,

³ Readers should also note that my use of the term coyotaje in lieu of human-smuggling or human-trafficking represents an attempt on my part to contribute to the development of a discourse about the phenomenon of autonomous migration that replaces state-centric terminology with a new set of terms with a substantively different set of cultural and political connotations.
Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua (see Bean et al 1994; Spener 2003). Since 1998, I have been engaged in a study of how Mexican migrants have struggled to contend with the United States’ intensified policing of the section of the border that runs from the mouth of the Río Bravo del Norte/Rio Grande in the Gulf of Mexico to the twin cities of Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila and Del Rio, Texas, nearly 600 miles upstream. [In my forthcoming book, I refer to this as the Northeast Mexico-South Texas Border Region.] Specifically, I have examined the clandestine border-crossing practices that migrants and their coyotes have developed that have permitted migrants to continue to defy state attempts to confine them to low-wage regions of the North American economy. It was while conducting a field interview with a migrant on this stretch of the border that I first encountered the term rascuache used with regard to Mexican migration to the United States. Because it was not a word I was familiar with, I had to ask him to explain what he meant by it. Intrigued, upon returning home to San Antonio I looked the word up in several dictionaries and “googled” it on the Internet to learn more about what it meant and how it was used. It was only at that point that I discovered how the term rascuache (often spelled rasquache) had come to be used with regard to Chicano artistic expression in the United States. Only then did it begin to occur to me that the concept of rasquachismo might be fruitfully applied to our understanding of the forms taken by Mexican migrants’ resistencia hormiga at the border.

In the remainder of this paper I will first describe how I initially encountered the term rascuache in my field work. Next, I will review the definition and use of the term in Mexican Spanish. Third, I will discuss the meaning the term has been given in Chicano art criticism as proposed by Tomás Ybarra-Frausto and further elaborated by Amalia Mesa-Bains and Alicia Gaspar de Alba. Fourth, I will give examples of rascuachismo that I have encountered while
conducting field work on the clandestine border-crossing practices of Mexican migrants and coyotes. Finally, I will propose, utilizing elements of Pierre Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, that we can interpret *rascuachismo* as a characterization of the *habitus* exhibited by peasant and working-class Mexicans in the *field* of autonomous migration. Before undertaking this consideration of *rascuachismo* with regard to autonomous Mexican migration to the United States, I remind readers that I do so as a consummate outsider, both to the practice of autonomous migration and to the world of Chicano art and art criticism. Thus, readers need to be aware that the interpretations I offer in these pages are offered from an *etic* point of view (Pike 1971), with all the advantages and pitfalls that pertain to such a view. In other words, neither migrants nor artists generally think about border-crossing practices and strategies as exhibiting *rascuache* elements. Nonetheless, it is my hope that members of both groups would find some “truth” in my interpretations of the phenomena I have observed.

**COYOTES RASCUACHES IN RURAL NUEVO LEÓN**

Roberto was a Mexican man in his forties who was living near McAllen, Texas when I first interviewed him with his wife in 2001. He worked as a maintenance man for a local school and had lived in the McAllen area since the early 1990s. Originally from the small town of La Cancha, Nuevo León not far from Monterrey [both the man’s name and the name of the town are pseudonyms], Roberto had gone back and forth across the border to work on the Texas side on many occasions since the 1970s. He finally legalized his status in the United States in the early 1990s when he married his wife, who was also from La Cancha, but who by that time was a U.S. citizen. I first interviewed Roberto in his home in McAllen and subsequently traveled with him to La Cancha, where he introduced me to his friends and family there. In our initial interview, Roberto explained to me how people from the La Cancha area organized their cross-border trips
with the services of local coyotes living there. It was here that he introduced me to the term

*rascuache*, which he used to describe the coyotes that operated in and around his hometown:

A lot of people don’t go with coyotes at the border. They avail themselves of little coyotes. And they get those coyotes over there in the *ranchos*, in my experience. Let’s say, for example, that someone tells you, “I know that Roberto has crossed over a bunch of times. Why don’t you go look him up on the *rancho*?” And so you go to see him and you ask him, “How does it work?” And he says, “Well, you have to walk for three days.” And then you say, “Take me, man! Take me over there to my sister or to my cousin. I’ll sell the cow!” And if I’m the coyote, I know if they’ve got siblings over there, because I’m from the same region. If they’ve got siblings or friends [*camaradas*] they’ll get the money from there. If they don’t, they’ve got to sell the cow! And so I say, “I’m going to charge you cash up front [*al contado*].” Like we call them on the *rancho*. *Rascuaches*. Not the ones that charge 1,500 dollars, but we’ll go with $500. But you’re going to give me the money now. I put you on the [freight] train in Harlingen and drop you off in Sarita and I head back. But watch out! I’ll lie to you! And if you’re lucky, you poor guy, you’ll make it. But you’ll be out your 500 dollars!

Clearly, Roberto used the terms *rascuachón* and *rascuache* pejoratively, albeit with some affection, to describe the coyotes he had in mind. By calling them *rascuaches*, I understood him to emphasize that these coyotes were not very professional or reliable and that, as a consequence, didn’t charge much for their services, either. Later, when he took me to La Cancha, I met several of the *coyotes rascuaches* that continued to work in the area and who were friends of Roberto or other members of his family. After meeting them and talking with other people from La Cancha, it seemed to me that a good translation for *coyotes rascuaches* into colloquial U.S. English might be “fly-by-night” coyotes. This was consistent with the definitions of *rascuache* offered by Larousse’s *Gran diccionario usual de la lengua española* (Larousse Editorial 1998:1462): “1.

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4 In fact, most of the coyotes in and around La Cancha appeared to only charge a part of their fee up front, collecting the remainder of their pay from the friends and relatives of their customers once they made it to their destination in Texas.

5 Harlingen is one of the larger cities in South Texas. Sarita is a Texas town about 75 miles north of Harlingen where the Border Patrol has its last immigration checkpoint on U.S. 77 leading out of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Migrants that do not get caught by the Border Patrol between Harlingen and Sarita are likely to make it safely to their destinations outside the border region, since state surveillance capacities diminish markedly from that point forward.
Que es pobre, miserable o escaso. 2. Se aplica a lo que es de mala calidad’ [1. That which is poor, wretched, or scarce. 2. A term applied to something that is of bad quality]. Nevertheless, it was also clear that some of these local coyotes that operated on a small-scale in and around La Cancha were more highly regarded and more likely to be relied upon by people in the area than more professional “commercial” coyotes based at the border itself. This also turned out to be the case in several towns in rural Guanajuato and San Luis Potosí where I conducted field work in the early 2000s. This raised an interesting question: Why would migrants prefer to cross the border with “fly-by-night” coyotes instead of with more professional coyotes? One answer, I would find, was that the local coyotes rascuaches were, at least, better-known and viewed as more trustworthy by migrants than were the full-blown “commercial” coyotes that could be contracted at the border (see Spener forthcoming; see also López Castro 1998). In this sense, men like Roberto seemed to think of such local coyotes rascuaches as the diablos conocidos that they preferred to the diablos por conocer they could find at the border.

**RASQUACHISMO AS A CHICANO SENSIBILITY**

If I were not living in a “plugged-in” postmodern age, my exploration of lo rascuache would likely have ended with my interview with Roberto and subsequent consultation of my trusty Larousse dictionary. Given that such a substantial portion of my life-world exists in cyber-space, however, it was all too easy for me to idly search the web for other references to the term. Serendipitously, one of the first pages containing the word rascuache returned by Google was an electronic version of Amalia Mesa-Bains’ (2003) pioneering article introducing the concept of *domesticana* as “the sensibility of Chicana rasquache” in artistic expression. This was my first contact with the “q” spelling of rasquache as well as my introduction to rasquache
as, so to speak, a term of art.\textsuperscript{6} What caught my eye and captured my imagination with regard to observation of Mexican migrants’ resistencia hormiga at the border was the following passage:

In rasquachismo, one has a stance that is both defiant and inventive. Aesthetic expression comes from discards, fragments, even recycled everyday materials such as tires, broken plates, plastic containers, which are recombined with elaborate and bold display in yard shrines (capillas), domestic décor (altares), and even embellishment of the car. In its broadest sense, it is a combination of resistant and resilient attitudes devised to allow the Chicano to survive and persevere with a sense of dignity. The capacity to hold life together with bits of string, old coffee cans, and broken mirrors in a dazzling gesture of aesthetic bravado is at the heart of rasquachismo (Mesa-Bains 2003).

In many ways, Mesa-Bains’ explanation of rasquachismo as an attempt by artists to celebrate the survival strategies of Chicanos as a people in the United States seemed to accord with the ways I had seen migrants practice their strategies of resistencia hormiga as they entered the United States in defiance of government attempts to exclude them. These strategies, as I will explain in more detail below, were frequently improvised and cobbled together “on the fly,” making do with whatever materials and know-how could be scrounged up at home in the Mexican interior, en route across the border, or that by friends and kin in Mexican communities in the U.S. interior. Intrigued, I asked colleagues at Trinity and at St. Mary’s University who were scholars of Chicano arts and letters what they could tell me about rasquachismo. Each of them recommended that I go to the original source of the concept as it had come to be used in art criticism: Tomás Ybarra-Frausto’s essay “Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility,” published in the catalog for the Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation (CARA) exhibit first shown at the Wright Art Gallery of the University of California-Los Angeles in 1990 (Ybarra-Frausto 1991).

Given that the question of rasquachismo at that time seemed somewhat tangential to my main scholarly interest, a considerable amount of time elapsed before I read the essay. In the interim,\textsuperscript{6} In this essay, I will use the usual Mexican spelling of the word—rascuache—except in those instances where I make specific references to Chicano authors/sources that use the “q” spelling, rasquache. In both instances, the pronunciation is the same—RAHS-KWAH-CHAY (transliterated into U.S. English).
and quite unexpectedly, these same colleagues introduced me to Ybarra-Frausto during one of his visits home to his native San Antonio. By then it was clearly time to read my assignment.

In his essay, Ybarra-Frausto (1991) makes clear that, for him, rasquachismo is not itself a specific style of aesthetic expression, but rather exists among working-class Chicanos as a posture, an attitude, a sensibility, a taste, an insider private code, a visceral response to lived reality, a worldview, a perspective, or an irrepressible spirit that finds its expression in the work of artists. In other words, the term refers to Chicanos’ cultural and social-psychological orientations/dispositions, not directly to the form taken by works of art, literature, and theater, although such works can embody these orientations/dispositions.7 The author argues that while rasquachismo is drawn from a base of “Mexican vernacular traditions,” it has found its strongest expression as a “bicultural sensibility” among Mexican Americans, i.e., among U.S. residents of Mexican ancestry. Rasquachismo, according to Ybarra-Frausto, can be most generally understood as “an underdog perspective—a view from los de abajo—an attitude rooted in resourcefulness and adaptability, yet mindful of stance and style.” This attitude, he explains, responds “to a direct relationship with the material level of existence or subsistence.” For Chicanos, “rasquachismo as a sensibility of the downtrodden” arose in response to their life experiences and their social reality, since “the majority of Chicanos [were] poor, disenfranchised, and mired in elemental daily struggles for survival.” Ybarra-Frausto explains the character of rasquachismo as follows:

In an environment always on the edge of coming apart (the car, the job, the toilet), things are held together with spit, grit, and movidas. Movidas are the coping strategies you use to gain time, to make options, to retain hope. Rasquachismo is

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7 Nonetheless, since the publication of Ybarra-Frausto’s original essay on rasquachismo in 1991, others have used the term to refer directly to a Chicano aesthetic. For example, Gaspar de Alba (1998:10-11), uses the term to refer to a “strategy of resistance” on the part of Chicanos to “dominant aesthetic codes in the art world” as well as “a uniquely working-class aesthetic of Mexican origin.” Needless to say, in my own analysis I do not mean to relate the rascuache elements of the migration process directly to the aesthetic exhibited in works of art.
a compendium of all the movidas deployed in immediate, day-to-day living. Resilience and resourcefulness spring from making do with what is at hand (hacer rendir las cosas). This use of available resources engenders hybridization, juxtaposition, and integration. Rasquachismo is a sensibility attuned to mixtures and confluence, preferring communion over purity (Ybarra-Frausto 1991).

Irrespective of the form taken by the works of art that Ybarra-Frausto identified as embodying rasquachismo, his characterization of it as an orientation and a “compendium of movidas” seemed to confirm my initial reaction to Mesa-Bains (2003) use of the term, i.e., that even if the migrants and coyotes I had met did not typically describe their own experiences as rascuaches, the term seemed to vividly connote precisely the types of attitudes many of them held and the types of border-crossing movidas they engaged in. Subsequently, I was fortunate enough to have a lengthy telephone conversation with Ybarra-Frausto in which I described my research on migrants’ clandestine border-crossing strategies and experiences and how I thought they could be seen as an example of rasquachismo. In that conversation, Ybarra-Frausto reiterated that rasquache was not an aesthetic, but rather was the stance or world-view of the underdog. Rasquachismo was, he said, “making do with what you have in the face of difficult situations, employing extraordinary creativity to do so.” The poor, he stated, have resources and modes of action that are unknown to outsiders. They have a “tool-kit of strategies and maneuvers” that they make use of. He referred to these as the “tools of the poor,” that had been written about. When I asked him if he was alluding to James C. Scott’s work on “the weapons of the weak,” he answered affirmatively. The resources that were available to the poor, he insisted, were not only cultural, in the sense of Vélez-Ibáñez’s (1996) funds of knowledge, and social, as in social capital, but were also imaginative. He told me he had developed the concept of rasquache to denote the human capacity for wonder and imagination that the poor and the
outsider possess in the same degree as the wealthy and the insider. *Rasquache*, Ybarra-Frausto
told me, equals *survival with hope*.

In the next section, I will relate some examples of *rascuache* attitudes and maneuvers
*movidas* I have encountered in my field work investigating Mexicans’ clandestine border-
crossing experiences. Before doing so, I would like to address the issue of whether the rascuache
concept developed by Ybarra-Frausto with regard to the Chicano experience can be appropriately
applied to the experiences of Mexican migrants who have not acculturated to the United States,
i.e., who do not share the bicultural orientation Ybarra-Frausto attributes to Chicanos. Although
there are important cultural differences between Chicanos and Mexican nationals, I believe that it
is appropriate to employ the rascuache concept to describe some of the lived experiences of
Mexican migrants. First, the Mexican migrants whose clandestine border-crossing experiences I
have been studying share with the Chicanos that practice rasquachismo the status of the
underdog on both sides of the border. Both groups are working class and have had life
experiences that have required from them considerable adaptability and ingenuity in the face of
adversity. Although their orientation towards specific aspects of cultural life on either side of the
border may be different, they both share the worldview of *los de abajo*. Second, although
Ybarra-Frausto focuses his attention on the experiences of Chicanos in the United States, he
notes that the practice of rasquachismo exists in Mexico as well as in the United States, even
though it does not necessarily get labeled as such. Moreover, he recognizes that the Chicano
sensibility and practice of rasquachismo is built upon the foundation of Mexican vernacular
traditions that migrants have carried north with them across the border. Third, the act of border-
crossing on the part of Mexican migrants represents a liminal, proto-Chicano moment for them.
It is, in many ways, a rite of passage not only in geographical terms, but also in cultural and
social terms. Although they may never themselves become fully bicultural or shift their cultural point of reference to the experiences of Mexicans in the United States, the act of crossing the border represents a passage into a new cultural space that will influence their attitudes and perceptions from that moment on. In addition, it is important for us to recognize that Mexican migrants often enter into intimate relationships with Chicanos if they set up more or less permanent residence in the United States, including marrying Chicano spouses and giving birth to Chicano children. Thus, we cannot neatly separate the Chicano experience from the Mexican experience insofar both experiences are frequently encountered under one roof within the same family. Let me now turn to a consideration of the clandestine border-crossing practices engaged in by Mexicans on their journeys to Texas.

**MOVIDAS RASCUACHES ON THE SOUTH TEXAS-NORTHEAST MEXICO BORDER**

In the course of my research on the Northeast Mexico-South Texas border, I have collected many detailed oral histories of clandestine border-crossings made by migrants and coyotes in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Many, if not most of these epic journeys exhibited the central elements of *rascuachismo*. These included making use of the scarce resources people had at hand; cobbling together each stage of the trip so that it became a *compendium of movidas*; coming up with imaginative solutions to unforeseen problems encountered on the trail; and facing hardships with a resistant and resilient attitude of perseverance in the face of incredible adversity. All arose as part of migrants’ “elemental daily struggles for survival” that in their case involved traversing a heavily-policed international boundary in defiance of the authorities that forbade their passage and hounded them mercilessly when they came anyway.⁸ The task of

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⁸ Here I should mention that in spite of the fact that Ybarra-Frausto (1991) describes rasquachismo as a “private, insider code,” readers should not be concerned here that by describing the *movidas rascuaches* of migrants and their coyotes that I am exposing their secrets of successful autonomous migration to the border police. The mechanics of clandestine border practices are well-known to the authorities. They are unable to stop migrants’ resistencia
evading apprehension by the Border Patrol is made much more difficult and dangerous by the harsh terrain of this part of the border region. Not only must migrants navigate the hazards of crossing a treacherous river, but they then must trek for days through dense and thorny brush on arid ranchlands in order to bypass immigration checkpoints on the roads leading away from the border towards the interior cities of Texas. Food and water can run out quickly and it is easy to get lost in the brush, mishaps that can be fatal in the brutally hot summer months. Whether or not they are accompanied by coyotes, migrants have to rely mainly on their own devices to complete their journeys. Unlike middle-class outdoor adventurers in the United States, migrants and their coyotes do not make these treks with the latest hiking and camping equipment, but instead make do with a meager amount of provisions obtained at minimal expense.

Migrants engage in *rascuache* maneuvers from the very outset of their journeys. One of their first tasks is to raise sufficient funds to make the trip. If they will be hiring a coyote to make the trip, the cost today will range from U.S. $1,000 to $2,000, not including the cost of transportation to the border with Texas. In order to finance the trip, migrants will have to request loans from a number of relatives and friends in the United States, whose dollar earnings put them in a position to be able make such loans. Even if they don’t plan to hire a coyote, migrants will have to cobble together loans from friends and relatives locally or by selling some personal possession (a bicycle, a burro, or a cow, for instance) in order to cover food and transportation costs to the border, which can run over $100. Supplies and equipment they bring from home will be minimal—a small *mochila* or *morral*, some tennis shoes, a change of clothes, a pocket knife, a slingshot, and perhaps a thin blanket or piece of plastic to sleep in or on during the march.

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*hormiga* not because they are unfamiliar with the concrete forms that it takes, but rather because it occurs on such a large scale spread over such a wide space. By speaking of these *movidas rascuaches*, I am only calling public attention to the “irrepressible spirit” that animates them and the imaginativity they often embody. In no sense am I providing information to the authorities that would prove helpful to them as they attempt to more vigorously enforce apartheid policies.
through the brush. At the border, the migrants will purchase a few simple and inexpensive rations for the trek that awaits them after crossing the Río Bravo. These typically include cans of beans, tuna, tortillas, and one or two gallon-size jugs of water per person. They may also have brought from home a bag of *pinole*, a sugar-sweetened corn powder that can be eaten dry or as a porridge, and that is lightweight, filling, and rich in calories and carbohydrates. They may also find a *vulcanizadora* [roadside tire repair shop] at the border that will sell them *cámaras de llanta* [inner tubes] with which they can paddle across the river. Alternatively, the *cámaras* may be supplied by a *patero*9 on the river bank, who may be one of the *cuates* of the *coyote rascuache* with whom they have traveled from their hometowns in the Mexican interior. At the river bank they will take off their clothes and tie them up in plastic bags they have saved from the groceries they have just purchased and wade or swim across the river. Once across, they quickly don their dry clothes and run into the brush, for they know that the Border Patrol has motion sensors buried in the ground near migrants’ favorite crossing points and will quickly appear in their vehicles. When the migrants come to a dirt jeep track parallel to the river, they attempt to jump over it to avoid leaving footprints in the dust that the Border Patrol might use to track them. If the track is too wide to leap over, they use reeds or tree branches to try to quickly erase their tracks before blending into the *monte* of South Texas.

The hike through the ranchlands of South Texas to circumvent inspection by the Border Patrol at the immigration checkpoints on the highways leading away from the border is long and arduous. Depending on the route taken, weather conditions, and whether or not encounters with

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9 Literally, *patero* means “duck-man.” Along the Tamaulipas border with Texas, the term refers to a person who takes merchandise or people across the river using a boat, a raft, or an inner tube. The term derives from the word *pato* or duck. *Pato* was also the name given to a shallow-draught boat made of wood and canvas used in the early twentieth century by smugglers of liquor (Ramos Aguirre 1994:105). Thus, a *patero* is not a “duck-man,” but rather is a specific type of boatman. Given that the use of this colloquial term is not effectively governed by the Real Academia, it is not particularly surprising that it also is often used in Tamaulipas synonymously with the term *coyote*. 
Border Patrol agents or vehicles along the way forces them to detour or lay over hiding in the brush, walking past the checkpoints can take up to a week. Because trails, fence rows, and power line rights of way are under heavy surveillance, migrants will guide themselves through the brush by sighting radio towers and/or following high-tension power lines from a considerable distance. They often walk at night to avoid detection and, in the warm months, because it is cooler. Normally migrants and coyotes walk by star or moonlight, since carrying flashlights can draw the attention of the Border Patrol. They sleep under the stars, but have to worry about *viboras* [rattlesnakes] slithering up against them in the night. One *rascuache* trick a coyote I interviewed had learned from his mentor was to carry plastic trash bags [*bolsas de hule*] with him. When the coyote and his charges wanted to lay down to sleep for a few hours, they would clear the ground as much as they could and then put rocks in the plastic trash bags and lay them out in a circle around where they would be sleeping. The *viboras* would not cross the ring of plastic bags to cuddle up to the warm bodies sleeping on the ground.

One of the biggest challenges facing migrants on their treks through the *monte* is running out of water and food before reaching the point where coyotes or friends will pick them up in a car, van, or truck and drive them the rest of the way to San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, or Houston. On even the shortest trek, migrants are likely to run out of water before reaching their destination, since they are usually able to carry with them only a one or two plastic gallon jugs each. Since dehydration is one of the greatest hazards of the journey, migrants and their coyotes need to be able to identify sources of water they can access en route. On many ranches in South Texas, ranchers have dug wells to fill troughs or ponds for their cattle. These are usually powered by *papalotes* [windmills]. Migrants’ survival on their treks can depend upon them locating *papalotes* to replenish their water, even though the water is often brackish and/or
contaminated with algae and other organisms that can sicken people who drink it. Alternatively, migrants approach dwellings they find along the way and fill their jugs with water from faucets or hoses. If they get delayed by bad weather or getting norteado [lost, bewildered] in the brush, migrants can also run out of food. Men I have interviewed from small towns in Guanajuato and the altiplano region of San Luis Potosí explained to me that this is one of the reasons they carry resorteras [slingshots] with them. Not only can the resorteras be used for protection against coyotes, víboras, and jabalis [javelinas] that menace them in the brush, they can also be used for hunting conejos [rabbits/jack rabbits]. Making a fire to roast the conejos can be risky though, since the light or smoke could attract the Border Patrol’s attention. If they do light one, they make it small and light it in some low-lying place where the smoke is not likely to rise far enough to be seen. Alternatively, they may skin the rabbits and let the meat dry in the sun and eat it as a kind of semi-raw jerky.

Pancho, a man from a small town in San Luis Potosí told me of even more extreme forms of hunting and foraging that he and a group of friends had engaged in on a week-long trek they had made in early 2001 from Laredo to Dilley, Texas, a distance of 85 highway miles, considerably more walking through the brush. When their food ran out after two days, they ate feed corn left by hunters in deer blinds, as well as raw nopales [prickly pear leaves], and sour tunas [prickly pear fruit] they found along the trail. In their desperation, they even used a resortera to hunt and kill an armadillo. They were able to peel off its shell with a pocket knife and nail cutter they had with them. They tried to make a fire to cook it, but it had been raining and they couldn’t keep the fire going. The armadillo’s meat was like a pig’s, Pancho said, and they’d had to eat it raw and bloody. Later, when a rattler struck at the legs of one of the men,
they killed it with a rock and then cooked and ate it. Pancho said that when you’re out in the monte, “You don’t think twice about it. You just do what you have to do to survive.”

Perhaps the most striking example I have come across of movidas rascuaches used to cross this stretch of the border came from a story told to me by a 39-year old man name Fernando, who lived in San Antonio and was working as a small-scale construction contractor when I interviewed him in 2002. Fernando was originally from a small rancho near Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato and had originally come to Texas as an indocumentado at the beginning of the 1980s. During the first half of that decade, he went back and forth across the border frequently, sojourning in San Antonio for several months to earn money and then returning to Guanajuato. In 1986, he took advantage of the amnesty offered by the Immigration Reform and Control Act and in 2000 became a U.S. citizen. On his second trip from Guanajuato to Texas, Fernando and a friend decided that, instead of walking through the brush to get past the immigration checkpoints, it would be better for them to each bring a bicycle from home and ride around the checkpoints. They loaded their bikes on a bus in Dolores Hidalgo and rode it to Nuevo Laredo. In Nuevo Laredo, the two friends unloaded the bikes and went to find some pateros that people from their rancho routinely hired to cross the river. The pateros took them to an abandoned house on a ranch along the Río Bravo, where they kept a couple of lanchas [launches, boats] to ferry people across to the Texas side. The boatmen at the river were amazed to see Fernando and his friend arrive with the bicycles. One of these pateros told them, “¡Chihuahua! You know, I’ve crossed marijuana, cocaine, women, children, but I’ve never taken a bicycle across before!” “Well,” Fernando replied, “Now you’ve got something else to add to your list.”
That night, when they had made sure that the coast was clear, the *pateros* took Fernando, his friend, their bicycles, and several other men across the river in their *lancha*. As they approached the Texas bank, someone on board moved in the wrong direction and capsized the boat, dumping everything and everyone on board into the water. Fortunately they were close enough to the shore that no one drowned (many, if not most Mexican migrants do not swim well). Fernando and his friend were able to fish their bikes out of the river and bid a hasty retreat into the brush. Because water had gotten into the hub of one of the bicycles, the chain would not get the wheel to turn. Desperate to get as far from the river as fast as they could, they walked with the bicycles through the brush for five hours. At that point they hid in some bushes and talked about what they should do. They couldn’t both ride on one bike. Fernando thought they should abandon their original plan and leave the bikes behind. His friend disagreed and they slept in the bushes that night with their bikes. In the morning, they opened up the hub of the wheel to see what the problem was. They realized that water had gotten into the bearings and that they needed to be repacked. Since they didn’t have any grease with them, they used some mayonnaise they were going to mix with the canned tuna they had brought with them. Much to their surprise, it worked and they were able to continue their ride around the immigration checkpoint. They rode along secondary roads at night, hiding in the brush when vehicles would approach. When they got to the town of George West, Texas after two nights of riding, they called the boss of Fernando’s friend, who lived in Corpus Christi, to have him come pick them up. They went to work on a road construction project near Victoria, Texas the very next day.

The arrangements made between migrants and coyotes to get across the border also often involve or consist of a series of *movidas rascuaches*. We can take the example of José, a 30-year-old migrant that I interviewed in 2005 at home with his family in Rancho San Nicolás [both
names are pseudonyms] in northern Guanajuato. In the 1990s and first years of the new century, José had crossed the border several times with coyotes, including those based locally in or around San Nicolás, in one of the Tamaulipas border towns, and in cities in South Texas (for a more extensive account of this man’s border-crossing experiences, see Spener 2007). For example, on his first trip across the border with a local coyote in 1994, the arrangements consisted of taking the bus with a dozen or so other migrants and the coyote to Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila. The group bought provisions at a store and proceeded directly to the river, where they waited until nightfall to wade across to the Texas side. Once across, they walked for two days and two nights until they were past the last highway immigration checkpoint. A pick-up truck stopped along the road for them, and all the migrants and the coyote piled in, some in the cab, but most laying flat in the bed of the truck. They lay low, out of sight like that as they were driven to an isolated mobile home on a ranch not far away. At the mobile home, everyone bathed, changed clothes, ate, and slept for the night. The next morning, another of the coyotes’ two collaborators on the U.S. side arrived in a van to drive the group to Dallas, Texas. Although there were fifteen people in the group, they loaded into the van such that only six people could be seen sitting in the van’s seats. They drove that way without incident to Dallas, where the coyote and his driver-friend took the migrants to the homes of the friends and family members who had agreed to pay for their passage across the border (U.S. $700 at that time).

In January 1999, José made the trip again with another local coyote. This trip, however, did not go so smoothly. The arrangements were similar, but when José and his companions arrived at the ranch with the mobile home, another group of migrants with another coyote were already there. Needless to say, with nearly 30 people holed up in the trailer it was very crowded. When a man stepped out of the trailer to relieve himself in the bushes, he was spotted by a
Border Patrol agent and everyone was arrested and sent back across the international bridge to Piedras Negras, Coahuila. José was anxious to cross again immediately, but his coyote said he couldn’t organize another attempt immediately. They had lost the trailer as a crucial layover point and his collaborators in Dallas would not be willing to return in their vans to pick them up until things had cooled down. Because his family was waiting for him in Dallas (José had married a Mexican woman from San Nicolás who migrated there when she was a little girl and was now a U.S. citizen), José decided not to return home but instead to seek another coyote at the border. He and Juan, a companion that had been arrested with him at the mobile home, traveled downstream to Nuevo Laredo, where they asked around for a coyote. They found a woman who said she could get them to Dallas by crossing the river with a *patero*. They would wait in a hotel room in Laredo until she could arrange to get them a ride in the sleeping compartment of the cab of the tractor-trailer rig. For this, she would charge each of them $1,000, with half paid up front. They made three crossings of the river with the *patero*, a young man who paddled them across on inner tubes. The first two times they were apprehended by the Border Patrol almost as soon as they set foot on the Texas side. They finally made it through the Border Patrol’s defenses along the river on the third try and hopped into a taxi the patero had waiting for them in Laredo, Texas. The *patero* and the *taxista* then delivered them to a motel in Laredo, Texas. The *patero* had been persistent and had looked at getting the men across as a personal challenge: “I’m going to get you across somehow. I’m going to get you there! I’ve never failed. I don’t know why we didn’t make it this time but we will the next time!” And he kept his promise to them on the third try.

The *coyota*, on the other hand, did not keep her promise. The ride in the tractor-trailer rig never materialized. After several days waiting and paying the hotel bill, José called his wife,
María, who drove to Laredo with her father. They came up with a plan to transport José and his companion themselves. The two men would walk to the town of Encinal, forty miles away, following the high tension power lines that ran parallel to the highway from Laredo. When they got there, they would call María and her father, who would wait in Encinal to pick them up with two vehicles. They would leave one for José to drive and would return in the other to avoid having everyone arrested if they were stopped by the Border Patrol. First, though, María crossed over to Nuevo Laredo to get the money they had already paid back from the unreliable coyota. After much haggling, she was able to recover half the $1,000 José and his companion had paid the woman. When María returned to Laredo, she and her father drove José and his friend to a spot just north of Laredo where they got out and began walking. They thought it would only take them two days, but conditions in the monte were unexpectedly rough and it took them a day longer than they expected. María and her father waited two whole days for them in Encinal, before giving up in desperation and returning to Dallas to wait for a call. When they finally made it to Encinal in the middle of a cold January night, José called María and she and her father set out from Dallas immediately. José and his friend spent the night on the floor of a restroom outside a small restaurant. In the morning, a Chicana waitress let them in, gave them something to eat, and hid them in the kitchen out of sight of the Border Patrol until José’s wife and father-in-law arrived with the two vehicles. Luckily, they made it to Dallas without being pulled over, even though they passed several Border Patrol vehicles along the way.

José’s next trip, involving another series of movidas rascuaches, would turn out much worse. It was January 2000. José and María had just gotten “truly” married in the church in San Nicolás just before Christmas. María headed back to Dallas with their daughter. After they left, José approached a trusted local coyote and tried to arrange to travel back to Texas with him. The
man was happy to take him, but did not have an open “seat” available for him on the trip. He only had one collaborator he could count on to pick his group up in a van and there was no room for another person. Because José was anxious to rejoin his family and resume working in Dallas, he explored other options with the coyote. They worked out a deal where the coyote would guide José across the river and through the brush with the group if José could have his wife drive their pick-up from Dallas to one of the Texas border region ranches to meet them. That way, the coyote could bring some more people that José could then drive in his pick-up truck. In exchange, the coyote would not charge José for his passage across the border. The crossing of the river and the trek through the brush went fine on this trip. María and her brother arrived to meet the group at a pre-arranged place with two cars. She left José their pick-up truck and drove back to Dallas in her brother’s car. Three men hid under a tarp in the bed of the truck, while the coyote and another man rode in the cab with José. As they drove through a small town only a short distance away from where they started, they were pulled over by a sheriff’s deputy, supposedly for erratic driving. The real reason was that, to the deputy, an old-model pick-up truck with cargo under a tarp in the back, driven by a Mexican with Mexican passengers was by definition suspicious enough to pull it over. The deputy turned the group over to the Border Patrol. José, because he was driving, was presumed to be the coyote. He was charged and convicted of felony “alien smuggling” and then sentenced to 100 days in jail. The other men, including the “real” coyote, were immediately sent back to Mexico.

José would return to Texas one last time, in December 2001. On that occasion, he crossed with the assistance of a pair of Texas coyotes, an Anglo woman and a Chicano man. This crossing, which was successful, involved its own series of movidas rascuaches. José met the man in Reynosa, who arranged for José to be brought across with another patero. He crossed

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10 In the border region, “driving while Mexican” is often sufficient reason to be pulled over by the authorities.
the river with the patero on that emblematic embarcación rascuache, the cámara de llanta. When they reached the Texas side, they quickly put on their clothes and ran up an embankment along a highway. They hid in the weeds as traffic passed, including a Border Patrol vehicle, but the agent driving it did not see them. After the Border Patrol passed, José and the patero ran across the highway into the parking lot of a fast food restaurant and the coyotes’ waiting mini-van. The patero got the coyote from the restaurant, who came out with his wife and their young son. They drove north up U.S. 281 towards the Falfurrias immigration checkpoint. Before they approached the checkpoint, they had José hide under some blankets and suitcases in the back of the van. As they drove through the checkpoint, a Border Patrol leaned in the window and asked the woman, who was driving, if she and her husband and child were all U.S. citizens. She said yes, they were, and the agent waived them through the checkpoint without further question or inspection.

I have learned of other movidas rascuaches involving migrants and their coyotes, several of which are worth mentioning here. As late as the beginning of the new century, many migrants hopped freight trains in towns like Brownsville and Harlingen to travel away from the border. Either alone, or with the assistance of coyotes, they learned where to get on the trains and where they needed to jump off in order to avoid detection by the Border Patrol. They knew the best rail cars to ride in were the ones that transported new automobiles, because their walls were perforated with thousands of agujeritos [little holes] that let air circulate. If they rode in regular box cars, or in truck-trailers “piggy-backed” on rail cars, they had to close the doors behind them in order to fool the railroad police and Border Patrol into thinking no one had entered them. This, of course, was quite dangerous, for if migrants got locked in, they could quickly suffocate inside. The trick was to make it look like the door was latched, but prop it open just a crack with
a rock or a board. Another tactic used by migrants and coyotes riding the trains was to carry a pick-axe known as a *talacho* with them. That way, if they got locked inside a rail car, they could bust out through the wall or roof. A couple of young men I interviewed in Monterrey in the summer of 1999 explained how they valued the help of coyotes on the trains because they were experts at *rascuache* tactics like this. Moreover, they said, if you didn’t perform them properly on the trains, you could wind up dead.

Finally, another *rascuache* tactic I learned of in my research also involved another way of slipping through the immigration checkpoints undetected, as José had done on his last trip to Texas. In this case, migrants traveled on board Greyhound buses at night in the company of a very obese Anglo woman. They would dress in black and hide face-down under the two seats occupied by the enormous woman in hopes that they would not be noticed by Border Patrol agents that boarded the buses at the checkpoint on Interstate 35 north of Laredo. I learned of this tactic through a review of files of “alien smuggling” cases that were prosecuted in the federal court in Laredo. On this occasion the woman and the migrants who had paid her were caught. We do not know, however, how many times this method had worked for them in the past. The court records did indicate that several other migrants were arrested by the authorities waiting in a Laredo motel room for other accomplices of the woman to pick them up and take them further north. Who knows what *movidas* they would have had to engage in to make it?

**RASQUACHISMO AS CHICANO HABITUS, AS THE HABITUS OF MIGRANTS**

It may seem odd to connect the concept of *rasquachismo* with the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist who during his lifetime had no interest in or familiarity with the social and cultural life of Chicanos or *mexicanos*. On the other hand, it is perhaps quite in line with Ybarra-Frausto’s (1991) original elaboration of the concept following the example of Susan
Sontag’s (1966) treatment of the “camp” sensibility in the arts. Moreover, if we consider the way in which Bourdieu (1977) developed the analytical concept of *habitus* in his influential work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, we see that it bears striking resemblances to the way Ybarra-Frausto develops the concept of *rasquachismo* as being an *attitude, sensibility, taste, worldview,* or *spirit* shared by Chicanos that has been imprinted on them as a consequence of their shared life experiences and that animates the strategies they pursue to survive in the face of great adversity.\(^\text{11}\)

For Bourdieu (1977:72), the *habitus* possessed by individuals consists of a system of “durable and transposable dispositions” that serve as “principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations” that enable them “to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations.” People are not typically conscious of the principles that constitute their worldview and guide their actions—their habitus—because they are socialized into them unconsciously. Thus, Bourdieu (1977:78-79) argues that individuals are not the conscious inventors of their *modus operandi*, but rather have had these inculcated into them historically and experientially. As such, “the ‘unconscious’ is never anything other than the forgetting of history, which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second natures of habitus.” These “second natures” of habitus exist as “the schemes of thought and expression” that form the basis of what Bourdieu refers to as “the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation” on the part of social actors. The type of habitus possessed by an individual depends upon the social positions she has occupied (class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and the like) as well as the history that has produced those social positions and their relations to other social positions that exist in the fields of activity in which those positions are

\(^{11}\) In another work, it would be interesting to analyze Ybarra-Frausto’s development of *rasquachismo* in terms of Bourdieu’s (1984) more general study of *taste* and its determination by *habitus*.
located. Concomitantly, the types of habitus that exist in a society vary according to the range of social positions that exist within the set of social fields that society contains (Bourdieu 1977; Ritzer and Goodman 2004:520-522). Summing up, Bourdieu argues that we should understand habitus as

... a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions [author’s original emphasis retained] and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained … (Bourdieu 1977:82-83).

Returning now to the case of Chicanos and autonomous Mexican migrants, we can think of rasquachismo as an important element in the habitus habitus corresponding to a particular type of underdog social position, that of los de abajo on both sides of the border, that exists as a worldview and attitude [“a system of durable dispositions”] that dialectically animates a wide range of practices [movidas] whose goal is survival in the face of adversity. This rascuache component of Chicano habitus includes a set of expectations about situations that are encountered in people’s day-to-day lives and also a set of flexible strategies for how to best deal with them. These expectations include that their existential condition is inherently precarious, that harsh conditions will be routinely encountered and have to be endured, that agents of the state are generally opposed to their interests, that help from friends and relatives is essential to survival, and that they will have to be exceptionally adaptable and inventive in order to successfully chart a course for themselves in life in the face of opposition from los de arriba. As Frausto-Ybarra (1991) notes, rasquachismo is based on Mexican vernacular traditions, i.e., it is an attitude and a disposition that has been transmitted historically, but among Chicanos has, in a dialectical fashion, been transformed into something more and different in the bicultural context of the United States. This process of evolution, I would argue, is quite consistent with
Bourdieu’s view that the habitus evolves in dialectical fashion, as people carry the set of expectations and orientations that have been historically deposited in them to innumerable novel situations in which they take action and are simultaneously acted upon by forces not of their own making.

For Mexican migrants, *rascuache habitus* includes the expectation that migration to the United States, however risky, is a viable survival strategy to pursue in the face of the many dangers and deprivations they confront at home on a daily basis. We might consider it to be one of the principal *movidas* that *campesinos* and *trabajadores* in communities with migratory traditions engage in, as Ybarra-Frausto puts it, “to gain time, to make options, to retain hope.” As I have attempted to describe above, the journeys themselves often consist of a series of *movidas* strung together from start to finish, as new and unexpected challenges are encountered along the way. These *movidas* are not always successful, as attested to by the fact that several hundred Mexican migrants die each year attempting to cross the border and many thousands of others are apprehended by the Border Patrol and deported. Nevertheless, the spirit and sensibility that animate such *movidas*, on the part of both migrants and their coyotes, have carried millions through the gantlet laid out for them by the apartheid police deployed at the border and resulted in the dramatic growth of the Mexican population in the United States in recent decades. Indeed, we might think of their “compendium of movidas” as the essence of *resistencia hormiga* to global apartheid. We can see this in the words of Sebastián, a Mexican man who migrated *de mojado* from Monterrey to San Antonio in the 1970s and who today is the father of an up-and-coming Chicano artist:
Yo sé que la gente nunca se va a rendir. Nunca los va a detener nadie, ni que muro, ni que esto, para todo hay una solución. Son como las hormigas que entran por cualquier agujero. [I know that the people are never going to give up. Nobody is ever going to stop them, not with a wall or anything. There’s a way around everything. They are like the ants that come through any hole].

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to link the concept of rasquachismo to the clandestine border-crossing practices of Mexican migrants and their coyotes in a very particular way. In so doing, I have focused on rasquachismo not as a form of aesthetic expression, but rather as a type of attitude, sensibility, worldview, and orientation towards action that is common to working-class Mexicans on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border. I have argued that rasquachismo in this sense can be understood as a group-specific manifestation of what Bourdieu has called the habitus, i.e., the “enduring dispositions” that orient people’s perceptions and actions, which they have received from processes of socialization that correspond to social, class, and cultural groups to which they belong. Whereas the concept of rasquachismo has mainly been used to talk about the attitudes, sensibilities, and world views embodied in works of art, here I use it as a way of talking about the habitus that animates the movidas that migrants engage in as they pursue their border-crossing survival strategies. In so doing, I wish to highlight the idea of the rascuache habitus as a set of imaginative resources that complement the other social and cultural resources that Mexican migrants have at their disposal in the border-crossing field.

To summarize my argument in analytical terms, we can think of the U.S.-Mexico border as a quintessential example of the operation of a global system of apartheid, which involves, among other things, the territorial confinement of non-white peoples into low-wage labor reserves. Working-class Mexicans resist their confinement in such reserves through the practice of autonomous international migration to the United States, i.e., they refuse to stay put and
submit to the wages, working conditions, and living conditions imposed upon them by capital and the state in their places of origin. This resistance, however, does not involve conscious, intentional efforts to change oppressive social structures. Rather, it manifests itself as a survival strategy engaged in by families and communities that is supported by a subterranean popular culture of resistance. As such, what I have termed resistencia hormiga can be understood as consistent with James C. Scott’s more general concept of “everyday forms of resistance” that he calls “weapons of the weak.” As I have argued elsewhere, resistencia hormiga, as a type of weapon of the weak, is underwritten with social capital and cultural funds of knowledge. To this formulation, I propose we add rasquachismo to refer to the imaginative resources and indomitable spirit that also sustain the resistance of los de abajo to our contemporary apartheid system.

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