

ANAPRA: An Anatomy of the Border

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Where an ecotone occurs, there is more life and life is louder because two or more groups of plants and animals overlap, boosting life's pitch and intensity. The border is now a place where a huge ecotone of flesh and capital and guns is rubbing up against itself as two cultures and two economies and two languages meet and mingle and erupt into something we cannot yet name.

– Charles Bowden, Juarez:
The Laboratory of our Future

A BUS CAME TO VERA CRUZ: ANA'S STORY

As for most Fronterizos, Ana's Border story begins in a small village a very long bus ride away from where she is now.

Economic prospects were poor for Ana, a young girl with 13 siblings who grew up on a vanilla farm in a hillside encampment near Papantla in Vera Cruz State. By the age of eleven, she was already out of school and begging on the streets of Vera Cruz city. At one point, Ana took four hour bus rides to Vera Cruz several days a week to search for day labor cleaning houses or sometimes, cleaning fish. Often she spent the night on the back alley streets around the central Plaza de Armas, begging for food and money from the numerous hard-drinking tourists who sat under the Plaza's active portals. It was here that Ana first met Jose.

Jose was another farmworker casualty who had drifted to Vera Cruz from Zacatecas searching for better opportunities. Ana called him her "husband", though it was apparent that they were not married. For a woman to survive on the sketchy streets of this rough port city, Ana needed to consider special alliances. Ana and Jose had only known each other for a few months when they met the man from the bus.

One evening, as Ana and Jose sat in a dimly lit corner of the plaza, a man stepped off of an old yellow U.S. school bus and asked them if they would like to take a free "vacation" to the

Border. He said that Ciudad Juarez was a very beautiful city full of friendly Norteno people. If they liked, it would be very easy to find high-paying work there. He also carefully mentioned that it was close to the United States, in the event that they might want to take a "vacation" there too. He emphasized that, there wasn't anything to lose. The trip would cost them nothing.

Traveling north to Juarez, across the seemingly endless, harsh Chihuahuan desert, Ana thought she was looking at the most barren place in the world. She saw a landscape that was bleak and treeless. She saw no green like the lush tropical rain forests of her home. The mighty Rio Bravo, called the Rio Grande on the US side, was dry. Passing through the squalid colonia neighborhoods with houses fashioned from discarded wood pallets, cardboard and tin, she wondered what kind of people might live here. The enormous maquiladora factories which dotted the city seemed a hundred times larger than the biggest building she had previously known, the Cathedral on the Plaza in Vera Cruz. Already she could hauntingly tell that, this was a landscape fundamentally altered for business – very big business and lots of it. The hot, dusty bus trip had taken over five days, it stopped frequently in village plazas along the way, recruiting other "vacationers". In the early evening she and Jose were dropped off on the main plaza in downtown Juarez, amidst prostitutes and drug dealers.

Ana presently lives at the Casa Peregrina, a shelter for abused and homeless women in the Centro District of Juarez. It is the only refuge of its kind in this city of over 1.5 million people and houses only about forty-five women and children. This was Ana's second stay here since she had arrived in Juarez for her vacation with Jose. Ana could not remember how many years ago that was. Shortly after arriving in Juarez, Jose left her for another woman. Ana quickly got a job in the Delphi automotive plant working on the assembly line fabricating chassis. She worked six days a week to earn about \$40 and was fairing well at her job until she was fired for refusing the advances of her line manager. This was when she first came to Casa Peregrina. She was here for a second time now as a means to save enough money to eventually rent an apartment of her own.

The maquiladora bosses prefer to hire women as they can pay them less than men and everybody here knows that they are much better workers. A typical maquila workday starts at 6 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m., for the day shift. A 20% portion of their \$40/week salary is withheld as an on-time bonus, paid only if they show up before the doors close promptly at 6 a.m. in the morning, all week. If the same worker possesses one of the coveted Immigration and Naturalization Service laser card passage permits, which allows travel up to 20 miles into the US interior to shop or go to school on a daily basis, she might illegally earn up to \$80/day in El Paso cleaning houses. This card is virtually impossible to attain as one must prove a significant salary and homeownership. The pressure on the Border is purely economic, and a little on the US side goes a long way in Mexico. The motivation for why thousands die in the desert each year trying to cross this abstract line in the sand is clear.

For most who arrive here from the rural interior, nothing possibly prepares them for the mechanics of modern industrial urban life. The work is endlessly repetitive and precise; it is not derived from the seasonal exchanges of agricultural life. Trust in bank accounts, paying rent to ruthless landlords and making money are new religions found here. Traditional religion, that force which organized the meaning of daily life in the campo, is hard to find. Additionally, the availability of such new freedoms as expendable cash, liquor, drugs and sex has turned their world upside down. This is a dangerous world where women are routinely raped, killed and discarded, out of contempt in this machismo culture where it is thought that women might be participating a little too successfully in the economic gains from the maquilas. Ana will not go out in the evenings in Ciudad Juarez, wary of the murders; she believes the city is full of bad people.

Ana is one of the over 3 million female maquila workers struggling to make sense of the Border. She is now trapped in a vicious, debilitating work cycle and cannot go back home, she is ashamed of what's become of her. Ana's Border story is not unique. It is roughly the same for countless other disconnected souls who have arrived here from bankrupt, rural villages to work the urban machinery of the US/Mexican borderlands.

“WE’RE ALL HERE BECAUSE THE AMERICANS WANTED US HERE”: ANAPRA

The 14 bi-cultural cities at the Border have expanded rapidly in the past decade due to the economic growth fueled by maquiladora programs implemented through NAFTA. As a result of this developmental shift, there has been a mass migration of Mexicans in search of work into the border region. It is estimated that over 300,000 illegal immigrants enter the US each year, recruited during this recent economic boom by US employers desperate for workers, regardless of their legal

status. This maquiladora migration phenomenon has made Juarez-El Paso, with a population of over 2.5-million, the largest border community in the world, growing at a rate of 5% a year. It is the migration story that most Americans do not hear about, the one that stops just short of the Border and grows and grows. Environmentally, this unchecked growth in Juarez-El Paso has wreaked havoc on air quality, increased the spread of disease and imperiled their shared Hueco Aquifer which is scheduled to be depleted in just 15 years. This is all the result of American factories, known as maquiladoras, set up across the Border to benefit from loads of cheap Mexican labor.

This is not the first time America has called upon Mexico's workers to get us out of a jam. With the outbreak of WWII, the War Food Administration established the Bracero Program in 1943 to recruit much needed agricultural labor from Mexico to support the US war effort. A new wave of migrants crossed the Border from Mexico under the official auspices of the US government. The current migrant labor trends in California's massive agricultural Central Valley, which employs over 750,000 Mexican workers yearly, were set in motion during the Bracero years. Additionally, industrial production in Mexican border cities was also stimulated by the war as the labor force in Juarez doubled during this time. The Bracero Program was so successful that this bilateral agreement was actively promoted until 1964. All sanctioned by the US government, the wartime flow of inexpensive Mexican labor north to both the Mexican and US border states and beyond marked the beginning of the economic and social profile of the current borderlands.

Through the Bracero Program were sown the seeds for NAFTA and the modern maquiladora industries at the Border. Moved by the twin goals of stimulating the manufacturing sector in the northern states and providing employment for the large number of workers returning to Mexico through the ending of the Bracero Program in 1964, the Mexican government established the Border Industrialization Program in 1965. The main feature of this program was the creation of maquiladoras, assembly plants that imported components and raw goods from the US, assembled them into finished products, and then exported them back across the border, virtually tax-free, for sale. The maquila innovation was slow to take off, but after major peso devaluations in 1982 and again in 1995, US corporations flooded into Juarez, Tijuana, Reynosa, Matamoros and other Mexican Border cities to set-up shop. The obvious advantage for them was duty-free importation of materials, supplies and machinery, proximity to an advanced transportation infrastructure on the US side and access to very cheap, non-union Mexican labor. Tariffs were paid solely on the value added by manufacture in Mexico, generating substantial savings on the price of finished goods.

Today, critical discussions center on the negative consequences of this maquila-led economic development in the Border region. The social infrastructure in Mexican Border cities

remains egregiously underdeveloped as US firms are required to pay virtually nothing in local taxes. The vast shortage of decent housing and the substandard conditions of what exists is directly related to this lack of infrastructure. And yet the poorly developed cities must sustain a growing number of maquila workers each year. Environmental regulations and fair labor practices, including unionization, are either not enforced or are ignored. Crime, filth, disease and corruption are rampant. All of this has led many critics of the maquila advances to suggest that it is nothing more than the hyper exploitation of Mexican nationals in the interest of the US consumer.

Presently, new arrivals to the Border most often land in unregulated colonias on either side of the Border. These squatter shantytowns without paved roads, water or sanitation services have sprung up overnight. Ad hoc homes are thrown together in every imaginable fashion using cardboard, wood pallets, tin and any marginally usable detritus obtained from the city dump. If the owner makes enough money in the maquilas, these lean-to structures might be replaced on site with cinder block constructions. If electricity is available nearby, it will be pirated from overhead lines using exposed copper wires that often arc in the streets where children play. This stolen electricity provides only a weak current, enough to run a radio or a few lights. As inadequate as they might seem, the colonia development is the only housing option available to the maquila worker. With a steady stream of new migrants arriving at the Border each month, this seemingly haphazard urban entity is always in a state of becoming, in motion and evolving at a visibly rapid pace.

Anapra literally crashes into the line of the Border and is met by an INS fence. A few hundred yards to the north, on the other side of the fence, is the town center of Sunland Park, New Mexico. Anapra is a ramshackle settlement of roughly 30,000 people located on the remote outskirts of Juarez. It is physically isolated to the east from the urban center of Juarez by a large hill and is bounded to the south and west by a series of mesas. Anapra is one of the fastest growing colonias developing in Juarez and it is also one of its poorest. It is here that recent arrivals from the interior will most often land because lots are still available. Due to its relative isolation, it is also the place that attracts the most criminally undesirable.

When asked why she moved to Anapra, Conrada Valles, the matriarch of a large family simply states, "we're all here because the Americans wanted us here." She is right. Without the illegal farm laborer in our US fields or the maquila worker in the Mexican assembly line, Americans would pay \$8 for a head of lettuce and \$400 for a 16-inch TV. As long as America values its right to export corporate capitalism without paying its full freight of the inevitable social costs, places like Anapra will continue to exist throughout the world.

LAND GRAB: FOUR FAMILIES

Anapra occupies over 700 hectares of land allegedly owned by four prominent Chihuahuan families. Fifteen years ago nothing existed here, it was all Chihuahuan desert. To increase the value of their vacant land where nothing grows because there is no water, Pedro Zaragoza, Alfredo Urias, Oscar Cantu and Sra. Maria Lugo "had a plan" to attract newly arriving maquila migrants to settle there. They fabricated rumors that an approved border crossing from their land to adjacent Sunland Park, New Mexico, USA was in the works, making this location an eventual goldmine for International trade and traffic. The Families even went to the extent of building a Potemkin border station on the Mexican side to substantiate their ruse. Today it stands in ruin. The Families too had buses, waiting to meet those arriving from the interior at the station or at the central Plaza and promises of cheap land filled the buses immediately. Within three years 3,100 people had landed in Anapra and twelve years later Anapra added another 26,900 settlers. At roughly \$12,000 a lot, it takes the average maquila worker about 15 years to pay this off, if they stay that long. In the meantime, the Families collect down payments and handsome rents on land which still has clear title questions and no infrastructural development costs. Nevertheless, as well connected members of the ruling PRI political party in Mexico, they had nothing to fear.

The border crossing never materialized but Anapra continued to grow. Square blocks were laid out at roughly 200 ft. by 200 ft. Each of the ten 2,000 sq. ft. lots receive about 40 feet of street frontage. Inconsistently, alleys were sometimes introduced into the blocks. Today the unpaved dirt streets are inordinately wide at well over 30 ft. across. Houses built on each lot are, in planning jargon, made of "self-help construction" using whatever can be obtained from the city dump. The average house is flat roofed, between 200 to 400 sq. ft. with one to three rooms. One room often serves as both the living and sleeping room. The kitchen or cooking room is usually separate. Commonly, outhouses are located in the rear of the property. For one-room houses, both cooking and bathing activities take place outside. In the Spanish tradition, all property lines are clearly defined by the use of a fence or a wall. Each lot functions as its own compound with its accrued outbuildings, in this climate, every attempt is made to utilize outdoor space. Admirably, the people of Anapra make every effort to foster landscape and trees in their yards using their discarded grey water. In reality, Anapra is not a wholly unpleasant place and it has a lot of visible spirit.

Until three years ago, no water or electric service existed in Anapra. It is the typical course of action in an unincorporated Mexican colonia for inhabitants to organize when they have enough voters to garner political clout. Three years ago, just before the national elections, Anapra exercised its growing might to petition the City of Juarez for annexation and requisite services in exchange for its considerable vote. The incumbent

PRI Mayor was very eager to please. Electricity was easy to provide because it paid for itself. However, he did not have enough money in the depleted city coffers to install the hotly demanded water line. The Families stepped in, reveling in the tremendous gain they would reap from City annexation. They met with the also campaigning incumbent PRI Governor of Chihuahua to secure the State's installation of the water main in exchange for votes for his re-election. In the Spring of 2000, conservative PRI Presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo visited Anapra to applaud the City-State collaboration in the name of his party and in service of the people of Anapra. Anaprans voted overwhelmingly for PRI, got their water main and the Families benefited from increased land values. Sewer service does not yet exist in Anapra. It was announced after the election that the City does not plan to install one in the foreseeable future.

Today, the majority of Anapra's residents have electricity. Those who don't, pirate what is available from nearby lines. About half now receive running water while the rest get their water once a week from trucks that fill up individual cisterns. The City provides garbage collection weekly. Public and maquila bus service now connects Anapra reliably to the rest of Juarez. The Four Families have announced plans to open up lots on top of the mesa, now that they have City jurisdiction and water. Yet, the wind still blows fiercely off the mesa top, sending the fine silt and dust from Anapra's unpaved streets into every home. It seems that dirty politics make dirty cities.

FAMILY INTERRUPTED: THE DEAD WOMEN OF JUAREZ

Maquila managers prefer to hire young female workers. They argue that they are more efficient than men at most assembly tasks that require manual dexterity and close eye-hand coordination. Maquila owners also consider Mexican women less likely to organize. Low pay and the lack of unions are key for the success of the maquilas. They can also get away with paying women significantly lower wages than men. These employment practices, however, have had the unintentional effects of stimulating the male work force to resort to more illegal passage into the US in search of work and worse, engaging in all forms of illicit trade and bad behavior.

Since the early 1990s, the dead bodies of over 350 young women have been found in Juarez, routinely turning up in the deserted lands around the city. Most have been maquila workers. Most have been raped, very often mutilated, and found dumped in places like the remote mesa in Anapra. Few have been identified since like Ana, so many of these young girls arrive in Juarez with no family ties. After initial attempts by police to finger a few jailed suspects and to claim this as an isolated serial killing spree, random bodies continued to appear. Over the years, no killers have been caught. The residents of

Anapra are particularly attentive to these events as a disproportionate number of their own women have been murdered. As the maquiladora industries grew, Juarez became an anonymous place for the poor campesino to make more money and, for many of these young women, an anonymous place to die.

Since there is no madman to pin these murders on and they have been happening over a sustained period of time, the best explanations suggest that they are the product of a general decomposition of social life at the Border. Juarez has always been a tough city, since the early days of Prohibition when it flourished producing whiskey and beer. It is now home to a healthy drug and prostitution trade. But many feel that something completely different arrived with the rise of the maquilas. This once male dominated, machismo culture has been turned on its head as women now hold the jobs and experience an independence never before allowed in this country. This is not acceptable to the out-of-work husband, jealous boyfriend or drunk stranger in a bar. The operators of Casa Peregrina, who are in the business of protecting these women, believe that men here feel like they are losing control leading to resentment, increased domestic violence and probably even murder. They say that men from rural areas are used to controlling women down to what they wear and how they speak. Nothing in Mexican country life prepares these young women for the quick modernization and role reversals of Juarez. Nothing prepares the men either. Most are beginning to accept this collective femicide as a result of anonymous victims falling prey to an increasingly aggressive hostile male madness.

The traditional Mexican family unit in Anapra has not been spared. The maquiladora is the entire family's duty. The best scenario occurs when both parents can find jobs in a maquila on different shifts, one in the morning, the other in the evening, so that one parent can be home with the kids. This is how Manuel and Lupe make it work, having recently arrived in Anapra from Parral with their four children. However, with this schedule, they are certain to rarely see each other. From Anapra, the bus ride to the maquila takes about two hours, requiring Lupe to be traveling by 4 a.m. in order to be at work by 6 a.m. for her ten hour shift. She returns home by 6 p.m., five or six days a week. If she is late or misses a day for a doctor's appointment or a sick child, she might not be paid for that week or even might lose her job. For this, Manuel and Lupe will each receive a free lunch on the job, a modest form of health coverage for their family, and \$40-\$50 a week.

The strain on the family in this grueling cycle is immense. Motherhood in a rural village generally means caring for the kids and tending to household chores all day while the husband works in the fields. Working at a maquila, women are so tired when they come home from work that they often cannot even prepare a meal. Very few women last in the maquilas for more than eight or nine years. They usually burn out before then. A weak form of education is provided for free by the government

through the fifth grade, after which a family needs to pay up to \$800 per child to continue through middle school, rarely an option on maquila wages. Given these prospects, children too are at work in the maquilas as soon as they can pass for 14 to help support the family. Before that, they might be at work in the streets panhandling. Often, the lure of fast money pressures children to join gangs trafficking in drugs or other contraband as a means of escaping the maquila life. Fathers may be gone for months at a time if they can get across the border illegally to pull down princely wages as seasonal laborers in US fields or working construction. And, the Catholic Church, once the focus of daily devotion in the villages back home, is visited largely only for special Feast Days, baptisms or funerals.

It would be wrong to conclude that family life in Anapra is desperate and joyless. Anapra's streets are filled with laughing children playing. Most families there exhibit the loving connection one expects to find in Mexico. When choosing between the village and the maquila, surprisingly, Manuel says that most Anapra families believe that they are better off here for although they are not paid well, at least they have food on the table and a glimmer of hope for their children's future, perhaps even in the US. There is no time for romanticism. Conditions were not good back in the village either where there was definitely no opportunity for improvement. Strange as it may sound, these people have embraced the American dream, at least Juarez-style, even though the odds are stacked badly against them.

As for the murders, Lupe is terrified. If these horrific events were not true, it might sound cliché to suggest that labor and life is cheaper at the Border.

TRAINWRECK: GANGS, DRUGS, COYOTES, STOLEN CARS AND TVS

Sitting in the shade of the only tree within sight on a small rise overlooking the railroad tracks, Larry Diaz waited for the train. The Union Pacific railroad careens to within ten feet of Anapra's border fence on the US side, for about 1,000 yards. Larry Diaz's job is to monitor most of the 28 trains which pass through here each day. He is a Senior Special Agent, Organized Crime Unit in the Union Pacific Railroad Company's "police department." He claims that more than once a week, gang members from Anapra hop the fence and derail a train, cut the locks on several box cars and rifle its contents which they can throw back over the fence, in about three minutes time. They score TVs, stereo components, bikes, computers, and other useful hardware. They even have advance information about which trains are carrying what. When asked why his men can't just go down there with their guns and stop them Larry remarks, "because they have guns too." When asked why they can't alert the Mexican police on the other side to round up the

stolen goods when this happens, he glares back and says, "who do you think is trafficking all of this loot?"

The Anapra-US border is marked by a 12-foot tall cyclone fence that is as porous as US immigration enforcement. More a statement than a true barrier, the fence allows Anapra residents a constant view of the other side. Walking the line of the Border along the fence at Anapra, one will be met by a United States Border Patrol Agent within three minutes. They watch this section of the Border intensely day and night, from up on top of the mesa, at ground level in their trucks and through underground electric monitoring devices. At night, stadium lights stretch for over two miles to illuminate this area like a football field. In fact, the industrious kids of Anapra have fashioned a soccer field on their side of the fence where they play midnight games under the free light. Still, given Anapra's strategic outlying location on the US border, a vigorous human traffic business is conducted by "coyotes", men who smuggle people across the border through Anapra. Border Patrol agent Aaron Tovar, who patrols the fence at Anapra, suggests that every day, maybe 25% of those who attempt to cross get through. The rest are caught and detained in downtown El Paso for booking, then walked across the border to Juarez where they will probably try again. Tovar's impression of the people of Anapra is that they are desperate and very dangerous. He warns of walking along the fence, as one could get shot and robbed. Anapra sits high on a slope which overlooks the Rio Grande valley in the US. From this position, the residents of Anapra survey the bustling commercial and industrial activities along the I-10 freeway, the US's rich agricultural fields, shopping malls in El Paso, modest trailer homes and the fast food restaurants of the strip through the fence. The fence sends an ambiguous message, "look but don't come."

Roberto lived with his family illegally in Sunland Park, New Mexico for over six years. Originally from Anapra, he went to Sunland Park to join his sister's family and for his kids to attend an American school. He made good money as a welder and his wife did not have to work. For most people in Anapra, their connection to the United States is not abstract; it is very real. Most Fronterizos have family in the US. The fence is a very recent addition. In the past, before the fence was erected, Roberto and others shopped or even worked daily in Sunland Park. Seventy miles away at the border between Palomas, Chihuahua and Columbus, New Mexico Mexican children are even allowed to attend schools in Columbus daily. Groceries and household items are considerably cheaper in the US than in Mexico. Maquila money would go much further if they could still shop in the US. In fact, in the post-September 11th closures implemented at the Border, it was the people and merchants of El Paso, Texas who cried for more passage leniency as they were losing millions of dollars of Mexican business. In response, for one month during the Holiday season, the INS relaxed their strict compliance policies to allow a freer flow of families and shoppers, and then rescinded this

leniency in January. But this didn't affect Roberto. He has an INS passage permit which allows him to shop in the US and to bring goods back for his family or for resale in Anapra.

Roberto moved his family back to Anapra from Sunland Park to take over his ailing father's tortilla shop. He said that in the end, he did not like raising his kids in the US because of the capitalist consumer culture and values. Everything seemed fast to him and everything about life required driving in a car. On the other hand, Anapra operates like a small Mexican town. People know each other and he missed that for his family. He was also tired of constantly ducking the INS. In Anapra he has his satellite dish which allows him access to American TV, the only thing he says he truly would miss. Anapra provides a stable environment for his family, a Mexican environment. He believes that most Mexicans would prefer to live in Mexico if only they could make a better living. He does not make nearly as much money running the tortilla shop but he likes his friendly customers. On the whole, Roberto thinks that the people of Anapra are good, honest, hardworking people just trying to do what they can for their children. And, when his family needs the money, it is easy for him to go to the US and pick up a stolen car which he can sell for a good price in Anapra.

Nothing is wasted in Anapra. Although this colonia may look like a trainwreck, it is truly a model of sustainability. Everything is recycled many times. US church groups descend upon Anapra throughout the year to build "Habitat" houses, to save souls and to feel good about how they are helping the poor Anaprans. Yet an objective survey of Anapran lots reveals a remarkable capacity for building innovation, creativity and order. To hold land, a squatter must build as quickly as possible on a lot. Otherwise someone else might move in. Initially, a house might be quickly erected using found cardboard and purchased or purloined wood pallets which lend themselves to an efficient form of modular construction. As soon as time and money allow, the structure is weatherproofed using rolled asphalt secured with nails and bottle caps or even galvanized tin. Over time, this base structure will be altered and added onto, and eventually completely transformed through the purchase of cinder blocks or adobe bricks made right on site. Great pride is taken in the development of yards where fencing might be made of anything from old bedsprings, hubcaps, car fenders and cactus to pallets, cinder block or adobe. Trees and gardens are planted which survive solely off of dish and bath water. Aesthetic concerns are not ignored as paint and bright colors serve as reminders that these people have not forgotten the villages from which they came. Housing is substandard by any measure, but is by far not the most challenging aspect of life in Anapra. If the church groups could install a water or sewer line, send children to middle school, generate local jobs or improve working conditions at the maquilas—now these would be useful to the people.

The informal economy in Mexico is another unique form of sustainability actively practiced in Anapra. Commonly, everything from tools, to food, to daycare can be bartered in this community. The big event each week is the Mercado Segundo or "secondary market" which takes place every Sunday along Rancho Anapra, the principal street in town which connects this place to Juarez. The streets are crowded. Everybody is smiling and people from Sunland Park are even known to frequent this market. Everything that a family might need can be found here, new or used. Here people sell tomatoes, eggs, chickens or rabbits raised in their backyard for extra income. Vendors sell cooked food, fresh vegetables and meat. Ranchero music is everywhere, courtesy of the boys selling bootleg tapes. Families recycle old clothing, household items and tools here for extra cash. Entrepreneurs, like Roberto, show up with trucks full of new items for sale, brought in from the US or in downtown Juarez. Sometimes Roberto sells a stolen car on these Sundays. The majority of new and salvaged building materials used in Anapra are obtained here. Services can also be arranged for tradesmen like auto mechanics, carpenters, electricians or even contractors. One local even sells American gasoline, at close to American prices. This is a vibrant people's market filled with all of the same "fayuca" and candy one might find in Mexico City. It is also here that one might hook-up with a coyote to discuss plans for crossing the Border or buy new products, fresh off of the Union Pacific train.

With the gangs came the drugs, inevitable in this place so close to Juarez, which boasts over 500 gangs. It is also a consequence of such extreme poverty. To date, only a few crack houses exist in Anapra. They are known to attract Gringos from the US for a cheap score. Teenage gang members linger around these places at night. Here these boys first get recruited by the train robbers or small time drug dealers to make their runs into the city. The money might seem easy at first, but soon the killings follow. Juarez gangs are notoriously violent. Of the many dead women found around Anapra, most think that they are gang related. They are believed to be yet another symptom of a society increasingly saturated with drugs and violence. Lately, word that Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, Mexico's most powerful drug lord and head of the Juarez cartel, was starting to move his product through Anapra from planes which land up on a remote part of the mesa. This frightens many people who fear that the powerful Carrillo Fuentes, already a folk hero to poor kids in the colonias, will begin to organize the gangs of Anapra into his own cartel soldiers and drug runners. Given Anapra's proximity to Juarez and yet its relative isolation along the US border, Agent Tovar characterized Anapra as the perfect "border motel", a way station for criminals, smugglers and other underground travelers.

PARACHUTE: GUERRILLA URBANISM

In Mexico, colonia settlements of several thousand people can develop overnight. Here, the verb for this sort of spontaneous urban invasion translates to "parachute". In vivid contrast to the blighted slum neighborhoods in the central cores of our US cities, squatters in Mexico seemingly airdrop strategically into unoccupied lands at the periphery of their cities. Where, as in the US, exclusive enclaves of the rich live at the very edge of cities. This is where a Mexican city will find its very poor. These developments are characterized by illegal occupation of land either through "parachute invasion" or illegal sale of lands and a lack of official recognition, lack of legal land titles, self-built housing and no basic infrastructure or human services. This type of informal urbanization is a global phenomenon in developing countries; in Africa, Asia, Latin and South America, now the rule rather than the exception. The fact that these informal settlements fall outside planned or regulated municipal mechanisms, not conforming to disciplinary Architecture or Urban Design frameworks, does not invalidate a series of maneuvers and strategies which amount to a very rational form of planning. Anapra's development is a good example of this.

In Juarez, as in Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Caracas or Lima, architects, planners and city governments have lost the battle to effectively house massively growing urban populations. The Anapras of the world therefore exist by default. Yet the impromptu urban development of Anapra exhibits an extraordinary amount of planning flexibility, progress and pragmatism. The grid initially implemented, continues to serve the growing demands of this settlement well, demonstrating an intuitive or cultural understanding of an effective street and block relationship, its scale and dimensions. Within this block structure, residents have established distinct neighborhood districts, often reflecting societal clans from their original campo villages. Schools, markets, churches and serviceable open space have been accommodated into Anapra's urban fabric. Through popular grass-roots organizing, the people of Anapra have begun to successfully negotiate the provision of urban services, infrastructure and clear land titles through the Four Families, the City and the State. Jose Castillo, in his study of the maturation of similar colonias in Mexico City, calls this "Bottom-up" planning, a highly sophisticated developmental process which leads to a "level of social interaction, plurality, and spatial complexity to which other 'planned' communities can only aspire." Anapra is not ideal, but for these recent urban migrants and millions like them throughout the world, there is no other option.

Carlos Gonzalez Lobo knows about Mexico's attempts to provide low-cost or "Popular" housing for its poor. A distinguished architect based in Mexico City, he has been working on this problem for the government for his entire career. When asked what he thought about colonia developments like Anapra he states, "these are cities of Hope, of constantly improving

communities, cities of change, sometimes even without houses." Yet of his own work he is critical, "the popular housing that Mexico builds are houses without community, the people cannot make any changes. Here they have houses, but do not have Hope." Architect Gaston Fourzan of the Instituto de Arquitectura, Designo e Arte, the planning arm for Ciudad Juarez, has been working with Gonzalez Lobo to develop a new prototype for popular housing development, one which maintains the spontaneity of the parachute settlements but which provides the backbone of modern planning techniques. This hybrid is underway on the outskirts of Juarez and it is appropriately named Tierra Nueva. The principle behind this experimental project for 25,000 families is that the City will plan and install the principal organizing streets, infrastructure and urban equipment in order to prepare vacant lots for sale with legal title, for self-help housing. Government subsidies are in place to help maquila workers with down payments and loans for materials. What is impressive about this undertaking is the scale of numbers served at one time, an entire Anapra, with capital expenditures covered through the sale of land in five years time, with running water.

Eduardo Galeano, the renowned Uruguayan social critic and winner of the first Lannan Prize for Cultural Freedom, pins the dire problems of the developing nation's urban poor squarely on the unjust mechanisms of now global corporate capitalism. Simply put, he contends that the abject misery of many makes possible the extravagance of the very few. In his terms, the world maintains a precarious equilibrium which depends on the perpetuation of injustice and exploitation, for this planet does not have the resources to provide everyone with an "American way of life." It is this inequality that every Anapra child grows up seeing daily, peering northward through a fence.

ANATOMY OF THE BORDER

On December 12, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Anapra is dancing. Miguel Gandert is photographing everything from priests to firecrackers. An internationally recognized photographer, he has been coming here for over ten years to capture the irrepressible Indo-Hispano spirit of a people who maintain their rich cultural traditions in the face of tremendous poverty. Colorful dancers of all descriptions fill the streets of this colonia slum. Like their houses, the dancers' costumes are made from whatever materials can be found. The residents of Anapra are remarkably resilient; they celebrate survival through their rituals. After the 1680 Pueblo Indian revolt, natives from the Isleta Pueblo in present-day Central New Mexico sought refuge on lands near Anapra, bringing with them native Tiwa variations of the Tortugas dance. Migrants arriving here today from places like Torreón and Zacatecas have transplanted their Mexican variations of the similar Malinche, Chichimeca and Matachines dances. The names of these dances describe their origins as Aztec, Native American and from Moorish and

Catholic Spain, brought to the New World by the Conquistadors. With the melding of these dances, North and South have become one in Anapra. No one can say whether the name Anapra is Indian or Spanish in origin but only that this remote area has had this name for several centuries. However, here, Miguel recognizes the confluence of cultures in Anapra through their dance.

In ecological terms, Juarez-El Paso might be understood as an eco-tone. In his extraordinary book *Juarez: The Laboratory of our Future*, Charles Bowden observes that where an eco-tone occurs, there is more life, and life is louder because two or more groups of plants or animals overlap, boosting life's pitch and intensity. He believes that this is what is happening at the US/Mexico Border now, "where a huge eco-tone of flesh and capital and guns is rubbing up against itself as two cultures and two economies and two languages meet and mingle and erupt into something we cannot yet name." One could name this place Anapra.

The current picture of the Border is not bright, not bright at all, though it is also not as bleak as it might seem. Formally always unified both ecologically and culturally, the region was divided with an abstract line running east and west in 1848 after the Mexican-American War. At any time, 24 million Borderlanders, Amexicans, or Fronterizos could legitimately petition to secede from either the United States or Mexico. Remember the Alamo! Life is very hard in Anapra, a Border zone lodged between agrarian roots and mechanized urban post-modernity. Its inhabitants are part flesh, part cyborg, an extension of the maquila machinery. Contradiction, irony and confluence mark its identity. Throughout history, human industry has realized strange, contorted compromises. As with the rest of the Border, Anapra's future is still tenuously in the making, its history not nearly complete.

POSTSCRIPT

Anapra: An Anatomy of the Border is the result of an interdisciplinary design studio investigation, titled *The Border Studio*, conducted in Anapra by Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design students from the University of New Mexico (Professor Christopher Calott), Auburn University (Professor Jack Williams) and the Instituto Superior de Arquitectura y Diseño de Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico (Professor Gabriel Diaz Montemayor), with the Annunciation House (Ruben Garcia), El Paso, Texas and the Instituto de Arquitectura, Diseño e Arte (Gaston Fourzan, Arq.), the planning arm for Ciudad Juarez. *The Border Studio* was funded through a generous \$4,500 grant from the J.B. Jackson Endowment at the University of New Mexico. Design projects produced in this semester-long studio are not included in this essay as they are the topic of another paper explicitly about design issues at the Border.

The primary objective of *The Border Studio* was to introduce students to the human community at the U.S. / Mexico border. Studio participants lived in Anapra for five days at Casa Vida, which is maintained through the Annunciation House, a non-profit human rights organization based in El Paso, Texas. The Annunciation House also operates the Casa Peregrina for homeless women in Downtown Juarez. *The Border Studio* served to establish a dialogue with others working and living in the border region and in Mexico. Set within the larger socio-economic context of exploitation at this place where first- and third-worlds collide, it is hoped that this studio inspired *decency* and *compassion* as honorable components of the discipline of Architecture.