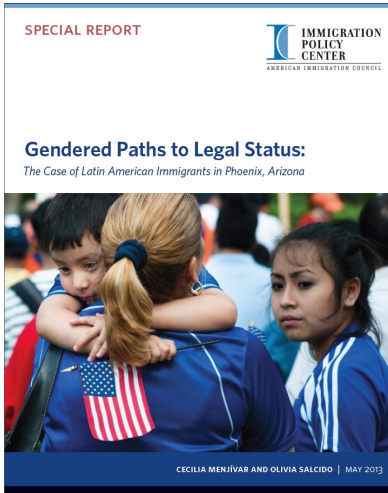


Gendered Paths to Legal Status: The Case of Latin American Immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona



This special report by Cecilia Menjívar and Olivia Salcido for the Immigration Policy Center looks at immigration law, which on its face appears gender neutral, but actually contains gender biases that create barriers for many women trying to gain legalization within the current immigration system. These inequalities appear across immigration law, and even as new laws are put into place, stereotypes and assumptions remain unchallenged. Ironically, even laws written specifically to protect women, such as the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), continue to play out in practice along gender-biased lines.

As immigration reform is being debated, our findings point to the need that any pathway to citizenship and integration be open, affordable, and accessible to all immigrant women, including those whose work is unpaid, and those employed in the informal economy. In order for this to occur, there should be more and stronger open channels for women to access the legalization process without having to rely on a principal visa holder to petition on their behalf.

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