What does reproductive freedom mean to an immigrant woman? If one speaks in terms of the income she earns at the top of the income scale, she is considered to have "voluntarily" immigrated because of her poverty (as her country's economy becomes increasingly strained by the global economic system). Or maybe domestic violence (or violent situations that she is unable to escape from within the home country), or because she is widowed or abandoned with her children and no source of financial support (from family or spouse). Such a woman worker may send eighty percent of her earnings to her home country to support the children she has left behind but who has little hope of seeing. She cannot visit them due to her lack of immigration status and she cannot bring her family to visit her as she falls well below the approved income level for sponsors. She lives and travels at the mercy of her employers -- often without any hope of returning to her homeland. What can reproductive rights mean to this woman who is tortured daily by her forced separation from her children?

What does reproductive freedom mean to a battered woman now incarcerated for unwittingly being involved in her abusive partner's drug dealing? What does it mean when she finds herself behind bars for a decade and her children are left either to fend for themselves or be put in an endless cycle of foster homes? What can reproductive freedom mean to a woman of color who was singled out among other mothers in her hospital ward and tested for drugs? What does reproductive freedom mean if she tests positive and then faces charges of child abuse and the loss of her other children to foster care? What does reproductive freedom mean when there are few substance abuse treatment centers that allow women to bring their children with them while they get well?

What can reproductive freedom mean to an Immigrant or US citizen (who looks "immigrant") woman working in a factory under conditions that have been described as "modern-day slavery", who is suddenly caught in an INS raid at her workplace while her children are at home with a babysitter? What can reproductive freedom mean for a woman crossing the US-Mexico border (or arriving at JFK airport), pregnant and/or with her small children? Perhaps she is seeking asylum or perhaps she is an economic refugee for whom asylum would be denied.

Does reproductive freedom in these cases mean protection? Protection from lengthy detentions, unnecessary home and body searches (both her and her children), and sexual harassment by the state/local police, INS, Border Patrol, US Customs officials? Protection from being whisked away to INS detention centers (because her story is not believed) and detained without any communication with the outside world as she waits, sometimes for years for the INS to decide about her case? Protection from discriminatory drug testing? Protection from battering (by partners, employers, police, or parents)? Protection from being separated from her children? Protection from neglect and humiliation? Yet, is protection from all these things commonly considered a reproductive right?