Brownell, Catherine- Student Coalition for Migrant Workers

Where are the earlier sections (proposal etc)? Instructions are very clear here

2018 Research

Video  this should be a link or the video should be embedded.

Scholarly Background

Student Coalition for Migrant Workers began forming as a club on campus during the spring of 2016. The following semester, during the fall, students who shared an interest in immigrant and local farmworker rights began to meet formally and organize. Political organization on campus gained momentum after the election of presidential candidate Donald Trump. Students who were frustrated with the results felt more empowered to take actions that challenged the values of the new administration. One of the most talked about issues within student spaces was the future of immigrants and immigration. In March of 2017 there was a traffic stop on the road separating North campus from South campus. During this stop, border patrol was called and two sisters, their younger brother, and five children were detained. This sparked a response from students, many of whom stood nearby in protest, some even live streaming the events to Facebook. After these headlining grabbing events passed, student involvement in the fight for immigrant rights began to slowly build. Student Coalition for Migrant Workers became an official campus club in the fall of 2018. One of the club’s main focuses has been on the campaign, Green Light NY: Driving Together.

Green Light NY: Driving Together was a campaign started to address the need to expand driver’s license access in New York State (Workers Center 2018). Prior to 2002 drivers licenses were available to immigrants. However after the events of 9/11 Governor Pataki rolled back these freedoms, and made it impossible to apply for a driver’s license without a valid social security number. The need for mobility in the immigrant community did not disappear when their ability to obtain licenses did. Within the past two years the Green Light campaign has been attempting to push a new law through the New York State senate, repealing the requirement for a social security number, and re-expanding access to licenses.

To understand why expanded access to driver’s licenses is important, especially in Western New York, it is necessary to understand the contributions immigrants make to the economy. New York is a leading state in the production of milk and dairy products. In fact the New York dairy industry placed fourth nationally in 2015 as a milk producer, producing 14.1 billion pounds of milk (Fox et al 2017). The industry also makes up 50% of total agriculture sales in the State (Fox et al 2017). Behind all this large scale agriculture are immigrant workers, primarily latino, who make up the majority of labor found on dairy farms (Fox et al 2017). The fact that a majority of dairy labor happens to be undocumented is crucial for the survival of the industry. This allows wages to be kept low, since workers have limited opportunities to fight back. Farmers also claim that it is very difficult to find U.S. citizens willing to work these demanding milking jobs. Without immigrant labor, the New York dairy industry, and likely the larger state economy, would collapse. One of the biggest concerns for immigrant dairy workers is their access to transportation, according to a survey completed by Cornell University (Maloney et al 2005). Without access to a driver’s license workers either drive illegally, taking great risks, or don’t drive at all and rely on others for transportation needs. Neither of these options are particularly safe for an undocumented individual. Many express that even when they have access to transportation they avoid going into their communities for fear of facing police or border patrol. This is a particularly salient fear in Western New York, where many farms lie within 100 miles of the Canadian border, giving border patrol agents the right to police these areas themselves. Immigration has also begun to fall under the scrutiny of criminal law enforcement, even though undocumentation is a civil law issue (Stuesse et al 2014) important point. The blending blurring of this line has increased the policing of immigrant bodies (this sounds a bit pretentious... not sure why it is more appropriate here than "immigrants") , and American rhetoric has encouraged the further criminalization of undocumented immigrants (Wilson 2000) (a more recent reference would be nice since the militarization of the border and criminalization of immigrants has only increased in that last 18 years). The increased association of criminality and immigration had greatly increased militarization at borders, and in detaining practices (Harrison et al 2011) ah good more recent reference. Some of this increased policing has materialized as more police checkpoints on roads, concentrated in communities near borders. Some have asserted that these checkpoints are profiling undocumented dairy workers who choose to drive (Alexander et al 2016).

Expanded access to driver’s licenses would greatly decrease the policing of immigrant bodies, and would decrease health issues linked to many undocumented dairy workers and their families. By removing the fear of being pulled over, or having border patrol called, dairy workers would experience greater freedom of mobility. They would be able to act as more involved members of their community, attending church, frequenting local businesses, and utilize health services like hospitals.

The interviews of selected members of the Student Coalition for Migrant Workers provides further explanation on what expanded driver’s licenses would mean for the community of Geneseo, and Western New York. I chose to feature their voices only, omitting my own, to avoid adulterating their answers with my own assumptions or personal goals. As a stakeholder in this campaign I have many of my own views and opinions. As the creator of this short ethnographic film, I wanted to remove myself as much as possible. Since I created and asked the questions, this was difficult, so I asked big questions, that were not overly specific, or looking for one ‘correct’ answer. I also included clips from an executive board meeting. I wanted to include a less structured video, where i capitalze could use observational methods of filming.

Work Cited

Green Light NY: Driving Together. Workers Center

Fox, Carly, Rebecca Fuentes, Fabiola Ortiz Valdez, Gretchen Purser, and Kathleen Sexsmith

MILKED: Immigrant Dairy Farmworkers in New York State

Alexander, William L, Anthony Guevara, and Mary K Brannock

Scholarly

Maloney, Thomas R, and David C Grusenmeyer

*Survey of Hispanic Dairy Workers in New York State* How do I know this is scholarly? Reference is incomplete

Stuesse, Angela, and Mathew Coleman


Wilson, Tamar Diana


Harrison, Jill Lindsey, and Sarah E. Lloyd


Approximately 900 words

Yes no

Provides basic background information for the issues

Outstanding Strong Adequate Weak

Substantial list of scholarly and peer-reviewed References Cited listed

Outstanding Strong Adequate Weak

Includes brief discussion of why you chose the format of your video (e.g., narrated or non-narrated, etc) in relation to the course readings.

Outstanding Strong Adequate Weak

Makes reference to any of the films we watched that inspired your approach to the film. If so, why?

Yes no

The final wiki space is in past tense

Yes no

References in American Antiquity format.

Yes no some problems

Reflection
Attempting to create an anthropologic film had been both an interesting and frustrating experience. I appreciate the opportunity that the project afforded of pushing me out of my comfort zone. Planning and shooting interviews was not something I had very much experience with. Through these interviews I was able to explore the deeper meaning of my organization. I was also glad to have the opportunity to shine some light on a campus organization that I believe is doing very important work. In critiquing my own work, I think my video would have benefitted from more interview subjects. Including an Alianza Agricola member would have been ideal, however I was hesitant to film an interview in Spanish that I would have to translate myself. In conclusion I am pleased with the outcome of the final film, and confident that it conveys a positive message of change and activism within the Geneseo community.

Written Reflection on Final Video Rubric (see syllabus p 3-4)

Evaluates your video in relation to your written wiki space and the course readings, with explicit references to both.

Outstanding   Strong   Adequate   Weak

Discusses choices you made about the style of the video and evaluates how successful were they in conveying the subject matter.

Outstanding   Strong   Adequate   Weak

Discusses how well the video worked in comparison to the written component?

Outstanding   Strong   Adequate   Weak

Explicitly reference the course readings (and other resources if you wish).

Outstanding   Strong   Adequate   Weak

Entry is in past tense.

Yes   No

Proposal

For my ethnographic film project I plan to interview and investigate the work of the student coalition for migrant workers. The SCMW is a relatively new club on campus, with the goal of supporting and advocating for local migrant dairy farm workers. Within Livingston county, there are many dairy farms which employ migrant laborers from Mexico, and others from central American countries (I changed the wording as Mexico is in North America.) The SCMW is a unique niche in the on-campus club community, providing an opportunity for political action and campaigning for a minority group during the current Trump era.

The United States is in a position where migrant labor is necessary for the survival of agriculture, yet there is a huge push to block immigrants from entering and deport ones already here. Rivera-Batiz (year: page) states “One of the key issues surrounding undocumented workers is the extent to which they are exploited, or discriminated against, in host country labor markets” (all quotes and statements that are not common knowledge require references). After an intense summer of headlines focusing on forced family separation and increased deportation, SCMW is bringing an interesting grassroots movement to the students of SUNY Geneseo. One of their main goals is earning support for a campaign titled “Greenlight NY”, which is attempting to make drivers licenses available to all New Yorkers, regardless of citizenship status. This campaign indirectly reduces family separation, since it could reduce the amount of immigrants being detained. I plan to explore how members of SCMW engage with students and faculty on campus and follow their goals for enacting change within the community. My video will focus on dynamics between SCMW allies and the individuals they are attempting to inform.

I also plan to interview at least one individual from Alianza Agricola, the larger organization with which SCMW is affiliated. In this interview, I hope to gain information from the point of view of one of the migrant workers. My filming technique will be similar to that of Preloran’s , where I will attempt to film as much content of the group as I can (Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology, 415).

Divide references cited into “Scholarly/ Peer-Reviewed” and “Other”

Levinson, David, and Melvin Ember

1996 Ethnographic Film. Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology 2: 411–416.  This is not cited in your entry.

Rivera-Batiz, Francisco L.

Proposal is about 250 words: yes no
Proposal outlines the goals of the project: strong good adequate needs work
Proposal outlines the methods of the project: strong good adequate needs work
Reference to course readings: strong good adequate needs work
Reference to scholarly/peer-reviewed anthropological works: strong good adequate