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Education

PhD- University of California Santa Cruz, Sociology, Spring 2017 (expected)

MA- University of California Santa Cruz, Sociology, Spring 2012

BA- California State University, Monterey Bay, Humanities and Communication, Spring 2009

AA- Hartnell Community College, General Education, Spring 2006

Dissertation:

Fields in the Factory: The Making of Precarious Union Labor in the Salinas Valley's Bagged Salad Industry. Scheduled to be completed in Spring 2017.

Dissertation Abstract:

Through a focus on workers in the Salinas Valley's bagged salad industry, this dissertation examines how precarious labor and upward social mobility reinforce each other. Drawing on 750 hours of workplace ethnography and 56 qualitative interviews, I argue that bagged salad workers recognize the precariousness of their labor even as they celebrate the achievement of upward social mobility. Most workers in bagged salad were born in Mexico, arrived in the U.S. as undocumented workers, and spent years as farm laborers in the Salinas Valley of California. This migration and employment background is key to comprehending their experience as precarious union workers in bagged salad factories. The analysis calls on labor studies to be more attentive to how workers experience precarious jobs as upward social mobility.

Committee: Dr. Steven McKay (Chair), Associate Professor University of California, Santa Cruz, Sociology Department; Dr. Pat Zavella, Professor, University of California, Santa Cruz, Latin American Latino Studies Department; Dr. Shannon Gleeson, Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Department of Labor Relations, Law and History.

Research Interests

Labor studies, social inequality, sociology of work, migration, citizenship, transnationalism and border studies, race, gender and class, food systems, and Latino sociology.

Awards and Fellowships

University of California President's Dissertation Year Fellowship, 2016-2017 (\$21,000).

University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UCMEXUS) Dissertation Research Grant, 2015-2016 (\$6,000).

Honorable mention for “From Farm to Factory: The Making of Precarious Union Labor.” The Society for the Study of Social Problems, Labor Studies Division graduate student paper competition. 2015.

University of California Eugene Cota-Robles Dissertation Year Research Fellowship, 2014-15 (\$21,000).

Lionel Cantú Memorial Award, 2014 (\$500).

Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship, 2010-2012 (\$21,000 per school year).

Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate award, 2008-09 (\$2,000 research stipend).

Publications and Writings

Espinoza, Ruben. 2016. “The Making of Precarious Union Labor in the Salinas Valley’s Bagged Salad Industry.” Under Review at *Humanity & Society*.

McKay, Steve., Ruben Espinoza and Steven Carmona Mora. 2015. “Working for Dignity: The Santa Cruz County Low-Wage Worker Study.” Sponsored by UCSC Center for Labor Studies, UC Humanities Research Institute, and the UCSC Blum Center. Available for download at: <http://workingfordignity.ucsc.edu/>.

Unpacking Vertical Integration in the Salinas Valley’s Bagged Salad Industry. 2012. MA Thesis. University of California, Santa Cruz.

Plant Shutdown: Globalization, Food Manufacturing, and the Salinas Valley. 2009. Senior Thesis. California State University, Monterey Bay.

Research Experience

Graduate Student Researcher & Team Leader. Summer 2016. “Building Healthy Communities: East Salinas.” Project funded by The California Endowment. Under the supervision of Dr. Veronica Terriquez, University of California Santa Cruz, Sociology Department.

Co-Investigator. Spring 2016-current. Center for Labor Studies, *Give Me Shelter: The Santa Cruz County Housing Crisis*.

Graduate Student Researcher. Summer and Fall 2014. UCMEXUS Collaborative Research Project (working for Dr. Shannon Gleeson, Cornell University and Dr. Xochitl Bada, University of Illinois Chicago).

Co-Investigator. 2013-15. Center for Labor Studies at UC Santa Cruz, *Low Wage Workers in*

Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties.

Graduate Student Researcher. 2013-2014. Chicano Latino Research Center at UC Santa Cruz.

Bodies, Border & Violence Research Cluster. 2011-2012. UC Santa Cruz.

Courses Taught as Primary Instructor

Sociology 15 World Society. University of California, Santa Cruz. Summer 2016.

Sociology 169: Social Inequality. University of California, Santa Cruz. Fall 2015.

Latin American Latino Studies 199F: Surveying Low Wage Workers in Santa Cruz. University of California, Santa Cruz. Winter 2014.

Teaching Assistantships

Sociology 176a Work & Inequality. University of California, Santa Cruz. Spring 2016.

Sociology 103a Statistical Methods. University of California, Santa Cruz. Winter 2016.

Sociology 103b Logics of Sociological Research. University of California, Santa Cruz. Spring 2013.

Sociology 15 World Society. University of California, Santa Cruz. Winter 2013.

Sociology 15 World Society. University of California, Santa Cruz. Fall 2012.

Sociology 105b Contemporary Sociological Theory. University of California, Santa Cruz. Summer 2012.

Presentations and Conferences

Paper presentation. "From Farm to Factory." *Rethinking Migration* conference. University of California, Santa Cruz. May 2016.

Guest Lecture. "Working for Dignity." *Sociology I.* Cabrillo College. Aptos, CA. April 2016.

Guest Lecture. "Graduate Research." *Sociology 103b Logics of Sociological Inquiry.* University of California, Santa Cruz. March 2016.

Paper presentation. "Unpacking Social Mobility in the Salinas Valley's Bagged Salad Industry." *American Sociological Association Annual Conference.* San Francisco, CA. Latino/a Sociology Paper Session: The Latino/a Middle Class. August 2014.

Presentation. "Capstone to PhD." California State University, Monterey Bay. May 2013.

Guest Lecture. “Global Woman and Care Work.” Sociology 15: *World Society*. University of California, Santa Cruz. March 2013.

Guest Lecture. “Labor Markets and Labor Processes in the Salinas Valley’s Bagged Salad Industry.” Latin American Latino Studies 80K: *Latinos and Organized Labor in the United States*. University of California, Santa Cruz. December 2012.

Paper presentation. “Unpacking the Vertical Integration of Labor in Salinas Valley Agriculture.” *Labor, Immigration and Changing Conceptions of Work* workshop. University of California, Santa Cruz, Center for Labor Studies. October 2012.

Paper presentation. “Labor Practices in the Salinas Valley’s Bagged Salad Industry.” *Migration and Ethnic Studies* Conference. University of California, Santa Cruz. April 2012.

Panel discussant on “Teaching Ethnic Studies in the 21st Century”. San Francisco State University, *Ethnic Studies: 40 Years Later* Conference. October 2009.

Capstone presentation. “Plant Shutdown: Globalization, Food Manufacturing, and the Salinas Valley.” California State University, Monterey Bay. May 2009.