

ANTH 2020 – Introduction to Cultural Anthropology:

Fieldwork Exercise 2: Economies, Mobilities, Identities and Communities

Introduction and Purpose:

One of the contributions of economic and political anthropology is that they allow us to trace how larger cultural forces materialize into the lived experience of individuals and groups, and how these change through time. Mobility and human flows are central features of the contemporary world, shifting people and communities within and across national borders. They also inspired the shared focus of the inaugural Cours Pairings initiative. **The purpose of this exercise is to explore mobility and migration ethnographically.**

Our shared reading, Iliana Yamileth Rodriguez's *Los Autobuses del Sur: Mexican Migrant Routes and Economies*, outlines the growth of Atlanta's ethnic Mexican, and more broadly Latinx communities since the 1970s. The article frames migration within larger economic and political changes but highlights the significance of family connections, personal ties and broader social networks and processes, including migrant economies industries like transportation, in giving it form. But it also draws attention to the significance of people and their stories: What does it mean to be part of these communities? How may the experiences of individuals and families vary or change through time? How did (and do) people understand their identities and navigate their relationships and everyday worlds? What motivations, problems, opportunities or affordances do they encounter?

The Exercise:

Your task is to use ethnographic tools to learn and convey something about how people experience and conceptualize their lives, identities and local communities as they are shaped by the dynamics of human flows: immigration, cultural heritage from elsewhere and/or by practices of movement and social exchange across borders and space.

You are encouraged to focus on the experience of Mexican or Latinx immigrants, or people of Mexican or Latinx heritage and their communities in Atlanta. However, you may consider any immigrant or ethnic community, or investigate the experience of internal migration, which does not cross national borders. Use Yamileth Rogriguez's piece to guide your questions.

Methods and Ethics:

You have a choice of two data collection methods.

- a) **Participant Observation:** Spend some time in a public space, engage in a volunteer opportunity, participate in a ritual etc. paying attention to how people make it a *place for the community*? In other words, how is a place, event or gathering made into a distinctly cultural space for a group? Consider people but also sights, sounds, material culture, spatial arrangements and so on.

Ethics issue: Be sure those you engage know you are doing fieldwork and consent to it. NO COVERT WORK.

- b) **Ethnographic interview:** Interview someone about their experiences, ideas, opinions, and perspectives. This can be about collecting a first-person account/personal history of migration, considering motivations (personal, economic, or other), processes, and practical aspects, including social networks and connections, infrastructure etc. But it can also mean discussing a person's experience as part of an immigrant community, how they understand and navigate their national and ethnic or cultural identities, the particular problems and realities of their communities in Atlanta today, and so on.

Ethics Issue: Make sure to CLEARLY EXPLAIN who you are, why you are doing this, and how you will use the material, and get active CONSENT. Clearly explain that whatever they want to tell you is TOTALLY UP TP THEM (voluntary participation) and that you will keep their identities CONFIDENTIAL. Identify persons and places with a PSEUDONYM (made up name) in your narrative. AVOID any collection or discussion of information regarding legal and documentation matters connected to any living individuals, whether your interlocutor or another. Strictly no children.

The Product:

You have an **Essay** and an **Un-Essay** option for this project. Both are submitted in the corresponding folder in iCollege. Go to Assessments → Assignments

- A) The **Essay** option is an ethnographic narrative paper like that of Fieldwork Exercise 1: 3-4 page double-spaced paper (standard fonts and margins), which includes your specific question/topic, methodology, findings and brief reflection. As this project is based on your own, original research, you do not need to use outside sources.

However, if you do, you must include a bibliography and use in-text citations as needed. Any citation style is fine, as long as used correctly, but if you do not have a preference, use AAA style: <https://americananthro.org/publications/publishing-style-guide/>

B) The **Un-Essay** option allows you to communicate your findings in alternative ways. It can be in the form of ANYTHING you want, including but not limited to:

- A photo essay, video/music video, TikTok
- An object or recipe telling a story
- An infographic, flow chart, slide show, clickbait-type article or quiz
- A song, poem or play script
- A piece of art, sculpture, painting, collage, drawing, illustration, cartoon or graphic story
- A quilt, knitting project, pottery, embroidery, or other craft
- A board game, card game, trivia night questions

This should be accompanied by a **project statement and reflection**: The statement is your “explanation” of the project. It should address a) what you did and why (topic, method, fieldwork process), b) what are the core ideas and understandings you want people to take from it, c) what you learned doing it. As a general guideline, the project statement should be 1-2 double-spaced pages, though variation is to be expected depending on the project.

If you use published sources, you should also include a bibliography in your statement. Any citation style is fine, as long as used correctly, but if you do not have a distinctive preference, use AAA style:

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AI;DR

As you are completing this exercise, please remember to

1. **SAVE A DRAFT OR TWO, notes, or whatever else can show that this is your work**
2. **Check your AI probability score on Turnitin when you submit. You want it to be no more than 35%. If it is higher, you will be asked to revise and resubmit unless you can provide proof that this is your work, or offer another convincing explanation**