Brentwood, New York 11717: A Multimedia Ethnographic Study on an Immigrant Town

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BRENTWOOD, NEW YORK 11717: A MULTIMEDIA
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY ON AN IMMIGRANT TOWN

by

ASHLEY MUNGO

A master’s capstone project submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts,
The City University of New York

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Brentwood, New York 11717: A Multimedia Ethnographic Study on an Immigrant Town

by

Ashley Mungo

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the capstone project requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Capstone Project Advisor

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

Brentwood, New York 11717: A Multimedia Ethnographic Study on an Immigrant Town

by

Ashley Mungo

Advisor: Karen Miller

Brentwood, New York is a working-class town of about 60,000 situated forty miles east of Manhattan on Long Island. As of the 2010 Census, 68.5 percent of residents are Latino or Hispanic, with 10.7 percent of the overall population living below the federal poverty level. Less than ten percent of the population has obtained a bachelors degree or higher. Street violence, gangs, and overall crime are frequently addressed at community meetings, igniting a fierce debate on immigration within the town that has reached national media, with critics arguing that the exponentially increasing Latino migrant population has caused this crisis.

The goal of this digital project is to explore and challenge immigration and violence in Brentwood. I employ ethnographic analysis by presenting interviews and photographs of current or past residents of Brentwood who are either immigrants or persons who have been affected by immigration. By using photographs, audio and text interviews, I create an immersive multimedia experience that tells a story focused on four female residents of Brentwood that explores not only immigration and violence, but also family and community. These profiles, along with notes and supporting documents from participant observation, showcase how students, lawyers, politicians, and activists are challenging critics by actively working within Brentwood to better their
community. This project can be accessed at http://www.ashleymungo.com/11717
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This capstone project would not have been possible without the participants who so bravely agreed to be photographed and interviewed. Thank you for entrusting me with your stories.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Project URL 1
2. Introduction 1
3. Literature Review 3
4. Research 9
5. Technical Process 15
6. Evaluation 17
7. Participant Responses 18
8. Continuation of Project and Conclusion 19
   Appendix: Screenshots of Project 21
   Selected Bibliography 28
DIGITAL MANIFEST

1. Project Narrative (PDF)

2. Archived Website (WARC Files)
1. Project URL

http://www.ashleymungo.com/11717

2. Introduction

This project would never have come to fruition if it wasn’t for my grandparent's decision to relocate and my desire to take a photography class in eleventh grade.

My grandparents grew up in Brooklyn, New York but decided like most working-class white people to move out to Long Island in the middle of the 20th century. They moved to Bay Shore, a hamlet in the town of Islip that sits on the south shore of the island. Both of my parents grew up in Bay Shore, but because of school districting lines, went to school in Brentwood during the 1960’s and 1970’s. At that time, Brentwood wasn’t much different than the other working-class towns situated 40 miles east of NYC; it was relatively safe and relatively white. When my siblings and I were born in the 80’s and 90’s, the town had slowly changed from predominantly white to Hispanic. We never thought of ourselves as a minority within the town’s demographics; we only noticed that that none of our friends looked the same. It wasn’t until I traveled across different parts of New York State during competitive marching band matches that I realized the racial makeup of our town was unique.¹

Off the football field, I was taking a ridiculous amount of advanced classes that barely allowed me time to scarf down a bagel between periods. When trying to decide the crucial junior

year schedule, I continued with all my advanced classes but also decided to reward myself with an elective: photography. Unfortunately, with my luck, photography was taught the same time as honors U.S. History, so I decided to make a decision, one that, if I decided differently today, would have drastically altered not only my academic but professional career.

I graduated from Brentwood in 2008 and moved to New York City to study photography at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT). While at FIT, I realized my real passion was documentary photography, specifically utilizing multimedia techniques to give a (literal) voice to my subjects. My senior thesis was entitled The Other Side, a multimedia study on post 9/11 Muslims living in New York City. That project allowed me to combine my love of international relations and photography, something I knew I wanted to continue in graduate school.

These chain of events, along with the election of xenophobic and racist President, is what drove me to conceive this project. While I now had an idea of what type of research I wanted to conduct and where it would take place, I had to decide the ultimate question: What do I want to say? I quickly realized this was a much harder question to answer than I originally anticipated. I started doing initial research into Brentwood and came across numerous articles reporting on the recent violence that was taking place, highlighting how the increase in violence has fueled national immigration debates. These debates, as stated in the news articles, attempt to blame the influx of immigrants to the rise in violence. But what many don’t understand is that

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immigrants are fleeing the very same violence that is now taking place at the doorsteps of their new homes. After reading these articles, and other sources related, I decided to focus on the fallacy that portrays immigrants as dangerous, lazy and unambitious. Because there has never been an in-depth profile done of immigrants living in Brentwood, I decided to photograph and interview current or past residents of Brentwood. What better way to challenge the misconception than hearing from the misconceived themselves?

3. Literature Review

Visual Ethnography

While my IRB application was being reviewed, I began researching experts in visual ethnography to give me insight into my chosen research method. Paul Byers, an early pioneer in visual ethnography, believes that “We can increase the information available and thus the useful value of still photography in behavioral disciplines if we understand photography in terms of the human behavior of which it is a product and in terms of the information which these behaviors contribute to the photograph.” This analysis is important to understand, especially as visual ethnographers have to accept that our mere presence in photographing participants can contribute to how the photograph is made and perceived. Byer argues that photographs are almost always taken to support an idea or prior image of an observer, but believes that the camera can also find out what we may not know and have little visual access to. He compares movies and photographs as an example of how we can access more information than what we have visual

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access to. Movies are played and watched at regular speed, but still photographs hold a scene
motionless forever. Being able to capture that scene in 1/100th of a second, so that we can then
later examine it, holds truths that visual ethnographers can reference forever. Therefore, “more
information is available in a still photograph of a scene, than was available at the moment of the
scene itself.” Byer’s theories are critical to using photography as a method to discover and
document the unknown by “exploiting the capacities of the still camera to see more than our eyes
alone will.” It is essential that as visual ethnographers we learn to balance our idea of an image
with what we produce so that the final product is as close to reality as physically possible.

Darryn Crowe also grapples with this objectivity relating to photography in visual
ethnographic work. He states,

Concerns about the role of photography in ethnographic fieldwork and anthropology
range from commentary about wounded artistic integrity and the inconvenience of having
to use photography to represent and document certain information to anthropological
concerns and fears that photographers not only document but “capture”
images—composing information rather than documenting reality.9

This dilemma of “capturing images rather than documenting reality” is a constant theme
present throughout visual ethnographic academia. Byer also argues that photography is a “human
transaction and not a simple second.” Meaning, the photographer makes a choice in a fraction of
a section to push a shutter which is a product of their own “idiosyncratic personality.”10 Thus,
even if two photographers with the same skill set are instructed to take a photograph at the same

7 Byers, Paul. “Still Photography in the Systematic Recording and Analysis of Behavioral Data.” Human
8 Ibid.
10 Byers, Paul. “Still Photography in the Systematic Recording and Analysis of Behavioral Data.” Human
time, the results will be different to someone with a critical eye.

Not only do photographers acting as visual ethnographers have to confront objectivity and reality when documenting their subject, but they also have to tackle shooting with the presence of an actual camera. This can have a dual effect, as two researchers write about different experiences they have with the presence of the physical camera. Dona Schwartz, who is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Art at the University of Calgary, describes her approach to photographing and documenting the town of Waucoma, a small farm land that had a population of 308 in the late 1980’s like this,

The camera itself became an important means of entering into the social life of the community, allowing me to engage in understandable, task-oriented activity in the course of observation. My picture-taking provided residents with an obvious reason to start up a conversation, and the longer I made photographs, the more people I met. I was able to move from photographing the environment to photographing public events as my contacts with community members multiplied. Residents came to expect me to appear with my camera at community events. Over time, I was able to ask and receive permission to photograph family activities as well. I became known even among families I had not yet met, and, with cursory introductions, I was invited to photograph them. Waucoma families welcomed me among them, expediting my fieldwork.\(^\text{11}\)

The camera, itself, was her way into the world of her participants. Once there, she used photo-elicitation techniques while interviewing her participants. While showing the photographs, she interviewed residents, usually at their kitchen tables, and asked them to make comments, only providing minimal guidance to evoke a range of responses. This technique “provided informants with a task similar to a naturally occurring family event (i.e. viewing the family

photo-album), [where] some of the strangeness of the interview situation was averted.”12 She also stressed to her participants that the interviews were her way of gaining a better understanding of life in the community, and that her participants were key to that understanding, highlighting that she not only “wanted to write about Waucoma, [but] also show people what Waucoma is like by using photographs.”13

Angela Torresan, a lecturer in Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester, illustrates that the presence of her camera made people interact with her in a particular way, a way they wouldn't have normally acted if it was not there. She states, “Some of the people I filmed anticipated that they were telling their stories to a larger audience, an audience who may well be ignorant of Brazil; hence, they would feel the need to be more performative in front of the camera.”14 This concept that our participants might be putting on “performances” is something that we also struggle with within our research, further illustrating the double-edged sword of “presence” in ethnographic research.

Understanding how the above researchers engaged photography in their ethnographic research shaped how I approached this project in many ways. My background is in photography as an art form, and this was something I had to constantly battle throughout the sessions with my subjects. We are taught in art school how to make a "good" photograph, and many techniques and personal decisions go into making it "good." As art is subjective, what one artist thinks is a good photograph is entirely different from the next. Therefore there is no standard on how to

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13 Ibid.
make a "good" photograph beside the basics of lighting and composition. But even with those two elements, I had to remind myself I wasn’t trying to make a "good" photograph, but document my subjects and the scene for exactly what it was. Typically I would attempt to make the photograph as appealing as possible, shooting different angles, using different lighting techniques, utilizing the rule of thirds, etc. I attempted to do this by shooting my subjects straight on, composing the scene exactly as I saw it in front of me during the interview portion of the project, in the hopes that viewers will the scene as I did.

I also had to contend with whether or not the scenes I was capturing were one-hundred presence authentic because of the presence of my camera and my relationship with my subjects. Documentary photography is an instrumental approach when used in a way that allows the photographer to capture the scene exactly as it is. This is usually achieved by my long-lasting forging relationships with the subjects, which then allows the photographer to blend seamlessly into the background. People are more comfortable being themselves when a camera is not around, so these relationships are critical for making people feel at ease. To try to achieve this, I made sure to interview my subjects before photographing them to establish a connection that would make them feel comfortable in front of the camera.

_Brentwood, Immigration & Gang Violence_

It was also important for me to understand the history of Brentwood, and its relationship with immigrant enclaves and gang violence. Since Brentwood is a relatively small town on Long Island, and the demographics have changed so drastically in a few decades, there are limited academic papers to consult. Julie Behrens and Kaja Kul utilized Brentwood as a case study to
illustrate the challenges and opportunities of suburban communities that arise from rapidly changing demographics.\textsuperscript{15} They note that the rise of the Hispanic population in Brentwood has contributed to reviving once vacant storefronts, but has also contributed to a white-flight “out-migration” of wealthier residents to nearby suburbs. They focus on tensions between new immigrants and current residents, stating

With the national debate focused primarily on inclusion versus exclusion and the legal status of the individual migrant, tensions can run high between long-time residents and immigrants who can be perceived as a threat to security and suburban life. Issues like diversity, poverty, and failing schools—long associated with urban areas—make many long-time suburbanites uneasy. The response to common complaints such as residential overcrowding and loitering has had the effect of limiting access to housing, services, employment, and public space for immigrants, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among many.\textsuperscript{16}

This fear and insecurity that Behrens and Kul reference is highlighted in a 2009 article by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which reveals how “Latino immigrants in Suffolk County, N.Y., are routinely the target of violent attacks, harassment and abuse driven by a virulent anti-immigrant climate that has been fostered by community leaders and law enforcement practices.”\textsuperscript{17} The relationship between law enforcement and immigrants in Brentwood has always been strained, especially since a 2012 profile prepared by The Suffolk County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council estimated that Brentwood has the largest total gang population in the county.\textsuperscript{18} To deal with this, special units are being created within New York State police

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Climate of Fear: Latino Immigrants in Suffolk County, N.Y. \textit{Southern Poverty Law Center}. September 2009, Print.
\textsuperscript{18} Profile of Gang Members in Suffolk County, \textit{The Suffolk County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council}, 2012, Print.
departments to try to combat a specific gang that hangs over Brentwood, MS-13.\textsuperscript{19} A 2018 New Yorker article highlighted how teenagers are “trapped” between MS-13 and the law.\textsuperscript{20}

These articles and profiles helped me better understand how outsiders interpret and write about Brentwood and gang violence, which I then applied to the design of my research questions. Because “violence” and “immigration” are always related to how outsiders write about Brentwood, I made sure to include questions that directly hit on this topic, for example, “Have you ever felt that people blame the large Latino population in Brentwood for the increase in gang violence?, and What do you think people misunderstand the most about the Latino community in Brentwood?” Further, because Brentwood is almost always profiled negatively, I wrote questions that engaged my subjects with positive aspects of Brentwood, focusing on community work and the connections to a large Latino population that Brentwood possesses for its immigrant residents.

4. Research

Research Design

The research type of this project is social behavioral, as it employs ethnographic analysis by utilizing interviews and photographs. The primary recruitment methodology I used involved finding participants through online platforms. The secondary recruitment methodology I used was asking participants who already participated if they knew of anyone who would be interested


in being interviewed/photographed for the project. This is also known as snowball sampling and proved to be the more useful recruitment technique. I originally planned to spend one to two hours with each participant, one hour interviewing and one hour photographing. Interviews usually went much longer once participants started sharing their stories. I also engaged in participant observation, attending numerous town hall meetings or groups that focused on immigration and violence in the town.

Participants

As I stated above, the most useful recruitment method proved to be snowball sampling, as participants tended to trust the person who recommended them to participate in the project. I was able to connect with many participants this way. I conducted four in-depth interviews with women. A brief description of each participant can be found below.

The first participant I interviewed and photographed was Laura. I met Laura online, through a posting on the Brentwood Facebook page. She is an immigrant who came to the United States when she was nine from Colombia with her parents. She is the only participant that I interviewed who is undocumented, and she is a DREAMer. She graduated from Brentwood High School and is currently in nursing school, hoping to finish next year and gain permanent citizenship if/when the DREAM Act passes in Congress.

The second participant I interviewed and photographed was Sandra. I also met Sandra online, through a posting on the Brentwood Facebook page. She was born in the United States, but went back to the Dominican Republic when she was seven years old, and lived there until she
was a teenager, at which point her mother decided to take her and her siblings back to the U.S. She graduated from Brentwood High School and currently lives in Huntington, New York, mentoring at-risk women who live in the Brentwood area.

The third participant I interviewed and photographed was Elva. Elva, who was in my graduating class at Brentwood, messaged me on Facebook after seeing my posting online and asked if she could be apart of the project. Elva was born in Brentwood; her parents came to the United States as undocumented immigrants who fled El Salvador during the civil war. Her mother was eventually granted asylum. She is unsure of her father’s legal status. Elva graduated from Brentwood High School in 2008 and just moved back a few years ago. She is an active member of the community, handing out “know your rights” flyers in English and Spanish, which tell people what to do if ICE agents come to their door.

The fourth participant I interviewed and photographed was Erika. I found Erika through the recommendation of Elva. Erika was born in California, and moved to Brentwood when she was around six years old. Her parents also fled El Salvador during the civil war. Her father was tortured and her mom witnessed a massacre and was almost killed so staying was not an option. She graduated from Brentwood High School in 2009 and is currently working as a law clerk, at the law office of Alexandra Mayen Rivera, which specializes in immigration law, while also studying for the Bar.

*Interviews and Photographs*

Once I connected with the participants, we decided on a location for the interviews and
photographs. I always left it up to them, as I wanted the location to not only represent them but make them feel secure. Locations included participants workplace, the local library, and their homes. After I arrived at the location, the first thing I did after introducing myself was have them sign the informed consent form. I always made sure to email it to them beforehand, if that was how we were corresponding, making sure they had ample time to read it through before signing either electronically or in-person. Each participant signed the informed consent form, and also consented to be photographed and recorded for this project.

After the informed consent form was signed, the interviews began. I asked each participant the same preliminary interview questions, which were:

- Can you talk a little about your life growing up in Brentwood and being surrounded by a lot of immigrants?
- Are you or anyone in your family immigrants?
- If so, can you tell me how, when and why you immigrated and from where?
- What was the process like to immigrate to Brentwood?
- Was Brentwood what you expected it would be like when you arrived?
- How did people in the community treat you when you arrived?
- Do you regret your choice to immigrate here?
- Have you ever felt that people blame the large Latino population in Brentwood for the increase in gang violence?
- What do you think is the leading cause of violence in Brentwood?
- What do you think the town needs to do to address the issues of violence?
- What do you think people misunderstand the most about the Latino community in Brentwood?
- Do you think there is a stigma associated with Latinos in the Brentwood community that portrays Latinos as “unambitious,” “lazy,” or “dangerous”?
- Do you participate in any work within the community to combat these issues? If so, can you explain in detail?
- Do you feel connected to the community within Brentwood? If so, do you think it is because there is a large Latino population?
The questions proved to be extremely useful, and the sessions usually lasted longer than I originally anticipated. The questions towards the end of the interview proved to be the most important to my research and are highlighted in the multimedia photo essay. Interviews were recorded with my iPhone, using the Voice Memos application and transcribed during the review process.

Once the interview was over, I then photographed the participants. I used my personal digital camera, a Canon 6D, usually fitted with a 24-105 lens. I often shot 100-200 photographs in 1-3 different poses. I took a documentary approach when photographing the participants, as the goal was to achieve the most authentic photograph possible. This is not always easy, especially if the participant is uncomfortable in front of the camera or if the participant tries to act differently once shooting begins. Luckily, the participants that I photographed acted naturally and the resulting photographs achieved the goal.

I also attended three town hall forums. I decided to blend in with the crowd and not directly engage with the audience. In those situations, I either took physical notes or recorded parts of the forums. I also took photographs to document the event, which can be found throughout the multimedia photo essay.

Once I was done interviewing and photographing after sessions or forums, I copied the interviews and photographs to my computer. I also backed up them up to hard drive in case my computer failed. Both my computer and hard drive are password protected to ensure confidentiality and security of the participants and the resulting data.
Risks, Benefits, and Confidentiality

As with all human research, there are extensive risks and benefits that a researcher must contend with when creating a project like this. The risk of photographing the participants was that they might feel uncomfortable being photographed, especially if they are discussing sensitive documents that can be directly correlated to their physical appearance. The mitigation method I used was to offer to take pictures that did not physically included them in the image, or take no photographs of them at all after the interview. The risk of interviewing and recording the participants was more psychological; participants may experience stress, discomfort, guilt, or embarrassment when thinking and talking about their experiences and opinions on particular topics. The mitigation method I used was only to include first names, specifically for undocumented immigrants. I also offered the option to alter their voice to keep their interview as confidential as possible, and if they still felt uncomfortable, offered only to take physical notes during the interview. The risk of participants signing an informed consent form was that might feel uncomfortable signing a document that allows themselves to be featured in a study that they may later not want to participate in at a later date. The mitigation method I used was to offer the participants the option to change their minds at a later date about using their interview or photograph in the research. All participants decided that their voices and faces were essential to this project, something I am truly grateful for.

While there are no direct benefits to the participants by being interviewed or photographed for this project, there are benefits to society. Until now, there has not been a photographic and journalistic study of Brentwood and its diverse Hispanic and Latino
community. More than half of all immigrants that arrived on Long Island since 2000 are from Latin America, which makes this study of utmost importance by analyzing the changing demographics of a particular town.

Maintaining confidentiality for the participants was of the utmost importance to me. But it is also important to note that the purpose of this project was not to entirely hide the participants, but highlight their personal stories and in turn, who they are and what Brentwood means to them.

5. Technical Process

Once the interviews and photographs of the participants were complete, the technical process of putting this multimedia photo essay together began. Even though I already knew that I wanted to host the interviews and photographs on my personal website, I first had to consult with Professor Klein to make sure this was the appropriate hosting platform to sustain the project for archival purposes. Once I met with him and discussed the multimedia project, he agreed that hosting the digital project on my website was the best idea, as he can take the finished URL and archive it.

Now that my hosting platform was secured, it was time to sort through the interviews and photographs. I approached this by organizing and reviewing participants one at a time. The first thing I did was listen to the interview in its entirety. As I was listening, I would flag sections that I thought were particularly interesting and could make good audio cuts. After finishing that process, I began transcribing the interviews. This was by far the longest part of the technical
process. Luckily, there are numerous transcribing tools available that made this part a bit easier, though not shorter. After the audio interviews were transcribed I read through the interviews a few more times, this time highlighting sections that I wanted to include in the written profiles of the participants.

I then moved on to reviewing the participant's photos. I opened the collection of photographs in Photoshop and viewed each before combing through them again and labeling the ones that I liked the best. This process usually narrowed it down to two or three photographs of the participant. I would then take a break and review them the next day with fresh eyes, which usually resulted in an immediate reaction to one of the photographs. Once the photograph was chosen, I did minor retouching, which included things like color correction and lighting adjustments. After I finished retouching, I resized the photograph for web and saved. I repeated this process with each participant and each forum, organizing the data meticulously on my computer and backup hard drive.

Once I had all the data, I set out to organize it on my website. I created a new page for this project, one that was private until the project was complete. I started by uploading all the photographs that I wanted to include and writing captions for each. After the photographs were uploaded, I had to choose a corresponding audio piece (if applicable) to go under the participant's photograph. This was another difficult part, as it is nearly impossible to select a one-to-two minute clip that best represents the thoughts of the participant. I utilized the same reviewing technique I used with the photographs, taking breaks and coming back at a later date to listen to the interviews with fresh ears. This allowed me to find audio clips that best represented the
stories of the participants while also maintaining the narrative I was trying to create within the project.

After the photographs and audio clips were uploaded, I decided to upload supporting documents that I thought would enhance the substance of the project. Some of these documents can be found in the appendix section of the paper for immediate reference, and they include data visualization maps, important photographs from initial research into the town and corresponding documents I collected on my trips to the town. There were a lot more than I published on the website, as I did not want it to overwhelm the heart of the project, which is the participant's photographs and interviews.

Finally, once all the data was compiled on the website, it was time to organize it in a documentary multimedia photo essay that attempted to realize the objective of the project. Instead of writing a general journalistic feature on the town that included snippets of the participant's interviews, I decided to create profiles of the participants as I felt this would best highlight their personal stories and accomplish the objective of the project. This multimedia photo essay employs a host of different journalistic techniques: interviews, photographs and storytelling, all which are subjective to the readers and listeners, each with varying opinions of the topic at hand.

6. Evaluation

When seeking participants, I did not state a specific gender, but only women contacted me offering to participate. Even though this was not anticipated, I am happy with the
stories being told exclusively from a female perspective. As a female academic, photographer and activist, this unanticipated female perspective was most welcome. I was able to not only highlight the opinions and struggles of women but of minority women. Rarely are stories told that only give a woman’s perspective, and even rarer are they told by women.\textsuperscript{21} To be able to profile four strong women of color who are fighting to better the community of my hometown was a privilege, to say the least.

I believe I was successful in illustrating that immigrants or people affected by immigration who reside in Brentwood live rich and complicated lives that proactively impact the community. From the four in-depth profiles and notes from participant observation, I showcase how immigrant students, lawyers, politicians, and activists are actively working within Brentwood to better their community. I was also successful in my chosen research method by using photography, interviews, and audio to display this project. I believe that without each of these components, the project would have lacked vital emotion, which contributes to the depth of the profiles presented of the participants.

7. Participant Responses

After finishing the multimedia project, I sent the URL to the four participants that I profiled to see if they would be interested in sharing their responses to the project with me to include in this paper.

Elva thanked me for still caring about Brentwood, and for acknowledging my platform

and using it to be an ally for our neighbors. She appreciated that I gave a voice to women in particular, and was moved by Laura’s profile because she had classes with her and did not know about her status. It made her think about all the students that we shared spaces with or people who are currently in high school who might be able to see themselves in these women and the issues they are facing. She thinks most about her niece, who came to the country four years ago and desperately needs that representation.

Erika believes that Brentwood is overdue to have a project like this and she’s glad that I took the time to show that the community is much bigger and better than what the national (and even local) headlines are painting Brentwood out be. She felt very proud reading about others in the community and recognizing that many have gone through what she and her family have gone through. She plans to share this project with family, friends, and immigrants with whom she works with at the law firm.

Sandra enjoyed how I covered the topic and interviewed people with different backgrounds and views within the community. She also believes that it would be imperative to get a project like this out to the community, especially people within the community who are critical of the immigrant population, to showcase the humanity that she believes connects all residents of Brentwood.

8. **Continuation of Project and Conclusion**

Because of the small number of profiles, I’m not certain that I succeeded in demonstrating that there is no significant relationship between immigration and violence. If I am able to continue this project and obtain more profiles, I might be able to better understand and
defend this theory. While I believe the project can stand alone at the moment, I know that the
addition of new profiles can only enhance the project. My goal is to interview at least three more
people over the course of the next year. Once those participants have been added, I plan on
submitting the project to local media outlets in the hopes that it might get published one day. The
voices of the participants and their stories are critical to battling the ill-conceived view of
Brentwood, and publishing this project can only positively impact the community that I so
fiercely protect.
Appendix: Screenshots of Project

Example of participant photographs and corresponding caption

Laura, a DREAMer, at home in her parents house in Brentwood. Laura came to the United States when she was 9 years old from Colombia.
Example of participant photograph and corresponding caption

Elva at the Brentwood Public Library. "Leaving made me learn to love my neighborhood."
Examples of participant observation photographs, along with corresponding captions

Legislator Monica R. Martinez speaking at an immigration forum in Brentwood, NY. The forum was co-sponsored by Liga De Justicia, a law firm that specializes in criminal defense and civil rights litigation.
Legislator Martinez taking questions from the crowd.

Lawyers from Smotritsky Law Group moderating a discussion on DACA and TPS.
A man asking a question during the discussion.
A "Know Your Rights" card that immigration activists hand out to people who are at risk of getting stopped by immigration officers.
A map depicting the high concentration of El Salvadoran immigrants in the Brentwood area. Critics argue this particular population has contributed to increased gang-related deaths. (Source: Social Explorer)
Selected Bibliography


