

Are there any cycles (time periods) of unified political activity among Latino students on campus, and if so, what factors play into them?

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EVOKE

About the Ethnographer

I am a junior majoring in Political Science and Latina/o Studies. The main reason I have chosen to focus on this specific question has to do with its relevancy to my experience here as a Latina undergraduate. Also, I feel that ethnography as a form of research will give me much more insight than just historical research.

EXPLORE

Question

What questions is your inquiry contingent upon?

Some subsidiary questions:

A. What is the background on the establishment of Latina/o Studies programs and resources at other Big 10 universities?

B. Are there parallels between African-American and Latino student activism on campuses?

-Is there is a theoretical framework?

-If so, does that apply to the UIUC campus?

C. What are the demographics of the current Latino student population?

OBSERVE

What observations, or findings are you encountering in your research?

-One of the most substantive things that I have uncovered so far deals with current students perceptions about student political activism in general. What I found was those who I interviewed all stated that they "knew" they "should" be more involved on campus, in terms of rallies, etc., but they were not especially motivated, or in general did not feel personally connected to the issues.

-Another observation among the current students who I interviewed were that they all mentioned there existed huge segregation and exclusion within the Latino community. When asked on what terms they made this statement, they mentioned, national origin (Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, socio-economic class, and then organizations. This was surprising since I myself assumed that self factionalization within the Latino community arose specifically out of the numerous Greek organizations. Now, I am interested in researching the exact composition (national-origin & class status) of various Latino organizations to see if there is a pattern that exists.

-Another substantial finding has to do with the contents of Latino/a student publications, specifically "La Carta". What I have come to find is

A) Current students hardly ever read the publication now whereas they tended to read nearly every issue their freshman year. This also has a lot to do with the newsletters being mailed to their dorms, where they now have moved out into apartments and houses.

B) The content of the newsletter has altered quite dramatically since the mid to late 1980's. The current publications are very neutral, and when covering a somewhat controversial topic, the tone is very impersonal with no definitive stance. This is in great contrast to earlier publications which included much more of a focus on Latino activism .

DISCUSS

Discuss your inquiry, taking care to separate speculation from fact or data

Files:

[EPS 500 Final Project.doc](#) (Sat 12/17/2005 10:57)

REFLECT

Link

Connect with other resources and materials.

"What is the purpose/role of Cultural Centers on Campus?"

This unit is in support of the Groups Inquiry Page.

-Created by Jones, Herb Last Modified on Dec 31, 1969 Ready To Use

"How do the ethnic/cultural centers on campus help improve student development of our undergraduate student population? What purpose do they provide?"

-Created by Rairden, Shilana Last Modified on Dec 31, 1969 Ready To Use

-This source deals with the role of cultural centers in student development. The author was an individual unfamiliar with the various cultural houses on campus and how their functions contributed specifically to student adjustment. I decided to use this specific ethnography for the purposes of my own since the author did conduct interviews and assessments of La Casa; students and personnel who frequented the place. Much of my research implicated the origins and protest in acquiring such a space, so I believed it was important to consider this analysis.

Upon reading the authors fieldwork notes, I noticed that right away that she was considered the "Other" upon entering these spaces, especially that of La Casa and the Africa American house. The clues within her notes are subtle, yet apparent. One example would be how the author initially spoke to the Directors and personnel of the houses before actually going in. This is important considering the fact that in speaking to these individuals, the author is guaranteed to receive a very politically correct dialogue about the centers purpose. Furthermore, the author was advised to show up on specific dates when certain events would be held. Thus, the author was in ways censored from several meaningful conversations and individuals who would have been able to share a variable insight. Yet, this source does provide an alternate perspective since the author openly admitted that they were never aware of any minority issues before the project.

Esquivel, Arisve. "Creando Una Casa: Embracing Space, Containing Space in the Definition of a Latina/o Community at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign". Thesis. Master of Arts in Education in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 2001.

-This source was referred to me by one very insightful informant, a while ago. Actually, I had heard quite a bit about this particular master's thesis since I had voiced interest in the history of Latino activism on this campus. After spending over an hour in the main stacks searching for this source, I was lucky enough to find it, and be able to check it out.

Esquivel was a student on this campus in the time of the 92' protest and attended graduate school here, thus her accounts of what occurred with those events were very detail oriented. Through the use of memos, agendas, correspondence, and informants, Esquivel chronicled the entire process that Latino students went through in order to gain a cultural center in 1975. The 92' sit-ins, preservation of the original La Casa murals, and the establishment of the Latina/o studies program were also highlighted within the thesis. What I found truly interesting about this particular source was the fact that it seemed despite the decades that had passed since the first efforts of Latino student mobilization, it seems almost as if the same concerns and roadblocks continue to exist today. Furthermore, this source is very factual based, with focus given primarily to archival research, although Esquivel does attempt to place the discussion within Critical Race Theory. Yet, I think there still needs to be a deeper analysis given to this topic so that it can be framed within a theoretical framework that accounts for the various other student movements that were also occurring in this time period.

Rhoads, Robert. "Freedom's Web: Student Activism an Age of Cultural Diversity". The John Hopkins Press. Baltimore, Maryland. 1998.

-This source seems very promising since its subject area is almost exactly as my own, with special attention placed on the early 1990's. The introduction places an emphasis on developing a theoretical framework for analyzing and understanding in depth the issue of minority student political activism. The author decided to conduct five specific case studies of more recent student protests on five various campuses that dealt with five disparate issues, ranging from South African divest, to Bhurma, to most importantly, for my own case, issues of equality for minority students. Yet, I still need to read much further on this source in order to apply it to my own research.

Vellela, Tony. "New Voices: Student Activism in the 80's and 90's". South End Press. Boston, Massachusetts. 1988.