Undocumented Voices
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The title of this presentation is “Undocumented voices” and it is two-fold; undocumented because of their presence in this country and undocumented because little or no attention is paid to what they have to say about their situation. It is well documented that people in power name others; in this case, demonizing of the immigrants is key to create an atmosphere of devaluation for certain group of people. It seems like Hispanics right now are prime suspects of being “illegal” more so if they don’t speak English or speak with an accent. In this case, even the speaker is in doubt, if I show my legal driver license, I still be looked as it may be a fake document. Demonizing the weak, the non-citizens is an easy practice since they have no rights, there is not much left for their message to be heard, since they are here “illegally they don’t have rights. right!” Despite the famous statement from the founding fathers, “all men are created equal” Do women were created equal? Do black-slaves were created equal? Do Native-people were created equal? Is the foundation of this country based on equal rights?

Right now the case of the two-year old that the grandmother wants him in Mexico there was a note on the newspaper stating if the grandmother is so interested in the well being of the grandson, why she doesn’t get a visa a come to live here with the child where he belongs. What are the assumptions and beliefs that permeate the daily discourse of our lives?

I am not against immigration, I am against illegals; these notions get paternalistic to the point that people in power can choose who stays and who can’t stay. In every historical context, people have found ways to interpret and rationalize their systems of social inequalities.

In order to understand this phenomenon of immigration we need to analyze the root cause of human movements. Many fields of knowledge help us bring light to this complex issue. Historically, we, as a human kind, move because of economic pressures, political and or religious persecutions just to mention the big causes. In addition, immigration as we know it today it is a relative new phenomena that involves the “modern state system” that tends to control and regulate who comes and goes. As an example, here in The Americas, Native people were not constituted as a state system, otherwise, they have had expelled the intruders. Currently, it is more or less clear that we don’t get a map and we say “ah, I am going to Monmouth to live, work and support
my family because it is on the map.” There are many situations in which people come from and to different places. The notion of First and Third World Countries provide some light to the issue here discussed.

The economic magnets are conceptualized as First World Countries that because of their industrialized status, these countries will need their own internal and outside cheap labor. Third World Countries in the other hand have cheap human capital to dispose and deflate social-political internal constrains (Mexico has the richest man in the world Carlos Slim). Therefore, there is a symbiotic relation between those industrialized nations who have and those nations that are underdeveloped who do not have. World inequity would be the characterization of this relation. This sociopolitical relationship is often not considered in any serious analysis but only superficial phenomena are discussed. In today’s global economy how the economic power is organizing? If the product can be assembled cheaply in some place else, let’s do it. Industries are looking to lower costs and elevate profits, how can this be accomplished? By using all possible resources from different places; via tax brakes, subsidizing energy, blocking local unions, etc. Inequities remain untouched. Do locals or immigrants are going to voice their concerns?

Immigrants are part of the global and local economies; global because of the push form the countries of origin. Globalization is not good news for many farm owners or farm workers from other underdeveloped countries, when industrialized nations compete, they don’t compete under the same rules, usually industrialized nations subsidized better their farm owners and workers, therefore, Third World countries and their farmers altogether lose, and the immigration movement starts. Third World countries can’t maintain a decent and dignify salary; Mexico still pays based on geographical regions, and that is like $10 US dollars for eight hour job as a national average. The substandard way of living that people are faced with it only begins to push people for economic reasons; the well-being of the family is a strong motivator to look for a better way of living. The Third World country becomes the sending community and the First World country becomes the receiving community; or any other small to “big” economy becomes the sending and the later becomes the receiving community (Guatemala and Mexico as an example).

To conclude, we need to analyze the immigration debate under the light of power relations and political and economic forces that shape much of what we think, only then we will be able to hear those voices that are silenced by the inequities of our current modus vivendi. We still need a lot to do in order to have social justice for all!

Thank you very much!