

With Dr. Alisa Garni's guidance, I examined how a small rural farming community in Kansas is responding to a recent resurgence in immigration. Although residents of "Dairy City" (pseudonym) descended from 19th century German immigrants, little immigration occurred between the early 20th and 21st Centuries. Until a few years ago, the result was limited racial and ethnic diversity. Thus, with the influx of immigrants originally from Mexico and Central America, which has raised the Hispanic share of the local population from less than one percent in the mid-1990s to approximately 30 percent today, how are longtime residents of Dairy City responding to social change? As part of my ethnographic research, I conducted an in-depth, semi-structured interview with the principal of a k-12 school who is pioneering his way into creating services for children who come into American society with little to no fluency in the English language. The purpose of this interview was to gain insight on how multi-lingual and inter-cultural programs develop, what obstacles and opportunities administrators encounter, and how new programs affect broader community development. I conducted this interview after learning about the ethics of conducting ethnographic research, how to develop interview protocols, and how to interview respondents.

I have planned several additional interviews with community leaders and residents. I also regularly observed Dr. Garni's interactions with recent immigrants in an adult English-Language Learner class to understand how a rural Kansas community whose populations has been dwindling over the years has invested in immigrant incorporation to reinvigorate itself. Dairy farmers invest in the upward mobility of their workers, which in turn allows the workers to invest back within the community. Most research on immigrant incorporation focuses on larger urban contexts across the United States. Dairy City provides a unique opportunity to study how immigration affects development in small rural communities experiencing significant agricultural and demographic change.