Professional Leave Report Cover Sheet

Name: Justin Myers

Department: Sociology

College: Social Sciences

Leave taken: ◉ Sabbatical ○ Difference in Pay ○ Professional Leave without Pay

Time Period: ○ Fall

◉ Spring 2023

○ Academic Year

○ Other

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Justin Sean Myers - Spring 2023 Sabbatical Report

Purpose of Sabbatical

I proposed using my sabbatical to begin a multi-year research project linking social theory and historical analysis with interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis of media to explore the ongoing history of settler ecologies in the San Joaquin Valley, specifically the identities, practices, and institutions of white settlers and how the possessive investment in whiteness as a property relation shapes settler colonialism as an ongoing structure of violence in the San Joaquin Valley that not only erases Indigenous sovereignty and efforts at self-determination but continually legitimates settler colonialism and the social, economic, and ecological problems of settler colonialism as acceptable and beneficial so as to ensure "settler futurity."

Specifically, I stated that the spring 2023 sabbatical would enable me to conduct transcription and textual analysis of *American Grown* (a documentary series on agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley), ethnographic research of old-town Clovis (and its selling of the image of the "old west"), and archival research of the *Fresno Bee* (on the struggle over water meters). The sabbatical would also enable me to begin data analysis for, and the write up of, three separate journal articles, one on each manifestation of settler colonialism.

Outcomes of Sabbatical

As I detail below, I was successful in conducting quite a bit of the archival research and transcribing and analysis of archival materials and media content but limited work on participant observation of old-town Covis. However, I was also able to pivot during my sabbatical to incorporate new forms of data collection and analysis not originally proposed for my sabbatical, including analysis of the ongoing conflicts in Fresno surrounding the renaming of schools in the Central Unified School District, changing the mascot for Fresno High School, and the renaming of Sq*** valley. The incorporation of these conflicts into my research project also led me to change my proposed research output from journal articles to a public facing book project with a non-academic press (E.g. a publisher akin to Beacon Press).

I was able to engage in:

- Transcription and textual analysis of the *American Grown* documentary series (Transcription of Season 1, 10 thirty-minute episodes, and several episodes from Season 2 and 3);
- Archival research and textual analysis in the *Fresno Bee* on the fight against the installation of water meters, spanning the years 1931 to 2018;
- Archival research and textual analysis in the Fresno Central Library of Fresno High yearbooks, from the late 1880s through the 1990s;

- Transcription and textual analysis of public meetings about changing the Fresno High Mascot (3-4 meetings at several hours a piece);
- Transcribing and textual analysis of public meetings about renaming James K. Polk Elementary school and Houghton-Kearney K-8 Schools (3-4 meetings at several hours a piece);
- Analysis of a Central Unified School District survey regarding the public's feelings about renaming James K. Polk Elementary school and and Houghton-Kearney K-8 Schools
- Transcribing and textual analysis of a public meeting regarding renaming of Sq*** Valley (1 meeting at several hours), and;
- Participant observation of Clovis Big Hat Days (1 full day observation)

My initial findings:

- Transcription and textual analysis of the *American Grown* documentary series
    - It became clear through the TV series, that farmers feel "entitled" to all the water in California, and to its "cheapness" based on claims of "feeding the world" and "creating jobs", as such, farmers articulate a discourse of possessive investment in public water as their exclusive right and private property. Additionally, farmers articulated a similar framework of entitlement to "cheap labor" to that of "cheap water," viewing farmworkers as merely a cost in their balance book rather than human beings deserving of basic rights and humane working conditions based on a narrative of farming as different or exceptional compared to other industries. The narrative of "family farming" was also utilized to elude the problem of exploitation and poverty and health and safety issues affecting their workforce. Additionally, the water crisis in the valley was not framed as an ecological crisis affecting the entire ecological community in the SJV (e.g., aquatic life, mammals, birds, etc.), or a social crisis principally impacting impoverished farmworker communities, but primarily an economic crisis facing farmers and the future of agriculture in the valley. All of this reinforces the fusion of the social and economic health of the SJV with the "economic health" of farming and its reliance on cheap water and cheap labor.
    - These findings will be connected to a burgeoning literature documenting and theorizing how capitalism's reproduction and expansion is premised on cheap labor, cheap water, and cheap land, and that the end of these cheaps in the SJV has fueled a wave of propaganda campaigns to reinvest legitimacy in settler agriculture and ensure the public, and therefore the state, continue to ensure the material conditions for settler agriculture to be able to exist in the future - and that the campaign "My Job Depends on Ag", from which the documentary series emerged, is central to this ideological battle.

- Archival research and textual analysis in the *Fresno Bee* on the fight against the installation of water meters:
    - Arguments generated against water meters over this 80 year-ish period were intrinsically connected to claims of having to transform the dull ugly brown desert into a lush green oasis mirroring rural England. The fight against water meters was consequently a fight for cheap water as the fear of water meters was that it would lead to higher water prices that would mean the death of non-native lawns, plants, and trees (e.g., all the flora and fauna the settlers were planting), and with it the ecological amenities that made living in the hot SJV worthwhile.
    - These findings will be connected to an existing literature on "settler ecologies" and "ecological imperialism" and how central to settler colonialism is the devaluing of indigenous ecologies, landscapes, and relations in favor of more "civilized" settler ecologies that reflect "development" and "improvement", not just in the conversion of "empty desert" into bountiful agricultural fields, but also the conversion of "empty desert" into lush urban and suburban yards.
- Archival research and textual analysis in the Fresno Central Library of Fresno High yearbooks:
    - The yearbooks never discussed why the Iroquois figure became the mascot of Fresno High rather than a figure of the local Yokuts nations. However, the yearbooks did demonstrate a long history of "playing indian" where white students took on an indigenous identity through dressing up as an indigenous person and enacting indigenous "behaviors" of bravery, strength, and violence. Much of this display was directly connected to athletics at the school, with cheerleaders and athletes wearing Indian clothing and enacting symbolic battles, such as Fresno High students dressing up as "Indians" and scalping President Roosevelt, an actualization of the banners on the walls of the gymnasium proclaiming that Fresno High was going to scalp Roosevelt (their rival).
    - I will be connecting settlers' investment in "playing indian" at Fresno High with the longer history of "playing indian" in the US and how "playing indian" is integral to settlers "indigenizing" themselves and claiming ownership of the land as the new rightful owners by taking on the identities of the Indigenous people they genocided and displaced. This work will build on the argument that settler colonialism entails symbolic domination of the indigenous by settlers, not just their cultural annihilation and genocidal displacement.
- Transcription and textual analysis of public meetings about changing the Fresno High Mascot:

    - A clear generational divide emerged here, where current students claimed the mascot as racist and something that should be changed whereas alumni were heavily invested in the mascot as the foundation of their memories and legacies at Fresno High, which fueled their opposition to changing the mascot. Rather than being racist alumni claimed that the mascot was honoring indigenous folks and that removing it would "erase their history" and obliterate their connections to the high school.
    - These findings will be connected to the ongoing struggles to end Native American mascots in K-12, college, and professional sports, and why students, fans, and the general public are materially and ideologically invested in turning the Indigenous into mascots as a form of symbolic violence and domination that legitimates ongoing settler colonial practices of land theft and denial of indigenous sovereignty.
- Transcribing and textual analysis of public meetings about renaming James K. Polk Elementary school and Houghton-Kearney K-8 Schools
    - Opponents to the name change did not publicly support or advocate for Polk, his ideologies, and his practices, but they did publicly support Mr. Kearney as a founding settler in the valley who helped fuel the spread of agriculture in the valley. Ironically, Mr. Kearney is the logical outcome of Polk's policy of Manifest Destiny - a connection that opponents were not necessarily able to make or refused to acknowledge publicly. Instead, opponents largely challenged the renaming process based on fiscal costs while supporters of the name change laid out Polk's connection to the ideology of Manifest Destiny, its negative legacy on Indigenous communities, and how the Central Unified School District as a minority-serving institution should not uplift advocates of settler colonialism and institutional racism.
    - These findings will be linked to the concept of "settler fragility" and "settler moves to innocence" and the various ways that settlers resist efforts by Indigenous peoples and their allies to challenge the mythological narrative of the U.S. as a beacon of freedom and liberty.
- Analysis of the CUSD survey regarding the public's feelings about renaming James K. Polk Elementary school and and Houghton-Kearney K-8 Schools
    - While in public meetings opponents of the name change did not support Polk in terms of Manifest Destiny and its genocidal effects, numerous respondents openly declared support for Polk and their embrace of Manifest Destiny because without both the San Joaquin Valley would still be part of "backwards" Mexico and not the US and that would be awful.

    - This finding will be utilized to explore how settler colonial ideology is still internalized and reproduced by residents in a variety of ways to legitimate ongoing dispossession and devaluation of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination through the dominant mythologies shaping US national identity.
- Transcribing and textual analysis of the public meeting regarding the renaming of Sq*** Valley
    - Residents opposing the renaming process engaged in numerous arguments about why Sq*** Valley should not be renamed: that it was named by local indigenous peoples; that it was named by the first settlers because all they saw were women in the valley when they arrived; that settlers did not harm local Indigenous peoples; that the name has been around for a long time and shouldn't be changed do to the desires of "outsiders", and; that changing the name will cause problems for local residents in getting their mail or voting. Locals also told Roman Raintree, the local Indigenous advocate pushing the name change to "leave" if he didn't like the name. Locals booed and got very upset when local Indigenous folks reminded them Sq*** is not a native word in their language and so they wouldn't name the valley with that word and that the reason why there were no men in the valley when settlers "named" it was because they were being murdered by the US army and white vigilante squads.
    - This finding will be linked to the concept of "settler fragility" and "settler moves to innocence" and the various ways that settlers resist efforts by Indigenous peoples and their allies to challenge the mythological narrative of the U.S. as a beacon of freedom and liberty.
- Participant observation of Clovis Big Hat Days
    - The audience at Big Hat Days was full of folks wearing 'conservative' ideology shirts expressing support for the flag, guns, and the second amendment. Analysis of the websites of the companies selling these shirts expressed clear messaging linked to "hypermasculinity" and "settler colonialism" through notions that the US was founded through armed violence - both against the UK and the Indigenous - and that gun ownership and armed civilians were central to securing and ensuring the nation and "freedom and liberty for the people."
    - These findings will be connected to a burgeoning literature on conservative white identity, settler colonialism, and sovereignty, and how settler colonialism discourse in the US must make invisible the sovereignty of Indigenous nations while centering the sovereignty of white settlers as the only group worthy of sovereignty, a sovereignty that must be generated and secured through armed violence, dispossession, and genocide.

Next Steps Due to Sabbatical

Overall, the sabbatical provided time for the initial research and exploration of my research project on settler colonialism in the SJV, enabling the generation of a lot of data to theorize how settler colonialism is playing out in the SJV. And through this initial exploration I have started to consolidate my notes and findings into chapter outlines for a public-facing book for a non-academic audience that will discuss the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism in the SJV, the struggles that seek to unsettle and decolonize settler colonialism in the SJV, and what white settlers can do to both unsettle and decolonize themselves and the broader SJV. I plan to use future RSCA opportunities to be able to write up my notes and outlines into book chapters as well as continue my participant observation of old-town Clovis, specifically Rodeo week and Clovis Hat Days. I plan to present my initial ideas and theories during 2024-2025 at the annual conferences of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA), and the American Sociological Association (ASA). After refinement of my arguments based on peer feedback I plan to pursue a book contract with a public-facing press in 2025-2026.

Benefits of Sabbatical

This sabbatical assisted me in cultivating a greater command of the scholarship coupling environmental sociology, settler colonialism studies, Indigenous studies, and the San Joaquin Valley and therefore enabled me to shift my research agenda towards place-based research in the San Joaquin Valley with a particular focus on the social, economic, and ecological impacts of settler settlement in the San Joaquin Valley. The sabbatical also enabled me to shift my data collection from historical analysis of settler ecologies in the valley to present-day manifestations of settler ecologies through providing the time to engage in participant observation and textual analysis of contemporary actions and events. Additionally, the sabbatical has made more clear to me the various ways and means that settlers utilize to both maintain their investment in, as well as avoid a deep introspection about their ongoing role in, settler colonialism, setter ecologies, and native dispossession and erasure.

The research conducted through this sabbatical has strengthened my curricula and course content by expanding the sociological theories and concepts taught in my courses as well as more strongly linking theories and concepts to the everyday lives of students and the communities in which they live, work, and play. Every year I teach courses in Social Classes and Inequality (SOC 151), Contemporary Sociological Theory (SOC 153), Qualitative Research Methods (SOC 176), Social Movements (SOC 122), and Sociology of Food (SOC 159), and I am in rotation to teach Environmental Sociology (SOC 158). This sabbatical has enabled me to cultivate expertise on settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley, its social, economic, and ecological impacts, and bring this into my content in the aforementioned courses.

Given that Fresno State exists on Indigenous land, teaches Indigenous students, operates an American Indian Studies program, and has relations with local Indigenous nations, this research exploring the history of settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley also aims to benefit the university community as a whole in understanding how settler colonialism operates, who it has impacted and in what ways, and what political efforts are necessary in order to address the problems and inequities emerging from settler colonialism in the SJV.

California Dreamin':
White Supremacy and Settler Colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley

Section 1: Project Proposal

Summary Statement

The San Joaquin Valley is home to numerous social, economic, and ecological problems, including air and water pollution, ecosystem degradation, suburban sprawl, concentrated poverty, and mass incarceration. It is also home to a growing body of environmental justice scholarship linking these problems to neoliberalism and environmental racism. Such scholarship has proven beneficial in illuminating the classed and raced processes shaping these problems and the tactics and strategies that marginalized communities utilize against agricultural, industrial, and development interests to create a more equitable world. Yet, much of this research ignores the role of settler colonialism in the production of these problems and therefore overlooks how the imposition of "settler ecologies" on the San Joaquin Valley, and the ongoing investment of settlers in such ecologies, provides insight into the root structures shaping these problems as well as how the processes of unsettling and decolonizing are integral to addressing these interconnected problems. Through a multi-year research project linking social theory and historical analysis with interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis I will explore the ongoing history of settler ecologies in the San Joaquin Valley through different yet interconnected forms of settlement (agrarian, urban, and suburban). Focus will be placed on the identities, practices, and institutions of white settlers and how the possessive investment in whiteness as a property relation shapes settler colonialism as an ongoing structure of violence in the San Joaquin Valley that not only erases Indigenous sovereignty and efforts at self-determination but continually legitimates settler colonialism, white rule, and the social, economic, and ecological problems of settler colonialism as acceptable and beneficial so as to ensure "settler futurity."

Project Overview

Emerging in the 1970s and 1980s, the environmental justice movement (EJM) shifted the lens of environmental activism from protecting wildlife and wild places to addressing environmental inequities where people live, work, play, and pray (Bullard 1993, 2000). In focusing on the built environment, the EJM emphasized the unequal distribution of environmental burdens in working class communities and communities of color and how such communities experienced negative social, economic, ecological, and physiological effects due to the disproportionate location of LULUs in their neighborhoods, including landfills, toxic waste dumps, chemical plants, mining facilities, slaughterhouses, oil refineries, and transportation corridors (Sze 2007; Taylor 2014). In emphasizing the disproportionate location of LULUs in

communities of color, the movement employed the term "environmental racism" to underscore how zoning, siting, urban planning, transportation systems, redlining, and systemic disinvestment, all played a role in concentrating "environmental bads" in such communities (Park and Pellow 2004; Pulido 2000, 2015).

Grounded in the people, discourses, tactics, and demands of the Civil Rights, Black Power, Chicano Power, and Red Power movements, the EJM blended community mobilization and direct action with litigation, lobbying, and policy reform to push beyond a limited focus on distributive equity to prioritize the importance of realizing procedural equity for a just society (Cole and Foster 2001; Pulido 1996). For the EJM, addressing environmental racism would require a transformation in the power relations between communities of color and white communities, between communities of color and the state, between communities of color and corporations (Agyeman 2005). Much of the literature has subsequently focused on the collective grievances, framing practices, and mobilization tactics and strategies of community groups and organizations, seeking to ascertain the conditions that lead to the success or failure of environmental justice movements. This is particularly true for the San Joaquin Valley, where scholarship has focused on the struggles around farmworker rights, pesticide drift, air pollution, water pollution, waste dumps, and the lack of access to affordable clean water (Cole and Foster 2001; Harrison 2011; Perkins 2022).

As a result, research has focused on the successes *of* and barriers *to* community mobilization against what scholars call neoliberalism and environmental racism (Cole and Foster 2001; Harrison 2011). The problem with this conceptual framework is that such scholarship has generally circumscribed research within and attributed the problems facing marginalized communities to the racialized political economy of capitalism, ignoring and overlooking the role of settler colonialism in generating social, economic, and ecological inequities and crises based on its imposition of "settler ecologies" on the landbase and the requisite social, political, and economic structures and ideological processes necessary to maintain "settler futurity" (Whyte 2016a, 2016b; Norgaard 2019). Such scholarship also tends to study down rather than study up and often does not explore nor theorize how settlers participate in and legitimate these inequities and problems materially and ideologically through a possessive investment in whiteness, capitalist property relations, settler agriculture, suburbia, automobility, and the myth of the frontier, the cowboy, and the west (Barraclough 2018; Rotz 2017; Whyte 2016a, 2016b). Fortunately, a shift is underway as environmental justice scholars have begun to call for the integration of theories of white supremacy and settler colonialism into the field and with it a shift in focus towards the identities, practices, performances, relations, and institutions of settlers, their role in the generation and reproduction of social, economic, and environmental problems and inequities, and the various narratives that shape settlers' "moves of innocence" to both devalue and make invisible these connections so as to avoid the need for unsettling and decolonizing (LaDuke 1999; Pulido 2015, 2018; Tuck and Yang 2012; Whyte 2016a, 2016b).

The intention of this research project is to bring this "settler turn" within environmental justice scholarship to the San Joaquin Valley, a region with arguable some of the highest rates of poverty and inequality and the most severe forms of ecological degradation and pollution in the nation, a region whose social, economic, and ecological problems are being exacerbated through settler generated climate change. The project will explore how the imposition of settler ecologies in the San Joaquim Valley has transformed human-nonhuman relations, the ideological and material processes shaping such transformations, the effects of such transformations on the structure of ecosocial relations, and the attendant social and ecological problems and inequities. The aim of such analysis is to underscore how unsettling and decolonizing processes are integral to addressing the myriad problems facing human and nonhuman life in the San Joaquin Valley and are therefore vital to creating a more just and sustainable world. In doing so, this project will bring together scholarship in environmental sociology, environmental justice, Indigenous studies, rural studies, urban studies, and settler colonialism studies in innovative ways in a place-based project to put forth programmatic solutions to the myriad crises confronting the valley.

Studies on Indigenous nations in the San Joaquin Valley have overwhelmingly been ethnohistorical in form and devoid of theorizing such histories in relation to settler colonialism, whiteness, white supremacy, and environmental racism, let alone urban and suburban development and the ongoing ecological crisis of climate change (Frank and Goldberg 2010; Manlove 2020; Phillips 1993, 1997, 2004). Correspondingly, much of the literature on settler colonialism has focused on the historical emergence of it in Turtle Island (what settlers call North America) and how settler colonialism transformed and negatively impacted Indigenous nations (Veracini 2010; Wolfe 2006). A significant amount of this research focuses on Canada and Australia, less research has been done in the United States, the West, and California on how settler colonialism reproduces itself today through a variety of narratives, practices, and mobilities, e.g., the frontier myth, settler agriculture, automobility, urbanization, and suburbanization (Claire and Surprise 2021; Hugill 2017; Edmonds 2010; Thrush 2006; Veracini 2012).

Unlike colonialism, where metropole countries extracted wealth from colonies, settler colonialism is where settlers come to stay to create a neo-Europe, a desire for a new homeland that necessitates the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty both literally and discursively (Wolfe 2006). Key here is that settler colonialism is a "structure not an event" (Wolfe 2006: 388). A structure that is reproduced materially through the inscription of "settler ecologies" onto Indigenous homelands in order to create a homeland for settlers, a process that requires the activation of settlers own "cultural, economic, and political aspirations and collective capacities (Whyte 2016a: 359-360)." Material transformations that are subsequently legitimated through the ideological processes of story-telling and myth-making, often involving agrarianism and narratives of "feeding the world", economic growth and the American Dream, and pioneers who tamed the frontier (Whyte 2016b).

The San Joaquin Valley is an invaluable region to investigate settler colonialism because it was one of the most densely populated Indigenous areas in the United States, experienced one of the most rapid and severe genocides, and continues to be shaped by the refusal of settlers to agree to the treaties signed between the Yokots, Mono's, and the United States in the 1850s that promised the Indigenous sizeable reservations within the valley, treaties that were not signed due to settler demands for the land for the purposes of agriculture and mineral extraction (Phillips 1993, 1997, 2004). Alongside this reason, the San Joaquin Valley is an important area of study because it is one of the most ecologically transformed, degraded, and polluted regions in the United States due principally to settler agriculture (Preston 1981). A transformation that has generated myriad social, economic, and ecological problems and inequities in the valley for Indigenous and settler alike, and despite these issues, many settlers in the valley display a possessive investment in settler agriculture, e.g., the My Job Depends on Ag campaign, the organization Farmers Protecting the Valley (FPV), and the *American Grown* documentary series about agriculture in the valley on Valley PBS. Moreover, the valley is a rapidly urbanizing and suburbanizing region that maintains an active relationship to the narratives of the frontier, the cowboy, and the west, e.g., Clovis Big Hat Days, Clovis Rodeo, and Old Town Clovis, and has been the site of significant settler resistance to efforts to reduce water consumption and air pollution, decenter automobility and suburban sprawl, and implement xeriscaping. Therefore, despite differences between agrarian, urban, and suburban forms, all three are settler productions and occupations of space that are heavily invested in capitalist property relations, whiteness, and Indigenous erasure. And while there is a growing body of scholarship exploring the historical transformation of settler colonialism within one city or region, there is no work doing such within the San Joaquin Valley (C.f. Norgaard 2020; Toews 2018).

This project aims to accomplish such a historical analysis for the San Joaquin Valley, with a focus on Fresno County, by documenting and theorizing the historical production of settler colonialism in the valley from the initial attempts at Spanish settlement through today and how the imposition of settler ecologies have fundamentally restructured social, economic, ecological, and political relations in the valley in ways that are social and ecologically destructive. Moreover, the project will explore how despite the visibility and awareness of the inequities, destructive capacities, and crisis of settler society in the valley, settlers engage in a variety of practices that maintain their investment in settler imaginaries and settler ecologies, practices that generate a possessive investment in the socially and ecologically destructive lifeways of settler ecologies as well as opposition to efforts geared towards social reform let alone the more transformative politics of unsettling and decolonizing relations between human and nonhuman life in the valley.

The research questions guiding this project will focus on settler colonialism in the valley and the role of settlers in reproducing settler colonialism as an ongoing social structure. They include: How has the imposition of settler ecologies transformed the ecosocial relations within the San Joaquin Valley? How have settler ecologies generated social, economic, and ecological

problems within the San Joaquin Valley? How have settler ecologies transformed themselves over time? How does settler agriculture legitimate its claims to the land, labor, water, and air in the valley? Through what forms does the settler imaginary reproduce itself today and how do such imaginaries play a role in securing settler futurity? How do settler ecologies generate a possessive investment in whiteness that generates and legitimates social, economic, and ecological inequities in the valley? What practices do settlers engage in to legitimate their claim to the San Joaquin Valley? How do settlers marginalize, devalue, and delegitimate critiques of settler society as unsustainable and unjust?

Given the lack of scholarship connecting settler colonialism to the problems and crises traversing the valley, this project aims to shape both scholarship and public policy in ways that underscore that current efforts to address said problems and crises need to move beyond analyses of neoliberalism and environmental racism to emphasize settler colonialism, settler ecologies, and settler imaginaries, and how doing so points to the need to embrace the processes of unsettling and decolonizing ecosocial relations so as to generate alternative ecosocial relations that can address the social, economic, and ecological crises confronting the valley.

Project Design

In exploring the ongoing history of settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley, this project will center attention on *three (3)* manifestations of settler ecologies, how such ecologies are constructed and legitimated, and the effects of such ecologies on human and nonhuman life in the valley.

(1) Through textual analysis it will investigate the ideology and practices of settler agriculture presented in the *American Grown* documentary series on Valley PBS.
(2) It will investigate the ideology and practices of the interconnected narratives of the frontier, the west, and the cowboy, through participant observation and interviews of the Clovis Rodeo, Clovis Big Hat Days, and Old Town Clovis.
(3) It will investigate settler suburbia through textual analysis of articles in the *Fresno Bee* documenting settler opposition to water meters, “No Burn” days, bicycle infrastructure, and the state gas tax, as well as settler investment in green lawns and automobility.

Such research is guided by the following research questions: What formations do settler ecologies inscribe on the San Joaquin Valley? How do these setter ecologies change over time as the valley experiences agricultural, urban, and suburban settlements? How do settlers engage in ideological and material practices that legitimate setter colonialism and seek to secure settler futurity? What social, economic, and ecological problems and crises are generated through these settler ecologies? What insights emerge through unsettling these settler ecologies and challenging their legitimacy and right to own and control the San Joaquin Valley?

I have spent the past year reading scholarship on the San Joaquin Valley, settler colonialism, Indigenous studies, and environmental justice. This historical research will continue through Fall 2022 and provides the historical and theoretical background shaping this project's focus on contemporary manifestations of settler colonialism. The spring 2023 sabbatical would enable me to conduct the transcription of *American Grown,* the ethnographic research of Clovis, and archival research of the *Fresno Bee*. The sabbatical would also enable me to begin data analysis for, and the write up of, three separate journal articles, one on each manifestation of settler colonialism.

The themes to be explored in the textual analysis of *American Grown* include: What settler narratives legitimate the existence and perpetuation of settler agriculture? How do settler farmers challenge social, economic, and ecological critiques of setter agriculture as economically exploitative and ecologically destructive? How do settler farmers contribute to the erasure and dispossession of the Indigenous in the San Joaquin Valley?

Interviews for the Clovis project will utilize purpose and snowball sampling to talk to organizers of the events, business owners involved with sponsoring and selling goods at the events, business owners located in Old Town Clovis, and individuals who visit the events or businesses. Interviews with event organizers and business owners will focus on the meaning and framing of "Old Town" in relation to their business, their ideas around the saying "Clovis, Gateway to the Sierras", their ideas about the significance and purpose of Clovis Big Hat Days and the Clovis Rodeo, the significance of ranching and the cowboy to the San Joaquin Valley, and the meaning of such events being held on the homeland of the Yokuts. Interviews with event attendees and customers will focus on the meaning and purpose of Clovis Big Hat Days, the Clovis Rodeo, and Old Town Clovis to settlers, the significance of ranching and the cowboy to the San Joaquin Valley and settlers, and the meaning of such practices being written onto the homeland of the Yokuts. A broader theme to be explored through the interviews is how do these events and places in Clovis contribute to the ongoing ecological crises in the valley as well as the erasure and dispossession of the Indigenous in the San Joaquin Valley?

The themes to be explored in the *Fresno Bee* articles include: What shapes settler investment in suburbia, home ownership, green lawns, and automobility? What shapes settler opposition to water meters, "No burn" days, bicycle infrastructure, and gas taxes? How does the investment in and opposition to particular built environments shape the ideological and material formation of settler colonialism? How do these practices contribute to the ongoing ecological crises in the valley as well as the erasure and dispossession of the Indigenous in the San Joaquin Valley?

This project is guided by qualitative methodology and its substantive focus on exploring social processes and collective experiences, with data collection being driven by thematic generation through textual analysis, ethnographic fieldnotes, and interviews (Warren and Karner 2015). The *American Grown* documentary will be transcribed, the Clovis interviews will be

transcribed and fieldnotes will be written up, and the Fresno Bee articles will be collated, all of which will be then be coded to ascertain the descriptive and analytic themes emerging from the research. Overall, I will utilize an inductive approach, coupling empirical observations, interview content, social theory, and thematic coding to inform my emerging theories and explanations about settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley (Maxwell 2005).

Project Timeline

Fall 2020 – Fall 2022

- Investigation of field of settler colonialism, Indigenous studies, environmental justice, and environmental sociology;
- Investigation of history of settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley.

Spring 2023 (Sabbatical) and Summer 2023

- Transcription of the *American Grown* documentary series (Transcription of 20 thirty-minute episodes);
- Participant observation of Clovis Rodeo, Clovis Big Hat Days, and Old Town Clovis (Clovis Rodeo = 4 days @ 36 hours, Big Hat Days = 2 days @ 18 hours, Old Town Clovis = 40 hours);
- Conduct interviews with staff who organize and sell at, as well as people who attend, Clovis Rodeo, Clovis Big Hat Days, and Old Town Clovis (50 interviews);
- Archival research in *Fresno Bee* on local conflicts over water metering, "No Burn" days, bicycle infrastructure, green lawns, and the state gas tax;
- Textual analysis of *American Grown* documentary series;
- Data analysis of Clovis interviews;
- Data analysis of *Fresno Bee* articles;
- Write up three journal articles.

Section 2: Benefits to Faculty Member

This sabbatical will enable me to achieve the following objectives outlined in APM 360: a) studies leading to a greater command of subject matter; b) studies to accomplish a shift in areas of academic emphasis; c) studies leading to improved curricula, and; f) travel with a well-defined professional or scholarly objective. In addition to achieving these objectives, the sabbatical is integral to my professional goals associated with scholarship, teaching, and service.

I am an environmental sociologist that utilizes qualitative and historical methods to examine how marginalized communities are organizing to address social, economic, food, and environmental inequities. My prior ethnographic project on the food justice movement in New York City incorporated several years of participant observation and interviews with residents and

staff associated with the organization *East New York Farms!*, and is emblematic of my training as a qualitative researcher utilizing participation observation, interviewing, and textual analysis. I have previously published on the politics of the food justice movement as well as the race and class tensions within the food movement. This work has appeared in the journals *Environmental Sociology*, *Geoforum*, and *Agriculture & Human Values* as well as the books *Twenty Lessons in Environmental Sociology* (Oxford)*, Twenty Lessons in the Sociology of Food and Agriculture* (Oxford), *and A Recipe for Gentrification (NYU Press).*

Much of my prior research has been focused on the food justice movement in New York City, where I previously lived and worked, this sabbatical will assist in cultivating a greater command of the scholarship coupling environmental sociology, setter colonialism studies, Indigenous studies, and the San Joaquin Valley and therefore enable me to shift my research agenda towards place-based research in the San Joaquin Valley with a particular focus on the social, economic, and ecological impacts of settler settlement in the San Joaquin Valley. The sabbatical would also enable me to shift my data collection from historical analysis of settler ecologies in the valley to present-day manifestations of settler ecologies through providing the time to engage in participant observation, interviews, and textual analysis of contemporary actions and events as well as provide the time to engage in the analysis and write up of such data so I am able to submit three separate journal articles for publication.

The time allotted to such research and writing by this sabbatical will contribute to academic presentations and publications to strengthen my case for promotion to Full Professor. For presentations, my goal is to present this research at the annual conferences of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA), and the American Sociological Association (ASA). For publications, I aim to publish my research in peer-reviewed journals in sociology, geography, and settler colonial studies, such as *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, *Settler Colonial Studies*, *Antipode*, *Social Problems*, and *Environmental Sociology*. After publication of several articles, my intention is to publish a book on settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley on an academic press that specializes on this topic, such as the University of Minnesota Press or the University of California Press. This work would build on my existing publication history, which at Fresno State includes a journal article, three book chapters, a series of book chapter inset boxes, and a book contract with Rutgers University Press. I also have written drafts of three journal articles that will be submitted this academic year (2021-2022AY) for publication in peer-reviewed journals (*Geoforum, Antipode,* and *Agriculture and Human Values*) and I have a book chapter on food justice movements in the book *Environmental Justice in North America* with Routledge due in the summer of 2022. This history of publication at Fresno State attests to my ability to complete the research plan outlined within this proposal.

The research conducted through this sabbatical will strengthen my curricula and course content by expanding the sociological theories and concepts taught in my courses as well as more

strongly linking theories and concepts to the everyday lives of students and the communities in which they live, work, and play. Every year I teach courses in Social Classes and Inequality (SOC 151), Contemporary Sociological Theory (SOC 153), Qualitative Research Methods (SOC 176), Social Movements (SOC 122), and Sociology of Food (SOC 150T, in process as a permanent course offering as SOC 159), and I am in rotation to teach Environmental Sociology (SOC 158). This sabbatical would enable me to cultivate expertise on settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley, its social, economic, and ecological impacts, and bring this into my content in the aforementioned courses.

Section 3: Benefits to University

The university will benefit, first and foremost, in having a professor with an enriched proficiency in their area of teaching and research specialization, which will not only increase the university's profile in these areas of study but provide students with a deeper interdisciplinary and place-based education, facilitating the university's core values of "Discovery. Diversity. Distinction." Given that Fresno State exists on Indigenous land, teaches Indigenous students, operates an American Indian Studies program, and has relations with local Indigenous nations, this research exploring the history of settler colonialism in the San Joaquin Valley will benefit the university community in understanding how setter colonialism operates, who it has impacted and in what ways, and what political efforts are necessary in order to address the problems and inequities emerging from settler colonialism. In particular, it will shine a light on how settler colonialism impacts the social, economic, and ecological health of Indigenous and settler students, their households, and communities.

The project aims to cultivate conversations between the American Indian Studies program, Indigenous and settler students, and the Yokuts and Mono communities, around the ongoing effects of settler colonialism on the San Joaquin Valley and what unsettling and decolonizing efforts in the valley could look like. Such work could strengthen relations between the university community and Indigenous communities as well as follow through on the obligations and responsibilities to such communities indicated in the university's land acknowledgement language:

> The Fresno State campus sits in the midst of the San Joaquin Valley, a valley rich in the traditions and representation of Native American peoples and cultures. We are grateful to be in the traditional homelands of the Yokuts and Mono peoples, whose diverse tribal communities share stewardship over this land.

The project intends to interject into existing debates around the social, economic, and ecological problems shaping the valley through bringing settler colonialism and decolonization politics to the center of conversations so as to underscore the role the former plays in shaping

the problems in the valley and the role of the latter in generating solutions to these problems. This is important because debates around the problems facing the valley have historically marginalized Indigenous experiences, knowledges, and voices, and continues to do so as the effects of settler colonialism on Yokots and Mono peoples, and their continued struggle against it, is still relatively unknown within public consciousness and discourse. Additionally, the multitude of ways that settlers maintain their investment in settler colonialism, setter ecologies, and native dispossession and erasure are understudied and undertheorized in the valley, a gap in the scholarship that I propose to address by linking scholarship on environmental sociology, settler colonialism studies, Indigenous studies, urban studies, rural studies, and the San Joaquin Valley with my own qualitative data collected and analyzed through this sabbatical.

Section 4: Previous Leaves

While at Fresno State I have not taken any sabbaticals or difference in pay leaves.

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