

Sarah Cerritos
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Sociology 201

Interview Transcription

Sarah: My name is Sarah Cerritos. I am a CI student. As a class project, I and my classmates are collecting the oral histories of those in Ventura County who are affected by the current economic recession. By signing the consent form that I have provided you with earlier, you have agreed to participate in this research and/or you have agreed the audio-recording of this interview to be archived at the CI Bloome Library. I would like to assure you that whenever you feel uncomfortable with the interview, you can take a break or you can decide to withdraw your participation in this interview.

Sarah: So I want to know a little bit more about you. Um tell me about yourself, where were you born and when and what do you do, what are some of your previous occupations and so forth.

Victoria Jonson: Well I was born in Oxnard California in 1990 and I have lived here all my life. So yeah.

Sarah: And what do you do?

Victoria Jonson: Well right now I am a college student and currently I am not working right now but just um trying to get my major and my classes done. So that it my number one priority at this moment.

Sarah: What was your childhood dream?

Victoria Jonson: My childhood dream was, first to go to college but I was not sure what I wanted to do but from a young age I knew that college was important and that is something that I have been pursuing since junior high or high school. I would say that was my childhood dream as childhood dream growing up.

Sarah: And were you a first generation?

Victoria Jonson: I was not first generation. My sister went to college before me. She was a first generation.

Sarah: oh okay.

Victoria Jonson: I was the first in my family to go to a four year university so that it an accomplishment.

Sarah: That is a big accomplishment.

Sarah: Tell me about your family, like how many siblings do you have? How old are they? Where are they now? Do they live with you? Or are some away in college?

Victoria Jonson: I have an older sister; she is thirty-two years old. Umm she is going to school and working but she is currently working fulltime at the bank, Wells Fargo. She is taking one online course because she plans to attend this school, CSU Channel Islands hopefully by next spring. And my younger brother is twenty years old and he is going to Oxnard college part time. And he is not sure what he wants to do yet but he is taking his general Ed courses requirements.

Sarah: oh okay.

Victoria Jonson: Umm parents, they didn't actually grow up here in the U.S., they came from Mexico. My dad came from San Luis Potosí. And he came here in the sixties. And my mom came from Guadalajara and she came here in the mid seventies. And my dad is working in maintenance and gardening. He has been working in the same place for about thirty-five years. My mom is currently unemployed but yeah.

Sarah: Were they able to adjust well when they came here?

Victoria Jonson: Um I feel like my dad was able to adjust because he had family members living here already. And the same goes for my mom. They already have family members living here. So I feel like the adjustment processes was a lot easier in the sense.

Sarah: Oh okay. And as you probably know there has been an economic recession, people are affected very differently. And my question to you is, if you have been impacted, how have you been impacted by the recession?

Victoria Johnson: Well, I feel like my family was impacted in like a few years ago. In 2008 when the recession was just starting because we lost our house in that year. And I feel like a lot of people are in the same situation where they signed or bought a house and signed a contract when they didn't know that the houses or payments were going on in the recession. So we ended up losing and unfortunately, well fortunately, we already had a house, we already owned a house.

Sarah: um hum

Victoria Jonson: So we had to move there but we had to start over with the payment since we were already renting it someone else. So it is like we had to start over in that sense. All the money my parents invested in that house it was like thrown away because the recession. Yeah.

Sarah: How greatly did this impact you? With school, did it affect you a lot? Did you have to cut back on anything? What was your experience in that?

Victoria Jonson: Well when we recently lost the house it was very difficult because um it was in the middle or the beginning of the school year. Around October and that was um we had to move back and we were packing up all our stuff because we only had or they only gave us about a week to move out. We literally had to take out all of our belongings and we felt so rushed. We didn't even get a chance to take everything out of the house. And when we came back the next day, they had locked the house up.

Sarah: Wow

Victoria Jonson: Yeah my mom had to call for them to unlock the house but everything was in garbage bags, and we weren't going to know what was what.

Sarah: oh okay

Victoria Jonson: We just decided to leave certain things behind. But it was very chaotic and very difficult too because it was around my homecoming so I was trying to get ready for homecoming and at the same time I was trying to move out.

Sarah: Yeah

Victoria Jonson: So that was really difficult.

Sarah: What would you say that was the most painful part of that experience?

Victoria Jonson: I think the most painful part was losing some of the photographs that we had. The family photographs. And um some clothing items that were left behind, that was difficult. And it was difficult knowing that my parents put so much money or invested so much money in the house and that it was a lot of that money just went to the house but it was like for nothing because we ended up losing the house.

Sarah: So I wanted to ask you a little bit about school and college. As we know now, a lot of the topic now is around education and are we getting enough teachers, good teachers and the pay cuts. Some students are very limited of where they can go. From your experience, now a college student what can you touch base on. Meaning what has your college experience been so far as a college student when it comes to economically paying for it or getting classes and just your experience so far.

Victoria Jonson: Umm well my experience as a college stressful in the academic sense and financially I am not too stressed because fortunately I have and am able to pay for school through financial aid. But at the same time I do get a little worried because sometimes I don't know how I am going to pay off the loans I have already accumulated. Since I have switched my major I am going to have to take out more loans and that worries me even more because it is going to be more money that I owe when I graduate.

Sarah: Yeah

Victoria Jonson: And I am hoping that I am able to pay that off after I graduate.

Sarah: True. And um, have you had any challenges when it came to applying to certain classes or does it seem so far the school has given you a great opportunity, economically, and educationally or any other sources?

Victoria Jonson: Umm well the classes I feel like they don't offer enough classes. I feel like there are a limited number of classes that they do offer per semester and that here is not enough resources and funding for this school to have more classes available for students and there needs to be more professors so that they cant teach more classes for that to happen. And I feel like since we are so limited with the number of classes that we do offer I feel like it is more difficult for students to be able to graduate on time or finish sooner than they would anticipate.

Sarah: Yeah. And then in regards to on hoe we were discussing earlier about your parents loosing the house and how was that changed you because of those hardships?

Victoria Jonson: Well in the beginning it was definitely hard to adjust to the hardship because we had to watch out spending a lot and um it was definitely very stressful because I was trying to apply to colleges and then I had the stress of moving back to my old house and it definitely took a toll on me and especially it was hard because I had to make sure I pass my classes in high school. So I feel like everything added up but I don't know. Wait was the questions again?

Sarah: what was your experience with this hardship?

Victoria Jonson: Yeah so it was difficult at first and umm

Sarah: well I would assume to because being in high school and having to go through that it must have not been easy.

Victoria Jonson: it was not easy.

Sarah: did it impact you and your family health wise? Did it cause insecurities meaning like will this happen again and stuff like that?

Victoria Jonson: Yeah it affected it all especially because we are a big family and have five family members and the house itself is small. It is only a two bedroom. So my sister and I have to share a room, my brother has his own room and my parents have to sleep in the living room.

Sarah: yeah

Victoria Jonson: so that was really difficult to adjust too that and the fact that there is only one bathroom, it was really an adjustment because the house that we lived in before it was more spacious and more appropriate to the number of people living in the house

and um so that was an adjustment and also, I was going to say something else but I cant remember haha.

Victoria Jonson: oh yeah um, the year we moved back I remember we had a strict budget so we had to cut back and we didn't even have a Christmas that year because we were so limited in the amount of money that we can spend. So that was really difficult. So um, thankfully I qualified for financial aid so that kind of helped and the money that they gave me helped a lot in the sense that I was able to buy my own groceries. I could and I didn't feel like obligated to ask my dad for money and that sort of made me a little bit, um gave me a little sense of relief because I felt that I didn't have to stress him out with that or money for books or other materials that I would need for school, so that helped.

Sarah: So that gave you a sense of independence as well.

Victoria Jonson: yeah.

Sarah: and how were you able to cope with it? You yourself struggling in school, not so much struggling but just being in school must have not been easy. And like who helped you out, and was it helpful?

Victoria Jonson: Umm well for myself, gosh I would say that going to school helped a lot because I was surrounded by friends and it is that kind of help that helped lightened the mood that was going on at home. It kind of like give me a moment or make me forget of what was going on and it didn't make me dwell on the negative aspects that were going on back home so I think that even though it was hard, going to school at that time made it easier because it was kind of like a distraction of those hardships.

Sarah: Yeah.

Victoria Jonson: oh and also, the classes or school was another way to keep me focused and in finishing my assignments and focused on school work and that kind of helped me umm focus on other things others than that hardship.

Sarah: Yeah.

Victoria Jonson: And my family also helped me a lot in that sense because we had and helped each other out. And since my sister was working at that time she was able to help with like groceries and other stuff so we didn't feel like we were so limited and yeah.

Sarah: yeah. And um support itself is very helpful and it is good to have that support and you and your family were still able to stay united and help each other get yourselves across from this hardship and school as you mentioned is very important and I am glad that you were able to have friends who were there for you and teachers and just the fact the school helped you to not dwell so much on what had happened and you were able to just move forward and not let this bring you down.

Sarah: Who would you say that you blame for your hardship? Like the economy the society?

Victoria Jonson: I would definitely say the economy because at the time the economy was really bad and gas was expensive and that time all the money would go to gas and since we have a really big car it was a lot of money every month and since my sister does not drive that was a big source in our expenses. And most of our expenses would go towards that. And of course food and um yeah I would say the economy for sure. I would blame the economy for our hardships. And I feel like the government too because of all the corruptions that were going on with the banks and the housing market. I feel like the realtor that sold us the house was not very fair they just wanted to sell the house just so they can get the profit even though it was not a good time to buy a house they just wanted to make an investment. I feel like that is the main source of the problem.

Sarah: yeah. I fell like a lot of people who might have been in that situation probably agree.

Sarah: and then um, after that has happened. Liken how have your views on society or on America, have changed because of your hardships?

Victoria Jonson: Umm well it definitely, um since the hardship I definitely appreciate everything that I have because going through this I know how hard it is to lose a house and kind of start fresh you know. And I kind of had to start over you can say. So in that sense I feel like I already know what that is like. I learned a lot from it and it has made me grow up and I feel like I have learned to deal with situation in a healthy way and not to focus so much on the negative even though it was an unfortunate thing and circumstances I don't want to focus to much on the negative aspects of that experience and I am happy that I have people who were supportive during those hard times and I had my family and friends who were there and supportive. I feel like the situation could have been a lot worse if I didn't have those outlets and I also fee that umm that our family became a lot closer because of that and even though it did affect us a lot it is not something I would want anyone to go through but it did make me and my family a lot closer and supportive of each other.

Sarah: Yeah. That is a good way to think about it to because a lot of people who may have gone through that look at life in such a negative way or they would say why me or they blame everyone and everything and I think that the fact that something very devastating happened to you, now you are able to reflect in a good way and value life better and like you said appreciate what you have which is good and a healthy way of thinking about it too.

Victoria Jonson: Yeah.

Sarah: And lastly just to tie in the interview. Umm why did you decide to do the interview? What do you hope that people will gain from like what your hardships were or how this economic recession impacted you and your family?

Victoria Jonson: well, I wanted to do this interview because I feel like people should know about what other people have gone through. Since the economic recession in 2008 and I know that a lot of people have gone through similar situations that I have but those who haven't I think this is a good way for them to get a sense of what's someone who did loose a house, what their experience was. And umm, I don't know I think it is a good way to reflect on everything that has happened and umm I feel like this interview would be good for anyone who has gone through a hardship in this economic recession, whether it is food insecurities and whether myself they have lost a house, financially, job instabilities and even trouble paying for school, you know if they have had to have any help from the government I think it is a good interview so that other students are aware of these issues.

Sarah: Yeah.

Sarah: and sometimes that is all some one wants, is to be heard. And you from other experiences that I have heard from other people umm they say that know one ever asked them how they were impacted and that they did go through something and they did have a certain hardship of their own because of the economic recession. You know just the fact that they were able to talk to someone about it, helped them because a lot of people, every where in the world go through these problems either at least once in their lives and they are never heard or they are just considered one of those statistics under one of those economic recessions issues and they don't ever personally ask someone what they went through and I feel like it is a good way that you were able to expresses yourself through the interview and other people could possibly relate to what you and your family went through.

Victoria Jonson: to kind if add to that umm. I also feel like even though my situation was difficult it would be interesting to hear how other people were affected by umm, loosing their house but not having a house to fall back on because unlike myself, like my parents they had a house they had that they were renting to someone so it was easy for us to move into that house.

Sarah: Yeah.

Victoria Jonson: so yeah, but I know that other people did not have that option where they lost their house but had no place to go and it would be interesting to know what those or what they did or how they were able to manage or find a house after something so devastating happens.

Sarah: Yeah, and then umm where did you draw the strength and perseverance to get through your hardship?

Victoria Jonson: I would say that number one would be family. They definitely, how I stated before were my support and because of this hardship we grew a lot and umm I guess as a family we became a lot closer. Number two would be friends and school because that kind of gave me something else to think about other than those hardships that were going on at that time and as a teenager it is very difficult you know and I could have easily gone into a rebellious stage or you know try to take my anger out in an unhealthy way. Fortunately that did not happen. I had good friends and good parents and the third thing would be like having hobbies and stuff to kind of like you know, umm have your mind preoccupied amongst other things.

Sarah: And then, as we know there are so many changes with the economy and one day the gas prices are lowered by ten cents and other days it is higher and then just the new decisions that they will be making on certain issued that relate to the economy. Are you hopefully for the future?

Victoria Jonson: well I would say I am. I don't want to be pessimistic so I do want to say that I am hopeful for the future because our situation has you know it was not as bad as it was before and yes the gas prices have not been the best it could be it is still ridiculously expensive and I feel like it is only getting worse, so that I feel like it is not changing and I hope that in the future it gets better but as far as right now I don't see that happening, as far as gas prices go. For housing I feel like it actually seems to be getting a lot better, actually I feel like there has been a shift and it is pretty much a good time to buy a house because houses that would usually go for seven hundred thousand are now at like for two hundred or so, so that's good. Something positive that came out of the whole situation. Umm and I don't know, I feel like it definitely a lot better than hoe it was before and over all I feel like as far as education goes I feel like that is another thins that needs to be umm fixed I guess you can say. Because first of all I feel like we are charging way to much for school and I mean the prices are going on and in this economic recession, it is very detrimental to college students because some students cant even afford or don't qualify for financial aid so like I feel bad for students who have to pay for their education out of pockets or their parents have to pay for their education and umm especially with the prices now, even in community colleges the prices have gone up. So, but those students who want to attend a four year university umm, they would have to go to ac heaper school or get a scholarship because it is just to expensive. Even if you do qualify for financial aid its paying those loans back that is stressful for students later on especially it depends on how long they have to stay in school.

Sarah: I completely agree I feel that they over pricing tuition and just textbooks themselves are so expensive and they expect people to pay out of their pockets when it s very difficulty to even get a job to pay for housing or even tuition and hopefully they put education ad a priority and we can try to fix this problem sooner that way more people are not discouraged into going to school because they feel that it is too expensive but I am sure that this issue, or I hope that this issue can get resolved.

Sarah: This pretty much concludes out interview is there anything else you would want to add?

Victoria Jonson: Umm I would just say that I am glad that I did this interview because my story is a good example of what other people went through during the beginning stages of the economic recession and umm I don't know I think it is a good way for people to reflect and learn from their experiences and for other people to learn from other people's experiences. That's what I feel.

Sarah: I completely agree. Well thank you for participating and it was a pleasure hearing what you went through and I am glad that everything went okay and that this hardship didn't destroy you and your family and you guys were able to strive through.

Victoria Jonson: Thank you.