

Interviewee: Miguel (pseudonym)

Interviewers: Breida

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Transcription and translation by: Claire Ganschow/Micaela Miralles Bianconi

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Abstract: In this interview the interviewee responds to questions regarding how the pandemic has affected their life, customs, their family, and people they know. They also address the vaccine, fears and the lack of awareness of it, consumption of information, the response of the government to the Covid-19 crisis, and their thoughts and suggestions for the future. The interviewee is a rural farm worker and their family resides in Mexico.

00:00:01 Breida

[noise of papers] Today is March 24, 2021. Today there are 29,708,285 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the United States, and 540,503 deaths. There are also 572,770 confirmed cases in the state of Wisconsin, and 6,576 deaths. Then, the first question is, when you found out about Covid-19 for the first time what were your thoughts on it?

00:00:41 Miguel

Of worry. I was worried. I was frightened because, well, I assumed that it was something more serious, I am from another country and it worried me a lot. [laughs nervously]

00:00:56 Breida

How have your thoughts changed since then?

00:01:02 Miguel

Well, they have changed. I still think that it is serious, but I try to take care of myself so I don't get sick and to not make more people sick. [conversation in the background]

00:01:12 Breida

Which issues have worried you the most during the pandemic?

00:01:19 Miguel

Well, what can I say? The problem is that we are not able to get out as much. Sometimes they go out to buy the essentials, but sometimes one has to go with much caution, it is not like before. That is what worries me the most. Yes. There is no movement, what the economy does is it goes down. This is what worries me most, because this country lives and has to grow, but it is not able to now.

00:01:52 Breida

Yes. So, which worries do you have about the effects of the Coronavirus regarding your employment and your- the economy? Your economic need.

00:02:04 Miguel

Well, when we started I was worried a lot that they would close, lets say, the farms, or, because other sources of employment have closed like restaurants and other things. So, yes, I worried because I thought then if this happened I am not able to continue because in Mexico, many people just arrived and wanted to do something but couldn't because they thought stuff would be open by now.

00:02:28 Breida

It has not happened.

00:02:30 Miguel

No, it has not happened, not in the farms, perhaps in the restaurants, yes they have closed.

00:02:35 Breida

Has the Coronavirus affected your job?

00:02:42 Miguel

No, my job no, other jobs yes. I work on farms since we have always been working. At the same time, it has affected nothing. Yes.

00:02:59 Breida

What influence has Covid-19 had on your family?

00:03:03 Miguel

In my family, well no, but my family is in Mexico. I have brothers here, but they too are okay. Thank God. They also have not been sick. Well, no, I have worried so much, well, so. My family, perhaps, is worried in Mexico, but also this is worldwide. So [ps] anyone is able to transmit it and we don't know the outcome, but that is seemingly what has worried me the most and what has affected my family. But that is all good right now.

00:03:35 Breida

Do you have more worries for your family in Mexico? [voices in the background]

00:03:39 Miguel

Yes, for the same reason. But they also try to take care and up to now all is going well. Yes, they haven't had any problems. Yes. Thank God. In regards to my family. Yes.

00:03:56 Breida

What have been the biggest challenges that you or your family have encountered during the pandemic? [voices in the background]

00:04:10 Miguel

Challenges- well no, because there hasn't been any. We have tried to follow instructions to take care of ourselves. I believe what is most important is to not go out without a mask and using antibacterial. So, for me there are no very big challenges, it is an easy thing to accomplish. Maybe other people do not do it but I try to do it like they indicate, following the protocol of Covid-19 [pronounced in English] so we go- there is no big problem.

00:04:38 Breida

Good

00:04:39 Miguel

Yes.

00:04:43 Breida

Has Covid-19 changed your relationships with family, friends, or your community? [voices in the background]

00:04:51 Miguel

No, with me no, because I practically don't leave much. Someone else does throw parties, yes, and it is normal to leave and have fun, but I don't, I work. I don't love it a lot, I only leave to go shopping. There's truth in it, the principle like you said, to have more time and less things that you can control, and little by little we're returning to normalcy. So, for me, it hasn't been a big problem.[voices in the background]

00:05:17 Breida

Have you or someone that you know been sick during the pandemic?

00:05:25 Miguel

Not me, but I have talked with friends that have been sick, but they are well. Thank God. Yes.

00:05:30 Breida

They recovered well? [voices in the background]

00:05:33 Miguel

Yes, they recovered, yes. Maybe other people- well lots of people have not recovered, but the people that I know have, they are well. Yes.

00:05:45 Breida

Yes, good. Why did you decide to get vaccinated?

00:05:55 Miguel

Because, well, I want [ps] this to be more or less sure that I am not going to be contagious. I do not want to transmit it to people. I would not like that. If I am going to be able to help, I will gladly do it because this is good for all people. So all of us should get vaccinated, but if some don't want to, we can at the least take care of ourselves, wear the mask, use soap, and not have so many parties. This we can all do. It is easy but many people don't want to follow it. I follow it and try to do what I can.

00:06:23 Breida

Yes. For one and for the rest. What have you heard about the vaccine in the news or the internet?

00:06:36 Miguel

[clears voice] In the news? Well, some have said that there are people who are allergic to it, but I'm not sure because I haven't seen this proven. I am going to see, in my case, and maybe not get it, but every person is different and I've heard that that vaccine is good. But I can't be sure of this. I'm going to get the vaccine and see what happens. I hope that I will be fine, for my sake and for others. Well, for me, I'm going to get it and let it run its course amidst my questions, but no one can be sure about anything. Only that maybe science is good and we are going to do what is possible so all are well.

00:07:16 Breida

Yes, yes. Have your experiences with the pandemic transformed how you think of your family, friends, or community?

00:07:30 Miguel

Yes, because I think- and I think that we should listen to the science and do what the doctors say. Many people don't believe it, but I think that well, it is right. So, we need to take care of ourselves and look after others. It's the only way because if we don't take care of each other, no one is going to take care of us. And if we do not follow the steps that are indicated by doctors, well maybe it will be worse. We don't know, but we are going to start to. What I have seen tells me it is good, I think- I don't know. Other people think differently and everyone thinks what they want. [stutter] Yes.

00:08:07 Breida

Do you have any opinion of how local, state, and federal leaders are responding to the pandemic?

00:08:21 Miguel

Well- well I don't know. But when this started, supposedly if they had closed the borders, maybe there wouldn't have been as many deaths. We aren't sure. Maybe if we didn't want to do it or didn't take it seriously, or had a reason. I don't, I don't know that, just that, it probably could have been better, but no one will know. The pandemic is here now and all that we can control is try to control and return little by little back to normalcy. So we must keep taking care of ourselves, maybe it is the only way to return to normal. For me I do not, but it does not worry me as much because I don't go out much, it doesn't affect me, but the people that do like to have more parties. Well yes, yes they always prefer to go out more. I leave every fifteen days and nothing more. If I am able, I leave one month and one month they help me, there is no problem. But many people are free, we are free, and they go out, they go out more. Right now it feels bad, but you have to take care of yourself, there's nothing else, you must take care of yourself. We'll see what happens later.

00:09:24 Breida

[conversation in the background] What have you, your family, and your friends done for fun during Covid-19?

00:09:40 Miguel

Well, my family is in Mexico and I believe that it remains more or less in the normal rhythm of life. My family lives in a town and so [ps] in the towns they try to not have contact with people in the city. But right now, it is good. In my town, I believe, there has not been anyone that has died of the coronavirus. In other parts perhaps. But like I have said. Well, for me it's still normal, like always, because my normalcy is that of work and going out a little, so I am not missing much and carry on like I was because it does not affect me much. [voices in the background]

00:10:18 Breida

How has the Covid-19 outbreak affected your community?

00:10:32 Miguel

My community here?

00:10:37 Breida

Yes.

00:10:40 Miguel

Well, it has affected it in that the people are not able to go out, not able to do parties. Well mostly, I think that it's just as important that people in my community, those who work on farms, still continue to work amidst this. Elsewhere, yes, I tell you, the workplaces have closed and, well, people are struggling, but little by little they will return to normal. We hope. But on the farm there has been no effects, not here in this part, in other parts there has not been any either. And so that no, it has not affected me much. I am still the same. And my friends, some have been sick, but they are well, they are all well. Well, no, there hasn't been a big problem.

00:11:24 Breida

And do you believe if there was an infection in your job it would be affected? [voices in the background]

00:11:35 Miguel

I don't know because I have known of other farms that have had infections and the people have not been affected, they have isolated and have followed protocol and are well. So there have not been any problems. I can't- I can't say what will happen, but I believe that if someone is infected and we follow protocol, well all will happen and all will be normal I imagine.

00:12:00 Breida

Do you feel safe?

00:12:02 Miguel

Yes, I feel safe.

00:12:10 Breida

In what way do you feel that the coronavirus is affecting mental health and/or physical health of people? And it may be the simple fact that all this; the pandemic, stress, not necessarily contagiousness, but the culmination of all that we are living in. [voices in the background]

00:12:32 Miguel

Panic in the people. Well in my case, I am not stressed because they say that they are not able to leave. So this affects, well people, that affects them mentally maybe some more or less. But to me, in my case, it has not affected me much because like I said I am accustomed to work and don't leave as much. So, my life is normal, other people, well if I understand correctly, they have to be isolated. It is difficult to live with several people. But, well, there is no other way, because you have to do it, that is what things in the future depend on. Another way, maybe those things are not going to get better, well, to me, it has not affected me. Other people, yes, yes it has effects on them, and one must follow protocols and we hope that it will be better in the future. Yes.

00:13:21 Breida

Good, that is all of the questions that I have for you and I am going to stop the recording.