

Dr. Paola Gemme  
Professional Development Grant Report

“Tracing Migrations and Mobilities  
of *La Virgen de Guadalupe*  
in Arkansas Linguistic Landscape”

2017 Linguistic Landscape International Workshop  
University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

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The Professional Development Grant I received in 2017 allowed me to travel with my colleague Rebecca T. Garvin to the annual Linguistic Landscape Workshop at the University of Luxembourg. We delivered a joint presentation entitled, “Tracing Migrations and Mobilities of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* in Arkansas Linguistic Landscape,” based on our research on the transformation of the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe as migrant devotees bring it from their homeland in Central America to host communities in our state. Our paper focused on the celebration of the Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Fort Smith, AR, on December 12, 2017, when hundreds of pilgrims followed a statue of the Virgin across the city, praying, singing, and dancing, and thereby temporarily appropriating the cityscape. We were particularly interested in the participants’ account of the significance of the pilgrimage as a reenactment of the migratory journey across the border, the interaction between the marchers and the onlookers, and the signs in the landscape traversed by the celebration, a multilingual environment reflecting linguistic occupation and accommodation both in the Latino community’s encounter with English-speaking culture.

The paper was very well received. We are now considering obtaining IRB approval to form a focus group and conduct interviews in 2018. A possible outlet for the publication of our study is *Linguistic Landscape*, a new journal published by Routledge.