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This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality  
and form for publication:

*Approved by the Thesis Committee:*

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**COUNTER CULTURE YOUTH: IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND THE  
THE UNDOCUMENTED YOUTH VANGUARD**

By

**Rafael A. Martinez**

B.A., History and Chicana/o Studies, California State University, Dominguez Hills, 2012

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts  
American Studies**

The University of New Mexico  
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**May, 2014**

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this project to my family who encouraged, motivated, and pushed me towards a better life. Without the unconditional love of my parents (Rafael and Teresa) this would not be possible. This Masters thesis is their gift for all the sacrifices they have made along the years for my sister (Karla), my nephew (Jayden), and myself.

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**COUNTER CULTURE YOUTH: IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND THE  
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**RAFAEL A. MARTINEZ**

B.A., History and Chicana/o Studies, California State University, Dominguez Hills, 2012  
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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis offers a social, historical, and political analysis of the Undocumented Youth Movement from 1986 to 2012 for the purposes of understanding how the movement carved out spaces of social belonging that problematized punitive immigration legislation and traditional understandings of citizenship. In particular, I argue that undocumented youth challenge the social binary of deserving and underserving citizenry by positing a counter cultural critique of U.S. immigration policies and the organizations that support or challenge these policies. By counter culture I mean the ways in which undocumented youth combat normative cultural integrations into the broader society and therefore do not comply to American youth models.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate how undocumented youth activists are a source of knowledge production and how their criticism deserving citizenry shapes power structures, be it policies or governmental officials that seek to manage practices of inclusion and exclusion. I believe that the political deviant forms of organizing by undocumented youth activists create an alternate way of decentering U.S. Empire. I believe that through an analysis of the Undocumented Youth Movement, scholars can identify the ways in which the

U.S. nation-state uses technologies of management to repress radical or dissident immigrant rights organizers. The Undocumented Youth Movement has been and continues to engage in an ongoing struggle to push the boundaries of inclusion without the cost of exclusion or repression of select populations of immigrants, including adults, transgender populations or those who have been criminalized.



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## Introduction

### Proposition 187: A Focal Example of Organizing in the Undocumented Youth

#### Movement

*“We didn’t realize that society would turn on us.”* – Libertad M. Ayala,  
15-year-old student in L.A. during Prop. 187

After Proposition 187 passed in California in 1994, public outcry against the proposition displayed a mix of sentiments in the streets of Los Angeles. Thousands of high school students captured public attention after walking out of their campuses in protest against Proposition 187. Local and national media covered the public clamor:

“On the surface this week, student reaction to Proposition 187 erupted in noisy, sweaty school walkouts buzzed by television helicopters and blocked by police. At many other schools, equally fervent but more organized students gathered peacefully to teach one another about the controversial ballot measure. For these students, Proposition 187 has become a real-life civics lesson, the first political issue to spark their imaginations, a banner that may become a generational turning point similar to the anti-war and civil rights movements.”<sup>1</sup>

The positioning of Latino youth against Proposition 187 became a public issue broadcast in the media outlets nationwide. On November 8, 1994, Proposition 187 passed as a ballot measure approved by a wide margin of California’s voters: 59 percent to 41 percent.<sup>2</sup> This relatively wide margin of the vote revealed the public tensions over the growing number of undocumented immigrants in California. During the early nineties, projections indicated that 1.3 million immigrants lived in California of which over three hundred thousand were

undocumented children.<sup>3</sup> Former California Governor Pete Wilson (R-CA), an avid supporter of Proposition 187, stated, “The People of California declare... That they have suffered and are suffering economic hardship caused by the presence of illegal aliens in this state.”<sup>4</sup> The economic crises provided the backdrop for the introduction of Proposition 187, one of the first examples of harsh legislation targeting immigrants since the 1970s.

Proposition 187 provided one of the first focal moments for immigrant rights organizing in California. The Undocumented Youth Movement emerged as a site of youth organizing against anti-immigrant policies and therefore, should be studied.<sup>5</sup> Proposition 187 served to strip basic civil rights of undocumented individuals and the communities in which they lived. Proposition 187 laid the blame for the economic recession on immigrant populations of California who were allegedly reaping benefits from tax-paying citizens. In particular, Proposition 187 targeted the children of immigrants who were deemed as enjoying free government services such as medical care and access to public education at the cost of taxpayers. Because the number of Latino migrant populations climbed through the early 1990s in California, more than any other immigrant population in the state, and because they represented the largest immigrant community in California, the law in effect targeted Latinos. Therefore, Proposition 187 placed a youthful brown face to the blame game of economic decline and prosperity. It received wide national media coverage, and since California receives the most migrants annually, the climate was set for the emergence of a response by undocumented youth activists that would resonate for decades. Undocumented youth activists and allies played a key role in protesting a de facto racialized public policy.

This thesis offers a social, historical, and political analysis of the Undocumented Youth Movement from 1986 to 2012 for the purposes of understanding how the movement

carved out spaces of social belonging that problematized punitive immigration legislation and traditional understandings of citizenship. In particular, I argue that undocumented youth challenge the social binary of deserving and underserving citizenry by positing a counter cultural critique of U.S. immigration policies and the organizations that support or challenge these policies. By counter culture I mean the ways in which undocumented youth combat normative cultural integrations into the broader society and therefore do not comply to American assimilationist youth models.

I draw on several theoretical frameworks and employ concepts that complicate Immigration policy, reform and activism. Employing Latino Critical Race Theory (LatCrit) is helpful in understanding how the face and bodies representing immigrants and immigration in the U.S. became racialized and associated with being brown or, more specifically, Latino. My thesis draws connections between policy making and the organizational efforts by undocumented youth activists in response to these policies. The concept of cultural citizenship is useful to understand how undocumented youth activists are pushing the boundaries of traditional forms of organizing and contesting state pressures of inclusion and exclusion. My work looks to analyze activist work that is deemed counter-cultural, dissident, and civil disobedient. Likewise, I borrow from queer theory to understand how undocumented youth activists contest heteronormative ideas and identities grounded in the dynamics and interplay of race, class, gender and sexuality. The intersections between immigration policy and activism are critical in informing the various dimensions of inclusion and exclusion that shape immigration discourse and debates.

My work navigates the multifaceted field in which undocumented youth activists operate and exist. I argue that the Undocumented Youth Movement is not a homogenous one,

but rather a series of heterogeneous movements that co-exist and challenge immigration discourse evident in immigration reform and policymaking in U.S. society generally. Many of the activists, organizations, and undocumented populations I look at in this study make the point that their commonality emerges from working against the oppressive policies and pressures enacted by the nation-state. I take a lead from Dylan Rodriguez, who analyzes the limitations that non-governmental organization's (NGO's) and independent activists face within a neoliberal nation state that seeks to include activism as a means of organizational regulation and management. Therefore, one model of activism I am interested in is the undocumented youth organizations that exist independently and at the margins of larger, more established non-profits, as consciously critical political players of notions of civic integration and liberal reform. My work therefore looks at activist organizations that are counter-cultural in nature because their organizing tactics and agendas defy publicly accepted civic practices.

Activist materials produced by undocumented youth and organizations compose the primary sources that my thesis analyzes. Materials include organizational websites that develop materials and networks for activists at the local, national and transnational level. Furthermore, I read secondary sources that demonstrate explore how undocumented youth activists utilize websites and internet media to inform audiences about immigrant rights, political campaigns, communication with legislators, and as a tool of communication. A critical part of the undocumented youth experience is testimonials, therefore, I use videos produced by activists as primary resources. The YouTube channels of the various undocumented youth activists are rich with first hand experiences, insights into undocumented youth outlooks, organizational positions, organizing strategies, critiques of

policies and politicians, and life experiences that have shaped the activists' political consciousness. Part of this trend towards relying heavily on social media as means of communication points towards what technoculturalists have referred to as the organic relationship between technology and cultural productions aimed at promoting civil rights.<sup>6</sup> Social media outlets have been at the heart of the undocumented youth experience as they are relied upon as primary means of communication between youth and used to recruit more youth to immigrant rights causes. All of the organizations analyzed in this thesis have a strong online presence, which makes analyses and interpretations of primary sources possible through the distinct media outlets used to release information to the public. I specifically looked for organizations that have a website, a face book page, and a YouTube channel.

The use of art by artists within the Undocumented Youth Movement has been a popular form of communicative expression. Undocumented youth activists are at the forefront of campaign development, messaging expressions, capturing and documenting events within the Undocumented Youth Movement, releasing statements, and providing a sentiment of self-worth and valorization for undocumented youth nationwide. Furthermore, artists are represented among the leadership of undocumented youth activists that complicate notions of citizenship, immigrant policymaking, gender, and sexuality. Julio Salgado is an example of an activist that unites the distinct components of the Undocumented Youth Movement analyzed in this thesis. He is an activist who is regarded as a national leader because of his presence and communication within local organizations such as Dreamers Adrift but also dedicated to the participation of nationwide coalitions such as the National Immigrant Youth Alliance (NIYA). As an activist, he is dedicated to creating campaigns that question notions of inclusion and exclusion both within interpretations of

citizenship but also within activist spaces. Julio Salgado's art campaigns center gender and sexuality exclusion in conversations about citizenship and policymaking. His work in activist spaces problematizes secondary interpretations of cultural citizenship, queer theory, gender analysis, and understandings of race in the U.S.

Undocumented youth activists have raised the issue of exclusionary citizenship and have posited their own definitions of inclusive citizenship. In my analysis, I borrow from Renato Rosaldo's understandings and interpretations of cultural citizenship. He argues that as scholars we must be critical of the inequalities that exist in the structures of U.S. society where universal citizenship is defined by the rights and privileges of a white male model citizen body at the expense of people of color and where notions of race, gender and sexuality are seemingly neutralized in the language of the law.<sup>7</sup> For Rosaldo, citizenship entails the "theoretical universality from the substantive level of exclusionary and marginalizing practices." I use Rosaldo's definition of cultural citizenship to understand the way public policies draw on racialized cultural discourse that influence public opinion on immigrants. Furthermore, I analyze how social institutions label undocumented youth as dissidents fighting for inclusion and human rights, but I also depart by demonstrating how undocumented youth have come to embrace a counter-cultural identity and organizational outlook to contest notions of inclusion dictated by the nation-state. In other words, some undocumented youth recognize that they do not want to be integrated into a social body because their inclusion reinforces structures of exclusion and inequality, so they would rather remain in a position of dissidence and operate from the margins.

In my understanding of undocumented youth mobilization, I borrow from Lisa Cacho and her ideas about the "politics of deviance" as a way to understand how society



characterizes undocumented youth activists as deviant members of society. Cacho argues that “politics of deviance” not only demonstrate how individuals critique the rule of normality, but also point us towards regulations of social worth and how a politics of deviance can represent alternate forms of political discourse. She goes on to state, “A politics of deviance does not just set aside the impulse to discipline difference; it also centers the responsibility to reckon with those deemed dangerous, underserving, and unintelligible.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Aihwa Ong argues, “Immigrants from Asia or poorer countries must daily negotiate the lines of difference established by state agencies as well as groups in civil society.”<sup>9</sup> My work also takes cue from Ong to analyze the ways that undocumented youth activists use notions of cultural citizenship when countering normative institutional and nation-state pressures. While undocumented youth activists are portrayed as deviant in public discourse and undeserving of inclusion, they also adopt deviant acts to counter normative pressures.

I argue that the evolving immigration debate from the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 to the present day has been shaped by and through a nativist position that scapegoats immigrant populations as an explanation for the social, economic, and political challenges facing the country. Daniel G. Solorzano and Tara J. Yosso posit; “a critical race and LatCrit methodology offers a way to understand students’ experiences with such concepts as self-doubt, survivor guilt, impostor syndrome, and invisibility.”<sup>10</sup> While these labels are used to describe Undocumented youth activists, youth activists simultaneously challenge the rigidity of these terms and descriptions of Latino undocumented youth. Immigration discourses in the U.S. are not color-blind, but rather are fully loaded in indicating race “types” and populations who are used as the face of immigration. Similarly, in “Battling for Human Rights and Social Justice” Velez, Huber,

López, de la Luz, and Solorzano argue that, “The activism was oriented toward a more inclusive notion of social justice, defined as a desire and struggle to dismantle the structures of inequality that perpetuate racist nativism and other forms of subordination”<sup>11</sup> This thesis uses LatCrit to understand the ways in which race plays a critical part of the immigration debate in the U.S., and the ways that Latino undocumented youth are made scapegoats for societal ills and made to be deviant for their choice of organization efforts.

The discourse used by immigration reform advocates and by immigrant rights activists illustrates race and racism as critical dynamics that shape the political context but also other forms of subordination including gender, class and sexuality. My work brings such perspectives on the subordination of gender and sexuality from queer theorists in to the conversation on undocumented youth activism. I use the work of Nicholas de Genova to analyze the intersections between queer activism and immigrant’s rights activism. Genova argues that there are similar points of interests and platforms between both movements, and therefore both sides would benefit from inter-movement collaborations. Inter-movement collaborations are the efforts made by organizations, leaders and individuals who try to forge relationships between distinct organizations and movements with the outlook that through co-sponsorship and mutual understanding of diverse struggles there can be a larger advancement of human rights. Similarly, an inter-generational approach refers to efforts by activists to bring together people of different generational and age sectors with the idea that uniting different ideas, angles, and perspectives is healthy for activism. I adopt this argument made by Genova and by “Undocuqueer” activists within the Undocumented Youth Movement who are pushing for inter-movement and inter-generational movement intersections.<sup>12</sup> Undocuqueer is a sector of the Undocumented Youth Movement that seeks to

forge a relationship between undocumented peoples and queer peoples through an inter-movement and inter-generational activist approach. Undocuqueer activists acknowledge the need to intersect movements to demand human rights and inclusion of all communities. Furthermore, I use a variety of primary sources including immigration reform policies, propositions, newspaper articles and organizational platforms and media statements that demonstrate the difficulties in developing inter-movement collaboration efforts between the LGBTQ community and immigrant communities.

### **Proposition 187: The Spark is Ignited**

California became the first state in the nation to test state and governmental powers in regulating immigration and immigrant's lives. The passage of Proposition 187, a major state policy on immigrants, occurred eight years after the Immigration Reform and Control Act passed under former President, Ronald Reagan on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1986. The immigration reform under President Reagan legalized up to three million immigrants who met certain qualifications. During this time, former Californian Governor, Pete Wilson, gained prominence in the Republican Party. Wilson gained widespread public appeal by taking a nativist position in terms of immigration issues. His criticism also appealed to Democratic Party officials who heavily criticized and ridiculed border enforcement and national security issues after immigration reform passed under President Reagan.<sup>13</sup> For Pete Wilson, it made political sense to attack and blame a vulnerable undocumented population for the state's socioeconomic issues. Wilson's approach was severe in that he supported policies that stripped immigrants of their civil and human rights as evidenced in Proposition 187.

Major provisions of Proposition 187 sought to criminalize undocumented immigrants for accessing public and health services. For example, key sections of Proposition 187

included: a) Giving authority to all law enforcements to detain any individual whom they suspected of being illegal in the country and report them to I.N.S., b) Made it illegal for any immigrant to request any state or federal service and demanded that officials report undocumented individuals who tried to request any social service from the state c) No public social services can be granted to an individual who cannot verify legal presence in the U.S., and d) Undocumented students do not have access to elementary or secondary schooling.<sup>14</sup> Thus, select provisions of Proposition 187 targeted youth and children of immigrant communities as underserving of basic civil rights. Undocumented peoples became the subject of scrutiny and attack like they had in previous decades of U.S. history. Proposition 187 branded Latino children and youth as scourges of the state.

Governor Wilson's nativist position targeted undocumented youth as the scapegoats of the ills of California. Undocumented youth of color were the face of the blame game and Proposition 187 was the answer to politicians' troubles. Proposition 187 provides a lens for understanding nativism, citizenship and notions of belonging. Nativist positionality operates to signify racial difference and subordination while drawing on allegedly neutral or objective notions of democratic governance and self-protection. Race matters, as demonstrated by the Proposition 187 example, and influences immigration discourse evident in legislative debates and media representations.

Some contemporary media accounts describe undocumented youth activism through bifurcated notions of positive and negative forms of democratic participation and citizenship. Activists who pursue traditional forms of lobbying and political organizing are projected in a positive light and those that use more dissident means of organizing, including sit-ins, and roadblocks, are portrayed in a negative light. Undocumented youth activists recognize that

the media informs public discourse and that when they step out of sanctioned forms of public organizing, they are cast as dissidents. Therefore, some in the media placed Latino undocumented youth activists in a binary between counter-cultural youth or model citizens. The coverage of Prop. 187 by *Los Angeles Times* journalist, Jon D. Markman illustrates how major reporting outlets utilized a model of American citizenship grounded in democratic civility and respectability.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout Markman's coverage of Proposition 187, the *Los Angeles Times* reporter attributes negative verbs to describe forms of activism that go beyond traditional or peaceful manners of organizing. For example, he describes the walkouts by high school students as illustrating a "raucous invitation." He goes on to describe the walkouts as, "noisy, sweaty," and the activists as "buzzed by television helicopters and blocked by police." The verbs, adverbs and adjectives used in his article project a negative light. Yet, he does not consider that to activists their forms of civic engagement may have been positive and empowering. In contradiction, Markman uses positive verbs to regard what are deemed peaceful and civil actions. For example, he declares that there were students who stayed away from controversial actions and describes it by saying, "But away from the din, a more meaningful morality play was under way. At other schools, equally but more organized students gathered peacefully." His reporting while appearing to be objective and multidimensional actually reinforces a normative gaze that reifies appropriate and inappropriate forms of political discourse and behavior. This type of reporting casts a shadow on undocumented youth activism as it places activists in a position where they are left to choose from only two types of organizing that puts them at odds or in conformity with notions of public civility.

Undocumented youth activists blur the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable forms of civic discourse. For instance, undocumented student activists draw on the history and language of the Civil Rights Movements to connect to a past that is now sanctioned and held, for the most part, as a justified and redeemable history. However, the media's position has also led to undocumented youth activists to organize acts of civil disobedience that challenge citizenship discourses and notions of the model citizen. Undocumented youth activists problematize normative concepts that define deserving citizenship. Undocumented students utilize "Coming Out the Shadows" events, where they proclaim that they are undocumented in public spaces, to reclaim their voice and space as active subjects of their own representation. The act of "Coming Out" challenges narrow depictions of immigrants illustrated in the public media and in public immigration debates.

After the passage of Proposition 187, the buzz and controversy over immigration and immigrants spilled over to the rest of the country as other state politicians and undocumented activists weighed into the heated public conversation regarding immigrants' integration of lack of integration into the nation-state. My work argues that Proposition 187 was one of the focal points in immigration history that sparked a national debate between immigrant policy makers and immigrant rights organizers. After the Immigration Reform and Control Act (1986), the table was set for politicians to take on increasingly antagonistic political stances and for undocumented peoples to fight for their civil and human rights.

After three days of the passage of Proposition 187, organizations filed multiple lawsuits and it was successfully challenged in the courts in 1999. The long battle of over five years left many lessons for policy makers and activists. The ballot measure was deemed

unconstitutional, as the courts declared that states did not have the power to make immigration policy decision that undermined federal authority.

At the time of the passage of Prop 187, federal policies sought to strengthen border enforcement and minimize the numbers of Latino immigrants. Under President Bill Clinton's administration, an active observer of debates around Proposition 187, Congress passed Operation Gatekeeper on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, a month before Prop. 187 passed. Then on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996, Congress also passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (I.I.R.I.R.A. – will be further discussed in Chapter One). Ultimately, I.I.R.I.R.A. sought to reinforce border security in order to control illegal immigration and ease public concerns. The 1996 legislation was the true legacy of Proposition 187, as I.I.R.I.R.A. would grant states the right to enact and enforce immigration policy as best fit their state's needs. My work argues that the legacy of Proposition 187 was the development of I.I.R.I.R.A., but most importantly it sparked the debate of immigration in a way that shifted certain responsibilities regarding the treatment of immigrants from the federal to the state government. This shift has impacted the course of policy making and activism to the present day.

After a long battle by undocumented youth activists fighting for their civil rights in California, the defeat of Proposition 187 was a point of celebration for undocumented peoples. But as my research shows, the battle was not won, but rather extended. The resulting impact of federal legislation that upheld state prerogatives in shaping policies regarding undocumented individuals also multiplied the arenas of struggles for immigrant rights activists. Knowledge productions of Latino immigrant populations were fed by nativist politicians and media outlets that served to inform the American public about the so-called

threat of Latino migration into the U.S. Technologies of management are tools used by the nation-state to control the American public and shape public discourse. This thesis analyzes the production of laws in the U.S. as technologies of management that extended from federal to state levels. An expansion of policies, enforcement agencies and greater integration of policing forces produced systems of efficient and precise management. Living in a postcolonial nation is questionable after the passing of I.I.R.I.R.A., as state politics began to resemble colonial and neocolonial managements to enact policy and laws to control the “immigration issue”.

However, undocumented activists and organizations were also keen to the development and shift in immigration discourse and law. National organizations like the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (M.A.L.D.E.F.) who took part in the fight against Proposition 187, became involved in multiple states to defend undocumented peoples’ rights across state lines.<sup>16</sup> These early debates on immigration policies at the state and federal level served to influence an emerging consciousness among undocumented youth activists, who in the early 2000s would begin to organize on behalf of educational rights and opportunities. For example, if we analyze states like New Mexico that have been at the forefront of pro-immigrant policies and fervent activism, we see that state level organizations developed and produced public opinions on policies like Proposition 187. Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a statewide organization of undocumented individuals with a core of youth activists, states on its website, “In 1995, a group of immigrants and supporters in Santa Fe campaigned to pass a state legislative memorial condemning California’s passage of Proposition 187.”<sup>17</sup> The 2000’s would see the development and expansion of national networks between undocumented youth activists and organizations that sought to educate, inform, and share



experiences of policies, activism, and support cooperation across state lines. The interconnectedness between policy and activism is demonstrated in the intricate networks of communication between pro-immigrant and anti-immigration development in the current state of the immigration debate.

By focusing on focal historical moments in the actions and discourse making of diverse sectors of the Undocumented Youth Movement, one finds that public policies and anti-immigrant legislation intended to subordinate and control immigrants often produce reactions on the part of immigrants that empower and drive pro-immigrant discourse and activities. My work is interested in analyzing moments where anti-immigrant policy making impacted activist discourse and the ways and forms that this activism took shape. I argue that policies that seek to proscribe notions of model citizenship produce dissident discourses that circumvent the logic of the nation state. I interpret model citizenship as a production by the nation-state to offer a normative understanding of what constitutes an exemplary citizen. The Federal Dream Act provides one example of a normative or exemplary citizenship model.

My thesis begins with an analysis on the impact of policymaking in the development of counter cultural and dissident forms of organizing by undocumented youth activists. In Chapter One I analyze a series of policies at the national level such as I.I.R.I.R.A. in 1996 that led to state policy making and a transregional form of organizing for undocumented youth activists. I explore the ways in which undocumented youth activists began organizing to demand and secure civil rights such as education in their respective states and helping other activists across state boundaries through various communication networks. I am interested in the ways that activists began contesting inclusion and exclusion of not only civil

rights but also normative pressures of citizenship that left out broad and diverse sectors of the immigrant population.

In Chapter Two, I look at how the 2006 national marches became a critical fall out moment for the Undocumented Youth Movement in relation to contesting punitive legislations and in interacting with mainstream immigrant rights organizational politics. Furthermore, I look at the ways in which the media places undocumented youth activists in binary positions of model citizenship or counter cultural youth, but also how undocumented youth activists use deviant actions as a way to organize and make statements of protest. Throughout the text, queer theory helps to inform the ways in which undocumented queer and women of color have been silenced and kept out of the immigrant rights narrative and how they insert their voices and criticism in bold and creative ways.

My thesis seeks to demonstrate how undocumented youth activists are a source of knowledge production and how their criticism of deserving citizenry shapes power structures, be it policies or governmental officials that seek to manage practices of inclusion and exclusion. I believe that the political deviant forms of organizing by undocumented youth activists create an alternate way of decentering U.S. Empire. I believe that through an analysis of the Undocumented Youth Movement, scholars can identify the ways in which the U.S. nation-state uses technologies of management to repress radical or dissident immigrant rights organizers. The Undocumented Youth Movement has been and continues to engage in an ongoing struggle to push the boundaries of inclusion without the cost of exclusion or repression of select populations of immigrants, including adults, transgender populations or those who have been criminalized.

## Chapter One

### Policy Making and the Development of an Undocumented Youth Vanguard

“They are treating us like we are criminals, and we’re not.” – Rocio Sanchez

High School Student in Arizona

One of the most covered stories on undocumented youth activism by journalists in the past five years involved a sit-in at Senator John McCain’s office in Tucson, Arizona. A *New York Times* article by Julia Preston titled, “Illegal Immigrant Students Protest at McCain Office,” provided one telling example of media coverage of undocumented student activism. Preston declares:

“Four of the protesters, including three who are in the country illegally, were arrested Monday evening on misdemeanor trespassing charges. The three were expected to face deportation proceedings. It was the first time students have directly risked deportation in an effort to prompt Congress to take up a bill that would benefit illegal immigrant youths.”<sup>18</sup>

The journalist’s take on the story focused on the sacrifice made by undocumented student activists in their effort to build support for the passage of the Dream Act.

The conscious decision taken by undocumented youth activists to engage in civil disobedience highlights the changing tide of activism in the first and second decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Pushing the boundaries of organizational efforts for the undocumented, youth activists assumed real risks and dangers associated with direct challenges to state and federal government officials. This extreme action reveals the lengths to which undocumented youth were willing to fight for their civil rights. Advocacy around the Dream Act, proposed legislation intended to grant undocumented youth the right to remain in the country legally,

and its subsequent failure to pass in Congress, moved activists to question the tactics and strategies of their movements. The direct appeal and challenge to legislators reveals the complex and contradictory contours of immigration legislation and immigration activism.

However, a closer analysis of the article reveals the complicating factors of inclusion and exclusion at play during the sit-in by undocumented youth activists. First, undocumented youth activists are demanding inclusion into a formal governance structure that would provide citizenship rights and education benefits to a delimited sector of the immigrant population. Second, if their inclusion is granted under a bill like the DREAM Act, structures of exclusion are reinforced, because other undocumented groups, like elders and other ineligible youth are still denied access to citizenship. Third, undocumented youth activists run the risk of deportation for organizing to demand a human right like education. Fourth, U.S. laws that support the U.S citizenship criteria based on the rights and privileges of white, Anglo Saxon heterosexual male normativity serve to marginalize undocumented youth activists who fall outside this norm.<sup>19</sup> Reports of abuse and neglect towards transgender youth and adults have been documented.

This chapter argues that the federal government and federal legislation promote structures and guidelines that shape anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant policy making at the state levels. Following the foundation laid out in the introductory chapter, I understand that one of the provisions of the Illegal Immigration Reform & Immigrant Responsibility Act (I.I.R.I.R.A., 1996) was to grant individual states the authority to enact immigration policies. For example, the states were granted authority on behalf of I.I.R.I.R.A to pass measures around health services and education that included immigration and legal legibility.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, I.I.R.I.R.A. also extended to state authorities the ability to define criminality and punishment in regards to the undocumented population.<sup>21</sup>

The granting of additional powers to the states set in motion anti-immigrant forces in several states including California and Arizona. For example, politicians who introduced Proposition 187 presented a nativist policy that used misleading data, disguised as facts, to prey on the citizenry fears of immigrant populations. I.I.R.I.R.A. left the immigration debate in the hands of state politicians, who seized opportunities to promote state legislation that was anti-immigrant, which consequently expanded anti-immigrant spaces that activists had to contend with. Thus, the proliferation of state laws that regulated the actions of undocumented immigrants simultaneously increased the fields of persecution and activism. Undocumented immigrants were now accountable to federal and state authorities and their combined actions to scrutinize and monitor immigrant populations. As a result of the increasing vigilance of federal and state authorities, Undocumented Youth Movement activists developed extensive state and nationwide networks that built the foundation for a future undocumented youth vanguard. Although the punitive aspects of I. I. R. I. R.A. initiated anti-immigrant activists to push for strict measures against immigrants, the federal policy also set the context for activist energies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thus, policy making that seeks to provide for a closer monitoring of immigrants and stricter controls can also lead to direct challenges to law makers who do not oppose or remain silent to anti-immigrant policies and legislations. Thus, activism and policy making does not occur in isolation but rather operate in interactive and interrelated motions. This connection between policymaking and activism has produced a counter cultural platform for some activists while giving other undocumented youth activists the incentive to work within institutional means to create change from within. The various

spaces that undocumented youth activists create are part of historical U.S. landscape of Civil Rights Movement to the present.

Prior to I.R.C.A. in 1986, the Immigrant Rights Movement was confined to efforts of receiving legitimacy and inclusion in institutional spaces such as the workforce, education, healthcare access, and political representation. Institutional spaces require formal processes of petitioning and organizing; therefore, undocumented youth were confined to support adult decision-making and guidance in support of the broader Immigrant Rights Movement.

Beyond this platform, the Chicana/o Movement of the sixties stretching into the late eighties did not fully problematize further notions of normative power, cultural citizenship or gender and sexuality. However, this thesis looks past and beyond movements like the Chicana/o Movement to the contemporary struggles and dialogues initiated by youth activists in conventional or unconventional spaces of organizing. This thesis argues that undocumented youth take up Civil Rights lessons of both institutional and counter cultural forms of activism as to not prioritize one over the other, but rather demonstrate that the different venues lead to contestation of normative powers pressures by the nation-state.

This chapter is concerned with linking anti-immigrant policies of the 1990s with the emergence of new forms of activism by undocumented youth in the early 2000s. This period marked a rupture from past strategies and approaches because the Undocumented Youth Movement broke away from the broader immigrant rights mobilizing efforts to conduct innovative organizing that met the pressing needs of immigrant communities. In making this argument, I contextualize the Undocumented Youth Movement as a series of movements, composed of a variety of fronts that challenge exclusionary immigration policies and structures. I argue that the Undocumented Youth Movement parts ways with other national

Immigrant Rights Movements in order to contest normative constructions of citizenship in public discourses and legislation related to immigrants and immigration policy. Many social movement scholars offer critiques of movements like the Civil Rights Movements for their national scope, their exclusion of female participants, and their repression of sexuality advocacies; I argue that the Undocumented Youth Movement is both inspired by social movement models in organizing but also departs from said traditional models to critique intersectional aspects of exclusion. My work looks at the ways that undocumented youth activists resist nation-state prescriptions of citizenship and exclusion, but also the ways in which they contest forms of organizing that conform to the pressures of inclusion and exclusion dictated by the nation state. Furthermore, I look at the ways that undocumented youth activists push for intersectional work across inter-movement and inter-generational collaborations. I argue that the type of activism in the Undocumented Youth Movement is an evolutionary process that combats the distinct forms of institutional and state pressures. Therefore, I look at the ways in which undocumented youth organizations take on different organizational approaches such as operating at the margins and independently of formal institutions.

In my arguments, I utilize interpretations of *direct* and *indirect* forms of student activism to demonstrate how activists in the early period of the 2000s drew upon a range of strategies in their organizing work efforts. Indirect forms of activism involve students operating mostly through institutional settings. As students face resistance and disappointment, they begin to question authority that eventually leads to direct forms of operation in the mid to late 2000's (the latter is the focus of Chapter Two).<sup>1</sup> I borrow the interpretation of direct and indirect forms of student activism from the article "Battling for

Human Rights and Social Justice” from authors Daniel G. Solorzano, Veronica Velez, Lindsay Perez Huber, Corina Benavidez Lopez, and Ariana de la Luz, where the intent is to capture the distinct ways in which undocumented youth activists organized during the 2006 marches. However, I use this concept to track the distinct ways in which the early 2000s differed from the mid and late 2000s period within the Undocumented Youth Movement in the adoption of different organizational strategies. I use Solorzano, Velez, Huber, Lopez and de la Luz’ definitions of direct forms of organizing as, “overt political acts of protests that often the physical body as vehicle for protest,” and indirect forms of organizing as, “political acts that express critical concern, but do not focus on attempting to physically challenge public institutions and/or their actors.”

### **Border Militarization as Federal Discourse and Immigration Policy as State Discourse**

The portrayal of the Democratic Party in the U.S. as the liberal progressive party on the issue of immigration is problematic.<sup>22</sup> A historical analysis of immigrant rights policy demonstrates that nativism existed in the discourse of both major U.S. political parties in complex ways and had real consequences on immigrant communities.<sup>23</sup> Former President Bill Clinton is considered a centrist Democrat politician, initiated a variety of initiatives to produce economic progress in a critical moment in the country’s history. Nevertheless, President Clinton was influenced by nativist positions of politicians like California Governor Pete Wilson who criticized the Immigration Reform and Control Act (I. R.C.A.). President Bill Clinton met with and listened to affluent Anglo citizens in communities like Orange County who noted their fear of immigrants.<sup>24</sup> President Bill Clinton believed the solution to be further containment of illegal immigration into the country. In order for us to understand how nativist sentiment took over dominant party philosophies of both major parties in the



U.S., we must look at how politicians socially constructed a state of urgency, fear and security alert. Joseph Nevins constructs a historiography of the anti-immigrant sentiment that was crafted in Southern California by key political figures along with the support of affluent white community leaders.<sup>25</sup> Nevins demonstrates how politicians carefully used immigrant demographic information to explain socioeconomic ills faced by the U.S. Furthermore, Nevins looks at the unique politics that developed in the borderland city of San Diego where political representation by Governor Pete Wilson, in combination with a concerned affluent Anglo citizen community, demanded increased enforcement of the border. In addition, immigrant communities were penalized by the nation for their “illegal status” through the construction of state and federal policy.

Local and national nativist political stances were used to inflame the fears of concerned citizens in affluent communities. For instance, Pete Wilson gained popularity as the mayor of San Diego for his anti-immigrant sentiment, which Nevins posits propelled him to the Governorship of California. Nevins argues, “economic recession proved to be an important factor facilitating the rise of immigration restrictionist sentiment” (2002, 62). Politicians appropriated anti-immigrant sentiments as a strategy to scapegoat immigrants. In addition, affluent Anglo communities along with political support helped build anti-immigrant activist organizations like the Federation for American Immigration Reform (F.A.I.R.) with chapters and active community organizations in critical locations like San Diego, C.A. in the 1980s. Organizations like F.A.I.R. along with politicians like Pete Wilson developed an immigrant discourse around data collection and analysis couched in seemingly objective political discourse. “FAIR” categorized American citizens as the victims of needy

immigrant populations.<sup>26</sup> F.A.I.R. contributed to the rationale for I.I.R.I.R.A., which ultimately sought to circumscribe and regulate the immigrant body during the early 1990s.

Anti-immigrant sentiment influenced Republican and Democrat national politicians in similar ways. Prior to I.I.R.I.R.A., President Bill Clinton gave influential speeches in nationally recognized anti-immigrant locations like in Orange County. Anti-immigrant ideology influenced a neo-conservative platform but was also present in the political opinions of the Democrat party; both parties drew on an anti-immigrant positionality to ease the fears of affluent white communities. This anti-immigrant climate provided the context for Operation Gatekeeper, which passed in 1994. An article published six years after Operation Gatekeeper that logs results of border militarization by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (UCIS) shows the contradictory results created by such anti-humanistic policies: “The INS has achieved considerable success in restoring integrity and safety to the southwest border by implementing the strategy through well planned operations, such as Operation Gatekeeper in California and western Arizona, Operation Safeguard in central and eastern Arizona, and Operation Rio Grande in New Mexico and Texas. It has been almost six years since the INS began this effort, and the strategy is having a significant impact...”<sup>27</sup>

Both political parties propagated militarization of the border to inculcate the support of white affluent communities. These communities and their representatives through their actions and discourse reinscribed the image of the ideal citizen; the white heteronormative male body. The others that stood outside of normative citizenship were brown young immigrant bodies that were a threat to the normative structures of the social fabric. The demonstrations by undocumented youth activists and allies against punitive immigration legislation brought back memories of Civil Rights struggles that also critiqued the role of

federal and state governments in supporting social inequities. Undocumented youth activist assertions claiming civil and human rights challenged the status quo. Politicians and right wing groups used exclusion through legal means to divide and disenfranchise immigrant populations while maintaining discrimination as a fair and objective process.

Two fundamental impacts of I.I.R.I.R.A. provided the seeds of discontent that would blossom in the unprecedented activism of undocumented youth in the decade of 2000. These included the militarization of the border and expansion of deportation practices and the endorsement of state-based immigration policies. The undocumented youth vanguard responded to the pervasive lack of civil and human rights denied undocumented immigrants. Law as a technology of management represents a seemingly objective interpretation that enacts just and fair treatment. I follow Michel Foucault's train of thought in identifying law as a source of management and as means to distribute violence to undesirable populations. Foucault argues that the rise of the modern judicial system is, "the increasing link between the judicial system and armed force."<sup>28</sup> Likewise, I take the creation of anti-immigrant sentiment laws and rise of deportation practices as twin practices of authoritative government. Deportations soared in unprecedented numbers from the time I.I.R.I.R.A. passed under President Clinton to current President Obama. President Barack Obama has overseen the largest number of deportations in history.<sup>29</sup> The data demonstrates that the law has contributed to the dramatic rise in the imprisonment of an undesirable population. As Ruth Wilson Gilmore declares, "prisons are partial geographical solutions to political economic crises, organized by the state, which is itself in crisis"<sup>30</sup> to demonstrate how the military industrial complex system is a political fabrication by politicians who intend to blame society's ills on populations who deemed undesirable.

The militarization of the border and deportation practices continued and heightened after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Former President, George Bush declared on many occasions that he intended to pass immigration reform in his second term. Previous Republican Party presidents, including Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Sr., had done so in their respective administrations. However, 9/11 changed all of that, and the state of fear and emphasis on border protection increased nationwide. After 9/11, George Bush passed the U.S.A. Patriotic Act in October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001, that further militarized the border region and most importantly increased the enforcement power of agencies to act pro-actively and aggressively upon suspicion.<sup>31</sup> The U.S.A. Patriotic Act demonstrates that the role of the federal government was to control and manage undesirable populations who were presented as national threats. George Bush's final speech as President of the U.S. revealed an imperialist nostalgia of failing to pass immigration reform, but the truth is that a historical analysis of immigration policy reveals that President Bush's policy making was in line with the trends to extend the federal role and policies of containing undesirable populations.

During the 2008 Presidential campaigns, the immigration question emerged at the forefront of national media and political debates. Republican candidate John McCain partially ran on the work he had done to craft immigration reform and his work on the DREAM Act bill; however, his reputation with the Latino and immigrant community had been tarnished when under his watch as Senator of Arizona there had been anti-immigrant policies and legislation that impacted the immigrant communities of the state. His apathetic response to undocumented youth activists was publicly recorded and broadcast. As a result, his popularity with Latino voters was low.<sup>32</sup> President Barack Obama on the other hand campaigned on the aspirations of crafting immigration reform and highlighted the failures by

Republicans to pass favorable legislation in improving a broken immigration system.<sup>33</sup> However, two terms later and five years after being elected to office, President Obama's administration is currently the administration with highest numbers of deportations to date.<sup>34</sup> However, President Obama did grant the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (D.A.C.A.) in June of 2012, which allowed 455,000 undocumented youth within the first 13 months of its release the ability to live legally in the U.S. and work. The DACA policy is credited to the insistent pressure by undocumented youth activists and their unique ways of organizing to pressure President Obama to utilize the powers available to the commander in chief. DACA is a direct example of activism that transferred into institutional change at the political level. However, undocumented youth activists realize that policies like DACA did not grant complete equality, and that inclusion and exclusion factors in immigration debates continue and therefore the fight for rights also continues.

The reelection of President Barack Obama in 2012, and the defeat of Republican candidate, Mitt Romney, demonstrated limits to the nativist positions of influence. The majority of Latinos do not support nativist politicians. However, President Barack Obama's reelection on November of 2012 also demonstrated a focal moment in immigrant rights history, where the undocumented youth activist community, in part influenced the political outcome. Tellingly, Latino populations voted their frustrations against a nativist position. As Richard M. Valelly outlines in his article, "Party Politics," "the Republican party may well reinvent itself with respect to Latinos," in reference to the defeat of the nativist positionality from previous Republican candidates.<sup>35</sup> Next, we will see how an undocumented youth vanguard grew in response to anti-immigrant policy making.

## **Towards a Critical Understanding of the Undocumented Youth Movement**

Federal immigration policies when enacted can have complex effects on immigrant communities. This can be seen in the response by Central American communities to the Immigration Act of 1990, which was passed by Congress during President George Bush senior's administration on November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1990. The Immigration Act granted Central American immigrants a path to legalization. The community center and organization, Central American Resource Center (C.A.R.E.C.E.N.), established in 1981 in Washington D.C. and in 1983 in Los Angeles, assisted Central American refugees fleeing from the turbulent wars occurring throughout Central American countries.<sup>36</sup> The center also helped Central American immigrants apply for asylum under the Immigration Act of 1990. In addition, C.A.R.E.C.E.N. staff aided individuals in filling out immigration applications, seeking employment, and securing social services. In addition, C.A.R.E.C.E.N. and other similar organizations provided education and training to undocumented youth in community organizing and activist traditions. As other immigration legislation, the Immigration Act of 1990 included a variety of immigrant populations that benefited from the policy. As a result of the policy there was a rise in Central American migration to the U.S. because of ongoing civil conflict and economic recessions. Like those immigrant populations before them, Central American immigrants faced the pressures of exclusion.

Centers like C.A.R.E.C.E.N. assisted undocumented youth in accessing educational opportunities. C.A.R.E.C.E.N.'s (L.A.) Vladimir Cerna demonstrates an example of one of the first reported undocumented youth activists to publicly announce his undocumented status from the Cal State University Northridge campus in 1994. He intended to denounce the ways in which immigration laws of the early 1990's disenfranchised immigrant students from

having access to higher education.<sup>37</sup> The C.A.R.E.C.E.N. website (L.A.) provided an overview about Cerna's ordeal, "He is accepted at UCLA but due to his immigration status he is not eligible for any financial aid. He enrolls at Cal State University Northridge (CSUN)." Cerna's example helps to highlight how undocumented youth students consciously took the risks of revealing their undocumented status for the hopes of bringing public attention to the position of immigrant communities who were fighting for civil rights.

Vladimir Cerna's example is most illuminating when we place it in dialogue with the specific historical moment that my thesis outlines in policy making. During Cerna's "coming out of the shadow" moment, a strong nativist political climate existed and it occurred during the same year that Operation Gatekeeper at the federal level and Proposition 187 were enacted.<sup>38</sup> According to politicians like Pete Wilson and affluent community supporters, Cerna embodied the "Latino Threat Narrative" – young bodies and minds that did not want to assimilate to American culture and were invading the country in a "Reconquista" fashion and reaping the country's benefits.<sup>39</sup> This was the space in which undocumented youth activists like Vladimir Cerna operated within to voice their opinions.

As discussed, one of the effects of the I.I.R.I.R.A. legislation was that the federal government granted states the authority to enact immigration policies that suited the needs of its residents. Proposition 187 sought to eliminate educational opportunities to undocumented immigrants. Not surprisingly, one of the first civil rights that undocumented youth activists began to organize was around access to education. Initial pushes by individuals like Vladimir Cerna demonstrated the lack of educational opportunities available to undocumented students. Many identified higher educational institutions as strategic places to wage struggles for civil rights. Soon, many other student groups began to organize around issues of

education. For undocumented youth who lacked the ability to find a legally sanctioned job or secure a driver's license, the preferable and available opportunity open to them is attending college.

The 2000s marked a focal moment in the Undocumented Youth Movement in the development of student organizations, statewide alliances, and the creation of national networks. The development of national undocumented youth networks emerged from discussions about pathways to higher education. As larger numbers of undocumented students began graduating from high schools and being accepted to universities, they realized they lacked opportunities for funding and scholarships as undocumented individuals. They initiated conversations among those in similar situations and reached out to supportive faculty, administrators and politicians. Some of these individuals joined them in their causes as allies. Students realized that there was a need to organize and help undocumented student populations who faced similar situations across the country.

Institutions that admitted and serviced undocumented students were unprepared to provide adequate support services. Many universities labeled undocumented students as "out of state," others as "international students," or as "resident tuition paying students," and others simply were at lost as to how to label undocumented students for tuition and rights appropriations. The truth is that states themselves did not have specific policies or bills that were crafted to address the needs of immigrant populations. Consequently, states began to interpret state policies, bills and constitutions as either favoring or excluding immigrant populations from civil rights such as education.

The University Leadership Initiative (ULI), student organization, founded in January of 2005 at the University of Texas at Austin campus, was one of the first undocumented



student organizations created to fight for undocumented student access to higher education. The organization soon expanded into a statewide organization and created communication channels with other undocumented students who experienced similar experiences at other Texas institutions. The ULI student organization was critical in initiating the organizing and communication with state politicians in providing access to higher education for undocumented students. One of ULI's most successful moments was the work conducted with state politicians like former Texas Governor, Rick Perry, to draft the House Bill 1403. As a result, Texas would become the first state in the nation that officially granted undocumented students in-state tuition.<sup>40</sup>

ULI made important strides in advancing favorable policy for undocumented students. However, limitations within university settings point to the complexities of developing approaches and policies to include larger numbers of undocumented students in U.S. colleges and universities. For example, ULI's website states: "ULI conducts outreach at local, state, and national levels to address the dilemma faced by young people who were brought to the United States years ago as undocumented immigrant children, but who have since grow up in the United States, have stayed out of trouble, and wish to continue their education on to college."<sup>41</sup> This statement embeds the notion of model citizenship as fitting to college students. When undocumented youth organizations make broad statements like, "stayed out of trouble," they are participating in reinforcing exclusionary immigrant systems that uphold or make attending college and receiving citizenship out of reach for millions of individuals. Thus, many undocumented youth activists operating in institutional settings like universities participate in processes of professionalization and organization that emphasizes universal notions of model citizenship.

While some activists pursued a more confrontational approach to electoral politics and immigrant's rights organizing, undocumented youth activists decided to operate in a hybrid mixture of spaces. They worked within campus "Dream Teams" and other spaces to remain informed of the legislature and lobby politicians for pro-active change. Certain undocumented youth activists decided to remain members of student organizations like ULI as a way to continue to organize students and impact public opinion in institutional spaces, while at the same time participating in acts of civil disobedience independently without any specific or long-term ties to organizations.

### **The DREAM Act: An Example of a Heterogeneous Undocumented Youth Movement**

Immigration reform policies created in the early 2000s reflected nativist sentiment and also sought to underscore the notion of a deserving citizenry. While anti-immigrant groups targeted immigrant adults through negative propaganda, they received less visible public support for targeting the children of immigrants. Moderate Republicans sought to provide access to citizenship to those immigrants who could aspire to the deserving citizenry, namely youth and children. The DREAM Act was first introduced to the U.S. senate in August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 by a Democratic Senator, Dick Durbin (Illinois) and a Republican Senator, Orrin Hatch (Utah). These politicians intended to create a path to citizenship for undocumented youth who could prove good moral standing and lawful presence in the country with an outlook to study or serve in the military as a way to contribute to the U.S.

Key Provisions of the first version of the Dream Act or SB 1291:

Authorizes the Attorney General to cancel the removal of, and adjust to permanent resident status, an alien who: (1) has attained the age of 12 prior to enactment of this Act; (2) files an application before reaching the age of 21; (3) has earned a high

school or equivalent diploma; (4) has been physically present in the United States for at least five years immediately preceding the date of enactment of this Act (with certain exceptions); (5) is a person of good moral character; and (6) is not inadmissible or deportable under specified criminal or security grounds of the Immigration and Nationality Act.<sup>42</sup>

This thesis offers a critique of the DREAM Act and the use of the “DREAMer generation” label as undocumented youth activists contest normative pressures of inclusion. John Nichols provided a critical understanding of the birth of the “DREAMer generation,” where he states, “The youths, or DREAMers as they came to be known, were making a powerful demand for residency status, but they were also ‘coming out’ and demanding that they be recognized as human beings who belonged in the country.”<sup>43</sup> However, my work departs from accounts of the term “DREAMer” in three particular ways. First, the label DREAMer generation is one that conforms to notions of model citizenship promoted by the DREAM Act bill; many undocumented youth activists question this model. Secondly, the DREAMer label does not respect the complex historical development of the Undocumented Youth Movement that my thesis describes. And finally, the DREAM Act further reinforces the inclusion and exclusion immigration system in place.

The U.S. as a nation-state favors certain immigrant populations more than others for inclusion, as the development of Dream Act demonstrates the favoring of students of good moral standing. The bill promotes the notion of the law-abiding citizen by privileging those individuals who participate in military and educational institutions. Bills like the DREAM Act continue to reinforce a system of inclusion and exclusion in the immigration structure by furthering a system that serves as a gatekeeper of undesirable populations. The DREAM Act

reinforces gender and sexuality normative practices against immigrant communities by violating human rights through unfair deportation practices that discriminate based on individual gender and sexuality identities. Bills like the DREAM Act seek to further divide immigrant communities through these inclusion and exclusion practices, as some benefit while others continue in the struggle for equality.

The DREAM Act served as a focal moment in the Undocumented Youth Movement because undocumented youth activists broke away from and challenged notions and structures undergirding inclusion and exclusion and definitions of the deserving citizenry. I borrow Deborah Vargas' term "exceptional exemption," to demonstrate how some undocumented youth activists and organizations reject the privileging of an educated youth community categorized by notions of model citizenship. Undocumented youth have created a vision of a just society that does not exclude individuals deemed as undesirable but that instead include all immigrants as worthy of citizenship. Furthermore, Vargas describes that education models feed the progressive liberal theories of who is to be included and who is to be excluded from a citizenry body of the nation state. Following this logic, the development of revolutionary and counter-cultural forms of organizing by undocumented youth activists provide for alternate accounts of citizenship making.

### **Movement from *Direct to Indirect* Forms of Organizing**

As federal immigration legislation assumed greater powers over the persecution, containment and control of immigrant populations, there occurred a rise of a vanguard Undocumented Youth Movement who developed sophisticated counter attacks to the deportation regime. I look at organizations like "Dream Activist" and "United We Dream" as organizations that escalated their actions against anti-immigrant legislation or non-action by

government officials. Undocumented youth activists sought to break away from organizing on behalf of or conforming to bills like the DREAM Act. They also departed from large mainstream immigrant rights organizations and moved away from politicians' talking points. They took independent action and leadership to new levels. In the remainder of this chapter, I will look at how the Dream Activist and United We Dream organizations mark the moment in which undocumented youth activists truly break from traditional forms of organizing including lobbying and legislative work, particularly around reform bills like the DREAM Act.

The Dream Activist organization traces its roots to the early 2000s as a national coalition that drew on the work of statewide alliances. The organization's mission statement gives priority to two factors: "the team" or the founding leadership of the organization and "testimonials" or the stories of undocumented youth who testify to distinct forms of oppression they experience as marginalized populations. The Dream Activist website became the largest online of testimonies by undocumented youth and their struggles.<sup>44</sup>

As undocumented youth took on the mantle of leadership in advocating for just laws they turned towards forms of organizing that assertively fore fronted personal struggles, identities, and struggles. Nicholas de Genova states that the use by Immigrant Rights Movement of the slogan, "Aquí estamos, y No Nos Vamos! (Here we are, and we're not leaving)" demonstrates an inclination towards a "irreversible presence." Similarly, slogans by the Undocumented Youth Movement that claim, "Undocumented, Unafraid" are a reaffirmation by undocumented youth activist choice to create testimonial campaigns that affirm an "irreversible presence." The testimonials rather than being used to create spectacle or sympathy by the viewer, affirm the identity of undocumented youth as self-owned and

directed. Similarly, Rene Galindo declares that, “Performances are critical for the construction of collective representation, since they are self-reflexive processes in which actors construct and communicate self-images through the use of verbal and nonverbal symbols,” to demonstrate how immigrant communities construct a counter-narrative against power structures. The creation of testimonials demonstrates a use of *direct* and *indirect* methods of organizing by undocumented youth activists that operate independently and outside of institutional spaces.

The use of testimonials as a tool of resistance by undocumented youth activists served a way to voice their opinions and reject oppressive measures legitimated by immigration policies. Furthermore, Dream Activists used testimonials as a way of educating fellow undocumented youth activists across the nation on the distinct ways in which anti-immigrant policies or pro-immigrant policies either suppress or empower immigrant communities. The testimonials also served to organize fellow undocumented youth activists to conduct their own campaigns to decry punitive legislation or enact favorable policies in state like California, New Mexico, Texas, among other pro-immigrant states. In the reverse, the testimonials also showed the distinct ways that undocumented youth activists have organized revolutionary or civil disobedient campaigns in anti-immigrant states like Arizona, Georgia, Florida, among other anti-immigrant states.

The United We Dream organization was also initially born out of organizing around the DREAM Act bill as part of national coalition among advocacy groups who were led by the National Immigration Law Center (NILC).<sup>45</sup> United We Dream realized early on from its founding that one of the largest threats to the immigrant communities was the large number of deportations that were taking place nationwide. In the composition of their website, they

added a “Take Action” tab under which a person can sign a petition that asks the President to stop deportation practices, more specifically the organization also uploads personal stories by undocumented youth activists who are fighting to stop the deportation of a family members, friends, colleagues or other fellow activists. After several successful stories where petition signing campaigns proved to be successful and stop deportation proceedings, the organization realized that there was true value in the organizational effort to stop deportation practices by the federal government. Organizations like United We Dream confronted the federal government head on against its role to manage populations it deemed undesirable and deportable.

In the article, “What’s Unique About Immigration Protest?” Patti Tamara Lenard argues that most nation states operate under the thought that its citizens and the nation have a contract under which a mutual exchange is supposed to occur. That is, the citizen obeys the nation’s standing rules and laws under the assumption that the nation protects the rights and well being of its citizens. However, Lenard realizes that the contract under which immigrants and nation states operate is set under specific premises where violations occur and where, therefore, immigrant populations use civil disobedience to claim rights denied them. The documentary titled, “Los In Detention” highlighted the practice of deportation proceedings as a form of profiteering and privatization reveals the violation of human and civil rights contracts.<sup>46</sup> The stripping of the civil and human rights of immigrants has shifted the organizing context of undocumented youth activists from indirect to direct ways of organizing. The petition signing campaigns by organizations like United We Dream highlight the initial *indirect* ways in which undocumented youth led organizations operated in the early

2000s period, and how acts of political disobedience demonstrate the shift towards *direct* methods of organizing outside of institutional or traditional forms of organizing.

The “Coming Out the Shadows” event organized by national coalitions within the Undocumented Youth Movement marked a turning point in organizational strategizing by undocumented youth activists from indirect forms of organizing to direct forms. The first recorded and covered “Coming Out the Shadows” event was conducted by Immigration Youth Justice League (IYJL) in Chicago, Illinois on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010.<sup>47</sup> Although the Vladimir Cerna example of the mid-1990s demonstrates that undocumented youth had earlier been unveiling their “illegal status,” the difference between Cerna’s example and that organized by IYJL is in the context and audience. Cerna’s identity unveiling was conducted within a university campus through a press conference that included professors, administrators and community supporters. The “Coming out the Shadows” event of 2010 was crafted as a sensational event that targeted public media with wide national coverage of both English and Spanish media. The 2010 activists claimed public space by revealing themselves as undocumented youth in the presence of public enforcements officials. The identity declarations, the media coverage and the sensational tactics used by the undocumented youth activists marked a turn towards civil disobedience in organizational approaches and their slogan “Undocumented, Unafraid” declared the movement’s disregard for either local, state or federal authorities.

### **Concluding Lessons from the Early 2000s**

The testimonial efforts by Dream Activist and the petition signing campaigns by United We Dream are examples in which organizations in the first decade of the 2000s organized to combat pressures from states and the federal government. Student organizations



like the ULI statewide coalitions demonstrate the formation of early organizations that would unite with national coalitions or organizations like Dream Activist and United We Dream. These examples demonstrate the various spaces crafted by undocumented youth activists in nationally recognized organizational efforts and campaigns. Prioritizing one form of activism over another is not the goal, rather what is crucial is an analysis of heterogeneous composition of the movement and how different activist or leaders organize around certain issues or themes.

In Chapter Two, I look at the mid 2000's in the light of the immigrant rights national marches as another focal moment in the Undocumented Youth Movement where undocumented youth activists further separated themselves from the broader Immigrant Rights Movement and continue to push the boundaries of activism.

## Chapter Two

### **The Giant Awakens: The Development of the Undocumented Youth Vanguard**

"[w]e refused to be naive ...we knew if we didn't do anything about it, nobody else was going to." – Gabriel Benitez, Las Vegas, NV

A focal moment that received national attention on immigrant's rights was the immigrant rights marches of 2006. While most Americans in several large major cities were waking up to their regular routines on May 1, 2006, they were greeted by waves of people marching through their cities. The limits of American privilege and exceptionalism were highlighted as immigrants stepped out of their marginalized position and gained public visibility and recognition denied them by the U.S. government. A tradition of restrictive legislation kept immigrant communities in an "in between" position or what Gloria E. Anzaldúa calls the "nepantla," which was broken that day by immigrants who marched on the streets of major metropolitan cities across the U.S. demanding their rights.<sup>48</sup> Political marginalization for immigrant communities in the U.S. included undesirable and low paying jobs, lack of political representation, a state of fear and persecution, a culturally marginalized position in society, and invisibility. Such structures of power are developed by a fractured immigration federal system that keeps the mainstream U.S. society misinformed about what Mary Louise Pratt calls the "contact zones."<sup>49</sup> That summer of 2006, marked a point of no return for the American public in a way where immigrants' rights were brought to the forefront of mainstream society and invisibility was no longer an option.

This chapter analyzes the 2006 national marches sensationalized by the media as the "Giant Awakens." The depiction of this national mobilization aligns with past notions of Latinos as an inert social population, passive and inactive. Media outlets sought to influence

the forms and waves of activism by using a dichotomy of peaceful or radical means. Furthermore, I argue that the mainstream media's attempt to redirect activism towards peaceful means served as a point of departure from undocumented youth activists who participated in the 2006 marches. As a result, this chapter follows where the first chapter left off and traces the fractures or ruptures that took place within the broader Immigrant Rights Movement in the mid-2000s (in the context which the 2006 marches took place) and the divergences in organizing within the Undocumented Youth Movement. This follows the idea that some undocumented youth activists were not content with operating under institutional and indirect forms of organizing, and wanted to move towards direct forms of organizing that contested some of the normative beliefs adopted by broader Immigrant Rights Movements.

My work argues that the 2006 marches is a moment where many undocumented youth activists felt the backlash from both politicians and fellow immigrant activists for wanting to engage in more confrontational or direct means, not supported by the U.S. majority public opinion. For many traditional activists within the Immigrant Rights Movement, dissident forms of organizing reinforced nativist fears of immigrants rejecting U.S. notions of inclusion. Undocumented youth activists took exception to organizations and individuals that encouraged them to accept the U.S. public discourse on deserving notions of citizenship. Instead, many chose to organize with like-minded individuals at the margins and in an independent fashion. The mid-2000s represents the switch from *indirect* forms of organizing to more *direct* forms of organizing that represented ideological and strategic differences between immigrant rights activists challenging punitive forms of immigration legislation. This chapter follows the intersections between the creation of public opinion by

the media and the ways that undocumented youth activists contest normative creations of racial and cultural politics.

### **Which “Giant?”**

My project demonstrates that the Undocumented Youth Movement is a vanguard because it not only challenges the negative impact of U.S. immigration policy but also criticizes the underlying notions and suppositions of the policy. By identifying normative understandings of deserving citizenship, undocumented youth activists undermined the naturalized notions of citizenship as being exclusive and serving hegemonic purposes. The coverage of the 2006 national marches as the “Giant Awakens” demonstrates sensational language used by the media to bury a legacy of immigrant rights activism and encourage less confrontational approaches to nativism and xenophobia.<sup>50</sup> In *Radical Sensations*, Shelley Streeby argues that nation-states see importance but also fear in the power of visual culture and social movements. I use Streeby’s analysis about the power of visual culture, in this case, as transmitted by the U.S. media, to influence and manage the behavior of immigrant populations. Similarly, Lisa Cacho argues that media is a technology of management employed by power structures to create epistemological discourses about groups of people. She declares, “As ways of knowing and methods of meaning-making, race, gender, and sexuality simultaneously erase and make sense of what should have been a contradiction by making racial contradictions commonsense.”<sup>51</sup> I interpret the commonsense depictions of undocumented youth activism as the ways in which the media uses demographic data about immigration populations to instill fear on the general citizenry, and the way in which the media utilize notions of peaceful discourse and civil disobedience as a way to instill organizational practices as commonsense to activists.

Major newspapers around the U.S. flooded their audiences with headlines intended to capture the fervor of activism experienced during the 2006 marches. The *Los Angeles Times* newspaper ran the headlines, “500,000 Pack Streets to Protest Immigration Bills”<sup>52</sup> and “500,000 Throng L.A. to Protest Immigrant Legislation,”<sup>53</sup> that captured the magnitude of the marches in the city of Los Angeles. The demographics of immigrant populations in Los Angeles explain why it was the largest demonstration around the nation, but the media’s choice to focus on the size of immigrant populations’ points to the ways that immigrants are made invisible or visible by the media even in a large city like Los Angeles. Similarly, the *Chicago Tribune* ran headlines which hinted that there is “Power in Numbers,”<sup>54</sup> to make the claim that numbers and visibility are the only power held by immigrant communities. Another *L.A. Times* headline read “Immigrants Demonstrate Peaceful Power,”<sup>55</sup> that captured the admiration for “peaceful” forms of organizing by immigrant activists. And then, there were also newspapers like the *Las Vegas Review Journal* that ran nativist opinion pieces like “Marches Full of Disturbing Irony”<sup>56</sup> where individuals critiques the marches based on the “ironic” authority by immigrant populations to march and demand civil rights.

The larger marches of May 2006 had been preceded by some student walkouts. Some media outlets captured several of the student demonstrations. Several of the newspaper headlines critiqued students for choosing to walk out of their schools and stand up for their civil rights. For example the *Las Vegas Review Journal* headlines about students read, “School Officials Try To Discourage Another Walkout,”<sup>57</sup> and “Students March Again,”<sup>58</sup> or “Merely Ditchers,”<sup>59</sup> and go on to capture actions organized by students such as Las Vegas based protests at politicians’ offices in, “Students Protest at City Hall.”<sup>60</sup> These headlines played on public fears by portraying youth as errant and irresponsible. Organizing efforts by

students and activists in Las Vegas echoed similar positions that undocumented youth experienced in other major cities around the nation.

Undocumented youth began to organize as a discrete sector in the larger Immigrant Rights Movement. Once undocumented youth began organizing on their own, they took on direct public actions like protesting at politicians' offices, walkouts, and other civil disobedient acts. Their new approaches were not always favorably received. Some activist groups deemed confrontational tactics as forms of organizing that jeopardized arguments for inclusion into an American citizenry body. While activist groups similarly challenged racialized constructs of anti-immigrant legislation they did diverge on how to reach fair and just compromises with political officials and mainstream immigrant rights organizations. In the article "Battling for Human Rights and Social Justice," Solorzano, Velez, Huber, López, and de la Luz make the arguments that oppressive policymaking targets youth of color in everyday ways. The authors in the article declare that it is impossible to eliminate race in the discussion of human and civil rights. When undocumented youth take organizing power into their own hands they "are taking ownership of their lives through political activism to resist these trends and bring about positive community change."<sup>61</sup>

The media coverage of the 2006 marches demonstrates a preoccupation on various reporters' part with depicting immigrant's rights activism as peaceful celebratory public manifestations. In the *Reorder of Things*, Roderick Ferguson argues that neoliberal discourse intends to incorporate social movements to more closely manage their expressions and manifestations. He declares, that neoliberal agendas "best institute new peoples, new knowledges, and cultures and at the same time discipline and exclude those subjects according to a new order."<sup>62</sup> Similarly, Jodi Melamed declares that the use of neoliberal

multicultural discourse in the media serves to mediate social movements in a way that perceives inclusion of ethnic populations as a way of management and further ethnic differentiation. She argues that, “In a society in which normative power is pervasive, control over the means of rationality is as important as, if not more important than, control over other social forces.”<sup>63</sup> The media’s depiction of the Immigrant Rights Movement as a slow and growing force or in terms like the “Giant Awakens” represent a literary device used to mediate the fears of a considerable immigrant population. Furthermore, the media asserts its power to carve acceptable activist spaces for immigrant rights organizing as a method of rationality. The politics of legibility versus illegibility, as described by Dylan Rodriguez, describe the ways that structure of power utilizes technologies of management, such as the media, to make populations legible or illegible through narratives of public discourse that gets decimated as common sense as a form of producing epistemology.<sup>64</sup> In contrast, activists who utilize more direct or radical forms of organizing are made illegible in public discourse.

Rather than aspiring to support normative notions of deserving citizenry, a new generation of activists coming into the political scene in the mid 2000s broke the mold of the civic-abiding Immigrant’s Rights organizations. Many of these undocumented youth activists from different locations in the U.S. expressed dissatisfaction with activists that sought to funnel their frustrations and aspirations in to a publicly acceptable discourse of civic activism. I argue that the mid 2000s is a point in which many undocumented youth activists and organizations departed from the larger Immigrant Rights Movement in an effort to operate independently and conduct organizing that directly challenged the normative underpinnings and extreme forms of marginalization they faced as undocumented individuals.

## **Battle of Policies: Nativist Pressures and Conservative Progressive Models**

My thesis argues that policymaking and activism impact one another in distinct ways at critical moments of immigration debates. The 2006 marches were a focal moment where immigrant rights activists responded to the proposals of an anti-immigrant bill at the federal level.<sup>65</sup> Prior to the introduction of H.R. 4437, the DREAM Act was first introduced in 2001 and subsequently in following years as a way to conduct immigration reform that would be acceptable at the national level. My thesis argues that the ways in which politicians crafted the DREAM Act is aimed at easing the fears of nativist politicians and anti-immigrant activist groups. I argue that by offering up an educated class of youth of good civil standing that seeks to contribute to the nation-state (the “DREAMers”), the DREAM Act serves as a normative response to immigrant claims to citizenship. Undocumented youth activists who advocate for immigrant’s rights outside of the DREAM Act defy the logics of the nation-state by creating a more collective body of immigrants who claim access U.S. citizenship and civil and human rights.

The DREAM Act reinscribed U.S. politics of control by granting citizenship and recognition to those who do not directly challenge U.S. immigration laws, the minor children of immigrants. By denying citizenship to adult lawbreakers, the DREAM Act reaffirms the logic of civic accord by the law-abiding citizen. Furthermore, I interpret the DREAM Act in light of Mimi Nguyen’s concept of “the gift of freedom,” or as a policy that creates debt within an undocumented youth that must be repaid at a later time through their educational or militaristic contributions to the U.S. By abiding with the provisions of the DREAM Act, the children of immigrants compensate for their parents’ misdeeds. Nguyen argues that “the gift of freedom emerges as a site at which modern governmentality and its politics of life (and



death) unfolds as a universal history of the human, and the figuration of debt surfaces as those imperial remains that preclude the subject of freedom from being able to escape a colonial order of things.”<sup>66</sup> The mid 2000s marked a point in which undocumented youth activists rebelled against both anti-immigrant nativist groups and traditional activist groups who knowingly and unknowingly affirmed normative discourses that sought to place undocumented youth into categories of model citizenship.

Proposed U.S. legislation like the DREAM Act provide guidelines for how and who among immigrants can be offered a path to citizenship. While some conservative nativist groups take an extreme position and rule out all possibilities for undocumented immigrants to obtain citizenship, other moderate conservative uphold normative modes of integration for immigrants. Similarly, reform groups that organized around comprehensive immigration reform upheld notions of exemplary conduct in the eyes of public by working with and making concessions to legislators. As a result, undocumented youth activists received pressures from political supporters, family members, religious leaders and groups, and institutional advocates to exhibit patience and optimism towards governing officials in their political deliberations, thereby upholding models of good citizenship.

Media outlets also promoted the discourse of undocumented youth as aspiring and model U.S. citizens when highlighting the political implications of the Dream Act. For example, the *National Catholic Reporter*, a religious journal that is adamant about covering undocumented youth activism and presents itself as an ally of immigrant rights, published an article that underscored the notion of the deserving citizenry. The article titled “A Human Face,” shows a picture of undocumented student, David Ramirez. In the photo, David is pictured with a thoughtful expression while studying and wearing a sweatshirt with an artful

print of the Virgin of Guadalupe.<sup>67</sup> The article uses expressions like “hard working student,” and mentions exceptionalist values that highlight Ramirez as being a “contributing member of society,” who gives immigration a “human face.” The article also covers the risk that Ramirez faced when he traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, along with other undocumented youth activists who conducted a sit-in at an Atlanta intersection. These activists blocked traffic in an act of civil disobedience. The article mentions that Ramirez and the other activists were arrested for the act of disobedience. The author acknowledges the danger of deportation faced by Ramirez and fellow activists, but what I find most interesting from the article is the position by religious groups to support undocumented youth activists even in their decision to conduct dissident actions as long as the activists reinforce family values, hard working ideals, and a male heteronormative condition.

One of the most recognized political figures and advocates of the DREAM Act and immigration reform is Chicago Congressman Luis Gutiérrez (D-Ill.). Congressman Gutiérrez has been at the forefront of promoting civil rights for undocumented youth. For instance, he has publicly fought for higher education for immigrants and measures to stop deportation practices against immigrant families.<sup>68</sup> His self-produced autobiography, *Still Dreaming*<sup>69</sup>, reads like a political platform to stage himself as a progressive politician fighting for civil rights and equity, which include advocacy for immigrant rights. He also criticized politicians like President Barack Obama for refusing to stop deportation practices. However, recently the Congressman’s office released the statement, “The Office of Congressman Luis V. Gutiérrez (D-IL) will no longer work with the National Immigrant Youth Alliance (NIYA) and their affiliated advocates at DREAMActivist.org,”<sup>70</sup> after members of NIYA demanded the collaboration from Congressman Gutiérrez to ask for the release of several undocumented

youth activists from detention centers. Congressman Gutiérrez drew a line between his office and the more radically oriented undocumented youth activists after these organizers had conducted several acts of civil disobedience. After this action, Congressman Gutiérrez deemed the act unlawful and in discordance with what he deemed appropriate methods of organizing for immigrant rights and reform. I argue that the specific internal politics that created the fallout are not important, but rather what is interesting are the ways that undocumented youth activists negotiate organizational boundaries in contesting what are deemed appropriate and what are considered deviant forms of organizing.

### **Alternate Ways of Operating: Cultural Citizenship as Contestation of Normative Pressures**

The National Immigration Youth Alliance (NIYA) is one of the organizations that emerged in the mid 2000s by undocumented youth activists who addressed head on the normative discursive and structural spaces that immigrant communities face. NIYA is based in the motto: Empower, Educate, and Escalate. Their website declares that “Empowering” is the embracement of their identity as undocumented youth, and “Educate” refers to their position within social movements discourse and their term “Escalate” is a way that the “movement... will use mindful and intentional strategic acts of civil disobedience to be effective.”<sup>71</sup> As a result, NIYA is at the forefront of controversial events that frequently capture national headlines.

Since 2010, Undocumented youth activists have escalated their approaches and tactics on behalf of immigrants in the U.S. The “DREAM 9” is a project in 2012 coordinated by undocumented youth activists within the national network of NIYA where three undocumented youth traveled to Mexico voluntarily to reunite with their families. Once in

Mexico, they planned to return to the U.S. through a legal port of entry in Arizona. This organizing represents one of NIYA's most extreme modes of organizing and ways to push physical and lawful boundaries. Six more individuals who had voluntarily returned to Mexico and some who had been deported united with the original three activists. Once the six individuals turned themselves over to ICE agents in the port of entry, the activists sought to receive humanitarian parole that would grant them the right to petition their case legally in the U.S. The "Dream 9" activists were recently released from the Eloy Detention Center in Arizona and allowed to petition their case freely in the U.S.<sup>72</sup>

NIYA seeks to highlight the extreme forms of repression experienced by undocumented individuals by pushing the limits and logics of the U.S. nation-state. The reasoning that NIYA members provide in their unorthodox forms of organizing is that what they are doing is most closely related to the real dangers that immigrants risk in their illegal passages to be reunited with families after many years of separation.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the "DREAM 9" sought to bring awareness to U.S. interpretation of refugee laws as the number of applicants from Mexico continue to rise but the U.S. continues to reject individuals even when the majority of applicants meet requirements.<sup>74</sup> But as Mimi Nguyen mentions, "the language of evaluation and assessment of a people's competencies and their potential," are also rules of measurement for refugee and immigrant populations who are applying to enter the U.S. legally and are thus measured by their offerings.<sup>75</sup> Thus, NIYA organizers from Mexico who organized the self-deportation act did so to demonstrate the cultural claims that youth make in a country that is not their birthplace. Through the act of self-deportation, undocumented youth activists contest citizenship as a birthright. The "DREAM 9" affirmed what political scientist, William V. Flores describes as a youth who is "Not fully accepted or

welcome in either world, the hybridity forces us to claim our own space.”<sup>76</sup> The act of civil disobedience by the “DREAM 9” demonstrates an act of political deviance that defies national and international interpretations of borders and inclusions. Undocumented youth activists continue to demonstrate that political interpretations of the border reinforce a “border imaginary”<sup>77</sup> that undermines the quality of life for vulnerable, working-class populations. Undocumented youth demonstrate the importance of cultural politics in carving out operational spaces that contest normative notions of belonging in ways that provide alternate ways of being.

NIYA’s “DREAM 9” campaign can also be understood in light of their motto “Escalate.” Members of the organization are known for conducting infiltrations of detention centers by voluntarily turning themselves into ICE customs enforcement officials. This organizing tactic brings the invisible and silenced populations of detainees into the public imagination. NIYA seeks to humanize these immigrants by sharing their stories of family and deprivation. The majority of infiltration acts have been successful in reconnoitering information and in the fact that the majority of undocumented youth activists who are DREAM eligible have been released. The goal of these infiltration practices is to “Educate” and bring public attention to the high numbers of deportees that have occurred during President Barack Obama’s administration. Furthermore, NIYA organizers also report on the ways that detention centers operate under private contracts from the U.S. government in a way that dissolves government responsibility and where human rights violations occur in a grey area of the law. Organizations like NIYA who conduct infiltration operations operate at the margins, using acts of civil disobedience that more closely align with the lived realities of immigrant communities who are kept in the shadows while human rights violations persist.

Therefore, when media categorizes undocumented youth activists as counter-cultural or deviant, the power structures that construct a system of violence against immigrant communities continue unabated and unchallenged.

### **Escalating Examples from the Early 2000s to the Mid-2000s**

I introduced the Dream Activist organization in Chapter One to highlight their practice of collecting the largest testimonial archive of undocumented youth activists “coming out the shadows.” The act of testimonials demonstrated initial stages in which undocumented youth activists conducted indirect forms of organizing as they remained tied to institutional settings. However, the mid-2000s marks a shift in which organizations like Dream Activist and other undocumented youth activists made the turn towards more direct forms of operation outside of institutional spaces. The video archive of testimonials started by the Dream Activist organization continues to grow since it was first established, however the testimonials are now accompanied by acts of civil disobedience, which marked a turning point in the logic of “Undocumented, Unafraid.”

One of the many examples that demonstrates the escalating actions designed by Dream Activist’s took place in Phoenix, Arizona in March of 2012, where six undocumented youth activists willingly conducted a rally that ended in a street corner facing Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s office. The activists proceeded to block traffic from passing through as a way to bring awareness to the human rights violations that have disproportional impacted immigrant communities.<sup>78</sup> The act of civil disobedience by the undocumented youth activists resulted in the arrests of the six activists, all who were later released. In a response video on the organization’s YouTube channel, two of the activists respond as to why they risked deportation proceedings through their civil disobedience act as, “I’m tired of working hard

and waking up and not having anything,” declares Rocio, followed by the declaration, “If somebody is tearing my dreams... I’m not going to sit back and take it, I am going to fight back.”<sup>79</sup> Rocio’s declarations highlight the conscious decisions by undocumented youth activists to stand up to the oppressive and enforcing power structures of the federal government through routine deportation practices. Rocio makes the affirmative statement that the “DREAM Act is not the answer,” as to argue against policy making that continues to exclude and divide immigrant families. Hugo concludes by declaring, “We are tired of living in fear,” a position that has led undocumented youth activists to conduct acts that are deemed politically disobedient or counter-cultural, because the loss of fear signifies a consciousness that a fight for a bigger purpose is much more important. Hugo and Rocio embody the undocumented youth vanguard when they declare, “Somebody has to step up and show the people that we can’t be afraid all the time... That’s why we are doing it.” Therefore, the Undocumented Youth Movement adopted the phrase – Undocumented, Unafraid.

Nicholas de Genova argues that the statements made by the undocumented movements declare a position of irreversibility. To rephrase it, de Genova argues that slogans like “Undocumented, Unafraid” reveal a firm position whereby immigrant populations are asserting their positions within society. “Undocumented, Unafraid” underscores the conscious acknowledgement of an undocumented youth vanguard to equate the loss of fear through claiming of rights and identity. De Genova declares, “This politics of incorrigibility, I want to insist, articulated a *queer* politics of migration. That is to say, it was a politics that defied and rejected all of the normative categories of state sovereignty and its immigration regime: *We’re here, we’re queer, get used to it!*”<sup>80</sup> Because as De Genova declares, migration politics are automatically connected to an outlook that is counter-normative and

anti-assimilationist and therefore, the approach taken by undocumented youth activist to operate at the margins is a way to create alternate notions of citizenship. The mid-2000s also marked a shift in the Undocumented Youth Movement in taking a post-national approach that was more inclusive of gender, sexuality, generational difference and inter-movement outlook.

I analyze the work by Dreamers Adrift as a way to understand the various ways under which undocumented youth activists carve out different spaces for activism, but also to understand different notions of cultural citizenship. Leaders within Dreamers Adrift generate activist spaces where undocumented youth are able to voice their opinions, politics, and artwork that push the boundaries on immigrant rights.<sup>81</sup> I borrow the definition of activism from Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre that interpret it as “a hybrid neologism that signifies work created by individuals who see an organic relationship between art and activism.”<sup>82</sup>

Dreamers Adrift is composed of undocumented youth activists who incorporate distinct ways of organizing, including artwork, videos, blogs, and other distinct events. Their YouTube channel is filled with many videos that aim to capture the “nepantlan” positionality by undocumented youth and their points of contestation to structures of power.<sup>83</sup> For example, in a video titled “We’re just human beeeeeeeings,” self-identified activist Julio Salgado captures the sentiments faced by undocumented youth activists who were feeling pressured to conform to political ideologies around the DREAM Act. Salgado begins by declaring, “In the ‘so called’ DREAM Movement you have to be a beast! You have to be a beast if you want to get some respect or rights... (laughter) rights,” to point the pressured point of operation “DREAMers” were placed in.<sup>84</sup> He goes on to say, “I did what I had to do.



I stayed out of trouble. Be the model citizen without the privileges... As soon as I started getting involved with the DREAM Act, politicians were like ‘don’t say anything, shut the fuck up, look pretty...we’ll do the talking for you. These are the talking points, you can’t say anything because you’ll get deported,” so he goes on to declare the breaking point happened when activists decided to stand up to such authoritarian models by saying, “Some of us got tired! Wait What? I can’t what? Some of us were like fuck this shit! We’re going to do it ourselves!”

Undocumented youth activists felt trapped in an in-between space and by various people who wanted to control their public behavior and voice within the broader Immigrant Rights Movement. Salgado’s comments reveal the limitations experienced by undocumented youth activists when politicians and organizations sought to restrict their actions within institutionalized settings. Salgado declares that there came a breaking point where some activists would not take it anymore and decided to organize at the margins and away from constraints. The very title of the video “We’re just human beeeeeeeings” hints at the ways that undocumented youth were being managed and compartmentalized as if their voice, thoughts, feelings, and well being did not matter. Undocumented youth activists were being reduced as a class that should be managed for inclusion. However, the use of profanity and anger reflects Salgado’s discontent and oppositional stance to what undocumented youth activists perceive as oppressive models of behavior. This reflective testimonial video by Dreamers Adrift captures a look back at a critical moment when undocumented youth activists affirmed they were not afraid to question and stand up to the nation-state, politicians and also to fellow activists and organizers.

The development of the organization Dreamers Adrift demonstrates a shift in the consciousness of undocumented youth organizers to combat imposed notions of model citizenship. Chon Noriega declares that Chicana/o “Artists used visual tools to articulate the goals of and issues central to the struggle, creating powerful graphic messages that raised awareness and aroused conscience.”<sup>85</sup> However, Salgado’s work also uses these traditional forms of resistance to counter nationalistic, gender and sexuality issues of traditional activism. Credited for developing the term and concept “Undocuqueer,” his artwork pushes the boundaries in representations of immigrant identity, citizenship and modes of activism/artivism.<sup>86</sup> Queer theory is helpful in understanding the intersections between the LGBTQ movement and the Undocumented youth movement. The Undocuqueer movement highlights intersecting notions of oppression that serves as a basis for inter-movement collaboration. Campaigns by Julio Salgado and fellow undocumented youth activist demonstrate a historical consciousness rooted in Civil Rights tradition, but also how certain points of contestation to race-based forms of organizing.

“Undocu-Queer” artwork seeks to queer the Immigrant Rights Movement, and brings awareness of the undocumented struggle to the LGBTQ Movement. For Salgado, these two facets are interconnected and cannot be prioritized one over the other. He states, “This is why we have to intersect, because people in both groups are so invested. You have to do gay marriage, we want to join the army...there’s more than that to being queer.” His work represents the commonalities shared by immigrants and highlights the importance of collaborating.<sup>87</sup> Similarly, Walter J. Nicholls describes this bridge as, “DREAMers now talk about the ‘intersectional’ character of their struggle. They are not only undocumented

Americans; they are also Queer, minorities, women, and so on,” as to point to how activists like Julio Salgado build on intersectional analysis to build inter-movement collaboration.<sup>88</sup>

The development of an Undocuqueer literature has led to the problematization of the heteronormative model citizen that has served as the basis for new critiques of immigration legislation and discourse. Unsatisfied with securing citizenships for themselves through policies like DACA, undocumented youth are looking for pathways for citizenship for all immigrants and stop punitive detention and deportation campaigns. Undocumented youth are a vanguard in fighting on behalf of human rights.

### **Reflections**

The context under which the Marches of 2006 took place became the platform under which the Undocumented Youth Movement began to position itself as a vanguard to fight against normative pressures by the U.S. nation-state. Undocumented youth activists reached a point in which operating within institutional spaces and conducting direct forms of organizing was not compatible with the everyday practices of violence inflicted on immigrant populations. Punitive laws and limited proposed immigration legislations led to the unique internal politics in which many undocumented youth activists decide to step away from traditional, national, and heteronormative forms of organizing. Furthermore, undocumented youth activists challenged the logics of an immigration system based on the dynamics inclusion and exclusion. Through notions of cultural citizenship, undocumented youth activists publicly refused to be incorporated into an oppressive system that was focused around the management of undesirable immigrant populations. If inclusion of undocumented youth represented further exclusion and removal of family members, friends, and workers; then, the Undocumented Youth Movement was declaring “Not One More!”<sup>89</sup>

Organizations like United We Dream, Dream Activist, NIYA, Dreamers Adrift and Culture Strike represent organizations that have consciously decided to operate independently and at the margins with the hopes of continuing to create unique and creative campaigns that meet the realities of immigrant populations. Their conscious decision to operate outside of institutional spaces points to a rejection and a failure of U.S. institutional and civil rights promises. Working outside of government or business influenced models allows undocumented youth activists to conduct acts of civil disobedience, such as the ones mentioned in this paper that include, detention center infiltrations, self-deportation campaigns, sit-ins, blocking of traffic demonstrations, conducting activist work, and many other forms of organizing that push the boundaries of activism. Therefore, the mid-2000s and the development of the “Undocumented, Unafraid” slogan is a call to action by the Undocumented Youth Movement to highlight how the exceptionalism of some, reinforces a system that excludes most.

## **Conclusion**

As the U.S. legislature continues to debate the implementation of comprehensive immigration reform, these public policy makers should be attuned to the impact undocumented youth activists have on public discourse and debate. Public policymakers should: recognize the social and cultural capital of undocumented youth organizers. They should understand that youth activists will continue to use direct means of organizing and raise the stakes of the public debate over immigration legislation. Politicians should appreciate the voice and advocacy of undocumented youth activists who made visible the most punitive aspects of immigration policy, including the detention and deportations of hundreds of thousands of immigrants. Policymakers should recognize the value of intersectional and counter normative critiques posed by undocumented youth activists in crafting fair and just immigration legislation.

This project seeks to inform academics and public audiences of the impact of state and federal immigration policy on immigrant rights discourse and activism. The contributions youth make to develop holistic understandings of human rights may assist scholars, activists and humans worldwide think about alternative possibilities to describe identity and citizenship rights. My project contributes to social movement scholarship by examining the ways the Undocumented Youth Movement has influenced social movement organizing as crossing ethnic/racial, gender, and sexuality lines, and emphasizing intersections between politics, culture, and personal lives.

This thesis demonstrates that political forms of organizing by undocumented youth activists create alternate interpretations of citizenry that resist normative pressures dictated by the nation state. We must regard undocumented youth as knowledge producers that can

inform immigration legislation and policymaking. Therefore, undocumented youth activists offer healthy critiques of the nation state that provides new meanings and directions in human rights discourse that may lead towards a more humane tomorrow.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Markman, Jon D., “Prop 187’s Quiet Student Revolution Activism: In Contrast to more publicized walkouts, Latino youngsters are turning opposition to immigration measure into a real-life civics lesson.” *Los Angeles Times*, Metro B, Nov. 6, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Ballot results for Proposition 187 can be found in California’s Secretary of the State website here: <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/sov/1994-general/1994-general-sov.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Margolis, Jeffrey R., “Closing the Doors to the Land of Opportunity: The Constitutional Controversy Surrounding Proposition 187.” *The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review*, Vol. 26:2, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Vallely, Richard M., “Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party’s Buried Past. The Republican Part and Immigration Politics: From Proposition 187 to George W. Bush.” *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> The reason why Undocumented Youth Movement is capitalized during the rest of the manuscript is because I consider the Undocumented Youth Movement a separate but contributing movement from the broader Immigrant Rights Movement. The capitalization emphasizes the contributions and respect granted to the Undocumented Youth Movement.

<sup>6</sup> P. xii-xiii in *Technoculture* (1991) by Constance Penley and Andrew Ross.

<sup>7</sup> Rosaldo, Renato, “Cultural Citizenship, Inequality, and Multiculturalism” in *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*, Ed. William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor. Beacon Press, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Cacho, Lisa, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York University Press, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Ong, Aihwa, “Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States.” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 37, No. 5, 1996.

<sup>10</sup> Solorzano, Daniel G., Yosso, Tara J., “Critical Race and LatCrit Theory and Method: Counter-storytelling.” *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Solorzano, Daniel G., Velez, Veronica, Perez Huber, Lindsay, Benavidez Lopez, Corina, De la Luz, Ariana, “Battling for Human Rights and Social Justice: A Latina/o Critical Race Media Analysis of Latina/o Student Youth Activism in the Wake of 2006 Anti-Immigrant Sentiment.” *Social Justice*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> De Genova, Nicholas, “The Queer Politics of Migration: Reflections on ‘Illegality’ and Incurability.” *Studies in Social Justice*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Vallely, Richard M., “Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party’s Buried Past. The Republican Part and Immigration Politics: From Proposition 187 to George W. Bush.” *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> The information for the specific clauses in Proposition 187 can be found on the California’s Online Voter Guide, a non-partisan journal that contains information on California’s legislation and propositions. Proposition 187’s information can be found here: <http://www.calvoter.org/archive/94general/props/187.html>

<sup>15</sup> I use Jon D. Markman as he was a L.A. Times reporter who was very active in covering wide range of social issue topics of Los Angeles in the early to mid 1990s when Proposition 187 took place. His coverage of Proposition 187 demonstrates the sensational language and mediation journalist practice towards activism that runs as a main media focus throughout this paper. Markman wrote a total of five articles on Proposition 187.

<sup>16</sup> M.A.L.D.E.F.’s website can be found here: <http://www.maldef.org>

<sup>17</sup> Somos un Pueblo Unido’s organizational website that covers their history and reference to Proposition 187 can be found here: <http://somosunpueblounido.org/somos-un-pueblo-unido.html#about>

<sup>18</sup> Preston, Julia, “Illegal Immigrant Students Protest at McCain Office.” *New York Times*, May 18, 2010, A15, L p.

<sup>19</sup> Luihbéid, Eithene, Cantú, Lionel, *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*. University of Minnesota Press, 2005. I read *Queer Migrations* as a way to understand the ways in which bodies are queered and subjected to different migration patterns and disciplining practices like deportations and persecution.

<sup>20</sup> Sections 343 through 352 in the I.I.R.I.A. legislation pertain to the changes and authority granted to states based on health, education and other services under which states are granted authority to authorize policy around immigration in the context of illegal peoples presence.

<sup>21</sup> Section 328 authorizes state authorities to create policies around the enforcement of immigration issues.

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<sup>22</sup> Bruce Barlet in, “Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party’s Buried Past,” *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, P. 261, 2011, examines the interpretation of the change between nativist positionality within the Republican and Democratic Parties formations from Proposition 187 in California to the Presidential administration of George Bush.

<sup>23</sup> I use nativism in the context of the immigration system around notions of inclusion and exclusion. The ways in which politicians craft neo-conservative positions in reference to their immigration politics. The nativist positionality within immigration policy is enforcement and further militarization of the border around containment of “illegal” immigration.

<sup>24</sup> For further reading on President Bill Clinton’s visits to affluent communities like Orange County and other key locations please see Joseph Nevins book *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the “Illegal Alien” and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*.

<sup>25</sup> Nevins, Joseph, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the “Illegal Alien” and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*. Routledge, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Along my research path, one of the organization or sources that collects the most information on immigration bills/policies both at the local and national level is the organization F.A.I.R. Their website reveals the economic power that anti-immigrant positioned organizations like F.A.I.R. have not only in data management, but also in actual political hearings in high offices like congress. Their website is: <http://www.fairus.org>

<sup>27</sup> The article produced by the executive associate commissioner for field operations of immigration and naturalizations services within UCIS, Michael A. Pearson can be found on the UCIS website here: <http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/testimony/pearson.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Foucault, Michele, *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Ed. Gordon, Colin. Pantheon Books, 1977. I read Chapter One (P. 5), “On Popular Justice” to interpret Foucault’s discussion on the inseparability between law or justice system and the management of violent structures to connect it with the deportation practices that immigrant communities must face.

<sup>29</sup> From 2000 to 2011 deportations has increased by over 200,000 people total and remained at an all time high under President, Barrack Obama’s administration, according to PEW Research. From former President George W. Bush’s administration end in 2008 to President Barrack Obama’s administration ascendancy to the presidency the following year in 2009, deportations rose to an all time high of 393,000 people annually, increasing from the previous year by 33,000 people. I measure this data as incongruent with President Obama’s platform to campaign with the intention of reforming the immigration system. Lopez, Mark Hugo, Gonzalez-Barrera, Ana, “High Rate of Deportations continue Under Obama despite Latino disapproval,” *PEW Research Center*, Sept. 19, 2013. Article can be found at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/09/19/high-rate-of-deportations-continue-under-obama-despite-latino-disapproval/>

<sup>30</sup> Wilson Gilmore, Ruth, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. University of California Press, 2007, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> For further reading on the specifics of the U.S. A. Patriotic Act of 2001, you can find it here in the U.S. Financial Crimes Enforcement Network a U.S. Department of Treasury sector’s website: [http://www.fincen.gov/statutes\\_regs/patriot/](http://www.fincen.gov/statutes_regs/patriot/)

<sup>32</sup> According to the PEW Research Center, John McCain captured 31% of the Latino vote in the 2008 Presidential Elections campaign. However, the numbers are more captivating when we see that by the 2012 Presidential Elections campaign, President Barack Obama captured 71% of the Latino vote. These numbers demonstrate the constant dissatisfaction by the Latino community in the nativist positionality. Lopez, Mark Hugo, “Republican Chris Christie captures about half the Latino vote.” PEW Research Center, Nov. 6, 2013. Article can be found here: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/11/06/a-republican-captures-the-latino-vote/>

<sup>33</sup> I use President Barack Obama’s speech on July 8, 2008 before the League of United Latin American Citizens during the 2008 presidential campaigns as promise the president made to Latino voters and immigrants where he declared, “They need us to enact comprehensive immigration reform once and for all. We can’t wait 20 years for them to do it; we can’t wait ten years for now to do it. We need to do it by the end of my first term as president of the United States of America.” The speech can be found on the Associated Press’ YouTube channel: <http://youtu.be/AM6q-E4rThA>

<sup>34</sup> I combine speeches given by President Barack Obama during his campaign platforms such as the one mentioned in the above footnote along with the mentioned deportation figures by the PEW Research Center mentioned in footnote number six, to outline how President Obama’s words do not match his actions.



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- <sup>35</sup> Barlet, Bruce, “Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party’s Buried Past,” *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, P. 261, 2011.
- <sup>36</sup> C.A.R.E.C.E.N. (D.C.) website: <http://www.carecenc.org/> and C.A.R.E.C.E.N. (L.A.) website: <http://www.carecen-la.org/>. C.A.R.E.C.E.N. (L.A.) website also reports that a total of 20,000 Central American immigrants benefited under the T.P.S. component of the Immigration Act of 1990.
- <sup>37</sup> Vladimir Cerna’s story is listed in C.A.R.E.C.E.N. (L.A.) website under the “About Us” tab listing the chronology of the organization and mentioning Cerna’s example as a prominent service in which the center fought for undocumented student’s rights.
- <sup>38</sup> “Coming out the shadows” is a popular term or phrased used within the Undocumented Youth Movement as an even in which undocumented youth activists will organize events in which undocumented youth will reveal their undocumented status in a public venue as a form to declare their firm positions and unwillingness to be intimidated by public discourse because their undocumented status is part of their identities.
- <sup>39</sup> Chavez, Leo, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford University Press, 2008.
- <sup>40</sup> Texas became the first state in the nation to grant in-state tuition to undocumented students. Soon afterward many other states followed the trend in passing bills that granted undocumented students in-state tuition. Currently the state of New Mexico is the only state to grant in-state tuition and state financial aid to undocumented students. There are currently (as of July 2013) a total of 16 states that grant in state tuition to undocumented students. I read the passage of policies at the state level that are pro-immigrant as focal point in which the heavy activism by undocumented youth activists have impacted policy making at the state level to be inclusive of education as an inclusive human right. For further reading on a U.S. map of states granting in state tuition to undocumented students, the information can be found on National Conference of State Legislatures website: <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/educ/undocumented-student-tuition-state-action.aspx>
- <sup>41</sup> ULI’s website is: [http://universityleadershipinitiative.org/?page\\_id=2](http://universityleadershipinitiative.org/?page_id=2)
- <sup>42</sup> The original Dream Act as drafted can be found on the following website: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:SN01291:@@L&summ2=m&>
- <sup>43</sup> Nichols, John, *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate*. Stanford University Press, 2013, 1.
- <sup>44</sup> The Dream Activist website is: <http://action.dreamactivist.org>
- <sup>45</sup> United We Dream’s website that details their history is: <http://unitedwedream.org/about/history/>
- <sup>46</sup> Hinojosa, Maria, “Lost in Detention.” *FRONTLINE Journalism Fund PBS*, 2011. You can find a preview of the film on PBS’ website here: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2140004804/>
- <sup>47</sup> IYJL’s “Coming Out the Shadows” website and information can be found here: <http://www.iyjl.org/comingout2013/>
- <sup>48</sup> I use the concepts of “nepantla” and “in between” in reference to Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s essay “this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation” (2002b, 1), where she develops the concept of “unsafe spaces” or spaces between where transformation, conflict, and unpredictable actions occur.
- <sup>49</sup> I use the phrase “contact zones” in the context that Marry Louise Pratt states, “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (1991, 34).
- <sup>50</sup> The term the “Giant Awakens” or “el gigante se despierta” is used as an affirmation in the strength in numbers by both activists and the media. For the context of my paper, I look at the way the media used reports of the numbers of participants to use this data in positive or negative ways.
- <sup>51</sup> Cacho, Lisa, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York University Press, 2012.
- <sup>52</sup> Watanabe, Teresa, Becerra, Hector, “500,000 Pack Streets to Protest Immigration Bills.” *Los Angeles TIMES*, Mar. 26, 2006, at A1.
- <sup>53</sup> Sterngold, James, “500,000 Throng L.A. to Protest Immigration Legislation.” *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 2006, at A1.
- <sup>54</sup> Associated Press, “Power in Numbers; Nearly 400,000 fill downtown Chicago’s Streets with Rallying Cry for Immigrant Rights.” *Chicago Tribune*, May 2, 2006, p. 6 6pp.
- <sup>55</sup> Gorman, Anna, “Immigrants Demonstrate Peaceful Power.” *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 2006, at A1.
- <sup>56</sup> See Commentary, *Marches Full of Disturbing Irony*, *LAS VEGAS REV.-J.*, May 3, 2006, at B8.

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- <sup>57</sup> Planas, Antonio, "School Officials Try to Discourage Another Walkout." *Las Vegas Review Journal*, March 31, 2006, at B5.
- <sup>58</sup> Planas, Antonio, "Students March Again." *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April, 1, 2006, at A1.
- <sup>59</sup> Dowling, Jane, "Merely Ditchers." *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April, 3, 2006, at B8.
- <sup>60</sup> Planas, Antonio, "Students Protest at City Hall." *Las Vegas Review Journal*, April 4, 2006, at B1.
- <sup>61</sup> Solorzano, Daniel G., Velez, Veronica, Perez Huber, Lindsay, Benavides Lopez, Corina, de la Luz, Ariana, "Battling for Human Rights and Social Justice: A Latina/o Student Youth Activism in the Wake of 2006 Anti-Immigrant Sentiment." *Social Justice*, Vol. 35, No. 1, P. 7-27, 2008, 14.
- <sup>62</sup> Ferguson, Roderick A., *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. University of Minnesota Press, 2012, 12.
- <sup>63</sup> Melamed, Jodi, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011, 11.
- <sup>64</sup> Rodriguez, Dylan, "Inhabiting the Impasse: Racial Genocide and the Logic of Evisceration." Guest lecture, University of New Mexico, February 2, 2013.
- <sup>65</sup> For further specific details on HR 4437 read: Pantoja, Adrian, Menjivar, Cecilia, Magana, Lisa, "The Spring Marches of 2006: Latinos, Immigration, and Political Mobilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2008. Also access to specific details of the bill on the U.S. government site: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-109hr4437eh/pdf/BILLS-109hr4437eh.pdf>
- <sup>66</sup> Nguyen, Mimi Thi, *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and other Refugee Passages*. Duke University Press, 2012, 5.
- <sup>67</sup> Kimont, Kaitlin, "A Human Face: Recent graduate brings attention to undocumented students' plight." *National Catholic Reporter*, March 2-15, 2012.
- <sup>68</sup> Congressmen Gutierrez introduced the "Student Adjustment Act of 2001" or H.R. 1918, which was an initial version of the DREAM Act and sought to repeal I.R.C.A. (1996) for undocumented youth students. He also helped bring House Bill 60 along with Illinois Governor, Rod R. Blagojevich on May 8, 2003, which granted qualifying undocumented students in state tuition. I read politicians efforts, such as those of Congressmen Gutierrez along with the developing activism at the grassroots level to find the escalating forces that lead undocumented youth activists to operate independently or through institutional ways.
- <sup>69</sup> Gutierrez, Luis V., *Still Dreaming: My Journey from the Barrio to Capitol Hill*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. The name of Congressmen Gutierrez is interesting in regards to the notions and categories for crafting of the DREAM Act bill and also around ideas of activism methods.
- <sup>70</sup> Congressman Gutierrez's website where the statement was released is: <http://gutierrez.house.gov/press-release/statement-niya> The statement is particularly interesting because the press release declares that NIYA members manipulated and misinformed activists and their parents about correct law policies to conduct activist approach. Whatever the truth may be, there is clear opposition to methods in activism operation.
- <sup>71</sup> NIYA's website is: <http://theniya.org/about-us/>
- <sup>72</sup> For further information and details on the "Dream 9," I follow public reports by the Huffington Post in combination with newspapers clippings, but what is particularly interesting is to read the public forums or comments on the stories that get published in online journals like the Huffington Post, read/follow: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-shourd/dream-9\\_b\\_3721023.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-shourd/dream-9_b_3721023.html) [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/25/dream-9-hunger-strike\\_n\\_3655111.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/25/dream-9-hunger-strike_n_3655111.html) & [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/01/dream-30-released\\_n\\_4025368.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/10/01/dream-30-released_n_4025368.html)
- <sup>73</sup> Stories of the "Dream 9" and also now another group conducting the same campaign calling themselves the "Dream 30" can be found on NIYA's YouTube page: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmVedomvjVwWeYZeZ9JJ6Kg>
- <sup>74</sup> Full story along with data information can be found in the L.A. Times online journal: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/oct/28/nation/la-na-texas-asylum-20121028>
- <sup>75</sup> Nguyen, Mimi Thi, *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and other Refugee Passages*. Duke University Press, 2012, 46.
- <sup>76</sup> Flores, William V., "Citizens vs. Citizenry: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship," in *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*, Ed. Flores, William V., Benmayor, Rina. Beacon Press, 1997, 257.

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<sup>77</sup> I borrow the term “border imaginary” from Alicia Schmidt Camacho used in *Migrant Imaginaries* to understand how immigrant culture surpasses national understandings of physical borders.

<sup>78</sup> The act of civil disobedience conducted in Phoenix, Arizona was documented by the Dream Activist organization on their YouTube page and can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqjmPVuao18&list=FLAmL4UHnjw6scbwyJW3A9nA&index=2>

<sup>79</sup> The reactionary/interview video of the civil disobedience act in Phoenix, Arizona that captures the opinion of two participants can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L6dJRZ6Y7c&list=FLAmL4UHnjw6scbwyJW3A9nA&index=3>

<sup>80</sup> De Genova, Nicholas, “The Queer Politics of Migration.” *Studies in Social Justice*, Vol. 4, Issue 2, 2010, 105.

<sup>81</sup> Dreamers Adrift’s website is: <http://dreamersadrift.com>

<sup>82</sup> P. 82 in the essay, “Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca’s Digital Work with Youth of Color” by Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre in the anthology, *Learning Rae and Ethnicity: Youth Digital Media*, edited by Anna Everett. Sandoval and Latorre highlight the development of the concept of “artivism” in relation to the Chicana/o Movement and in relation to contemporary digital art work productions in what they label, “digital artivism.”

<sup>83</sup> I use the concepts of “nepantla” and “in between” in reference to Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s essay “this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation” (2002b, 1), where she develops the concept of “unsafe spaces” or spaces between were transformation, conflict, and unpredictable actions occur.

<sup>84</sup> Julio Salgado’s full declaration and video can be found on the Dreamer’s Adrift YouTube page:

[http://youtu.be/5zaEvW0SV\\_g](http://youtu.be/5zaEvW0SV_g)

<sup>85</sup> P. 8 in the “Acknowledgements” section of *Just Another Poster?* anthology edited by Chon Noriega. The introduction provides a critical analysis of the importance of the poster board making trajectory in the Chicana/o Movement.

<sup>86</sup> Julio Salgado is credited for coining the term, “Undocuqueer” a concept that combines both identities of being undocumented and queer. This term first appears in his artwork campaign, *I Am Undocu-Queer* in January of 2013, which focuses on challenging identity constructions and reinstates the dignity that exists in being queer and undocumented. This campaign also captures Salgado’s methods of intersection between inter-movement collaborations.

<sup>87</sup> Full interview can be found on the Culture Strike YouTube page:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dFAYEK--Lc>

<sup>88</sup> P. 125 in *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate* (2013) by Walter J. Nicholls.

<sup>89</sup> The “Not One More!” campaign is a collective network organized by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network that brings organizations together nationwide with the sole focus to stop the deportation proceedings of many undocumented peoples nationwide. What is interesting about this campaign is the use and creation of technoculture to raise awareness to stop deportations virtually through online petitions but also uses technology to report about the grassroots efforts being conducted by undocumented youth activists on the ground level conducting acts of civil disobedience that include detention center infiltrations, human chain links to physically stop ICE buses carrying immigrants, human right violation practices, and much more. It is interesting that this campaign credits its establishment to past campaigns and organizations that I mention in this paper, which further demonstrates the escalating nature of the Undocumented Youth Movement.

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