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NAVIGATING THE SHADOWS: INTERSECTING THE UNDOCUMENTED AND UNDOCUQUEER IDENTITIES

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NAVIGATING THE SHADOWS: INTERSECTING THE UNDOCUMENTED AND
UNDOCUQUEER IDENTITIES

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Social Sciences and Globalization

by
Iriana Balbian
September 2019

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ABSTRACT

This project analyzes the navigation of social experiences of Undocumented and Queer individuals amidst broad anti-queer and anti-immigration sentiment prevalent throughout American society. To achieve this goal, this project seeks to resolve three questions. First, what are the social services that Undocuqueer and Undocumented adults need? Second, are their needs fundamentally distinct? Finally, to what extent have they been able to access those services? Crenshaw's (1994) theory of intersectionality will serve as the overarching theoretical framework of this project, in order to better understand the multifaceted marginalization that Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals face with everyday institutions.

In this research, I utilized activist research methods. In addition to its scholarly contribution to the fields of undocumented and Undocuqueer studies, the findings of this project will serve as a resource for the undocumented student center across the country to improve its services for the student body. I interviewed a total of seventeen individuals drawn from both the Undocuqueer and undocumented populations at a University in southern California. To facilitate my research, a center that focuses on undocumented students at a campus in southern California, allowed me to place flyers in their center and the majority of my participants were frequent visitors to the center. Out of my 17 participants, one was the coordinator of this undocumented student center; 3 identified

themselves as Undocuqueer; and, 13 identified themselves as undocumented students.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS.....	8
CHAPTER THREE: UNDERGROUND INSTITUTION.....	25
CHAPTER FOUR: NAVIGATING IDENTITIES.....	37
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	50
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER....	52
REFERENCES.....	52

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Undocumented Student Success Center.....	34
Figure 2. Immigration Status	45

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In their daily lives, Undocuqueer individuals must navigate the complex gauntlet of heteronormativity, homonormativity, and the socio-political stigma attached to the DREAMer discourse. This project analyzes the navigation of social experiences of Undocumented and Queer individuals amidst broad anti-queer and anti-immigration sentiment prevalent throughout American society. To achieve this goal, this project seeks to resolve three questions. First, what are the social services that Undocuqueer and Undocumented adults need? Second, are their needs fundamentally distinct? Finally, to what extent have they been able to access those services? Crenshaw's (1994) theory of intersectionality will serve as the overarching theoretical framework of this project, in order to better understand the multifaceted marginalization that Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals face with everyday institutions.

In this research, I utilized activist research methods. In addition to its scholarly contribution to the fields of undocumented and Undocuqueer studies, the findings of this project will serve as a resource for the undocumented student center to improve its services for the student body. I interviewed a total of seventeen individuals drawn from both the Undocuqueer and undocumented populations. To facilitate my research, an undocumented student center allowed me to place flyers in their facility and the majority of my participants were

frequent visitors to the center. Out of my 17 participants, one was a coordinator of the undocumented student center; 3 identified themselves as Undocuqueer; and, 13 identified themselves as undocumented students. The majority of my participants were reached through word-of-mouth, also known as the 'snowball' sample. The participants were asked to complete one, forty-five-minute interview. The identity of my participants is kept confidential, and all identifiable personal information has been coded in order to protect the anonymity of participants.

Background Behind a Undocumented Student Center

A coordinator of a undocumented student center, was also interviewed in order to obtain a historical background on the inception of the undocumented student center. During our interview, the coordinator, Sandra explained that the undocumented student center was incorporated in November 5th, 2015. And that she initiated as a staff member at the center on January 4th, 2016. She began her career there as an emergency assistant and then moved on to becoming the coordinator of the Center. But she was also part of the group of students who advocated for the center. She has been advocating in behalf of the undocumented students at her university in southern California ever since.

The concept of the center originated amongst a group of students attending this particular university in 2005. Working in tandem with sympathetic members of university administration, these students were able to create networks amongst the undocumented student population. From these networks, a series of focus groups were created with the goal of discerning the needs of

undocumented students and determining how these needs differed from the broader student body. These focus group met three times during that year in order to establish the basic needs and requirements of the undocumented student population. Sandra recollected that these focus groups helped create a sense of community in the undocumented student population. In the interview Sandra recalled that “what we decided as students is to establish a student organization. So, we establish the [club], ... And through that club we started having conversations about having a physical space”. The club was formed on May 17th, 2015. One of the first orders of business for the club was to establish a center. Sandra stated that the club was utilized as the place to initiate conversations about the needs of the undocumented students and having a center, a place of their own, seemed like a necessity for these students. Sandra, later, added that two sympathetic administrators “were working behind the scenes to [help] write a proposal that we could present to the [rest of the] campus administration about having a physical space.” Sandra emphasized that the assistance of these administrators was crucial in the creation of the center. She explained that even though the undocumented students knew that they needed a space of their own, it was difficult trying to determine how to navigate the waters of the academic bureaucracy to achieve this goal. Since most of undocumented students are first generation college students, higher education is a new institution that these individuals are learning to navigate. Like any institution, academia possesses its own practices and process that are unfamiliar to

newcomers that individuals and groups must learn to navigate in order to meet their needs. Guidance is essential for first generation students who are attempting to navigate the unfamiliar landscape of academic institutions. As “with undocumented students and others experiencing significant barriers to staying in school, LGBTQ students find too few supports at school and often are reluctant to access what is available for fear of exposing themselves” (Yang:1). Support from the school’s administration fosters a supportive environment that helps students inform the school of their needs and together come up with solutions and institutional improvements. The benefits of such a supportive environment are readily apparent in the creation and subsequent successes of the Center. Guidance for these students before and during their time in higher education is imperative for facilitating academic excellence and success. Particularly due to their status as undocumented individuals, which adds a unique and often politically volatile layer of complexity to navigating the institution of higher education. The assistance of the sympathetic administrators in the creation of the Center is a powerful example of the merit of proper guidance. These administrators showed a group of undocumented students the correct avenues that they had to navigate in order to get their voices heard and their needs met and, in the process, they helped create a valuable asset for undocumented students to make their voices heard.

US Immigration Policy. Since the inception of the United States of America, immigrants have been the very foundation of the nation. Immigrants and their culture is what makes the United States such a unique and diverse nation. Even though immigrants are the literal foundation of the United States, immigration laws and policies have been utilized to restrict immigration and build racial hierarchies of desirable versus undesirable immigrants. In order to understand contemporary immigration laws and policies, one must first understand where our public perception of immigrants became a negative image in a country founded by immigrants. In this section, the Immigration Act of 1924 and the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 will be explained in order to set a precedent of how certain immigrants have been treated and controlled through the implementation of laws and policies.

The Immigration Act of 1924 was a landmark piece of legislation that transformed American Immigration policies and American attitudes towards immigrants. The Immigration Act of 1924 limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States and established the first set of national origins quota. This immigration policy introduced national quotas that allowed only a certain number of immigrants to enter the country. This act was not the first exclusionary immigration order, but it was one of the most significant immigration policies, and it left lasting effects can still be felt in contemporary immigration law and policy. Legally, the act only permitted 2% of immigrants to enter the country, which was only about 150,000 immigrants per year. And the

quotas were designed to favor immigration from nations deemed "desirable" like Britain and Germany. In addition to its legal restrictions, this act perpetuated xenophobic ideologies, meaning, that it validated the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, but it widened the number of people excluded based on national origin. This ban excluded and impacted Slavic, Japanese, Italians immigrants the most. The Chinese were already excluded by the Chinese Exclusion Immigration Act, but the 1924 Act further reinforced this notion that Chinese people should be excluded from obtaining citizenship in America. In summary, the Immigration Act of 1924 created a racial hierarchy that stated which countries they seem fit to 'assimilate' to the American culture.

The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 is an important piece of legislation to note due to the elimination of exclusion of certain nationalities. Even though the McCarran-Walter Act maintained the national origins quota system, it still removed certain barriers to citizenship. Vigdor mentions that one of the main differences that this legislation introduced was 'legal permanent residency', also known as 'green card' prior to citizenship. This new form 'legal permanent residency' acted as another barrier for immigrants in the United States. Adding this extra step for immigrants to become citizens is another example of how laws have been utilized to exclude and make it more strenuous for immigrants to gain a path to citizenship.

Currently, under the Trump administration there has been a numerous amount of discourse discussing the future of the DACA program. The Deferred

Action for Childhood Arrivals was created under the Obama Administration and implemented in August 12th, 2015. “DACA--instituted by a DHS directive rather than congressional action--provided temporary work permits and deportation relief to more than 664,000 young undocumented immigrants who had lived in the United States since childhood” (Gonzales 2016:1). DACA is a result of immigrant rights groups fight for immigration reform. DACA provides these young people with a work permit and driver licenses, it also allows DACA recipients to travel within the United States and obtain loans. While there are many positives to the implementation of DACA, DACA is also not a solution, but a band aid to a much larger representation of failing immigration system. DACA is not the DREAM Act, the main difference between these two legislations is that the DREAM Act allows for a path to citizenship, while DACA does provide some incentives it maintains lives legal at limbo. DACA recipients have to pay a filing fee of \$465 every two years without a promise of renewal. And because DACA is an executive action and was not signed into law this means that the future of DACA is unreliable and can be removed depending on who is holding office.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

This literature review will explore current research on Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals and their navigation with social institutions. In order to understand the lived experience of undocumented and undocumented queer adults, it is necessary to utilize a framework which discusses the intersectionality of their participation in more than one marginalized group. For this reason, this chapter will explore the origins of the Undocuqueer identity and analyze its intersectionality by considering its role in the LGBT and immigrant rights movements. This review will also seek to analyze how public discourse regarding immigrant populations is formed and manipulated. Specific attention will be paid to the role of institutions, power relations and public perception that help formulate and facilitate this discourse.

Theoretical Framework

In order to understand and analyze the lived experience of Undocumented and Undocuqueer adults, it is necessary to utilize a framework that discusses the intersectionality of their participation in more than one marginalized group. This research will compare undocumented and undocuqueer experiences through the framework of intersectionality. Crenshaw (1994:12) states that “intersectionality

offers a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics.” Intersectionality examines the social constructions of race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality, and how it shapes experiences of oppression. I have chosen to utilize an intersectional approach because “this framing—conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by the dynamics of power—emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is” (Cho et al.: 2013, 795). Intersectionality helps us understand why the Undocuqueer and the Undocumented (DREAMERS) identity was created as a form of resistance, as well as its utility to the LGBTQ and undocumented social movements. By analyzing identity and participation in these marginalized groups, it becomes apparent that there are multiple layers of oppression that simultaneously interact and help shape Undocumented and Undocuqueer experiences. These identities are necessary to address intersectional social inequalities within both the broader scope of society and within these sub-cultures.

Undocumented LGBTQ adults understand that they do not belong solely in either their ethnic/cultural enclave or in the LGBTQ community, but in a combination of both. It is this complexity of “being a ‘minority within a minority’ [that] was reported to be a challenge in and of itself” (Gray et al: 2015, 10). In regard to the Undocuqueer identity, this concept of expression is a subgroup of an already highly marginalized group. The challenges and complexities of this

identity will be addressed in this study. Intersectionality helps unpack the multiple layers of oppression experienced by Undocuqueer and Undocumented students as they navigate American social institutions, such as, health care, the criminal justice system, politics, higher education, and financial institutions. An “intersectional approach recognizes variability in the experiences of people who share one or more social categories, and does not assume specific patterns of similarity or difference” (Gray et al.: 2015, 2). It embraces every aspect of the undocuqueer identity. Crenshaw states that “ignoring differences within groups frequently contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics” (1994, 1). “Contrary to articulating gender, race, and class as distinct social categories, intersectionality postulates that these systems of oppression are mutually constituted and work together to produce inequality” (Viruell-Fuentes et al: 2012, 2100). By analyzing identity and participation in these marginalized groups, we note that there are layers of oppression that simultaneously interact and help shape undocuqueer experiences. This identity is needed in order to best be able to address intersectional social inequalities with the society at large but also within these sub-cultures.

I will utilize intersectionality as my theoretical framework in order to deconstruct the complexities of both Undocumented and Undocuqueer experiences and identities. Undocumented individuals experience multiple forms of oppression, including race/ethnic, gender, and immigrant status. Undocumented LGBTQ adults understand that they do not belong solely in either

their ethnic/cultural enclave or in the LGBTQ community, but in a combination of both. And Undocumented adults understand that the main factor that sets them apart from other immigrants and the American population is their legal status. Intersectionality provides an excellent framework to understand systematic institutional oppression that Undocuqueer and Undocumented adults face during their everyday interactions.

Immigrant Rights and the Undocuqueer Movement. One of the goals of this project is to help ameliorate the lack of attention to Undocuqueer communities in social science research. Shore (2013) observes that there is a dearth of quality data pertaining to sexual minorities and undocumented communities in extant research. This research seeks to help fill this void with a detailed exploration of the Immigrant Rights' and Undocumented Movement to understand how these identities intersect and collaborate with each other for a common goal: social justice for undocumented communities in the United States.

In 2013, UCLA's Williams Institute undertook the first ever nationwide study specifically dedicated to estimating the size of the Undocuqueer community in the United States. Not only is there a lack of research pertaining to the Undocuqueer community, but what does exist is fairly recent. As Shore (2013) notes, Undocuqueer individuals have played an active role in the immigration reform movement, but their contributions have been chronically under-reported

and overlooked in public discourse. The contributions of Undocuqueer youth over the last decade have been particularly crucial in this regard. Due to their exclusion from their own migrant communities, as well as the mainstream LGBT and immigration reform movements, Undocuqueer youth carved out their own unique spaces in response to multifaceted exclusion (Lal:2016). Unfortunately, the energetic efforts of Undocuqueer youth to assert their own identity in the face of exclusion and contribute to the broader immigrant rights struggle has been sorely understudied. This combination of under representation and lack of quality data is precisely what makes this project such a necessary addition to the field.

Existing research regarding the Undocuqueer identity has mainly focused on their role in the DREAMers movement and on the activists who have helped develop the Undocuqueer identity. Julio Salgado, a prominent Undocuqueer activist and artist, utilizes art and social media to raise awareness of the Undocuqueer identity. As “the movement of immigrant youth coming out as ‘undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic’ grew, undocumented and queer artists such as Julio Salgado created artwork to mark the intersection of LGBT and immigrant rights” (Lal 2016). The growing visibility of the Undocumented and Undocuqueer community helped establish the Undocuqueer identity as a new and novel fusion of undocumented and queer identities. Undocuqueer activists have shed a light on this identity by coming out of the shadows and raising awareness of the existence of the identity more broadly. Undocuqueer activist demonstrate visibility, in order to have a larger conversation about intra-group

politics and make their needs part of the immigration debate known. They achieved this by “skillfully creating and launching visual art & videos, (utilizing) social media and (organizing) live-in person collective action” (Equality Archive). Queer undocumented activist state that their purpose for creating political pieces and producing them via social media is because the “immigration and LGBTIQ issues are controversial topics that have gained prominence in political and social circles throughout the nation and at the ballot boxes” (Equality Archive). Immigration and LGBTQ rights are not parallel movements, but intersecting ones in the fight for social justice.

While there is some mystery regarding the origin of the Undocuqueer identity, one thing is certain and that is that this identity was forged through activism and art. And contributing to this conversation by analyzing the production of political art. White (2014) examines migrant activism in the US and Canada, and how this activism interacts with nationalism and state organizations, such as Homeland security. White examines the activism of the Undocuqueer movement to analyze constructions of national identity and the question of who belongs inside/outside of the nation. Juan Ochoa (2015) also analyzes protest art, specifically Julio Salgado’s *Joteria* series in order to study how Undocuqueer artist reclaim the word ‘joto’ or ‘joteria’. Ochoa highlights that “the digital prints of self-identified undocuqueer artist Julio Salgado because his artwork challenges me to develop what I am conceptualizing as a jotería analytics.” (2015:184). Ochoa states that examining the politics of *Joteria* “becomes a useful tool to

understand the constant shifting of power and its impact on identity formation, especially for those who identify as undocuqueer.” (2015:184). The role of Undocuqueer activists is currently well represented in the small corpus of literature dedicated to studying the Undocuqueer identity, because it was their art that helped coin the term in the first place. The art created by these activists played a pivotal role in giving a voice to the anxieties of people who belong to both the undocumented and LGBTQ communities, but studying their work only scratches the surface of the experiences of the broader Undocuqueer community. More research is needed on the everyday experiences of Undocuqueer people.

Institutions

Institutions and institutional systems are necessary to understand in any research pertaining to social structures, because they play a key role in the organization of society. Emilé Durkheim (1938) explains that “one can, indeed, without distorting the meaning of this expression, designate as ‘institutions’ all the beliefs and all the modes of conduct instituted by the collectivity” (lvi). Institutions inform the collective society how to behave, think, and act. Emilé Durkheim suggests that the importance of institutions is, “to know is not the way in which a certain thinker individually conceives a certain institution but the group’s conception of it; this conception alone is socially significant” (Durkheim 1938: xlvi). Durkheim suggests that the conception of institutions by the collective is the

ultimate sociological truth and fact. Veblen states that in practice, institutions are “habits of thought” regarding particular relations and functions of individuals and of communities. (1894:127). Consequently, institutions are socially constructed and constantly redefined and renegotiated by society as a collective whole. It is through these socially ascribed thoughts and patterns that we create society and institutions help us manage these complex social systems that influence the individual and the collective. Because institutions are man-made they do not exist outside of corruption or outside the axis of power. “Institutions, because they instantiate power, are not neutral” (Waylen, 2013:216). Due to the fact that institutions are not neutral they need to be studied and dissected. These institutions permeate every aspect of human life. In light of their powerful role in society, specific institutions cannot be viewed in isolation, they must be analyzed in light of their broader connections to society and in their interactions with other formal institutions (Waylen 2013). Institutions not only affect human life, but they interact and influence other institutions as well. We must study institutions and their effect on the individual as well as the collective community. The “scientific rationality has permeated not only the modes of thinking and acting of our public institutions but even the ways we think about the most intimate details of our private lives” (Harding 1935:355). Institutions affect every aspect of our lives. There is inherent power relations within the foundation of these institutions, and because they interject within every personal and public sphere we interact with institutions must be dissect due to the position of Undocumented and

Undocuqueer individuals. Undocumented and Undocuqueer immigrants navigate American institutions that are built and maintained by discourse surrounding power.

Institutions matter because they “are the ‘rules of the game’ – the rules, norms, and practices – that structure political, social, and economic life” (Chappell & Waylen, 2013: 599). Society is firmly defined by its constituent institutions, and it is through the renegotiation and alteration of existing institutions that certain players even get a chance to play the game at all. However, it is difficult to conduct social change because of how ingrained these institutional norms are in the collective. These institutions affect every aspect of our lives, but they act as an invisible hand, unnoticed and taken for granted by much of the population at large. Conversely, due to their socially ascribed outsider status, Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals are placed at a disadvantage operating in these institutions, but they still have to navigate these institutions in order to get their needs met and live in everyday society. Since institutions represent power, institutions must be studied in order to understand their impact on the lives of Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals. The claim that “nearly all definitions of institutions assume that they are relatively enduring features of political and social life (rules, norms and procedures) that structure behavior and cannot be changed easily or instantaneously.” (Waylen 2013: 213). Institutions help structure the political and social life of Americans. Since institutions represent power and rule over behaviors that affect the political

and social life of Americans, institutions must be dissected in order to achieve activist research methods or affect meaningful change. In order to best understand how Undocumented and Undocuqueer navigate institutions, the underlying power that forms these institutions must be acknowledged and analyzed.

Discourse. Public discourse surrounding immigration is shaped by policy, media and other institutions which help to frame our societal construction of immigration and immigrants. Such constructions can be perpetuated long after they are created and continue to exercise extensive influence on the beliefs and decisions of succeeding generations (Whitney, 2012). Uneven power relationships are readily apparent in public discourses that are directed towards specific groups, and this discourse can serve to shape the way institutions and individuals interact with these groups. Institutions play a key role in organizing society into factions that help, or inhibit, sub-groups within society from meeting their needs. For example, discursive objects such as 'illegal immigrant' and 'immigration, are shaped and given meaning by the power relations that led to the creation of these terms (Whitney, 2012). Who produces discourse about whom demonstrates power relations at play. Discursive objects produced by individuals in positions of power impact individuals or groups at the margins of society the most. Due to its marginalized status, the undocumented population is amongst one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. Discourse

produced by elites impacts undocumented individuals disproportionately, particularly in the realm of politics and public policy.

When discourse is utilized in constructing societal narratives pertaining to immigration, “immigration in general is constructed as a problem” and portrayed in a negative light. The consequences of the creation and perpetuation of this negative social discourse are detrimental to the immigrant population as a whole. This type of discourse influences every aspect of daily life. Institutions are assembled with individuals who have certain connotations pertaining immigration and migrants themselves. If the immigrant community is portrayed in a negative light, then the public officials are more likely to accept and pass anti-immigrant legislation. Becerra et al., states that “the negative public discourse regarding undocumented immigration may lead to increased levels of perceived discrimination” (2012:118). This discrimination penetrates every institution in America. Increased levels of discrimination are then, “enacted [through] laws putting local, county, and state law enforcement personnel in the position of relying on stereotypes about what an ‘illegal alien’ looks or sounds like” (Becerra et al., 2012:115). Utilizing discourse to construct the concept of the ‘illegal alien’ is harmful to the migrant population because it carries with it a host of commonly accepted ‘facts’ that are rooted in harmful stereotypes. And these stereotypes inherently affect all migrants in the United States including those with documentation and those without. These “facts” are never neutral and are always embedded in contexts’ and that ‘...some groups in society are privileged

over others, and this privilege leads to differential access to services, goods and outcomes” (Whitney, 2013:444). The undocumented population exists at the margins of privilege. Narratives are being produced by elites and are embedded in with biases that are not founded in empirical data. Consequently, these bias impacts institutions and inhibits their ability to provide fair and just access to services, goods, and outcomes.

Public Perception

Public perception is shaped by discourse surrounding immigration and the LGBTQ+ community. The media helped facilitate the construction of the ‘illegal immigrant’ trope through the “‘criminalization of immigration’, which involves the unification of social control of both immigrants and criminals through integration of deportation with criminal justice system operation” (Warner, 2015:57). The criminalization of immigration is influenced by the widespread propagation and internalization of the illegal immigrant trope. This trope has associated immigrants with crime through the restriction of bodies and boundaries by the implementation of public policy. Immigrants have often been attributed to crime and criminality. Although, there is no impartial research that confirms the stereotype of the criminal illegal immigrant, public opinion sadly ignores these facts. Becerra et al., observe that “the perception that ‘illegal aliens’ are responsible for higher crime rates is deeply rooted in American public opinion. These opinions in turn shape political behavior, which ultimately results in public

policies and practices that are created absence of rigorous empirical evidence” (2012:114). The fact that Americans’ opinions about the correlation between immigration and crime is ill-founded drives political behavior and public policy.

In democratic systems, public perception is important in the formulation of policies; therefore, it is important that our public is educated on empirical facts; not stereotypes created by politicians and media. “Media stereotyping concentrates on drug traffickers and gangs, and has depicted Arab and Muslim Americans after 9/11 as terrorists” (Warner, 2005:56). This type discursive communication regarding immigrants serve to validates stereotypes in public discourse, which then results in anti-immigrant public policy. Wang (2012) contends that public perceptions of the purported criminality of immigrants, often form the basis of state immigration policy, and shapes political and cultural themes more broadly. Negative perceptions of immigrants have been the catalyst of a wide range of anti-immigrant legislation. The construction of the ‘illegal alien’ was necessary in order to induce Americans to support anti-immigration legislation. Creating the stereotype of the criminal alien was and still is vital to the creation of policies that utilize ill-founded facts to support xenophobic legislation.

This type of discourse can be utilized negatively because public perceptions are shaped by the perceived size of immigrant communities instead of their actual size. Wang (2012) states, that “U.S. Census show that the perceived size of the undocumented immigrant populations, more so than the actual size of the immigrant population and economic conditions, is positively

associated with perceptions of undocumented immigrants as a criminal threat” (743). If the perceived size of the immigrant community is larger than the actual size, it skews that way that individuals in positions of power within institutions interact with the immigrant community. The economic state of the ‘native’ population is a direct indicator of whether or not the immigrant population will be targeted as a scapegoat or not. Economic conditions are “likely [to] affect the perceived threat of undocumented immigrants by affecting economic competition and conflict between native residents and undocumented immigrants” (Wang, 2012:765). When economic conditions are poor, immigrants are utilized as scapegoats and immigrant communities are cast in a negative light. The role of public perception is crucial to understand, because the way in which marginal groups are perceived by dominant groups, exerts a strong influence on public policy and everyday political behavior. The literature indicates, that ill-founded facts frequently form the basis of anti-immigration laws and policies. These facts are embedded with stereotypes exacerbated by the media and politicians.

Methods. The methodology utilized in this project will be activist research methods. Hale explains that “the word ‘activist’ is meant as an adjective, which qualifies and modifies the way that research methods are conceived and carried out.” (2001:13) In order to understand the experiences of people who identify as Undocumented and Undocuqueer, I conduct semi-structured interviews at the a university in Southern California. Being able to conduct interviews with

individuals who self-identify as Undocumented or Undocuqueer is the best approach for the purpose of this thesis. Conducting interviews will help me understand how the intersectionality of these identities and the need for the inclusion and expansion of services to the undocumented and Undocumented LGBTQ individuals in Southern California.

I conducted my research starting February 2019 until May 2019 and interviewed a small sample of 17 participants, who self-identify as members of the Undocumented or Undocuqueer communities; and one member of the administration of a center. I intend to utilize a snowball sample, meaning that I engaged a small number of initial participants and they led me to additional potential participants. I, also, recruited these participants by posting flyers all over a university in Southern California. By posting flyers all over the campus, I am allowed participants to self-identify and to come forward. One of the purposes of this study is to not bring anyone out of the 'closet'. Coming out of the closet has many connotations, but for the purpose of this study, coming out, will be referred to both coming out as Undocumented and/or coming out as queer.

One of my intentions is for participants to volunteer their stories for the purpose of this research. This research is performing activist research methods. Hale states that "activist research: a) helps us better to understand the root causes of inequality, oppression, violence and related conditions of human suffering" (2001:13). Meaning that because I am interviewing individuals who are members of a very select marginalized community, they themselves, with their

stories, can best describe their experiences of oppression, inequality and violence. “b) is carried out, at each phase from conception through dissemination, in direct cooperation with an organized collective of people who themselves are subject to these conditions” (Hale, 2001:13). Meaning that as a researcher, I have paired up with a center at a university in Southern California, and with the assistance of Administrative Support Coordinator, who is the coordinator of center and its services, has sent a letter of support for my thesis. Working with this center is precisely what activist research methods is about. The data from these individuals will return to the population and will be utilized in ‘direct cooperation’ with ‘people who themselves are subject to these conditions’. And, “c) is used, together with the people in question, to formulate strategies for transforming these conditions and to achieve the power necessary to make these strategies effective.” (2001:13) Once all my data is collected, this undocumented student success center, will be receiving a fact sheet of all the collected data; therefore, the center could utilize my data set to ask the university for more funding for programing, jobs, scholarships, etc. The data collected from this group of people is therefore is returned to them.

In my interviews, I employed both demographic and qualitative questions. All information collected will be coded, so that participants cannot be identify through the participation of this study. The demographic questions are necessary to categorize participants according to age, ethnicity/race, occupation, and other basic demographic information. These questions are necessary to help identify

these populations specific needs. And to be able to categorize these needs based on a demographic pool. The second set of questions pertained to the participants' identities and experiences with American institutions. I asked questions such as: Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? Are you undocumented? Are you familiar with the term Undocuqueer? If yes, then what does Undocuqueer mean to you? What social services do you utilize? What social services do you need but do not have access to? When you have any questions regarding financial aid, where and who do you go to? Questions regarding their identities best helps me understand the experiences of the Undocuqueer and Undocumented population and what social and community services are currently being underrepresented for members of the Undocuqueer and Undocumented communities in Southern California.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERGROUND INSTITUTION

Many of the undocumented immigrants that arrive in the United States are 'paperless'/'sin papeles'. And as a result of this lack of 'proper documentation', undocumented immigrants must rely on their enclaves and informal economies to juxtapose their inability to utilize certain institutions. Therefore, undocumented immigrants created this underground institution to get their needs met. This underground institution provides the essentials to newly arrived migrants on how to navigate the new country. Steven Gregory states that, "urban informal economy has underscored the significance of noncompliance with regulation as an important 'weapon of the weak,' a modality of agency and resistance capable of contesting and influencing state police" (2007:34). This chapter will elaborate on this concept of what is an underground institution and why it is an imperative function of the undocumented individual's survival. In this chapter, I will expand on three major concepts that compose this underground institution: informal economies, social networks, and the undocumented student Center.

Migrant communities in the United States, must operate within a hidden institution. In part, due to my positionality, I have witnessed this underground institution in play. As a child, growing up in an immigrant community, I was very aware of the 'loop poles' that immigrants utilized in order to survive. Immigrant communities utilize this underground institution to get their needs met. It is one of

many reasons why immigrants live within the same communities. These communities function as a fortress. They help provide essentials for survival, but they also offer protection and information. Informal economies are created to substitute an institution that is not available to undocumented people. The inception of informal economies benefits, both, the migrant communities, but they also contribute to capital accumulation in part of the business owners. The “informal economy contributes to the process of capital accumulation because it provides cheap goods and services by lowering the costs of the reproduction of labor and by using low-cost, unregulated labor through ‘off the books’ hiring and subcontracting arrangements” (Gregory, 2007:34). It’s an institution that is always present and seldom seen. This underground institution makes a difference in the livelihood of these migrant communities.

One of the main aspects of the underground institution is that of the informal economy. Since many undocumented individuals lack proper paperwork that allows them to find jobs in the formal economy, immigrants must rely on the informal economy to get their needs met. One of the main commonalities that all participants shared was that their parents all worked in the informal economy. And it was through their parental guidance and these pre-established enclaves that they learned how to navigate the multitude of avenues that makes up this underground institution. A large amount of my participants retold stories about being able to get jobs through this underground network.

One participant, Laura, shared that when her father was deported things at home became very difficult. Not only was the stress and sadness of not having her father around, but he was also the main financial provider for the home. So, when he was deported he took their financial stability with him. Laura shared that one of the reasons they survived the time when he was gone was due to the ingenuity and resiliency of her mother. She explained that her mother did not just 'sit there with her arms crossed waiting for him to return', on the contrary. Her mom and the participant would sell almost anything that "you could make in the kitchen", anything from tamales to an indigenous drink, to potato chips. "Street vending is conceptualized as a simple survival strategy situated outside the standard system." (Muñoz, 2016:59) Street vending was expressed as a quick and entrepreneurial way to make an honest living. The participant shares that "it did not matter if it was over 100 degrees, my mother would stand in the corner and sell her products until she could come home with enough money for the rent". "Because women are shutout of formal employment opportunities, they turn to selling their wares on the streets" (Muñoz, 2016:59). Laura elaborated that this is the moment she learned about 'the hustle'. 'The Hustle', is a term that many participants utilized to describe the type of informal work they performed. 'The Hussle' basically represent one way of getting their own needs met by navigating the underground institutions. Street vending is one of the more popular modes of 'the hustle'. Muñoz states that, "street vending is seen as unskilled work but it

involves complex mechanisms of human capital development to deal with the daily economic challenges” (2016:58).

Participants reveal all different types of ‘hustle’ to be able to afford their basic expenses like rent. For example, one participant, Fabian, shared that “yes, I have had under the table jobs, working at a car wash, and at a [taqueria]. I was here before DACA so I am not really scared of not having a work permit. Because I did it without. Selling Tamales in the parking lot. [laughs]”. ‘The hustle’ is illustrated in this example of performing any task readily available to make a living. The underground institutions teach that there is no shame in honest work. Participants must rely on this institution in order to survive. This type of ‘hustle’ is learned. This is part of what is taught and passed down through generations that must rely on the underground institution. Miriam shared that she has only obtained all her jobs through word-of mouth. She utilizes her family and friends to find different ‘gigs’ that will understand her situation and that will not ask for that “magic number”. Miriam shared that “my mom cleans houses on the side and she knows people who do banquetes, so I go with my mom or help with banquetes. I have a lot of friends that work. like fast food chains that are always hiring. But if I ever needed I feel like they would put a good word in for me”. It is through the community in the underground institution that the undocumented community has a network that they can rely on. These networks provide the safety net of the informal economy that immigrants utilize on a daily basis.

Not only do networks provide a safety net for economic survival, but it provides different types of social support that keep this undocumented community afloat. Stephanie explained that “when my father was detained by ICE, it was hard because it was like WHAT? I thought he was working like we were concern because he wasn’t coming home, so we did not know what to do? Do we go see him? And if we go are we going to get deported as well? Like, it was hard to know what to do”. Stephanie later revealed that her family had relied on a family friend to get her father out. If it had not been for the assistance of this person, they would not have known how to properly navigate the institution of criminal justice. Stephanie shared that “like I said, having a support system helped.” For fear of their own deportation, immigrants must rely on allies to penetrate institutions that might harm their anonymity from the state. Allies are a crucial function of the survival of immigrant communities. Allies can transcend through boundaries of institutions without negative ramifications.

Social networks that function in the underground institution extend beyond the informal economy and compassionate allies. Navigating the institution of higher education is a feat for any college student, but specifically an undocumented student. Completing a university education is an arduous process, from applying to financial aid, to selecting a major, to how to survive as a Freshman on a college campus. The institution of higher education does not start in college, it begins in high school. In high school, one must be armed with a toolkit that provides the information regarding the SAT and ACT exams, to an

explanation of the difference between a community college or four-year university. When this participant, Ana, was asked if her family was able to navigate the college process with her during high school, she stated that “yes. Because my sister done it, so she helped me out a lot”. Without the one-on-one help from her sister, who was only a few years older than her and was currently in her senior year of college, this participant would not have known the process of applying to college. Ana did not have the luxury of having college educated parents, but the little information that circulated this family was utilized by every member. This family created a network that provided help where there was none.

Family is crucial for the success of undocumented students in higher education. Even though many participants were first generation and their families were not able to provide knowledge for the college process they were able to provide other resources. The help that these individuals received from their families and communities is astounding. Immigrant communities support one another in ways with the resources they have. Another participant, Linda, shared that her brother was one of the people in her family always pushing for her to continue her education even though he could not. Linda stated that “he was always supportive and from his side it wasn’t so much monetary, but it was support. How are you doing? Do you need money for this or that? For books or whatever? So, I had that support too. So, my last few years, my brother is always the one to buy our cars. And whatnot. So, he had gotten one car for himself, but

he gave me the car he had.... I would take the bus, but then I was able to drive, so he helped with the car, you could say and my mom too. But I always felt that support...my uncles and aunts from my dad side also help out...". She later explained that even though her father had been deported to Mexico and the rest of the family decided to stay, all the extended family banded together and provided support and resources. It was this community that nourished her and helped contribute to her success at this university in California.

As sociologists, we are taught that the family is the first and major unit of socialization for an individual. Familial support is an imperative process for all children, but especially undocumented students who are undergoing the college process. Many of my participants revealed that even though their family was not able to provide knowledge or advice regarding college they provided support in other avenues. Family is imperative in helping navigate the array of avenues that one must navigate as an immigrant in this country. One distinct avenue in which familial support is offered is that of obtaining status. When this participant, Raul, was asked how did you apply for your current status? The participant responded with the following: "my sister sent me the paperwork that I needed to fill out and she helped me go through it the first time. I have my sister and my brother went through the process first". Legal paperwork is a complicated process, which is why people attend law school for three years to learn to navigate this process. Immigrants, regardless of educational attainment and level, must navigate the legal system. One way that the underground institutions functions is that

immigrants utilize word-of-mouth to inform each other of the current legal changes, they suggest lawyers, and legal nonprofits. Immigrants utilize this network to inform each other when there are migra raids or DUI checkpoints that also be investigating immigrants.

Jose described that his high school support was imperative in getting their students to attend a university/college. This participant stated that “yes. My school had an overall in charge of scholarship counselor and like I was part of the Academy so my counselor was very one by one and met with the seniors”. This was not the only participant that was part of a specialty program that focused on sending their students to college. The majority of my participants were involved in programs such as AVID or Upward Bound. These programs specialize and have a-built-in structure that facilitates the college process for first generation students. These type of high school programs are structured that during the students’ regular school hours, they have a counselor that meets one-on-one or with a select few students and discusses their specific college education and financial aid process. These programs also provide seminars for parents, so they are informed and involved in the college process. They keep up with their students after they graduate high school and attend college. When I asked one of my participants, Coraima how they had navigated the college process they answer the following statement: “basically, I was in AVID. So basically, I remember my AVID teacher was the one that guided me through the application through the SAT and all that stuff. So, it was my AVID teacher that

helped me completely and throughout". Being a first generation means that you have no one that can guide you through and experience the rights and wrongs of the college process. Programs like AVID and Upwards Bound are essential to providing the undocumented immigrants with support to enter an institution that would otherwise be closed off.

The last major component of the underground institutions is the role that the undocumented student center plays, specifically, in the lives of the participants and in all students at the university. The center was incorporated on November 15, 2015. The creation of this center is imperative to the survival of undocumented students in higher education. Because the majority of undocumented students are first generation, they need support and guidance throughout their college years. The center provides, support, programming, and resources for students. Out of the sixteen participants interviewed 11 were frequent visitors, 2 visited the center somewhat, and 3 had never been to the center before.

Undocumented Student Success Center

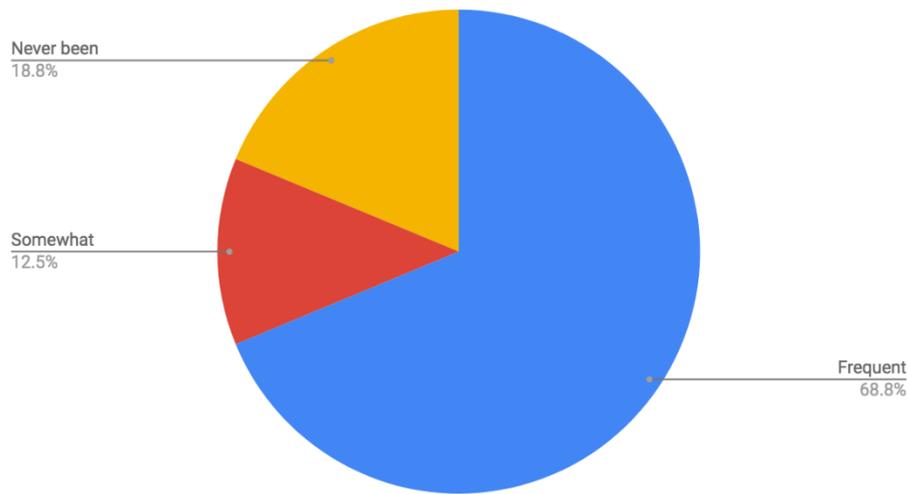


Figure 1. Undocumented Student Success Center

Regardless of the regularity attendance to the center, all of the participants stated that they would feel comfortable asking the center for help. One participant, Rosa, stated that she attends the center every moment she can. “I was there all the time because I had the support and it was a good environment. It was a safe environment”. Rosa stated that she would be at the center before class, in between classes and even on the weekends, if she could. Another participant, Paige, shared that she “didn’t discover the center until one of my friends told me about it. She was an ally. So, I was freaking out the first few days I started here. You know, what if I can’t do it? You know, doubting yourself. This is college it’s not going to be like a Junior college. This is University. So, after I walked in there, I felt like wow, I found myself again. Because I felt like I didn’t belong. The first weeks it was rough, it’s tough. And I still come to visit,

whenever I have time.” Rosa transferred to the university and she felt out of place, like she did not belong in an institution of higher education. Rosa stated the sense of relief she felt once she found the center. The center helped her feel supported and that she was not alone. Representation matters for these first-generation undocumented college students. Seeing themselves partaking and succeeding in an institution of higher education is crucial to their sense of self.

Not only does the center offer immense amount of resources and support for their students, but it also functions differently than the other centers on campus. Not only did all of my sixteen participants actively participate in this underground institution, but the undocumented student center itself participates more as an autonomous center than one that is united with the Student Union. When I interviewed Sandra, the coordinator of the center, she stated that there is a distinct relationship between the Student Union and the undocumented student center. Even though the center is housed by the student union, the center acts more like an independent contractor. Sandra states that by being able to act more like an independent contractor, this allows the center the leverage to not only provide programming for the current students, but also reach out into the nearby migrant enclaves in the Southern California. Sandra states that by having the space to reach out to migrant enclaves in the nearby communities, she is strengthening the bond between the University and the immigrant communities that reside near the University. Sandra explained that being fully integrated into the union would limit the center’s ability to have institutional autonomy. And as a

result, this would hinder the support that they, as a center, can provide for their students.

Institutions are created to help us meet our basic needs. Because of the undocumented status, many immigrants are barred from utilizing certain formal institution, and therefore, must rely on other as means of getting their needs met. Consequently, undocumented immigrants created an underground institution that functions the same way that undocumented immigrants do, in the shadows. This institution is not noticeable by those who have not been trained to witness it. This institution provides everything from an informal economy to social networks of support. This institution is imperative to the survival of the undocumented community.

CHAPTER FOUR

NAVIGATING IDENTITIES

Crenshaw states that “membership in a group--defined by race, sex, class, sexual orientation or other characteristics--both helps to explain the nature of the oppression experienced by members of that group and serves as a source of strength, community, and intellectual development” (1959:484). This chapter will discuss two major segments of the Undocumented identity: Undocuqueer and DACAmented. Very often, the term undocumented acts as an umbrella term that encompass all individuals who do not have proper documentation. This project sheds lights to two segments of the undocumented population.

Undocuqueer

At the start of this project, my intentions were to have an even number of undocumented and undocuqueer participants. I believed that studying equal numbers of undocumented and undocuqueer participants would allow me to accurately assess the differing institution needs of these two populations. However, once I began collecting my data, it soon became apparent that an even sampling of both populations was impossible within the purview of this study. In the United States, there are approximately “267,000 LGBT-identified individuals among the adult undocumented immigrant population” (Gates, 2013:1). Consequently, LGBT-identified individuals are only “2.7% of undocumented

adults in the US” (Gates, 2013: 1). In keeping with these national statistics, recruiting large numbers of undocuqueer participants for this study proved prohibitively difficult. Out of sixteen participants only three (5.3%) identified as Undocuqueer. The population that I was able to interview closely mirrors the country statistics in the United States. Additionally, my perception of what the numerical population should be was deemed incorrect, but the actual population recorded was, in fact, exceeding the national standards. LGBT-identified individuals or Undocuqueers, have different needs than LGBT individuals or undocumented individuals. Because they are considered “being a ‘minority within a minority’” (Gray et al: 2015, 10). Their needs are distinct from the LGBT and undocumented communities because they do not belong to one of those categories or the other, but to both.

This section will expand on the definition of undocuqueer and explore how these individuals navigate everyday institutions; and what specific services these individuals need that are not currently being provided. This chapter will also expand on the term Undocumented and the various versions of ‘sin papeles’. ‘Sin papeles’ means ‘without papers’, this phrase was very common saying among my participants. The deeper implications of ‘sin papeles’ will be discussed at length later in the chapter. All undocumented students that have entered the institution of higher education have had to navigate this institution through similar channels. The goal of this chapter and project, is to unravel the term undocumented and to expand our knowledge of this marginalized population. By

shedding light on the specific needs of this community, this study hopes to inform the creation of better services and support to these marginalized students who so desperately need guidance.

To begin, I will expand on the term Undocuqueer. The term Undocuqueer can be best defined as “interacting and working within the intersection of gender, sexuality and immigration status, participants described identity negotiation and coming out as a form of resistance to institutionalized oppression, and resilience amidst simultaneous anti-immigrant, xenophobic and heterosexist power structures” (Cisneros, 2015: i). The term Undocuqueer came to be recognized as a term of resistance and ignited its own movement. The “undocuqueer movement is invoking in order to challenge power, subjectivity, and citizenship” (Ochoa, 2015:192). Unpacking the complexity of the Undocuqueer experience is so significant because in existing literature, the experiences of the ‘DREAMer’ and the discourse surrounding undocumented students have been excessively homogenized. The stories of self-identified queer undocumented students have been conflated into the larger, heterocentric trope of the ‘DREAMer’ student. Jesus Cisneros states that, “no empirical study focused on LGBTQ activists within the immigrants’ rights movement was accounted for, despite the fact that the leadership of the immigrant youth movement disproportionately identifies as queer” (2015: 23). The dearth of studies pertaining to the involvement of immigrant youth that identified as queer in the immigrant rights movement is a major gap in existing literature that must be corrected. The present erasure of the

role of undocuqueer individuals in the immigrants' rights movement creates the false illusion that all 'deserving' DREAMers are, 'straight'. Cisneros brings to light the 1952 Immigration Nationality Act (INA), where he indicates that because homosexuality was under such scrutiny during this time in American history, we have carried on this legacy into the immigrant rights movements. The "dominant political and cultural ethos of the decade held that homosexuals, like communists, were dangerous, subversive, and profoundly un-American" (Cisneros, 2015: 24). Consequently, this politically incendiary stigma has continued to obscure the activism of queer communities in many social movements, including undocuqueer individuals in the immigrant's rights movement.

One of the various topics that frequently surfaced during the interviews was the term 'coming out.' In this project, the phrase 'coming out' is utilized to describe 'coming out', not just as queer, but also as undocumented. 'Coming out' has real repercussions for individuals who identify with one or both of these identities. 'Coming out' was coined to describe this process during World War II. The "meaning of the phrase 'coming out' itself expanded as the war began to change gay life. In the 1930s 'to come out' or 'to be brought out' meant to have one's first homosexual experience with another person" (Berubé: 1991, 6). This phrase was coined in WWII to 'come out', is utilized to describe a multitude of ways that one can 'come out' in the contemporary United States. This project utilizes the phrase 'coming out' in order to understand the lived experiences of Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals. From "our lived LGBT

experiences, we knew that the way to formal equality for undocumented immigrants was to use our stories as our weapon, to “come out” as undocumented, just as we had come out as gay, lesbian, or transgender” (Lal 2016). Specifically regarding the Undocuqueer individuals, ‘coming out’ has double repercussions. “Coming out as undocuqueer challenges the concepts of social acceptability within LGBT and immigrant rights frameworks that rely on norms of cisgender heterosexuality and are built on a discourse of exceptionalism and privatized notions of citizenship” (Cisneros and Bracho, 2018:3). Coming out is never an easy process, but coming out has been made into a battle of acceptance; where people have to ‘come out’ as their true selves to be able to be accepted into mainstream society, and if your identity is not accepted, there are social consequences. The range of potential social consequences in the coming out process is as diverse as it is severe. These consequences range from loss of economic opportunity to threat of physical harm to even being kicked out of one’s own home.

Undocuqueer individuals must ‘come out’ twice, once as undocumented, and the other as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. ‘Coming out’ as queer is extremely difficult, especially when the individual in question is a member of both the Undocumented and the LGBTQ+ communities. Since undocumented individuals function in underground institutions, ‘coming out’ can endanger their access to crucial support networks inside the undocumented community. Undocumented students are typically first introduced to these underground

institutions by their parents, who navigate them on a daily basis. If parents bar the student from this institution based on cultural and religious ideals of what is 'normal', then the student's ability to survive in the undocumented community is significantly endangered. Therefore, 'coming out' has very severe repercussions for these individuals. For example, one participant, Natasha, stated that "our religion says that's wrong [being queer]. That's a sin." It was due to these religious beliefs that she had not come out to her family. Another participant, Maria, stated that, when she finally decided to come out to her brother, he replied with, "wait, you don't like men? I thought you were like asexual or something." To which she replied, "No I am gay'... my brother still kinda makes homophobic jokes. Because unfortunately in our Hispanic culture there is a lot of homophobia". While retelling her 'coming out' story to her brother, this participant became visibly red and distressed, as if she was going through the experience all over again. You could see and feel the embarrassment and shame in her eyes. Maria later confided that her support system is her family, only when it does not pertain to an issue about her identity. This participant had to fragment her sense of self in order to get basic emotional support from her family, and yet, not all her emotional needs were being met. Even though, to her family she was out of the closet as undocumented, she had to keep her queer-self in the closet due to shame and fear of being denied by her own support system.

For Undocumented individuals, the needs and services that they require will differ from those needed by the rest of the undocumented community. For

example, when presented with the question: as an undocuqueer what resources do you feel you need that are not being provided? Many participants only provided stunned looks. And many replied, “no one has ever asked me that” and, “wow, I am going to need to sometime to think.” One participant, KD, did provide a clear answer, they stated that they, “feel that there should be some [support] group of people that are LGBT and that are undocumented, so we can talk about this kind of stuff...I know that there are other groups, but I want to be with people who know exactly what I am going through.” KD mentioned that they already attend other support groups on campus. But in these groups, they feel that they have to compartmentalize certain aspects of themselves. Ochoa explains that sometimes “being a Gay Chicano is a unique experience only other Chicano Gays can truly understand” (2015: 187). The particularity of Undocuqueer experiences, means that peer support is necessary when formal support cannot be found elsewhere. Thus, providing a support group specifically for Undocuqueers would allow them to be better supported as an individual that is both queer and undocumented.

Often the undocumented community is provided unilateral services. This project helped uncover the different needs of Undocuqueers. A deeper look into the immigrant rights movements acknowledges undocuqueer leadership that was closeted in order to maintain the ‘DREAMer’ trope. In this project, the phrase ‘coming out’ is utilized to describe the multitude type of identities that have to be revealed in order to be accepted. All participants that self-identified as

undocuqueer described 'coming out' as a very emotionally intense conversation that is never ending. A participant reveal, "coming out! It's something that you have to negotiate. I just came out to? my coworker the other week. And when we have a new coworker, I will have to 'come out' to them too."

DACAmented

The term 'undocumented' is expanded in this project to include Undocuqueers. Apart from including Undocuqueer, one of the other major findings in this project is the variety of the many different types of status that can be included to represent Undocumented individuals. One of the key findings of this project is that while all participants were Undocumented, 'sin papeles' at one point, their immigration statuses varied. Out of sixteen participants, 12 stated that they were DACAmented. 2 stated that they were undocumented because they were deemed ineligible for the DACA program. Lastly, 2 participants stated that they had DACA as their previous immigration status, but due to personal circumstances they were able to obtain a status change. The first such individual adjusted her status from DACA to Legal Permanent Resident after getting married, while the second adjusted his status from DACA to Visa.

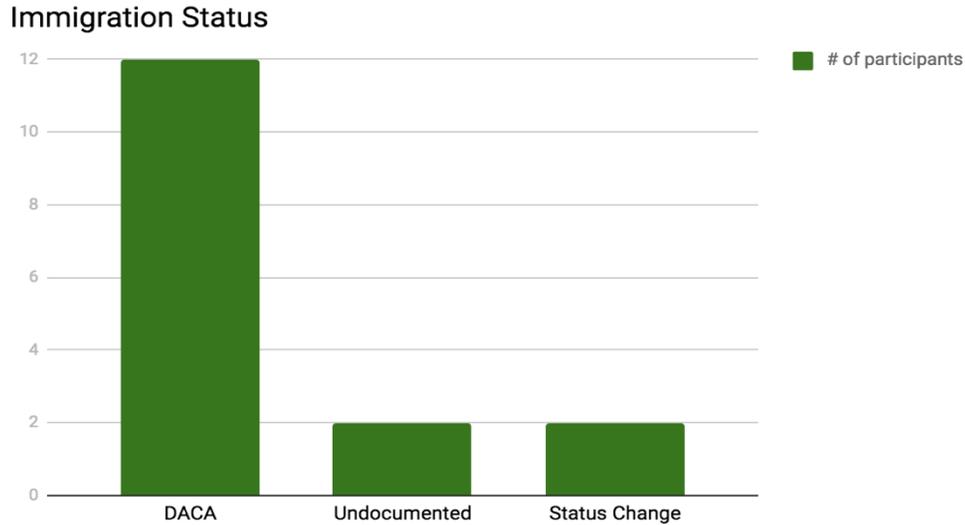


Figure 2. Immigration Status

Being Undocumented has radically different connotations depending on the type of attained status. President Obama’s Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy has had the greatest effect on the young migrant population. On “August 15, 2012, DACA went into effect, providing undocumented young people a temporary reprieve from deportation and giving them legal access to work permits” (Gonzales, 2016: 25). This program helped create a new type of Undocumented individual, ‘DACAmented’. ‘DACA’ has helped individuals with a variety of opportunities that undocumented individuals did not have access to prior to the program. “DACA has provided an opportunity for a segment of the undocumented immigrant population to remain in the country without fear of deportation, allowed them to apply for work permits, and increased their opportunities for economic and social incorporation” (Gonzales, 2016:226). The implementation of DACA guided many participants into the

institutions of higher education, expanded their career choices, and even facilitated the acquisition of their first cars, thereby further enhancing their economic prospects.

The implementation of DACA has had many benefits for some individuals in the undocumented community. The majority of the participants in this study were current DACA recipients. One participant, Nicolas, shared that, “back then DACA wasn’t implemented. I didn’t have the DREAM Act. Nothing. So, I had to do Community College so I could afford it. And then I dropped it out because I couldn’t afford to transfer [to a 4 year]. When DACA was implemented in 2012, I was able to apply back to college. So I applied here.” The implementation of DACA allowed undocumented students to extend their education into four-year universities. Policy change influences what people are allowed to do with their lives and what institutions they are allowed to partake in. Another participant, Joel, stated that DACA gave him the hope that he could follow his American Dream: “I went for two years. Saw that there was no point in it. Even if I graduate there’s no point, I can’t work...I wanted to be a nurse, but I couldn't do that either. But once DACA was implemented in 2012 that’s when I decided to go back... So, I went back so that one day I can support my family, my parents, my wife one day.” One of the benefits of DACA is that not does it provide in-state tuition but it also provides its recipients with a work authorization card. This “policy [DACA] change represented an important step forward and a chance to begin to realize deferred dreams” (Gonzales, 2016:25).

DACA is a first step towards comprehensive policy change that benefits individuals who grew up in the United States and who were raised as Americans. But, DACA is only a temporary executive action, meaning that it was never signed into law after Obama left office. The “program is temporary in duration and partial in coverage” (Gonzales, 2016:227). Participants are granted DACA status only on a two-year term and must renew their DACA status every two years. The program offers no path to citizenship. Moreover, because DACA has not become law, its participants live in the shadow of potential deportation due to shifts in American domestic policy over which they have no control. Consequently, despite its benefits, the DACA program is both politically unstable and it falls short of fully ameliorating the challenges facing undocumented youths who were raised as Americans.

DACA” offers no pathway to legalization for its beneficiaries. DACA status does not confer the right to vote, travel freely, or qualify for federal financial aid. Despite the program’s two-year reprieve from the threat of deportation, enrollees can still be removed in future. DACA offers its beneficiaries no respite from long-term uncertainty and the possibility of legal limbo. And, given the large numbers of undocumented young people who have not enrolled, even those limited benefits have yet to reach a sizable portion of the eligible population” (Gonzales, 2016:227).

Because the future of DACA is uncertain, and given current American political trends, potentially bleak, many participants expressed fear and uncertainty with the Trump administration and its immigration policy. Joel shared that obtaining DACA he felt a sense of relief, but he knew that it was temporary: “I feel like I got

a little break. And I can do things I couldn't do before. I still know I am undocumented. And whenever they feel like they can do something to my status and be deported. Because I am in the system". Most of the DACA participants shared concerns about the Trump administration's hostile immigration policies and worried for the safety of their family members as well. One participant stated that when Trump won the 2016 presidential election, the center was surrounded with students needing support, "especially when Trump won. A lot of students came in. They provide a SAFE ZONE for them". The center played an important role for students scared and struggling with the news of Trump as the president of the United States. In light of administration policy over the course of the next year, such concerns proved to be well founded. During "2017, also banned nationals of eight different countries from entering the United States; cancelled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program; ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for nationals of several countries; and reduced the refugee admissions to the lowest number since the statute guiding for refugee resettlement was enacted in 1980" (Pierce & Selee, 2017:1). Depending on who is currently holding office, immigration policy will vacillate wildly based on the domestic political climate. Presidents influence immigration policy and the climate surrounding immigration. Because Presidents demonstrate power, they can utilize their political influence to contribute positively or negatively against the immigrant population.

The future of DACA is currently being argued in the Supreme Court. Because DACA's fate remains uncertain, a majority of immigrants, when able, adjust their status. There were two participants that during our interviewing process were undergoing an adjustment of status. One of the participants who currently had DACA, was in the process of obtaining a US Visa. VISAS can be obtained in a multitude of ways depending on the type of VISA an individual is applying for. Also, just because an individual or a member of their family is able to obtain a VISA, renewal is never guaranteed, potentially making law-abiding citizens undocumented. All participants were asked about their current immigration status and how they had applied for their status. One of the participants, Michael, stated that they had just applied for a VISA that they did not previously know they qualified for. When I asked why his family was unaware that they could apply for this status, he stated, "laws change and so do VISAS". Political climates change laws and immigration regulation, sometimes creating more law-abiding citizens into border-crossing 'illegals' in the process.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to investigate what are the social services that Undocuqueer and Undocumented students need and are the same or different? In regard to this research question, so far, Undocumented and Undocuqueer individuals utilize the same services provided by the institutions, but due to the lack of participants there is not enough data to state that claim. And secondly, there are no services offered to only Undocuqueers individuals. All services that Undocuqueers utilize are the same that are available to the entire student body. And to what extent are Undocumented and Undocuqueer students able to access these services? Due to the involvement of the center in providing support, resources and programming to all students, this has had a tremendous impact in the lives of undocumented students. In 2018, the center serviced an average of 100. But in 2019, the center serviced an average of 800. The number of Undocumented students being serviced is growing due to the implementation of programming and support. Undocumented students are taught to live in the shadows; and therefore, do not trust institutions easily. The center, by partly functioning in the shadows, mentors' students on how to travel through the correct channels through bureaucratic processes, such as the institutions of higher education or immigration. The center advocates for their students and facilitates the transfer of information. For example, one participant only applied to the university because Maria came to her high school and taught the students

how to fill the college and financial aid applications. Due to their programming, support, and resources available they are able to provide programming to all students regardless of documentation.

This study interviewed sixteen participants who self-identify as Undocumented or Undocuqueer; and one member of the administration of the undocumented student center. This study utilized activist research methods and paired up with the an undocumented student center. In order to complete the activist research methods aspect of this project the data collected will return to the center. Through an extensive review of the relevant literature this study utilizes intersectionality theory as the fundamental theoretical framework of this project. Through the collection of this data, one fundamental outcome has been the discovery of the underground institution that helps undocumented and undocuqueer students navigate and survive ins and outs of every American institutions, but especially, higher education. The underground institution is primary function of survival for immigrant communities in the United States, not only does it allow access to the informal economy but it is also backed by a support network of other undocumented people and allies. This project also seeks to unravel the term undocumented and break down into sub-categories, in order to analyze if all the needs of these students are actually being met. This project shines light on the term Undocuqueer and how 'coming out' can be utilized in more than one context.

APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



February 25, 2019

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Expedited Review

IRB-FY2019-95

Status: Approved

Ms. Iriana Balbian and Prof. Teresa Velasquez
Department of Anthropology
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Ms. Balbian and Prof. Velasquez:

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Coming Out Twice: Intersecting the Undocumented and Undocuqueer Identity" has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The informed consent document you submitted is the official version for your study and cannot be changed without prior IRB approval. A change in your informed consent (no matter how minor the change) requires resubmission of your protocol as amended using the IRB Cayuse system protocol change form.

Your application is approved for one year from February 25, 2019 through February 25, 2020.

Please note the Cayuse IRB system will notify you when your protocol is up for renewal and ensure you file it before your protocol study end date.

Your responsibilities as the researcher/investigator reporting to

the IRB Committee include the following four requirements as mandated by the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 listed below. Please note that the protocol change form and renewal form are located on the IRB website under the forms menu. Failure to notify the IRB of the above may result in disciplinary action. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent forms and data for at least three years.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following by submitting the appropriate form (modification, unanticipated/adverse event, renewal, study closure) through the online Cayuse IRB Submission System.

- 1. If you need to make any changes/modifications to your protocol submit a modification form as the IRB must review all changes before implementing in your study to ensure the degree of risk has not changed.**
- 2. If any unanticipated adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research study or project.**
- 3. If your study has not been completed submit a renewal to the IRB.**
- 4. If you are no longer conducting the study or project submit a study closure.**

Please ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study.

The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval notice does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required. If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the IRB Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval identification number (listed at the top) in all correspondence.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Donna Garcia

Donna Garcia, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

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