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Understanding the institutionalization of undocumented student support in higher education using a neoliberal multiculturalism framework

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Understanding the institutionalization of undocumented student support in higher education using a neoliberal multiculturalism framework

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
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Chicana, Chicano and Central American Studies

by

Chantiri Duran Resendiz

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Understanding the institutionalization of undocumented student resources in higher education using a neoliberal multiculturalism framework

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Chantiri Duran Resendiz

Doctor of Philosophy in Chicana, Chicano and Central American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles 2021

Professor Maylei Blackwell, Chair

This dissertation examines the recent establishment and institutionalization of undocumented student services in two university campuses in California and analyzes the ways in which these projects of institutionalization and the "undocumented student" figure fits within the rationalities of neoliberal multiculturalism. I explore how undocumented students (multicultural, racialized subjects who could, in an ongoing process, fashion and *re*fashion themselves through the ethos of self-reliance and competition) came to be accepted at these universities and how undocumented immigrants were able to enter the public imaginary of the university's projects for diversity and inclusion. I argue that neoliberal multiculturalism illuminates and explains how the ways narratives elevating the social value of undocumented students are congruent and *simultaneously occur* with the increasing privatization and expansion of the immigrant detention industrial complex, increasing criminalization of immigrants' daily life activities, and record high number of immigrant deportations. Furthermore, this dissertation asserts that neoliberal multicultural rationalities shape advocacy efforts designed to support undocumented students in higher education. These rationalities inform the scope of values, principles and practices behind the forms of student advocacy that could be

possible and intelligible in a university context. I argue that neoliberal multicultural rationalities underlie the dominant frame shaping undocumented student advocacy that replicate the undocumented student subject figure as one contingent on disciplined integration. This in turn limits discourses and frames in undocumented student advocacy.

This dissertation follows an intrinsic and instrumental case study design. I conducted 30 interviews with institutional allies, current and former student organizers. I also analyzed written and digital records, including institutional public statements, institutionally affiliated research reports, university taskforce recommendations, university newspaper articles, strategic plan publications, newspaper articles, student- and university-created resource guides, course syllabi and student-led publications. Finally, I conducted 180 hours of participant observation at various student and university-sponsored events, including summits, student retreats, educator workshops, immigrant student conferences, undocumented student welcome receptions and university and student sponsored webinars. This dissertation contributes to scholarships in Critical Ethnic Studies and the emerging intellectual project called University Abolition Studies.

The dissertation of Chantiri Duran Resendiz is approved.

Genevieve Negrón-Gonzales

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DEDICATION

To RISE, with you I learned what *Isang Bagsak* is all about.

To Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix, as your rebel spirits have and will continue to guide me.

To my mother and sisters, as your love and the love I hold for you inspires me to be the best version of myself.

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Without Maylei Blackwell, Leisy Abrego, Genevieve Negron Gonzales, and Gaye Theresa Johnson this dissertation project would have looked very different, thus I am forever grateful for

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"Making moves in/with/against the university: The development of a politicized voice in immigrant youth organizing" (Panel presenter). National Women's Studies Association. Annual Conference. Atlanta, Georgia. November 2018

"Making moves in/with/against the university: The development of a politicized voice in immigrant youth organizing" (Panel presenter) American Studies Association. Annual Conference. Atlanta, Georgia. November 2018

"Undocumented immigrant students as expert consultants and diversity practitioners" (Panel Presenter) Society for Applied Anthropology. Annual Conference. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. April 2018.

Introduction: Undocumented student advocacy in the context of neoliberal multiculturalism in higher education

Dreamers across our 10 campuses are studying to be doctors, teachers, lawyers, and engineers… UC Dreamers represent the very best of our country—they are positive role models to their peers and critical to our nation's progress.

--University of California Chancellors to the California Congressional Delegation

[Undocumented] student activism is important because so many people's dreams are tied to their education. We are fed as immigrants that education is the ultimate goal. I don't really care about it as much because of the student, but more than anything, I think about their families and parents and their sacrifice, so much in hopes that they will succeed. I hope that the students I do manage to help will go back and help their families and give their families security.

--Lily

Lily had recently graduated from the University of California (UC) at the time of our interview in 2019. She is the oldest daughter in a mixed-status immigrant family and the first member to graduate with a doctoral degree. As a student, Lily dedicated much of her free time to organizing with immigrant grassroots organizations in Los Angeles and to doing advocacy work with undocumented immigrant college students ("undocumented student" hereafter)[1] across UC campuses. As one of the few undocumented graduate students on campus at the time, Lily and I connected over our shared experiences navigating graduate school as undocumented students and mentoring undocumented undergraduate students. Four years after meeting and cultivating a friendship, we conducted a three-hour interview where I asked

[1] I use the term "undocumented student" instead of "undocumented immigrant college student" because it is an emic term to the cultural and social context where I conducted my research.

her to reflect on her educational experiences as an undocumented immigrant student and lessons learned as a student and community organizer.

Lily is part of a larger network of undocumented students, undocumented immigrant youth and allies across the country who in a period of two decades and through a variety of movement building and political advocacy strategies had accomplished legal, institutional and cultural shifts in how private and public universities recognize and support their undocumented student populations.[2] Her organizing is part of the larger migrant rights movement, what Alfonso Gonzales (2013) identifies as "a multiethnic and multisector constellation of actors that overlap and intersect with the even broader US and global Left" (2–3). A constellation including party organizations, labor unions, faith-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, hometown associations, youth, students, and other minoritized communities. During the interview, Lily remarked how important community organizing, immigrant deportation defense work *and* immigrant student organizing was for her own self-formation.

Lily's organizing is also part of a legacy of student organizing on US college campuses after the 1960s, a moment in time where the emergence of anticolonial, black liberation and feminist movements shook the organizational cultures and practices of college campuses. In the US, the civil rights movement of the 1960s offered an important "break" from previous state racial projects, a movement that also inspired a range of "new social movements"—including antiwar, free speech and racial justice agendas in US university student movements (Omi and Winant 2014). As Roderick Ferguson (2017) reminds us, student organizing from the 1960s on,

[2] In this dissertation I focus primarily on the time period between 2000-2020, particularly the period between 2004-2018. I am aware that undocumented students and allies/accomplices across the country have been addressing educational inequities and educational access for undocumented youth prior to 2000. For instance, in California the Leticia A. Network, was a network of Southern California educators and administrators who supported the growing number of undocumented students attending public higher education institutions in the 1980s. This network was one of the first grassroots groups to advocate for undocumented students in higher education and was a precursor to the activism that occurred during the 1990s, the early 2000s and through the 2010s. For a more detailed history of undocumented student advocacy in California, see Guillen, Liz. 2003. Undocumented immigrant students: A very brief overview of access to higher education in California. In *Teaching to Change LA's School Report Card* 3, ed. J. Rogers, Los Angeles, CA: UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, & Access

has worked “to challenge the ways that the university obscures its own social relations” (3) and as a way to show that the wellbeing of disenfranchised communities “are not abstract concerns that can be separated from the operations and responsibilities of the university” (4). Through her organizing and student advocacy, Lily, like previous cohorts of student organizers before her, was working to create fundamental changes of social relations between the university and the livelihoods of undocumented immigrants.

I asked Lily why she found undocumented student advocacy important. She shared that under the current social conditions that perpetuate the marginalization of immigrant communities, supporting the educational goals of an undocumented student (an undocumented family member) had an amplified effect in the immigrant family unit, as a whole. As a working-class child of immigrants, she described being “fed” the idea that education was “the ultimate goal.” Skeptical that education could ever be her life’s “ultimate goal”, Lily understood the pragmatic components of higher education and the resources it could offer to support the financial stability of her household. Lily also understood the mechanisms of what James Scott (2014) refers to as “the distribution of life chances through education” (112). She was aware that her and her family’s life chances could be better with a higher level of education. Furthermore, Lily’s “cognitive map of the future” (Kelley 2002) traced the relationship between supporting an immigrant student’s educational goals as enacting solidarity with an immigrant family—a relational analysis of solidarity.[3]

This dissertation explores how Lily’s form of student advocacy, (which was framed through collective wellbeing), was in conversation and attuned to the type of undocumented student advocacy that was sanctioned by the University of California. Between 2001 (with the

[3] I draw on Robin Kelley’s (2002) understanding of “cognitive maps of the future” as they emerge from the cultural products of social movements, the many reflections of activists, the poetics of struggle and lived experiences of ordinary folks and how together their visions constitute the cognitive maps for the world not yet born. Lily’s cognitive map included a direct relation between supporting undocumented students and supporting immigrant families—supporting an undocumented student was *the method* towards supporting immigrant families.

passage of AB540 which allowed certain undocumented students to qualify for instate tuition) to 2013 (with the inauguration of UC president Janet Napolitano), undocumented students at the University of California became increasingly *visible*.[4] Visibility, as trans theorists remind us, is a paradox—as it is a form of recognition that aligns with dominant norms (Spade and Willse 2016; Ellison 2017). The growing visibility of undocumented students had its own set of complications and expectations.

As this dissertation explores, there are a variety of reasons for this increasing institutional visibility. Some of this visibility emerged out of immigrant youth's sustained political grassroots movement for immigration and justice reform at the local, state and national level beginning in the mid 2000s. Additionally, the passage of the 2012 executive action Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which offered work authorization to 800,000 immigrants; and the 2011 passage of the California Dream Act, a combination of two state bills (AB130 and AB131) that provided financial aid for qualifying undocumented college students, led to an increasing presence of undocumented students in the public imaginary and in the actually enrollment numbers at the UC.

As the visibility of undocumented students increased, so did the legal clearances, philanthropic support, social and cultural capital for universities to invest in an undocumented student support infrastructure. In 2013, the UC Undocumented Students Initiative launched, providing campuses with $5 million in funding for targeted financial aid and student services directed at undocumented students' needs. Between 2013 to 2017 a new infrastructure of undocumented student support was developed at the UC, which consisted of student affairs

[4] This is not to dismiss that prior to 2001, undocumented students had also attended and graduated from this university system. For those interested in learning more about how undocumented immigrants navigated higher education prior to the passage of AB540, please see: Seif, Hinda. 2004. Wise up!" Undocumented Latino youth, Mexican-American legislators, and the struggle for higher education access. *Latino Studies* 2, no. 210-230; and Rosas, Lucila. 1995. Is Postsecondary Education a Fundamental Right-Applying Serrano v. Priest to Leticia A. *Chicano-Latino Law Review.* 16.

staff, programming, educational resources, financial aid, shifts in campus climate, and even a legal immigration clinic that provides services to students and their family members.

By 2017, when the Trump administration announced the rescission of DACA, the University of California was one of the first institutions to sue the US Department of Homeland Security for its arbitrary and capricious decision to end the program. The opening epigraph in this introduction is a direct quote from a letter of support for DACA recipients signed in October 2017 by each UC chancellor to the California Congressional Delegation. By 2017, the University of California (as a higher education institution) was a vocal advocate of undocumented students, stating undocumented immigrants were "studying to be doctors, teachers, lawyers, and engineers" who represented "the very best of our country…critical to our nation's progress".

I offer Lily's interview and the university's official correspondence excerpt as insights into the various forms of undocumented student advocacy I witnessed at the University of California. These different ideologies of undocumented student advocacy are part of a spectrum of approaches to advocacy; with some more based on relationship-making, and others focused more on individuality and meritocracy. At times, these forms of advocacy (with different sets of orienting values) informed each other to create new forms of advocacy—such as the immigrant legal clinics at the UC campuses that offer services not only to students, but to their family members as well.

The institutional incorporation and affirmation of racialized immigrant undocumented youth occurred simultaneously with the expansion of immigrant deportation and detention infrastructures that led to the expulsion and forced separation of immigrant families and communities. In this dissertation I focus primarily on one aspect of this phenomenon: the rationalities that explain the incorporation and affirmation of racialized immigrant undocumented youth into higher education. Neoliberal multiculturalism is the object of study for this dissertation

and the conceptual framework that helps us understand how those rationalities operate and are replicated.

The object of study

This dissertation is about neoliberal multiculturalism. Neoliberal multiculturalism is an ideological formation informed by racialized constructs of social valorization, the economization of social life, and the disciplining of social unrest. It is a productive ideology that generates privilege, rights and forms of state protection for racialized subjects deemed valuable to the circuits of capital, *whether formally citizens or not.* In this dissertation I draw from the work of multiple scholars who have investigated and developed "neoliberal multiculturalism" as an object of study across different fields, such as literature, political theory, anthropology and education (Mitchell 2003; Melamed 2011; 2006; Hale 2005; Darder 2012; Kymlicka 2013; Speed 2016; Bourassa 2019; Atasay 2015). I explore neoliberal multiculturalism as a "modern configuration of racial capitalism" (Melamed 2006; 2011b) and a system that "enacts a structure of public recognition, acknowledgement and acceptance of multicultural subjects, based on the subjects productively abiding to an ethos of self-reliance, individualism, and competition" (Darder 2012, 417).

The ways in which the "undocumented student" figure fits within the rationalities of neoliberal multiculturalism are at the center of my study. I explore how undocumented students at elite institutions of higher education have been incorporated into the university's projects for diversity and inclusion.[5] I argue that to interpret university diversification projects simply as "kind" or "fair" demonstrations of "student support" or as demonstrations of "institutional

[5] My understanding of Diversity and Inclusion in university settings draws from feminist and critical management scholarships which center diversity and inclusion as a wide range of perspectives, practices and vocabularies that make up a guiding framework that aims to incorporate diverse bodies into university missions. Diversity and Inclusion, as a framework in higher education came to replace the previous post-Civil Rights efforts to diversify US institutions through programs such as Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Diversity and Inclusion projects engage the university as a key actor in the progress towards democratic inclusion and positions the university's efforts as crucial in achieving "excellence in learning, research and teaching, student development, institutional functioning, local and global community engagement, workforce development and more" (Clayton-Pedersen and Musil 2009, 4).

accountability" dismiss the larger historical-political context from which projects for diversification derive. It would also dismiss how in the wakening of social unrest in the 1960s, universities opted for new strategies "to turn critiques of student movements into the hegemonic maneuvers of American institutions" (Ferguson 2012, 67).

As Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), Jodi Melamed (2006, 2011), Sara Ahmed (2012) and Lisa Duggan (2012) remind us, multiple organizational bodies such as (but not limited to) corporations and universities, have taken up diversity initiatives as a way to promote a type of antiracism that aligns with market agendas. Thus, a meaningful entry point into a study of social movements and institutional transformation in a university setting gives weight to the historical and empirical evidence of the ways in which these institutions incorporate resistance into hegemonic complicity. It also encompasses the spectrum of maneuvers, strategies and tactics of those who actively chose to not fully comply to those institutional rationalities.

Neoliberal multiculturalism helps us understand how the acceptance of undocumented students (multicultural, racialized subjects who could, in an ongoing process, fashion and *re*fashion themselves through the ethos of self-reliance and competition) developed and how these undocumented immigrants were able to enter the public imaginary of the university. Prior to the immigrant youth movement, undocumented students enrolled at universities such as UCLA and UC Berkeley. Some of my research participants attended these institutions as undocumented students in the 1980s and early 1990s. This dissertation is an investigation of the power building of undocumented students and allies organizing and mobilizing for material changes at the higher education institutions; *and* it is also an investigation of the institutional conditions of possibility and the rationalities that allow for these material changes to take place. Neoliberal multiculturalism helps contextualize (in history and power relations) these rationalities.

I characterize neoliberal multiculturalism as my object of study to distinguish from my object of observation (Trouillot 2003). Although two UC campuses (UCLA and UC Berkeley), undocumented students and institutional allies are at the core of this dissertation project, neither the UC as a system, the two campuses, the undocumented students nor allies are my primary *object of study*, but my *object of observation* and the *place in which observation occurs*. In an attempt to not collapse the field of study, (a common issue of ethnographic work) I draw from Michel-Rolph Trouillot to differentiate my "object of study", "object of observation", and "field" where observation takes place.

I aim to do a similar analytical maneuver to that of Trouillot's (1995) study of the Haitian revolution and the intentional silencing of Haitian African slaves' dissent in Western historiography. Trouillot's object of observation was the empirical facts of the Haitian revolution, but his object of study was the *conditions of possibility* that led to the history of the Haitian revolution being silenced in Western historiography. His provocation is for us to consider the ways in which the field of anthropology (and I would add ethnography as well) often collapse into "the treatment of places as localities, isolated containers of distinct cultures, beliefs, and practices" (123). Against the fetishization of non-Western and non-White people that is possible due to Anthropology's structural claim over the "savage slot", Trouillot critically re-assessed the epistemological status of the native voice. Similar to Trouillot, I distinguish "object of study", "object of observation" and "field" where observation takes place in order to not collapse my study as another contribution that aims to understand "undocumented immigrant youth," "undocumented immigrant students" or "institutional climate towards undocumented students." When not critically assessed, studies that collapse the object of study with the object of observation can further contribute to the essentialization of immigrant youth.

In the past decade, a variety of advocates, organizers and scholars have contributed knowledge on the experiences of undocumented immigrant students in higher education and

institutional responses higher education institutions have taken to address educational disparities. A variety of exploratory reports and research articles have given an expansive understanding and assess the educational and social challenges undocumented students face in college campuses; as well as the state of undocumented students in California public universities (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015; Enriquez, Burciaga, and Cardenas 2019). This literature has supported undocumented student advocacy efforts and provided a better glance of the experiences of undocumented students and the ways in which educational institutions have supported their undocumented student population. This dissertation draws from this literature but is in conversation with a different set of research questions and conceptual inquiries that do not accommodate this dissertation project neatly within that academic scholarship.

My *object of observation* consists in the relational dynamics (between undocumented students and university administrators) at my *location of study*, the two main university campuses and what I refer to as the "undocustudent world", where I primarily carried out my ethnographic work. It is also the advocacy work that undocumented student organizers and their allies have done and continue to do and the university's response to these forms of advocacy. At these campuses, I conducted participant observation, archival research, and interviews with research participants who had institutional affiliations as students, alumni and/or staff.

My analysis of the university as "the field where observation takes place" (Trouillot 2003) and also as "a field of knowledge" (Ahmed 2012) helps me explore the university as an interdependent spatial and relational arrangement, where events, meetings, conferences, workshops, and trainings form part of the multi-sited networks and connections of the field. Similar to Sara Ahmed's (2012) ethnographic study on the institutionality of diversity initiatives in UK and Australian universities, what she refers to as the "diversity world", I studied what I call the "undocustudent world". The undocustudent world consists of the material, symbolic, and

digital landscape where knowledge production on undocumented students and student affairs best practices occurs (i.e., student meetings, educational conferences, social media posts, informational webinars and workshops about undocumented students in higher education). As this dissertation explores, the undocustudent world is constituted by a "multi-sited" character with "mobile subjects and objects, of the networks and connections necessary for things to move around" (Ahmed 2012, 11). Importantly, while my field site is at two campuses, this study is not limited by these localities. In following the "undocustudent world" I followed networks that transcended the spatial boundaries of these two university campuses.

I also distinguish my object of study from my object of observation to make explicit that this is a study falling outside of the emplotment (White 2014) in which academic literature has often situated undocumented student/immigrant youth organizing.[6] I neither romanticize nor criticize the immigrant youth movement. This dissertation is not an analysis of undocumented student subjectivity, even though, as a study that centers aspects of my research participants' forms of meaning-making, there are sections that examine undocumented student organizers' subjectivity. I intentionally shift focus away from just exploring the lived experiences of undocumented students, undocumented student organizers and their allies. In doing that, I go against the trend in education, legal and sociology research to center the life experiences of undocumented student organizers as a central object of study. This dissertation does not aim to encapsulate or summarize the experiences of undocumented students at the University of California, as other scholars have explored (See Suarez Orozco et al 2015; Enriquez, Burciaga and Cardenas 2019).

[6] By "emplotment" I refer to Hayden White's work in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* and his analysis of how historians, and I would argue social scientists and humanists at large, participate in the writing of history through the selection of a plot that is imposed by the historian. Historical meaning is imposed on historical facts by the historian's choice of storytelling. The historian, White argues, *choses* the chronological structure and how to give the story historical meaning. I refer to White's understanding of emplotment, because I am aware of the ways in which the immigrant youth movement has often been historicized within a romantic narrative that sets immigrant youth organizers in character tropes that fit this romantic narrative.

Similar to the way Trouillot turned his analytical gaze to power relations and the interconnected workings of power within academe and Western imaginaries, I also turn my analytical gaze to power relations, avoiding ethnographic representations "to make voices heard" or "to recover and represent the lives" of my research participants. Instead, I reveal the processes, power arrangements, and management processes that undocumented students are embedded in.

The argument

This dissertation asserts that neoliberal multicultural rationalities shape advocacy efforts designed to support undocumented students in higher education. These rationalities inform the scope of values, principles, and practices behind the forms of student advocacy that could be possible and intelligible in a university context. I argue that neoliberal multicultural rationalities underlie the dominant frame shaping undocumented student advocacy that replicate the undocumented student subject figure as one contingent on *disciplined integration*[7] (Foucault 1979; 1990) into the university. In turn, these rationalities constitute the university as a site responsible for the protection of undocumented students. I consider this to be a tacit agreement[8] between the educational institution and undocumented students contingent on the logics of *deservingness and exceptionality.*[9] Both *deservingness* and *exceptionality* are

[7] By disciplined integration I refer to what Michel Foucault (1979, 1990) identified as "positive power," meaning power that is not operated through the mechanisms and effects of violence, exclusion, and rejection, but through modes of control that give subjects their "own place" and thus helps develop populations into resources. This type of positive power is at the core of my examination on how undocumented students were institutionally incorporated. This incorporation was not violent, but instead was generative—as both parties, undocumented student organizers and the University, were able to negotiate and mutually benefit.

[8] As this dissertation further explores, I interpret this "tacit agreement" not as a conscious decision by early student organizers and advocates, but as a developing and evolving agreement, that was shaped by political context, legal possibilities, narrative change, and political will.

[9] Research on the construct of immigrant "deservingness" emphasizes the ways in which divisions among immigrants are created based on their legal status, as well as the role anti-immigrant forces, the media, and policymakers have in sustaining these divisions (Yukich 2013; L. Chavez 2013; Capetillo-Ponce 2008; Yoo 2008). Research on the construct of "exceptionality" has often turned to examining the psychological traits that explain forms of intelligence

constructs that emphasize distinction as merit for a different type of treatment, access and/or rights. *Deservingness* and *exceptionality* and the logics upon which they depend on, fit neatly within neoliberal multicultural rationalities which in turn depend on forms of racialized and economic distinction to justify social value. A major consequence of neoliberal multicultural rationalities operating as the dominant framework for undocumented student advocacy is that they render advocacy grounded in other ways of being, organizing, knowing, and relating unintelligible to the university, especially those forms of advocacy that are not contingent on ideas of deservingness and exceptionality.

Institutional protection and disciplined integration are important to the engagement between university representatives and undocumented student organizers. The legal vulnerability of undocumented immigrants introduces a particular set of student needs that are different from other class, racial and gender minoritized students. Contemporary arguments for the policy-driven institutional incorporation of minority students have relied on equal opportunity frameworks that highlight the importance of educational access and equity for minorities who belong to a group that has been historically excluded from higher education. In lieu of significant reparations, at first affirmative action, and later diversity and inclusion policies and practices, have offered an increase in the institutional inclusion of those minorities. For undocumented students (whose lives are often at the intersection of being racial and class minorities), their vulnerability to deportation or "deportability" (De Genova 2002; Carrasco and Seif 2014) introduces a different set of considerations outside of those for "educational equal opportunity". As this dissertation explores, immigrant *deservingness* and *exceptionality* are crucial analytics to understand why the university positions itself in a role to *protect* undocumented students. Undocumented student organizers advocate for not only educational inclusion, but also for

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that differ from the norm (Robinson and Clinkenbeard 1998). I use these terms in tandem to understand how both concepts circulate in a social context where immigrants are categorized based on binaries of social value.

forms of *protection*. They become incorporated into the accepted protocols and terms of engagement set by the university, (e.g., transitioning from student organizers into institutional sanctioned roles such as paid peer advocates).

Neoliberal multiculturalism shapes but does not determine the advocacy and movement building efforts of undocumented student organizers and undocumented student allies/accomplices. As political theorist Will Kymlicka (2013) puts it, "wherever neoliberal multiculturalism has been adopted, its limits have been contested…and used for purposes that were not intended by their designers" (115). In the spirit and tradition that acknowledges power arrangements as generative, complex and multisided social formations, this dissertation explores how undocumented students are also able to use their subject position as minoritized[10] students in order to redefine the terms of their relations to the university. I make this case by examining the ongoing articulation of the relationships between the university and its undocumented students. This study builds upon and contributes to literatures that examine how productive, multisided and shifting power dynamics constitute (im)migrants and institutions into new kinds of subjects, subjectivities and social relations (Ong 2003; 2006; Brown 2003).

Furthermore, this dissertation explores an alternative approach to student advocacy and movement building which I call *undocumoves*. *Undocumoves* map a set of multimodal approaches and strategies grounded in collective memory, intergenerational relationality, transformative politics, and a desire for reimagining ways of relating to the university. This dissertation considers how neoliberal multicultural rationalities and *undocumoves* constitute how undocumented student organizers interpret their subjectivities and daily activities at the nexus of

[10] In using the term "minoritized" instead of "minority", I aim to emphasize the active result of social constructs which reinforce power structures and assign groups of people into subordinate social categories. These categories are socially constructed and have real material consequences for those who are "minoritized". The term minority does not capture these power dynamics.

their embodied, social identities and their social position as undocumented students, undocumented student organizers, and/or undocumented student advocates.

As a study informed by a theoretical framework that acknowledges the interrelationship among institutions, individuals and organizations in social systems—I draw upon documents, newspaper articles, interviews and participant observations to understand the processes and meaning-making of social relations between university affiliates and undocumented students. I examine how ongoing remaking, reworking and rearticulating social relations are experienced in a variety of social contexts (for example: student group meetings, educational conferences, administrative taskforce meetings, graduations, counseling sessions, and educational summits). Focusing on social relations offers insights into the assumptions, values, and beliefs that are created and circulated among individuals, organizations and institutions; as well as how these interactions give meaning to undocumented students' commonsense and in their daily and reproductive practices. To further sustain my claims, I also draw from discourse analysis of various forms of knowledge productions—academic scholarship, institutional materials, written and recorded student testimonies, undocumented student groups' correspondence—as these texts offer insights into the language and symbols that comprise the rationalities and power arrangements shaping my field of study.

With each chapter, I offer ethnographic examples that demonstrate the different ways neoliberal multicultural rationalities obscure or emphasize specific aspects of student and immigrant advocacy over others. I argue that this creates conditions for certain forms of advocacy to be legible and thus included by the university while rendering other forms of advocacy (what I refer to as undocumoves) unintelligible to the cultural and bureaucratic processes of the institution. Both of these forms of advocacy operate in tandem.

Legible advocacy implicates discursive apparatuses and principles that resonate with the cultural and social context. The significance of what I call *undocumoves* is that they operate

outside of the legible forms of undocumented student advocacy—they are, similar to what Dionne Espinoza, Maria Eugenia Cotera and Maylei Blackwell call, “subversive interventions” (2018, 2) in their theorization of Chicana movidas. Undocumoves is not just undocumented students engaging in student organizing and challenging the university to increase their support for undocumented student services. It is an approach that at its best, does not simply reinforce ableist, individualist and racialized constructions of social value to guarantee support for immigrant youth by reinforcing immigrant moral binaries. For the most part, there is no immaculate form of resistance or undocumove. Instead, there are opportunities and possibilities for challenging the dominant forms of advocacy. As the reader will see, strategies that at a point could be considered to be *oppositional*, maybe even considered to be an *undocumove* at the time, can then become hegemonic. Thus, there is a continuous revamping of strategies, ideas and tactics.

In the rest of this introduction, I introduce this dissertation’s research participants: undocumented students. I introduce the legal and historical context in which undocumented students, as subjects embedded within US higher education institutions, came to be. I also provide a quick overview of how academic literature has discussed the educational and social experiences of undocumented immigrant youth and undocumented immigrant students. In the next section, I provide an overview of the field, what I refer to as the undocustudent world at the University of California as well as the theoretical traditions that inform my understanding of US universities. In “Neoliberal Multiculturalism and its Limits” I establish the definition of my working concept and explain how *undocumoves*, as informed by Chicana feminists’ concept of *Chicana Movidas*, helps explain the limitations of neoliberal multiculturalism. In “Method and Position”, I discuss methods and my own positionality, particularly as a racialized, formerly undocumented immigrant. I conclude this introduction with a dissertation chapter map.

Introduction to the research participants

My understanding of the "undocumented student figure" builds upon scholarship that has explored how immigrant populations circulate as narrative and quantitative figures that are often discussed in contradictory ways. Discourses and quantitative data circulate and portray undocumented immigrants in the form of metaphors as "population invaders", "hard workers", "(im)moral subjects", "outsiders", "criminals", "aliens" and their movement as "a wave" or an "invasion" (Santa Ana 2002; Gutiérrez 2009; Cunningham-Parmeter 2011; Chavez 2012; Pallares 2014; Sati 2020). As stated by Joel Sati (2020) these discursive accounts are a tool of political omission to undocumented immigrants because "metaphors become a tool of exclusion that, by the time deliberation occurs on undocumented immigration, renders their exclusion as given" (31).

Given undocumented immigrants' marginal position within the constructs of US citizenship, the undocumented immigrant, as a figure, has often been used as marker that embodies a set of mythical characteristics associated with "the other" and "the stranger".[11] As Lisa Lowe (1996) reminds us, the immigrant figure, "produced by the law as margin and threat to the symbolic whole, is precisely a generative site for the critique of the universality" (8-9). The immigrant figure serves as a critique to the cohesiveness of the nation state. It is the immigrant's condition of *otherness*, their interior foreign positionality, and their position of being a *stranger*, a figure who is already known and can be described and predicted, which offers a site for understanding the mechanisms through which narratives of US national imaginaries and practices of neoliberal multicultural governmentality function and circulate.

[11] Michel Foucault (1970) describes society's "Others" as "at once interior and foreign, therefore, to be excluded (so as to exorcise their interior danger)" (xxiv). Sara Ahmed (2000) describes the stranger as a figure who is socially constructed not as an unrecognizable other, but as someone who is already known. Both have been terms that have been used to describe immigrants and their relationship to the nation state.

For this dissertation, I focus primarily on the narrative figures associated with one group within the undocumented immigrant populations. I define this group in relationship to a specific US institution—as undocumented immigrants *in relationship* (in their role as students) to institutions of higher education. As stated by the 1982 Supreme Court decision *Plyler v. Doe,* undocumented immigrant children have constitutional equal protection rights with respect to access to K-12th public education.[12] The years following the precedent of *Plyler v. Doe* would lead to a substantial population of undocumented immigrant youth growing up with legal access to public education through high school, but who later face legal and economic barriers to higher education (Abrego 2006). Their "constrained inclusion", as Genevieve Negron Gonzales (2017) identifies it, is that they live their lives in educational institutions that allow them to belong; and simultaneously, they are subjected to immigration laws that deem them susceptible for expulsion as a result of legislation and policy decisions.

Contextualizing undocumented students in higher education: Legal and historical context

Abrego and Negron Gonzales identify a legacy of state legislation and federal policy decisions that have fluctuated between providing and negating educational opportunities to undocumented immigrants. In California in 1983, shortly after the *Plyler v Doe* decision, the state amended its Educational Code to provide in-state tuition to non-citizen resident students.

[12] In the decade of the 1970s, anti-immigration advocates passed laws that rolled back immigrant rights, sharply expanded border enforcement, and proposed requirements for local and state officials to deny basic services to immigrants (Massey and Pren 2012). One of these anti-immigrant efforts is the 1975 revisions to the Texas education laws, in which the state opted to withhold funds from local K-12 school districts that provided education to undocumented immigrant children. In May 1975, the Tyler Independent School District adopted a policy requiring noncitizen students to pay tuition if they could not provide proof of legal residency. This led to a class action lawsuit challenging the policy on grounds that it violated the 14th Amendment on the US Constitution, as well as also being preempted by federal immigration law. This lawsuit would lead to a key moment that would shape the educational experiences of undocumented youth in the US, the legal precedent of the landmark United States Supreme Court Decision *Plyler v Doe*. In 1982, the United States Supreme voted against this Texas education law asserting that undocumented immigrant children are "persons" with guaranteed constitutional rights to public elementary and secondary education under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Olivas 2012)The verdict in this case was historically significant, as legal theorist Maria Pabon Lopez describes, it was "the first time the Supreme Court clearly stated that undocumented persons are protected under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment" (López 2004, 1385).

The amended code provided undocumented students with California resident status the opportunity to register for in-state tuition in public higher education. This was a significant gain for undocumented students, as in-state student fees are lower than out of state fees, and thus make public higher education financially more affordable. However, a year later, under the California Education Code 68062(h), the California State Attorney limited that benefit only to legal residents, stating that undocumented students could not establish residency for tuition purposes. This change in tuition policies represented a roll back for undocumented students in higher education.

Aware of how changes to the California Education Code would affect undocumented students, counselors, admissions staff and educators across Southern California brought together affected students and created the Leticia A. Network—an advocacy network and support network. In a conversation with one of its former members, Victor Narro narrates the formation of the Leticia A. Network as an organic, grassroots effort that came together to support undocumented students by producing and distributing information to undocumented students during and outside their work hours. In 1985, with the growing advocacy network and political momentum, five undocumented students challenged the State Attorney's interpretation of "residency for tuition purposes" and filed a case against the University of California on the grounds that they had graduated from California high schools and had resided continuously in California for an average of seven years (*Leticia "A" v Board of Regents of the University of California*. No. 588-892-4 1985).[13]

[13] Before the Supreme Court landmark case *Plyler v Doe* 1982, the Supreme Court case of *Toll v. Moreno* 1979 served as a precedent case in residency determinations for noncitizen university students. *Toll v. Moreno* found that a 1973 policy enacted by the University of Maryland that limited who could receive in-state tuition was unconstitutional. While the case involved the child dependents of G-4 visa holders, the application of this case would also have a future impact for other noncitizen students such as undocumented students. For more on *Toll v Moreno*, see Olivas, Michael A. 1986. "Plyler v. Doe, Toll v. Moreno, and Postsecondary Admissions: Undocumented Adults and Enduring Disability." *JL & Educ.* 15: 19–55.

In 1986, the Alameda County Superior Court case *Leticia A v. Board of Regents* struck down the residency provisions in the California Educational Code and made undocumented students in public higher education eligible for in-state tuition and financial aid. By striking down the residency provisions for undocumented students, the *Leticia A* ruling provided once again a pathway for affordable public higher education for undocumented students. Similar to the ways in which my research participants became associated with identifiers such as "AB50 students", "DACA students", and "DREAMers", beneficiaries of Leticia A. became known as "Leticia A students" and benefited from residency eligibility for tuition and state financial aid purposes. Thus, from 1986 to 1991, Leticia A students were eligible to receive state financial aid and were charged resident tuition.

The benefits of the Leticia A ruling did not last long. David Paul Bradford, a UCLA employee assigned to determine the residency status of students, resigned after failing to comply with the Leticia A. ruling. Bradford filed a lawsuit asking the UC to comply with the education code under the statute in which undocumented immigrants were considered nonresidents. In 1991, the Los Angeles Supreme Court decision in *Regents of California v. Bradford* overturned the *Leticia A.* case. The overturn of *Leticia A*. meant that undocumented students attending public higher education institutions were again charged out of state tuition. In the post-*Bradford* decision era, undocumented students in California lost access to the lower costs of in-state tuition, and thus returned to being priced out of higher education.

During the years following the Bradford decision, there were multiple legislative efforts to support undocumented students' pursuit of higher education in California and across the country.[14] The early 1990s was also a time characterized by the rise of anti-immigrant

[14] Across the country between 2000s and 2010s, various states passed legislation that increased access for undocumented students to instate tuition. As of 2021, seventeen states and the District of Columbia offer in-state tuition to unauthorized immigrant students by state legislative action and seven state university systems have established policies to offer in-state tuition rates to undocumented students. For more see, https://www.ncsl.org/research/immigration/tuition-benefits-for-immigrants.aspx

legislation in California. In her ethnographic study in Southern California, Hinda Seif (2004) explores how Mexican American state legislators and undocumented Latino youth, organized primarily through NGOs, participated together in the passage of California Assembly Bill 540. As early as the late 1990s, undocumented Latino youth took measures to disclose their immigration status, lobbying and organizing for educational access alongside state legislators. This is significant given that much of current scholarship on immigrant youth activism has focused on the movement organizing around the DREAM Act.

The passage of Assembly Bill 540 (AB540) was another moment of fluctuation in undocumented students' path towards higher education in California. In the post-Bradford era, undocumented students and allies launched a campaign to pass legislation that would allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition. AB540 was signed into law in October 2001 and enacted in 2002, allowing qualifying students to pay in-state tuition at any California public university. With the passage of AB540, students who 1) attended a California high school for at least three years 2) graduated from a California high school or received an equivalent degree (GED) and 3) signed the California Nonresident Tuition Exemption Request became eligible to pay in-state tuition for California public institutions of higher education.

According to Negron Gonzales (2011), the passage of AB540 was significant in at least three ways. AB540 made a difference for undocumented students seeking a university education as it reduced tuition costs significantly. Additionally, the passage of AB540 came at a time when Texas passed House Bill 1403, a similar legislation that also provided qualifying undocumented students with a nonresident tuition exemption. This provided an optimistic outlook for allies and immigrants for the direction that new legislation was moving towards. Third, "AB540 catalyzed a generation of young undocumented youth activists, with no prior political experience but a wealth of enthusiasm and passion" (Negrón-Gonzales 2011, 12). This

dissertation focuses mostly on the aftermath of the campaign and movement that followed the passage of AB540, the immigrant youth movement that emerged after the mid 2000s.

Contextualizing undocumented students in higher education: Academic literature

Studies on undocumented students and undocumented youth have helped portray the social and educational conditions these students and youth face. Most of the available literature on undocumented students focuses on qualitative and quantitative studies conducted after 2000. These early studies on undocumented students have examined the effects that immigration and education laws have had on the accessibility of higher education for undocumented students (Dougherty, Nienhusser, and Vega 2010; Guarneros et al. 2009; Reich and Barth 2010). Literature has also examined different incorporation patterns and financial challenges undocumented students face once attending higher education (Abrego 2006; Gonzales 2009; Perez et al. 2009; Rincón 2008; Abrego and Gonzales 2010). These studies have been crucial in providing some of the first investigations into the social characteristics of undocumented students and their experiences in higher education.[15]

These studies have also provided a demographic picture of this student population. Most undocumented young adults do not pursue a college education (Abrego 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010b; Greenman and Hall 2013). According to a 2019 report by the Migration Policy Institute there are approximately 98,000 undocumented students graduating from US High School every year and 27% of these graduates reside in California (Zong and Batalova 2019). A 2020 report by the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration in partnership with the New American Economy estimates that there are more than 450,000 undocumented

[15] For instance, Abrego (2006) offers one of the first studies on how legal status influences the educational attainment of undocumented youth. Abrego notes that even though undocumented students have legal access to public education, their inaccessibility to federal financial aid and the cost of attending college, makes obtaining a college education unattainable because of its unaffordability. On a similar note, Rincon (2008) highlights the compounding impact political and social constraints have on students' college success. In one of the earliest published books on undocumented students, Perez (2009) chronicles 20 undocumented students navigating higher education, highlighting the missed opportunity that arises when society does not capitalize on the talent of undocumented youth.

students enrolled in postsecondary education, representing two percent of all postsecondary students in the US (Feldblum et al. 2020).

A majority of undocumented students are first-generation, low-income, students of color. (Flores 2010; Gildersleeve, Rumann, and Mondragón 2010; Gildersleeve and Ranero 2010; Diaz-Strong et al. 2011; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015; Terriquez 2015). These intersecting identities as first-generation, low-income, students of color, who are also undocumented immigrants, position them at an educational systemic disadvantage (Manalo-Pedro 2018a; Buenavista 2013; Gildersleeve and Ranero 2010; Perez 2009; Perez et al. 2010). Additionally, undocumented students experience stressors in the college access and navigation process their US born and legal permanent resident counterparts will likely never experience (Perez et al. 2009; Pérez Huber 2009; Gildersleeve and Ranero 2010; Buenavista 2013; Clark-Ibáñez 2015; Rivarola 2017).

Even when successfully enrolled in higher education, undocumented students have exhibited psychological and emotional distress (Terriquez 2015; Contreras 2009; Gildersleeve and Ranero 2010; Gildersleeve, Rumann, and Mondragón 2010; Perez 2009; Clark-Ibáñez 2015; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2015). Shame and guilt of undocumented status is associated with feelings of isolation, alienation and negative academic performance. Furthermore, Helge Schwiertz (2015) notes that because the dominant discourse surrounding undocumented immigrant youth defines undocumented students as students "with good grades and appealing as cultural Americans" (as cited in Modragon 2020, 45), the emphasis on hyper achieving undocumented students, Grecia Modragon proposes, "has problematically overlooked the academic struggles of undocumented students, especially the experiences of those students with a history of academic probation" (2020, 45). As Mondragon states, even when undocumented students do successfully enroll in higher education, unrealistic standards of

academic excellence are specifically difficult to meet given the structural realities of their social conditions.

Undocumented students are also one of the most recent additions to university “special student” populations that have been constituted to be deserving of special recognition and support. Previously referred to as “at-risk students”, the term “special populations” has been increasingly used and has had a particular purpose and role in the discourse of higher education (Atay and Trebing 2017). Definitions of “special student populations” might vary depending on individual states. According to the federal Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V), special populations are defined as students with disabilities; students from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults; students preparing for nontraditional fields; single parents, including single pregnant women; out-of-workforce individuals; homeless individuals; youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty and students with other barriers to educational achievement, including students with limited English proficiency (California Department of Education). As discussed previously, undocumented students are already at the intersection of various identified “special student” populations. Even though immigration status is not included in the Perkins V definition of “special student population”, universities like the University of California have increasingly included information on undocumented student services and resources under their “Equity Affairs” online page. Undocumented student resources have also been increasingly affiliated with student affairs programs meant to support other vulnerable student populations (for example, the UCLA Undocumented Student Program is located under the Bruin Resource Center a center that primarily focuses on supporting foster youth, student with dependents, student in recovery and students impacted by incarceration).

This dissertation builds and diverges from the previously presented literature. I examine how undocumented students became subjectified into figures and representations of diversity at the university. This dissertation is especially concerned with an investigation of the figure of the "undocumented student" (an undocumented immigrant who is enrolled as a student in an institution of higher education) as it reveals how institutions imagine their associations to this student population and vice versa. Through a study of how the undocumented student figure circulates, I investigate how universities discuss, represent and manage undocumented students, revealing the operating logics and values that shape these institutions. Given universities' historical role in nation-making and citizenship projects (Boggs 2013; Chatterjee and Maira 2014; Ferguson 2012; Wilder 2014; Astin 1997; Colby et al. 2003) the undocumented student figure can provide insights on how this figure is constituted in relation to universities, as well as the nation state. Similar to how Abigail Boggs (2013) explores the figure of the international student in US higher education as a paradoxical figure of "promise" and "threat" to illustrate the entwined transnational histories of US universities, the state and knowledge production and personhood; I explore the undocumented student figure as a figuration that further reinforces migrant morality binarities and the meaning of US conceptions of belonging and prospective US citizenship.

Introduction to the Field: The Undocustudent World at the University of California

I became more interested in the historical and political function of US universities through my engagement with undocumented students and their university supporters. In conducting research on the experiences of undocumented students in higher education, I came across research that discusses undocumented students in ways that highlighted their social value and talents to position them as eligible candidates for the rights and privileges associated with being recognized as full students, as well as *full citizen-subjects*. This tethering between educational capital, social capital and access to claim rights to citizenship led me to continue

researching how universities function as sites with a significant administrative role in the development of the state and neoliberal governmentality.[16]

US Universities from a Critical Ethnic Studies and Abolition Universities Studies Approach

The political and intellectual tradition of Critical Ethnic Studies and the emerging project called Abolition University Studies inform my understanding of US universities. I view them as social and institutional sites of resistance and possibility. As Roderick Ferguson (2012; 2017) states, the rise of student protest movements in the 1960s and 1970s is a vivid example of this very possibility. Ferguson states "The American university changed because of the emergence of new kinds of 'publics' in the United States and because of the assertiveness of communities differentiated by race, gender, ethnicity, indigeneity, religion, sexuality, ability and class" (2017, 9). In this period, working-class, students of color and women (those considered to be the new 'publics') catalyzed change in the production of university knowledge and its institutional practices. Yet, Ferguson reminds us, these calls for the democratization of the university were met with strategies of deradicalization and cooptation. Furthermore, Ferguson (2012) describes that minority culture and difference, as affirmed by the legacies of these student movements, were appropriated and institutionalized by established networks of power within the state, capital and academy. Universities have an innate and intimate connection to hegemonic projects of state and capital.

My position on what the university *is* and *represents* in relation to undocumented students, is influenced by the work of abolitionist, feminist, queer, Trans, women of color,

[16] This dissertation focuses primarily on the role of universities in relation to nation state and neoliberal governmentality. Even though I understand universities to be transnational entities that are embedded in networks of transnational knowledge production and distribution, as well as entities connected to militarization and imperialist projects; this dissertation has an orientation towards examining the university's role in the production of narratives pertaining to nation making, US citizenship, and US based racial formations. I am aware that this is a limitation of the dissertation, but also necessary for the intents of writing a cohesive dissertation project.

Indigenous and Black scholars. These scholarly genealogies and radical traditions have constantly reminded us that the university (and the academy) is more than a site of "where education happens" or a site "where the accumulation of knowledge can be exchanged for upward mobility" (Mohanty 2003, 194). Similar to Grace Hong (2008), I also think of the university as a productive and destructive institution. For instance, my analysis of US universities builds upon the essays by contributors to the volume, *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent,* who have historized the role of the US university in legitimizing slavery, notions and mythologies embedded in settler colonialism (manifest destiny, land grants), racial projects (slavery, racial categories, eugenics) and US exceptional democracy (imperialism and militarization)—projects that until today continue to sustain the university as key in the maintenance of US militarism and its imperialist pursuits.

Given its proximity to the administrative, economic and security apparatus to imperial nation-state projects, universities function as sites that maintain and replicate forms of social inequities and racial violence. In this regard, Grace Hong (2008) asks us to consider how the regulation and disciplining of the study of race and gender have organized the mechanisms of power in the US university. Furthermore, Jodi Melamed argues "US universities have become a key site for racializing individuals' value to neoliberalism as multicultural and for teaching them the codes of privilege and stigma that naturalize contemporary biopolitics and its uneven distributions" (2011a, 88). Universities create and disseminate racial projects. These projects emerge from their critical productive role in producing and disseminating knowledge about racialized subjects; as well as their practices in the management and representation of racial difference.[17]

[17] Here I draw on Lisa Lowe's (1996) understanding of the inevitable paradox that emerges from projects and fields such as Ethnic Studies. Lowe reminds us that "institutionalization provides a material base within the university for a transformative critique of traditional disciplines and their traditional separations, and yet the institutionalization of any field or curriculum that establishes orthodox objects and methods submits in part to the demands of the university and its educative function of socializing subjects into the state" (41). This understanding of institutionalization guides my

In spite of the colonial, imperialist, racist, capitalist ideological and material architecture of US universities, feminist women of color such as Lisa Lowe, Grace Hong, Chandra Mohanty, Maylei Blackwell and Sara Ahmed, have asked those that are institutionally and historically marginalized from universities to hold a feminist commitment and reimagine the possible relationships scholars and students of color can have to such institutions. Lisa Lowe describes the university as "an ideological state apparatus in which intellectual and pedagogical labors make and remake alternative spaces by exploiting the contradictions of that state apparatus" (2015, 38). I read this to mean that through the exploitation of contradictions a feminist scholar can create "alternative spaces." Chandra Mohanty (2003) maintains that cultures of dissent—active, oppositional and collective voices in the academy—that work towards creating *pedagogies of dissent* are core to the possibility of an academy that can be site of "political struggle and radical transformation" (194). Maylei Blackwell (2011) reminds us that falling into false dichotomies between the "university" and "community", dismisses how "the university has been a critical historical site for the transformation of the relations of power/knowledge" (32) not only inside college campuses, but also outside. Roderick Ferguson builds on this tradition of feminist, Black, Indigenous and abolitionist scholars who have remained critical about how their presence is managed in the university. Ferguson describes that minoritized academics and students can form "alternative spaces" and "cultures of dissent" in the university through the "little things". He describes these little things as,

> "a syllabus, a job ad, a recruitment strategy, a memo, a book, an artwork, a report, an organizational plan, a protest—such are the little things that we can deploy in order to imagine critical forms of community, forms in which minoritized subjects become the

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understanding on how the management and representation of racial difference can occur even with projects that aim to have critical and oppositional standpoints and critiques.

agents rather than the silent objects of knowledge formations and institutional practices" (Ferguson 2012, 232).

Ferguson reminds us that the power of the US university over managing and representing racial, sexual, gendered difference is never entirely complete and there are always forms of becoming agents rather than objects of knowledge formations. This critique is useful in understanding the variety of projects that undocumented students have imagined and created in universities.

Aside from the frameworks in Critical Ethnic Studies, this dissertation is in conversation with an emerging interdisciplinary project: Abolitionist University Studies (AUS). AUS builds on the decade-old field of Critical University Studies and draws from the political projects and intellectual visions articulated by Critical Ethnic Studies, Queer Studies, and Feminist Studies. As a new and emerging project, AUS is inspired by the intellectual work of Black, Indigenous, feminist, queer and abolitionist scholars, such as Fred Moten, Stefano Harney, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Dylan Rodriguez, WEB Du Bois, and Angela Y. Davis.

AUS can be understood as a generative intellectual project and political invitation to conceptualize new forms of sociality and institutionality in today's US universities[18]. Some of the tenets of this emerging project include situating universities in terms of land expropriation and the racialized exploitation practices that sustain this relationship to land. AUS positions its political commitment within the Left abolitionist tradition, a tradition that is constructive, generative, and inspired to seek alternatives to dominant forms of sociality and institutionality (alternatives to systems such as white supremacy, settler colonialism, racial capitalism and carceral rationalities). Unlike Critical University Studies' periodization of the university starting in

[18] Even though the Abolitionist University Studies project is by no means constrained to a national commitment and sees itself in connection to global networks of capital accumulation and exploitation, currently most of its emerging analysis center on US universities.

the post-World War II era, AUS focuses on a periodization of US universities grounded in the post-civil War period.[19] Thus, highlighting the university's role in slavery, as well as its continuous role in the accumulation of Indigenous land, dispossession and genocide of Indigenous communities, the management of those deemed as surplus populations, and its overall collaboration with white supremacy and settler colonialism projects. This abolitionist perspective highlights spaces of organizing, resistance, subversion and accumulation towards non-capitalist ends within, and in relation to universities. Conscious of the social functions of universities, AUS works within the terms of the university, but towards its own ends, seeking to reimagine what the university might be for.

In its investigation of university student movements, AUS offers me a critical entry point to discuss undocumented student organizing in ways that are different from the existing sociological gaze which limits itself to investigating frames, narratives, and tactics without a critical relational analysis of university institutional absorption into ongoing diversification projects. My aim is to use the concepts of Critical Ethnic Studies and Abolitionist University Studies (particularly its attention to the power dynamics in US universities) to tell a different narrative about the undocumented student movement/advocacy and institutional dynamics that I observed.

[19] The field of Critical University Studies (CUS), positions universities and their relationship to the state as a central object of analysis. As described by Jeffrey Williams (2012), CUS emerged in the 1990s and is exemplified by analysis of the university and capitalism and has taken on issues ranging from privatization, student debt, and financialization. CUS formed as a response to critiques of the university that began emerging from the right and left on the 1980s. These critiques can be summarized on the Left as a "reminisce about a post-World War II institution in which merit and intellectual ability triumphed over identity and access to higher education was universalized" (Boggs 2013, 13) and on the Right as a "harken back to a mythical pre-World War II university that was paradoxically objectively apolitical and morally nationalist…dedicated to a common (national) culture and the pursuit of a non-partisan truth" (Ibid). CUS as a field focuses primarily on a temporal analysis of the shift between a public model of higher education to the neoliberal model—often this shift is referred to within a narrative of "crisis". Thus, CUS is a disciplinary formation, as Boggs, Nichols, Meyer (2019) best put it, "is haunted by its allegiance to a 'crisis consensus' fueled by nostalgia for the apogee of the postwar public mass university" (5). In focusing on a nostalgia for what the public university once was and its current condition of being "in ruins", CUS fails to account for the ways in which the expansion of the public university is built upon and has consistently depended on militarized funding priorities and nationalist agendas that perpetuate racial violence and violent forms of capital accumulation.

The Undocustudent World at the University of California

Research for this dissertation took place primarily in two of the University of California campuses: Berkeley and Los Angeles. The University of California is a land-grant institution, tracing its foundation to the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant College Act, an act that provided states with indigenous lands (deemed by the federal government as "public" lands) to sell for the establishment of university endowments. The University of California is one of fifty-two modern land-grant universities that received land grants traceable to the Morrill Act. Approximately 250 tribal nations were disposed from nearly 11 million acres of land. The act was enforced through 160 violence-backed treaties and land seizures (Lee et al. 2020). Because of its connection to Native American erasure and land dispossession, from its inception, the University of California has been a central institution linked to the racial and citizenship projects of the state.[20]

Aside from its historical importance in the creation of racial and citizenship projects for the state, the University of California, the state's public research university, was also chosen as a site of study because of its political economic significance at the state, national and global scale. This political and economic significance of the University of California can be seen at various levels. The UC is an institution with a $140 billion investment portfolio located in the state with the largest economy of the country (also ranked as the fifth largest economy of the world). The UC is one of the largest employers of the state. It has an estimated student enrollment of 200,000 students, with about 4,000 of those students being undocumented (Molle 2019).

[20] The Morrill Act turned nearly 11 million acres of land expropriated from tribal nations into seed money for public higher education. The University of California received about 150,000 acres of land. The Morrill Act is a racial project by design as it was unprecedent federal legislation that helped advanced the dispossession of Native American people's lands. For more on an analysis of the Morrill Act and its connection to extractive practices, indigenous dispossession and white supremacy see Stein (2020) "A Colonial History of the Higher Education Present: Rethinking Land Grant Institutions through Process of Accumulation and Relations of Conquest; Nash (2019) "Entangled Pasts: Land-Grant Colleges and American Indian Dispossession" and McCoy et al. (2021) "The Future of Land-Grab Universities"

The UC does not have the highest undocumented student enrollment, but it has established the most systemwide support for undocumented student resources. According to the Campaign for College Opportunity, in 2018 approximately 14% of California undocumented students attended a California State University (CSU) campus and 5% a UC campus (The Campaign for College Opportunity 2018). In analyzing the different trends between UC and CSU campuses, Laura Enriquez's et. al (2020) report on the state of undocumented students in California's public universities notes:

> In 2013, the UC launched the Undocumented Students Initiative, providing $15.4 million in funding over seven years to build up campus support services for undocumented students. It funded the UC Dream Loan program, established the UC Immigrant Legal Services Center, and further developed undocumented student services. UC campuses hired professional staff members, created undocumented student centers, provided additional financial aid, and developed innovative programming to reduce educational, social-emotional, and resource inequities. During this time period, many CSU campuses also established undocumented student centers and hired professional staff members, but without systematic systemwide support, campuses had fewer resources to build such programs and initiatives (2020, 1).

This systematic systemwide support for undocumented students began developing in the early 2010s as a consequence of student and allies organizing, sympathetic institutional champions, and philanthropic investment and continued to be further developed after Janet Napolitano, former Secretary of Homeland Security (2009-2013) was elected as UC President. Napolitano has been heavily criticized by immigrant rights groups for ramping up deportations to record levels during her tenure in the Obama administration. With her appointment came a strong opposition from UC students across campuses, in part because of her record and also because of the lack of transparency of her appointment. Within weeks of the announcement of her new

role as UC President, Napolitano met with a cohort of undocumented students and student allies to discuss their concerns. Shortly after the meeting on Wednesday October 30th, 2013, Napolitano announced a 5-million-dollar initiative to aid undocumented students at the systemwide level.

The undocustudent world that I explored in this dissertation consists of the variety of social networks, knowledge-making practices and institutional spaces that make up the material, symbolic, digital landscape where knowledge production on undocumented students and student affairs best practices occurs. An aspect of this landscape consists of the peer support networks that students have been creating with the support of institutional allies (Hallett 2013). In this dissertation, I examine two peer support/ student organizing groups: IDEAS and RISE. In 2003 a group of undocumented students at UCLA along with advisors Jeff Cooper, Alfred Herrera and Adolfo Bermeo formed Improving Dreams, Equality, Access, and Success (IDEAS). Three years later, at UC Berkeley, a small group of undocumented students along with the support of institutional advisors from the Centers for Educational Justice and Community Engagement formed Immigrant Scholars Rising through Education (RISE). Peer support networks such as RISE and IDEAS were crucial in helping students gain access to information and emotional support necessary to remain enrolled (Hallett 2013; Oseguera, Locks, and Vega 2009; Perez et al. 2009). RISE and IDEAS were peer support groups that provided forms of vital information about navigating higher education institutions as well as a space of confidentiality and trust to share the vulnerability of one's immigration status (Flores and Horn 2009).

The undocustudent world is constituted by a "multi-sited" character with "mobile subjects and objects, of the networks and connections necessary for things to move around" (Ahmed 2012, 11). As the Undocumented Student Initiative was taking place in the various University of California campuses across the state, I focused primarily on the flagship institutions UC

Berkeley and UCLA. Prior to this initiative, these two campuses had already begun forming an institutional infrastructure of support. As the flagship universities of the UC, UCLA and UC Berkeley provided an important site to explore the mechanics of neoliberal multiculturalism rationalities in higher education.

Introduction to Neoliberal Multiculturalism and its limits

Neoliberal multiculturalism is a major conceptual frame of analysis in this dissertation, as it allows me to explore how neoliberal ideology and social organization work in conjunction to produce privilege and stigmatized forms of humanity. These forms of privileged humanity are maintained by discourses that justify and naturalize social inequality along the lines of a person's ability to contribute to circuits of capital accumulation, regardless of their citizenship status. As this dissertation examines in depth, neoliberal multiculturalism is an important concept to understand how ideology, social organization and discourse operate together to racialize and stratify groups of immigrants (regardless of citizenship status) into categories of social value, dependent on the immigrant's economic contributions to capital circuits.

Neoliberal multiculturalism is a productive conceptual frame to understand how noncitizen, young, multicultural, educated immigrants (such as the undocumented student organizers who I learned from) become intertwined through ideology, social organization and discourse, stratifying them into different categories of social value. The university serves as a useful space where I could conduct observations to explore the ways in which these processes unravel. In this dissertation I draw from the work of multiple scholars who have investigated and developed "neoliberal multiculturalism" as an object of study across different fields (Mitchell 2003; Melamed 2011b; 2006; Hale 2005; Darder 2012; Kymlicka 2013; Speed 2016; Bourassa 2019; Atasay 2015).

A variety of theorists view neoliberalism as a periodizing schema to describe a constellation of changes that occurred in the past four decades. They emphasize the

importance of understanding “neoliberalism” and “multiculturalism” as independent concepts to then understand neoliberal multiculturalism. Elizabeth Bernstein (2013) describes three major schools of analysis on neoliberalism that seek to capture these interrelated changes: the Neomarxist, the State Transformation and the Neofoucauldian school.[21] In this dissertation I align closely to a NeoFoucauldian analysis of neoliberalism, which explores the ways in which neoliberalism has been defined as a political rationality and normative order that unfolds across different aspects of economic, epistemic, affective, cultural and social life (Bourassa 2019; Brown 2015). This school considers neoliberalism as a cultural project in which market rationalities have been embodied and incorporated by self-regulated, self responsabilized subjects (Ong 2006; Brown 2015). Specifically, I draw primarily from Aiwa Ong’s (2006) description of neoliberalism and its relationship to citizenship. Ong describes neoliberalism as a malleable technology of government that produces new forms of sovereignty and new interactive modes of citizenship, with rights and benefits that are distributed in accordance to the subjects’ entrepreneurial capacity, and not necessarily nation-state membership.

Multiculturalism is a useful frame of analysis for recognizing why undocumented students fit into the state and university’s logic of accommodation. Briefly, multiculturalism has been recognized as the idea that Western liberal democratic states should adopt policies to affirm and shelter minority ethnic projects. According to Will Kymlicka, multicultural state-minority relations can be seen through the normalization in public expression and political

[21] The Neomarxist school investigates neoliberalism as a project that reestablishes conditions for capital accumulation and as an upward redistribution of economic resources through policies such as structural adjustment and those imposed by the International Monetary Fund (Harvey 2007). Building upon Marxist’s understandings of primitive accumulation, where capital is accrued through violent means, Neomarxist scholars such as David Harvey’s highlight the “accumulation through dispossession” logic of neoliberal capitalist economy that centralizes wealth in the hands of few elite and intensifies exploitative social relations of production at a global scale. The State Transformation school focuses on neoliberalism and a new mode of statecraft entailing a shift from the welfare state to the carceral state categorized by the rise of a new securitized state apparatus (Wacquant 2009). Both schools offer a critical analysis of neoliberalism as a project of wealth redistribution, exploitation, and inequality at local and global interconnected scales.

mobilization of minority ethnic identities and cultural rights. The recognition of minority rights can be seen in the form of “land claims and treaty rights for indigenous peoples; strengthened language rights and regional autonomy for substate national minorities; and accommodation rights for immigrant-origin ethnic groups” (2013, 101). Multiculturalism includes the nondiscriminatory applications of laws as well as the changing of laws to better reflect the distinctive needs and aspirations for minorities. Critics of multiculturalism such as Katharyne Mitchell see multiculturalism as a “broader technology of state control of difference”, and as a “tool of domestication” to bring different groups of people into a shared national narrative of multiculturalism (Mitchell 2004, 123–24). “Multiculturalism” Mitchell argues is “a strategic partner in the growth and expansion of a Fordist capitalist regime of accumulation” (ibid).

To understand the significance of “neoliberal multiculturalism” and what its operation entails, I turn to Jodi Melamed’s (2006, 2011a) definitions of the term. Following Omi and Winant’s (1994) understanding of the “racial break” that occurred in the US following World War II, Melamed situates neoliberal multiculturalism within a chronology of three main “official antiracist” configurations that occurred in the post WWII period: racial liberalism (mid 1940s-1960s), liberal multiculturalism (1980s-1990s) and neoliberal multiculturalism (2000s to present). These “official antiracisms” emerged in the post WWII period to pacify critiques that centered racial violence as a logic endemic to capitalism. Melamed historically locates neoliberal multiculturalism in a recent stage of racial capitalism, which offers a generative place to begin thinking about how it operates today in social institutions.

Furthermore, Melamed claims neoliberal circuits of value set the terms for how governments allocate value across their populations. Building upon Aiwa Ong’s concept of “differentiated citizenship”, Jodi Melamed argues that through a differentiated experience of citizenship, governments protect those who are valuable to capital, whether formally citizens or not, and they render vulnerable those who are not valuable within circuits of capital. “Neoliberal

multiculturalism" Melamed notes, "constructs 'the global multicultural citizen' as a privileged racial subject" (2011b, 20). In a similar way to Melamed's observations of the fabrication of "privileged racial subjects", in his studies of Indigenous communities in Central America anthropologist Charles Hale, one of the first theorists of neoliberal multiculturalism, argues that neoliberal multiculturalism is a strategy of governance that includes the recognition and endorsement of the principles of intercultural equality, alongside a strategy of governance that deepens the state's capacity to share and neutralize political opposition (Hale 2005).

Hale identified neoliberal multiculturalism's privileged racial subject, the *Indio Permitido,* (the sanctioned "Indian" subject) as a critical part of understanding how state relations create legible/permissible subjects who occupy key mediator positions. Furthermore, Hale identified neoliberal multiculturalism as the integral relationship between the growing new cultural rights and neoliberal political economic reforms among Black and Indigenous communities in Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica. "The great efficacy of neoliberal multiculturalism", Hale argues, "resides in the actor's ability to restructure the arena of political contention, driving a wedge between cultural rights and the assertion of the control over resources necessary for those rights to be realized" (2005, 13). Hale, Ong and Melamed speak to the ways in which neoliberal multiculturalism is a set of rationalities where social value and resources are allocated to particular populations *according to their legibility into racial capitalist projects of accumulation*. Neoliberal multicultural subjects, such as the *Indio Permitido*, become figures that exemplify how individuals are imagined as morally responsible for navigating the social realm using rational choices grounded on market-based principles that truncate other forms of social relationality.

In addition to Melamed, Hale and Ong, my analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism also draws from education theorists. These scholars have explored neoliberal multiculturalism as the links between economic competition, national security, and social justice agendas (Atasay

2015) and highlight the ways in which multiculturalism deploys a meritocratic justification linked principally to neoliberal notions of economic benefit to justify inequalities (Darder 2012).

Scholars such as Antonia Darder (2012), Engin Atasay (2015), and Gregory Bourassa (2019) have offered key insights into the application of neoliberal multiculturalism in the field of education. For instance, Darder (2012) examines the impact of neoliberal policies upon the work of what she refers to as "border intellectuals within the university", those whose scholarship seeks to explicitly challenge longstanding structural inequalities and social exclusions. She discusses neoliberal multiculturalism in relation to the phenomenon of economic Darwinism, the whitewashing of academic labor, and the tradition of progressive struggle within the academy.

Whereas Darder focuses on academic labor, Engin Atasay (2015) turns to understanding how neoliberal multiculturalism is embedded in social justice education, examining the way in which the commodification of multicultural education has been of the rise. I particularly find Atasay's analysis of the concepts of "diversity" and "equity" fruitful for the questions at hand in this dissertation project. Atasay argues that concepts such as "diversity" and "equity" in US education "have become amenable to global neoliberal economic educational discourses that rest on competitive global market demands" (2015, 171). In tracing neoliberal economy and multicultural educational reform and conceptions of equity in the US, Atasay warns us of the rendering of social justice education theory and practice to be amenable to economic human capital models of education. I take Atasay's insights as an important aspect of my analysis on how diversity and inclusion efforts are often in close intimacy to human capital theories that dissect racialized subjects into racialized *economic* subjects.

Gregory Bourassa (2019) also offers an important analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism useful for my own research. Like Atasay, Bourassa takes on multicultural education as an object of study. He explores how neoliberalism has "appropriated, accommodated, and put to use the discourses of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion" (2019, 1) in US education. I mainly draw

upon his definition of *productive inclusion*, what he defines as “the mechanisms that operate by absorbing, coopting, channeling, extracting, and appropriating that which has previously been deemed abject and outside – even antagonistic to – the logics of capital, and enlisting it within the circuits of capitalist accumulation” (2019, 2) to understand the ways in which undocumented students became enlisted into the university’s projects for diversification and accumulation. Darder, Atasay and Bourassa’s careful view of the workings of diversity in US education help ground my analysis of neoliberal multiculturalism in the context of the expansion of what I refer to as the infrastructure of undocumented student support.

A note on *Undocumoves*

I argue that neoliberal multiculturalism illuminates the ways in which narratives elevating the social value of undocumented students are congruent with the increasing privatization and expansion of the immigrant detention industrial complex, increasing criminalization of immigrants’ daily life activities, and record high number of immigrant deportations. Under neoliberal multiculturalism, immigrant life becomes constituted according to the moral calculus that allocates different value to different immigrant groups— “rearticulating citizenship rights, entitlement, and benefits into different elements whose exercise is then based on neoliberal criteria” (Melamed, 2011, 138). As this dissertation further investigates, immigrants cannot be so easily divided into these circuits of neoliberal value. In their political projects and strategies, undocumented student organizers and their accomplices demonstrate the fictitious character of immigrant categories. These categories attempt to separate undocumented students from their *relationships* to their families and exploit undocumented students as figures in narratives that represent them as morally responsible individuals.

As mentioned previously, this dissertation project considers how neoliberal multiculturalism shapes the dominant form of undocumented student advocacy at my places of observation, yet this is not the only form of undocumented student advocacy I observed. Within

the political and intellectual tradition that highlights that “every power relation implies at least *in* potentia a strategy of struggle” (Foucault 1991, 225), this dissertation takes “the potential of a strategy for struggle” as an analytic to demonstrate how in the midst of dominant discourses, procedures of sociality and institutionality, there are always forms in which contestation and negotiation are enacted. The conceptual analytic I call *undocumoves* is inspired by the lessons and work of grassroots social movements and feminist women of color theoretical interpretations of these social movements.

I draw on the work of Chicana theorists Espinoza, Cotera and Blackwell (2018) and their ideas of *Chicana Movidas* as they illuminate a “multimodal engagement with movement politics that included acts of everyday labor and support as well as strategic and sometimes subversive interventions within movement spaces” (2). Furthermore, Espinoza, Cotera and Blackwell explain *movidas* as a way to capture a mode of historical analysis that allows for charting small scale, intimate political moves, gestures and collaboration that reflect the tactics embedded within and between social movements. *Movidas* describe multiple kinds of moves; from those taken as strategies and tactics, to those more subversive forms “like forbidden social encounters, underground economies and political maneuvers” (2). I consider Chicana movidas, as a useful conceptual intervention to capture the insights, interventions and activities of undocumented students who generated new visions for the social relations between institutions of higher education and undocumented students.

Positionality and Method

The figure of the (im)migrant and its relationship to the state has captured the attention of a variety of scholars, who through a relational framework propose the understanding of the immigrant not as an exception nor as external, but as an internal and configurative figure to the very significance of the nation state. Through this relational framework that acknowledges the intimacy and co-constitution of the state and the immigrant figure, I began this dissertation with

the intention of exploring how the figure of the “undocumented immigrant youth” is interpreted in the official and counternarratives of American citizenship and belonging.

My own social position as an undocumented immigrant who was accumulating forms of social and educational capital inspired me to turn towards a set of new questions. I began to seriously explore how as an undocumented immigrant, who was increasingly inhabiting a social position associated with privilege, I was a beneficiary of political discourses that framed my immigrant experience through constructs of innocence, merit, and economic productivity.

In 2017, while studying and researching the material for this dissertation, I became a temporary legal resident. After living as an undocumented person for 12 years, and being a DACA beneficiary for 5 years, becoming a temporary legal resident opened a new set of economic and social opportunities that I had not had before. Two years later, my mother, who had applied for legal residency through a petition based on her marriage to my stepfather, was denied a visa to enter back to the US. She was deemed inadmissible on grounds of human smuggling—bringing my sister and me to the US as undocumented immigrants. What was not taken into consideration in my mother’s application was that she left Mexico fleeing for her life. After eleven years of living domestic violence, my mother left my father, took my sister and me out of a context of violence and to the best of her abilities, provided for us a life free of domestic and gender violence. My family’s experience with immigration laws and discourses of social value shaped my writing. Writing about the ways in which immigrants are deemed “(im)moral”, “(un)desirable”, “innocent”, and “(un)productive” in relation to the nexus of US racial capitalism is a deeply personal matter for me. Family separation, as a consequence of these forms of immigrant differentiation, is something that I share with multiple research participants who just like me, also consider their immigrant experience not only as individuals, but as an extension of their blood and chosen families.

Aside from this personal experience and connection, the seeds to this dissertation project emerged prior to starting my doctoral training. As an active organizer with Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education, (RISE) the immigrant student advocacy and peer support group at UC Berkeley, I built community with undocumented students at UC Berkeley and in the California Bay Area. In my junior year I became interested in pursuing graduate school. A graduate student mentor and friend, Kevin Escudero, reached out with the opportunity to join an ongoing project as a research collaborator. Between 2011 and 2012, I recruited participants and conducted interviews for a research project sponsored by the UC Berkeley Chancellor's Taskforce on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community. I conducted eight interviews to gather data about the experiences and challenges undocumented immigrant students faced in pursuing their education at UC Berkeley. At the time, I understood this taskforce project as an initiative for campus climate change. In retrospect, and as explored throughout this dissertation, this project is emblematic of the forms of neoliberal multicultural incorporation that I present in this dissertation. The taskforce was a productive engagement by the university, as it met student demands with further forms of institutionalizing and bureaucratizing a university response to what originally was posed as student organizers' demands.

My experience as a research collaborator led to my growing interest in the emotional and mental health of immigrant youth. My interlocutors shared experiences of anxiety and depression due to living with the uncertainty produced by their immigration status. At this point, I became interested in the ways undocumented students were engaging with narrative as a tool to explore and transform difficult life instances into stories of resilience in the process of retelling their life stories. I applied to graduate programs interested in studying testimonios, poetry, art, street theater, as part of the visual, written and embodied forms of cultural expression that constitute the repertoire of resistance tactics immigrant youth across the US were building.

My doctoral training in the Department of Chicana/o and Central American Studies at UCLA offered the intellectual and institutional space to explore preliminary research ideas that eventually led to this dissertation. Interested in questions regarding testimonial narratives, oral history projects and creative forms of self-expression, in 2014 (and later in 2017) I participated in Dream Summer, a ten-week national fellowship program for immigrant youth and allies engaging in social justice work and intersectional movement building in the immigrant rights movement. As a fellow at the UCLA Labor Center's Dream Resource Center, I spent about 200 hours compiling academic references for the beginning stages of a collaborative oral history project between Arizona State University and UCLA Labor Center that intended to document the life stories of immigrant youth organizers across the nation. This experience provided me with a growing network of future interlocutors, from institutional allies to undocumented student organizers in Los Angeles and across the US.

I would also like to note that I was a beneficiary of many of the new programs instituted by the University of California that aimed to support the recruitment and retention of undocumented students. I benefited from free legal services and funds offered through UC Immigrant Legal Services; transportation scholarships and meal vouchers offered through the Undocumented Student Program; and received three university fellowships open to AB540 students through UCLA Graduate Division. As a DACA recipient I had work authorization and was employed by my department to teach as a teaching assistant. I navigated UCLA as an undocumented student with work authorization and in-state tuition which qualified me for institutional resources, employment opportunities and funding for almost four academic years. In a way, even though I was an undocumented graduate student conducting research, my educational experience did consist of opportunities that not all undocumented students may have access to depending on their eligibility to financial aid, work authorization and instate tuition (for more on this last point, please see Chapter 4).

Method

This dissertation follows both an intrinsic and instrumental case study design (Stake 1995). It began as an intrinsic case study to learn about a unique phenomenon—the institutionalization of the undocumented student support infrastructure at the UC. It developed into an instrumental case study in the sense that this case study explores how the phenomenon of neoliberal multiculturalism functions. Research instruments and recruitment of participants protocols were tailored to understand a unique case (processes of institutionalization) that could shine light into the complexities of a social phenomenon (neoliberal multiculturalism).

Being an undocumented immigrant during the years I was conducting and collecting most of my research provided me with an "insider" researcher position. I built rapport with interlocutors by presenting myself as a resource—by being a mentor to students, accompanying students to their first IDEAS meeting, writing letters of recommendation to educational and graduate programs, mentoring IDEAS members applying to post undergraduate school, building friendships with undocumented undergraduate and graduate students. I would request to interview student organizers only after years of building rapport. For the most part, the interviews were retroactive reflections of their experiences as organizers and in the case of institutional allies, as current or former allies. This method of conducting research, possible because of the length of my studies at UCLA and my own previous background as an undocumented undergraduate student organizer, was something that I was committed to at a methodological and political level.

I investigated movement strategies within the undocumented immigrant youth movement over the past two decades by exploring how personal narratives have been developed and used as a social movement method in and outside of college campuses. I investigated how this strategy was mobilized and its role in the production of a network of higher education institutional arrangements that were created during this student movement and national political

moment. This required examining the production of a network of higher education institutions, and specific campus strategies that have been created over the past two decades with the input of university representatives (office of the president staff, chancellors, deans, administrative officials), student organizers (student collectives, retention and recruitment student groups) and institutional allies (direct services administrators, mid-level student affairs officers, faculty, student affair officers) to create knowledge about direct services for undocumented students.

Data

My data encompasses interviews, participant observations, and archival research. I conducted 30, 45-180 minute, interviews with institutional allies, current and former student organizers at UCLA and UC Berkeley. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded for themes on NVivo. At my interlocutor's requests, 10 interviews were not recorded, but I took notes on those conversations and also coded for themes. My archival research consists of institutional public statements, institutionally affiliated research reports, university taskforce recommendations, university newspaper articles, strategic plan publications, newspaper articles, student and university created resource guides, course syllabus and student-led publications. I conducted 180 hours of participant observations at various student and university-sponsored events, including summits, student retreats, educator workshops, immigrant student conferences, undocumented student welcome receptions and university and student sponsored webinars.

Chapter Map

Throughout this dissertation I argue that advocacy efforts designed to support undocumented students have been shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities by exploring different aspects of the relationships between undocumented student organizers and university affiliates. As mentioned earlier, I do not consider neoliberal multicultural rationalities to be the determinant form of advocacy engagement, but I do consider it to be dominant. In some

chapters, I also explore the role of *undocumoves*, the multimodal approaches and strategies grounded on collective memory, intergenerational relationality, transformative politics, and a desire for reimagining ways of relating to the university, that also shape undocumented student advocacy. Neoliberal multiculturalism and undocumoves work in tandem to generate new forms of advocacy. These rationalities are not always completely oppositional and there is no purity in undocumoves—they are strategies that are at times transformative but can also become hegemonic over time.

Chapter One "Storytelling as subjectification and strategy for visibility and institutionalization" builds upon the assertion that the act of storytelling has been a central political strategy to the immigrant rights, immigrant youth and undocumented student movements. Whereas multiple of these studies have focused on the emancipatory potential of storytelling of personal narratives among undocumented immigrant youth, in this chapter I am guided by Critical Ethnic Studies frameworks that examine multiple outcomes at the intersection of the radical potential of student movements and the power dynamics and complexities of institutionalization. Building upon these studies and my field observations, I propose two major arguments. First, this chapter discusses storytelling as a mode of subjectification, a historical and cultural process of being made into subjects *and* of transforming oneself into a subject. Through the practice of storytelling and stating one's personal narrative, I argue that undocumented student organizers used storytelling as a form of articulating themselves into the "undocumented student" subject position. By engaging the terms of the university—with its neoliberal rationalities, codes and discourses—undocumented student organizers' storytelling practice shaped their understanding of themselves, their scope of responsibility, behaviors, and choices. Second, this chapter examines how by engaging in the practice and political project of storytelling, undocumented student organizers negotiated their visibility, how to be acknowledged, understood, and eventually, included and institutionalized into the university.

Chapter Two “Social value and neoliberal morality in the university’s reconfiguration of undocumented student support” continues exploring aspects of the development of a strategic relationship between undocumented students and high-ranking university administrators. First, this chapter argues that the strategic relationship between undocumented students and high-ranking university administrators relied on a dominant advocacy framework that articulates undocumented students as productive immigrants who are valuable and whose lives and talents often go to “waste”. Building upon the work of immigration and education scholars, I call this dominant advocacy framework the “Wasted Lives Framework”. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which the Wasted Lives Framework is shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities of social value, where “waste” is highlighted as the unfulfillment of undocumented students’ productive capacities. In the following section, this chapter discusses how undocumented student advocacy called attention primarily to issues of equity, inclusion, and institutional responsibility— a form of “critique” that is legible and could be incorporated into the university’s terms of engagement. In concluding this chapter, I explore how the undocumented student support infrastructure of support was reconfigured at the University of California after 2010. The “Wasted Lives Framework” and the moral bifurcation of undocumented students as “good students” (and not bad activist) are important aspects to understand how the funding and design of undocumented student support infrastructure developed after 2010. In the last section, I begin discussing different aspects of this emerging infrastructure of undocumented student support, primarily the emergence of taskforces and institutionally sponsored research projects.

Chapter Three “The rationalities of the undocumented student support infrastructure” examines the ways in which the undocumented student support infrastructure came to be and analyzes in what ways it is informed by the dominant form of undocumented student advocacy—what I identified in the previous chapter as the Wasted Lives Framework. This chapter examines closely the values, principles, practices, discourses and symbols that inform

this infrastructure. I argue that this infrastructure is shaped by concepts of *disciplined integration*, *deservingness*, and *institutional protection*, which in turn help sustain and perpetuate dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy grounded on neoliberal multiculturalist social relations. This chapter examines how different discourses and frames in the undocumented student support infrastructure are shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities. To be clear, I do not intend to condemn the ways in which undocumented student advocacy in the infrastructure has developed nor critique its approaches. Instead, I explore the *mechanics* that inform the dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy—which rely on assessment of social value, and in turn the effects these frames have had on the infrastructure.

Chapter Four "Undocumented student difference with(out) separability" argues that universities are sites that sustain and perpetuate structures of immigrant differentiation; that these systems of immigrant differentiation and stratification are experienced relationally among undocumented students; and that in the midst of these mechanisms, undocumented student organizers cultivate practices that seek to destabilize the ways in which neoliberal multicultural rationalities separate immigrants into different categories of social value. First, my argument builds on contemporary scholarship that investigates how university policies help construct and mediate the consequences of immigrant illegality. In this way, universities are sites that sustain and perpetuate structures of immigrant differentiation. Second, similarly to Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera's (2015) insights on how undocumented students navigate the "paradox of performing exceptionalism" at elite universities, I also suggest that concepts of "deservingness", "exceptionality" and "specialness" are negotiated at the intrapersonal and interpersonal level. For undocumented student organizers, negotiation of these concepts brings to the forefront the lived aspects of neoliberal multicultural rationalities. In the last section, I demonstrate how *undocumoves* grounded in collective memory, intergenerational relationality and transformative politics challenge the forms of immigrant differentiation that emerge in a university setting. I

discuss how student-designed resource guides, student-organized conferences, student-led campus tours, and student-led vigils are examples of practices that student organizers do to generate an alternative vision of solidarity among undocumented immigrants on campus and with immigrant communities beyond campus. These are projects and moments that encapsulate the creative ways that undocumented student organizers engage with.

Chapter One: Storytelling as subjectification and as strategy for visibility and institutionalization

I remember my story went on the news. What it meant to be an undocumented student at UCLA. It gained national attention and for me that was part of the fight for the federal Dream Act as well. That I had a responsibility to tell my story of being at UCLA. The challenges I have incurred in my life at this institution, to really hopefully get this piece of legislation passed and then change the trajectory and opportunity for undocumented folks at UCLA.

--Daniel

It's exhausting. I think it's very easy to glamorize experiences that we think pull certain narratives forward or that help create opportunities. But I think for the people that are actually living that, where everybody sees one or two accomplishments, you see the seven hundred failures. And you feel each one of those failures and then people want to praise you for the one or two accomplishments, but how do you remain emotionally healthy in the face of those seven hundred failures?... I know that at the end of the day I'm nothing but a token for them. It's a matter of knowing when you allow yourself to be a token for something that's for greater purpose. I won't let myself be tokenized for no reason. It sucks because I shouldn't really have to do that in the first place.

--Lily

Daniel and Lily are storytellers—undocumented immigrants who learned to draft and share aspects of their intimate lives with multiple audiences. The opening epigraphs in this chapter come out of my interviews with them, a space where I simultaneously got to hear their stories and understand their perceptions of storytelling. During our interview, Daniel shares how as an undocumented undergraduate student organizer at UCLA he learned to become comfortable with drafting and sharing his personal story [22] as a form of advocacy for

[22] What I refer to in this chapter as "personal story" has also been referred to in the literature on immigrant youth organizing as "counterstory" (Pérez Huber, Velez, and Solorzano 2018), "testimonio" (Negrón-Gonzales 2015; Fuentes and Pérez 2016), "testimonial narrative" (Quakernack 2018) and "personal narratives" (Swerts 2015). Each definition is significantly different in terms of its conceptual origins and political commitments. For cohesiveness, I use

undocumented student issues, immigrant issues, LGBTQ issues, and other issues at the intersection of those identities. Daniel notes a clear connection between sharing his personal story, (such as the challenges he was facing as a UCLA undocumented, gay, Latino, first-generation student) and how the act of sharing aspects of his personal life could help legislative campaign efforts that would transform social and material conditions for undocumented immigrant communities at the federal and institutional level.

Similar to Daniel, Lily, the undocumented graduate student organizer I introduced in the previous chapter, also shared her personal story to multiple publics, including university students and administrators. Unlike Daniel, who expressed he had a responsibility to tell his story, Lily was skeptical of the practice, but could articulate the pragmatic reasons for sharing her personal story. In other parts of the interview, she describes it as an exhausting affective practice where she would tell her personal story repeatedly to university administrators and funders, emphasizing the accomplishments of her life, all in hopes of creating some kind of institutional change—such as increasing educational resources, programming, mental health staff, and financial support—not only for herself to benefit, but for other and future cohorts of undocumented students. She describes feeling like she had to "tokenize" herself with the hope that sharing her story could lead to some type of institutional response that would transform the very social conditions that drove her to publicly narrate that very struggle in the first place.

Daniel and Lily (now currently in their early 30s) came of age during the rise of what has been known as the Immigrant Youth Movement, a youth-led, grassroots, direct action movement which aimed to change the social conditions of immigrant communities in the US.[23]

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the terms "storytelling" and "personal story" throughout this chapter as it is a descriptive way to explore the act of sharing aspects of one's personal story with a public and the intention of the act bringing some kind of social change as defined by the narrator.

[23] The Immigrant Youth Movement consists of a variety of social movement actors and networks of organizations, including individuals, student groups, community groups and formal/informal organizations (Lopez 2013). Some of its goals have included crafting different representations of immigrant youth, setting up networks of immigrant youth

By 2010, the immigrant youth movement, once closely embedded within the social and organizational infrastructure of legislation campaign and electoral politics and allies who spoke on behalf of undocumented immigrant youth, began to develop new grassroots tactics that focused on making public platforms where immigrant youth could speak for themselves. Undocumented students like Daniel and Lily were part of a larger group of undocumented immigrant youth who, using the cultural schema of *coming out*, also *came out of the shadows* as undocumented immigrants willing to speak for themselves.[24] Coming out of the shadows meant that for the first time in the development of the Immigrant Youth Movement, undocumented immigrants were at the forefront of exposing their immigration status in public and telling their own stories, without having someone else tell their stories for them. In the midst of the War on Terror and the anti-immigrant bureaucratic and legislative infrastructure that intensified in the post 9-11 period, "coming out of the shadows" was a significant posture for immigrant youth, as it was a rejection of the expectation that they remain silent about their experiences, breaking stigmatization associated to their status as undocumented immigrants, and using storytelling as a method to change public perceptions of immigrant communities. "Coming out of shadows" carried strategic risks, as they made their immigration status public, and thus their deportability, visible.

Daniel and Lily offer insights into the process and mechanics of storytelling. Daniel describes sharing his story in the news media as a strategy with potential outcomes that could

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organizations, and capacitating immigrant youth in messages, tactics, strategies to advance the struggle (particularly reform) for immigrant rights and immigrant youth forward (Nicholls 2013).

[24] Undocumented immigrant youth combined two strategies for visibility. First "coming out" is a reference among LGBTQ communities to the metaphor of coming out of the "closet", which as Eve Kosofsky Sedwick (1990) explains, "the closet represents a confining figurative space that protects LGBT persons from the convergence of different vectors of discrimination and prejudice" (as cited in Cisneros and Bracho 2019, 716). Thus, coming out of the closet, implies a sense of liberation from hiding one's true self. Second, undocumented immigrant youth used the schema of the "shadows", a metaphor that as Jesus Cisneros and Christian Bracho explain has been "generally used to describe the invisibility and criminalization of undocumented immigrants who live, work, study or function within the margins of society" (Cisneros and Bracho 2019). In tandem "coming out of the shadows" is a visibility schema that refuses hiding, shame and marginality.

change the trajectory and educational experiences and outcomes of undocumented students at UCLA. Sharing his story is directly tied to material resources and educational opportunities not only for himself, but also for other undocumented students. Daniel narrates the challenges he faces as an undocumented student with hopes that UCLA administration will respond with increasing forms of institutional support and that federal legislators will pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (known as the DREAM Act), a path to legalization for undocumented immigrant youth. Lily describes sharing her personal story at panels and roundtables with UCLA administrators as a tokenizing experience, where she consented to being tokenized in hopes that her story (specifically a story tailored around the educational experiences she was facing) could contribute to larger efforts that would lead to institutional change (for example, funded teaching opportunities for undocumented graduate students who are ineligible for work authorization). Like Daniel, sharing her story is tied to material resources and opportunities. Throughout the interview, she touches upon the affective fatigue that comes with limiting a narration of her experiences through a frame that only highlights her academic accomplishments, and how that is an inaccurate portrayal of her full humanity.

There are two main sites of inquiry I take from these two epigraphs and my interviews with Lily and Daniel. They both describe storytelling as a significant strategy for narrative, material, legal and institutional change. They both engage with the strategy, but their understanding of what the process means at a personal level is a bit different. Lily sees it as a form of consenting to being tokenized for a larger goal, a form of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1996). Daniel sees sharing his story as a personal responsibility, closely aligned with the political tenets of testimonial narrative (Beverley 2004; Yúdice 1991). Both of them are conscious of the material resources that are at stake. I seek to understand what storytelling means to my research participants and how the process of storytelling aspects of their intimate lives influences their publics and on themselves, their sense of scope of responsibility, behavior

and choices. This phenomenological understanding of my research participants allows me to better comprehend how at the intersection of technologies of governance (such as immigration enforcement) and the self-making process of rejecting and modifying those policies, undocumented students developed a subject position.

My second inquiry examines how research participants, such as Daniel and Lily, make a connection between storytelling and institutional change at UCLA. Lily and Daniel operate under a similar understanding: that the practice of storytelling contributes to a form of institutional visibility that *can lead* to a form of institutional change which *can then lead* to concrete resources and other forms of educational access. At a time when many students struggled financially to sustain themselves in college, sharing their stories was a way that could possibly lead to institutional acknowledgement and potential philanthropic, institutional, and legislative support. They both share awareness about how storytelling requires a level of legibility by the audience; meaning, the public affects the type of story that is drafted and shared. Once we were finished with the interviews, Lily and Daniel shared a similar understanding of the level of performance, fatigue, and awareness of their choice about what story to tell, who to tell it to and for what purpose. With that in mind, I ask why is storytelling such a useful strategy in an institutional context such as the university? What are the histories and politics in US universities that make storytelling a reliable method of engagement for undocumented students such as Lily and Daniel? What does the university gain by engaging with the stories of undocumented students? If neoliberal multiculturalism shapes university rationalities (such as its cultural and organizational practices), then in what ways are undocumented student organizers' stories engaging directly with those rationalities?

The argument and chapter map

This chapter builds upon the assertion that the act of storytelling has been a central political strategy to the immigrant rights, immigrant youth and undocumented student

movements (Pallares 2014; Nicholls 2013; Negrón-Gonzales 2015; Quakernack 2018; Zimmerman 2016; Fernández 2018). In this chapter, I build upon previous literature that has examined the ways immigrants create different forms of cultural politics (particularly through personal narratives) that complicate and destabilize available dominant narratives. Yet, whereas multiple of these studies have focused on the emancipatory potential of storytelling of personal narratives among undocumented immigrant youth, in this chapter I am guided by Critical Ethnic Studies frameworks that examine multiple outcomes at the intersection of the radical potential of student movements and the power dynamics and complexities of institutionalization. Building upon these studies and my field observations, I propose two major arguments.

First, I discuss storytelling as a mode of subjectification, a historical and cultural process of being made into subjects *and* of transforming oneself into a subject (Foucault 1980; 1982). Through the practice of storytelling and stating one's personal narrative, I argue that undocumented student organizers used storytelling as a form of articulating themselves into the "undocumented student" subject position. This articulation of the self as an "undocumented student" emerges out of first, the immigration processes and forms of immigration enforcement that categorizes them "undocumented immigrants" and second, the personal choice to adopt and politically mobilize through this subject position. As Aiwa Ong (2003) examines how everyday government technologies play a role in shaping people's attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations in belonging to a modern liberal society; I also examine how at the intersection of technologies of governance (such as immigration enforcement) and the self-making process of rejecting, modifying, or transforming those policies, undocumented students developed a subject position.

By engaging the terms of the university—with its neoliberal rationalities, codes and discourses—undocumented student organizers' storytelling practice shaped their understanding of themselves, their scope of responsibility, behaviors, and choices. As Ong (2003) and

Foucault (1982) remind us, the process of subjectification is one of hybridity, where neoliberal governance creates conditions for people to actively reinvent their understandings of themselves through rejection, modification and transformation of rationalities, norms and practices. Undocumented student organizers, invested in supporting themselves and each other, catalyzed institutional change beyond their university campuses. They created a movement that changed institutions, just as much as the movement changed them. For this reason, the practices of storytelling, specifically its transformative potential, can be understood to be an *undocumove*, yet I do not hegemonize "storytelling" as an emancipatory strategy in and of itself. To sustain these claims, I discuss how undocumented student organizers used storytelling to enact "a sense of personal responsibility" to take political action.

Second, I examine how by engaging in the practice and political project of storytelling, undocumented student organizers negotiated their visibility, how to be acknowledged, understood, and eventually, included and institutionalized into the university. My understanding of visibility draws from scholars such as Lisa Duggan (2012), Dean Spade (2015), and featured writers in the 2017 volume, *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility,* who have explored the paradoxes, limitations and social ramifications of the concepts of representation and visibility in liberal society. Aware of the mechanics of how visibility works, I argue that undocumented student organizers used storytelling, and the visibility it provides, as a productive and intelligible strategy that informed the institutional affirmation of undocumented students at the UC. By institutional affirmation I refer to the incorporative processes upon which undocumented students' immigration status and racialized subject position, situated them as minoritized subjects who could then be welcomed and incorporated by the university [25] (Melamed 2011b; Ferguson 2012; Mitchell 2015; 2018).

[25] In this dissertation I use the term "minoritized" instead of "minority", to emphasize the social constructs and histories at hand that have excluded certain groups of people. Here what is emphasized is not the social grouping,

Furthermore, I argue that undocumented student organizers advocated for undocumented student issues by capitalizing on the university's normalization, necessity and reproduction of diversification projects (projects that demonstrate performances of institutional self-reflexivity, democratization of higher learning, and inclusion of minoritized groups). Undocumented student organizers did so by mobilizing their own personal narratives of economic and social struggle which could then be translated through the university's discursive apparatus and principles of "excellence" and "merit" (i.e., an undocumented student's story about overcoming financial challenges could be translated as a story of a racialized immigrant whose financial struggle and educational *excellence* demonstrates *merit* for institutional support). This translation is possible because as a neoliberal institution and social formation, the university is in a position where it requires validation for its systems of managing minoritized subjects (Ferguson 2012; Mitchell 2015; 2018). I propose that undocumented student organizers met the university with a generative offer—the affirmation of deserving and productive minoritized immigrants into the university's institutional projects for diversification. In this chapter, I focus primarily on the expansion of courses and student-led, university-sponsored publishing, as two examples of how these diversification projects worked.

I examine the outcomes at the intersection of undocumented students' practice of storytelling and the university's capacity and need for incorporation of difference—where some stories/subjects resonate better with dominant institutional rationalities and thus are easier to recognize and include. A main chapter takeaway is that storytelling, as a strategy, had generative outcomes for *both* undocumented students and the university's diversification projects. As I heard from multiple research participants, undocumented student organizers, were aware of the limitations of their stories being framed through constructs of "merit" and

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but the social constructs that have been normalized and reproduce in the exclusion of that group. For an in-depth analysis of the concept "minoritized subjects" see Ferguson, Roderick. 2012.*The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference.* University of Minnesota Press, 35.

"deservingness," but in order to be heard and for any potential material change to occur, they needed to modify their terms of engagement and meet the university with the terms it knows how to recognize.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section, "Storytelling as a strategy for visibility" situates in what ways undocumented student organizers used storytelling as a form of making themselves *visible* in governmental, public and institutional settings. My analysis of "visibility" is that it is an entrance to recognition only insofar as this recognition aligns with dominant norms embedded in racial capitalism (Ellison 2017). Given that a variety of politicians, nonprofit leaders and academics were initially in the position to tell their stories *for* them, the fact that undocumented students began telling their own stories was in itself a rupture in the way undocumented students (and immigrant youth) had been previously understood and seen. In this section I discuss three examples of what sharing personal stories consisted of: I discuss aspects of Tam Tran's personal testimony in a 2007 immigration congressional hearing; the press release/ short documentary covering the personal narrative of Victor who shares aspects of his personal life as an undocumented student; and Julissa, a former RISE cochair and organizer who narrates memories of sharing her personal story in front of a group of philanthropists. Aspects of these personal stories demonstrate how storytelling was mobilized as a strategy for visibility among undocumented student organizers. I consider an analysis on storytelling as a strategy for visibility and as an important point of entry to support the chapter's two main arguments.

In the second section, "Storytelling as a mode of subjectification", I explore undocumented student organizers' insights on how storytelling shaped their own processes of understanding themselves as *undocumented students*. By fashioning themselves as "undocumented student" subjects, undocumented student organizers called upon an expected set of responsibilities and commitments implied from the relationship the university has to its

students. This process of subjectification also shaped their understanding of themselves, what they could do, and what they could not do as undocumented students.

In the last section, "Storytelling as a strategy for institutionalization" begins by examining how the university functions as an archive of difference—a site that requires the management and justification for the management of difference. After explaining the motivations and mechanisms behind institutional incorporation and institutional projects for diversification, I present an analysis of university-sponsored projects that centered personal narratives as a form of institutional advocacy. In this section I focus on the ways in which student-led publications and courses contribute to the university's "archive of difference" (a term I explain further in this section) and by extension how undocumented student organizers were able to mobilize this archive as a path to institutionalization. I do not undermine the political project and social transformative character of these projects, instead, I examine how these projects have actually in practice fit well with the university's terms of engagement. These projects also reflect ways in which undocumented student organizers and their institutional supporters have experimented with producing and channeling university funding into different modes of knowledge formations and memory practices.

Storytelling as a strategy for visibility

Storytelling during the post 9/11 era: Coming to terms with telling *our* own stories

As much as the US has invested in circulating a liberal origin story of being founded as "a nation of immigrants", empirical and historical evidence proves that the US is in fact a nation founded on settler colonialism, slavery, genocide, and structures of white supremacy that have consistently dehumanized those who are categorized as "the other". Racialized immigrants have been historically included in the category of "the other".

This dissertation project is historically situated in the context of the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the War on Terror, and the racist xenophobia that emerged from this particular time period. Amalia Pallares (2014) considers some of the key aspects to the post 9/11 era are "legal and political changes that have dramatically curtailed the legalization options for people who are in the United States without legal status, millions of undocumented immigrants and their families have experienced the threat or reality of deportation and family separation" (1). I consider this time period and the development of anti-immigrant policies and institutions, (such as the Patriot Act, the inauguration of the Department of Homeland Security and the War on Terror) not as unique, but as a continuation of ongoing dominant national narratives that have long considered racialized immigrants as "the other". Moreover, these dominant narratives have dehumanized racialized immigrants throughout different time periods conflating them with "narcotrafficking", "terrorism", "communism" and other forms of "cultural and political threat" (Lytle Hernández 2010; Chavez 2013; Santa Ana 2002). However, these dominant narratives are always met with opposition. As Alicia Schmidt Camacho (2008) reminds us, (im)migrants across time and space "have contested their deliberate subjection to forms of racism and class domination" (2) by defending their mobility, refusing to conform to the assimilative structures of the nation state, and by creating transnational forms of expression and cultural politics.

An aspect of this dissertation consists of understanding how immigrants create different forms of cultural politics (particularly through personal narratives) that complicate and destabilize available dominant narratives. Immigrant stories, as narrated by immigrants themselves, became a crucial aspect of reframing the public portrayal of immigrant communities in the aftermath of new infrastructures of immigrant policing and criminalization. Even though there is a rich literature examining the cultural politics and personal narratives of immigrant communities in the US and how those narratives are used to redefine constructs of national belonging, humanity and home (For example, see: Lowe 1996; Schmidt Camacho 2008;

Pallares 2014); in this study I build from these previous studies to examine closely the significance of personal narratives and storytelling in the immigrant youth and immigrant rights movement as they connect to the institutional transformation of the university.

The stories of immigrant youth and undocumented students were not always initially told as first-person accounts; in fact, it was allies (such as university administrators, educators, nonprofit leaders, policy makers and politicians) who played a major role in designing and delivering the stories of undocumented immigrant youth and students. Abrego and Negron-Gonzales (2020) discuss the development of allies telling the stories of undocumented students and immigrant youth in this way:

> As educators, school staff, and university officials became increasingly familiar with the struggles of undocumented students, a discourse began to emerge to illuminate this conundrum among the mainstream…Their stories of incredible sacrifice to attain an education… caught the attention and garnered the support of dedicated educators and university staff. The stories that became the most salient, as emblematic of this inherent unfairness, were of students who had earned college admission but were unable to matriculate due to their status. Allies—nonprofit leaders and educators—began using this powerful narrative to advocate for the educational rights of these promising students and increasingly, many undocumented students took up these narratives to make a strategic and compelling appeal for their rights (Abrego and Negrón-Gonzales 2020, 8–9).

Abrego and Negron Gonzales continue discussing the way in which “this powerful narrative” became known as the “DREAMer Narrative”. This narrative, and the advocacy it generated, was tightly connected to the federal DREAM Act and worked in tandem to justify immigration reform and relief (in this case a path to citizenship) for undocumented immigrant youth. Furthermore, Abrego and Negron Gonzales note “the nonprofit industrial complex, DC lobbying groups,

journalists, and researchers also played a role in the narrative's solidification" (9). The narrative's solidification, as observed by Abrego and Negron Gonzales, was pushed initially by people who were not undocumented youth, but over time, undocumented youth also adopted it as an advocacy narrative and strategy.

Many allies of undocumented immigrant youth worked with a narrative that could speak to broad American values, and more importantly, portray undocumented students and youth as *innocent* and therefore *deserving* of some type of relief. Examples of how this discourse was developed in the mainstream can be seen in a variety of ways. An example is a 2007 opinion piece written by former state senator Alfredo Gutierrez for the Immigration Policy Center. The opinion piece titled, "The Sins of the Father: The Children of Undocumented Immigrants Pay the Price", is sympathetic towards immigrant youth and takes a stance against Arizona's Proposition 300, which states that "only U.S. citizens and legal residents are eligible for in-state college tuition rates, tuition and fee waivers, and financial assistance" (Gutierrez 2007, 1). In situating the struggle of undocumented immigrant youth, Gutierrez states,

> These are kids brought by their parents to this country as young children, in many instances infants in their mothers' arms, and in every instance as children for whom the decision to come here was made without their participation. And yet, they shall pay the price, perhaps with their futures (ibid).

The title of Gutierrez's opinion piece and the discourse justifying reform for immigrant youth is emblematic of some of the tenets of the DREAMer Narrative, particularly the emphasis on immigrant youth's innocence. The piece offers an insight into the type of discourse that surrounded the ways in which undocumented students and youth were made *visible* to the public, as well as the consequential ongoing demonizing of their immigrant parent's decisions.

Aside from politicians such as Gutierrez, as movement for immigration reform and the DREAM Act was building up in the late 2000s, nonprofit organization leaders also had a key role

in developing the type of political messaging undocumented immigrant youth were to use. As Walter Nicholls (2013) notes in his monograph of the undocumented youth movement, organizations such as the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA) trained immigrant youth in types of political messaging that delivered “a morally compelling story” (62) to the general public. This story, Nicholls identifies, consisted of a generic narrative that would stress several points, such as, “the hardships facing [undocumented immigrant youth] as children, their abilities to overcome difficult barriers and continue to strive for the American dream, and the burdens posed on them by an unjust, immoral and broken immigration system” (63).

At the same time that organizations such as the California Dream Network and CHIRLA were training immigrant youth on storytelling and messaging tactics, the 2006 political mobilizations of immigrant communities across the US were reinventing the public portrayal of immigrants. Cristina Beltran (2009) notes that the immigrant rights protests of 2006 are significant in “inaugurating a nationwide movement of undocumented subjects claiming visibility and giving voice to their dreams and frustrations” (Beltrán 2014, 247). Additionally, Beltran states that this public inauguration of immigrants into the public sphere, was even more noticeable among undocumented immigrant youth who were campaigning for the DREAM Act. Beltran explains “seeking to call attention to support for the DREAM Act… unauthorized youth are increasingly electing to come out, eschewing secrecy in favor of claiming membership through a more aggressive politics of visibility and protest… (2014, 249-250).” Personal stories and experiential knowledge were some of the tactics used to counter the deliberate forms of state and legal violence undocumented immigrants were subjected to.

Beltran’s understanding of the direction where immigrant youth were heading, their “more aggressive politics of visibility and protest” (250) alludes to the early stages of the “Undocumented and Unafraid” campaign of the immigrant youth movement. The

"Undocumented and Unafraid" phase and strategy that called upon a new form of self-representation for undocumented youth activists. This different strategy was significant as it began to disengage with some of the aspects of the dominant DREAMer narrative. Undocumented and Unafraid, as a strategy was pushed by organizations such as the Immigrant Youth Justice League[26] and supported civil disobedience tactics (such as sit-ins and hunger strikes in front of legislators' offices) and the sharing of personal stories in public spheres (such as street protests and rallies).

In this dissertation, some of my research participants were engaging at the margin of this movement narrative transition—and because there is no such thing as a clear-cut temporal transition in tactics, some of them engaged in ways of representing their stories which were in tune with the dominant "DREAMer narrative" and the "Undocumented and Unafraid" strategy. Beltran along with a number of other scholars have examined a variety of ways for understanding storytelling—as a political strategy, a consciousness raising tool, a collective form of meaning-making, a form of self-determination and a method of healing.[27] What this literature has offered is multiple frames for understanding and arriving to similar conclusions—that the stories of undocumented immigrants matter as they contribute to "narrative change strategies" which then can translate to personal, material, social and political transformations. By "narrative change" I refer to the conscious and deliberate efforts by different cohorts and

[26] The Immigrant Youth Justice (IYJL) League was founded in Chicago in 2009 by a group of undocumented youth fighting against the deportation of co-founder Rigo Padilla. IYJL was able to organize a grassroot campaign to stop Padilla's deportation. IYJL continued to organize for the passage of the DREAM Act through different actions. By 2010, IYJL began the National Coming Out of the Shadows week of action, which included a rally where undocumented youth publicly came out as undocumented. IYJL proclaims that it's shift in language, strategies and tactics took inspiration from previous and on-the-ground radical queer organizers. The organization eventually changed its name to Organized Communities Against Deportations.

[27] This emerging literature has examined storytelling and testimonial narrative through lenses that emphasize the emancipatory potential of storytelling and its relationship to narrative and material change. Furthermore, some of this new literature examines how audio-visual self-narration shapes self-representation of immigrant youth organizers (Marini, 2019); the role of digital storytelling in self-representation (Constanza-Chock 2014) the role of testimonial narrative in immigration reform efforts (Negron-Gonzales, 2015).

sectors of immigrant supporters and activists who have worked diligently to transform public perceptions of immigrant communities and shift the public's focus and ways immigrant issues are framed.[28]

The concept of immigrant storytelling as an emancipatory, even revolutionary, strategy became produced and circulated across multiple spheres—in the media, nonprofit, philanthropy, political organizing arenas. For instance, undocumented organizer and public speaker, Ernesto Rocha, (also known as Undocubae) has defined the importance of his work (storytelling his life as an undocumented person) as an act of personal liberation. In a published interview with the UCLA Labor Center, Rocha states,

> I use storytelling precisely as a tool for my liberation…There is power in your narrative and lessons to be learned from your challenges, downfalls and victories; for me telling these stories honors my lived experiences. The movement needs more honesty and storytelling is just one way to get closer to that (Rocha 2017).

Rocha's understanding of storytelling is similar to that of other immigrant rights youth activists and advocates. For instance, Jobin Leeds and AgitArte (2016) have quoted Gaby Pacheco, one of the undocumented youth activists who participated in the Trail of Dreams[29] stating that for

[28] My conceptual understanding of storytelling was originally shaped by foundational and newer scholarship on testimonio (also known as testimonial narrative). Scholarship on testimonio is grounded in an intimate analysis of the impacts of the lived experiences of social injustice and community struggle. In speaking to its value as a method of creating community narratives, Beverly (2004) states, "testimonio is a fundamentally democratic and egalitarian form of narrative in the sense that implies that any life so narrated can have a kind of representational value" (34). Testimonio's ethical and epistemological authority derives from the fact that we are meant to presume that its narrator is someone who has lived in person, or indirectly through the experiences of friends, family, neighbors or significant others, the events and experiences that they narrate. As I was collecting interviews and field observations, I interpreted my research participants' understanding of storytelling through the lenses of this scholarship—as life-stories told in the first-person, where the narrators bear truthful witness and recall the social injustices that have affected their lives, as well as make connections to a larger community struggle.

[29] In 2010, Gabriela Pacheco along Felipe Matos, Carlos Roa, and Juan Rodriguez were four community college students who embarked on the Trail of Dreams, a 1,500-mile walk from Miami to Washington DC to ask the Obama administration to stop the detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants and the separation of families and to promote immigration reform. For more on the significance of the Trail of Dreams, see: Solorzano, Rafael Ramirez. "The Trail of Dreams: Queering Across the Fight for Migrant Rights." PhD diss., UCLA, 2016.

undocumented immigrant youth “our stories are the most powerful tool that we have” (as quoted in Fuentes and Perez 2016, 8).

Additionally, between 2010 and the present, multiple multimedia projects and publications have emphasized the importance of undocumented immigrants telling their own stories. Some examples include: undocumented immigrant journalist, Jose Antonio Vargas’ “Define American” multimedia project “which uses media and the power of storytelling to transcend politics and shift the conversation about immigrants, identity and citizenship in as changing America”; and the California Bay Area nonprofit Immigrants Rising’s “Things I’ll Never Say” multimedia national platform “for undocumented young people across the country to create our own immigrant narratives by boldly sharing our personal experiences through various forms of creative expression” (“Things I’ll Never Say”). Across the US cultural landscape, storytelling by undocumented immigrants became a crucial strategy for speaking back against forms of state and legal violence. With this in mind, I present a variety of ways in which undocumented student organizers shaped a variety of stories to publics, depending on the terms of engagement that could be understood by the listener.

Storytelling in the undocustudent world

A significant aspect of my data collection was dedicated to understanding why storytelling was such an important practice in immigrant youth organizing and how that manifested within the undocustudent world. Similar to other immigration theorists, I consider storytelling as a strategy for visibility. This visibility comes with forms of material resources and access, as much as it also comes with the consensus to share one’s story in a formulaic format. I draw on the insights of black trans theorists, I define visibility as a strategy to gain resources and recognition that does not necessarily “challenge the racialized distribution of resources nor

criminalization within the regime of racial capitalism" (Gossett and Huxtable 2017, 44) [30]. By understanding storytelling as a strategy for visibility, I aim to simultaneously acknowledge its pragmatic material and ideological potential, as well as its serious limitations.

In the following pages I explore three examples of how undocumented student organizers engaged in storytelling. In discussing these examples, I want to clarify that these are not meant to crystalize the positions and beliefs of these organizers nor are they representative of the various forms of political engagement and various forms in which they shared their personal narratives. In fact, over time, many organizers would often change their positions about what tactics, narratives and political messages they would align with. This is to be expected as political contexts shift and one's life's experiences play a role in the formation and ongoing development of critical consciousness. Thus, the following examples are not meant to totalize the positions of these organizers, but instead explore how storytelling developed in legislative spheres (Tam Tran), media coverage (Victor) and philanthropic spaces (Julissa) and how collectively these examples give us an insight into the ways storytelling developed in the undocustudent world.

Tam Tran's Congressional Testimony offers an important point of departure to begin discussing the role of storytelling as a strategy for visibility among undocumented student organizers. Tran's testimony unravels some of the key aspects of how storytelling was utilized as a political strategy by undocumented youth and demonstrates some major themes that emerged out of undocumented student organizers' personal narratives. In her short 27 years of life, Tran became a nationally recognized advocate for immigrant communities. Tran was one of the founding chairs of IDEAS at UCLA, a community organizer, scholar, and filmmaker. In 2010,

[30] For further reading on the conceptualization of visibility from the black trans perspective, see Gossett, Reina, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton. *Trap door: Trans cultural production and the politics of visibility*. New Museum, 2017.

Tran, unfortunately passed in a car crash accident along with her friend and fellow undocumented student organizer, Cinthya Felix.

As an active student organizer, she was one of the first undocumented immigrant youth to testify in US congress in support of immigration reform. On May 18th, 2007, she collaborated with Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles (CHIRLA) to travel to Washington DC to deliver her testimony before the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugee, Border Security and International Law in efforts to support the federal DREAM Act.[31] In her testimony to the US Congress, Tran shared her personal experiences of living as a stateless person. Tran was born in Germany, but as the daughter of Vietnamese refugees who were not German citizens, she was not recognized as a German citizen. At six years old, Tran and her family migrated to the United States to reunite with their extended family. After twelve years of waiting on their pending asylum applications, Tran's family was denied asylum on grounds that they migrated from Germany and not directly from Viet Nam. US immigration ordered the family deported to Germany, but Germany denied them entry.

Tran's testimony begins by discussing her frustration with bureaucratic systems of citizenship categorization—that are inadequate in capturing her experiences as a stateless person. Her testimony, begins,

> I hate filling out forms, especially the ones that limit me to checking off boxes for categories I don't even identity with. Place of birth? Germany. But I'm not German. Ethnicity? I'm Vietnamese, but I've never been to Vietnam. However, these forms never

[31] Through a variety of creative narrative forms (particularly film and writing), Tran explored her life story, the significance of immigration status in her life and in the lives of other immigrant communities. She directed and produced two short documentaries that explored aspects of living as undocumented immigrant youth and collaborated with scholars to produce academic knowledge on the undocumented Asian American immigrant experience (see: Buenavista, Tracy Lachica, and Tam Tran. "Undocumented immigrant students." *Encyclopedia of Asian American Issues Today, Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO* (2010): 253-260). Her testimony to US Congress is just one example of the various forms of self-expression Tran explored to tell her story.

> ask me where I was raised or educated. I was born in Germany, my parents are Vietnamese, but I have been American raised and educated for the past 18 years… so on application forms when I come across the question that asks for my citizenship, I rebelliously mark “other” and write in “the world” (Tran 2007, 2).

Tran lived in the US with liminal legal status for thirteen years of her life. She was eligible for work authorization and had access to a driver license, but as a stateless person who had been denied asylum and with a deferred deportation order to her birth country, meant she had no path to US citizenship. In her congressional testimony, she acknowledges her access to forms of documentation (such as a work permit and a driver license) as a privilege that facilitated the opportunity for her to fly to Washington D.C. from California and to share her testimony at US Congress. In her testimony, Tran states,

> This is my first time in Washington DC, and the privilege of being able to speak today truly exemplifies the liminal state I always feel like I’m in. I am lucky because I do have a government ID that allowed me to board the plane here to share my story and *give voice* to thousands of other undocumented students who cannot (Tran 2007, 3).

Tran expresses her presence in US congress as an act of *giving voice* to many others who could not be in that space. In fact, *giving voice*, was a popular discursive method of narrating agency of people who are perceived as disempowered, a strategy of visibility. In this excerpt, we can see how *giving voice* operates. For Tran, the act of sharing her testimony meant access to a platform and a public that was out of reach to many other undocumented students who had no path to US citizenship. Sharing her congressional testimony, with a public inaccessible to most people, was an act of *giving voice* to a larger community and to enact personal responsibility towards those immigrants who because of lack of documentation could not share their story (i.e., having a driver’s license which facilitates air travel).

In the rest of her testimony, Tran continues to *give voice* to the limitations undocumented students faced in their pursuit of a college education and the challenges they face in their full integration to US society. She describes how her legal status affected the educational and economic outcomes of her life and limited the impact she could have in society. Her immigration status limits the potential of her educational and social capital. Tran states,

> I have the desire and also the ability and skills to help my community by being an academic researcher and socially conscious video documentarian, but I'll have to wait before I can become an accountable member of society. I recently declined the offer to the PhD program because even with these two fellowships, I don't have the money to cover the $50,00 tuition and living expenses. I'll have to wait before I can really grow up (Tran 2007, 2).

Here Tran exposes the infantilizing limitations her immigration status poses on becoming "an accountable member of society". Many scholars have concluded that narratives that emphasized individual uplift limited the political potential of immigrant youth and constrained them onto neoliberal discourses of political rights claims and liberal capitalism (Pallares 2014; Nicholls 2013). But what we can see here is a little bit more complicated. Tran's testimony speaks to a concept of membership that highlights accountability to contribute to society, not in deductive economic terms, but through the skills one has acquired. Nonetheless, skills that are, in an ableist, capitalist society, highly desired.

Similar to Tran, other undocumented student organizers were finding storytelling as a useful strategy to *give voice* to immigrant communities. One of them is Victor, a formerly undocumented student organizer at UC Berkeley. In our 2018 interview, Victor recalled his participation in 2007 in a 30-minute short documentary where he shared his personal challenges along with other three undocumented students. In the documentary, Victor shared his life story by narrating different aspects of his educational journey—his first day at a US

elementary, learning English by watching cartoons, his growing interest in school, his high school experience, applying to college, attending UC Berkeley, withdrawing out of UC Berkeley due to financial constraints and his career aspirations. Victor (as directed by the film director's vision) narrates his story within parameters that help us understand who he is in relation to his social incorporation to the US, mainly through the institution of US k-12 and higher education.

Two years later he was contacted by the documentarian to participate in a 2009 interview with a national broadcast network where his story was featured in a special news story. Victor's story "Undocumented students struggle toward college: Reintroduction of the DREAM Act could mean legal status for college grads" was featured in connection to the reintroduction of the federal DREAM Act at the time. Victor recalled that at the point of his life, he was willing to share his story with anyone who would be open to listen, hoping that his story would contribute to the larger goals of immigration reform.

In his interview with a different national news network, Victor shared difficult aspects of his educational journey, particularly the homelessness he experienced at UC Berkeley and being hospitalized after academic and financial complications compromised his health. In this interview he is quoted expressing fears of deportation, as well as his optimism that immigration legislation could offer a path towards a productive future where he could contribute back to society. Victor states:

> However, the possibilities of me contributing back can end with me getting deported. Every day I think about me potentially getting deported, but I can't constantly be living in fear and I have to continue to be optimistic and hopeful that one day I will be able to contribute back and one way or another with the Dream Act being passed. (Victor quoted in Adib 2009)

Similar to Tran, Victor emphasizes the way that the passage of immigration legislation would contribute to his life, particularly his *ability* to contribute back to society. Victor reminds us that deportation is a limitation to his potential future contributions to society.

Tran and Victor offer us some insights into what previous scholars have emphasized: storytelling and the sharing of personal narratives (or testimonios) serve as a "tactic for political advocacy and community formation" (Mangual Figueroa 2015, 244) and "forms part of the repertoires of contention undocumented student organizations deploy" (Zimmerman 2016, 1887). Tran's congressional testimony and Victor's memories of sharing his personal narrative demonstrate some of the key components on how storytelling was used as a political strategy, particularly by highlighting their connection to US social norms.

As Nicholls (2013) has suggested, the ability of undocumented youth organizers "to forge an effective political voice has depended on generating a compelling message, but equally, it has depended on controlling the ways in which thousands of diverse activists and advocates talk about the cause in the public sphere" (59). Victor shared his own experiences in getting media training prior to conducting an interview with a mainstream national network—where he learned to understand what kinds of messages would attract "middle America" to the causes of undocumented immigrants. In his participation in the short documentary, Victor emphasized aspects of his life that made him relatable to other people, regardless of their personal opinions on immigration. These aspects of this life include losing a parent, overcoming educational and personal challenges, and his willingness to pursue his goals and dreams.

Tran's testimony has been analyzed by several scholars interested in understanding the role of storytelling as a political tactic. For instance, in his analysis on the significance of Tran's presence in US Congress and her statement that in sharing her story she was "giv[ing] voice to thousands of undocumented students who could not", Rene Galindo (2011) concludes that "the role of speaking on behalf of others is not to be underestimated since the presence of the first-

person accounts of undocumented immigrants are rarely seen and heard in formal settings such as congressional hearings" (388-389). I agree with Galindo, and add, that aside from their significance, undocumented students' strategic use of some aspect of their personal stories (those that highlight their educational triumphs and challenges) was within the parameters of the terms of engagement that legislators and news media viewers *were able and willing* to accept. Victor (and highly possibly Tran) learned through news media training, how to speak to the terms of engagement of "middle America"—terms that highlighted their potential economic contribution, merit and excellence as university students.

Through their storytelling, both Tran and Victor engage in an *undocumove*—a relational strategy that not only centers themselves, but others. They speak of a commitment that extends beyond themselves and their families, they both express a sense of willingness "to contribute" to society, but the threat of deportation compromises their potential contribution. In the case of Tran, her immigration status is an infantilizing experience, where her immigration status delays her "to really grow up". Tran and Victor raise an invitation—they are willing and ready to contribute to society; their immigration status limits this possibility.

Like Tran and Victor, undocumented student organizers also participated in variety of other ways of using storytelling, not only in front of media representatives, government legislators, and university administrators, but also philanthropists. Julissa, a previously undocumented student organizer and RISE co-chair, describes during our interview how after months of planning and coordinating with various institutional allies and the chancellor staff, RISE was able to coordinate and finalize a fundraising dinner at the chancellor's residence in December 2011. As one of the main event organizers, Julissa describes that the dinner's program was intentionally set up to have students share their personal stories in front of philanthropists at the event.

In discussing the intentions for the dinner's program, Julissa said personal stories of RISE members were included as a way to seek donations. Sharing personal narratives in this case was a direct way of fundraising, not necessarily for their individual selves, but for programing and scholarships that could be created for current and prospective undocumented students. She remembers the event in this way,

> We were putting together this fundraiser with the Chancellor, this dinner, where we were going to invite fancy people and we're going to tell our stories. It's going to be nice and fancy but then, we are going to ask for donations… We're all eating, people tell their stories… It is a beautiful event where people were talking, sharing stories (Julissa, personal interview with author, March 23rd, 2018).

Julissa states that at the time she was organizing the event, practicing the way she would share her own personal story and asking RISE members to also share their own narratives, was an act that could be mobilized to gain access to funding that could support the educational goals of all undocumented students. Julissa reiterates,

> For me it's always important to have allies, who have funding, power, and care and then to direct them in a way they could be useful. It is not really useful to me if some rich, powerful person is like 'I care about your story; I was so touched!' That is not useful to me! But it is useful to me if they fund future students to be able to finish and continue their education (ibid).

Julissa articulated "caring about an issue" as not enough. The act of sharing her story was a means to an end—the end was to gain financial support in exchange, not necessarily only for herself, but for undocumented students at UC Berkeley. At the event, Julissa remembers sitting next to philanthropist Elise Haas, and during their table conversation she asked her what some of the most pressing issues for undocumented students at that time were. Julissa recalls her dialogue with Haas as this,

> So, Elise was like 'What do you think is the biggest, biggest issues, right now?' I was like 'aside from survival, basic survival, if somehow, magically, school was taken care of and we could eat, I think the next thing is mental health. I think everyone is so stressed out about themselves, their family, about the movement, that I personally think this is a major issue.' She is like, 'what do you think would be helpful?' I said probably something [RISE] were already talking about, so I shared those things. We need a space, we need a collective space, a safe space. We need someone who is trained in AB540 issues to talk about and advocate for us on the administrative side. We need resources, we need help, what if an emergency comes up? We need food, I am so stuck on food. Food pantry, we need paper, supplies, books, we need all these things. She was like 'Ah, yeah that makes sense'. In my head, I am just telling this rich lady what we need but why does she even care. By the end of the event, she and the attendees were all like 'we are really touched, we are really looking forward to helping you guys' (ibid).

Julissa reminded me that she was skeptical much would happen after talking to Haas, as she says, "why would this rich lady even care?". This time around, there was some encouraging outcome after the event. In the week after the dinner Elise Haas announced a 300,000-dollar gift towards the creation of the Robert D Haas Dream Resource Center and her father (also present at the event) donated a one-million-dollar award towards "The Dreamer Fund", a scholarship fund that would be paid to undocumented students at UC Berkeley over the course of five to ten years.[32]

The Federal DREAM Act campaign that Tran and Victor worked so diligently on never came to fruition, however, it was moments like the one described by Julissa, that also form part of the repertoire of ways in which personal stories became strategies for advancing cumulative institutional change. Whereas Tran and Victor expanded their stories to publics outside of the

[32] I analyze the implications of this funding further in Chapter 3

university, student organizers such as Julissa, focused on using similar tactics to activate university institutional support for undocumented students.

In retelling this narrative, I do not aim to highlight philanthropic investments as an optimal goal of storytelling. It is also worth mentioning that this appeal for philanthropic funding should be considered with care, and as Nick Mitchell (2011) reminds us “philanthropic foundations do not simply give; they govern” (85) and they govern in the ways in which “they function as a constant horizon of expectation and investment” (ibid). I do consider that Julissa and other students present at the event opened themselves up to the speculative interest of philanthropic investment. Instead, I aim to highlight the ways in which storytelling as a strategy for visibility made its way in a variety of publics: politics, media, philanthropy.

Tran, Victor and Julissa offer us some understanding of how storytelling developed in the undocustudent world. In every account, organizers describe what is at stake, such as “their ability to give back”, to use their degree as a way to contribute to society (contribute to capitalist forms of production *and* as a civil/community member), their own ability to even stay afloat financially in school, and their mental health. Storytelling is a negotiation; for there are concrete material, legal, and ideological gains that can come out of sharing their stories. Similar to the way “poverty porn” depends on the exploitation of financial hardship in order to generate general sympathy or support, the decision to share personal stories that expose hardship, is also embedded in a power matrix that benefits from the exploitation of hardship. Depending on the narrator, the structure of the story, and the public, valid critiques on structural inequalities can be possibly obscured.

If we consider the strategy of using one’s personal narrative as a way to create “visibility”, to “change hearts”, and change the narratives and perspectives about undocumented immigrants, then, how exactly are storytellers also changed by the practice of storytelling? Scholars of narrative therapy and testimonial narrative have offered innovative answers to this

question—pointing out the psychological and social mechanisms that activate affective connection and stimulate self-reflection (Hogan 2011; Tyler and Mullen 2011; Prodinger and Stamm 2010). Informed by and departing from the interpretative frames of this literature, in the next section I examine storytelling as a mode of constituting subject formation—what I call the "undocumented student" subject position.

Storytelling as a mode of subjectification

In the opening epigraphs in this chapter, I introduced Lily and Daniel. Both research participants offer insights into how storytelling had an effect on their emotional wellbeing (Lily) and scope of personal responsibility (Daniel). I build upon their insights as well as my interviews with other research participants to understand how storytelling operates as a mode of subjectification. Subjectification, as previously defined, can be understood as a historical and cultural process of being made into subjects and transforming oneself into a subject; a process of people actively reinventing their understanding of themselves through rejection, modification, and transformation of rationalities, norms, and practices (Spade and Willse 2016; Spade 2015; Ong 2003; Brown 2015).

This process can be observed in how, at the intersection of multiple power relations, people shape their understanding of themselves through their conduct, behaviors, choices, and sense of responsibility. I build on Cristina Beltrán's (2009) analysis of the immigrant rights marches as "a space of appearance", a space where subjectivity is produced and transformed through the civic encounter of protesting in the public sphere, to further understand the impact of storytelling (particularly in public spheres) in the subjectification of undocumented student organizers.

Here, I examine storytelling as a mode of subjectification in two ways. I discuss how undocumented student organizers used storytelling as a way to enact personal "responsibility" and as an act of personal/communal "survival". In my field observations and interviews, I

repeatedly heard undocumented student organizers talk about storytelling their personal stories in ways that emphasized it as a “responsibility”, shaping their behavior and choice to tell intimate aspects of their personal lives for an individual and collective good.

Second, I examine how undocumented student organizers used storytelling as a way to articulate themselves as “undocumented student” subject position, meaning, through their stories they constructed a sense of identity, an identity in relationship to the university. By articulating a subject position as an “undocumented student” they also called upon an expected set of responsibilities and commitments the university had to its student population. Thus, storytelling was also a way to hold the institution “responsible” for its commitments to its students, including its undocumented student population. It was a responsibility shared both ways. My intervention acknowledges the significance of this cultural and historical landscape but invites a different reflection—to examine storytelling as a mode of *subjectification*. Daniel and Lily provide crucial insights into how this process occurs.

Storytelling as a responsibility and act of survival

In the opening epigraph of this chapter, Lily talks about how sharing aspects of her personal life was an affectively exhausting process. Lily mentions that during the years she was a student at UCLA, she learned to navigate school with multiple institutional actors who “closed doors in front of her face” (Lily, personal interview with author, June 15th, 2019). She would disclose her status as a way to advocate for herself and for other undocumented students. By disclosing why undocumented students had no access to certain resources, Lily was hoping to use her story as a way to mobilize change. Lily describes the process of learning to use storytelling to advocate for herself as an undocumented student in this way,

> It takes time and it takes energy and so much emotional labor to go from door to door to try to find someone who will say ‘maybe’… there’s so much emotion and vulnerability

> connected with your status and the status of being a student and the fear of losing them, that it pushes you to advocate for yourself to *survive* (ibid, emphasis mine)

Lily expresses using storytelling as a way of advocating for herself and as an act of *survival*. Similarly, Daniel shares that advocacy and sharing aspects of his personal story to a multitude of audiences, was about finding a way to *survive*. Daniel states,

> …where a lot of the conversations back in the day were just about how do we eat, how do we live, how to survive, how do we access money, and a lot of it came with the reality that we had to fundraise for ourselves and we had to do the advocacy with the university to ensure that we would have the opportunity to actually stay here (Daniel, personal interview with author, June 22nd, 2019).

Storytelling, as a form of advocacy and as stated by Lily and Daniel, was interpreted as about finding a way to *survive*. To survive independently, but also as Lily and Daniel share, as a collective of students who were seeking ways to access resources and establish new paths of access for students after them.

The relationship between lifting one's "voice" (as also stated in the previous section by Tam Tran) also resonates with how Daniel reflects on his years doing student activism at UCLA. Daniel remembers being a student organizer as a *fight for survival*. Daniel shares,

> I had to be an advocate because I was fighting for my survival, I was in an organization with other individuals that were also fighting for their survival, and as we fought for our survival. We organized. We realized that we had agency and we had power and that we could transform not only UCLA, but the state and this country, to be more equitable, to be more just, and fair for undocumented students. So here, I really saw the power of organizing, the power of student movements, and the power of uplifting your voice, bringing it to the table, in front of decision-makers, and creating a tangible change, not

only for yourself and for your peers, but for an entire generation of people to come down the pipeline (ibid).

Here, Daniel summarizes what advocacy meant for him. Advocacy was a way to fight for his individual survival, but also for the survival of a collective—of his peers and of future generation of students to come.

For undocumented students like Daniel and Lily, survival was a crucial aspect of why they were involved in student advocacy. In my research, I noticed how storytelling was also articulated as "a responsibility". In my interview with Lorena, a former undocumented student organizer at UC Berkeley, she describes the reason why she became active in student organizing as "a need". Lorena describes:

> I think there was a need for me to become active, I just saw the necessity to do so. I felt the necessity to do it. Sometimes I become some tired and I just want to stop and not do anything, but I think about all the work that we have done and all the work I've done and all the work that people have done. I can't quit. The reality is that it would be really bad. A lot of it is thinking about the future generations and making a better future for them (Lorena, personal interview with author, May 23rd, 2014).

Lorena describes in detail what student organizing meant for her—*a need*, with a sense of responsibility to do this activism for future generations. It is out of necessity that Lorena shares aspects of her life with publics that might be hostile. We can start seeing how responsibility, activism and storytelling are interconnected.

This continuous sense of framing responsibility, storytelling and activism as interconnected aspects of undocumented student advocacy, also emerged during my observations at the Second Annual UC-Wide Undocumented Student Conference on May 4th-5th, 2019 at UCLA. In the first day of the conference, two keynote student speakers spoke of their own personal experiences navigating immigrant detention. One of the students described

in detail their parent's detention and the impact family separation had on them. The second student described their own process of being detained in an immigration detention facility. Both students presented their stories in front of a public of about 60 students. The master of ceremony student who presented the two keynote speakers stated "we [undocumented students] have to tell our stories" (Student speaker, 2019). The audience was given a trigger warning prior to the keynote speakers' speeches, affirming that as difficult as these stories might be, because they touch upon the hardships of detention, there is still an importance to telling and hearing these stories.

Lily, Daniel, Lorena and the MC at the Undocumented Student Conference, offer a glimpse into how undocumented student organizers who shared their personal stories becomes an act of understanding one's positionality within student organizing and the university. Considered to be a "necessity" and a "responsibility", the acts of listening and sharing were particularly important to forming one's position as an undocumented student organizer and undocumented student subjects.

Storytelling as a form of identity formation

"Is being undocumented always a bad thing? Not always, I think more of it as carrying a heavy set of wings"

– Jonathan

In this section I propose that through the enactment of storytelling, of sharing aspects of one's personal identity to a public, undocumented student organizers formed an identity at the intersection of their positionality as undocumented immigrants and university students. This is an important aspect of how undocumented student organizers were able to mobilize resources for undocumented students. Categorized as undocumented immigrants, undocumented students were able to mobilize for institutional resources, relying on their association to the

university as its students. Undocumented student organizing depended on making clear and explicit connections to their subject position as university students.

In the opening epigraph of this subsection, I quote Jonathan, an undocumented graduate student presenter at a welcoming reception for graduate and professional undocumented students. Jonathan speaks of the ways in which he found a sense of identity in his personal struggles of living life as an undocumented person in the US. During his keynote speech, Jonathan repeatedly asks “is being undocumented a bad thing?”. He concludes his speech stating that “some of the most beautiful things about this struggle” is “the resilience and sense of family” he has obtained from navigating structures that have constrained him as an undocumented person. Jonathan describes finding “beauty in the resilience” of his experience and that being a defining aspect of his life and identity.

When I speak of storytelling as a form of identity formation, I am aware of the long tradition by marginalized communities to use storytelling in the construction of memory and identity formation. Through my conversations with research participants, my observations in the undocustudent field, and research on digital archives, I had the opportunity to see how storytelling served as a way to engage with identity formation. For instance, as I was listening to Jonathan deliver his keynote speech, I noted multiple times he made reference to his status as an important aspect of his identity.[33] During his speech he shared about how with time he “came to terms with undocumented identity”. Jonathan spoke of the difficulties of migrating to the US and being raised in a working-class household. He recalled the difficulties of living as an undocumented gay man, where gay bars felt as a safe haven for the gay community, he was constricted to patron only the bars that would accept his Mexican consulate ID as a form of

[33] Some researchers have investigated the ways in which immigration status and identity development are negotiated by immigrant youth. For further reading, see, Ellis, Lauren M., and Eric C. Chen. "Negotiating identity development among undocumented immigrant college students: A grounded theory study." *Journal of counseling psychology* 60, no. 2 (2013): 251

identification. With each aspect of his personal challenges, the audience got to appreciate how Jonathan's identity came to be and how even his mundane personal choices (such as what bars he would patron) were shaped by his immigration status.

In October 2013, I attended another space where I heard how crucial storytelling was in generating a sense of identity. I attended one of the first IDEAS general meetings of the quarter where there was a panel of previous IDEAS alumni sharing their experiences in IDEAS and the impact this space had in their own formation. Through storytelling the panelists engaged in different aspects of how their experience was formative in their own identity formation and in their sense of belonging—as activists and advocates and as well as the identity of a larger social movement. Mel, a formerly undocumented student organizer, alumni and one of the panel presenters, spoke of how living as an undocumented person an experience of constraints had been, but through student activism they were able to enact more agency in their lives. For Mel, student activism and storytelling represented the opportunity to discover one's subjectivity in a different way from what was previously experienced.

As other immigration and social movement theorists have also claimed, storytelling has been a significant aspect of immigrant rights activism and undocumented student organizing. So far, Daniel, Lily, Tran, Victor, Julissa, Jonathan, and Mel offer insights into the ways in which storytelling was a significant aspect of gaining visibility which could then be mobilized to get institutional resources and representation. Visibility, for my research participants, was *maneuvered.* To claim that storytelling in itself was an emancipatory practice, ignores the affect fatigue I heard from my research participants.[34] Visibility instead was maneuvered because real material gains could be made by exposing one's story to legislators (Tran), media spectators

[34] Even though I did not transcribe "off-the-record" conversations, these conversations and moments of insight emerged often after I stopped the recording. These were moments that allowed me and my interlocutors to establish a different type of dialogue—the act of turning off the recorder, was sometimes that moment when interlocutors relaxed physically, were more likely to use curse words, and often, were more likely to be more sincere about the challenges they were facing in their organizing work.

(Victor), philanthropists (Julissa), and university administrators (Daniel, Lily and Jonathan). This exposure of personal stories in public was also informed by the Undocumented and Unafraid strategy of the Immigrant Youth Movement, which aimed to center the stories of undocumented immigrant youth as told by them, not others, in public spaces such as rallies, protests, and social media.

Conscious of the many ways in which storytelling can be interpreted and its many manifestations in public spheres, in the following section I explore how storytelling was used as a strategy for institutionalization. By describing storytelling as a strategy for "institutionalization", I aim to highlight how storytelling can be understood as a means to institutionalization or "a resolution of material social processes congealed into a relatively durable form" (Melamed 2016). I consider storytelling as an intelligible and productive strategy in a university setting.

Storytelling as a strategy for institutionalization

In this section I provide a different way of understanding storytelling, primarily as a "strategy of struggle" (Foucault 1982), because there is a power relation at hand that storytelling aims to intervene in and transform. In the case of undocumented student organizers engaging in storytelling, the strategy of struggle consisted of sharing ones' personal narrative to shift the institutional relationship between undocumented students and the university and the way the university responded (discursively and materially) to the conditions that undocumented students described in their personal stories. In this section I explore this institutional relationship as a process of institutionalization. I am guided by Nick Mitchell's definition of "institutionalization" which he describes as "the establishment of norms or conventions along the concentration of bodies and things in a given place" and as "the power to normalize, and the power to determine who and what belongs where" (10).

Similar to previous critical theorists, I propose that the personal narratives of undocumented students can be a mode of upholding hegemonic liberal orders that sustain

morality binaries and violence (this, I expand on the next three chapters).[35] I explore how practices of storytelling unravel at the university setting—where the constructs of "diversity and inclusion" are part of institutional rationalities that guide *who* is included, *why* they are included, and by extension, tacitly justifying *how and why* systems of exclusion remain in place. Additionally, storytelling is productive in a university setting because universities are archival formations. In the case of the current configuration of the university, universities have become increasingly invested in archiving minoritized difference (Ferguson 2012) with the project of "diversity and inclusion" shaping how this archive of difference works.

As stated previously in the introduction, diversity and inclusion in US universities can be understood as a shift away from older civil rights frameworks of "equal opportunity" and "affirmative action" to that of a performance indicator. My definition of diversity is informed by the conceptual interventions of women of color, particularly, Jacqui Alexander, Chandra Mohanty and Sara Ahmed. Diversity is an ideological function in the "manufacture of cohesion" (Alexander 2006, 135) a "benign variation" that "rather than conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism" (Mohanty 2003, 193) and a set of practices "in the creation of an idea of the institution that allows racism and inequalities to be overlooked" (Ahmed 2012, 14).

By exploring the rationalities that sustain institutionalized forms of diversity and inclusion, my hope is to better demonstrate why storytelling can be such an intelligible strategy in a context where "manufactured cohesion" of cultural pluralism is tacitly elevated. In the following section, I explore how undocumented student organizers' storytelling practices

[35] Here I am not making a new argument but building upon the work of scholars such as Amalia Pallares (2011), Alfonso Gonzales (2013), Genevieve Negron Gonzales and Leisy Abrego (2020), who have engaged with understanding how personal narratives and certain movement strategies can be used to uphold immigrant morality binaries and dominant hegemonic thinking.

contribute to the university's archive of diversity and inclusion. Prior to making this argument, I provide a brief explanation of what I mean by the "university as an archive of difference".

The university as an archive of difference

To comprehend how undocumented students' practices of storytelling became part of the university's "archive of difference", I explore what I mean by the *university as an archive* and how it exercises archival power. Drawing upon Roderick Ferguson (2012) and his engagement with Jacques Derrida, I understand the archive as an assemblage and social formation, and archival power as the enactment of strategies that metabolize difference to extract value. With this definition of the archive and archival power, Critical Ethnic Studies scholars such as Ferguson (2012) have offered ways of understanding how student movements in US universities in the postwar period became part of the university's archive of difference.

In *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*, Ferguson discusses the student movements of the sixties and seventies (student movements for racial, ethnic and gender justice) as a moment of social rupture, where the US university faced a demand to expand both in terms of resources and students. Against a romanticized or a pessimistic narrative of these movements, Ferguson describes the institutional pressures of these movements as seeking "new forms of community and new ways of producing and disseminating knowledge" (2012, 52). Furthermore, whereas these student movements sought revolutionary transformation in social organization and redistribution of wealth, Ferguson reminds us that the racial state developed the capacity to transform revolutionary demands through strategies of absorption, or what Ferguson citing Derrida refers to as "archival power". Ferguson describes that "in its absorptive capacities the state becomes a subarchive that 'documents' past struggles and thus achieves power through control of the broad assemblage of 'documents' known as 'the student movements'" (27). At the core, the book analyzes how

dominant institutions, such as the academy and US universities, attempted to reduce the initiatives of oppositional movements (i.e. those led by students) to the terms of hegemony.

Yet, as Ferguson invites us to reflect on, and as critical theorists, Abigail Boggs and Nick Mitchell (2018) describe, “archival power includes, but it includes by transforming its objects and modulating itself” (458). Meaning, the transformative work of absorption is not a one-way process. Absorption is not neutralization, as there is always room for experimentation in its “ruptural possibilities” (Ferguson, 2012,18). In the case of the university, even though it affirms difference on the registers of an adaptive hegemony and restricts the oppositional and collective aims of “student movements’ radical deployment of difference” (Melamed 2016), there are always ways to intervene in its regulatory formations. With a conceptual understanding of how universities function as archives that exercise power to incorporate difference, I move forward to examine how undocumented students’ storytelling strategy became a welcomed project to diversify the university.

Storytelling projects

In the last decade, various dissertation projects, articles, and increasingly anthologies and monographs, are contributing to understanding how undocumented student organizations and allies mobilized on university campuses to generate institutional transformation (Seif 2004; Chen 2013; Cisneros and Cadenas 2017; Hallett 2013; Montiel 2016). This scholarship offers detailed exploration of undocumented student organizations through the lens of peer groups (Hallet 2013), social networks (Chen 2013) and activist groups. Moreover, this literature has helped situate the chronology of undocumented student organizing through its relationship to policies and legislation (for example: AB540, California Dream Act, DACA).

In a connected, but different line of inquiry, I examine how student-led publications and courses contribute to the university’s archive of difference and by extension how undocumented student organizers were able to mobilize this archive as a mode to institutionalization. I do not

undermine the political project and social transformative character of these projects, instead, I examine how these projects have actually fit well with the university's terms of engagement. These projects also reflect ways in which undocumented student organizers and their institutional supporters have experimented with producing and channeling university funding into different modes of knowledge formations and memory practices.

There are two major projects I examine here: the undocumented youth experience trilogy publications published by the UCLA Labor Center (published between 2008-2015) and a 2014 creative writing publication published by a UC Berkeley collaborative. Both projects emerged out of a context in which allies and students were mobilizing to get their university campuses to invest in educational and mental health resources, as well as spaces where undocumented students could produce and organize forums, research and creative writing projects. These projects were an important site for the cultural production of undocumented students who were experimenting with different mediums of advocacy. By engaging in cultural and knowledge production, undocumented student participants engaged their voice as a method for advocacy and self-expression. I take these projects, and their role in the long-term project of institutionalization, similar to Lisa Lowe's (1996) understanding of institutionalization as an "inevitable paradox" (41). As projects within the university that emerge from a site of transformative space of critique and yet, projects that also create the objects and methods that submit in part "to the demands of the university and its educative function of socializing subjects into the state." (ibid)

Exhibit 1: Labor and Workplace Studies M166ABC: Immigrant Rights, Labor and Higher Education and the undocumented youth experience publication trilogy

In winter 2007, as the immigrant youth movement was emerging, the Labor and Workplace Studies minor under the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, offered one of the first classes on campus on the undocumented students experience: "Labor and

Workplace Studies M166: Immigration Rights". By the spring 2007, the class was cross listed with the departments of Chicana and Chicano Studies and Asian American Studies. By 2008 the class added "Immigrant Rights" and "Labor" to its course title. As of this academic year, the class has expanded to a three series class and is now listed as "Immigrant Rights, Labor and Higher Education". The first course of the "Immigrant Rights, Labor and Higher Education" series exposes students to the development of the collaborative efforts between labor movements and immigrant rights movement locally and nationally. The course is designed for students to be emerged in experiential learning opportunities such as: conducting oral histories, family histories, researching issues related to immigration and immigrant rights, and learning creative writing. The two other series in the courses are designed to further expand the research conducted by students in the previous course and produce a final project.

Over the course of the last thirteen years, the course has produced a series of reports and publications on immigrant student issues and the immigrant youth movement. The students have also organized hearings and conferences as final projects. For instance, on May 19, 2007, students organized an immigration hearing and conference on undocumented students about the pending California Dream Act SB65 and federal Dream Act legislation. During the event twelve undocumented students provided their personal testimonies. On March 5th, 2018, the same day the Trump administration set as a deadline for Congress to enact policy that would impact the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients, students in the course organized an immigration forum. "Immigration Forum: Student Speak Out!" was a two-hour forum to discuss recent policy developments, where speakers shared their personal narratives and students presented recommendations on how to support immigrant communities in the months ahead.

The Immigrant Rights, Labor and Higher Education courses have offered undergraduate students the space to learn about the immigrant rights movement, immigrant youth movement

and policies affecting immigrant communities. The research and class project component of the courses have also trained students in qualitative research methods, editing and publication skills. Since 2018 the class and the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education have published the following student publications: *Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out* (2008), *Undocumented and Unafraid: Tam Tran, Cinthya Felix and the Immigrant Youth Movement* (2012), *and Dreams Deported: Immigrant Youth and Families Resist Deportation* (2015). Each publication offers a unique view into the different struggles undocumented youth face in their pursuit to higher education: limited educational financial support, fear of family separation and deportation, and emotional and psychological distress.

The first publication, *Underground Undergrads* (2008), was produced at the same time the 2007 federal DREAM act was up for debate. Students researched legal and legislative issues, conducted interviews, identified community resources, and collected photos and poems for the publication. The instructor's preface presents the stories in this publication as revealing "the hopes and aspirations of UCLA undocumented students, but they also represent millions of undocumented youth and students who are striving for the American dream" (xi). For this project, many student participants used pseudonyms for confidentiality.

Four years later, after a positive reception of *Underground Undergrads*, students published *Undocumented and Unafraid* (2012). The Student Preface in *Undocumented and Unafraid* explains the purpose of the publication as threefold:

> It is a dedication to Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix, two inspiring undocumented women and leaders of the immigrant youth movement. Second, it captures the voices and experiences of undocumented immigrant youth as the leaders of their struggle. Third, the book includes student research on the day-to day experiences of undocumented students (xii).

Unlike the previous publication where pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of student participants who shared their personal narratives, *Undocumented and Unafraid* consists of testimonies by immigrant youth across the nation who openly came up as undocumented in acts of civil disobedience, as organizers of solidarity coalitions, and as open advocates of immigration and education reform. The publication pays homage to the lives of Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix, two former IDEAS student organizers who passed away in a car accident. In the first part, readers are introduced to the lives of Tran and Felix through the writings of those who love and remember them: their family members, friends, and mentors. The publication is successful in transmitting the energy of the immigrant youth movement at the time: photographs of protests, civil disobedience, and calls to action inform the publication's content and aesthetic layout.

The last publication transcends a focus on immigrant youth to emphasize the impact immigration policy has had not only on immigrant youth, but also immigrant families. The initial stages of the production for *Dreams Deported* (2015) coincides with the rise of the national Not1More Deportation campaign.[36] *Dreams Deported* focuses on the expansion of the immigrant youth movement to include the fight for all immigrants and to oppose the policies of deportation that have criminalized immigrant communities. Part One focuses on the stories of deportation, focusing on the impact has on family and community. Part two features the stories of immigrants who have fought against deportation.

During my 2014 interview with Joshi, a former chair and student organizer with IDEAS, as well as student course participant and contributor to the third publication, they briefly

[36] The Not1More Deportation campaign describes its work as a campaign that "builds collaboration between individuals, organizations, artists, and allies to expose, confront, and overcome unjust immigration laws. #Not1More enters the discussion from the place that touches people in concrete ways and can offer tangible relief. By collectively challenging unfair deportations and criminalization through organizing, art, legislation, and action, we aim to reverse unjust policy, build migrant power, and create immigration policies based on principles of justice and inclusion. The campaign started as a project of NDLON in April 2013 and transitioned to an independent campaign in early 2015 after the President's historic announcement of an expansion to deferred action." ("'About' #Not1More" n.d.)

reflected on the role the UCLA Labor Center student publications and the Labor and Workplace Studies minor course had on the development of the critical consciousness of undocumented students. For Joshi, the student publications offered a forum for immigrant youth to write their own stories and to disseminate their knowledge. Joshi stated,

> to disseminate knowledge about the [undocumented students], it's really exciting that the people who contributed to the publication are undocumented students themselves and I think especially when the federal DREAM Act was first happening. That class was really instrumental in really expanding the consciousness of undocumented students about their own experiences (Joshi, personal interview by author, April 2014).

Aside from their role in disseminating knowledge about undocumented students, Joshi valued the fact that undocumented students themselves were the ones that produced and published these stories. Additionally, Joshi viewed the course as a space where students could expand their consciousness about their own experiences in the process of learning research, writing and publications skills. In summarizing what these classes and the knowledge that came out of these student projects meant to undocumented students, Joshi states, "you know, so it's really exciting to see that maybe like passing down knowledge through these means would really help out undocumented students because I think it doesn't get more – it doesn't get any more institutionalized than a class!" (ibid).

Like previous undocumented student participants, Joshi was excited about the ability to be part of a class and a project that would have a legacy. Joshi understood that a class would be the best way to "pass down knowledge" to future students about undocumented students.

Exhibit 2: Ethnic Studies 199: Undocumented Immigrant Students at UC Berkeley Writing Workshop Series and the student publication: It was All a Dream

Growing up I was afraid.
Afraid of leaving my emotional safety zone.
Afraid of the loneliness that could carve a hole in my soul.
But leaving the nest without knowing how to fly

Taught me that learning how to fly in midair
Is what it means to be undocumented.
Turning fear into determination,
Experiences into knowledge,
Anger into love,
Dreams into actions,
And actions into tangible reality
Is what soaring DREAMERS do.
And I'm not afraid anymore,
Because my family, my future, my heart and my soul
Deserve the opportunity to live out of fear

--Montzerrat Garcia

This stanza from Montzerrat Garcia's poem, "Afraid of the Unknown", captures emotional aspects of living life in the US as an undocumented immigrant. In the act of declaring "I'm not afraid anymore", Garcia is conveying an emancipation from fear. "Afraid of the Unknown" is one of twenty poems featured in the 2014 student publication *It was all a DREAM*: *Writings by undocumented youth at UC Berkeley. It was all a DREAM* is a culminating anthology of creative writings by ten student writer contributors who participated in a yearlong writing workshop and in a two-year on-going commitment to editing their writing for publication.

The writing workshop emerged as a recommendation by student organizers to the research and community partners at the UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender and the Center for Latino Policy Research. Between 2010-2012, both centers collaborated in a qualitative research project that aimed to better understand campus climate for undocumented students at UC Berkeley. The project was funded by the UC Berkeley Chancellor Taskforce of the Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community, and the Haas Innovation Grants for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity. One of the project partners, the Center for Race and Gender, described the writing workshops as an initiative outcome that could "provide rich and humanizing qualitative data that will help create a three-dimensional picture of the experiences of AB540 students" (Center for Race and Gender). In describing how the workshop came about, the 2013 evaluative research project report appendix at the end of *It was all a DREAM*, states,

> The research project followed a recommendation from RISE to design and facilitate a writing workshop for undocumented students on campus. RISE student leaders noted that a space for self-reflection and creative production could support undocumented students to deeply explore their own lived experiences, illuminate information about the campus climate that would not be revealed in more informal interviews and transform the processes from an experience of being "researched" into a collective art practice (86).

Publicly available grant reports also describe that the writing workshop emerged as expanding the ways in which undocumented immigrant student experiences were represented into more collective art practices and also the writing workshop could generate humanizing qualitative data (Garcia Bedolla, Nakano Glenn, and Escudero 2013a; 2013c; 2013b). Therefore, the recommendation for the writing workshop was a student-suggested project, with benefits onto the larger qualitative data gathering aspects of the campus climate research project. In the same evaluation report, the writing workshop is described as providing "students with a safe space and creative practice they found to be supporting and useful both personally and academically" (Flores, 2014, 86).

The creative writing workshop series consisted of two projects. In the first semester, the workshop co-facilitators designed a syllabus with the intent to introduce students to the importance of personal narrative at the intellectual and personal level. Students were exposed to topics on identity formation and self-expression through creative autoethnography. In the second semester, students explored ways of drafting their stories onto a creative writing piece using themes of voice, intersectionality, memory, family, silence, and fear. By situating knowledge production at the intersection of race/class/ gender/ sexuality and immigration status, students drew upon the work of women of color writers who have written on the power of knowledge that is experienced in the flesh. Unlike the first workshop, this workshop shifted towards a student-run model with staff supervision and support. The three students that run the

workshop were student organizers with RISE. The workshop was designed for students to "engage in a creative writing process that encourages self-expression and fosters supportive and productive writing environments" (Garcia Bedolla, Nakano Glenn, and Escudero 2013b, 13)

For many of the participants of the writing workshops, sharing their narratives through a creative writing format allowed for an outlet to express parts of their stories in a way that revealed aspects of their life, without having to disclose their full narrative. In an opening note, Marco Antonio Flores, editor and student contributor to the anthology, remembers how the students chose the publication's name. Flores remembers the publication's name as a reference to a song that resonates with the challenges undocumented students faced in their pursuit to higher education. Flores states:

> Hence the title, "It was all A Dream" a reference to the opening line in The Notorious B.I.G. classic 1994 hip hop record, "Juicy", a song that resonated with many of us. "It was all a dream"—a testament to our ongoing haters that we learned to hustle despite the great odds, the conjuring a future despite the haze of racist contempt, to embracing our rebelliousness (v).

As stated by Flores, *It was all a Dream*, emerged as a project for participants to "embrace their rebelliousness". The creative writings featured are organized through different themes: experiences of being an undocumented student at Berkeley, on dreams, hopes, love and homeland memory. The participants had authority over what aspects they wanted to incorporate into their narratives, thus the anthology themes were created after the pieces were chosen, not prior. The final student publication was released on October 17th, 2014, at a launch party at UC Berkeley's Multicultural Resource Center. The event convened student authors to read their work and curated a gallery exhibit of visual art published in the anthology.

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The student publications and courses I discussed in the previous pages demonstrate collaborative characteristics that bring together students, researchers, and as I argue, institutional interest, together. Researchers have noted that a variety of potential benefits can emerge out of student-led campus climate change initiatives in college campuses (see Helferty and Clarke 2009). I propose a different take on these institutionally sponsored initiatives. These courses emerged with the support of university centers (UCLA Labor Center, UC Berkeley Center for Race and Gender, UC Berkeley Center for Latino Policy and Research); academic departments (UCLA Chicana and Chicano Studies, UCLA Asian American Studies, UCLA Labor Studies and UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies), and student support groups (UCLA IDEAS and UC Berkeley RISE). These multilevel initiatives and collaborations were sponsored by a variety of stakeholders who aimed to support channeling university resources to student groups and student interests.

I am provoking a different reading. We can also understand these projects as strategic collaborations between students, university allies and a variety of other university actors. Diversity management scholarship in corporate contexts has explored how racial and gender integration policies have reconfigured organizational practices after affirmative action, aligning diversity and inclusion policies with profit maximization and organizational productivity (Richard, Murthi, and Ismail 2007; Carrillo 2018). As US public universities adopt increasing corporate organizational and financial models, diversity management models also form part of the logics of what is productive for a university, not only financially, but also morally. Inclusion of vulnerable student populations can have positive and desired outcomes for universities as these diversity statements and projects can push forward a morally compelling public view of the existence and role of a public university and its role as an institution invested in the “public good”.

For those undocumented students that participated in the research projects and courses I previously discussed, their participation was shaped by the available rationalities of the immigrant youth movement—which highlighted the strategic use of storytelling as a method of shifting the public's perception of immigrants as well as the personal/communal transformative aspect of sharing one's story. Moreover, the act of narrating, collecting and writing personal narratives of immigrant communities was also useful for the university's record. It also provided proof of the university's organizational and investment efforts to be inclusive of its marginalized student populations. It positioned the university investment in its undocumented student population as morally "good".

Conclusion

Critical Ethnic Studies scholarship pushes us to grapple with the reality and complexity of diversification projects such as Ethnic Studies, projects that can be co-opted into (neo)liberal politics of multiculturalism. I view the institutionalization of the classes I discussed in the previous pages, as the outcomes of undocumented student organizers and institutional ally efforts, as well as the outcomes of research project recommendations that *fit* within the matrix of institutionalization. The university's archive of difference welcomed undocumented student stories that explored stories that resonated with the moral and liberal rationalities of cultural pluralism.

As the next chapters will examine in depth, these projects emerged at the intersection of shifting ideologies, norms and axes of power. Whereas the first stages of undocumented student campus organizing focused on building spaces of trust and disseminating information about the social conditions undocumented youth and students faced; the next stage of undocumented student organizing was able to take the strategy of storytelling to other outside publics and spheres of influence. Visibility of undocumented students began to be endorsed by university projects that allowed for funding for the allocation of teaching and administrative staff,

student enrollment, and staff training. If we think of these classes and the publications that came out of these courses as a story of the wins of student and ally activism, we risk undermining why institutions, such as the university, are welcoming of these diversification projects in the first place.

As the next chapter explores in depth, the institutionalization and welcoming of projects that explored the experience of undocumented students was possible because on one end, undocumented student advocacy was primarily understood within what I call “The Wasted Lives Framework” a mode of advocacy that operates through neoliberal multicultural rationalities that enact ideologies of productive citizenship, self-reliance, individualism, and competition. Additionally, the institutionalization and welcoming of storytelling projects that explore the experience of undocumented students was also possible at a time when student activism was increasingly questioning the neoliberalization and militarization of university campuses. At a time of increasing student unrest between 2009-2011, these student storytelling projects received funding and support from the office of diversity and inclusion. In Chapter 2 I continue exploring in depth what social conditions gave space for the emergence of storytelling and its projects to emerge, be invested in and to a degree, celebrated by the university administration.

Chapter Two: Social value and neoliberal morality in the university's reconfiguration of undocumented student support

In 2013 I interviewed Sonia, a fourth-year undergraduate undocumented student, as part of a pilot study examining immigrant youth perceptions of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the effects DACA would have on immigrant youth organizing.[37] I interviewed Sonia because I knew of her active participation in multiple immigrant student campus climate improvement initiatives at UC Berkeley. As I was inquiring about her community organizing background, I learned about the ways Sonia's early involvement in grassroots organizing as a high schooler had prepared her to be a student advocate and organizer at UC Berkeley. Sonia articulated her student advocacy as necessary to ignite change—as "no one else can bring about change for you, but yourself" (Sonia, personal interview by author, March 12th, 2013). With similar conviction, Sonia discussed that a crucial strategic way of growing advocacy and momentum for potential new immigration bills depended on recruiting politically powerful allies, such as university chancellors, who could advocate on behalf of immigrant youth.[38] Sonia holds both positions as equally valid: student advocacy is necessary to bring around change, politically powerful allies are necessary advocates. Sonia shares,

> The governor is not willing to listen to me, but he is willing to listen to the chancellor because he has influence. It's about being strategic and having that power and that sort of influence. If we really want to push for something, if we want policy to happen, we have to go after top administrators. That's what's really going to help, once people start

[37] Sonia kindly agreed for me to use some of the material from that interview for this dissertation project.

[38] Eight years later, Sonia has changed many of the ideas that guided her in her early twenties, more specifically, the belief that institutional change could only be facilitated by institutional allies.

> speaking out for us and saying why it's necessary for us to have these kinds of rights (Sonia, personal interview by author, March 12th, 2013).

In her statement, Sonia reveals some of the ways in which political messaging, social capital, advocacy, and allyship are intertwined. Sonia articulates her vision for successful messaging diffusion where institutional allies with symbolic and social capital can be mobilized to amplify the messaging of undocumented immigrant youth. Institutional allies can become advocates by speaking on behalf of undocumented students. She also explains that there are different levels of influence that immigrant youth navigate and that there are ways to disseminate information according to those levels of influence. Sonia shares, that whereas "the governor might not listen to her", or other immigrant youth, the governor might listen to a university administrator such as UC Berkeley Chancellor Birgeneau.

Sonia is referring to the recruitment of university administrators who can then become institutional champions—administrators with genuine commitment to take initiative in advocacy, fundraising and educational campaigns to support undocumented students. As Sara Ahmed (2012) notes, institutional champions are "senior and credible people within the organization, people whose views will be taken seriously" (131). From an organizational point of view, Ahmed describes that institutional championship is necessary for a different set of values to become embedded within organizations and for structural and cultural changes to take place—as champions are the ones that assist "translat[ing] individual commitment into collective commitment" (2012, 134). Sonia was aware of the agency she had as an organizer, as much as she was aware of the importance of recruiting institutional champions, senior and credible voices "whose views would be taken seriously" at the state and federal advocacy level.

I asked Sonia: How do you speak to institutional allies and how do you recruit them? She shared that in navigating multiple organizational spaces, she continuously had to translate her ideas between student organizing spaces, community-based and grassroots organizing

circles, university taskforce committees, and strategic meetings with philanthropists. During the interview she shared that when speaking to university administrators and philanthropists, she would have to break down the undocumented student experience as a question of equity and inclusion. These were endogenous terms that the university understood and was comfortable with. Speaking of initiatives to better “include” undocumented students, create an “equitable” educational experience and to “diversify” the university were welcomed recommendations. To speak to institutional champions, “you speak in their terms”.

The argument and chapter map

This chapter continues exploring aspects of the development of a strategic relationship between undocumented students and high-ranking university administrators. This chapter consists of three sections. The first two sections explore the discursive rationalities and the social context that helped sustain these strategic relationships. The last section discusses aspects of how advocacy led to an institutionalized strategic relationship.

In the first section, I argue that the strategic relationship between undocumented students and high-ranking university administrators relied on a dominant advocacy framework that articulates undocumented students as productive immigrants who are valuable and whose lives and talents often go to “waste”. Building upon the work of immigration and education scholars, I call this dominant advocacy framework the “Wasted Lives Framework”. The Wasted Lives Framework is a continuation of what organizers and scholars have referred to as the “Dreamer Narrative”. The Wasted Lives Framework is the very materialization of the Dreamer Narrative in the context of neoliberal higher education. This section demonstrates the ways in which the Wasted Lives Framework is shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities of social value, where “waste” is highlighted as the unfulfillment of undocumented students’ productive capacities. Aside from its economic rationalities, the Wasted Lives Framework is also grounded on highlighting undocumented youth’s affective attachments to national belonging.

The ongoing moral economy of campus unrest in the University of California sustained and perpetuated the Wasted Lives Framework. Between 2009-2013 (while undocumented student advocacy was growing) students, faculty and staff across University of California campuses began organizing against the austerity measures that followed the global economic Great Recession (2007-2009). This horizontal, participatory movement drew attention to and criticized the increased privatization and neoliberalization of higher education as well as the university's militarized response to campus unrest. In this second section, I juxtapose this context of campus unrest with the undocumented student advocacy at the time. I do this by providing some key insights into the student protests that took place at the University of California in the 2009-2010 academic year. I discuss how undocumented student advocacy called attention primarily to issues of equity, inclusion, and institutional responsibility— a form of "critique" that is legible and could be incorporated into the university's terms of engagement. I build upon Nick Mitchell's (2015) understanding of "critique" within a university context. Mitchell describes critique as a practice where the "university's autocritical desire to optimize its image as an ideal, ethically committed social body" (86). Similar to Mitchell, I consider "critique" as a practice that liberal institutions need to engage in, in order to produce performances of progress and self-reflexivity. Undocumented student critique of the university as a site that had an institutional responsibility towards diversity, equity and inclusion, limited a more radical form of critique that could focus on privatization, neoliberalization and militarization of the university. I argue that the neoliberal multicultural rationalities within the "Wasted Lives Framework" reinforced a moral division. In this moral division, undocumented students benefited from being recognized as "good students" worthy of support and inclusion and not as "bad activists" such as those students who openly challenged the neoliberalization and militarized response of the university.

In concluding this chapter, I explore how the undocumented student infrastructure of support was reconfigured at the University of California after 2010. The "Wasted Lives Framework" and the moral bifurcation of undocumented students as "good students" (and not bad activists) are important aspects to understand how the funding and design of undocumented student support infrastructure developed after 2010. In this section, I begin discussing different aspects of this emerging infrastructure of undocumented student support, primarily the emergence of taskforces and institutionally sponsored research projects. In the aftermath of 2010, university administrators were able to establish the terms of undocumented student inclusion by capitalizing on the expert knowledge of undocumented students (as research subjects, research collaborators and diversity practitioners). Concurrently, the university positioned itself as a *protective entity* towards undocumented students. By being an institution willing to "protect", "listen to" and "invest in" undocumented students, the University of California negotiated a relationship to its undocumented student population that resonated with the university's liberal ideology of diversity, equity and inclusion. Whereas undocumented students were previously organizing to be *acknowledged* by the university (Chapter 1), in 2010 a new set of relationships between the university and its undocumented student population were beginning to be created, namely, the cost-efficient bureaucratization of the undocumented student support infrastructure. This infrastructure became even more developed across UC campuses after the inauguration of Janet Napolitano, former US Secretary of Homeland Security, as UC president in 2013. Given Napolitano's role in developing the deportation regime under the Obama administration, undocumented students were positioned to have a special type of moral authority to further negotiate the development of the infrastructure of undocumented student support.

The making and circulating of the Wasted Lives Framework

Chapter one concludes by introducing some of my research participants' vision and strategy for recruiting university administrators and philanthropists--a strategy that consisted of turning these actors into institutional allies and champions. This vision and strategy consisted of going for top university administrators; people who had funding, power and care; people whose social, financial and political capital could support the advocacy efforts of undocumented students beyond the university campus and in areas such as state and federal legislation.

At UC Berkeley, Chancellor Robert Birgeneau became a known institutional champion of undocumented students.[39] His first public appearance as a supporter of undocumented students was through an opinion piece published on July 7th, 2007, in the *Los Angeles Times* titled "Undocumented students deserve aid too". The Op-Ed was a statement of support for the federal DREAM Act and the California State Dream Act. At the time this Op-Ed was published, immigrant rights organizations and immigrant youth across the US were leading efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act, with the DREAM Act as the most promising legislation that could be passed in congress.

In a short interview with the Bay Area nonprofit organization, Immigrants Rising, Birgeneau explains that he was motivated to support undocumented students, and write that opinion piece, after having a personal encounter with an undocumented student who shared their personal narrative at a scholarship dinner event. The student revealed the challenges she had overcome and was currently facing as a first generation, working class, student of color and undocumented immigrant student. After this personal encounter, Birgeneau describes how he

[39] In conducting preliminary research, I learned that Birgeneau *became* an institutional champion of undocumented students over a period of time. Research participants spoke of how a few undocumented UC Berkeley students and a local immigrant student advocacy organization first intended on having a meeting with him in 2006 to discuss the educational issues undocumented students faced on campus. The invitation was declined by Birgeneau's staff. By 2011, Birgeneau hosted a fundraising dinner for undocumented students at his residence. What became clear was that Birgeneau was not automatically supportive of undocumented students, instead it was through *a process* of mediated meetings, personal encounters with undocumented students, and recommendations with staff who openly advocated for undocumented students, that Birgeneau became a publicly recognized institutional champion for undocumented students.

began meeting more students with similar stories—highly achieving, often first generation, students of color from working class backgrounds, who were undocumented immigrants. Upon hearing their stories, Birgeneau describes being motivated to take action. In a separate interview with NPR, Birgeneau states: “Once I heard the real-life stories, I thought to myself, these are astounding young people. We can't afford to *waste* this kind of talent” (Birgeneau as quoted in Gonzales 2012).

Birgeneau’s statement about “waste” resonates with the dominant frame informing advocacy and academic knowledge production over the educational and social experience of undocumented students and undocumented immigrant youth. The Wasted Lives Framework emerged through scholarly research and undocumented student advocacy statements that highlighted support to undocumented students as a way of avoiding “wasted talent”, “wasted lives” and “wasted value”. The framework is also informed by similar rationalities to those in the Dreamer Narrative (a narrative that emphasizes the untapped potential of undocumented immigrant youth who aside from their citizenship status are full members of US society). The Wasted Lives Framework operated through neoliberal multicultural rationalities that enacted ideologies of productive citizenship, self-reliance, individualism, and competition. These tenets were grounded in a system of valorization and economization of social life. The concept of “waste” is useful to explore how neoliberal multicultural rationalities are made and circulated in institutional undocumented student advocacy. Birgeneau’s statement, “we can’t afford to waste this kind of talent” is a strategic way of engaging in political expediency and also part of the self-evident truths that circulated in undocumented student advocacy and can be traced to the Dreamer Narrative and emerging academic literature that accompanied this advocacy.

I first encountered the term “Wasted Lives’ frame of mind” as a short reference in political scientists Maria Chavez, Jessica Monforti and Melissa R. Michelson’s (2015) *Living the DREAM: New Immigration Policies and the Lives of Undocumented Latino Youth*. Here, the

authors briefly mention the “Wasted Lives” frame of mind” in relation to a conceptual frame used in a qualitative study conducted by immigration scholars, Roberto Gonzalez and Leo Chavez (2012) on the experiences of undocumented 1.5 generation Latino immigrants. In this study, Gonzales and Chavez identify the *discardable* potential of undocumented 1.5 generation Latino immigrants, a finding they titled “Wasted Lives”. By *discardable*, Gonzales and Chavez (2012) refer to how regardless of acculturation into US “civic lessons” and “values driving the American Dream”, their status continues to leave them “in the margins of society” (267). Building upon this finding, Chavez, Monforti and Michelson use the “Wasted Lives” frame of mind’ to describe and analyze how undocumented Latino youth raised in the US are “not allowed to enjoy many of the benefits of inclusion in mainstream society to a great personal and professional cost” (Chávez, Monforti, and Michelson 2015, 9). Chavez and Gonzales (2012) and Chavez, Monforti and Michelson (2015) articulate “waste” and “discardability” to describe what is lost when immigration status keeps undocumented youth disposable and at “the margins of society”, in spite of their US acculturation.

Building on their theorizations and findings, this chapter examines the “Wasted Lives Framework”, not as a description of the life consequences of undocumented status for undocumented youth, but instead as a dominant frame informing student advocacy and academic scholarship. This framework developed within a specific political moment: The War on Terror. Political theorist Kathleen Arnold (2011) encapsulates this moment as “the merging of immigration policy with anti-terror provisions that led to an increased arrest of immigrants, harsh treatment of authorized entrants and charges of racial profiling” (2). In the context of a hostile environment against immigrants, the Wasted Lives Framework is a type of “counternarrative”, shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities, that highlights the social and economic

contributions that immigrants give to the US.[40] As discussed in the following section, institutional champions (such as Chancellor Birgeneau) and academics in support of undocumented students were faced with very limited options on how to articulate their support for undocumented students. In their attempt to be advocates they gravitated towards terms that would guarantee political expediency.

The Wasted Lives Framework and its economic and affective rationalities

The Wasted Lives Framework is based upon claims that highlight support for undocumented students and undocumented youth in reference to what is *wasted* when support is denied. According to this framework, if undocumented students are not supported, the US wastes trained talent and invested resources. This wasted talent and resources can be more productively used and allocated in the global economy. In this framework, undocumented youth are deserving members of US society because of their human capital and exceptional capacity and to contribute to US circuits of labor and capital. Aside from its economic rationalities, the Wasted Lives Framework depends on affective rationalities that correlate rights-claims to feelings of national belonging.

The Wasted Lives Framework and The Dreamer Narrative

We can think of the Wasted Lives Framework as a continuation of the Dreamer Narrative. The Dreamer Narrative emerged out of the legislative and campaign efforts to pass the DREAM Act. The narrative constituted undocumented youth as "innocent", "moral" youth who were by "no fault of their own" living as undocumented immigrants in the US (Nicholls 2013; Schmenner 2014; Schwiertz 2015). Jonathan Perez, cofounder of the Immigrant Youth Coalition, describes the Dreamer Narrative, as strategic position which influenced legislative

[40] I define counternarrative as narrative that disrupts the "authoritative narrative" or "official story" on immigrant communities. Counternarratives hold emancipatory possibilities for marginalized groups who challenge and actively dismantle the grand/official narratives that sustain hegemony, yet counternarratives are not by default emancipatory. In the case of the Wasted Lives Framework, the counternarratives generated that challenged the official story of immigrant communities, for instance, did not always challenge the logics of racial capitalism.

campaign efforts, but also as a position that was pushed onto undocumented immigrant youth organizers by nonprofit organizations and legislators. Some scholars have analyzed the consequences of the Dreamer Narrative to be in close connection to the hypercriminalization of nondreamer undocumented immigrants (Pallares 2014; Chávez 2013; Nicholls 2013). In a 2014 opinion article for the HuffPost, Perez describes the Dreamer Narrative as:

> If at first the DREAMer narrative was strategic, then it quickly became annoying. As our movement picked up steam, the word DREAMer became exactly what legislators wanted it to be - an exclusive term for those who are model residents and future "Americans." We began to see how quickly people were ready to throw our parents and "criminals" under the bus… Nonprofits pushed a narrative in which we had no agency in coming to this country. So who was to blame? Our parents… The dreamer narrative served as a wedge between youth who qualify for the DREAM Act and the rest of the community who didn't…We learned that some of those grassroots organizations pushing the DREAMer narrative were actually led and taken over by people with papers. So it was easy to connect the dots, associating the DREAMer narrative with conservative view on immigration. Challenging the DREAMer narrative is essential to dismantling the criminalization and elitism found in the immigrant rights movement. Many youth have seen the problems with DREAMer and have actively challenged it, while others like myself take offense since it shows a lack of understanding of how we live everyday as undocumented people (Perez 2014).

The Dreamer Narrative, as acknowledged by Perez, was strategic, but limiting interpretation of undocumented immigrant youth's humanity. As Perez states, the Dreamer Narrative relied on the moral bifurcation of immigrants that highlighted morality and innocence to advocate for immigration relief through the DREAM Act. With the failed passage of the DREAM Act in 2010

and the growing leadership grassroots capacity of immigrant youth, by 2010 immigrant youth leaders became more distanced from this narrative.

Through similar rationalities to those in the Dreamer Narrative, the Wasted Lives Framework also shared a position that highlighted immigrant youth's morality and innocence in order to advance political expediency in immigration reform. However, I present the Wasted Lives Framework as a dominant advocacy framework that also interacted with the logics of the neoliberalized public university. Whereas the Dreamer Narrative could help explain the dominant framework in early immigrant youth movement organizing, the Wasted Lives Framework can illuminate the dominant advocacy framework in higher education. In the following pages, I explore the way this narrative was being developed in the university through knowledge production (academic scholarship) and institutional practices (university administrator advocacy).

The Wasted Lives Framework in academic scholarship and university administrator advocacy

In order to explore how The Wasted Lives Framework works, I first turn to the work of Roberto Gonzales, an immigration and education scholar who has carried out comprehensive studies on undocumented immigrant youth and students. His studies have been used by policy makers to advocate on behalf of undocumented immigrant youth and students. An example is the following 2007 report written for the Immigration Policy Center, "Wasted Talent and Broken Dreams: The Lost Potential of Undocumented Students". In this report Gonzales calls Congress to act on the DREAM Act by reminding them that aside from humanitarian and moral reasons to act, undocumented young people are also trained workers who the US cannot afford to go to waste. He states,

> There is compelling evidence that Congress needs to address the uncertain situation of these hundreds of thousands of young people who are hostages of a confusing and

> contradictory system. Besides the moral and humanitarian reasons for doing so, there are also strong economic considerations such as ensuring that the *investment* already made in the schooling of these students is not *wasted* and that the country is not deprived of productive, educated, and U.S.-trained workers.
>
> (Gonzales 2007, 10, emphasis mine)

Gonzales' argument is similar to Birgeneau's statement alluding to "not wasting" immigrant youth's talent. Yet, there is another layer of consideration at play: this kind of talent is the result of years of US schooling and, thus, a time and financial investment that should not be wasted. Years of US education and their migration to the US are both forms of human capital that the US has directly financially invested in. In the case of undocumented youth, the phenomenon of "the brain drain" (Adams 1968), the depletion of the human capital of skilled workers from developing countries to developed countries in the form of migration, is reversed. Not legalizing undocumented youth is a form of brain drain for the US, as the US has invested social and educational capital onto undocumented students whose multiculturalism and talent help the US compete in the global economy.

The understanding that legalizing undocumented immigrant youth is good for the competitive edge of the US in the global economy is also articulated in the arguments for other immigration policies such as DACA. In a 2017 conversation sponsored by Migration Policy Institute, UC Chancellor Janet Napolitano states her support for DACA in this way, "We want their talents, their brains, their contributions to the country, so it makes no sense to subject them to deportation, and makes a lot of sense to give them work authority so they can go to school and work at the same time,"(Migration Policy Institute, 2017) . Napolitano describes her support for DACA recipients as something that "makes a lot of sense". The US has a want (for talents, brains and contributions of undocumented young immigrants) therefore it "makes sense" to give undocumented immigrant young adults work authorization, the means for them to put their

talents and brains towards economic contribution, and therefore not let them go to waste. The deportation of skilled US-trained workers is a reversed form of brain drain for the US.

In the following excerpt Birgeneau articulates a similar view to Gonzales' and Napolitano's statements—the investment on immigrant youth via schooling should be considered in the calculus Congress uses to determine its decision to act. Birgeneau states, "We have *invested* in these children, providing them access to public education in our K-12 schools. Our teachers have encouraged them to learn, to compete and to succeed. It is only after these eager and ambitious young people gain college admission and apply for state or federal financial aid that we turn them away" (Birgeneau 2007).

For Birgeneau, this investment is not only an economic and time investment, but also an *affective investment*. In this affective economy teachers build relationships with undocumented students, invest time and effort in encouraging students to "compete and to succeed". Undocumented youth on the other hand, are provided with contradictory information on how much and to what extent they belong to US society. As Birgeneau points out, these affective attachments are compromised once undocumented youth are admitted to college and are turned away from accessing financial aid.

Aside from the economic rationalities that ground the Wasted Lives Framework, there is also a set of affective rationalities that make this framework cohesive with liberal ideology of cultural pluralism and meritocracy. This framework relies on elevating the emotional and cultural attachments undocumented youth have to the nation—attachments that are possible from the social and cultural acculturation that occurs via different US institutions, particularly through K-12th education. This form of acculturation is also used to articulate a justification for undocumented youth's legal incorporation. These arguments depended on affectively charged descriptions of undocumented students and youth by highlighting aspects of their moral

character such as “their perseverance”, and how those moral characteristics acculturate them into the “internalization of US values and expectations of merit” and “value to US society”.

Early examples of how this characteristic of the framework can be found in William Perez’s (2009) *We ARE Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream*. *We ARE Americans* is one of the first books published on the lives and challenges of undocumented immigrant youth. Perez focuses on the chronicles of sixteen undocumented students navigating higher education, highlighting the missed opportunity that arises when society does not capitalize on the talent of undocumented youth. He introduces the reader to these undocumented students describing them as: “They have grown up American in every way possible; their dominant language is English, they proclaim an American identity, and they live an American lifestyle. In various ways, their community service participation and activities reinforce their affinity toward American society” (xviii). Perez uses descriptors of acculturation and integration to describe the ways in which undocumented students are full members of US society.

Affectively charged visualizations of the characteristics and desires of undocumented students is also used in later scholarship. For instance, Gonzales and Chavez (2012) “Awakening to a Nightmare” portrays the experiences of undocumented 1.5 generation Latino immigrants as a nightmarish experience. The awakening to reality (or awaking to a nightmare) refers to the act of becoming an adult in a country one realizes how undocumented immigration status leads to the limitations to fulfill one’s full potential in society. Gonzales and Chavez describe the experience of awakening to reality as such,

> With the awakening reality of their abject status as socially constituted noncitizens, these young people came to realize they were not like their peers. Even though they may have come to believe the civic lessons learned so essential to citizenship and to hold dear the values driving the American Dream, their illegality that defined their abject status left

> them with a clear sense of their difference. As noncitizens, they were full of discardable potential… leading abject lives in the margins of society…desiring government documentation of their presences (2012, 267).

Gonzales and Chavez's use of abjectivity (what the authors describe as abject subjectivity) of undocumented 1.5 generation Latino immigrants, portrays a vivid imagery of their exclusion from the promises of the American Dream. Additionally, Gonzales and Chavez also point out how abjectivity, aside from producing their discardable potential, ignites a form of desire. This desire is described as the desire for "government documentation of their presence". Gonzales and Chavez articulate recognition by the state and embed it within a romantic and nostalgic discourse of a denied national "love" (Ahmed 2004; Nyers 2006). As observed in this excerpt, the Wasted Lives framework is also affectively charged and aside from relying on logics of economic value, patriotic references and internalization of merit, is also shaped by a reference to a desire of national belonging deferred.[41]

What is also significant about the way in which the affective and economic rationalities of the Wasted Lives Framework operate, is that they help sustain the rationalities of the American Dream. The Wasted Lives Framework, as an advocacy framework, supports the very ethos that upward social mobility that can be achieved through hard work. The Wasted Lives Framework appeals to the rationalities of an ethos built into the social fabric of the US. In investing in undocumented students, advocates are also voicing the ways in which supporting these students is a way to continue supporting the ethos and mythology of the state. These are terms

[41] This is similar to Sara Ahmed's (2004) and Peter Nyers (2006) understanding of national "love". Nyers explains that love and fear function as pivot points in the antibirth citizenship movement, where the will to love the nation is constituted by a will to fear its others. Ahmed queers psychoanalytic theories of love to illustrate how love and fear work together to materialize the "alien" citizen, the "real" citizen and the boundaries of the national body. I make a reference to these theorists because they use allude to "love" as a psychoanalytic and affect concept that are shaped into discursive construction of citizenship, belonging and abjection.

that are familiar and palatable to mainstream US and that for political expediency are more likely to be advanced.

The Wasted Lives Framework in connection to university student organizing

In the previous subsections, I described the ways in which the Wasted Lives Framework is based on an understanding that as a country we should not let undocumented students' talent and lives go to waste, as this has implications not only for the undocumented person, but for the US economy, society and ethos as well. In the making and circulation of the Wasted Lives framework, the undocumented student, as a figure, becomes intertwined within economic and affective rationalities and represented as an acculturated member of US society. Moreover, the Wasted Lives framework fits within the already existing commodification of education into market rationalities, as it elevates human capital discourse (such as personal responsibility and individual merit) to justify advocacy for undocumented students.

My provocation is that aside from being a reliable neoliberal multicultural frame for student advocacy, the Wasted Lives Framework has interacted with binaries that create differential constructions of deservingness not only in immigration discourse, but also in student activism. The Wasted Lives framework generated undocumented students as both "good immigrant subjects" and "good students". At a time of increasing student protests over the privatization, militarization and securitization of university campuses, undocumented student advocacy generated discourses of support by highlighting the role the university had as an entity that could protect and invest in "good immigrant students". In the following section, I examine how the Wasted Lives Framework interacted with the representation of undocumented student subjects in the shifts of the moral economy of campus unrest at the University of California between 2009-2012.

Undocumented student subjects within the moral economy of campus unrest

A variety of scholars have examined the student mobilizations against austerity measures and the privatization of higher education that took place in the US and across the world between 2009-2012. Prior to the Global Recession (2007-2009), critics had already been calling attention to the increasing marketization of higher education. For instance, Cini and Guzman- Concha (2017) identify this marketization in higher education to be characterized by "the introduction of greater competition into the provision of student education, supplementation of public sources of funding of universities with private sources, especially tuition fees, and concession of greater institutional autonomy from government steering" (624). It is no surprise that austerity measures following the global economic recession accelerated the implementation of neoliberal reforms in higher education. Yet, this very increase in austerity measures, also led to the proliferation of student movements and protests in the US and across the world, including Canada (Smeltzer and Hearn 2015); Puerto Rico (Atiles-Osoria and Whyte 2011); South Korea (Shin, Kim, and Choi 2014); Chile (Bellei and Cabalin 2013; Cini and Guzmán-Concha 2017); South Africa (Luescher and Klemenčič 2017); United Kingdom (Hensby 2016; Cini and Guzmán-Concha 2017), Italy (Zamponi and Daphi 2014), Spain (Zamponi and Fernández González 2017) and Germany (Tausch and Becker 2013).

Some scholars offered critical insights into the student protests and events that unraveled particularly at the University of California (Maira and Sze 2012; Rodríguez 2012; Godrej 2014; Levenson 2011; Augusto 2014).[42] Building upon their contributions, particularly their analysis of the UC's response to student protest, I examine how undocumented student

[42] For example, Sunaina Maira and Julie Sze (2012) use a racial framework to situate the pepper spraying of student protesters at the University of California, Davis and the Occupy protests in the UC system within larger global economic and political apparatus that has imposed fiscal austerity in higher education. In their analysis, Maira and Sze link a critique of the violently imposed defunding of higher education to the militarized regimes of policing and surveillance at UC Davis and across UC campuses. Similar to Maira and Sze, Dylan Rodriguez (2012) employs an analysis of the racist police state to argue how the overidentification of presumed innocence to white young bodies led to different police responses to student protests at UC Davis and UC Riverside. With an emphasis in the UC system as a whole, Farah Godrej (2014) argues that the neoliberal logic of private capital at work in the privatization of the University of California is necessarily intertwined with the logic of militarization and the criminalization of dissent.

advocacy became intertwined with the moral economy of campus unrest during this same time period. This interweaving of campus unrest (which rested on a critique of the neoliberalization of higher education) and undocumented student advocacy (which rested on advocacy efforts to hold the university to be accountable to improving the inclusion of undocumented students) provides an insight of the terms upon which universities respond to critique.

I begin this section by briefly exploring aspects of the neoliberalization of higher education that began in the 1980s, providing some key insights into the student protests that took place at the University of California in the 2009-2010 academic year. I focus on this academic year because it was the first year with large student demonstrations, protests and campus unrest linked to the opposition against austerity measures that came with the global great recession. At the same time students were mobilizing against austerity measures at the UC, undocumented students and allies were also mobilizing their own advocacy efforts—sometimes in conjunction and sometimes separately from this student movement.

I proceed by drawing upon Mark Stern and Kristi Carey's (2019) analysis of what they call "the new moral economy of campus unrest". Stern and Carey argue that a new form of critical engagement has emerged in university campuses. The authors identify universities as sites that make rhetorical and material investments in self-criticality, this generates needed structural changes and a continuous regulation of "the bodies and actions of people of color and other communities who threaten the institution by designating them within a moral economy" (Stern and Carey 2019, 4). This moral economy is based upon the establishment and defining of the terms by which critique can occur and who will be invited. This, in turn, creates a moral bifurcation of identities. In the new moral economy of campus unrest, student dissent is divided into two figures, the figure of the *good student*, those who adhere to prescribed performances of critique and the vilified figure of the *bad activist*, student activists whose voices threaten the status quo. Furthermore, Stern and Carey argue, this form of bifurcation is possible because

universities have turned structural critiques (such as the privatization of higher education, student debt and social inequality) into issues of personal responsibility (the *choice* a student has to invest on themselves to become a competitive candidate in the job market).

I build upon Stern and Carey's understanding of how universities engage critique to analyze the ways in which the concerns raised by undocumented students and student advocates, primarily issues on college unaffordability, were invited and managed into the university's terms of engagement. I argue that through their reliance on The Wasted Lives Framework and its neoliberal multicultural rationalities, the university recognized undocumented student organizers and advocates as "good students," which was less threatening to the university's status quo. This is not to say that the university actively pitted student activists against each other. Instead, we can understand the recognition of undocumented student organizers as "good students" to serve the university's investment on inviting a particular set of student demands over other student demands.

Neoliberalization of Higher Education: An aspect of the 2009-2010 student mobilizations

It is misleading to think of neoliberal adjustments, neoliberal governance and the neoliberalization of organizational culture in higher education as "the starting point" leading to the student mobilizations between 2009 -2010. One of the shortcomings in how much of the Critical University Studies literature has explored the student mobilizations of this time period, is the way in which "neoliberalism" is framed as an interruption to the "Golden Era" of higher education. The Golden Era narrative lauds the expansion of public university systems across the country sponsored by federal and state funding, funding often linked to US military Cold War objectives (Chatterjee and Maira 2014). As Abolitionist University Studies scholars, Abigail Boggs, Eli Meyerhoff, Nick Mitchell, and Zach Schwartz-Weinstein (2019), remind us "where we start the story of the university matters" (8). A story of the university that starts in the 20th century obscures the US academy's roots in white supremacy and settler colonial capitalist

projects. These historical roots are far more visible, if the starting point of US university history is in the 19th century, a period that more accurately historizes universities within modes of capitalist accumulation and land dispossession. Recognizing the limitations of historicizing universities in the 20th century, I still find value in discussing how neoliberal policies shaped the organizational and cultural practices in US universities in the last decades and how those shifts played a significant role in the 2009-2010 university student mobilizations.

"Neoliberalism" political theorist Wendy Brown states, "does not merely privatize…[r]ather, it formulates everything, everywhere, in terms of capital investment and appreciation, including and especially human themselves" (2015, 176). Much of the critique of the neoliberalization of US postsecondary education has focused on understanding how higher education has been marketized and represented as a private good produced for individual consumption (Saunders and Blanco Ramirez 2017; Bok 2009; Naidoo and Jamieson 2005; Shumar 1997). The impact of neoliberalism in higher education includes: the increasing reliance of consumer mechanisms that mediate the organizational cultures and practices of universities (Naidoo, Shankar, and Veer 2011); the quantification and commensurability of education (Kvale 2007); the privatization of the costs and outcomes of higher education (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004); the implementation of "New Public Management" practices that emphasize accountability that the institution is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible (Olssen 2002); and the instrumentalization of performance measurement through management benchmarks (Schram 2014). As Henry Giroux (2014) points out, neoliberal policies massive disinvestment in schools, social programs and an aging infrastructure "is not about a lack of money" (9); since more than 60% of the federal budget goes to military spending, while only 6% is allocated to education. Likewise, Sandord Schram (2014) states that resulting cutbacks in higher education have "led to increases in tuition, declining graduation rates for low-income students, increased reliance on

adjuncts and temporary faculty and growing interest in mass process of students via online instruction" (427).

One of the major consequences to cuts in public education includes tuition increases and the accompanying student debt that comes with externalizing university costs to students. The trend of defunding public higher education has been associated to a variety of cultural, political and economic policy decisions. According to Henry Giroux, by early 1970s, demonization of the professoriate as leftists facilitated an agenda to limit funding for higher education (Giroux and Giroux 2006). Chris Maisano (2012) has noted that by 2012, student loan debt has become the largest form of debt totaling approximately one trillion dollars; citing that the main reason for increased debt is the rising cost of tuition and fees that have more than doubled since 2000. Since families' incomes have been stagnant for over thirty years, students increasingly seek loans to finance their education. Maisano states, "According to the Department of Education, 45% of 1992 – 1993 graduates borrowed money from federal or private sources; today, at least two-thirds of graduates enter the workforce with educational debt" (Maisano 2012). Undocumented students and citizen students alike, faced a context of increased austerity measures, increased tuition rates, and increased student debt.

Austerity at the UC and The Proliferation of Student Protests

In a context of sweeping federal and state austerity measures across public sectors set during the late 2000 recession, university students at the University of California experienced these measures at the institutional level in the form of hundreds of layoffs, cuts to campus services, consolidation of academic departments, and the financial burden from the state onto students in the form of tuition fee hikes (Levenson 2011). Austerity measures, however, were not just the result of state budget cuts, but also the results of a budget deficit caused by the direct actions of the UC Board of Regents. According to the *Sacramento News and Review* the consolidated control of the UC investment strategy shifted once private managers were hired to

handle the university's investment portfolio. This shift to private financial managers led to less transparency and increasing placement in private equity partnerships.

With increasing budget deficits, the UC Board of Regents opted for a variety of austerity measures. Mass mobilizations by UC students followed these austerity decisions. Major student protests were held on September 24th and October 15th against staff cuts, layoffs and student tuition fee hikes. At the University of California, the high point of student mobilizations erupted November 19th, 2009, when the UC Board of Regents met at the UCLA campus and voted to raise student tuition by 32%. Series of actions were held between November 18th-20th. On November 20th, 43 students locked themselves inside Wheeler Hall and held the building for 12 hours. At UC Santa Cruz, over 100 actions were held between November 18th-20th. On November 20th, 43 students locked themselves inside Wheeler Hall and held the building for 12 hours. At UC Santa Cruz, over 100 students participating in a sit-in at Kerr Hall. At UC Davis, 51 students and 1 faculty member were arrested in Mrak Hall (Jones 2009). The protests continued throughout weeks across campuses. In December 2009, UC Berkeley students retook Wheeler Hall to hold "Live Week", a week of workshops, classes and teach-ins open to the public. On December 11th the UC Berkeley administration in collaboration with UCPD arrested 66 students without a dispersal order.

A brief context of undocumented students in the 2009-2010 student mobilizations

As I examined in the previous chapter, college unaffordability was a major and early concern raised by undocumented students and their advocates. Without access to work authorization, federal and state financial aid, undocumented students would often face difficulties paying for college expenses. The framing of undocumented students as economic contributors to their institutions (as tuition-payers) who were not fully benefiting from their

financial contributions to their institutions (as financial aid recipients) became an early campaign for supporting legislative efforts to expand financial aid to undocumented students.[43]

Undocumented students as tuition payers

This reliance on being understood as "a contributing tuition payer student" was being used by undocumented student organizers since the mid-2000s. In a 2007 interview with Los Angeles Daily News, UCLA IDEAS organizer, Stephanie Solis, explains how by paying full tuition undocumented students contributed to a pool of institutional aid that "later fed back to students in the form of scholarships based on merit" (Ortega 2007), but undocumented students would not be able to take advantage of that pool of funds. In my interview with Daniel, the former student organizer with IDEAS who I introduced in Chapter 1, I also heard about the ways in which between 2009-2010, IDEAS continued to raise awareness on undocumented students' inaccessibility to institutional financial aid. Financial inaccessibility was constructed as an educational equity issue. Daniel explains the framing of these efforts in this way: "We as undocumented students were paying 33% of our tuition into a pool called financial aid, but because of our status, we weren't able to get anything back. We were just doing advocacy work to inform people that we didn't have access to financial aid, that with the increase in tuition, our ability to stay at UCLA was difficult" (Daniel, personal interview by author, June 22nd, 2019).

Solis and Daniel consider inaccessibility to financial aid as a major educational and advocacy rallying point—here the educational inequity was defined by how undocumented students were paying tuition but were "not getting anything back". By the 2009-2010 academic year, undocumented students who were already struggling to pay tuition fees, and other economically vulnerable students, faced an increasing set of financial challenges.

[43] This campaign point is similar to those advocacy efforts that have often highlighted "undocumented immigrants as contributing taxpayers" whose status disqualifies them to receive in return the full benefits of their financial contributions.

Undocumented students during the protests against austerity

With the exception of a 2011 reflection essay by Carlos Amador, a former UCLA graduate undocumented student of color, not much has been published on the experiences of undocumented students who were active organizers, participants and/or witnesses of the student protests against austerity measures in this time period. In his personal reflection of the events leading to and following campus unrest between 2009-2011, "UCLA Underground Students Rise to Fight for Public Education", Amador explains how race and privilege, and differences in ideology and strategy, played out during the planning and execution of student actions against austerity measures at UCLA. He further states that the student protests against austerity measures and tuition hikes "developed a space of conflicting dynamics between different organizers" (2011, 569). Amador describes two main student groups organizing against tuition hikes emerged: the mainstream student government and affiliated student organizations, and the unofficial, more radical and primarily white student groups. In the essay he describes that the more radical student groups were white, of anarchist politics, and that the more mainstream student groups consisted of more ethnically diverse students from student organizations such as MEChA, IDEAS and the Undergraduate Student Association Council[44].

Through different means, strategies, political ideologies, and organizational structure, both groups were in consensus on one issue—calling attention to the impact tuition hikes would have on students' college unaffordability. In response to students' concerns over the impact tuition fee increases would have on the most financially marginalized students, the UC Regents Committee of Finance recommended the expansion of increased financial aid for most

[44] An analysis that takes into consideration the difference in racial privilege and social position between white and students of color may offer a more grounded understanding to why these groups organized through different tactics and politics. Radical student groups that embrace anarchist politics (in this case white students) may have access to forms of resources that can guarantee their basic needs, whereas working class students of color may have more to lose if they interact with law enforcement. Please see Dylan Rodriguez (2012) "Beyond "Police Brutality": Racist State Violence and the University of California" for an analysis on the presumed innocence of white student organizers vs the presumed criminality of students of color as it manifested in student protests at two UC campuses.

economically marginalized students through the Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan. Funding for the Blue and Gold Plan would be generated from the increases in mandatory statewide fees from undergraduates, with a 33 percent set aside to "mitigate the impact of the fee increases on financially needy undergraduate students" (The Regents of the University of California 2009, 22). Any student whose family income was less than $70,000 a year, would qualify for the Blue and Gold Plan. Undocumented students who shared testimony at the November 19th, 2009, UC Regents meeting were quick to bring up that they would not be able to benefit from such financial aid program.

In January 2010, in the aftermath of the student mobilizations that took place in 2009 and the passage of the 2009-2010 academic year tuition hikes, IDEAS began "The Missing" campaign. The campaign consisted in calling attention to the impact of tuition increases on undocumented students. In a 2015 interview with Edwin, a former undocumented student organizer and IDEAS chair, he remembers the "Death of a Dreamer" as a day of action where IDEAS members organized and displayed tombstones across the UCLA campus with the inscription "R.I.P. AB 540 students". Another action he recalled was the displaced chalked-out bodies throughout different locations on campus symbolizing the undocumented students who had gone missing since the new fees were implemented. Humorously, Edwin recalls and remembers these actions as "very dramatic" because "people were confused about who had died!" (Edwin, personal interview by author, April 16th, 2015). At the same time, he also believes these forms of protest were necessary. As Amador points out in his essay, even though IDEAS as an organization did not have data on the exact numbers of undocumented students dropping out of college due to the fee increases, the campaign was necessary to call attention to the disproportional effects of tuition fee increases across the student body.

In the rest of Spring of 2010, university campuses across the US continued to organize and build a movement against austerity measures and privatization of higher education. For

example, on the National Day of Action to Defend Public Education on March 4th, 2010, students organized a set of actions ranging from walkouts, marches, occupations, shut-down, teach-ins and movie showings. The months leading to this action were significant as they brought together teachers, students, faculty, staff across different education systems to disseminate a message of protest against the state cuts to education, imposed furloughs, tuition hikes, and the need for stronger protections to educators.

Then in April 2010, another major protest took place in a University of California campus. A hunger strike took place shortly after the announcement of Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 (SB1070), a senate bill dubbed as the "show me your papers" law, required law enforcement to check the immigration status of anyone they "reasonably suspected" was in the country undocumented. SB1070 sparked outrage across the US. At UC Berkeley students, a group of mostly Latino students (who were also immigrant allies) went on a hunger strike on May 3rd to demand Chancellor Birgeneau publicly denounce SB1070. The protestors seized the opportunity to also set a six point set of demands including: declaring UC Berkeley a sanctuary campus and the implementation of the previously promised task force on AB540 students; the dropping of all student conduct charges related to protest actions that occurred in the 2009-2010 academic year; the stopping of cuts to low-wage workers on campus and attacks on union activists; the suspension of the student code of conduct and initiate a democratic student-process to review the code; the acceptance of responsibility for the violence and escalation of the November and December 2009 campus demonstrations; and a commitment to nonviolence during student protests in the future (Berkeley News, May 5th, 2010).

As the 2009-2010 academic year came to an end, the Latino student hunger strike in May demanded the university to implement the promised AB540 Taskforce to begin Fall 2010 and to include student representation. Aside from Chancellor's Birgeneau public denouncement of SB1070, this was one of the few demands implemented. The AB540 taskforce had been an

idea proposed by Chancellor Birgeneau as early as Spring 2009, (and across ally spaces the idea has been proposed even before 2009). By 2010, the actions of the protesters reinforced the creation of the new taskforce charged with identifying the issues and challenges undocumented students faced on campus.

The 2009-2010 academic year was a significant turning point for the development of undocumented student advocacy. As students across the US mobilized against austerity measures in higher education, the administrative response to campus unrest was of militarized and punitive character (Levenson 2011; Rodríguez 2012; Godrej 2014). It was in this context that student protests against austerity measurement and undocumented student advocacy became intertwined with the Wasted Lives Framework and the moral economy of student dissent.

Undocumented students within the moral economy of bad activists/ good students

Carey and Stern's (2019) analysis of the moral economy of campus unrest considers how constructs of individual responsibility and neoliberal morality shape the criteria that "punish individual actions" and "move structural critique into individual choice" (15) and consequently how these constructs have an effect in the way campus unrest is understood. Carey and Stern note the ways in which access to resources and services in higher education have increasingly become modeled through neoliberal privatization and choice models, thereby shifting the focus of responsibility from state to the individual student. Under this moral economy, students who become activists are choosing to "both not feel the inclusionary love of the institution and also resist it" (ibid). Furthermore, students are purposefully and out of their individual choice, choosing disappointment and thus "their wounds of doing activist work seem self-inflicted" (ibid). Missing from this analysis, the authors note, is how student activism is something beyond an individual choice, but a collective call to critique structural conditions affecting *all* students.

In the moral economy of campus unrest, the university sets the terms of welcomed critique. Between 2009-2012, police in riot gear armed with assault weapons beat, pepper sprayed, shoved batons and arrested non-violent protesters who demanded a particular type of critical engagement from university administrators. As Godrej (2014) best describes it, "the administrative response to campus protest managed to completely subvert the logic of nonviolent protest, effectively criminalizing all forms of it by focusing on the potentially threatening nature of such protest" (135). UC administrators' response was clear: critique of the university in the form of mass protests would be met with "consequences" the campus authorities deemed fit. For unarmed protesters who expressed any confrontation or active opposition to the response of such militarization could be suspect and worthy of violent response (Godrej 2014).

Undocumented student advocacy was in conversation with the discourses that circulated in the movement against UC privatization, militarization and austerity. Drawing upon the impact that tuition hikes would have on the college unaffordability of undocumented students, advocates continued to push forward conversations on how the university could best support this economically marginalized student population. I argue that this form of student advocacy relied on positioning undocumented students as *good students* who were vulnerable and in need of protection. This is a process that developed over time. On one hand, students were pressing for the university to take accountability for its violent response towards student protestors. On the other, the undocumented student figure offered a means by which the university could take a moral position as a protector to a student population—undocumented students whose requests were coherent with the university's accepted forms of engagement.

An example of this process were the negotiations between Latino hunger strikers and the university's administration. On May 5th, 2010, after 2 days of the Latino student hunger strike, Chancellor Birgeneau responded to their various demands by releasing a statement to

UC Berkeley students involved in the strike. In regard to the demand for the implementation of "the promised AB540 taskforce" and declaring UC Berkeley a sanctuary campus, Chancellor Birgeneau responded with the following statement,

> "Make UCB a sanctuary campus and provide extensive protection for undocumented students. We share your concern for the safety of our undocumented students. At request of La Raza, I recently spoke to our Chief Police and was assured that our undocumented students would in no way be put at risk it they contacted our police to report crimes or threats. However, a declaration of our campus as a sanctuary campus almost certainly would have the unintended consequence of putting undocumented students and other community members at risk for heightened scrutiny (Public Affairs 2010).

The strikers had originally released six demands that were edited and updated over the period of the ten-day hunger strike.[45] In the communication available through archived blogs, the six-point list did not include a demand for "extensive protection for undocumented students", but a call for sanctuary for all undocumented persons at UC Berkeley and for the administration to carry on with the promised AB540 task that had been proposed as early as the Spring of 2009.

In other words, what originally had been a call for accountability (the implementation of the promised taskforce) and solidarity (in the form of sanctuary campus), became read through administration as a call for "extensive protection". I call attention to this, because it demonstrates some of the initial documented ways in which the university administration was projecting itself as a *protective figure* for undocumented students. This protective role was articulated through assuring undocumented students there was no risk contacting the police.

[45] The demands were: 1) for the administration to publicly denounce the Arizona's SB1070 law 2) the implementation of the promised AB540 taskforce and to include student representation. 3) Drop student conduct charges that occurred between 2009-2010. 4) stop cuts to low wage workers on campus, rehire AFSCME service workers and UPTE union activists 5) suspend the student code of conduct and initiate a democratic student-led process to review to code. 6) Accept responsibility for the violence and escalation of the events on Wheeler Hall on November 20th and December 11th.

Here protection is shaped by carceral logics that deem policing as fundamental and necessary in how protection is imagined.

At a time of an emerging critical engagement with the privatization of higher education, austerity measures and the militarized response to campus unrest, undocumented students entered the public imaginary of the UC as subjects who were highly disadvantaged, but whose individual merits and socially vulnerable condition made them relatively (in comparison to students with serious concerns about the UC's militarization and abuse of police violence) easier to respond to. Ultimately, the university was able to set a series of responses that reconfigured the undocumented student support infrastructure; mainly, because undocumented student demands were set not on critiquing the privatization of higher education and militarized response to campus unrest, but on highlighting the educational inequity of not being fully *included* (as tuition payer, responsible student subjects). As my research participants constantly reminded me, this infrastructure was always financially weak, but symbolically powerful, shifting the terms under which the university managed and included its undocumented student population.

Reconfiguring the infrastructure of undocumented student support after 2010

This section discusses how a new set of creative and productive relationships developed between undocumented students and the University of California after 2010. These relationships occurred as the UC became invested in producing knowledge about, designing and developing programming and financial aid for its undocumented student population. The passage of state and federal legislation (for example, the California DREAM Act and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program) opened legal venues for the university to channel state financial aid, educational resources and employment opportunities for qualifying

undocumented students.[46] With the appointment of Janet Napolitano as UC president, undocumented students were strategically positioned to call upon moral reasoning arguments that could help them negotiate institutional support for new human, financial, and educational resources. I refer to these changes as the "cost-effective bureaucratization" of the undocumented student support infrastructure. As my research participants pointed out, this infrastructure was financially susceptible and vulnerable to legal shifts, but its symbolic importance redefined the terms and public narratives of the university's management and inclusion of undocumented students.

With the cost-effective bureaucratization of the infrastructure, the university became positioned as an institution willing to "protect", "listen to" and "invest on" undocumented students, particularly at UCLA and UC Berkeley.[47] positioning aligns with the neoliberal multicultural reasoning of the university's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives—the ways in which the university articulates itself as an institution welcoming of difference. This position of being "welcoming to difference" is necessary for the university's institutional reproduction and legitimacy (Ferguson 2012, Mitchell 2012). This position also allowed undocumented students to capitalize on the university's necessity for legitimacy. Whereas the university needs to create a spectacle of inclusion, undocumented students took advantage of this need to demand institutional changes for a more (in the terms of the university) "equitable", "diverse", and "welcoming" institution.

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[46] For a closer analysis on the impact that the California DREAM Act and DACA had on undocumented immigrant youth and students please see Patler, Caitlin, and Jorge A. Cabrera. 2015. "From undocumented to DACAmented: Impacts of the deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) program." Institute for Research on Labor and Employment and Ngo, Federick, and Samantha Astudillo. "California DREAM: The impact of financial aid for undocumented community college students." *Educational Researcher* 48, no. 1 (2019): 5-18.

[47] It is worth noting that this cost-effective bureaucratization of the infrastructure was not even across University of California campuses. This study focuses on two of the flagship institutions of the University of California, yet since at this point each campus was developing its own infrastructure, some campuses were in a disadvantaged financial position to leverage financial resources and funding. For more about how similar discourses of diversification of a student body are equated with the university's social value and its material contradictions as demonstrated by the lack of actual financial investment, please see, Gabrielle Cabrera (2020) "Disrupting Diversity in the Neoliberal University.

Knowledge Production: Taskforce and Innovation Grants Projects on Undocumented Students at UC Berkeley

The May 2010 Latinx student hunger strike and recommendations made by the UC Berkeley Immigrant Student Issues Coalition (ISIC), both emphasized the importance of creating a task force on undocumented students that could articulate issues, needs and "make recommendations for campus initiatives to accommodate [students]" (Basri 2011, 1). The Chancellor's Task Force on Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Community, first convened in the Fall semester of 2010.[48] Representatives included members from ISIC, student representatives from RISE, the Multicultural Student Development (MSD) office, the Educational Equity Alliance, the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) and the Graduate Assembly. The taskforce was made out of three subgroups "incoming students", "retention and advancement", and "post-graduation", with each subgroup focusing on issues particular to undocumented students at different stages of their undergraduate education. The taskforce was responsible for assessment of financial resources and campus climate; evaluation of campus services; compilation and assessment of relevant campus policies; and increasing collaboration with outside private entities who could help address identified issues. Members met throughout the 2010-2011 academic year, releasing a report of key findings and recommendations in the spring of 2011. Eight key findings and nineteen recommendations were made suggesting ways to improve university structure and role, climate change and research and policy analysis.

The taskforce was significant for various reasons. First, the taskforce generated key findings on the educational and life experiences of undocumented students at a specific higher education institution. These findings emerged out of the lived and professional experiences of

[48] The UC Berkeley Immigrant Student Issues Coalition originally pushed for a taskforce on undocumented students to be created. Chancellor Birgeneau, following these recommendations, requested Gibor Basri, Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, to create a taskforce in the Spring of 2009

taskforce members—taskforce members who in their capacity as staff also had a wealth of information about the institutional inner workings of UC Berkeley. While researchers had already began producing knowledge of the educational challenges undocumented students face at four-year institutions, this university-sponsored taskforce began tracing the specific challenges students faced at UC Berkeley, with findings aligning to major key findings in the developing academic literature.

Second, the taskforce offered an opportunity for stakeholders across the institution to network and collaborate together in an institutionally sponsored forum. While some staff supporters had previously helped and strategize with undocumented students outside of paid work hours—this taskforce was a university sponsored effort where staff across departments (human resources, learning centers, registrar office), faculty (at the School of Education and School of Law), and community-based organizations (such as Educators for Fair Consideration), openly came together to research, evaluate, assess, strategize and report together. Similarly, to Sara Ahmed's (2012) reflections on how diversity practitioners think of the process of drafting and reporting diversity documents, where "documents are not themselves the point; what was useful about writing the document was 'the networks it helped set up' (90), the taskforce helped set up a university-sanctioned network of undocumented student allies. Third, findings and recommendations from this taskforce detailed the possibilities for new campus initiatives to improve the experiences of undocumented students. Even though allies and students had voiced similar recommendations in the past; the university deployed its own practices of evaluation, assessment and documentation to proof and legitimize the recommendations previously made by on-the-ground supporters.

As this taskforce was taking place, faculty directors Lisa Garcia Bedolla, at the Center for Latino Policy Research, and Evelyn Nakano Glenn, at the Center of Race and Gender, were awarded with a two-year Haas Innovation Grant by the Office of Equity and Inclusion to conduct

research about and community building efforts for undocumented students at UC Berkeley. The project had three main goals: to initiate community building efforts among undocumented students across the lines of race, ethnic and national origin; to conduct research and collect data on the experiences and insights of undocumented students; and to facilitate information distribution of community building and research projects. "Working Together to Improve Campus Climate for Undocumented AB540 Students at UC Berkeley" resulted in a qualitative research project detailing campus specific and legislative advocacy recommendations, guest lecture and event series, a year-long creative writing workshop for undocumented students, a creative writing publication by undocumented students, and a three-part series report (see Chapter 1).

Unlike the findings of the Chancellor's Taskforce on Undocumented Students, which were mainly based on the lived and professional experiences of the taskforce members; the innovation grant project's findings were based out of in-depth interviews conducted with 18 current and recently graduated UC Berkeley undocumented students. The findings of the Innovation Haas Grant report both supported and expanded upon the findings of the 2011 Chancellor's taskforce. The research findings include aspects of family and migration experiences, experiences of transfer students, students' bureaucratic interactions, funding, issues pertaining to intersectional identities, mental health, finding and recruiting institutional allies, and post-graduate studies. At the institutional level some of the recommendations include allocating space and funding for a resource center, university supported working group on undocumented students, funding for peer mentorship program, legal services, outreach and support for potential undocumented transfer students, training and hiring of additional staff to provide mental health services, and targeted career center resources (Basri 2011).

The taskforce and the innovation grant project are two examples of how university-sanctioned knowledge production on undocumented students was beginning to develop after

2010. Between 2010-2012, the UC Berkeley Office of Diversity and Inclusion, was a key site for collaboration between students, supportive staff, faculty and resource centers. Guided by the intention to “improve campus climate”, committees and research partnerships generated a plethora of knowledge not only on undocumented students, but also on the university itself—its pipelines, blockages, gaps, limitations and opportunities. These partnerships produced conversations on the legal and financial feasibility of institutional arrangements that could be created for undocumented students. Additionally, central to these projects was the participation of undocumented students who along with researchers, staff and faculty, participated as knowledge producers and diversity practitioners of the undocumented student experience. Their labor and expertise (as experts of their own personal experiences) supported the cost-effective bureaucratization of undocumented student support.

The National UC Summit on Undocumented Students, Janet Napolitano and the continuous development of the cost-effective bureaucratization of undocumented student support infrastructure

On July 18th, 2013, former UC President Mark Yudof announced his resignation as president, citing “taxing health issues” as a reason for his departure (Chi 2013). On the same day, Janet Napolitano, former 2009-2013 Secretary of Homeland Security under the Obama administration, was announced by the UC Regents as the next UC President. The announcement of her appointment was met with many discontents. Under Napolitano’s leadership, Immigration and Custom Enforcement implemented the Secure Communities program which led to record-high number of immigrant deportations. Shortly after the announcement of her appointment, campuses across the UC System led series of resolutions of no confidence in Janet Napolitano and in the UC Regents’ non-transparent appointment process. Many of these resolutions called for meetings against her appointment and expressed

deep concerns with her previous background leading the Obama administration's increased deportations, surveillance, policing and border militarization campaigns.[49]

Immediately, students across UC campuses opposed to Napolitano's appointment, standing in solidarity with undocumented students. For instance, the undergraduate Associated Students at the University of California, San Diego (ASUCSD), circulated a resolution of no confidence in UC President Napolitano with a list of 9 demands including:

> Hold a meeting with all undocumented students' organizations across the UC's during your campus visits in September to discuss the demands… Make the University of California a sanctuary for undocumented students… Mandatory University of California Police Department UndocuAlly training on the rights of undocumented communities to prevent harassment and criminalization…The office of the Chancellor of each respective campus should hold UCPD accountable to not comply with 287G…Implement general education courses on undocumented/immigrant experiences on all campuses UC wide…Hire staff that specializes on Undocumented/AB540 Student Affairs in every UC campus…Mandatory UC staff and faculty training on Undocumented/AB540 Student issues…" (Associated Students at the University of California San Diego 2013).

Some of the demands from the ASUCSD would not be able to be implemented, as they were in odds against federal regulations (particularly those around employment). However, what these student demands do capture is the amount of support that emerged for undocumented students after Napolitano's UC presidency was announced.

[49] In an analysis of the Obama's administration's position on immigration, the Migration Policy Institute (2017) found that Obama inherited a more legally robust and better-resourced immigration enforcement regime than his predecessors had. For instance, the Obama administration benefited from a rise of congressional funding for immigration enforcement and an infrastructure of surveillance that had been developing since 2001. With more resources and strategies, immigrant removals increased significantly. Additionally, the increased penalties against unauthorized border crossers discouraged repeated entry attempts from deported noncitizens. For more information on the consequences of the Obama administration for immigrant communities see: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/obama-record-deportations-deporter-chief-or-not

Many students and staff were surprised about Napolitano's appointment. In a 2015 interview with a Rodrigo, a former staff member at the Undocumented Student Program, he explains a collective feeling that emerged with the announcement of Napolitano's appointment. Rodrigo describes seeing positive institutional changes on campus for undocumented students. When asked about the impact on Napolitano's appointment, he states:

> That was a major reawakening of undocumented political organizing, because that was a major like 'what the f***?'. Like that was a major moment… it was kind of like that moment that people were like this is too good to be true. This is way too good to be true. We have an undocumented student program. California Dream Act just passed. Something's going to happen, and then BOOM!!!, Napolitano is our new UC president. (Rodrigo, personal interview by author, March 23rd, 2015).

Furthermore, Rodrigo explains how, aside from being an unexpected surprise, Napolitano's appointment also came at a time when the state of California and UC Berkeley were beginning to make significant material advances for undocumented students. Rodrigo continues explaining how he experienced the affective landscape around him:

> That's when like it like kaboom! Not like against the institution, but against Napolitano and against the Regents, because it was like, how could you possibly even consider somebody that doesn't have an education background, has never worked in the context of higher education, comes from government, designed the masterful deportation machine that has become the United States, and that's the new UC president in the state that is arguably one of the most Undocu friendly, Undocu progressive, in the UC system that is essentially creating the model for supporting the success of higher education for undocumented students? How? (ibid).

Rodrigo describes working with undocumented students in his capacity as staff at the Undocumented Student Program as “spiritually heavy”. He describes it as a heavy time for the undocumented student program”. He states:

> Every single day students were coming in and crying saying my dad got deported and it was *her*, or my mom got deported, and it was *her*, or my brother, or my neighbor, my mentor… It was very real. And it was having to just listen and say, you're right. This is heavy. This is heavy, and that's a lot of energy. So, what can we do to make you feel better, but also what can we do to help you use that energy and put it for like productive purposes? (ibid).

The student energy was indeed put to use. On October 1st, 2013, one day after Napolitano’s official first day as president of the UC, a coalition of undocumented and concerned students across UC campuses, met with Napolitano to discuss a list of seven demands. The demands, originally nine, had been circulated by student groups since July. The meeting was coordinated by student Regent Cinthia Flores and facilitated by Andrea Gordillo, a UC Irvine student and vocal leader of the coalition challenging Napolitano’s appointment. At the meeting, the students presented the list of demands to Napolitano and her staff. In an interview with New University, UC Irvine’s student newspaper, Gordillo is quoted saying “We expected more tangible solutions and clear responses, but we do think this is a first step. Our no confidence on her still stands, the fact that we had a meeting with her does not change the fact that we don’t accept her as UC president” (Menendez 2013).

A day after meeting with the UC wide student coalition, on October 30th, 2013, UC President Napolitano announced a 5-million-dollar initiative to aid undocumented students at the systemwide level. Napolitano stated “These Dreamers, as they are often called, are students who would have benefited from a federal DREAM Act. They are students who deserve the opportunity to succeed and to thrive at the UC” (UC Office of the President 2013). In the

following chapter, I explore the different ways in which this original initiative and those that followed, shifted the infrastructure.

The initiative was welcomed by students and staff and provided funds for the development of university resources for undocumented students. As the UC continued to grapple with the symbolism of Napolitano's presence as UC President, other initiatives by the UC Office of the President were pursued to support the public image of the UC as an undocumented student friendly campus.

The National UC Summit on Undocumented Students

As the following chapter explores in depth, the undocumented student support infrastructure developed with the support of not only individual allies, or friendly campuses, but also with the support of the University of California. Aside from the first 5-million-dollar initiative that aimed to support undocumented student services, the University took another public display of support by organizing the first national summit on undocumented students.

The National UC Summit on Undocumented students was an invitation-only summit that took place in Oakland, California on May 7th-8th, 2015. The event was organized by the newly formed UC President's Advisory Council on Undocumented Students. For two days, educators, policy advocates, legal experts, nonprofit directors, student service providers, alumni, current undergraduate and graduate students, came together at the Marriott Oakland Hotel, to dialogue on the current issues facing undocumented immigrant college students. As stated by official communication from the University of California Office of the President (UCOP), the summit aimed to provide participants a platform to discuss issues undocumented students face in higher education and in their professional development, and ideas on how to best address them (Pedersen 2015).

I was part of the UCLA student delegation, accompanying undergraduate students to the event. On the night before the summit, we had a student-only dinner where approximately one

hundred students were greeted by Katherine Gin, executive director of Immigrants Rising and one of the two co-chairs of the planning committee. I could see that many of the student attendees looked uneasy at the dinner event. Many attendees had never met before, there were new faces across the different campus delegations, and some students had not even met within their specific campus delegation. Many students were uneasy about the possibility that this was just a public relations event from which no meaningful outcomes would emerge. Other students saw the moment as an opportunity for voicing their concerns to an audience of policymakers, researchers and journalists. Noticing an air of tension, Gin reassured us that this space was ours, that this was our conference. Once Gin left the room, some of us began to reconnect, to get to know each other and to strategize what kind of unified message would be delivered at the conference.

That night students from across UC campuses came together to strategize an action to take a stand against the lack of transparency in the planning of the summit and moved to prepare a collective speech and stage a walk-out during the UC President Napolitano's opening speech. Thursday morning when Napolitano began her opening speech, immigrant students stood up from their chairs, rose their fists up in the air and said, "We are not here to simply fill your seats for your political gain," "We demand that you listen to us," "You cannot make decisions about our lives without knowing our personal struggles".[50] After the last student said their lines, we walked out of the conference room. By standing up as a collective, undocumented students across each campus came together to call attention to serious concerns they had regarding the transparency of the planning of the event. Furthermore, the students were also communicating a series of concerns including their dissatisfaction with the way in which their attendance was used as a way "to simply fill seats for political gain."

[50] These quotes were also recorded on the Mercury News Article "Undocumented students disrupt Janet Napolitano's speech at UC Summit" Retrieved from http://www.mercurynews.com/census/ci_28069833/undocumented-students-disrupt-janet-napolitano-speech-at-uc.

After that morning the tone of the summit changed, students would not sit as passive participants or cooperative informants throughout the rest of the conference. The rest of the summit was organized though four discussion tracks around the themes of Financial Aid and Support Services, Immigration Legal Services and Support, Career and Professional Development, and Civic Engagement and Community Involvement. Attendees could attend two tracks and each track was facilitated by moderators who guided the group towards coming up with action plans and proposed goals that could then be delivered to UCOP. During the sessions, some of the moderators and speakers referred to undocumented students as "Dreamers". As students were referred to as "Dreamers", tensions would elevate. By 2015 many students disidentified with the term "Dreamer" and considered this term to be divisive to the humanization of immigrant communities. This moment demonstrated a type of information delay between what these moderators and speakers *knew about* undocumented students and how undocumented students were now mobilizing new identifiers and campaigns.[51]

By the evening of the first night of the summit, student organizers who had not officially received an invitation and funding to attend the summit, showed up to the event. I met with some students from a caravan that drove from Southern California who thought it would be important to have their voices be included in the ongoing dialogues. Some of these students were being housed in the hotel rooms of official attendees or in the apartments of student activists in Berkeley and Oakland. During the second day of the summit, a small delegation of students was asked to meet with Napolitano during lunch to discuss some of the demands they wanted UCOP to address. These demands were outside of the ones that were being produced at the structured discussion track dialogues. I learned from my 2018 interview with Alejandra,

[51] This is what I referred to as an knowledge delay between what university officials knew about undocumented students and the directions undocumented students were taking in their social movement agenda. One of the biggest critiques about the summit can be summarized as what Gabrielle Cabrera (2020) describes of the summit "Undocumented student present expressed that the summit felt like a field of site for scholars interested in immigration; the conversation was on undocumented students as an academic topic—about us, rather than with us (72)".

one of the graduate student participants present at the lunch meeting with Napolitano, that the delegation was given limited time to plan a set of demands. Among the student demands that they delivered was the need for the university to understand that undocumented students were part of immigrant family units, not independent of them. Immigrant students would not be able to thrive under a political context of immigrant criminalization that threatened the very fabric of their families and communities. If the university wished to support its undocumented student population, they would need to start expanding their support to the immigrant family unit.

This specific student demand to the university of understanding that "undocumented students were part of immigrant family units, not independent of them", was something I had heard before. During my 2014 interview with Joshi, where they articulated that one of IDEAS' biggest challenges with university administrators was getting them to understand that for the university to make a stand with undocumented students, they had to make a stand with immigrant families. Joshi articulated, "Although, I think one of the biggest things for administrators to understand is that to support undocumented students you can't just support the undocumented students, you have to support the undocumented family" (Joshi, personal interview by author, April 2014).

The summit served as an event that catalyzed the UC system as a nationally recognized supportive campus for undocumented students. The event served a space for undocumented students, and student organizers from across UC campuses, where they could meet each other and strategize together. For many student attendees, this was one of the first places where they encountered themselves as activists, whose voice could potentially be heard. For some, the event was more of a "self-serving event", a push for favorable media coverage.

I interpret the summit as part of the making of the undocumented student support infrastructure, and as another aspect of the ways in which the "good immigrant student" subject was being developed at an institutional level. In remembering the summit, a student present at

the 2nd Annual UC-Wide Undocumented Student Conference spoke of the a few positive outcomes that emerged from the summit, mainly, the UC Undocustudent Coalition, which includes two student representatives from each UC campus. The Summit was a space that facilitated the creation of social networks to be set up. These networks had potential for political and symbolic change, not only at a large scale, but also at the intrapersonal scale.

Conclusion

In this chapter I continued exploring aspects of a strategic relationship between undocumented students and university administrators. I argue that the strategic relationship between undocumented students and high-ranking university administrators relied on a dominant advocacy framework that articulates undocumented students as productive immigrants who are valuable and whose lives and talents often go to "waste". The Wasted Lives Framework is shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities of social value, where "waste" is highlighted as the unfulfillment of undocumented students' productive capacities. Aside from its economic rationalities, the Wasted Lives Framework is also grounded on highlighting undocumented youth's affective attachments to national belonging.

The significance of the Wasted Lives Framework is further elevated when compared to the ongoing moral economy of campus unrest in University of California between 2009-2013. At a time when students, faculty and staff across University of California campuses began organizing against the austerity measures that followed the global economic Great Recession, undocumented student advocacy called attention primarily to issues of equity, inclusion, and institutional responsibility— a form of "critique" that is legible and could be incorporated into the university's terms of engagement. I argue that the neoliberal multicultural rationalities within the "Wasted Lives Framework" reinforced a moral division. In this moral division, undocumented students benefited from being recognized as "good students" worthy of support and inclusion

and not as “bad activists” such as those students who openly challenged the neoliberalization and militarized response of the university.

In the third section of this chapter, I examined different aspects of the emerging infrastructure of undocumented student support, primarily the emergence of taskforces and institutionally sponsored research projects. By being an institution willing to “protect”, “listen to” and “invest on” undocumented students, the University of California negotiated a relationship to its undocumented student population that resonated with the university’s liberal ideology of diversity, equity and inclusion.

In the following chapter I explore in depth the ways in which the University of California restructured its services, resources, funding and programing for undocumented students. As Chapter 1 explores, undocumented students used storytelling, as a method for gaining visibility and advocating for themselves. Chapter 2 bridges from Chapter 1 by exploring the rationalities informing the university’s response to undocumented students demands. The university responded by inviting students into its own terms of engagement: by producing knowledge on undocumented students, creating taskforces, and developing funding opportunities.

This strategic partnership, where undocumented students supported the university’s efforts to diversify and the university worked towards creating new programming, resources and funding for undocumented students, was not only the result of student and institutional allies’ efforts. In fact, this strategic partnership was also the result of the university’s need for performing self-reflexivity. Since undocumented student advocacy was primarily shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities, the university was able to respond more comfortably to demands based on equity and inclusion (critiques that did not question the university’s militarized response to student unrest or its neoliberalization). The university was able to respond to students’ demands with creative productive opportunities that channel student activism towards knowledge production, service delivery and program development,

What I refer to as the “undocumented student support infrastructure”, is the result of channeling student activism towards a university partnership—of the university working along students to make an inclusive university. This partnership was productive as it created new sources of funding, knowledge, services, policies and practices. This new infrastructure includes legal services, funding opportunities, educational programs, resource centers, staff with expertise on undocumented student issues. As I explore in the next two chapters, this infrastructure has been financially weak, but politically powerful by design. The infrastructure is not completely inclusive of all undocumented students and has created its own tiers—where some undocumented students benefit more than others (Chapter 4). This infrastructure has depended on philanthropic gifts and short-term financial commitments, which has made staff and students question the sustainability of this infrastructure. Institutional allies often spoke of the tacit expectation of their roles: of increasingly doing more with less funding.

Chapter Three: The rationalities of the undocumented student support infrastructure

On Friday May 3rd, 2019, I attended "UndocuU: Reimagining Institutions, Advocacy and Belonging with Undocumented Students and Mixed Status Families," a one-day conference organized by the Dream Success Center, a center that provides resources and services to undocumented students at the California State University Long Beach (CSULB). I was interested in learning about the current institutional challenges and possibilities college campuses (outside of the University of California) are facing in their current efforts to understand and better support their undocumented student population. I joined the roundtable "Undocumented Organizing at CSULB: Successes and Challenges"; no recording was allowed to protect the confidentiality of the speakers and participants. The classroom had about 25 attendees which included undergraduate students, faculty and administrators from student affairs from CSU campuses, with only a few of the participants affiliated to community colleges and University of California campuses.

The audience heard from a panel of students, alumni and administrators who shared a chronology of events pertaining to the development of institutional resources for undocumented students at CSULB, as well as their personal experiences with different key mobilizations by students and supporters. We learned about the 2017 mobilizations and call to action in support of the release of CSULA student, Claudia Rueda, from immigrant detention[52]; and heard a brief

[52] At the time of her apprehension by Border Patrol Agents, Claudia Rueda was an undocumented immigrant rights activist with Immigrant Youth Led Coalition in Los Angeles and an undergraduate student at California State University, Los Angeles. Claudia was seized on May 18th, 2017, by agents while outside her family's home in Boyle Heights and taken to a detention facility near San Diego, CA. Claudia's detention raised accusations of retaliation because of her activism in support of her mother, who was arrested in April by immigration officials on drug charges which authorities later admitted were baseless. For more, see: https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-immigration-activist-20170518-story.html

history of the philanthropic donations that led to the establishment of CSULB Dream Success Center.

During the Q&A section, a student affairs administrator and supporter of undocumented students spoke about the cooptation[53] of the immigrant youth movement on college campuses. As a holder of more than twenty years of institutional memory, this administrator had witnessed and accompanied many stages of the immigrant youth and undocumented student movements. They recalled encountering resistance from supervisors and senior administrators in their efforts to support students and in their advocacy for undocufriendly institutional policies at their CSU campus. They also shared that when the position to serve as director of their campus' undocumented student resource center opened, they were not considered for the position, even though they had a strong record of supporting undocumented students and also had the professional qualifications to be an excellent candidate. Frustrated and feeling undervalued by their institution, the student affairs administrator reminded the audience that there was more beyond this job position and the undocumented student resource center. They stated,

> Today, the resource center is service oriented, it is completely co-opted. I know some of you in here might be thinking 'I wish we had a Dream Resource Center!' But we were meeting once a month for two years, and then we were completely co-opted (Student affairs administrator, May 3rd, 2019).

Additionally, the student affairs administration told the audience to never forget that before the creation of a resource center, *"this* was the story of movements and community organizing". By "*this"* I believe the administrator was inviting us to think beyond resource centers, but the fact that us coming together to discuss how to improve the conditions of undocumented students was the results of movements and community organizing. "*This*", I interpret, as the process of people gathering to think, work and find solutions together to a social issue.

[53] The administrator used the term "co-optation".

In fact, this moment was not the first time I heard a supporter of undocumented students express some frustration over the ways in which service-oriented models of student support had changed student activism and organizing on campus. What I witnessed at CSULB reminded me of a previous moment of introspection an interlocutor and I had towards the end of our interview. This interview happened in 2015 with a UC Berkeley undocumented student supporter and academic affairs administrator who had been mentoring and advocating for undocumented students since the early 2000s. Towards the end of our interview, when I asked them if they had anything else to add to our interview, they reflected on the risks of an eroding historical memory of the immigrant youth movement at UC Berkeley. They stated,

> That's a lot about what happens when you have eroding historical memory—people forget. What happens to policies that people now feel are de facto, the right policies and they've been vetted, and they think that this is 'what university's willing to do'. And then there's *experts*, these are the people who now have the position, you know. I think a lot of times is the undocumented student program is defined as the end all and be all of undocumented support for campus. And I think that that's unfair to the students, that's unfair to the movement and that's unfair to the history of the program (Undocumented student supporter and academic affairs administrator, interview by author, March 27th, 2015, emphasis added).

At the time of our interview, this supporter was commenting on the new form of expert knowledge that was beginning to emerge a few years later after UC Berkeley inaugurated its Undocumented Student Program in 2012. This supporter was making an observation over how a new group of professionals were being employed by an institution to fill roles as new "undocumented student experts". I also consider their concern over the "erosion of historical memory", very similar to the concern the supporter at CSULB brought up—that there is

something to lose when people forget the grassroots movement and community organizing origins of an institutionalized new program or space.

Both of these insights on the institutionalization of student movements offer an introduction to some of the mechanics behind what I call: the "undocumented student support infrastructure". I use this term as it encompasses the ways in which undocumented student support in universities, such as the University of California, has generated physical, organizational and ideological structures and communication networks that facilitate information, resources and student services for undocumented students. This infrastructure is recent, no longer than a decade old, and is at the center of my analysis for this chapter.

The argument and chapter map

I identify the "undocumented student support infrastructure" as the ongoing institutionalization of student services, programs and spaces designed to support undocumented students in higher education. Similar to Kyle Southern (2016), I identify undocumented student supporters[54] as the admission officers, academic counselors, financial aid officers, student affairs and counseling/psychological professionals, faculty and other institutional actors who leverage their own positional capital to support undocumented students. This infrastructure is unique (even rare) when contextualized at a national level as only 59 out of 4,000 institutions of higher education in the U.S. have a similar undocumented student support infrastructure to that of CSULB or the University of California. Furthermore, this infrastructure, even in campuses such as the University of California is not homogenous, as each campus has a variety of different funding sources, institutional allies and philanthropic support.

[54] I refer to my interlocutors as "supporters", mindful that some of them referred to themselves as allies, institutional agents, university employees and none referred to themselves as "accomplices". UndocuAlly is an emic term in the undocufield. In this chapter, I evade using this term and opt for a more descriptive term "undocumented student supporters" as I am critical of the construct of allyship and its tendency to commodify and objectify social struggles. For more on the critique of allyship from a radical grassroots, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial perspective see Indigenous Action blog "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex" http://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/comment-page-1/.

This chapter examines the ways in which the undocumented student support infrastructure came to be (as understood by my research participants and as narrated in the literature) and analyzes how it is informed by the dominant form of undocumented student advocacy—what I identified in the previous chapter as the Wasted Lives Framework. This chapter examines closely the values, principles and practices that inform this infrastructure and thus, how these material and ideological architectures within the infrastructure help "(re)produce and govern social life within and beyond the university" (Stein 2018, 901).

I argue that this infrastructure (along with the literature and forms of advocacy that sustain it) is informed by an understanding that undocumented students are *deserving* and *exceptional* and thus worthy of *institutional protection* through *disciplined integration*. As stated in the introduction, by "disciplined integration", I draw from what Michel Foucault (1979, 1990) identified as "positive power," meaning power that is not operated through the mechanisms and effects of violence, exclusion, and rejection, but through modes of control that give subjects their "own place" and thus helps develop populations into resources. This incorporation is not violent, but generative—as undocumented student organizers and the University, are able to negotiate and mutually benefit. In this chapter I explore how this understanding of undocumented students as deserving of institutional protection through disciplined integration helps sustain and perpetuate dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy grounded in neoliberal multiculturalist social relations. This chapter invites the reader to step out of the cultural and ideological rationalities that shape *and limit* contemporary forms of dominant undocumented student advocacy as well as the scholarship that has accompanied these forms of advocacy There are two main sections in this chapter.

The first section is descriptive, I examine what the infrastructure of undocumented student support is and various aspects of how it came to be (as understood by my research participants and as narrated in the literature). One of the primary ways in which this

infrastructure has been explored in the academic literature and narrated by my interlocutors is as the result of *student organizing and ally support/advocacy* around educational equity for undocumented students, which then led to the creation of sanctioned and not-sanctioned *taskforces*, which under a pro-undocumented student state *policy* climate and *philanthropic* interest helped materialize this infrastructure. Furthermore, this infrastructure has been pushed forward by supporters who align their arguments for the institutionalization of undocumented student support to *university missions*—e.g., they align their arguments to terms that are legible to and advertised by the university.

In the second section, I examine how different discourses and frames in the undocumented student support infrastructure are shaped by neoliberal multicultural rationalities. These teleological frames often propose progressively investing on the human capital of undocumented students as they have a future potential to contribute to US global progress. I do not intent to condemn the ways in which undocumented student advocacy in the infrastructure has developed nor critique its approaches. Instead, I explore the mechanisms that inform the dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy—which often rely on an assessment of undocumented students' social value, and in turn the effects these dominant forms of advocacy have had on the infrastructure. To do this, I turn to the academic literature in the fields of student affairs and education to understand the rationalities that inform undocumented student institutional support and undocumented student allyship models. This literature, along the interviews I conducted with undocumented student supporters, helps inform my analysis of the rationalities that are circulated in the undocufield and in undocumented student support infrastructure. My findings and discussion are grounded on the observations and interviews I collected over a period of six years with universities employees, who in this chapter I describe as "supporters of undocumented students" or simply as "supporters".

I conclude this chapter with an invitation towards rethinking the terms that are often circulated in the undocumented student support infrastructure. Various critical education scholars and Critical Ethnic Studies scholars have discussed the ways in terms such as "inclusion" and "equity" limit the scope of possibilities for re-imagining our social relations to institutions of higher education. This section is an offering to those practitioners and theorists who are committed to (re)envisioning their analysis on the institutionalization of undocumented student support.

The Making of the Undocumented Student Support Infrastructure

I identify the "undocumented student support infrastructure" as the ongoing institutionalization of student services, human resources, programs and spaces designed to support undocumented students in higher education. Furthermore, I identify this infrastructure to have its own physical, organization and ideological structures and communication networks. The infrastructure consists of student services and resources such as: book vouchers and lending books program; meal vouchers and food pantries; parking permits, bus passes and transportation commuter van services; student employment and internships; mentorship and undergraduate research programs; academic, career and general advising; mental health, financial aid, legal and transfer services (Cisneros and Rivarola 2020). Aside from its student services and resources, it is sustained by paid full-time and part-time staff trained and hired specifically to serve undocumented students (undocumented student experts); and sometimes consists of physical office space in the university campus where day to day operations, student advising and programing takes place.

This infrastructure is influenced by and is part of a legacy of other tailored support services and campus centers in college campuses that intent to support the recruitment, retention and graduation of historically marginalized and vulnerable student populations—one of them being the student resource center. Undocumented student resource centers are part of the

legacy of student resource centers established in response to concerns regarding students' experiences with discrimination and hostile campus climate (Sanders 2016; Sanlo, Rankin, and Schoenberg 2002; Ramirez 2018). Once established within the university, "undocumented student centers", Michael Rabaja Manolo-Pedro observes, "affect the university macrosystem" (2018, 3), its patterns, culture, knowledge practices, and power dynamics.

Literature in this topic has emphasized the need for resources (such as the resource center) as well as culturally sensitive staff training. Multiple studies have found that college administrators are often unaware or uninformed about their responsibilities to undocumented students as well as what accurate information is needed to support them effectively (Dougherty, Nienhusser, and Vega 2010; Nienhusser 2014). For instance, Perez and Rodriguez (2011) found that undocumented students' psychological stress was made worse by university agents who were unfamiliar with policies regarding undocumented students' rights. Thus, the need for this infrastructure has been recorded in the student affairs and education literature as an adequate response to the incorrect information undocumented students receive from faculty and administrators across different levels of education and that educational, psychological and emotional impacts that misinformation can have on them.

In the following pages, I explore different components of the infrastructure: student organizing and ally support, taskforces, policy changes, philanthropic interest and alignment with university mission. The organization of this section draws primarily from Cisneros and Valdivia (2020) and their study of the emergence, naming and structure of undocumented student resource centers across the country, along with my own observations and insights from interviews with interlocutors.

Student organizing and ally support

The development of undocumented student support infrastructure has been attributed to mobilizations "by and on behalf of undocumented students" (Cisneros and Valdivia 2020, 56). In

conducting interviews, I came across narratives about how undocumented student supporters and undocumented student organizing played a foundational role in generating campus changes—a consistent finding with the literature. In my interview with Saul (an undocumented student affairs administrator who at the time had been employed to work with undocumented students for four years), he talked about the role of "students' voices" in generating empathy that could then lead to institutional change. In the early part of our interview, Saul mentions,

> For me, a lot of what was possible on this campus came through students. Students really putting emotions to their voice, putting emotions to their words and getting out there and actively vocalizing their needs and the ways that the university was not meeting their needs (Saul, personal interview by author, March 18th, 2015).

This was a similar position to Hannah, an undocumented student affairs administrator who also understood the institutionalization of undocumented student resources as part of a legacy of students' opening up about and voicing their educational experiences. During our interviews, Hannah shares, "I think students were very vocal in, and not in a demanding way but just very expressive. I think when you hear the stories, it's hard to not feel compelled, you know, when you learn of students' lives and experiences, it's hard to not feel like this is inequitable" (Hannah, personal interview by author, February 18th, 2015). In this excerpt, Hannah makes reference not only to the fact that students were "vocal" and "expressive", but also to the effect that being "vocal" had on their audiences—hearing their stories had an effect on the audience to feel compelled to act.

Similarly, Rodrigo, another undocumented student affairs administrator who at the time of the interview had also been employed for about three years to provide undocumented student services (and who I first introduced in Chapter 2), also expressed that the existence of his role could only be understood as the legacy of multiple cohorts of allies and students who organized for institutional change. During our interview, Rodrigo mentions,

> I think one of the strengths of the undocumented Dream Movement in the UC system is how multi-generational it has been from the get-go. There's always been multiple generations, and each generation with different capacities involved in the conversation, right? …You have staff that have been there for a long time, and you have faculty that have been there for a long time, and you have young staff that was mentored by the old-time faculty, by the old-time staff that are now taking over, and now they're the staff or they're the faculty so because of that multigeneration, current students that are organizing and that are still connected to that legacy (Rodrigo, personal interview by author, March 18th, 2015).

Here Rodrigo points out not only to the multigenerational aspect of student organizing, but also to the multigenerational aspect of undocumented student supporters—of supporters who transmit their knowledge to the new generations of undocumented student advocates.

Saul, Hannah and Rodrigo offer insights into what other researchers have also found: that undocumented students vocalizing their needs and the support and advocacy of undocumented student supporters were crucial to institutional change. Interviews with former student organizers also support this finding. For example, in an interview with Julissa, (the former undocumented student organizer who I first introduced in Chapter 1), recalled an experience with financial aid administrator who misclassified her instate tuition petition under AB540 and instead classified her as an international student.[55] For Julissa this would have meant paying more for her college tuition. It was until Julissa voiced concerns to a known undocumented student supporter on campus who then advocated on her behalf that the mistake was resolved. During our interview, Julissa recalled,

[55] This incident happened in August 2008 and immigrant students like Julissa could qualify for instate tuition since January 2002, yet six years later, there were still financial aid administrators who did not understand how to guide undocumented students.

> For some reason someone told me to go to the Chicano Latino Resource Center. I remember when I saw [name of student affairs undocumented student supporter] I broke down and then she connected me to somebody in financial aid and explained the situation and then once a staff member was able to explain the situation that I was not supposed to be paying international fees*, then* they changed it (Julissa, personal interview with author, March 23rd, 2018).

Undocumented student supporters such as the student affairs administrator at the Chicano Latino Resource Center, served as advocates and translators of bureaucracies to students who were seeking to advocate for themselves, in a context of an institution that had inadequate awareness and understanding of the procedures associated with undocumented student needs. "Vocalizing needs" is not limited to the act of individually advocating for oneself, but also the act of collectively voicing needs. As Kyle Southern explains in his study of institutionalizing support services for undocumented students at four-year colleges "when undocumented students organize interest groups, hold campus rallies, invite speakers to public events, and petition institutional leaders for more formal measures of support, they demonstrate their needs in ways campus leaders may not have encountered previously" (2016, 311). Undocumented students collectively voicing their concerns, along with the buy-in of other undocumented student supporters helped informed and recruit new potential supporters. Supporters, on the other hand, were crucial institutional actors as their own positional capital and efforts helped advance taskforces and committees that could generate institutional change.

Taskforces

As discussed in other sections of this dissertation, taskforces[56] were also a crucial component in the solidification of the infrastructure. As Cisneros and Valdivia (2020) also found

[56] I draw from organizational literature to define what I mean by taskforces. Organizational literature discusses taskforces as "a special type committees with policy-administering functions" (Tropman and Johnson 1992) and as

in their qualitative study of 59 undocumented student resource centers across the country, "taskforces enabled participants to address the immediate needs of undocumented students, as well as to develop long-term strategies for institutionalizing undocumented student services" (57). Prior to the institutionalization of undocumented student resources, these taskforces were created by undocumented student supporters motivated to support the small but increasing number of undocumented students on campus.

At UC Berkeley the Immigrant Student Issues Coalition (ISIC) began as an effort by faculty and staff who were invested in educationally supporting international students. One of my interlocutors at UC Berkeley and previous ISIC member explained the origins ISIC as this,

> The Immigrant Students' Issues Coalition itself was an organization that had evolved from other initiatives…since the 1970s, Berkeley has been trying to figure out how to incorporate international/immigrant students and it tended to be focused mostly on Asian American or Asian immigrants, Asian international students. And the reason it came together was because faculty had a lot of complaints about students who were coming in who weren't thoroughly socialized to American academic expectations and they wanted a service to help them kind of catch up (Undocumented student supporter, interview with author, March 27th, 2015).

ISIC was originally a coalition that came together to support the educational and social incorporation students from Asian descent, but later in the interview the interlocutor describes that the coalition shifted directions in response to key political moments in immigration policy. The interlocutor describes,

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groups that "arise out of a crisis-oriented environment and are time-limited, action-oriented groups working at an administrative level" (Johnson 1994, 337). Gersick (1990) identifies four distinctive features of taskforces, including: team members who do not typically work closely together, the work generated from the taskforce is unique, taskforces have an unusual mix of autonomy and dependence and they are temporary groups. Coalitions generally suggest longer-term association or alliance.

> Around the late 80s and the early 90s, you began to see that service now having to focus more on Latino students and a lot of it had to do with amnesty. A lot of it had to do with 1986 Immigration Reform there was a wave of students who started coming in who were already here who went through that transition. Leticia A was part of that experience (Ibid).

The interlocutor then describes how with a change in immigration reform at the national level, there was also a new shift in the types of students who were starting to enroll at UC Berkeley. Many of them were Latino beneficiaries of the 1986 Immigration Reform as well as students benefiting from the in-state tuition that the *Leticia A* case made possible.

ISIC, as a coalition, continued to adapt to new immigrant student population needs. The interlocutor then describes how by the 1990s and early 2000s there was a new generation of students that were at the center of ISIC advocacy efforts. They describe,

> In the early 1990s, early 2000s, you had had critical mass and there was this generation of students that we call the Gen 1.5 students who they were immigrant students who had been brought to the US at an early age but because they had been born somewhere else, in classrooms, they were still displaying sociological characteristics of immigrant students (ibid).

The interlocutor then discusses the ways in which the mass mobilizations of 2006 brought to the forefront the need to stand in solidarity with and support undocumented students. They state,

> Until about 2005, undocumented immigration was not really a central issue we were addressing. But what happened in 2005 was the Sensenbrenner Bill…that forced us. And for us in ISIC, we had already been talking peripherally a little bit here and there about undocumented immigrants but at that point, it became clear that there was a cognitive need among some of our undocumented immigrant students to know what kind of support there would be in – among the faculty, staff, and you know, the university.

> These were about a dozen staff from across campus who wanted to reflect on how to better serve these students and how to translate for the administration the experiences of these students (ibid).

Following the immigrant rights marches of the mid 2000s, ISIC continued exploring new ways of advocating for undocumented students on campus. ISIC, originally a coalition of mostly faculty and staff, began working with undocumented students to propose new ways of advancing campus policies that could improve campus climate and educational outcomes of undocumented students. By the late 2000s, members of ISIC began drafting ideas to propose a taskforce that "would articulate the issues and needs of undocumented students at UC Berkeley and make recommendations for campus initiatives to accommodate them" (Basri 2011, 1). The Task Force was then materialized after student protestors pushed for Chancellor Birgeneau to follow up on his promise to ask Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, Gibor Basri, to initiate a task force on undocumented students (See Chapter 2). Currently, the taskforce changed to become a permanent and is now known as the Standing Committee for Undocumented Members of the On-Campus Committee.

In comparison to UC Berkeley's university sanctioned taskforce, UCLA did not develop a university sanctioned taskforce on undocumented students but had a consistent group of supporters who would meet regularly, about every two to three months, to update the group on resources available to undocumented students and to address continuous and emerging institutional challenges. This network also consisted of former members from the Southern California Leticia A Network, which in the 1980s advocated on behalf of undocumented students enrolled in CSUs, community colleges and the University of California. The UCLA network of supporters also helped undocumented student supporters become visible to one another; a visibility that helped increase opportunities for communication, collaboration, and effective service delivery between departments. The committee of supporters also provided the group a

certain level of autonomy from campus bylaws, which in turn also kept the committee and its recommendations institutionally marginal. Similar to UC Berkeley, this network also consisted of outside community members (nonprofit, grassroots and philanthropy leaders) who also collaborated and strategized together.

From my interviews I learned about how, regardless of the marginality of the committee, the committee was successful in supporting campus climate shifts, the implementation of new university resources for undocumented students, and the design of UndocuAlly trainings. Yolanda, a former undocumented student organizer who later became an undocumented student affairs employee, describes campus climate as the result of an ongoing improvement by informal supporter committees. Yolanda states,

> There's always improvement, I would say, but it is because it comes from those allies. If you were able to see any changes was because key allies and very few people…they were the ones that were challenging conversations. It was very informal committees; allies were the ones that were creating those committees with students and slowly building up (Yolanda, personal interview by author, July 10th, 2019).

As Yolanda notes, most of the efforts to change campus climate and resources for undocumented students at UCLA was carried on by undocumented student supporters. Efforts were also continued to be advanced by new cohorts of undocumented students who would graduate and remain on campus as employees. For example, Edgar, the former UCLA undocumented student organizer who I introduced in Chapter 1, describes how once he became a UCLA employee after graduation, he was able to mobilize more resources that would benefit undocumented students. During his time as a UCLA employee, Edgar helped develop two programs that could support emergency needs for undocumented students: a free food pantry and a free commuter van service. As someone who had personally experienced hunger and who commuted over 3 hours one way in public transportation to get to UCLA, he knew from

personal experience the positive impact that programs such as the closet and van service could have for students experiencing hunger and transportation challenges, regardless of status.

Even though most undocumented student supporters had structured their own committees, with the 2016 election of Donald Trump as president, students and allies began mobilizing for increased and visible institutional support on campus. On March 2nd, 2017, Chancellor Block asked the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Scott Waugh to convene an Advisory Council on Immigration Policy to "study the impact of the Trump administration's new immigration policies and recommend strategies to mitigate negative consequences on the relevant needs and concerns of the UCLA community" (Chancellor's Advisory Council on Immigration Policy 2017, 1). The Council was trusted to generate insights about the impact policy changes had on student community, particularly the effects of the Muslim Travel Ban and the rescission of DACA had on international and undocumented students.

At both universities, undocumented student supporters were key in generating momentum for institutional change. Different structures (networks, committees, taskforces, councils) have been used in accordance with the political and campus climate. The willingness of key institutional actors to either welcome or ignore recommendations have also played a significant role in the task forces' organizational capacity. For many supporters, changes in state financial aid eligibility for undocumented students brought the possibility to make further claims for the university's investment in the infrastructure.

Policy changes

Changes in instate tuition policies and state financial aid also helped support the argument for the development of the undocumented student support infrastructure, especially the need for resource centers and staff positions. Cisneros and Valdivia (2020) note "policies provided mechanisms for practitioners to be able to track undocumented student data and advocate for student support services" (57). As discussed throughout this dissertation, ongoing

changes in instate tuition policies, financial aid criteria, and federal immigration policies (such as the implementation and the later threat of rescission of DACA) have affected the enrollment, retention, as well as the prospects of future employment and career opportunities for undocumented students. These new policies, Cisneros and Valdivia (2020) identify, have also helped advanced the justification for the demand for specialized and trained direct service providers, centers and resources for undocumented students.

Additionally, a rapidly changing policy context also helped justify the need for institutional investment in the undocumented student support infrastructure as well as the need for culturally competent professionals who could translate these policies between departments and department-student interactions. As Oseguera, Flores and Burciaga (2010) point out in their study of the impact of instate resident tuition rates among undocumented community college students in North Carolina, “the success and failure of the interplay between education and immigration policies is in the hands of not only policymakers but the practitioners most likely to encounter the realities of these students” (42). Student affairs staff are at a key position to translate federal and state policies into campus best practices. These professionals and institutions of higher education, Tapia-Fuselier (2019) observes, should have a capacity to serve, support and advocate for undocumented students, or as the author calls it, “undocu-competence”. Tapia-Fuselier notes, “[p]olicies alone cannot transform higher educational practices; this must happen alongside increased undocu-competence” (2019, 149). Therefore, policy changes can generate the support for not only resources for undocumented students, but also for staff positions of trained experts (undocu-competent staff) whose training allows them to contribute to best practices. Aside from the student organizing and policies that have helped catalyze visibility on undocumented student issues, philanthropic interest has also been a component to the undocumented student support infrastructure.

Philanthropic interest

In “Private Foundations and the Undocumented Student Movement in Higher Education” Kyle Southern (2019), finds that private foundations have played essential roles in helping construct the field of best practices, advocacy strategies, research and other resources in undocumented student resource centers. Similar to Southern, I also found that the infrastructure at my two sites of observation also depended on the support of philanthropic interest. One example is the Haas Foundation. In 2012 the foundation awarded 300,000 dollars towards the creation of the Robert D. Haas Resource Center, which became housed at the Cesar E. Chavez Student Center building at UC Berkeley (Harrison 2012). At the time, it was one of the most visible philanthropic gifts to the undocumented student support infrastructure in the form of a gift that would be used to establish a resource center.

There are other examples of how philanthropic interest has supported the infrastructure, even when it has not been directly through the investment of resource centers. When it has not been channeled through university resources, philanthropic interest has focused on funding individual students through direct financial support in the form of scholarships and fellowships. For instance, between 2006-2011, The Liberty Hill Foundation awarded nearly 1.2 million to undocumented students in the form of scholarships to students from Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Dominguez Hills, UCLA and UC Berkeley (Aldana-Taday 2011). At the graduate level, the Ford Foundation and the Paul and Daisy Soros Foundation have opened their eligibility criteria to undocumented students with DACA status. Recently, in April 2021, Jack Schuler, biotech entrepreneur and investor, announced a plan to invest 500 million over the next ten years in an initiative aimed at increasing enrollment of undocumented students in liberal arts colleges by awarding funds to institutions that pledge to increase their enrollment of undocumented immigrants and students with financial need to 6% over ten years (Tognini 2021). Since

Schuler's plan is a direct investment in campus initiatives that increase enrollment of undocumented students, his investment is a direct change in the undocumented student support infrastructure—particularly efforts focused on student recruitment and enrollment.

Philanthropic interest, along with policy changes, student activism and ally support, have been key components in the materialization undocumented student support infrastructure. One of the strongest components of the infrastructure has been the ways in which undocumented student supporters have connected their efforts to university missions and in the process have aligned with the terms that universities are able and willing to understand. Similarly, to how I have explored through different chapters in this dissertation, alignment with the university's missions or what I refer to as "terms of engagement", is a key discursive component for the incorporation of undocumented students.

Alignment with university missions

Alignment with university missions, or what I refer to previously in this dissertation as "the university's terms", have also been an important component in the creation of the undocumented student support infrastructure. As the literature and my interlocutors discussed, in order to generate support for undocumented student services and resources, they had to appeal to the missions of the university, reminding the university of its commitment to public education for *all*, and strategically adding to this statement "regardless of immigration status".

Appealing and aligning with university missions has looked differently according to the university campus. For instance, whereas undocumented student supporters at community colleges have referenced the "the open-access missions of community colleges as motivating factor for their work supporting undocumented students" (Southern 2019, 74-75); and Jesuit universities have called upon their commitments and "long tradition of their service, faith and

justice to align their missions with educating the descendants of immigrants"[57]; supporters at public research universities such as the University of California, have called upon the university's commitment to public education and to serving the people of the state, to generate support for the development of the infrastructure. Since many universities already have core missions that highlight the civic engagement and democratic promise of higher education, undocumented student supporters were able to align to the democratic promise of higher education by highlighting undocumented students as contributing and diverse civically engaged population and "as next leaders of the state" (Enriquez et al 2020, 29).

Some supporters have focused simply on the fact that undocumented students *are* university students. In an interview with an academic counselor and longtime supporter of undocumented students at UC Berkeley, the supporter identifies their advocacy for undocumented students, as an act of advocating for any other UC Berkeley student. The academic counselor, who at the time was working for a federally funded program but was considered a UC Berkeley employee, found it ridiculous to be prohibited from working with undocumented students seeking academic support in the early-mid 2000s. The supporter describes,

> I actually got into a little trouble because the director said to me 'Your salary and this office is being funded by the federal government and we don't want to have any issues with that so, please do not work with undocumented students here.' So, what I started doing was meeting with undocumented students during my lunch hour and after five… they were after all, UC Berkeley students (Undocumented student supporter, interview by author, March 20th, 2018).

[57] See for example the statement of support by Fr. Fitzgerald, President of University of San Francisco, at https://myusf.usfca.edu/sites/default/files/default/Undocumented/ajcu.pdf

This supporter, unable at the time to be in a position where he could debate his superior's orders, still kept true to the fact that his act of support was in alignment with the university's mission to not discriminate and treat all students equally.

Conclusion

As this section discussed, there are different contributing aspects to the making of the undocumented student support infrastructure. Student organizing, ally support, taskforces, policy changes, philanthropic interests, and alignment with university missions, can be interpreted as some of the key tenets to the network of actions by actors, policies, funding, and discursive maneuvers that have helped this infrastructure emerge and grow.

In the past five years researchers have analyzed the durability of this infrastructure and have found that most of its funding is unstable (see Macias Limon 2017). Some of the funding for these resources have come through philanthropic donations, and short-term institutional commitments of 1-, 3- and 5-year funding cycles. Undocumented student resource centers, staff positions, programing and resources are not available at every college campus in the US. There are more than 4,000 institutions of higher education in the US and only 59 of these have some form of undocumented student resource center. As of 2020 most undocumented student resource centers are concentrated in California, with at least one center established in Oregon, Washington, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Florida and New Jersey (Cisneros and Valdivia 2020).

Aside from the fact that the infrastructure is nascent and has been financially vulnerable to short-term gifts and grants, the infrastructure is also composed of staff who have reported burn-out and lack of institutional support. As Jodaitis, Arreola, Canedo and Southern (2016) note in their "Undocucollege Guide and Equity Tool 2016" publication,

> Often the small group of institutional advocates are hampered in their efforts because they are not given the appropriate positional standing and/or compensation for the work

> that they do. As a result, institutional advocates have had to work additional hours as volunteers or have had to work the equivalent of a part-time position within their full-time workload (Jodaitis et al. 2017, 6–7).

This observation is something also I heard in my interviews with interlocutors referencing either, lack of training support, having to do extra unpaid hours in order to best support students, and lack of opportunities for growth in their job positions. So even though I have discussed the infrastructure as an ongoing institutional project to support undocumented college students, this infrastructure is very unique (even rare) when contextualized at a national level. In the following section, I examine the different discourses and frames that have emerged from the undocumented student support infrastructure and its interaction with dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy.

Concepts of exceptionalism, deservingness, institutional protection and disciplined integration in the undocumented student support infrastructure

The fully racialized social and epistemological architecture upon which the modern university is built cannot be radically transformed by "simply" adding darker faces, safer spaces, better training, and a curriculum that acknowledges historical and contemporary oppressions…Universities will never be engines of social transformation. Such a task is the work of political education and activism.

--Robin Kelley

In his 2016 Boston Review forum piece "Black Study, Black Struggle", social movements historian, Robin D. G. Kelley, calls for the rebirth of political education in college campuses. His call is tailored to Black student activists, many of them organizing around the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, to "carefully consider the language that they use to frame their grievances" (Kelley 2016) in their demands for the university to be more hospitable for black

students. Kelley notes a tension—contradictory impulses within the Black student movement where reform and revolution, desires for belonging to and rejection of the university—constitute the Black student movement's frames and discourses. His advice is for students to be careful of their frames, as framing their demands through the lens of trauma (even though might offer a great entrance into activism) "is not the destination" and furthermore "may even trick activists into adopting the language of the neoliberal institutions they are at pains to reject" (ibid).

Kelley observes that in the aftermath of the resurrection of Black activism in college campuses and the Black Lives Matter national campaign, Black student activists have organized for the increase of measures for greater diversity, inclusion, cultural competency, safety and affordability such as more "safe spaces", mental health support, reduced/ free tuition, curricular changes and renaming of university buildings and monuments. Kelley notes that Black student activists' core demands converge with "the fundamental belief that the university possesses a unique teleology: it is supposed to be an enlightened space…but the pursuit of this promise is hindered by structural racism and patriarchy" (ibid). Kelley disagrees with this fundamental teleological belief of an enlightened institution and instead reminds students that at the end of the day, universities are not the engines of social transformation. Instead, it is the people who engage in political education and activism who are *the* engines of social transformation. He advises student activists to not seek love from an institution incapable of loving them (or loving anyone in that regard), but to turn that energy towards a love, study and struggle that transcends asking for recognition from the university.

Even though Kelley is directly engaging with Black student activists organizing for institutional transformation, I find this essay relevant to my discussion of undocumented student organizing, processes of institutionalization, and the forms of sanctioned protection that derive from institutionalization. As discussed above, these ongoing processes of institutionalization are also grounded on a teleological framework where undocumented student safety is the end goal.

I open this section with a quote by Kelley, as it offers the conceptual background that informs my discussion and analysis of the present frames in undocumented student advocacy. Like Kelley, in this section I discuss the ways in which frames and discourses that are used and (re)produced in advocacy for undocumented students are limited by the dominant neoliberal multicultural rationalities and how these frames might actually engage advocates into adopting the language of neoliberal institutions. I argue that undocumented students are presented in advocacy and in the literature as *deserving* and *exceptional* and thus worthy of *institutional protection* through *discipline integration*. This statement does not deny that this literature also supports institutional responses that also include promoting support for immigrant family units, student activism autonomy and centers the student as a holistic being with mental, emotional, development needs. Instead, this section reflects on what scholars, such as Kelley, have previously observed—that a tension exists between calls for belonging and autonomy, reform and revolution—this is a tension that we need to be comfortable discussing, as it may offer opportunities for readjustment in our frames, discourses, strategies that can lead to new coalitions and more radical visions.

To understand how these frames, discourses and strategies operate, I turn to the new and emerging literature on undocumented student advocacy that has developed simultaneously with the development of the undocumented student support infrastructure. As the infrastructure of undocumented student support sporadically forms in college campuses across the United States, new literature has emerged analyzing how to advance the institutionalization of undocumented student services (Jodaitis et al. 2017; Gildersleeve and Vigil 2015a), with some of this literature focusing on four-year campuses (Southern 2016; Sanchez Canedo and So 2015) and community colleges (Valenzuela et al. 2015). This literature has also focused on best practices for promoting staff competency on undocumented student issues (Alvarado Sanchez 2020; Mouris 2018; Cisneros and Cadenas 2017; Cisneros and Lopez 2016), with some of this

literature focusing on community colleges (Tapia-Fuselier 2019; Andrade 2019; Nienhusser and Espino 2017). Additionally, in the past five years, masters and doctoral students have also contributed to the literature by conducting program evaluations and case studies of specific undocumented student resource centers (Salcedo 2020; Rosas 2020; Ruiz 2020; Manalo-Pedro 2018; Macias Limon 2017).

Much of the previously mentioned literature emerges from the fields of student affairs and higher education. Critics of student affairs and higher education practices and knowledges have offered critical positions of the fields from *within* (Grande 2018; Atasay 2015; 2014; G. Bourassa 2019; G. N. Bourassa 2016; Smithers and Eaton 2019; 2019; Eaton and Smithers 2020). For instance, education scholars have highlighted higher education's complicity with and appetite for the governing logics and making of the university student as a *homo economicus* (Boggs 2013; Atasay 2015); the logics of absorption embedded in student development theory, student outcomes, and cultural centers in higher education (Smithers and Eaton 2019); and the fetishization of measurements and instrumentalization in student affairs practices (Eaton and Smithers 2020). In this section, I primarily draw upon the work of education scholar Sandy Grande (2018), whose critical examination of the liberal theories of justice as underlying within the politics of recognition that ultimately sustain relations of institutional oppression. I offer These positions and invitations help inform my analysis on how student affairs and higher education literature circulates its own taken for granted truths about the meaning of social justice, inclusion and equity.

Undocumented students as exceptional and deserving

As described in the introduction of this dissertation, advocates for undocumented students have focused on the "exceptional status"[58] of undocumented students. The

[58] For clarity, my understanding of "exceptional" approximates the definition associated with the figure of the "exceptional immigrant" as interpreted in immigration literature, instead of "student exceptionality" as understood in

uniqueness, vulnerability, and special status of undocumented students has been centered to advocate for tailored institutional responses that can better acknowledge and respond to the needs of this student population. In fact, undocumented students do encompass various social identities that are institutionally recognized to fall under those of vulnerable student populations; as they are often first-generation, English language learners, who come from working class backgrounds and are ethnic and racial minorities (Perez et al 2010; Gildersleeve and Hernandez 2010; Suarez Orozco et al. 2015). Advocates have emphasized the additional burden immigration status places on students, who already live at the intersection of other marginalized social identities. This has been a strategic way for advocates to tailor for student-centered responses that can better address the particular challenges undocumented students face which can include fear of deportation, inaccessibility to financial aid or loans, disproportionate rates of poor health, and few options for career development (Enriquez et al 2020). Ultimately, these positions are about undocumented students being institutionally *recognized*. From a critical educational view, we can interpret these demands for greater recognition as locked into the politics of recognition—where, as Sandy Grande (2018) points out, "the main contention is not the structures and systems of domination that give rise to the university", but rather, "the ability to fully participate in them (and thus have access into the inducements associated with its recognition)" (Grande 2018, 57).

Undocumented students have been increasingly recognized to be "a unique population" with challenges that affect their recruitment and retention in higher education (Peña 2021, 34). In a 2015 report by the US Department of Education, undocumented students were "identified as one of the most vulnerable groups served by US schools" (U.S. Department of Education

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educational psychology literature. Whereas "student exceptionality" often refers to that associated with a student's cognitive, intellectual and behavioral differences, my use of exceptionality refers to that associated with the ways in which immigrants are divided into categories of immigrants deemed exceptional (those who demonstrate potential to contribute to circuits of capital accumulation) and those who are not. Deservingness, as in deserving to be incorporated and invested upon, is justified for this exceptional immigrant figure.

2015, 3). A 2016 report by the Dreamer Ally Network at Cal Poly Pomona calls for “special focus and resources” to be allocated to serve undocumented students improve their low graduation rates (León et al. 2016, 16). It is worth noting that these reports that highlight the special, unique and vulnerable experiences of undocumented students also allude to the “resiliency” and “strengths” of undocumented students and that aside from being “uniquely at risk”, they are also “remarkably resilient” (Enriquez et al 2020, 8). In this way, advocates simultaneously balance communicating the uniqueness of undocumented students’ educational, emotional, social experiences with their potential for academic resilience, civic and political engagement. Thus, the narratives surrounding the call for the special circumstances of undocumented students have not fallen into a flat narrative of students’ unique and unfulfilled needs but have also pointed students’ unique strengths. Yet, central to these narratives is a call for the recognition of the uniqueness (unique challenges and unique strengths) of their experience.

Yet, this narrative of undocumented students’ uniqueness and vulnerability (as strategic and well-intended as it might be) along with its association to the resiliency of undocumented students, is not always beneficial to undocumented students. For instance, as various of the contributing authors in the 2020 volume *We are Not Dreamers: Undocumented Scholars Theorize Undocumented Life in the United States* point out, well-intentioned strategic tactics to garner public and political support can have negative consequences for immigrants as a whole. As one of the contributing writers in the volume, Gabrielle Cabrera, describes, “under neoliberal regimes, undocumented students must mobilize their lived experiences (which may include narratives of suffering and trauma) to make political claims” (2020, 67). These narratives of suffering and trauma can, as Robin Kelley reminds us, lock student activists and their advocates into framing their experiences and grievances through the lens of trauma. Even though trauma can be entrance into activism, Kelley reminds us, it is not itself a destination and can potentially lead student activists to “into adopting the language of the neoliberal institutions they are at

pains to reject" (Kelley 2018, 154). Under frames that minimize conversations and students demands to a personalized and collectivized matters of trauma, we might miss the opportunity to have deeper analysis of economic and social justice and collective struggle (Kelley 2016).

In the face of an increase in anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies, limited institutional resources, and low higher education enrollment and graduation numbers of undocumented students; undocumented students' supporters were left with using and exploring the *uniqueness, vulnerability and special status* of the undocumented student population to advocate for a transformation in the way institutions of higher education relate to their undocumented student populations. These strategic maneuvers have also helped advance reasoning explaining why undocumented students are *deserving* of inclusion. Their uniqueness deserves them with a proper institutional response towards educational inclusion.

Uniqueness and deservingness have been tethered in the advocacy for undocumented students and can be observed in the literature. For instance, in one of the first publications examining the history and development of undocumented student resource centers in higher education, student affairs practitioners Canedo Sanchez and So (2015) explore how the concept of "deserving students" has changed in higher education. They describe that "the idea of 'deserving students' has evolved over time—from white upper-class-legacy males to males from all socioeconomic classes, to women, to students of color" (Sanchez Canedo and So 2015, 474). Sanchez Canedo and So suggest that immigrants should be the newest added category of "deserving students". Under a teleological concept of ongoing inclusionary progress of higher education, the authors suggest that when facing oppositional views on whether undocumented students "belong" in universities, they focus on an "asset-based approach and highlight the talents, contributions, and insights undocumented students can bring to the university community" (475) furthermore, the authors suggest that "by accepting undocumented students, institutions will signal an international perspective on educating students and thus produce the

research, professionals and leaders, needed to ensure our global progress"(ibid). It is undocumented students' investment in their own human capital and their future potential to contribute to global progress, which places them at in a favorable light to be deserving of a college education.

The deservingness of undocumented students to belong and be served by their university is not only justified as a matter of their unique strengths (their social, positional, cultural capital), or as a move towards the democratic ideas of educational progress (a teleological understanding of higher education's direction towards democratic progress and inclusion), but also as the continuous responsibility universities have to students once they encourage students to apply, enroll and pay high rates of tuition. In this regard, education commentator Lily Mckeage notes,

> In essence, it is simply not enough for colleges and universities to accept undocumented students tacitly and passively. It is not enough to accept undocumented students but then charge exorbitant tuition. If an institution welcomes undocumented students in principle by allowing them to apply, then those students deserve the same level of targeted support that American citizens receive when it comes to the application process and financial aid -- not to mention student services once in college (McKeage 2016)

As McKeage states, once students are encouraged to apply, enroll and pay high tuition rates, they deserve the same level of targeted support than any other student receives, regardless of immigration status. Here, universities are invited to recognize that they are bounded to have the same relationship they have with other US citizen students. Undocumented students are deserving of the same college education US citizens have because, as McKeage suggests, they *pay* for that very education. Their transactional engagement as student/consumers of a college education, then *deserves* them the same quality education than any other student/consumer.

Undocumented students as deserving of institutional protection

Safe spaces are a key demand in undocumented student advocacy and are the very materialization of what institutional protection can look like. In order to make claims for safe spaces, scholars have positioned universities as crucial sites that can offer forms of protection for undocumented students. For instance, in the aftermath of the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and policies that were implemented during the Trump administration, Cisneros and Rivarola (2020) point out that as political discourse and policies further criminalize undocumented communities, "educational institutions will need to create more possibilities for psychological and emotional safety on campus" (660). According to the authors, these possibilities for safety on campus are exemplified by the environments of undocumented student resource centers which the authors claim, "foster and validate the campus the experiences of undocumented students inside and outside of the classroom, where not only students' sense of belonging is nurtured, but they are also challenged to achieve their academic and professional aspirations" (ibid). What is significant here is that under that logic, the university *can be or can facilitate* that source of personal/communal safety.

The undocumented student resource center, therefore, becomes a central site for advocacy because, from the dominant advocacy view, it offers the very materialization of undocumented student safety and can facilitate students' sense of belonging. In her analysis of a program evaluation of an undocumented student resource center, Norma Rosa Salcedo (2020), concludes that "universities must create a place of belonging that welcomes student participation in the decision process and call to action" (160) in creating undocumented student resources. Similarly, the Dreamer's Ally Network at Cal Poly Pomona 2016 report emphasizes the high need for a dreamer resource center as "it would provide students with a sense of belonging" (León et al. 2016, 17). The undocumented student centers are advertised as a site where sense of *belonging,* and *safety* can happen.

This emphasis on the materialization of undocumented student safety that the resource center represents comes out of what advocates and scholars have found from their interviews with undocumented students and undocumented student supporters. For example, in her dissertation case study of the role of an undocumented resource center (USRC) and its influence on the college journey of undocumented students, education scholar Rosa Olivia Rosas (2020) notes that her research participants shared that the undocumented student center "was a place where they felt a sense of belonging. The most common theme expressed by the participants in their responses regarding their description of the USRC was 'safe haven' 'home', and 'like a family' (130). Aside from creating a space a space that builds "a sense of belonging for students and the community" (133), Rosas notes that the USRC is described as a paradise. As stated by Jaime, one of Rosas' interviewees, the USRC is described as a "paradise". When asked about what the environment at the undocumented student center is like, Jaime is quoted responding, "Paradise. It's a really good place for me to be myself. I don't have to hide who I am. I don't have to hide my status. They make you feel at home. Make you feel that you belong" (Jaime quoted in Rosas 2020, 130).

If institutions are willing to have a designated undocumented student center, the arguments for the expansion of *safety* across all campus is then proposed. For instance, in his study of the importance of positive validation for undocumented students in community colleges, educator Luis Andrade (2019) refers to how one of his interviewees, who he provides the pseudonym of Alexander, was upset that his community college did not publicly adopt a sanctuary policy. According to Andrade, "Alexander was upset that the community college did not publicly adopt the title of 'sanctuary school'. He argued that administrators are 'cowards' because they do not publicly declare the entire institution as a safe space" (Andrade 2019, 11). As Andrade highlights, it's not just advocates, but undocumented students who really push forward the analysis that institutions should provide safety to them, as a resource center or by

naming themselves sanctuary campus. They both call for instructionally sanctioned forms of protection.

Institutional protection as facilitated by disciplined integration

My definition of disciplined integration draws from my understanding of how power is exercised. Power, in the Foucauldian sense, is not simply oppressive, coercive or violent (negative power), but it is also productive, inclusionary, disciplinary and integrative (positive power). This framework on how power works is crucial to understand why I interpret demands for institutionally sanctioned forms of protection (e.g., a resource center) as a form of positive power—of disciplined integration into the university's management of racialized student difference (Ferguson 2012). It has become commonsense to understand and situate the demands of students and advocates for institutional forms of protection as a matter of increasing student equity and inclusion. A framework that takes into consideration the ways in which universities are complicit in disciplined integration of difference helps us untangle how disciplined integration is operationalized and streamlined.

Advocates for the institutionalization of undocumented student services have designed multiple forms of knowledges, in the forms of protocols and instruments, for measurements and indicators that universities seeking to integrate their undocumented student populations can use. These forms of knowledge include models for the progressive incorporation of student support systems. For example, Jodaitis et al. (2016) and Southern (2016) list institutional models for undocumented student support and success as practices in three main institutional phases: foundational, emerging and comprehensive/institutionalizing. Each category indicates a different form of institutional capacity and readiness for services, support networks, climate culture and student resources. According to these models, the foundational phase undocumented student support services includes actions such as: "broadening awareness of the presence and needs of undocumented students on campus", "establishing undocumented

student organization", and "connecting inclusivity of undocumented students to institutional mission"; and the institutionalizing phase includes "conducting regular evaluation of undocumented student progress", "designating positions to provide ongoing support or establishing campus Dream/AB 540 student centers". Models such as Jodaitis et al and Kyle Sothern's provide a map and sense of direction for how, where and when institutional support and advocate efforts can be allocated.

Other models for undocumented student support at the institutional level include Valenzuela et al. (2015) proposal for Institutional Undocu-Competence, an institutional capacity framework aimed to inform community college efforts to better support growing undocumented student populations by "establishing institutional policies and procedures to reduce instances of exclusion and marginality" (89); "establish visible networks of allies to facilitate information and dissemination across campus" (90); and creating a welcoming campus environment with opportunities to develop personal and professional skills. Models such as the ones discussed by Jodaitis et al, Southern and Valenzuela et al. are both invested in expanding the abilities of institutions of higher education to better serve their undocumented student populations using new forms of institutionalized services.

These emerging models, practices, forms of knowledge and evaluative protocols, are not only limited to examining and suggesting ways of improving institutional capacity, but also the capacity of human resources: professional student affairs staff and to an extent, faculty. Student affairs scholars such as Jesus Cisneros and Anna Lopez (2016; 2020) have contributed to knowledge on best practices for educating staff working with undocumented students by developing, implementing and testing what they call "DREAMZone", a tripartite framework and educational intervention designed to provide counselors and other human service professionals with awareness (identifying and deconstructing preconceptions), knowledge (of background information and content knowledge of policies/laws) and skills (form rapport and implement

culturally responsive interventions) to work with undocumented students. Similar to DREAMZone, the Undocumented/DACAmented Status Competency (UDSC) model proposed by H. Kenny Nienhusser and Michelle M. Espino (2017) is tripartite framework including "*awareness* of undocumented and DACAmented students and their needs, opportunities that contribute toward UDSC *knowledge,* and UDSC *skills*" (1) to inform higher education practitioners' work. Both DREAMZone and UDSC are modeled after student affairs scholars Pope, Mueller, and Reynold's (2009; 2014) concept of *multicultural competency* which also centers awareness, knowledge and skills in building the capacity of student affairs practitioners working with multicultural student bodies. [59]

These sets of models, frameworks and recommendations for best practices are guided by the principle of moving towards systematically organizing spaces (such as undocumented student resource centers), developing human capital (training staff such as program directors and program coordinators), developing programs and resources towards the institutional incorporation, maintenance and replication of these practices. Furthermore, these models produce student affairs practitioners into specific types of subjects "the UndocuAlly", who are then assigned with a set of responsibilities and accountability: to be subjects who are knowledgeable, aware and skillful in working with undocumented students. As the undocumented student support infrastructure develops, discussions about how to increase forms of generating trustworthy student data, improve evaluation capacity of programs and resources, and hiring trained staff, are crucial in directing how the infrastructure will help facilitate the incorporation of undocumented students.

By institutionalizing forms of undocumented student support, sociality (the way undocumented students and undocumented student organizers relate to each other and the

[59] Multicultural competency is based on a tripartite model that emphasizes the student affairs professional's multicultural awareness (set of attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions and self-awareness necessary to serve a diverse student body), multicultural knowledge (such as knowledge of diverse cultures) and multicultural skills (such as those skills professional perform when working with diverse cultures.

university) is also changing. This change in social relations can be observed in the following quote by Hannah, the student affairs practitioner I introduced earlier in this chapter, who points out to the changes the undocumented student program has had on UCLA undocumented students. Hannah states,

> When this program [undocumented student center] wasn't here, IDEAS basically provided that support, right? They were functioning as, almost like an academic support, as an academic or student affairs department, because you could go to IDEAS, and it would be like okay. Where do I find scholarships? You know, they were the referring unit, right? But I think at the same time, that takes a lot of energy from students. Students can feel overwhelmed with the responsibilities. I mean, I'm sure the students too want to do other things. They want to be social, they want to have fun, they want to, you know, take care of themselves and each other (Hannah, personal interview by author, February 18th, 2015).

Hannah observes that with the implementation of the undocumented student resource center, IDEAS undocumented student organizers no longer have to serve as the main undocumented student "knowledge hub". In this excerpt, Hannah calls attention to the labor practices that shifted once IDEAS was no longer the main student resource and paid staff became responsabilized for providing information to undocumented students. By alleviating the responsibility of undocumented student organizers to know "everything-undocumented-student related", Hannah observes, undocumented students could be "students" and the responsibility of guiding students fell instead to paid university employees, which also led to the development of a new workforce: the undocumented student peer staff and the recently graduated undocumented student expert student affairs staff.

The undocumented student peer facilitator and the recently graduated undocumented student expert student affairs staff embodies what Roderick Ferguson (2017) notes as "the

ombudsman method", a method of developing diversity staff in the aftermath of campus unrest in the 1960s. Citing Richard Nixon's 1970s Report of *the President's Commission on Campus Unrest,* Ferguson analyzes how the report proposed new ways to handle the grievances that student activists put before the university. According to the report, the ombudsman is "an individual who acts as a mediator and fact-finder for students, faculty members, and administrators. To be successful, the ombudsman must have both great autonomy and support of the university president" (*President's Commission on Campus Unrest* cited in Ferguson 2017, 25). As the report notes, the ombudsman are trusted administrators, and "because these administrators have the confidence of the students, they can suggest practical modifications of student demands without automatically being branded as 'sell-outs'" (ibid). With that entrusted function, Ferguson notes, "[t]he job of the ombudsman was to take demands that might push against the university's institutional order and bring them within that order" (ibid). Similarly, the undocumented student peer facilitator and the recently graduated undocumented student expert served as the eyes of the university administration through the bodies of entrusted staff whose "seeming autonomy and racial identity" could be used "as resources for rather than hindrances to the administration's efforts to manage activism and conflict" (ibid). The undocumented student peer staff and the recently graduated undocumented student expert staff could now be included as trusted administrators' members who could accomplish diversity management and the pacification and bureaucratization of student activism.

Yet, in my interviews, I also heard the ways in which this new staff shared conscious understanding of how the university administration was using their bodies to manage student activism. From the start of her position, Yolanda, the undocumented student support staff and former undocumented student organizer I introduced previously, knew that student organizers trusted her because she had been part of IDEAS as an undergraduate and had a strong record as a student leader and advocate. Yolanda notes how within months of her new job as a student

affairs staff specialized in undocumented student issues, one of her higher ups began to inquire about the state of undocumented student organizing. Yolanda shares,

> It was interesting because the very first month I was scheduled a lunch with [supervisor's name] and [they] was checking on me on how my position was going. It was interesting because the questions [they] would ask me were all about my relationship with students from IDEAS and how I was working with IDEAS and everything was about IDEAS. I just felt like: Are you trying to spy on IDEAS through me? Because I'm not going to share any information. (Yolanda, personal interview with author, July 10th, 2009).

Yolanda came to realize early in her job position that there was tension between what her job implied, which was to support undocumented students, and what *she could actually do.* Yolanda shares the disconnect between her job position and her abilities to actually carry on her job in this way,

> I started the job, and everything seemed really cool in the beginning, except when you start advocating on behalf of students and you really start putting yourself out there and highlight the importance of bringing students to a conversation. It took me a little while to understand why it's that. In many cases they actually didn't want to have student voices in the conversations. For me this is what I am here for, my job was always a reminding them, my job is to provide support for students, I'm here to help students advocate for resources. That was not something that they were actually looking for. There was a legacy of IDEAS always advocating, because of the advocacy we had a lot of resources. Even the implementation of AB540 it was the advocacy of IDEAS in 2002. The undocumented student center that exists, it was undocumented student advocacy that exist, conversations they had with the former vice chancellor, Janina Montero. The funding that they received in 2015 it was also student advocacy. They [administration] knew that [undocumented student] advocacy was strong and if [undocumented student

organizers] requested, [administration] had to respond. They knew that if there was a gap in these resources, they needed to find them, have a way and figure out.

Yolanda demonstrates an awareness that student activism played a role in institutional transformation and that the administration (meaning her direct supervisor) were carefully watching new directions in student activism, trusting that Yolanda would be their eyes in this sphere. Yet, during her position, Yolanda learned to navigate a careful balance between supporting students and reporting to her supervisors.

Aside from the development of a new expert workforce, in my observations I noticed the continuous celebration of institutional symbolic commitments that could show the positive performance of the university. Across the undocufield, I heard positive feedback by student affairs practitioners on how institutional resources and centers were key to successfully supporting undocumented students. For instance, during the Undocumented Student Welcome Reception in October 2014, a student affairs officer delivered a speech welcoming undocumented students into a better university campus—a campus where "we now have [undocumented] students living in the hill". By this, the student affairs practitioner proudly emphasized that some undocumented students could now afford paying the price of on-campus housing—meaning, undocumented students' ability to be incorporated into the university housing market was discussed as a measurement and indicator of increasing student equity. Yet, these measures of student incorporation and progress fall short from exploring how within a context of increasing austerity, college education has increasingly become inaccessible to working-class students. A statement that emphasizes the successful incorporation of some undocumented students into the university housing market reveals the ways in which individual stories of success are codified to indicate campus climate progress, dismissing the structural context of state and institutional austerity measures that have increasingly transferred financial crisis into individual student debt.

Models for institutional capacity, staff competency training, as well as student affair practitioners' opinions about the progressive nature of their work and their function in expanding the "student experience" onto undocumented students, fit well within the (neo)liberal multicultural rationalities of universities. The terms of engagement of these models engage with metrics and indicators of equity, inclusion and diversity. In these models, there is no room for a discussion that examines the university as a manager of racialized bodies and as a complicit institution in the management of racialized debt, labor exploitation, racial injustice and US imperial projects. Cultural competency, teleological progress models, systematic integration of racial others, are the key concepts that shape and limit this form of dominant undocumented student advocacy.

On different ways of thinking about the undocumented student support infrastructure

I am personally grateful for the encouragement undocumented student supporters offered me when I was attending UC Berkeley (2007-2011) as an undocumented undergraduate student. Their campus advocacy, personal commitment and words of encouragement helped me graduate from college. Many of these undocumented student supporters continued to support me at UCLA and provided me direct services and resources during the four years I was an undocumented graduate student (2013-2017). Their support and collaboration with me as a researcher played a key role in my research design and data collection.

This chapter is part of my personal commitment to think through some of the personal, professional and institutional challenges many of these undocumented supporters face in the work they do in establishing institutionalized forms of undocumented student support. I do not attempt to dismiss the creative forms of negotiation that comes with occupying and strategizing from spaces where these supporters and advocates serve as ombudsmen, code switchers,

mediators, and as Ahmed (2012) puts it “institutional plumbers”, meaning, those diversity workers who specialize in knowing and addressing the various blockages within an institution. As Chen (2013), Gildersleeve and Vigil (2015b), Valenzuela et al (2015), Southern (2016), Manolo Pedro (2018a), Cisneros and Valdivia (2020) and others have explored in their research, undocumented student supporters are crucial in creating a welcoming campus environment and providing a strong backing to the advocacy efforts for undocumented students. As I have pointed out throughout this dissertation, undocumented student supporters are often in a position where they have to meet the university with its own terms—terms that the university recognizes, values, and invests on. These supporters are in a position where they have to align their strategies with university missions that promote inclusive education through the institutionally sanctioned neoliberal apparatus of the “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion” framework. Put simply, dismantling racial capitalism, white supremacy and the abolishment of universities (as the University Abolition Studies project would invite us to think through) are not within the terms that the university can, is able or willing to engage with.

This chapter invites the reader to step out of the cultural and ideological rationalities that shape *and limit* contemporary forms of dominant undocumented student advocacy as well as the scholarship that has accompanied these forms of advocacy. If we think about the various ways that critical education scholarship reasons through the constructs of equity, inclusion, diversity and social justice, we might be able to move forward with new frameworks that do not equate “inclusion” as a steppingstone towards “social” or “racial justice”. There is a fundamental difference between a project guided by goals for collective liberation and a project guided by incorporation of minorities into racial capitalism. We could be more honest about the limitations of our advocacy frameworks—advance pragmatic strategies that move forward material, ideological and cultural shifts, but not disguise them under the idea that these strategies are intrinsically emancipatory or to be celebrated. There might be a visible material change (i.e., the

increased enrollment, retention and graduation of undocumented students) without any real challenge to the racialized economic logics that sustain the dehumanization of immigrants in the first place. The increase of equity does not equate justice; and as researchers and advocates we should be honest about that. This honesty requires a careful analysis of our terms of engagement and discourse.

There are several limitations that supporters of undocumented students should be aware of as they (re)envision their understandings of "inclusion". As Eli Meyerhoff (2019) explores in *Beyond Education: Radical Studying for Another World,* education is one among many alternatives modes of study tied to a variety of world-making projects. Our work as critical educators, Meyerhoff reminds us, is to deromanticize education (which he differentiates from the concept of *study*) and recognize it as the colonial-capitalist institution it has always been. Meyerhoff provokes the following, "if we view the education-based mode of study as inherently bound up with the colonial-capitalist world-making project, then expanding *inclusion* in the public higher education system might actually be counter to decolonization" (Meyerhoff 2020, 4, emphasis mine). I interpret this as an invitation for critical educators to think about how we must transcend the taken for granted idea of inclusion and education as a taken for granted social good. This invitation can be particularly uncomfortable for education advocates who are motivated to support undocumented students enroll, stay and graduate from higher education—and they see this as intrinsically good and desirable, as a sign of educational justice. If undocumented students face multiple challenges (financial, legal, emotional) in their pursuits to higher education, then to speak of anything that compromises their inclusion in higher education, could be wrongfully interpreted as a form to sustain the status quo.

Yet, my invitation is not to exclude undocumented students from higher education, but to consider what are the taken for granted narratives that often circulate about a university education. This might require a different interpretation of the university, one that for instance,

centers the roots of slavery and settler colonialism in the origins of the US university and confronts head-on the ways US universities have actually expanded and intensified settler-colonial capitalism's process of accumulation (Boggs et al. 2019). Critical education scholar, Sharon Stein (2018), reminds us that in higher education, continued *inclusion* is often "premised upon furthering existing institutional values and interests and thus implies the potential risks to those who might challenge or interrupt those values and interests" (909). Since inclusion *needs* a commitment to institutional values and interests and depends on a fetishization of and capitalizing of difference, we need to be clear about how concepts such as "inclusion" do not give us the vocabularies needed to properly discuss projects that engage with ideas of liberation or freedom.

The undocufield is beginning to circulate an appetite for institutionalization of student support through the certification of allyship. Yet, as a UC Berkeley student affairs practitioner and supporter of undocumented students with ten years of institutional memory told me during our 2015 interview,

> There's an UndocuAlly movement, for example, that certifies who's an ally and who's not. But you know, there's a lot of us who were in Immigrant Student Issues Coalition, we are not undocu allies and that's hard to believe, right? That we're not undocu allies because we haven't got through the program, even though we developed the program, you know? (Undocumented Student Affairs Administrator, interview by author, March 19th, 2015)

The student affairs practitioner turns to the irony of certification—of the institutional practices that sanction allyship and what those practices obscure about the commitment, love and care of people who might never be certified as Undocuallies, but who have for years demonstrated commitment to undocumented students and immigrant families. For those who have been doing the work of supporting undocumented students the certification may be of use, as it might give

them additional and new information about emerging resources and opportunities that they can connect undocumented students. However, for the university I understand the certification to serve as a performative indicator of diversity initiatives. Beyond the professionalization of undocumented student services and the instrumentalization of allyship, many supporters with years of advocating, caring and encouraging undocumented students, continue to reason through what these forms of institutional sanctioned protection and new diversity management of undocumented students might mean to grassroots organizing, community-led movements, solidarity efforts and anti-capitalist commitments. As the student affairs practitioner in the beginning of this chapter states, "*This* was the story of movements and community organizing". Thus, we might need to reframe our advocacy frameworks in ways that center collectivity and the legacy of social movements. What gets lost when individual undocumented students living in expensive student housing are elevated as an indicator of UCLA's record of supporting undocumented students? The story of social movements and community organizing—the story of collectivity. This might require a continuous and sustained commitment to a politics of refusal. As Quechua scholar, Sandy Grande, notes in her essay, "Refusing the University", to take a politics of refusal against the university requires a need to commit to collectivity "a refusal to the cycle of individualized inducements—particularly, the awards, appointments, and grants that require complicity of allegiance to institutions that continue to oppress and dispossess" (Grande 2018, 61); a commitment to reciprocity and a commitment to mutuality "the development of social relations not contingent upon the imperatives of capital" (ibid).

Chapter Four: Undocumented student difference with(out) separability

I think there's a few tiers to the undocumented experience. I think that the way you are going to experience the university will be very tied to the tiers that the government has created.

--Gabriela

For five consecutive years, Gabriela, a former undocumented graduate student, would volunteer to design and present a workshop on financial aid options for undocumented immigrants pursuing graduate school at the UCLA IDEAS Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference (IYEC).[60] Gabriela explains how she would often start her presentations by drawing "the matrix", a table describing how each category in the matrix determined an aspect of the prospective student's potential accessibility to financial resources in graduate school. Those at the intersection of eligibility for in-state financial aid and work authorization were the ones who, she says, "really had the golden ticket", a category with more accessibility to financial aid, educational resources and employment outcomes. Gabriela's matrix was based of the funding eligibility, where each category outside of the "golden ticket" signifies a different degree of resource accessibility and funding strategy for the prospective graduate student.

Gabriela describes explaining "the matrix" and "the golden ticket" as a very troubling experience. On one hand, she could share her knowledge of growing resources for eligible undocumented immigrants to pursue graduate school (for example: extramural and institutional fellowships, employment opportunities, internships, and legislation that allows undocumented immigrants to pursue professional certifications). Yet, there would always be at least one attendee who was left out from those opportunities, because they aged out of eligibility for

[60] The Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference is an annual educational and legal resource and information conference organized by IDEAS for immigrant youth and their families.

DACA, did not meet all the requirements to qualify for in-state tuition, among many other factors. Gabriela expresses that it was difficult to tell someone that some arbitrary aspects of their experiences as immigrants would make them face more obstacles in their educational journey relative to a person sitting next to them. These experiences served as reminder of how a variety of laws, policies and institutional protocols constitute what Gabriela refers to as "the tiers to the undocumented student experience".

In the chapter's opening epigraph, Gabriela reflects on what she calls "the tiers to the undocumented student experience" as the outcome of government processes that differentiate immigrants into "tiers" or categories, with each category having different implications for the type of educational experiences and career opportunities the undocumented immigrant will have. I take Gabriela's observations as a framework to continue examining how processes of immigrant differentiation, along with neoliberal multicultural rationalities as experienced in a university setting, generate different figures of the undocumented student, each with different degrees of deservingness and rights. Even though undocumented immigrants may qualify into these immigrant social positions based on arbitrary differences (i.e. being enrolled in a California high school 3 years instead of 2 and thus qualifying for AB540; or being present in the US at the age of 16 instead of 17 and thus qualifying for DACA), these differences become more prominent as they are experienced relationally among undocumented students. These relational experiences can lead to comparisons, assumptions, and misunderstandings about each other.

As these processes of immigrant differentiation are experienced *relationally* among undocumented students, so are the moments of possibility for connection. Gabriela recalls her experience volunteering at the UCLA IDEAS Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference, a student-led and student-organized effort to distribute resources and information to immigrant families, immigrant students and their supporters, in and outside of UCLA. IYEC is a project that recognizes the different lived experiences and conditions of immigrant families and aims to

present information that will be useful to a variety of immigrant community members. It is in projects like IYEC that I identify an *undocumove*, a strategy for struggle—the engagement of "difference without separability"[61], immigrants with a variety of social positions, social capital and forms of privilege, coming together to support each other as part of the shared experience and forms of knowledge that emerge from living in this country as undocumented immigrants.

The argument and chapter map

This chapter argues that universities are sites that sustain and perpetuate structures of immigrant differentiation; that these systems of immigrant differentiation and stratification are experienced relationally among undocumented students; and that in the midst of these mechanisms, undocumented student organizers cultivate practices that seek to destabilize the ways in which neoliberal multicultural rationalities separate immigrants into different categories of social value. These systems of immigrant differentiation function in tandem with the forms of stratification embedded in the rationalities of racial capitalism and US education. This chapter has two main sections and a short introductory section that help support this argument.

First, my argument builds on contemporary scholarship that investigates how university policies help construct and mediate the consequences of immigrant illegality. In this way, universities are sites that sustain and perpetuate structures of immigrant differentiation. Enriquez et al. 2019 study on how federal, state and institutional policies mediate illegality and influence the educational experiences of undocumented students supports Gabriela's observation—the ways in which students are differentiated in a matrix of educational opportunities leads to an array of future possibilities in their accumulation of capital. In this short

[61] Here I draw on Fred Moten's engagement with feminist Black theorist and artist, Denise Ferreira da Silva (2016) who suggests that we exist in a condition of "difference without separability". Moten builds upon Ferreira da Silva, to state that we are "entangled, vulnerable, open, non-full, more than and less than [ourselves]" (as cited in Stein 2018, 140). I take Moten's insights on the fantasy of self-determination to think through how this condition of entanglement requires an ethical and political responsibility beyond the self.

section, I discuss how federal, state laws, and university institutional protocols, produce and sustain forms of immigrant differentiation that are then further constituted and perpetuated by neoliberal multicultural rationalities.

Second, similarly to Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera's (2015) insights on how undocumented students navigate the "paradox of performing exceptionalism" at elite universities, I also suggest that concepts of "deservingness", "exceptionality" and "specialness" are negotiated at the intrapersonal and interpersonal level. For undocumented student organizers, negotiation of these concepts brings to the forefront the lived aspects of neoliberal multicultural rationalities. These neoliberal multicultural rationalities simultaneously frame undocumented students as "entitled" to an elite education, at the same time they are met with the realities of racialization and other exclusionary practices in higher education. In coming to terms with these neoliberal multicultural rationalities that form part of higher education, undocumented student organizers confront disappointment, not only at the university, but also with each other. In this section, I present a relational analysis to understand how my research participants make meaning of the significance of undocumented student organizing when other undocumented student peers disengage from organizing. Furthermore, I discuss how in understanding their own experiences as undocumented students and student organizers, many research participants would speculate about a projected undocumented student figure whose fear, anxiety and apathy would prompt them towards self-regulation and disciplined integration into the university. This section investigates how these ideas about *other* undocumented students create an affective site of both empathy and resentment. In this section I discuss the ways my interlocutors refer to their speculations *of other* undocumented students as an indicator for understanding *their own* immigrant social position in a relational form.

In the third section, I demonstrate how *undocumoves* grounded in collective memory, intergenerational relationality and transformative politics challenge the forms of immigrant

differentiation that emerge in a university setting. I discuss how student-designed resource guides, student-organized conferences, student-led campus tours, and student-led vigils are examples of practices that student organizers do in order to generate an alternative vision of solidarity among undocumented immigrants on campus and with immigrant communities beyond campus. These are projects and moments that encapsulate the creative ways that undocumented student organizers engage with. Conceptually, I draw on Denisse Ferreira da Silva's (2016) conceptualization of nonlocality in *The Entangled World*, the inescapable entanglement of our social condition, to identify what I call "immigrant difference without separability".

Introduction to the "tiers to the undocumented student experience": Universities as sites of immigrant differentiation

The 2019 American Community Survey estimates undocumented students as 2% of the total US higher education student population and according to United We Dream only about 5-10% of undocumented students who graduate high school go on to pursue higher education (United We Dream 2015; US Census Bureau 2019). This small percentage of undocumented students enrolled in higher education highlights a variety of structures and systems that work together to differentiate undocumented immigrants and exclude them from higher education even before they enroll. At the intersection of income inequality, governments' disinvestment in public K-12th schools, the material consequences of the school to prison pipeline, and the persistence of systemic racism, these are all intersecting structures and systems that work to differentiate immigrant students *even before* they enroll in higher education.

When undocumented students *actually* do enroll in higher education, their educational and life experiences are shaped at the intersection of federal, state and institutional laws, policies and procedures. Even though undocumented students, like any other undocumented

immigrant, are subject to federal policies and laws; state and local governments have the authority to enact legislation that regulates the lives of their constituents, including undocumented immigrants (Varsanyi 2011; Motomura 2008; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2015). For some localities and states, these policies have had positive outcomes on the lives of immigrant communities.[62] Enriquez et al.'s 2019 study argues that similarly to state and local authorities, educational institutions are also sites intervening in immigration policy because "[universities] determine if and how they will incorporate undocumented students" (Enriquez et al. 2019, 682). "Educational institutions", the authors conclude, "work alongside federal and sub-federal governments to intervene in immigration policy and mediate illegality" (683). Building on Enriquez et al. argument that universities mediate illegality, I also understand universities as sites that mediate illegality and thus help create and perpetuate forms of immigrant differentiation.

These forms of immigrant differentiation can be best observed in the ways federal, state and institutional laws and policies create different forms of "undocumented student categories"—such as those in the table discussed previously. With the passage of AB540 in 2001, undocumented students meeting criteria were granted with an exemption to pay resident tuition at California public higher education institutions. In-state tuition is in itself a significant support for eligible students, as it allows students to pay lower tuition fees (Heif 2004). With the passage of the California Dream Act (Assembly Bill 130 and Assembly Bill 131), students who met the AB540 criteria became eligible to apply for state financial aid. In 2014, undocumented students became eligible to access student loans through Senate Bill 1210. SB 1210 created the DREAM Loan Program allowing undocumented students enrolled in participating four-year public universities, to receive up to $4,000 in loans per year and to borrow a total of $20,000

[62] For instance, on the pro-immigrant side, some of these policies include municipal identification cards, driver's licenses, limiting cooperation with federal immigration authorities, and in-state tuition.

(Enriquez, Burciaga, and Cardenas 2019). These programs have supported the expansion of federal financial resources to a growing number of undocumented students.

Not all undocumented students have access to financial resources that AB540, AB130, AB131 and SB 1210 offered. At the IDEAS 11th Annual Educators Conference at UCLA in the spring of 2019, two IDEAS members presented a workshop on financial aid for undocumented students to an audience of higher education and high school educators. One of the presenters, Julian, spoke about his own educational journey as an undocumented student who did not complete high school in California, and thus did not qualify for AB540 status, and by extension, the California Dream Act.

During the presentation Julian explained he migrated to the US as an adult and worked in the service industry to sustain himself throughout community college. When he transferred to UCLA, he continued to work in the service sector to sustain himself and pay the costs of his education. He became an active student organizer in IDEAS, doing advocacy work in and outside of campus. In 2016, Julian shared his testimony with California Senator Ricardo Lara, as a way to advocate on behalf of non-AB540 undocumented students. At the time, Senator Lara was working towards drafting a bill that would allow students, similar to Julian, a path to being exempted from nonresident tuition—Senate Bill 68.

Between 2014 and 2017, two bills were passed in the California that expanded in-state tuition to undocumented students who did not meet AB540 original requirements. Assembly Bill 2000 (AB2000) passed in 2014, increased eligibility for students who attended a California elementary or secondary for a cumulative total of 3 years or more. In his last academic year, Julian became a beneficiary of Senate Bill 68 (SB68), passed in 2017, which changed the criteria for students eligible for a nonresident tuition exemption by including attendance at California Community Colleges and attainment of an associates degree. By 2017, these two state bills increased accessibility for instate tuition to undocumented students.

In addition to these California legislative changes in in-state tuition and financial aid (AB540, AB130, AB131, AB2000, SB1210 and SB68), DACA created a new path for temporary status with work authorization and temporary relief from deportation. Among some of the benefits of DACA are: increased wages and employment, improved mental health outcomes, and reduced the number of immigrants living in poverty (Abrego 2018; Gonzales, Terriquez, and Ruszczyk 2014; Hainmueller et al. 2017; Venkataramani et al. 2017; Patler and Cabrera 2015; Pope 2016). For undocumented students who were also DACA recipients, the benefits of DACA extended into their educational experiences as well. With work authorization and a social security number, undocumented students could now access employment and internship opportunities that could further enrich their educational experiences and prospects after graduation (Abrego 2018). DACA recipients also found higher paying jobs that better matched their education with better working conditions (Patler and Cabrera 2015).

Aside from legislative and federal policies, institutional policies also had an effect in changing the educational experiences of undocumented students at the University of California. UC President Napolitano funding commitment to support the development of undocumented student resources, included allocations for a DREAM loan program, student services, graduate fellowships, and the UC Immigrant Legal Services Center (UC Office of the President 2013; 2016).[63] Some of this funding became directly accessible to students who qualified for in-state tuition *only* (such as scholarships and awards); whereas other resources were created and open to all undocumented students, regardless of "in-state tuition status" (such as immigration legal

[63] As stated by the University of California Office of the President website, the 8.4 million dollars were distributed as: UC's DREAM Loan Program received $5 million per year for at least three years—a program that makes student loans available to undocumented students, who are not eligible for federal aid. Students will repay their loans back into the DREAM Loan fund. Student services staff coordinators and targeted undergraduate and graduate fellowships, as well as other financial support such as funds for textbooks, were allocated $2.5 million per year. UC's Undocumented Legal Services Center received $900,000 per year. For more information visit: https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/press-room/uc-president-napolitano-proposes-multi-year-support-undocumented-students

services administered through the UC Immigrant Legal Services Center). It is important to note how with the implementation of such state mandated tuition policies, “in-state tuition status”, becomes in a way its own identifier for educational access to undocumented students, and not solely citizenship status.

Given that not all undocumented students qualified for the variety of available programs, some undocumented student organizers and advocates continued to mobilize campus-oriented efforts to create ways of supporting students who did not qualify for work authorization or in-state tuition. An example is these initiatives is the Instructional Opportunities Committee (IOC), which was a UC coalitional student-led effort by graduate and undergraduate students who were designing a pilot program for graduate students without work authorization to be compensated for their teaching labor. The coalition proposed several options to the University of California. In 2016, a pilot class and fellowship program at UC Riverside was implemented with the intention to support primarily graduate students without work authorization. This pilot program intended to support undocumented graduate students to be compensated for their teaching labor without compromising the University with federal laws and restrictions on employing undocumented immigrant labor.[64]

As this chapter explores, an undocumented student’s social position within their intersection of these various laws and policies at the federal, state and institutional level, indicates a different undocumented student “category”. Systems of categorization, such as these, stratify students into different categories of social value and thus contribute to perpetuating ideas of what racialized multicultural immigrant subject is adequate subject to invest on. These categories contribute to the fabrication of “privileged racial *immigrant* subjects”, which I consider not only a byproduct of federal, state and institutional laws, policies and

[64] I learned about this pilot opportunity during my interview data collection from one of the program designers. There is no written record on the pilot.

procedures, *but also*, a byproduct of a set of rationalities, where social value and resources are allocated to particular populations according to their legibility and potential for incorporation into racial capitalist projects of accumulation. In the case of undocumented students, their subject positions as noncitizen, young, ethnically diverse, English speaking, ofted US raised, educated immigrants, positions them in a category of relatively more social value, than other undocumented immigrant populations.

It is also crucial to remember that these different "categories" are not fixed; in fact, DACA beneficiaries could sometimes fall out of status and then be without work authorization for a temporary time, compromising their employment when they are out of status. Yet, even though these categories are not fixed, some students benefited more than others from the intersection of being in certain categories, and thus, could then take more advantage of existing university resources.[65] My research participants demonstrated keen understandings of how these differences impacted one's expectations to access to university resources. For those outside of the category of the "golden ticket", there was an understanding that one's position in the university was marginal as opposed to those with the "golden ticket" who came to expect a certain level of access to university resources. As discussed below, these expectations played an important role in how undocumented students experienced their own position in these categories relative to each other.

Immigrant differentiation as experienced in the undocustudent world

In their study of undocumented students' educational experiences at an elite Northeast university, Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera's (2015), found that undocumented students navigate

[65] I was a beneficiary of many of the new programs instituted by the University of California. I benefited from free legal services and funds offered through UC Immigrant Legal Services; transportation scholarships and meal vouchers offered through the Undocumented Student Program; and received three university fellowships open to AB540 students through UCLA Graduate Division. As a DACA recipient I had work authorization and was employed by my department to teach as a teaching assistant. I navigated UCLA as an undocumented student with "the golden ticket"—work authorization and in-state tuition which qualified me for institutional resources, employment opportunities and funding for almost four academic years.

what the authors call the “paradox of performing exceptionalism”. According to the authors, undocumented students experience a complicated tension between conflicting categorizations of social value (“deserving” vs. “undeserving”). Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera state that “despite the ‘entitlement’ of their elite education” undocumented students “continue to be racialized as undocumented students of color” (46). Thus, in the context of the Ivy League, undocumented students face both efforts to assimilate to overcome exclusion, by becoming Americanized, “within a broader educational structure that disempowers them” (46). Similarly, to Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera, I also agree that elite educational institutions (in the case of this study not an Ivy League institution, but a prestigious public university) do create conditions for undocumented students to feel simultaneous belonging and exclusion. This, however, I do not consider to be a paradox. A paradox implies contradiction, whereas a conceptual framework such as neoliberal multiculturalism, implies the reasonable possibility for *belonging* and *exclusion* to exist simultaneously. This is because racial capitalism relies precisely on social conditions where forms of belonging and exclusion occur *simultaneously.* Extraction of social and economic value from a racialized person does not always require labor exploitation, it can also be through the symbolic value that a racialized person provides to an institution (e.g., in the form a racialized body supports metrics for diversity and inclusion desired outcomes).

Drawing from Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera’s observations on how undocumented students at elite institutions negotiate indicators of social value, in the following pages I discuss the ways my research participants discussed the simultaneous messages of “deservingness”, “specialness”, “exceptionality” and “entitlement” that are circulated in the undocustudent world. I primarily focus on how these concepts are circulated in undocumented student organizing—as they allow us to observe how some research participants project an undocumented student figure whose fear, anxiety and apathy prompts them towards self-regulation and disciplined integration into the university.

“They just want to be comfortable”: The tiers of privilege in undocumented student organizing

In the aftermath of 2016, fear and anxiety circulated across the affective landscape of the undocustudent world. After the presidential election and inauguration of Donald Trump, increasing number of incidents of harassment and hate crimes against women, immigrants, LGBTQ, BIPOC, Muslim and Jewish communities followed. These hate crimes occurred along a rise of white supremacist, fascist, sexist discourse that became normalized in different public spheres: from virtual forums to the White House. Among the many fears and anxieties expressed, many of my research participants were suspecting early on that DACA would not last more than a year after the inauguration of Trump.

Fear and anxiety operate as assumptions about what the future holds—and many of my research participants believed that the future was not favorable to them. More often I witnessed a back and forth between a type of “educated hope” (Bloch et al. 1986) and the immobilizing aspects of fear and anxiety. This section does not assess if “fear and anxiety” or “hope and action” were the determining aspects of how undocumented students responded to the increasing hostile environments they were living under (see for example: Gonzales and Chavez 2012). Instead, this section discusses how in understanding their own immigrant social position, undocumented students discussed their experiences in relation to *other* undocumented students. These *other* undocumented students are then projected as self-regulating figures who integrate themselves into the university.

Alejandra, a former IDEAS co-chair, was eligible to receive instate tuition through AB540, but was not a DACA beneficiary. She became a member of IDEAS since her first year of college and attended meetings and volunteered at events and fundraisers. In her third year, Alejandra was a fundraising committee co-chair. She describes how some IDEAS members identified her as a responsible and reliable leader. Alejandra remembers stepping into the

IDEAS co-chair position after being personally invited by graduating IDEAS leadership members to run for co-chair. Half-jokingly, she shares, it was because of her personality and willingness to help others she was sought after as a qualified co-chair candidate. She says she was "seen as a responsible person, like a mom, or something like that" (Alejandra, personal interview by author, June 20th, 2019). As a gendered caring figure, Alejandra became an ideal person to carry on the leadership responsibilities of a co-chair.

During the summer before the 2016-2017 academic year started, Alejandra and her co-chair were discussing plans to schedule an academic year with a variety of partnership opportunities for IDEAS members to collaborate with community organizations outside of UCLA. She recalls how within months of being a co-chair, the election of Trump ignited fear and stress among IDEAS members. Alejandra remembers this time as a time of "a lot of fear and running around"—a disorienting period in her personal life and the life of IDEAS members. I asked her to share her views on how IDEAS membership reacted to the presidential election and inauguration of Trump, seeking to understand the implications of this political moment on undocumented student organizing.

Similar to other research participants, Alejandra shares personal frustration towards the decreasing amount of political mobilization from IDEAS membership and other undocumented students across campus after 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as president. She speaks to how fear determined the ways in which undocumented students were mobilizing on campus and speculates that for DACA recipients, this fear was connected to the potential of losing DACA status. The implications of losing DACA status are serious as multiple studies confirm that DACA played a significant role in improving the mental health, financial situation, job prospects of recipients (Patler et al. 2019; Abrego 2018). Yet, this fear, as observed by Alejandra, was an immobilizing factor for undocumented students that prompted them to assimilation and accommodation within legal and educational institutions.

Alejandra shares students with DACA and access to financial aid became acquainted to a traditional student experience and had grown “comfortable” with the types of educational, economic and social access they now enjoyed. Alejandra shares, “I think that it was comfortable to continue having DACA, living on campus, and going to these internships that required a social [security number]. Because they did have a social [security number] and they could be paid, they could have this traditional student experience” (Alejandra, personal interview by author, June 20th, 2019). She affirms that access to student housing, and other educational and employment prospects that could be accessed with work authorization, as resources and forms of social and educational capital that had previously been inaccessible to undocumented students. The implications of access to this form of capital, Alejandra suggests, is that undocumented students would not be willing to jeopardize their DACA status.

Alejandra then shares, undocumented students with DACA and instate tuition eligibility (the ones with what Gabriela referred to as having the “golden ticket”) were the students who were the hardest to recruit into doing collaborative work outside of UCLA. As she further explains, “[DACA recipients] didn’t quite see the need to work with outside organizations that maybe people who had been before all of this had happened felt the need to do” (Alejandra, personal interview by author, June 20th, 2019). This reference to a past cohort of student organizers was common across interviews. Other research participants shared similar opinions, particularly, that a previous generation of undocumented student organizers had “done more”, been “more active”, or “cared more” than the student organizers being discussed in the present. In many of my interlocutors’ perspectives, there was always “a past” where undocumented students had faced more challenges than in the present and thus, their efforts to overcome these challenges were perceived as greater.

In the following quote, Alejandra shares some of the coalition initiatives to make UCLA a sanctuary campus that were occurring between 2016-2017. She explains how only few IDEAS

members became interested in participating in this coalition, with most being fearful about the implications of DACA being rescinded and what that would mean for their own individual situation. Alejandra states,

> [IDEAS] also worked with folks from CARECEN who were trying to work around the sanctuary movement…They were trying to do a movement for sanctuary across the campuses, but this was more sanctuary for everyone, not just students. And like I said, it was mainly me, Ron, Carla, who wasn't technically part of IDEAS, and maybe Lauren and sometimes Lorenzo and Sandra. But the majority of the people on the [IDEAS] board were working on other stuff…Really it was four, five people from [IDEAS], who would try to work with them, but everyone else was focused on being a student, scared about their DACA being taken away (ibid).

There is sadness and frustration in Alejandra's voice as she recalls this memory. Alejandra remembers continuous efforts by her and her co-chair to motivate students to engage in community work with organizations and grassroots campaigns outside of UCLA. She shares that a shared conviction between her and her co-chair was the belief that relative to other immigrants, undocumented students would be safer. She states,

> We also felt that the people who would be criminalized the most, chased after the most, and dehumanized the most, wouldn't be DACA students at a prestigious university. It would be parents, queer and trans people of color. We were really trying to create more visibility for people who weren't students, and it was a very scary situation for everyone, but *they* were the model of how to be a 'good American' (ibid, emphasis mine).

In this excerpt, Alejandra shows an understanding that this moment was "scary" for everyone, but she also explores how within the logics of the moral calculus of immigrant criminalization, undocumented university students would be placed in a different category of policing. In her view, undocumented immigrants who are DACA beneficiaries enrolled at a prestigious university

would be less likely to be criminalized, chased and dehumanized in the same way that other immigrant populations would be. Their proximity to institutions of social privilege and moral capital would be pragmatically useful. Thus, much of Alejandra's frustration was the denial of undocumented students and IDEAS members who could not understand that *relative* to other populations they would be safer and that their community work would be useful in supporting other marginalized immigrant populations whose identities intersected with social identities that were less fitting of the model American citizen.

Similar views to Alejandra's correlation—between fear (a fear grounded on the implications of an openly anti-immigrant presidential administration) as an influence in the lack of undocumented students' community involvement—were shared by undocumented student organizers, supporters, and former undocumented student organizers.

For instance, in a 2019 interview with Yolanda, a former student organizer and former undocumented student services provider who I first introduce in Chapter 3, also mentions a very similar insight. In her capacity as former program coordinator, Yolanda would often counsel undocumented students who were both in and outside student organizing. When I asked Yolanda about what undocumented students would express regarding the termination of DACA, she remarks, "They were really panicking with the termination of DACA. That was one of the reasons why they didn't want to organize as well. They just wanted to assimilate." (Yolanda, personal interview by author, July 10th, 2019). She paraphrases what she would hear from students as, "I don't want to continue thinking about my undocumented status, I want to feel like a normal student. I want to have the college experience; I want to live in the dorms like everyone else without mentioning my status" (ibid). As a former program coordinator, Yolanda understood her responsibility to support equitable education to all students regardless of status and understood that all students had a right to a positive educational experience. As a former

undocumented student organizer herself, Yolanda expressed understanding how crucial organizing and political education was at the moment.

Similar to Alejandra and Yolanda, in a 2014 interview with Shawn, a former undocumented student organizer and co-chair of IDEAS, express how the new cohorts of undocumented students enrolling at UCLA, were enjoying “benefits” that other cohorts of student organizers and allies “had previously fought for”. New undocumented students were entering campus “entitled” to these “benefits” but showed less initiative to be as politically active as previous generations of student organizers. In the following excerpt, Shawn shares how he feels about this new cohorts of students,

> I just feel so upset sometimes that undocumented youth here while they do take advantage of the resources, be forgetting that our privilege shouldn’t just be entitlement but also finding a way to utilize that privilege to share it with others and finding a way for others to also have the same privilege (Shawn, personal interview by author, May 19th, 2014).

At the time of our interview in 2014, Shawn was describing new cohorts of students enrolling at UCLA who were recipients of new resources (i.e., undergraduate research programs, the undocumented student resource center, designated undocumented student support staff, immigration legal resources and immigration application waivers) that had not been available to previous cohorts of undocumented students. These resources emerged from new (at the time in 2014) state and federal policies such as the California Dream Act and DACA. These policies and laws, as observed by Shawn, provided students with new “privileges” other undocumented students in the past did not have. For Shawn, and other research participants alike, these new undocumented students could utilize that privilege to share it with others. Shawn describes a vision for advancing one’s privilege towards a collective good and shares

feeling upset about the lack of engagement and apathy from other undocumented students, who do not see their privilege as a way to support others.

In 2013, Sonia, a fourth-year student at UC Berkeley who I first introduced in Chapter 2, shared similar views to Shawn and Alejandra—she was frustrated by students who would also take advantage of new resources (particularly institutional resources such as emergency loans, and affordable student housing options for undocumented students) without "appreciating" or "valuing" the effort behind what took to make those resources a reality. Sonia explains,

> I tell a lot of people there was no Dream House, there was no emergency loans, there was nothing before a few years from now, so for people to come into the institution and take that for granted it pisses me off! And there's nothing I can do about that because that's just the way it is now. They will never learn and appreciate the value of what they have now. I do, because I came in at a point when there was nothing. But I feel that doesn't discourage me from stopping the work that I am doing. I feel if anything that's going to lead me to more drastic changes and along the way I will pick one or two who are really interested and willing to do the work (Sonia, personal interview by author, March 12th, 2013).

Sonia explains how regardless of the fact that students would take for granted these resources, she was not discouraged from doing the work to continue creating institutional changes for undocumented students.[66] She believes that in the process of doing this work, she would meet other student organizers who would be interested and willing to organize together.

For many undocumented student support groups co-chairs, the responsibilities of student and community organizing would sometimes take a toll on their academics. Alejandra

[66] It is worth noting, that at the time of our interview, Sonia was describing the California Dream Act, DACA and institutional changes that were emerging at UC Berkeley, not at the University systemwide level. Unlike my interviews with Alejandra and Shawn, Sonia's interview took place before the announcement of former President Napolitano's undocumented students funding initiatives.

did not perform well the academic year she was co-chair. Her time was devoted to student organizing, community organizing, family and employment responsibilities and her academics took a back seat. In the end, the work felt unsustainable for her. In reflecting back to what organizing meant for her, Alejandra showed empathy in understanding reasons why undocumented students and other IDEAS members were not as invested in doing community work outside of UCLA. She describes the shock of the new administration as a reason why undocumented students now faced an administration that jeopardize aspects of their lives as immigrants in this country. Alejandra shares,

> Because of the privilege that they had, that was obviously comfortable. And also, the shock of this new administration and what they could potentially do to them. It's hard to focus on working with other external groups when you have to deal with academics, when you don't know what is going to happen with your DACA. At the same time, you are benefitting from DACA, so when you're benefiting from it, it's a little more difficult to see beyond what you are immediately receiving. And, it's comfortable, trying to assimilate (Alejandra, personal interview by author, June 20th, 2019).

I find Alejandra's reflections on her experiences in 2017, Yolanda's reflections in 2018, Shawn's reflections in 2014, and Sonia's reflections in 2013—as part of a continuing concern that undocumented student organizers in the undocustudent world called upon. Research participants who shared their insights often pointed out to their concerns with the lack of student organizing efforts and political commitment by undocumented students. This dissertation does not make conclusions of the percentage of undocumented students organizing over a period of time to support Alejandra, Shawn or Sonia's observations about the decline of undocumented student organizing—such longitudinal data was not collected. Yet, what we can observe, is that with the creation of multiple undocumented student categories (or "tiers of the undocumented student experience" as Gabriela calls them) these categories do create tension among

undocumented students that is experienced relationally—some students organize and others do not, and this leads to a series of assumptions about concepts of entitlement, fear, and assimilation among undocumented students and undocumented student organizers.

The limits of academic accomplishments: Coming to terms with one's "special" status

Over the course of my observations and conversations with research participants, I became aware of the circulating expectations undocumented students had as they navigated higher education. To some degree, in the years following the implementation of policies that broaden the access to higher education, undergraduate undocumented students could receive services tailored to their needs as undocumented students, but this was not always the same at the graduate level. The following excerpt comes from my 2019 interview with Lily where we discuss how those differences were experienced.

During our interview, Lily mentions a memory she has of Choi, a person we both mutually know. In the summer of 2016, Lily, Choi and I had been speakers at a panel for undocumented students pursuing graduate degrees. We both remember how Choi described their first year as a professional graduate student at UCLA—they were disillusioned. Choi explained how, unlike their undergraduate UCLA student experience, their UCLA graduate student experience consisted of anecdotes where administrators had refused to accommodate them or even make an effort to understand their situation as an undocumented immigrant. Being "left out in the dark" had repercussions for Choi, such as not knowing how to navigate mandatory internship requirements for their professional degree that required government clearances.

Lily and I both remember the disappointment in Choi's narrative and how much they lamented being so trusting during their undergraduate experience—believing that UCLA was doing their best in helping undocumented students. Once a graduate student in a professional program, Choi encountered enough institutional resistance to understand the limitations of this

support. Lily explains how similar to Choi, these encounters with reality were common and hurtful for many undocumented students who she had mentored over the past years. She summarizes that the reason students like Choi and some of her mentees became hurt was due to the ways in which the university constructed a narrative around the *specialness* of undocumented students. She explains what this "specialness" means in the following way,

> We [undocumented students] are told we are darlings so much that we believe we exist in a bubble outside of what is happening in the real world. Then when we leave that bubble, there's a shock that happens and this realization that you are no longer protected the way you thought you were. Just because the university does see you as special, it doesn't mean the police does. It doesn't mean the employers do; it doesn't mean that racist people do (Lily, personal interview with author, June 15th, 2019).

Even though Lily's observations on a perceived "detachment of reality" undocumented students experience once they graduate might have limitations and be grounded in her own assumptions; Lily does make an important insight—there are consequences to leaving an institution where one is "protected". These consequences, as described by Lily, are the social structures that immigrant communities and people of color face in society: carceral and policing systems, employment discrimination and broader structural systems of white supremacy and racism.

Later in the interview, Lily refers to how in a university context, there are circulating discourses that exist to "bombard" undocumented students with a sense of *specialness*. She then argues that this sense of *specialness* complicates the ways in which undocumented students can have perspective and a sense of solidarity with others who do not share the same privileges, who in fact are categorized as "less worthy". She states, it is up to the undocumented student *to choose* if those constructs of differential social value mean anything to them. When I

asked her to share what she believes were some of the greatest challenges undocumented students were facing, Lily states,

> I think that is one of the greatest challenges that students are going to face is how do you obtain perspective and sense of solidarity with people who they are told by the government are less worthy than them. I think that people in the university space get so bombarded with their specialness because of their status and because of their accomplishments and the traumas that they live that they consider themselves to be the end-all, be-all instead of thinking well it was so bad for me then imagine how it is for these folks that have less. You get so convinced that you are special, and you get so used to wanting that praise that comes with being special that you start to believe that you are special in a way that is very different from being special is. That's the way of believing you are special because Napolitano chose to sit down with you at the table. Because City Council gave you an award. Because LAUSD headboard member gave you a hug and told you how proud she is and wish you were a LAUSD grad. All those things are happening. You get to decide whether that means anything or whether that's B**S***. (Ibid, emphasis mine).

As stated in this previous excerpt, Lily considers that undocumented students are surrounded by an institutional context that highlights and compensates particular types of acts and behaviors—those that are seen and recognized as praiseworthy by people in positions of power: a university president, a school district headboard member, a city council member. She shares, that this sense of specialness comes from the ways in which status, accomplishments and traumas are mobilized to further contribute to a sense of separation and uniqueness from other immigrants.

Lily and I witnessed how the realization that "one is not *special"* occurs when we heard Choi speak. As someone who had previously benefited from the infrastructure of financial, legal

and educational support offered to undocumented undergraduate students at UCLA; once a UCLA graduate student, Choi realized that the support infrastructure for undocumented professional graduate students was less developed, in part because the enrollment of undocumented graduate students was less than the undergraduate enrollment. Undocumented status and academic accomplishments were not enough to mobilize institutional support. Whereas some student affairs and education scholars would articulate this difference in institutional support infrastructure as a challenge to educational access to be addressed; a Critical Ethnic Studies approach asks us to examine this "gap" a little differently. Instead, this moment helps us see the fragility of the constructs of progress, neutrality, and merit that often shape college accessibility arguments. I do not intend to argue against Choi having access to an enriching educational experience. Instead, both Lily and I understood and aligned with what Critical Ethnic Studies scholar, Long T Bui, refers to as the idea of "accomplishments as proof merit and inclusion", is based upon neoliberal rationalities with necropolitical logics (politics that dictate who gets to live and die) that refute certain undesirable populations to save most productive populations (Bui 2019).

Lily speaks of a "shock" a moment that sparks the realization that those protections are not going to be upheld once undocumented students enter the labor force and encounter the social realities of policing apparatuses as racialized undocumented immigrants. The moment of realization may not be as definitive as Lily describes it—since undocumented students as Anguiano and Gutierrez Najera remind us, *are* conscious of their racialization—nonetheless, she brings to question the instability of the moral calculus that designates some immigrants and their individual behaviors and actions as better and more worthy than others.

Lily calls upon an important insight that critical theorists and social justice organizers across movements have pointed out—to highlight the instability of the moral calculus that designates social value across capitalist allocations of value. In stating that one of the most

important challenge for undocumented students is to "obtain perspective and sense of solidarity with people who they are told by the government are less worthy than them", she highlights the need for a vision that challenges neoliberalism's regimes of isolation through the development of political practices and frameworks that illuminate social connections. For Lily, the instability of this calculus comes in the encounter with the reality that beyond the social position of being "a university student at a prestigious university" and the social, economic and educational capital associated to that social position, undocumented students outside of the university would then encounter their social reality as gendered, racialized people of color. And as Lily observes, this social reality would remind them that they are not *special*. Even if undocumented students do accumulate forms of social and educational capital as college graduates that still does not provide immunity to structural racism and racial capitalism. They may benefit from a differential form of social vulnerability, yet the structures of inequality that are grounded on racial capitalism are still present.

Grassroots immigrant organizers outside of the university also upheld discussions about the limitations of the construction of value allocated to different immigrant status. In a 2017 letter written in the immediate aftermath of the announcement by Department of Homeland Security to rescind DACA, Nancy Meza, Zacil Pech and Ilse Escobar[67], immigrant womxn of color and long-term community organizers, call attention to the "sour side of complacency" within the immigrant rights movement. Meza, Pech and Escobar write this letter to the fellow undocumented immigrant community, reminding them of the limitations of DACA and the need to seize the moment and to organize for *all* immigrants, not just DACA recipients. They remind readers how immigrants will continue to be criminalized and thus why solidarity with all immigrants is even more necessary. The authors state,

[67] Meza and Escobar are UCLA IDEAS alumni.

> This moment may be difficult to bear, but we must remember that while we reaped some benefits, the majority of the immigrant community remained under attack. We are not on an equal playing field with those who have the right paperwork. We are f***. We must now defend *all* immigrants, not just the selective few who are most politically acceptable. Immigrants have been and will continue to be deemed criminal and illegal, especially by this administration that measures its commitment to "rule of law" by pardoning the racist former Sheriff Joe Arpaio (Meza, Pech, and Escobar 2017).

Whereas Meza, Pech and Escobar write on the limitations of letting the government determine one's protections and thus one's special status; Lily signals to the university as a key institution constructing a narrative of "special status". Later in the interview, Lily states the earlier undocumented students come to the realization that they are not special, "the more they will save themselves a heartbreak". As discussed in Chapter 2, Lily is responding to a narrative that through discursive approaches has positioned the university as a symbolic protective entity towards undocumented students. I concur with Lily in her observation that the material and ideological aspects of this narrative is what creates the environment of "a bubble"—of an institution positioned as a protector and a group of students who are the recipients of that protection. "Leaving the bubble", and the protections guaranteed through this institution, generate a form of heartbreak. The heartbreak is that as an undocumented person, one will continue to encounter reminders of not belonging, that the special status associated with obtaining a higher education degree, might not be sufficient once one encounters the social realities of being a gendered and racialized subject under the eye of the state. Lily, Meza, Pech and Escobar all agreed that undocumented people will face, regardless of DACA or higher education attainment, continuous reminder of being a racialized and criminalized subject in the US.

The metaphor of the heartbreak can be understood as the disillusionment derived from realizing the limits of framing one's relationship to the university, and the nation state, as one in relation to a desire for belonging. This metaphor of the "heartbreak" that Lily proposes reminds me of that observed by Sara Ahmed (2004) construct of national love. Ahmed describes the ways in which the subject becomes invested in the nation, with the failure of the nation to return that love, as a further increase in the subject's investment for the promise that it will be responded in a deferred future. Lily asks for undocumented students to save themselves the heartbreak, in doing so, dismantle the promise of national love as a fictitious logic dependent on moral calculus that allocate more social value to some immigrants over others. Saving yourself the "heartbreak" means seeing beyond those calculus that equate higher education and its generative capital with being thought as more *special.*

Over the course of collecting interviews, conducting participant observations and thinking and theorizing alongside my research participants, I identified various instances where the heartbreak of realizing that one's experience as a privileged racial immigrant subject, would generate its own forms of potential for political consciousness raising as well as compliance and assimilation. In this section, through the experiences that Alejandra, Shawn, Yolanda, Sonia and Lily shared, I aimed to bring to light some of the ways in which systems that uphold forms of immigrant differentiation come to be experienced relationally. These structures generate tension and leave much room for undocumented student organizers to have assumptions, misunderstandings and disappointment.

In the following section, I present a few instances where *undocumoves* grounded on collective memory, intergenerational relationality and transformative politics challenge the forms of immigrant differentiation that emerge in a university setting. I discuss how student-designed resource guides, student-organized conferences, student-led campus tours, and student-led vigils, are practices that student organizers create in order to generate an alternative vision of

solidarity among undocumented immigrants on campus and with immigrant communities beyond campus. These are projects and moments that encapsulate the creative ways that undocumented student organizers engage with “immigrant difference without separability”.

Immigrant Difference without Separability

In the previous sections I explored how federal, state, and institutional policies, laws and procedures, work in tandem to differentiate immigrants into a matrix of social value. Through the insights of my research participants, I explored how this matrix generates “tiers to the undocumented student experience” to offer a glimpse into how at the intersection of a variety of government and institution regulatory procedures, undocumented students become channeled into different tiers, each with a variety of potential future capital outcomes. In the second section, I discussed how these structures of social value are experience relationally and generate fragmentation, speculation and distrust among undocumented students.

In this section I build on the teachings of Black, Indigenous and Women of Color traditions and theories that seek to challenge the fictitious desire for independence, separation and autonomy grounded on liberal ideology of the modern subject. In setting my conceptual framework for this section, I build on Denisse Ferreira da Silva’s (2016) short essay “On Difference without Separability,” particularly, I turn to her concept of the social physics of the world. Ferreira da Silva asks us to turn away from methodological and ontological grounds of the modern subject that emphasize temporal and spatial separation (and its tenets which she identifies as *separability*, *determinacy* and *sequentially*) and instead towards a re-imagining of sociality that highlights *uncertainty*, *nonlocality,* and *entanglement*. In this essay, Ferreira da Silva’s opens by examining European states’ response to the “refugee crisis” and analyzes how fear and uncertainty have been staples of modern racial grammars and how articulations of cultural difference in the modern world have “contributed to social scientific signifier designed to delimit the reach of the ethical notion of humanity” (Ferreira da Silva 2016, 57). Ferreira da

Silva's analysis of racialized xenophobia helps me think through the condition of immigrant differentiation at the center of this chapter.

In a recorded discussion of Blackness and performance, Fred Moten builds on Ferreira da Silva essay to remark that *we all* exist in a condition of "entanglement" and vulnerability. Moten states that we live "entangled, vulnerable, open, non-full, more than and less than [ourselves]" (as cited in Stein 2018, 140). Critical education theorist, Sharon Stein engages and builds upon Moten and Ferreira da Silva's conceptual analytic of "entanglement" to explore the (im)possible potential for transformative justice in higher education. In her engagement with Ferreira da Silva and Moten's concept of our existence as one of "entanglement", Sharon Stein (2018) notes the following,

> [e]ntanglement signals a condition of enmeshment and an accompanying ethical and political responsibility before/beyond will…entanglement is impervious to common or divergent values or interests; it is not premised on universalism, transparence, consensus or harmony, but rather includes the full range of possibilities, including violence, pain, joy, conflict, creativity and community (140).

Stein's understanding of entanglement allows us to think through the ways the social experience of "difference without separability" and the "entanglement" that this social experience is grounded on, is not always a harmonious phenomenon, but constituted by conflict as much as it by harmony. Ferreira da Silva, Moten and Stein's understandings of our existence of one of "difference without separability," help me ground the theoretical framework for this section. These theorists build on a long tradition of Women of Color, Black and Indigenous knowledge whose works have challenged the fragmentation and separation rooted in systems of capitalism, white supremacy, colonialism, and patriarchy. With this conceptual framework, grounded on a long tradition of refusing to deny the ethical obligation we all have to each other, I turn to a discussion on what "immigrant difference without separability" looks like on the ground.

As the following undocumented student organizers' projects demonstrate, in the *undocufield* I identified a variety of acts that sought to recognize the entangled existence of immigrant communities. For this section, I focus primarily on an analysis that centers discussions of entanglement among immigrant communities; yet I recognize that an analysis of entanglement at times expanded to discussions that transcended immigrant communities, finding connections among other human beings as well as the rest of everything that forms part of our planet. Thus, in discussing the following projects, my aim is to introduce the reader to a variety of projects and undocumoves. The projects are grounded on small-scale, intimate political moments and collaborations that demonstrate how undocumented student organizers negotiate power, voice, solidarity and social privilege. This section reveals those moments of potentiality where divergent values and interests materialize to create, from a place of difference, inseparability. These projects include knowledge sharing practices such as student-run conferences and student-designed resource guides; as well as projects of collective memory such as campus tours and vigils.

Knowledge sharing practices: Student-run resource conferences and resource guides

In conducting my fieldwork, I observed a variety of knowledge sharing practices in the *undocufield*. In this section I discuss the importance of oral and written modes of knowledge production and distribution. Even though some undocumented student organizers were comfortable sharing their personal stories in public forums and could speak about their immigration status openly, not every undocumented student organizer felt comfortable releasing their private immigration information in large open forums. Additionally, some of the issues discussed by undocumented student organizers required a high degree of sensitivity and discretion, as their actions could be deemed illicit.[68] Regardless, it was common for student

[68] For instance, some interlocutors discussed getting involved in sex work and stealing food from dining halls. This information has to be handled with extreme care as shoplifting and sex work are both considered to be misdemeanor

organizers to plan student-initiated conferences, workshops and other forms of events where oral knowledge would be distributed to potential undocumented students.

At these events, undocumented student organizers found ways to support prospective students and immigrant families by providing experiential knowledge, delivered primarily in an oral form, about the inner workings of higher education for undocumented students. Like Gabriela and Julian, who organized and presented financial aid workshops at Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference (IYEC) and the UCLA IDEAS Annual Educators Conference respectively, student organizers would often design and present workshops on topics regarding similar forms of information, for example, in topics related to career advising and university-specific educational opportunities. Their knowledge was grounded on their lived experiences navigating the university, understanding its blockages, flows and recognizing and making allies in the process. This knowledge would sometimes be delivered orally, asking participants for confidentiality of the presenter's personal information, but asking for the information they learned to be distributed to others *what's said here stays here, what's learned here leaves here*.

In the opening epigraph in this chapter, I introduced Gabriela's workshop on financial aid for prospective graduate students at IYEC. IYEC is an annual, free, day-long event open to students, parents, educators, allies and community members. Going on its 14th year, IYEC is a student-organized resource conference that aims to raise awareness about the various issues that impact undocumented immigrant communities. The conference has attracted an estimated 1000-1200 attendees every year and is held simultaneously with a free DACA clinic that provides one-on-one legal assistance for DACA applications and renewals. IYEC is organized by the AB540 Project, a subgroup of students whose work is considered the community service pillar of IDEAS since they are the group that organizes the annual conference and work with

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offenses in California. These misdemeanors can jeopardize immigrants from pursuing immigration relief options in the future.

local high schools and community colleges to mentor undocumented students. In a similar form, at UC Berkeley, RISE would also hold annual AB540 conferences, a space to raise awareness and share resources with local immigrant families about the ins and outs of the undocumented student educational journey.

The impact of these resource conferences has had long-lasting effects for some attendees. For instance, during our interview, Yolanda, the former undocumented student organizer and program coordinator I introduced in the last chapter, describes attending IYEC as a transformative personal experience. Prior to attending the IYEC, Yolanda was unsure about transferring to UCLA. In the following excerpt, Yolanda describes what her experience at IYEC was like,

> Everything started when I attend the Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference and I connected with other undocumented students. Through the conference I saw how much people were organizing. It was a really safe environment. It felt welcoming to be around other undocumented students who were very outspoken…It was just powerful for me to actually see *me* at that university, before that I had never thought that I could go to *that* university. Probably if I would not had attended the conference, I wouldn't have applied to UCLA. (Yolanda, personal interview by author, July 10th, 2019).

As Yolanda recalls, IYEC was a space that offered a welcoming and safe environment for her. As a student-run, student-initiated resource conference, IYEC also had a spillover effect as it also served as a recruitment event for UCLA. As Yolanda states, "Probably if I would not had attended the conference, I wouldn't have applied to UCLA". Students like Yolanda would be inspired to attend UCLA after encountering other students with similar backgrounds and political orientations as her.

In 2011, Alejandro Jimenez, a former UC Berkeley undocumented student and student organizer, shared his insights about his educational experiences as an undocumented student

in a special feature of *The Daily Cal*, the student newspaper, titled, “Dream State. A closer look at the DREAM Act: From personal, political, and financial perspectives.” Through a series of videos and transcribed interviews, Alejandro shares how the RISE AB540 Annual Conference impacted his decision to attend UC Berkeley. In a video interview Alejandro shares,

> The time when I really believed that if I worked hard, like this is gonna happen was Spring of 2007. I came to a conference here on Berkeley put on by RISE, the AB540 student group. It was a whole conference panel based around the stories of six individuals who were in college. Some were about to graduate, couple of them were still here. Hearing every single part of their story, from high school to getting admitted to finding housing, ever single part of what they struggled with and stuff, hearing all that it really fired me up. Before I had that desire and I really wanted to go to school, but I really didn’t believe that I could, it was like we will see if it works. After that day I was like I want to go to school and felt a little more in control. (Jimenez 2011)

Alejandro narrates attending the RISE AB540 conference as an event that played a significant role in helping understand how to navigate his undergraduate education. He recalls hearing other undocumented students share their personal narratives and educational trajectories and how at the time that provided motivation for Alejandro to also attend college. As he says, “it fired him up”. Like Yolanda, Alejandro also shares that he “really didn’t believe that [he] could do it” but hearing the stories of other undocumented students in different stages of their undergraduate education did provide a sense of personal control and direction.

IYEC and the AB540 annual conferences are not the only examples of undocumented student organizers sharing oral knowledge across publics. In fact, students would often organize similar workshops and events to distribute information and resources to the local communities. At UCLA, IDEAS would also hold workshops during Admin Day, the UCLA recruitment day for recently admitted students, to help inform prospective undergraduate students and their families

about the available resources undocumented students at UCLA. In my 2015 interview with Edgar, a former undocumented student and student organizer at UCLA, he recalls the impact one of the IDEAS workshops at the 2006 Admin Day had for him. Edgar recalls,

> I first met members from IDEAS at UCLA during what they used to call Admit Day - a day when admitted students and families attended UCLA for the day. I went with my mom, my uncle and youngest brother. Throughout the day, my mom kept asking if they had workshops for undocumented students, one counselor even coughed at the idea and told her that she was unrealistic to think that I could make it out of UCLA, "go to community college" she advised. We ended bumping into a team member from CPO and they took us to the IDEAS workshops. It was really quiet in the room. Cynthia Felix went up and started to talk about how she was paying for college, I remember thinking to myself, "this is how we're going to do it." The space was warm, the space was empowering. Later that day, as we were driving back to home, my mom looked at me and told me to submit my enrollment form (Edgar, personal interview by author, June 5th, 2015).

Edgar remembers attending this workshop with his family as crucial in helping him make the final decision to submit his statement of intent to register at UCLA. Later in the interview, Edgar expands on his disappointment he felt with the lack of institutional support and recruitment efforts for undocumented students, particularly, that comment by a UCLA student affairs officer who recommended him and his family to defer his acceptance and attend community college instead.

Yolanda, Alejandro and Edgar, offer insights into the significance these types of conferences had for them and their family members. Since both conference aim to distribute resources and information to broad audiences, these were opportunities to bring shared knowledge of resources to community members who may not have access to this information.

As stated previously, these conferences have a spillover effect for also supporting university's diversity recruitment efforts. Furthermore, the impact of these student-run conferences resonate with studies that have examine the way in which students of color participate in student-run recruitment efforts to advance social praxis that create institutional and social change (Maldonado, Rhoads, and Buenavista 2005).

Aside from recruiting potential students and sharing knowledge pertaining to educational and career opportunities for undocumented students, student organizers also participated in practices to help retain undocumented students. In the "Undocumented Student Resource Guide: Emerge. Survive. Thrive" published in the Spring of 2015, student organizers with RISE published and distributed a student-curated resource guide for undocumented students at UC Berkeley. The guide includes information on financial resources, policy pertaining to undocumented immigrant communities, personal resources, UC Berkeley specific resources such as support spaces on campus, centers, scholarships and grants, and other forms of available student resources. The guide concludes with narratives of alumni and current students. In a written form, student organizers curated a guide that could support students with learning (from a student perspective) how they could thrive at UC Berkeley. The guide is grounded on similar knowledge sharing practices as the student conferences and like the conferences, emphasizes the collective efforts of undocumented students supporting each other succeed. As introduction in the guide describes,

> The road to college for an undocumented student is not easy but know that YOU ARE NOT ALONE; there are many of us who have been in your shoes and have succeeded and YOU CAN TOO… Remember we are here today because of our efforts, but also the efforts of our family, friends, allies and the trailblazer that came before us. We all fall together and rise together (Rising Immigrant Scholars through Education 2015).

Aside from recognizing the student's efforts, the authors allude to the impact of the legacy of former supporters in helping undocumented students succeed. The authors remind the reader that collectivity is part of an undocumented student success.

Student organizers' efforts to share and disseminate knowledge were not only constrained to educational conferences and workshops. For instance, on April 28th, 2018, I attended the IDEAS, Bruin Resource Center and UCLA Center for Community College Partnerships sponsored event "Deportation Defense Workshop: What to do if a loved one is detained by ICE", an open to the public workshop for people interested in learning how to defend their rights if encountered with Immigration Customs Enforcement during the Trump administration. During this workshop attendees were provided with food, day care, and an immigration lawyer who presented and stayed after the event to answer audience questions. With an attendance of about 35 people, many of them being local community members, the 2-hour event offered some tangible resources on knowing their rights, how to structure a family emergency plan, understand the jurisdiction of ICE, how to locate a family member in ICE custody, and the process of navigating immigration court. Unlike educational related conferences, the Deportation Defense Workshop was important as it brought out other aspects of the undocumented immigrant experience, in this case deportability, at the forefront of the discussion. The workshop was a response to the threat of deportation mixed-status families experience, as it provided pragmatic information to attendees about the ways in which families can be best prepared for a deportation. The workshop centered the experiences of families, not just students.

However, not all of my research participants believed that resources and workshops were the best way to support or to standing in solidarity with immigrant communities. In my interview with Victor, who I first introduced in Chapter 1, he recalls how by 2009, RISE strategy had shifted. Instead of continuing to mobilize for the DREAM Act, RISE organizers became

increasingly interested in providing resources by doing high school and community college outreach. During our 2018 interview, Victor remembers RISE's transition as going from "too [politically] active" to a more resource-oriented group. Victor shares,

> [RISE] went from being too active, like having too many demonstrations, then we had a few but it became more from around what resources could we provide. And then we started doing the AB540 conferences from there on. It was more on creating a space where we invite people to come over from all campuses all high school students and have the conferences here in Berkeley, we are undocumented, and we are in Berkeley. It was more like organized around the resources for us on campus and also for students from community colleges students, it's not just high school students but community college. But also, bring the students that were undocumented, but it became more on the resources than being political (Victor, interview by author, March 23rd, 2018).

Later in the interview, Victor shares his opinion about the lack of student organizing energy that was then became energy towards resource mobilization. By 2009, Victor had already participated in a hunger strike, had been trained in lobbying by grassroots organizers to lobby at Sacramento and Washington DC, and had extensive experience in leading demonstrations, thus, when RISE members decided to shift direction towards resource mobilization, he was not on board. For student organizers like Victor, who had an analysis of political power that centered direct action and policy change, resource mobilization was not the best way to stand in solidarity with immigrant communities.

In thinking about the impact of these conferences, workshops and resource guides my aim is neither to romanticize the work nor to imply that the impact was radical by default. At these events, dominant advocacy narratives and liberating narratives on immigrant solidarity were simultaneously present. To an extent, the conferences still operated within the logics that consider higher education as inherently good. What I aim to demonstrate is that it is in the

practice of deploying forms of community that are grounded on non-economic transactional agreements, but rather on the belief of supporting others, that undocumented students became more than “silent objects of knowledge formations and institutional practices” (Ferguson 2012, 232), but agents, experts with lived experience, and supporters for other immigrant community members.

Projects of memory across space and time: The UndocuHistoric Campus Tour and the

Tam Tran & Cynthia Felix Vigil

The UndocuHistoric Tour

On February 1st, 2018, I joined IDEAS members on the UndocuHistoric Campus Tour. Along ten other students, we were guided by two IDEAS members on a one-hour campus tour where undocumented students could find supportive spaces, allies, available resources and learn about how those spaces, allies and resources came to be. We began our tour at the Student Activities Center building, the same building where IDEAS holds their weekly meetings, where the Undocumented Student Program, the AB50 project (the community engagement branch of IDEAS), and the Community Programs offices are located.

We began our tour with a quick reminder of the types of support the Undocumented Student Program offers undocumented students on campus. We learned about the transition of the program: from a small office within the Bruin Resource Center (a center that supports current and former foster youth, students with dependents, students in recovery, and students impacted by the criminal justice system and at some point, veteran students), to its growth in office space to accommodate two attorneys from the UC Immigrant Legal Services Center, to its new office located outside of the Bruin Resource Center where students can enjoy a larger lounge area. What was clearly communicated was the expansion of the office that has been

justified by the need for more intentional and spatially aware measures that could best respond to the confidentiality of undocumented students inquiring services and support.

After visiting the Undocumented Student Program, we walked to the AB540 Project's office, a small desk in a space where other student groups share similar sized offices. The tour guides explained some of the programing and history behind the AB540 project. We learned about the history of the AB540 project, a project that first emerged as the community engagement branch of IDEAS which focused on mentoring high school and later community college students. Since 2008, the AB540 project has organized the Immigrant youth Empowerment Conference which I discussed earlier in this chapter. After learning about the AB540 project, we transitioned to visit the Community Programs Office Food Closet.
We learned about the CPO's food closet, a space where students who may be experiencing hunger and/or struggling to attain food due to financial hardships, can find free food. The closet, we learned, was originally the seed idea of a former IDEAS organizers who transitioned to work as staff in the Community Programs Office and who mobilized for the closet to be part of a campus initiative to address some of the immediate needs of undocumented students. As a university resource, the program could not be restricted to only a group of students and thus the space was open to all UCLA students who were financially struggling.

The tour continued with a trip to Campbell Hall, the building where the Academic Achievement Program (AAP) office is located and where we met with key staff who have been supportive to undocumented students over the past decade. We learned about new undocumented student recruitment and retention programs such as the Undocu Summer Intensive Transit Experience (Undocu SITE)[69] and the UndocuBruins Research Program.[70] At

[69] Undocu SITE is a five-day residential program where students learn to navigate the community college system to transfer successfully to the University of California. It offers participants an introduction to research, university writing and support programs. The program also focuses on the history, educational pipeline and resources available to undocumented students. For more information visit: https://www.aap.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-2019-UNDOCUSITE-Extended.pdf

the AAP office we had some conversations about other resources available at AAP that undocumented students can also qualify for.

The tour concluded outside of campus at the St. Alban's Episcopal Church where the 580 Café, a secular community space that provides free meals and food for financially struggling students, is located. We learned about the history of the space, the community sponsors who run and donate food to the space. As a space originally created with the idea of providing food to struggling undocumented students, the space expanded to any hungry student. In a 2011 article for *The Daily Bruin*, Jeanne Roe Smith, United Methodist campus minister at UCLA, describes the café as "a non-threatening, free environment where students can not only eat, but interact and socialize as a group" (Roe Smith quoted in Hoey 2011).

The IDEAS UndocuHistoric campus tour blended aspects of the alternative/ student of color campus tours that seeks audiences to think about the variety of labor, racial and student organizing movements that are often erased through university sanctioned tours and its affiliated publicity materials (Toth 2017). It also served as a space where students could further learn about the landscape of resources available to them. The spaces we visited resonated with the dominant advocacy narratives which highlight the creation of resources as a teleological manifestation of previous student activism. In this framework, student activism is a means to create infrastructural and campus climate changes that will materialize as resources, offices, and spaces. By its design, the tour was framed as an exploration on how the materialization of social movements is the creation of new institutional procedures, spaces and practices.

As previously stated in this dissertation, there are no perfect forms of resistance or undocumove. What I witness in the Undocuhistoric tour was also a commitment by the guide

[70] The UndocuBruins Research Program guides undocumented students in their junior or senior year to develop research experience and their graduate school goals. Participants undertake a research project under the guidance of a graduate mentor and a faculty mentor. Participating students get the opportunity and support to develop their graduate school applications- curriculum vita, draft personal and professional statements, learn how to obtain strong letters of recommendation. For more information visit: https://www.aap.ucla.edu/programs/undocubruins/

tours and the student organizers to connect current students to a legacy of undocumented and immigrant student movement building. The students who guided us asked questions from us, shared knowledge on resources and more importantly, modeled a curiosity to learn from the past, to inquire about how things came to be, to appreciate what exists and to entertain ideas of what else there could be. This curiosity is a mindset that can be so important to the sustainability of grassroots movements. As Shawn shared during our interview, student organizers often struggle with ways to transfer the memory of the movement to new generations of students. Shawn explains,

> There are so many brave people before me who didn't have AB-540. At first you couldn't even say that you were undocumented, still in 2003, 2004. And going from not being able to say that you are undocumented, to living on campus and getting financial aid and getting scholarships, within a matter of 10/15 years, that's really a lot! And I feel that we've gotten so far from that point that we don't always remember that a lot of these struggles occurred so that we could receive these benefits and sometimes we don't really pass on our history very well and it just gets lost in between the lines. It gets lost in translation (Shawn, personal interview by author, May 19th, 2014).

For Shawn, not passing the history of the grassroots, radical aspects of student organizing *is* a problem. It dismisses the complexity of student organizing, the challenges and the lessons that come with it. As I was taking part of the tour, I acknowledged both the students' intentions for connecting histories and the shortcomings in falling for a narrative that emphasizes movements materialization as the creation of resources they bring about.

Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix Vigil

In *The Archive and The Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, performance studies scholar Diane Taylor, explores performance as a means of storing and transmitting knowledge. For Taylor, the repertoire of embodied memory—of gestures,

movement, dance, song, poetry and performance—is a site of production and reproduction of knowledge, new political arguments and forging of cultural identities. Performance is an episteme. Unlike the written knowledge of the archive, “the repertoire”, Taylor states, “requires presence people participated in the production and reproduction of knowledge by being there, being a part of the transmission” (Taylor 2003, 18). I take Taylor’s understanding of presence and participation in the process of embodied knowledge and memory, to explore the annual vigil for Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix.

I first introduced Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix in Chapter 1. Tran and Felix were two former IDEAS organizers who were tragically killed in a car accident in May 2010. As two early organizers in the immigrant and student movement they had an impact on the early stages of the movements. Their memory continues to live on through publications, essays, scholarships named after them, and an annual vigil that celebrates their life and legacy. The first time I attended one of the annual vigils was in 2015.

The vigil was a community event where those who had been inspired and impacted by Tran and Felix came together to celebrate their life. Family members, alumni and close friends were in attendance. The vigil in a classroom where about 30 people came together to commemorate the lives of Tran and Felix. The vigil began with a moment of silence and proceeded with some words from Tran and Felix’s family members. Lolly Tran, Tran’s brother, shared some words and good news, his wife and him were getting ready to welcome their baby, Tam Cinthya Tran, into their family. Friends and family went around sharing memories of Tran and Felix. We proceeded outside to congregate, light our candles, and took another moment of silence. At the end of the event, we took a group picture. Some people stayed to catch up and I could hear laughter and joy in those who were there. Despite the tragedy of the loss of Tran and Felix, those who were there expressed joy in their physical gestures and in the tone of their voices.

The vigil was an event where different cohorts of student organizers, family members, friends and community members came together to remember and celebrate the life of Tran and Felix. They were remembered beyond their identifiers as students, but also as daughters, friends, rebels, who had a vision for a better life for immigrant communities. The vigil demonstrated an engagement with both memory and futurity—a future of possibilities, that in a way, baby Tam Cinthya symbolizes.

Furthermore, I would like to propose the vigil as a project of memory, where those in attendance come together not as affiliates of a university, but instead, what brings them together and what they share in common is an appreciation for the lives and teachings of Tran and Felix. The vigil is a project of memory that brings participants together across time to share a common space for remembering, planning, and dreaming together about the work ahead. Similar to Taylor's description of the repertoire, being *physically there* is part of that knowledge transmission. As the publication *Undocumented and Unafraid: Tam Tran, Cinthya Felix and the Immigrant Youth Movement* demonstrates, the memory of Tran and Felix has continued to live on through the archive. Yet, the vigil is not a transmission of written knowledge. It is only in being physically present that the participant can immerse themselves in the affective field of what it means to have known, loved and learned from Tran and Felix. The vigil, with its affective field of knowledge transmission, cannot be replaced by the written record, for this is the space where in small intimate ways, participants get to know about Tran and Felix and the impact they had at UCLA and beyond.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an exploration of the different ways in which federal, state, institutional procedures and practices contribute to the creation and sustain forms of undocumented student differentiation. Later in the chapter I explored the impact these forms of differentiation have among undocumented student organizers. As my research participants

shared, these forms of differentiation are experienced not only independently, but also relationally. In making assumptions about other undocumented students, research participants reveal how they understand their own social positions.

In the last section of this chapter, I present a few instances of projects that student organizers created to challenge forms of immigrant differentiation grounded on neoliberal multiculturalism that prioritize constructs of individualism and meritocracy. The student-run conferences and workshops, student-led resource publications, the campus tours and vigils are only a few examples of the ways in which undocumented student organizers engaged with complicating neoliberal multiculturalism rationalities that emphasize separation. Through an engagement in embodied practices, forms of oral knowledge transmission, the undocumented student organizers engaged in projects that aimed to find points of connection among immigrant communities. These projects are part of a long history of street-to-campus activism and how student organizers have worked to repurpose university resources towards their own needs. More importantly, some of these projects transcend the politics and discourse of recognition and instead opt for centering care, legacy, and solidarity.

This analysis does not include the various projects and initiatives where students aimed to find points of connection and solidarity with other students of color and other social struggles. What I previously discussed is a partial and incomplete view into the projects of immigrant "difference without separation" in which students came together to share, create and support each other. My hope is that future scholars will examine the variety and possibilities of these multiple moments of connection and continue examining those moments where student organizers come together to imagine and envision what it means to realize one's full humanity.

Conclusion: Plan and Study

In the previous four chapters I examined different aspects of how neoliberal multicultural rationalities are embedded in the dominant forms of undocumented student advocacy. This dissertation seeks to understand how the institutional incorporation and affirmation of racialized immigrant undocumented youth occurred simultaneously with the expansion of immigrant deportation and detention infrastructures that led to the expulsion and forced separation of immigrant families and communities. I focused primarily on one aspect of this phenomenon: the rationalities that explain the incorporation and affirmation of racialized immigrant undocumented youth into higher education. Neoliberal multiculturalism is the object of study for this dissertation and the conceptual framework that helps us understand how those rationalities operate and are replicated.

I argued that neoliberal multicultural rationalities underlie the dominant frame shaping undocumented student advocacy that replicate the undocumented student subject figure as one contingent on disciplined integration into the university. In turn, these rationalities constitute the university as a site responsible for the protection of undocumented students. I consider this to be a tacit agreement between the educational institution and undocumented students contingent on the logics of deservingness and exceptionality. Both deservingness and exceptionality are constructs that emphasize distinction as merit for a different type of treatment, access and/or rights. Deservingness and exceptionality and the logics upon which they depend on, fit neatly within neoliberal multicultural rationalities which in turn depend on forms of racialized and economic distinction to justify social value.

Each chapter observes the mechanics of neoliberal multiculturalism, and each chapter explores the ways in which neoliberal multiculturalism is never a completed project. Long conversations with different cohorts of student organizers and undocumented student

supporters always pointed me to the nuances of being, what Sara Ahmed (2012) refers to, an "institutional plumber". They reminded me of the compromises that institutional plumbers have to do to support undocumented students—of having to be fluent in university terms, university missions, to speak as politicians, to speak to the university's legible terms. To speak in the terms of engagement of the university, undocumented young immigrants adopted the subject positions of undocumented students and made their stories—their trauma, resilience and demands—visible (Chapter 1). As they gained visibility among potential institutional champions, undocumented students became incorporated into the university's projects of diversity and inclusion because they could fit into the subject position of "good immigrant students" and not bad activists (Chapter 2). As with everything else with processes of institutionalization, where there are material and structural gains, there is also a sense of personal loss. This loss can be seen in the way undocumented student organizers remembered "those days" and "those previous undocumented students" who really did care about organizing (Chapter 4); or the ways undocumented student supporters discuss the shifts and paradoxes embedded in new institutionalized university sanctioned forms of allyship (Chapter 3).

As a project that aims to contribute to the scholarships in Critical Ethnic Studies and University Abolition Studies, my theoretical orientation in this dissertation does not take a taken-for-granted understanding that higher education is intrinsically *good*, university as intrinsically *democratic*, and that undocumented student incorporation into higher education is intrinsically *progressive*. Guided by the works and theories of abolitionists, feminist, Black, Indigenous, Trans, Queer scholars, in this dissertation I center the university as one of the many ideological and material structures that sustain constructs of US citizenship, and by extent the imperial, gendered, racial violence that support this construct. This is not to dismiss the material, life chances, and forms of capital accumulation that come from obtaining a college education. In fact, as a university student who spent 8 years of my 12 years of higher education as an

undocumented student (4 years undocumented, 4 years DACAmented)—I have a personal understanding of the material gains that come with a college education, and I have personally benefited from structures and programs that facilitate increasing forms of educational accessibility to undocumented students.

Over the time I was an undocumented student, as well as my ten years as a researcher in this topic, I have witnessed the increasing amount of scholarship that seeks to understand the educational and social experiences of undocumented students; the role of undocumented student supporters in leading educational equity; the impact of storytelling in the immigrant and undocumented student movements; and more recently the evaluation and improvement of best practices for undocumented student support services. Similar to the calls of action that form part of this scholarship, when I was an undocumented student and organizer at UC Berkeley, I had hopes that one day undocumented students would not struggle with obtaining their college education. As part of the undocumented student movement, I joined with others because we just wanted to study and support our families. We wanted a chance. Some of us wanted to stop engaging in illicit economic activities, competing with our friends for limited financial resources, and have a chance to develop as adults without the impact of our immigration status limiting our future options and dictating our choices. Some of us were more hopeful than others. Some of us reported high levels of depression, and others developed the emotional resources, sense of gratitude and organized in solidarity with local communities outside of our university. I do believe, at the core, we all (regardless of political orientation and strategic lens) wanted change.

In the last years I wrote this dissertation, after gathering data collection and designing my data collection protocols, I began engaging with new scholarships that question the socially accepted intrinsic goodness of education. From this position, it is difficult to bring into conversation scholarships that center the responsibility of higher education institutions to increase the inclusion and creation of safe spaces for undocumented students; and on the other

hand, scholarships that push for a nuance understanding of how power absorbs, coerces and waters down the radical potential of student and social movements and how the university is a space where these power dynamics can be well observed. This was a challenge I took on with full awareness that my work could lend itself to be misinterpreted.

My aim in this dissertation is to offer an invitation for new frames of thinking about justice that do not seek love (Kelley 2016) or recognition from the institution, but instead frame at the center the power of radical solidarity: the solidarity that happens without institutionally sanctioned forms of recognition, standardization, or certification. To not seek love from the university does not mean to be in *no* relationship to the university, as my research participants reminded me multiple times, there are material and ideological transformations that are needed. Yet, similarly to Robin D. G. Kelley, I do not think we can be invested in believing and framing safety as an institutionally sanctioned project. Ethnic Studies has a long tradition of centering the potential of people in solidarity to bring about social change. My invitation is to also to deromanticize social movements, as we have known for a long time in Ethnic Studies, social movements can hold radical potential *as well as a* strong attraction for sustaining and accommodating around the status quo. New frames require our attentiveness. A commitment to be attentive and quickly respond to any fixation with progress narratives, teleological constructs, romanticization of social movement movements, or celebration of institutions as saviors, and to instead, reorient ourselves when we fall into these narratives, even when they are intended for political purposes.

This kind of attentiveness to our frames, discourses, and symbols is already out there and can be seen in the work of cultural workers, such as the queer undocumented immigrant poet and activist, Yosimar Reyes. Recently, Reyes playfully called for the replacement of the iconic pro-immigrant monarch butterfly for *la cucaracha* (a cockroach). Reyes builds upon the work of performance artist, Xandra Ibarra's, solo exhibition *Ecdysis: The Molting of a*

Cucarachica and her exploration of the cucaracha as a revamped racialized, gendered symbol of strength, perseverance, and resilience. Whereas the monarch butterfly has been the adopted symbol in pro immigrant communities to represent the beauty and humanization of immigrant communities, la cucaracha is a despised and stigmitized insect. However, Reyes and Ibarra see in la cucaracha the potential for a symbol that embodies transformation and resilience. In an Instagram post, Reyes articulates his call for la cucaracha as this, “La cucaracha in its genetic is resilient and it’s strong to survive nuclear wars it’s the perfect symbol for the plight of undocumented communities” (Reyes 2021). What I find powerful about Reyes’ call is the adoption and experimentation for new symbols that do not lock immigrants into static socially accepted representations and symbols (for example: the monarch butterfly), but instead ask us to experiment with new frames of immigrant communities that provoke a different set of future imagined subjectivities. Through what Indigenous scholar, Audra Simpson, has called politics of refusal (Simpson 2014)—a politics that refuses to accept the legitimacy of authorities to grant rights, social services, recognition and protection—Reyes engages with the potential of new subject positions and imaginaries that La Cucaracha brings forward. This attentiveness, with all its experimental and playful potential, can help us continue to be watchful of the rise of new forms of frames, discourses and figurations of the “acceptable immigrant subject”, as these figures often serve to fragment and sustain differentials of social value.

Like Reyes’ attentiveness, this is the attentiveness that I also witnessed in the undocufield. When I heard my interlocutors refuse to see institutional transformations as the result of institutions who grant “recognition and protection” and instead as the results of *people* organizing and coming together as entangled and messy beings in this social world. This attentiveness requires the willingness to be subversive individuals and, in an *undercommons* fashion (Moten and Harney 2013), to continue planning and studying together.

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