Creating Resistance on the Border: Coalitions and Counternarratives to S.B. 1070

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

With the passing of Arizona’s immigration bill S.B. 1070, the controversial “Papers Please” law ignited strong responses from its supporters and detractors. This dissertation focuses on the resistance to Arizona’s law by examining the role of artists in the protest movement. This dissertation examines films, both documentary and narrative; songs and their accompanying music videos; and the Sound Strike boycott of Arizona begun by prominent musicians in order to explore the discourse utilized by these groups in their protest of S.B. 1070. Through an analysis of visuals, narrative structure, lyrics, Facebook posts, and public press conferences, this dissertation argues that these creative productions change the discourse around immigration and undocumented immigrants. Focusing on undocumented immigrants as laborers, parents, and children, these artistic forms of protest create a counternarrative to the dangerous, violent, immigrant evoked by S.B. 1070 supporters. In film, music, and the Sound Strike boycott, artists emphasized the connection between racial profiling in S.B. 1070 to other fights against state surveillance and violence, calling for a multiracial, multiethnic coalition. This dissertation argues that the protests of S.B. 1070 show the opportunities and importance of coalitional building outside of identity groups while simultaneously recognizing that the reliance upon the heteronormative family and gender essentialism limits the protest both in coalitional opportunities and in protecting already marginalized undocumented immigrants.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Protests take place in the streets, in the courthouse, in social media, and also in creative work such as art, music, and literature. Using cultural production to protest against discrimination, violence, and social ills has been an integral part of movements for social justice. In 2010, a law passed in the state of Arizona sparked a protest movement that would lead to the creation of a variety of protest art. On April 23, 2010, Governor Jan Brewer signed into law the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act. This piece of legislation, known more commonly as Arizona Senate Bill 1070 or S.B. 1070, was praised by its supporters for its step toward securing the borders, deporting undocumented immigrants, and “protecting” the state of Arizona from criminals (Dahms Foster and Hartz). S.B. 1070, considered the toughest immigration bill to pass in any U.S. state in decades, created extensive controversy, both within the state and at the federal level with President Obama condemning the bill before Governor Brewer signed it into law (Archibold). This dissertation focuses on the resistance to Arizona’s law by examining the role of artists in the protest movement, and how they rearticulate the undocumented immigrant, construct coalition, and what social or governing bodies they hold responsible for the law.

Introduced in January of 2010 by Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce, S.B. 1070 contained a number of provisions aimed at criminalizing and harshly penalizing the daily
actions of undocumented immigrants in the state. S.B. 1070 imposed fines and imprisonment on undocumented workers found within the state of Arizona and imposed a requirement on law enforcement to determine the status of anyone suspected of being an undocumented immigrant (S.B. 1070). The law made it illegal for undocumented workers to attempt to find employment, to hire or be hired by a passing vehicle that stops traffic, and established a provision making it a felony to hire undocumented workers (S.B. 1070). Furthermore, the law made undocumented migrants ineligible for early release from prison, allowed police officers to arrest those they believed to be undocumented without the need of a warrant, and made it illegal to have an undocumented person in one’s vehicle (S.B. 1070). These strict laws made it difficult to attain work, to travel, to exist in public spaces, and triggered a strong reaction from those supportive of the law as well as those opposed. Protests in Arizona, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles as well as other areas of the country began after the bill passed due to those both with and without legal citizenship fearing racial profiling by law enforcement in Arizona and the widespread belief that the law would hurt small business owners in Arizona (Grinberg; Nintzel).

With immigrants making their way from Mexico to the U.S. without going through legal channels and unemployment rates rising, discussions around immigration reform escalated around the country in 2010, particularly in border states like Arizona. Before the passing of S.B. 1070 in Arizona, the state legislature had attempted to pass similar bills in Arizona, including 2006’s Senate Bill 1157 and 2008’s House Bill 2807, both of which included the controversial provision in S.B. 1070 necessitating law enforcement to check the immigration status of those suspected of being undocumented
(S.B. 1157; H.B. 2807). At the time, the laws passed the Arizona Senate and House before being vetoed by then Democrat Governor Janet Napolitano (Benson). In 2004, the state passed Arizona Proposition 200 or the “Arizona Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act,” which necessitated photo identification and proof of citizenship to vote (Proposition 200). In 2006, the state passed a number of initiatives targeting undocumented immigrants, including Proposition 100 that denied bail to individuals thought to be undocumented immigrants, Proposition 102 that forbade undocumented immigrants from receiving punitive damages from any court in Arizona, and Proposition 300 that refused undocumented immigrants in-state tuition as well as banning them from adult education classes and from receiving financial aid (Proposition 100; Proposition 102; Proposition 300).

In 2007, the state passed the Legal Arizona Workers Act, which made it mandatory for public and private employers to use e-Verify to check the legal status of their employees (“Legal Arizona Workers Act). Additionally, in 2010 Senator Pearce and three other members of the state legislature attempted to pass Senate Bill 1097 that asked school districts to gather information on their students that cannot prove legal residency and report the information to the state government (S.B. 1097). While unsuccessful, the Arizona state legislature did pass H.B. 2281, a law targeting the Mexican American Studies program in the Tucson Unified School District, outlawing courses that “promote resentment” based on race, are designed for those of a particular racial or ethnic group, advocate racial or ethnic solidarity, or encourage the overthrow of the U.S. government (H.B. 2281). Though not specifically targeting immigration, over sixty percent of the
student body of the Tucson Unified School District are Latina/o, and Tucson, being the closest major Arizona city to the border, has a large immigrant population (TUSD Stats Ethnic/Gender Enrollment; Carrasco). The passing of this law inspired protests across the state and national media coverage, including the creation of the 2011 documentary, *Precious Knowledge*, which followed the teachers and students, showing the various methods deployed by those in opposition to the law (*Precious Knowledge*).

In addition to the legislation enacted by the state of Arizona, the policing of immigrants in Arizona before S.B. 1070 took place on several fronts. The Sheriff of Maricopa County, Joe Arpaio, known in the media as Sheriff Joe, made a name for himself nationally for his controversial and, at times, illegal forms of policing. While his treatment of Maricopa County’s incarcerated population has been much discussed in the media, his tactics around undocumented immigration have also drawn attention as he regularly performed raids in businesses and public spaces, including areas like water parks, swap meets, and car washes (James; Sunnucks; Rubiano; Gaynor). These raids led thousands of Arizonans to take the streets in protest in February of 2009 with signs saying “We are human” and “Stop the raids” with celebrities like Rage Against the Machine frontman Zach de la Rocha joining the march in solidarity (Gaynor).

In addition to the policing enacted by the Sheriff’s department of the most populous county in the state, the civilian militia group known as the Minutemen have been active in Arizona since the mid-2000s (Chavez 132). The Minutemen are composed of several loosely tied organizations of civilians who patrol the border with guns in search of immigrants crossing illegally into the United States, positioning themselves as
the protectors of the U.S. (Chavez 132). In this way, the policing of undocumented immigrants in Arizona existed before S.B. 1070. Despite the intense policing and multiple laws passed in Arizona targeting the undocumented population, it would be a mistake to believe that the events in Arizona were an example of exceptional racism or anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S.

Though eventually found to be unconstitutional, California Proposition 187, passed in 1994, prohibited undocumented immigrants from receiving public education and health care, and necessitated schools to verify the legal status of their students and their students’ guardians (Proposition 187). As Kristina M. Campbell points out in her article on state regulation of immigration, in 2006, San Bernardino, California put up an Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance that disallowed undocumented workers from living or working within the city and made English the official language of the city (Campbell 419). Later in 2006, Hazleton, Pennsylvania passed the Hazleton Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance, which made it mandatory to register with the city in order to gain residence and made English the official language of the town (Campbell 420). In Prince William County, Virginia, the Board of County Supervisors passed Resolution 07-894, which tasked law enforcement to increase policing and detainment of undocumented immigrants as well as to deny all public services to undocumented immigrants not mandated through federal law (Resolution No. 07-894). Furthermore, in the year following the passing of S.B. 1070 over half the states in the U.S. proposed laws similar to S.B. 1070 with the laws passing in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Utah (“S.B. 1070 at the Supreme Court”).
Alabama’s H.B. 56, or the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, is similar to S.B. 1070 in its requirement that law enforcement check the legal status of anyone suspected of being undocumented and forbid the offering of transportation, housing, or employment to undocumented immigrants (H.B. 56). However, Alabama’s law went further than Arizona’s law by forbidding undocumented immigrants from attending public universities and mandating that state elementary and high schools keep a record on how many of their students are undocumented and report these tallies to the state (H.B. 56). Though Arizona’s law inspired other states, the desire to increase the policing, detention, and deportation of undocumented immigrants existed before the law and continued after its creation. Additionally, the presence of so many laws outside of Arizona’s borders highlights the how the resistance to harsh laws targeting undocumented immigrants apply throughout the country. The steps taken by Arizona are not an isolated incident, but rather part of a nationwide movement.

What makes Arizona’s S.B. 1070 important is that it was the most restrictive state immigration law in existence when it passed, and the law created a ripple effect with other states moving to create their own similar laws. However, the spread of S.B. 1070 to so many states, including those with a significantly smaller undocumented population, indicates a sweeping anti-undocumented immigrant sentiment felt far beyond the borders of Arizona. In 2010, the year S.B. 1070 passed and the peak of the economic downturn, Arizona’s unemployment rate rose to 11.1% in January, surpassing the national average of 9.6% (“Local Area Unemployment Statistics: Arizona”). At times of economic downturn, intensification of anti-undocumented immigrant sentiment in the U.S. rises, as
was the case during the Great Depression when Mexicans, both undocumented and citizens, were deported to Mexico to increase job opportunities and public services for white Americans (Hernandez 81; Diaz, Saenz, and Kwan 302). However, research by the Cato Institute has shown that S.B. 1070 and laws mandating e-Verify, the program that checks for legal residency status, rather than benefiting those in the state, caused significant losses to jobs and revenues with sectors, like farming, suffering as laborers left the state (Nowrasteh 7).

Furthermore, while economic arguments followed the law, it was not the main discourse around the passing of S.B. 1070. In the speech made by Governor Jan Brewer when signing the bill into law, Brewer stated,

I’ve decided to sign Senate Bill 1070 into law because, though many people disagree, I firmly believe it represents what’s best for Arizona. Border-related violence and crime due to illegal immigration are critically important issues to the people of our state, to my Administration and to me, as your Governor and as a citizen. There is no higher priority than protecting the citizens of Arizona. We cannot sacrifice our safety to the murderous greed of drug cartels. We cannot stand idly by as drop houses, kidnappings and violence compromise our quality of life (Brewer).

This is despite studies, like the one released by the American Immigration Council, that finds that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than citizens and higher immigration often leads to lower crime rates (Ewing, Martinez, and Rumbaut 1-2). Furthermore, rather than increasing, undocumented immigration from Mexico has
decreased since 2009, according to research published from the Pew Research Center (Krogstad, Passel, and Cohn). The construction of undocumented immigrants as criminals justifies, at least to the law’s supporters, the extreme measures taken by the state. Despite the arguments of lawmakers and elected officials, S.B. 1070 and other laws targeting the undocumented population are not actions taken to keep their states safe. The gulf between the discourse around undocumented immigrants and the reality left those opposed to the law with an opportunity to change the perceptions of undocumented immigrants.

I argue that S.B. 1070 and similar laws are part of an ongoing project to privilege normative citizens, while simultaneously ensuring that the states and the nation can control the racial, religious, sexual, and ethnic makeup of the country. Resistance to S.B. 1070 and similar laws should, then, address not only the specifics around the law, in this case S.B. 1070, but would do well to ally itself with other movements to form coalitions outside of racial/ethnic boundaries. Though the fight in Arizona is specifically around questions of who deserves to exist within the U.S., who should have a pathway to citizenship, and what limits should be placed on the policing of undocumented immigrants within the U.S. border, the law does not protect citizens equally. Surveillance, violence, and the construction of the other as not truly belonging within the nation applies to those both with and without legal citizenship.
Contributions to the Scholarship

This dissertation will contribute to scholarship on Latino/a popular culture as well as work on S.B. 1070. Latina/o resistance to white supremacy, economic exploitation, sexism, colonization, and other community issues have nearly always included an active creative community. As Jorge Huerta argues in his article on Latinos/as and the U.S. theater, each Latin American country and its people have their own specific relationships with Spain and the U.S. and have created art and music as a way to address their experiences (Huerta 465). Latinas/os have a long history of using art, music, film, theater, and other creative outlets to push against colonialism, racism, labor exploitation, and sexism. In MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands, Rosa Linda Fregoso argues culture, including cultural products, play an important part “in the formation of social identities on the borderlands” (Fregoso xiii). This dissertation will seek to contribute not only to the body of knowledge on S.B. 1070, but also to the work examining creative contributions to protest movements and the ways in which art is used to shed light on social injustice. Specifically, I am interested in how creative work meant to resist the law represents undocumented immigrants and the law’s supporters as well as what types of discourse the artists use to fight against the law. Furthermore, I place the creative work used to protest S.B. 1070 into a history of musical and cinematic protest art within the United States.

Chicanas/os, in particular, have a history of incorporating artistic work into protest movements. In MeXicana Encounters, Fregoso turns to a documentary by the name of Maquila: A Tale of Two Mexicos (2000) to argue that films have the ability to
“provide a generally persuasive account of unfair labor practices, gender and labor exploitation, health and safety violations, and environmental degradation” (Fregoso 9). Additionally, in Fregoso’s earlier work, *The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture*, Fregoso argues that film, specifically Chicano film, can resist colonization and foster support for revolution (Fregoso 8). While Fregoso’s work focuses on the medium of film, her larger argument is that creative production can reveal important truths about marginalized people and their daily lives. Furthermore, Latina scholars like Clara E. Rodriguez trace the history of Latinas/os in film to discuss changing representations and the ways in which film has shaped the perception of Latinos/as within the United States (Rodriguez). Rather than seeing Latina/o representation as static, Rodriguez highlights the racism found in Hollywood cinema as a way to argue for the necessity of marginalized people to create their own artistic work to combat harmful stereotypes. In Gloria Anzaldua’s book, *Borderlands: La Frontera*, Anzaldua eloquently argues for the importance of art to resistance movements:

My ‘stories’ are acts encapsulated in time, ‘enacted’ every time they are spoken aloud or read silently. I like to think of them as performances and not as inert and ‘dead’ objects (as the aesthetics of Western culture think of art works). Instead, the work has an identity; it is a ‘who’ or a ‘what’ and contains the presences of persons, that is, incarnations of gods or ancestors or natural and cosmic powers (Anzaldua 89).

In this quote, Anzaldua ties art to spirituality, but also argues that creative work brings forth action, not just when it is created but whenever it is viewed, read, spoken, or heard.
In the book itself, which is a critique of U.S. state power through a poetical history of the U.S. borderlands, a call for rethinking spirituality, and a look into homophobia and sexism within the Chicano community and family, Anzaldua uses both prose and poetry, incorporating art into theory. Similarly, songs, films, and other forms of art, like those created in response to S.B. 1070, work to reveal conditions, theorize new avenues of resistance, and function as a form of creative political commentary.

The scholar Jose David Saldivar argues that artistic and creative work should be viewed as tools for creating change and that these artworks give voice to a struggle as well as telling the story of life and culture within the borderlands (Saldivar 36). From murals with indigenous imagery used to show ethnic and nationalist pride during the Chicano Movement to Chicanas/os using the medium of film to fight stereotypes in U.S. film, art is a form of activism, resistance, and protest (Latorre 66; Noriega xi-xii). This dissertation is a continuation of this scholarship with some deviations. Like William Anthony Nericcio’s *Text-{t}-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the “Mexican” in America*, I do not just look at work created by Latinas/os, but instead focus on the work specifically aimed at resisting S.B. 1070, some of this created by Latinos/as, but much of it created by those who are not immigrants or Latinas/os. Instead, the focus is on how undocumented immigrants and Latinas/os are imagined within the creative community protesting Arizona's law, and how the allies of the Latina/o community contribute to the creation of a counternarrative to the one advanced by S.B. 1070 supporters.

Many scholars covered the impact of S.B. 1070, though most focus on the events leading up to the law, the legality of the law itself, and the impact it has on the
undocumented community. In addition to tracking the history of federal and state laws that led to the high numbers of undocumented immigrants in Arizona, scholars highlighted that anti-undocumented immigrant sentiment is exacerbated by the government and news media covering the issue so shallowly that most people do not understand the basics behind legal immigration and immigration laws and its impact on foreign policy (Longley 50-51; Diaz, Saenz, and Kwan 310-311; Santa Ana 13). Scholarship has found that the passing of the law in Arizona led to an increase in illness and other negative health outcomes for Latinas/os, particularly those whose primary language is Spanish, and the law encouraged racial profiling from average citizens as well as law enforcement (Anderson and Finch 542; Bean and Stone 145). Under this system, far fewer undocumented immigrant women use the health system, leading to illness and developmental delays for their children, and far fewer women call on law enforcement, leading to few options for those experiencing domestic violence (Toomey 531; Arcidiacono 210-211).

Scholarship on resistance to the law has looked at creative production. For instance, scholarship on the use of graffiti in its function as public resistance art as well as its use as a teaching tool integrated art, teaching, and activism (Oliver 72-73). Django Paris’ piece on youth activism found students using literature and walkouts to resist S.B. 1070, drawing connections between undocumented immigrant fights today with the Civil Rights Movement (Paris 7-8). Analysis of Latina/o and South Asian blogs found that while the trend was to empathize with undocumented immigrants and argue that the U.S. and Arizona marginalize brown people, the blogs relied upon normalizing language,
emphasizing that they were “American, just like you” (Mudambi 56-58). This dissertation adds to this scholarship through a discussion of other artistic mediums as well as putting different types of creative production into conversation with one another.

This dissertation contributes to the body of work on Arizona by focusing specifically on the contributions of filmmakers and musicians to the fight against S.B. 1070. In particular, I examine the discourse artists have deployed to resist the law. I examine songs, music videos, social media, and film to analyze how artists are representing undocumented immigrants, and who they include as part of their coalition to fight against the law. Additionally, I look at what powers, people, and institutions they identify as the antagonists in the fight against the violence done to the undocumented community in Arizona. The positioning of undocumented immigrants in Arizona as non-normative and undesirable subjects opens up space for coalitions with those similarly marked including those who queer, disabled, low-income, and other communities of color. Furthermore, I argue that while normative representations of undocumented immigrants that rely upon the heteronormative family and able-bodied laborers are less threatening, focusing exclusively or nearly exclusively on these groups only further marginalizes those within the undocumented community who do not fit into this narrative.

Additionally, this dissertation contributes to scholarship focused on artistic contributions to immigrant protests such as Veronica Oliver’s scholarship on the use of protest graffiti in resistance to S.B. 1070 as well as works such as Katarzyna Marciniak and Imogen Tyler’s Immigrant Protest: Politics, Aesthetics, and Everyday Dissent, which
looks at the use of art transnationally in contemporary protest movements. Marciniak and Tyler’s book shows the vast field of art as both a site of marginalization and a type of activist work, including everything from Native protests of the film *Avatar* to the use of art to protest Israeli violence. Furthermore, these works highlight how citizenship alone does not guarantee inclusion within the nation.

While citizenship grants legal inclusion within the nation, Kathleen M. Coll uses the term cultural citizenship to describe the ways in which “certain groups of citizens who, though formally entitled to full legal political rights, are socially recognized neither as first-class citizens nor as contributors to the vernacular meanings of citizenship as it plays a role in day-to-day life in the United States” (Coll 5). While many within the U.S. have citizenship, cultural citizenship is restricted to those most normative – white, heterosexual, male, cis-gendered, able-bodied, middle class – who represent the desired subject. However, William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor believe that cultural citizenship within the Latina/o community is a call for empowerment in that it encourages Latinas/os to claim rights in a way that bypasses the bonds of legal status (Flores and Benmayor 13). It is within these frameworks that we can see the possibility for coalition and resistance that expands beyond the borders of Arizona or the threat to the undocumented population to make lasting alliances across identity lines. Cultural citizenship, or the lack thereof, can explain why some who are not undocumented joined the protests in Arizona, created art in support of undocumented immigrants, and spoke out against the law. The United States is currently in what Karma R. Chávez calls a “coalitional moment,” in other words, “when political issues coincide or merge in the public sphere in ways that create space to
reenvision and potentially reconstruct rhetorical imaginaries” (Chávez 8). These
coolitional moments, if taken advantage of, can lead to more widespread change.

Methodology and Chapter Outline

In this dissertation I analyze the discourse of three separate artistic forms of
protest, focusing on three specific issues: who is the sympathetic immigrant these artists
use to combat the negative images of undocumented immigrants advanced by supporters
of S.B. 1070, who are the artists imagining as part of their coalition or allies against the
law, and who or what is responsible for the law in Arizona. I begin the dissertation by
looking at film that addresses the conflict in Arizona over S.B. 1070. Specifically, I
analyze two documentaries, *SB 1070 The Faces* (2011) and *The State of Arizona: Battle
ever Illega Immigration* (2014), and the narrative film *Machete* (2010). I chose to place
*Machete* in conversation with two documentary films to highlight the similarities within
the narratives of the films despite the different genres and aims of narrative and
documentary films. Including both genres of film allows me to highlight the prevalence
of these narratives while also discussing how genre changes how these messages are
conveyed. Second, I turn to music to analyze both the lyrics and the visuals of music
videos created to protest S.B. 1070. Given the number of songs created in protest of the
law, I chose to focus on music released the same year as S.B. 1070 that directly addresses
Arizona rather than focusing on music that has a more general message of acceptance,
 inclusion, or pro-immigrant rights. The eleven protest songs all speak directly to the fight
in Arizona and give the musicians a clear way to articulate their views on undocumented
immigrants, allies in resistance, and the opposition. Lastly, I focus on the Sound Strike boycott. I analyze the organization’s Facebook page from May 26, 2010 when it began to December 31, 2010 as well as the group’s press conferences and public statements. I chose to focus on the organization’s Facebook because it is the main source of information and activist coordination for the boycott. In addition to looking at these forms of creative production separately, I place them into conversation with each other to discuss the ways in which these varying forms of protest often have similar messages as well as discussing how they differ from one another.

In the following chapters, I focus on the contributions of the artistic and creative community to the protest of S.B. 1070 in order to highlight the different methods employed in challenging the discourse of the law. While street protests, governmental lobbying, and legal action were all employed by resisters in their attempts to stop the enforcement of the law, force the state to remove provisions from the bill, or have it declared unconstitutional, artistic forms of resistance and protest also contribute to the movement. In particular, artistic forms of protest can inform the populace, gain sympathy for those impacted by S.B. 1070, galvanize those opposed to the bill, and keep the issue within the public spotlight. As Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre argue in their article on digital artistic activism, art gives not only a space for critique but also the ability to imagine an alternative future, giving agency and purpose to people who might otherwise feel powerless (Sandoval and Latorre 81-82).

In Chapter Two, “Visions from the Arizona Border: S.B. 1070 Counternarratives in Film,” I examine three films: Machete (2010), SB 1070 The Faces (2011), and The
State of Arizona: Battle over Illegal Immigration (2014). All three works were created by directors and writers opposed to the law and attempt to garner sympathy for undocumented immigrants within their respective films. First, I discuss the medium and its limitations both from a visual and narrative perspective as well as the bodies of work from which these films pull in order to contextualize what is seen onscreen. Second, I discuss the part race plays in the narratives of these films. Given the racialized nature of S.B. 1070, race within the films work as a line of demarcation and as a pivotal point for building coalition. Specifically, the films often emphasize the racial dimension of the law by arguing that S.B. 1070 is not only attacking undocumented immigrants or Mexicans within Arizona but is part of a larger national project of surveillance, detainment, and violence against people of color. The placing of S.B. 1070 into conversation with other racialized struggles against both states and the nation allow all of the films to highlight the ways in which other racially marginalized groups join undocumented immigrants in their struggle against the state because they share a history of violence and marginalization. Third, I discuss the ways in which each film works to construct a counternarrative of the undocumented immigrant. Specifically, this narrative is counter to the ones oftentimes evoked in discussions around securing the border, undocumented immigration, and tougher penalties for undocumented immigrants, like the ones enacted by S.B. 1070. I argue that the films rely on similar counternarratives, focusing on undocumented immigrants as pregnant women, mothers, fathers, and children and emphasizing their roles as laborers who contribute to the U.S. economy. While these narratives do create a more sympathetic immigrant subject, I argue that these narratives
are problematically normative, relying upon heterosexual kinship, strict gender roles, and sexist reifications of women in which they are defined by their relationship within the family. The emphasis on Mexican immigrants as a source of cheap labor legitimizes the exploitation of Mexican immigrants by U.S. businesses. Furthermore, these arguments, because of their reliance on the most normative of Mexican immigrants, exclude the single, queer, and at times, disabled immigrants. In other words, the only welcome immigrant is the normative or what Theresa Delgadillo calls “the ideal immigrant” (Delgadillo 38).

In Chapter Three, “Songs from the Border: Resistance, Representation, and the Sympathetic Immigrant,” I focus on the protest songs created to resist S.B. 1070. Though a number of songs have been utilized by those opposed to S.B. 1070, I chose to focus in on the music released the same year as the law was signed that specifically reference S.B. 1070 and undocumented immigration. Many of the protest songs created in response to S.B. 1070 are what Dario Martinelli refers to as area songs, or protest songs that were created with a struggle in mind but do not directly reference the event so much as call for togetherness, understanding, and inclusivity or critique violence, nativism, or the state more generally (Martinelli 48). Though those songs, both currently and historically, are useful because they can be utilized by a variety of movements for social justice, the messages are oftentimes so general they do not speak to direct events (Martinelli 48). Therefore, using protest songs that directly address the law in Arizona and undocumented immigrants allow for an examination of what precise arguments are being made by the creators within the song. I begin this chapter with an overview of protest songs and their
use by movements within the U.S. The overview allows me to place the protest songs of S.B. 1070 within historical context as well as discussing the changes to traditional protest music that occurred due to music streaming and the use of social media by movements for social justice. Within this discussion, I show how music has often traveled transnationally and across racial lines with different racialized struggles utilizing one another’s protest music. Next I discuss how the protest songs around S.B. 1070 take the multiracial coalitions also featured in S.B. 1070 films and expand upon it, not only connecting S.B. 1070 to racialized struggles within the U.S. but also struggles against colonialism, militarism, sexism, and poverty both nationally and transnationally. This expansion of what is at stake in the fight against S.B. 1070 allows for coalition building outside of racial lines and encourages the listener to think of the fight not as one just for undocumented immigrants but as a resistance to state violence and the abuse of marginalized people by the powerful – be they the government, the larger normative culture, or corporations. Furthermore, I discuss how the songs critique those in Arizona as well as the federal government for their part in deportation and violence against undocumented people, and how these songs typically avoid the false construction of Arizona as a place of exceptional racism but instead view Arizona as an example of what is taking place in other cities and states around the country. However, I argue that sexism can be found in the dehumanization of Jan Brewer over figures like Joe Arpaio or Russell Pearce, and in how the songs, much like S.B. 1070 films, rely upon the heteronormative family represented by the hard working father and the pregnant mother to make their arguments in support of S.B. 1070. Lastly, I discuss how some the songs problematically
call upon American exceptionalism through their argument that undocumented immigrants should be allowed into the free United States to escape the poverty and abuses of Mexico.

In Chapter Four, I turn to Sound Strike, the organization of musicians that banded together to boycott the state of Arizona after the passing of S.B. 1070. I begin with a discussion of the history of boycotts in the U.S., focusing on other boycotts that grew from dissatisfaction with immigration law to the contemporary boycott of North Carolina for its transphobic toilet law. This discussion allows Sound Strike to be placed in historical context and show the ways in which the boycott builds on a history of resistance. After placing Sound Strike in this context, I discuss the ways in which Sound Strike, like S.B. 1070 protest films and songs, utilizes the heterosexual family, particularly through the image of the Child, to position itself as a protector and the state of Arizona as psychologically harming children. I argue that while these themes and images appear in all three mediums, the narratives articulated through Sound Strike’s Facebook intensifies these images. While it is important to show how S.B. 1070 impacts children and the active role some children are taking to resist the law, which Sound Strike does on several occasions, Sound Strike utilizes children primarily in their roles as victims of the state. In interviews, broadcasts, and links on their Facebook, the Mexican immigrant is part of a heteronormative family structure, and the opposition to S.B. 1070 is imagined as a movement to protect children. This narrative obscures the needs of those who exist outside of these bonds, particularly for those whose kinship ties exist outside the heteronormative family. Furthermore, I discuss the reoccurrence of the immigrant as
laborer narrative that focuses on the cheap labor undocumented immigrants provide the nation even as it critiques U.S. capitalism. However, I argue that one of the strengths of Sound Strike is in its transnational work. While the organization focuses primarily on S.B. 1070 and the struggle in Arizona, it also acknowledges the connections between U.S. struggles and transnational struggles and argues that American citizens need to inform themselves about global social justice issues.

Finally, in the conclusion, I discuss the current state of Arizona’s S.B. 1070 as it is today and draw attention to the additional issues facing the United States due to the election of Donald Trump and his stance on undocumented immigrants and his desire to build a wall along the border. I argue that in the current political landscape, it is likely that laws like S.B. 1070 will continue and perhaps broaden with the support of the presidency, making it important outside of S.B. 1070 protests how we argue for rights and inclusion. Because of the current state of U.S. politics and the presidency, resistance to further immigration and border restrictions will be necessary for the days to come. Like the work of artists in opposition to S.B. 1070, those opposed to increasing detention, deportation, and surveillance of immigrants must move beyond identity categories and create coalitions to fight against the law. In order to facilitate effective protests and mark these movements as ones that wish to serve the immigrant community, it is necessary to ensure that we do not reify normative kinship structures or argue that people deserve amnesty or residence due to their role as laborers in service to middle class, white citizens. By showing a more diverse and inclusive support for immigrants, we will not just be arguing that the normative, the able-bodied, and the heterosexual immigrants
should be allowed within the U.S., but that we reject the nativist, fearmongering arguments that would have the U.S. restrict admittance to Muslims from a wide range of countries, Mexicans, Central Americans, the queer, or the disabled.
On May 5, 2010 Robert Rodriguez released a trailer to the pop culture website, Ain’t It Cool News, for a film still in production. In the trailer, Danny Trejo, who plays Machete, the main character of the film, addresses the camera, “This is Machete with a special Cinco de Mayo message for Arizona.” The short trailer that followed was only two minutes and twenty-four seconds long and ended with Machete causing an explosion that he drives his motorcycle through while shooting anti-immigrant people in the film. The brief trailer ends with a voiceover stating, “They soon realized, they just fucked with the wrong Mexican” (Knowles).

Released in September of 2010, Robert Rodriguez’s Machete features Machete Cortez, a Mexican police officer nicknamed after his favorite weapon, and begins with Machete attempting to rescue a girl from the drug lord, Rogelio Torrez, only to discover that the girl and his own chief of police are working for Torrez. Machete is injured, and Machete’s partner, wife, and daughter are murdered by Torrez and his men. The film picks back up in Texas, years later, where Machete has been in hiding from Torrez, working as a migrant laborer. He receives assistance and free food from Luz, who runs a taco truck during the day but is secretly the leader, Shé, of an underground organization called the Network that provides aid and assistance to undocumented immigrants. We are
also introduced to Sartana Rivera, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent who is investigating Luz/Shé for her connection to the Network.

Machete is living a quiet life until rich businessman Michael Booth approaches and attempts to hire him to kill Senator John McLaughlin, a hardline anti-undocumented immigrant senator. When Machete declines the offer, Booth threatens to kill Machete if he does not fulfill the contract. Machete attempts to kill Senator McLaughlin only to discover that it was a setup engineered to boost Senator McLaughlin’s popularity and reinforce the idea of Mexican immigrants as a danger to U.S. citizens. Machete discovers that Senator McLaughlin, Booth, the drug lord Torrez, and Von Jackson, the leader of a vigilante border patrol group, are all in business together. Enlisting the aid of Luz/Shé and Sartana, Machete and Luz/Shé’s Network gather a stockpile of guns and assault the base of Von Jackson’s group, killing almost everyone inside, including Torrez, the man responsible for the deaths of Machete’s family. McLaughlin escapes only to be killed by members of the vigilante group, who mistake him for a Mexican. The film ends with Machete and Sartana on his motorcycle riding off into the sunset together.

The image of undocumented immigrants and their allies going to war against white U.S. citizens incited such strong feelings that one white movie reviewer argued that Machete was anti-American, racist, and an attempt to start a race war against white people (Nolte). While it is unlikely that a race war was Rodriguez’s intent when he created the film, it does show the strong feelings film can evoke from audiences. As Carlos E. Cortes writes, "Filmmakers function as teachers (intentionally or unintentionally), films serve as their resulting textbooks (effective or ineffective), and
viewers are the learners (consciously or unconsciously)” (Cortes 121). The construction of filmmakers as teachers and viewers as students highlights the importance of film in delivering messages, constructing alternative modes of being, and reinforcing or challenging existing structures. Like other types of artistic work, film is a medium through which creators can express political commentary, offer solutions to social problems, and highlight injustice.

With the passing of S.B. 1070 and subsequent anti-immigration legislation, filmmakers opposed to the law created works to resist the legislation and both the anti-immigrant and anti-Latina/o sentiment embedded in discourse supporting S.B. 1070. In this chapter, I examine three films: Machete (2010), SB 1070 The Faces (2011), and The State of Arizona: Battle over Illegal Immigration (2014). Though on the surface it may seem like Machete is only tangentially related to S.B. 1070 since the film takes place in Texas and not Arizona, and the film had already begun production when S.B. 1070 was signed into law, reviewers of the film believed that the director, Robert Rodriguez, fashioned the villainous fictional Texas senator John McLaughlin after Senator John McCain because of their similar names, belief in the U.S.-Mexico border fence, and their hardline stances on immigration (Roberts). This idea is further supported by Robert Rodriguez’s release of a special trailer for the film on Cinco de Mayo that explicitly references Arizona and Arizona’s S.B. 1070 immigration policies (Roberts). While the law itself had not been signed until the film had begun production, clearly the film was meant to address current tensions on the border, and the director’s own reference to S.B. 1070 places the film into conversation with the law. For this reason, I believe that
*Machete* is Rodriguez’s critique, if not directly on the law itself, on the conditions on the border that give rise to these types of laws and discourse, particularly since Arizona public officials are eluded to in the film.

In this chapter, I discuss the individual films and the impact the genre has on these films – both in the case of the documentaries and in the fiction of *Machete* in order to give context for what is seen on film. The films are sympathetic to undocumented immigrants and give insight into their lived realities, showing both the racism experienced by immigrants as well as the possibilities of multiracial coalitions. Yet at the same time, the films resort to gender essentialism, heteronormative constructions of the family, and utilize arguments which encourage the economic exploitation of immigrants. By highlighting these issues within the films, I hope to show how coalitions around resistance to S.B. 1070 are imagined and realized. Additionally, I will show the limitations in the discourse both in how the films advocate for undocumented immigrants and in the scope of the coalitions.

**The Social Problem Genre and Chicano Film**

As Francisco X. Camplis discusses in his article, “Towards the Development of Raza Cinema,” Chicana/o literature and film developed from a need to create art that addressed the problems facing the Chicana/o community and was imagined as not only a decolonizing project but also as a way to imagine a liberatory future (Camplis 288-292). As Rodolfo Gonzales, a member of the Chicano Movement, argued, “There is no inspiration without identifiable images, there is no conscience without the sharp knife of
truthful exposure, and, ultimately, there are no revolutions without poets” (Gonzales 1).

The incorporation of art into critiques of the state has a long history with the Chicano Movement as Chicano films increased dramatically after the 1970s due to the Chicano Movement and the increasing politicization of Chicanos in college (Saldivar-Hull 11). Many Chicano students interested in addressing the problems of Chicanos within the larger U.S. culture found their voices through filmmaking because of its ability to reach so many (Noriega 142). Because of the need for art to have a message, social problems are often found within Chicano cinema as the genre enabled Chicano filmmakers to address issues of racism and inequity, particularly in relation to the political system and education (Ruiz and Sánchez Korrol 15).

The social problem genre is typified by its intent to "expose topical issues rather than conceal them" (Ramirez Berg 29). Highlighting problems that disrupt a nation's cultural, political, and social identity, social problem films deal with issues affecting marginalized communities, oftentimes in ways that may prove unsettling to the viewers (Ramirez Berg 29). Unsettling viewers by exposing the fault lines between how a country or society imagines itself and how it functions for those living on the margins is largely the goal of these types of films, which focus on the precarious members of society, showing what other films avoid. In this way, the strength of the social problem genre is its ability to reveal systemic marginalization, exposing dominant culture to alternative discourse surrounding an issue. The genre, most often allied with liberal politics, flourished in less conservative decades by making politics and social commentary the focus of film, particularly around issues such as the systemic
disenfranchisement of communities and the resulting rise in crime (Ramirez Berg 32; Ryan and Kellner 87). Focusing on the poor, the devastation of war, homelessness, prejudice, addiction, and even domestic violence, social problem films have existed since the 1910s, gaining popularity in the 1930s and again in the 1960s, and were considered an explicitly political genre of film (MacCann viii; Sloan 12).

Characterized by a male hero who becomes the victim of injustice, the hero of social problem films attempts to right society through words and fists (Ryan and Kellner 94). Locating change within a single person or small group of people typifies the productions of this genre of film (Ryan and Kellner 94), and this dynamic can be found in Luis Valdez’s 1981 film *Zoot Suit*. *Zoot Suit* is a fictionalized retelling of the Sleepy Lagoon murder trial and the Zoot Suit Riots that openly addressed the racism that existed within the police force and judicial system. The main character, Henry Reyna, was based on Hank Leyvas, one of the men prosecuted during the Sleepy Lagoon trial. In the film, Reyna and his friends stand trial and are convicted of a murder they did not commit. They would later be acquitted. Detailing the day of the murder through the acquittal of Leyvas and his friends, the film focused on a small group of Mexican individuals suffering from a biased legal system. Furthermore, the film uses its tight focus on Reyna in order to make his acquittal a triumph for Chicanos rather than specific to one man and his friends. As the director stated in an interview, the purpose was to make Reyna larger than life, mythic (qtd in Barrera 235). Reyna was not the only one imprisoned, and his legal team fight alongside him for his release, but it is not the lawyers or Reyna’s unjustly accused friends that play the part of hero. If anything, these characters are secondary,
seen as aids to Reyna rather than partners. The reliance on the individual, male hero rather than a collective group, characterizes a large portion of the social problem genre and remains salient in Chicano social problem films in particular.

However, it is worth noting that within these films the structures that marginalize the people are left untouched. The hero has triumphed, so the people have triumphed, even if nothing has changed except for the situation of the individual. The limitations of this narrative are particularly noteworthy in in the Chicano film *Stand and Deliver* (1988). Stories of Latinas/os being discouraged from attending college by those in the school system remain a prominent narrative borne out by research (Schneider and Ward 551). Ramon Menendez's *Stand and Deliver*, arguably one of the most popular Chicano films in the U.S., details the teacher Jaime Escalante's attempt to teach calculus to underprivileged, mostly Chicano teenagers in Los Angeles. Based off a true story, the film addressed the day-to-day struggles of the students, and the reluctance of other teachers at the high school to believe the Chicano students were capable of mastering such a difficult subject. The history of U.S. culture's belief that Chicano students are less intelligent than white students figures prominently within the film, in addition to the struggles faced by those with low economic status, touching on everything from poverty, to gang violence, and the struggles of single parent households (Saldivar-Hull 95). After the students triumph and receive excellent marks on their Advanced Placement exam, they are accused of cheating and forced to retake the test, which they again pass with high scores. Escalante is clearly the hero of the film, and it is through his hard work that the students are in a position to prove their intellectual capacities. However, as Mario
Barrera writes, "The message, on the other hand, is that institutionalized racism continues to exist and must be taken into account by non-Whites attempting to improve their lot" (224). While these students succeed, the situation that both poverty and their ethnic identity placed them in remains unchanged. Because of this, though the individual triumph in the film is emotional, it is ultimately a singular victory.

The same narrative structure found in *Zoot Suit* and *Stand and Deliver* can also be seen in *Machete*. Machete is the lone protagonist or hero of the film. Though Sartana and Luz/Shé help Machete, and it is ultimately Luz/Shé’s guns and people within the Network that allow Machete to defeat the civilian border patrol group, they are secondary characters within the narrative. We know little about either of the characters, and they exist onscreen to lend assistance and aid to Machete, emphasizing his role as the savior or hero of the film. Sartana gives up her life as an ICE agent to ride off into the sunset with Machete, and Luz/Shé sleeps with Machete and offers him much needed weapons, medical care, and support, but neither of the characters are treated as partners in Machete’s hunt to kill those who betrayed him or the man that murdered his family. Even his sexual relationships with both of the women do not increase their importance within the narrative as they are two of the four women he sleeps with over the course of the film.

Furthermore, the construction of Luz/Shé as the leader of the Network is in some ways undermined by Machete’s role in the film. Luz/Shé has been stockpiling weapons in case they needed them, and yet, despite the deportations, abuses, and violence that is experienced by the undocumented immigrants in the film, it is not until Machete’s life is threatened and he wants to go to war that she feels compelled to take violent action.
When, at one point in the narrative, Machete’s enemies capture Luz/Shé and blind her in one eye, the narrative glosses over this, having her reappear with an eyepatch but otherwise the film largely ignores the injury. And though it has already been mentioned, Sartana, who dedicated her life to ICE changes within the span of a few days after meeting Machete, falling into bed with him and ultimately leaving her entire life behind for him. Sartana is a Chicana who spends her career detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants, but even though none of those experiences can change her mind about the work she does, a day in Machete’s company turns her from a dedicated ICE agent to someone who believes Mexicans have a right to cross the border at will.

The women are not the only ones who suffer in the narrative because of their connection to Machete, as Padre, a Catholic priest who is crucified in his own church by Machete’s enemies, is certainly murdered because of his relationship with Machete. However, between the death of Machete’s wife and daughter and the blinding of Luz/Shé, women within the film exist to bleed for Machete or be bedded by him. Even nurses who briefly appear onscreen to help Machete with a bullet hole in his leg kiss and flirt with him. Though these scenes are certainly tongue in cheek (especially considering that actor Danny Trejo is not known for his good looks, so all these women being instantly in lust with him certainly has a bit of humor in it) the narrative turns all these women, even powerful, self-assured women into lustful beings incapable of being in the same room as Machete without taking their clothes off. The hypersexualization of Chicanas within the film and the regulation of these women to marginal or supporting
roles is a common trend in Chicana representation in Hollywood film and Chicana/o history.

Within the Chicano Movement women were often regulated to supporting roles, asked to clean, serve men food and drink, and provide any support they need (Gutierrez 47). Furthermore, the construction of Chicanas on film functions similarly. As Catherine S. Ramirez discusses in *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory*, the Sleepy Lagoon case referenced by the film *Zoot Suit*, did not just involve Chicanos, but that these men were arrested along with a group of Mexican American teenage girls (Ramirez 30). Moreover, while the men were later exonerated, the girls were never tried in a court but instead sent to the Ventura School for Girls where some were made wards of the state until their twenty-first birthdays (Ramirez 31). In this way, *Zoot Suit*, focused on the impact the law and imprisonment had on the men while marginalizing the Chicanas involved, effectively erasing them from this historical moment. In addition to the erasure and marginalization of Chicanas, whenLatinas appear in United States film, they are often represented as either intrinsically tied to the family through their roles as mothers or hypersexualized both through their dress and in their sexual behavior (Morrison 29). The portrayal of Luz/Shé and Sartana falls in line with other depictions of Chicanas, both in their sexualization within the film as well as their marginal roles within the overall narrative. Luz/Shé is a Chicana who leads her resistance movement, but this important role seems less significant than Machete’s actions within the film, and in this way, Robert Rodriguez missed his opportunity to tell
the story of Chicana/o resistance, of immigrant resistance where a Latina is the one whose story is prioritized.

Machete’s attraction within the film is not, however, merely a physical one. Similarly to Reyna, Machete also functions as the mythic hero whose triumph becomes a representation of the triumph of all his people. The writer and director, Robert Rodriguez, said, "I wanted a character that was almost superhuman... You create superheroes to take care of problems that can't really be solved another way" (Radish). When conceptualized in such a manner, the problems the films address resolve themselves through the triumph of a single, mythic figure, making others not as fortunate unrepresented within the film. Moreover, even the other characters in the film recognize Machete’s mythic status with Luz/Shé telling Machete that she’s “heard the legend” when she realizes who Machete was in Mexico. Yet Machete does not seem equally impressed with Luz/Shé being responsible for the Network. Though he does acknowledge her as capable, she is certainly not placed in the same mythic or legendary status as him. The sexism in Machete is exacerbated further in how women’s bodies are represented in the film, though rather than being a function of the social problem genre, this is a direct result of the visuals within the film being largely influenced by the exploitation genre.

The Exploitation Genre and Machete

Though Rodriguez relies upon a history of Chicano filmmaking and the social problem film, Machete is the violent film that it is because of Rodriguez’s engagement with the exploitation genre. If the social problem genre is responsible for the narrative arc
of the character Machete, it is the exploitation film that most influences the appearance of images within the film. Or, to put it another way, the social problem genre informs the framework of the film while the texture and the way that framework and narrative expresses itself is through the lens of the exploitation genre. The exploitation genre appears in some of Rodriguez’s other films as well, specifically *Grindhouse* (2007), *From Dusk Till Dawn* (1996), and *Planet Terror* (2007), all of which have visual styles unlike most social problem films.

Exploitation films are known for their low budgets as well as "many scenes of sex, violence, or other potentially lurid elements; the term derives from the fact that promoters of such films exploit the content by using advertising that plays up the sexual or violent aspects of the films" (Clark 4). With the aim of making money, exploitation films use these tactics to bring in audiences and keep their audience entertained in ways that are both budget conscious and expedient (Clark 4-5). While that does not necessarily detract from the larger critiques the film presents, it does influence how seriously some will take those critiques. In addition to the violence and sex of exploitation films, this genre also critiques current events and “reflects the fears and concerns of the public at large” (Clark 8). However, unlike social problem films, exploitation films critique rather than offer solutions or success in the guise of a triumphant mythical hero. Additionally, when race is added to the exploitation film, like in the case of Blaxploitation or Mexploitation films, the hero is either involved in crime or a loner cop working outside the law to kill evil white people encroaching upon their territory (Brayton 276-279).
*Machete*, with its clear message about the poor treatment of Mexicans and undocumented workers, fits in with the ideas espoused by the exploitation genre. As a bodyguard in *Machete* states, "We let these people into our homes, watch our kids, park our cars, but we won't let them into our country. Does that make any sense to you?" A clear example of the overall statement of the film, *Machete* carries a message of inclusion. Furthermore, the fear permeating exploitation films features prominently in *Machete*. The civilian border patrol group in the film are obvious stand-ins for the Minutemen, and it is this group’s violence against Mexicans that lead a group composed primarily of Latinos to take up arms and assault their compound, killing those they find. *Machete* clearly shows an armed uprising of a primarily non-white group against an all-white organization with the intention to take the fight to the U.S. state itself. The violence takes the fears of white America, of conservative pundits, and makes it a reality within the fictional world of the film.

Though they do not call themselves the Minutemen, the civilian border patrol group in the film is clearly modeled after the organization. Begun in 2005, the current Minutemen are a group of armed volunteers that patrol the U.S.-Mexico border and stop Mexican citizens from crossing into U.S. territory (Chavez 132). The group organized themselves and quickly expanded from Arizona to other states, using U.S. flags and frequent references to the founding fathers and the greatness of the U.S. nation, the Minutemen position themselves as patriotic and involved in important work that the federal government abdicates (DeChaine 54). Named after the early American colonists who fought against the British, these men call on the past in order to lend legitimacy to
their operation (Chavez 133). The Minutemen fashion themselves as the current era's militia that seeks to protect fellow citizens from those who would take their freedoms (Chavez 134). Describing the crossing of Mexicans into the United States as an "invasion," the Minutemen are explicitly anti-Mexican immigration (Chavez 134). The armed Minutemen also bring with them the threat of violence. Looking like soldiers, Minutemen often dress in camouflage, carry guns, and wear bulletproof vests (DeChaine 55).

In addition to their threatening dress and militaristic mindset, the group has, on more than one occasion, argued for more direct violence. For example, one member of the Minutemen said, "It should be legal to kill illegals. Just shoot 'em on sight... You break into my country, you die" (Holthouse). Furthermore, studies conducted with the Minutemen have shown that not only do they overwhelmingly support a fence between the border of U.S. and Mexico, but 82.7% of the Minutemen studied support using armed U.S. military to control immigration (Cabrera and Glavac 684). Despite these ideologies, studies have shown that only slightly less than half of Americans support the work of the Minutemen with the number rising to half in Phoenix, Arizona (Cabrera and Glavac 675). In this way the power of the Minuteman can be seen both as one of political clout and how the organization positions itself as holding back the “dangerous undocumented immigrant infiltrating” U.S. borders, emphasizing the need for Americans to fear immigrants. With this kind of history of specifically anti-Mexican sentiment and militarism, this group becomes a representation of white intolerance, of anti-Mexican, anti-Latino, and anti-immigrant sentiment, drawing the ire and violence of Machete.
However, the fears in the film are not just white fears as *Machete*’s engagement with exploitation film focuses on two distinct cultural fears functioning in the U.S. at the time of release. The first fear is that of the immigrants coming over the U.S.-Mexico border and Mexican Americans in the U.S. The film includes a scene of a pregnant woman being shot and killed by the Minutemen-like group after she crosses the border, and other scenes that depict undocumented workers being chased by men in trucks with rifles in an attempt to kill them. *Machete* depicts a United States that is not merely hard on illegal immigration, but a United States that is anti-Mexican, be that Mexican a citizen of the U.S. or undocumented. Moreover, the racism within the film is not one of passive dislike but murderous intent.

Likewise, white Americans in *Machete* have their own nightmare scenario. As mentioned previously, the violence perpetrated by the Minutemen inspired civilian border patrol results in people of color (and some poor whites as well) taking up arms to assault their compound, killing those they find. Though the race war mentioned by a reviewer is not exactly what is depicted onscreen (Nolte), race is an important element in how the lines between the groups are drawn. *Machete* clearly shows an armed uprising composed primarily of people of color against an all-white organization that murders them for sport, not a group of Mexicans killing all white people. While the state is certainly implicated in the abuses against immigrants in the film, the film chooses to focus on a civilian group. The image of the Minutemen inspired organization chasing undocumented immigrants through the desert and shooting an unarmed pregnant woman while the others look on and laugh is certainly powerful, but it ignores the roles that both the state and federal
governments play in enacting violence upon the immigrant body. The extreme nature of the violence within the film, which showcases limbs flying and blood pouring out of wounds in a fairly unrealistic fashion, also makes the violence seem less real, more the fantasy of the filmmaker than an exposure of actual violence. The violence of the U.S. Border Patrol is completely ignored in favor of the violence of civilians.

The focus on violence outside the state obscures what Omi and Winant call racial projects that position the U.S. nation as white and encourage, directly or indirectly, violence against racial and ethnic others (Omi and Winant 55-56). The decentering of the state as the originator of violence obscures the work the state does in encouraging and enacting cultural, psychological, and physical violence. Yet the prevalence of the Minutemen group in the film and the association of the Minutemen with violence is not without cause. In 2011, Shawna Forde and Jason Bush, members of the Minutemen, were given the death penalty for invading the house of a Mexican family with the intent to steal from them to fund their Minutemen activities, leading to the death of nine year old girl and her father (Dwyer). Several reports of dead undocumented immigrants in areas heavily patrolled by these militia groups have been attributed to drug and human smugglers, but many believe that they were the result of one of the Minutemen groups (Lenz). Robert Crooks, founder of the Mountain Minutemen, “disseminated a video in which he staged the fake execution of an undocumented immigrant,” which while found to not be real, does indicate a willingness to enact violence, which is particularly frightening given that he patrols the desert with a rifle, waiting to find undocumented people crossing the border (Murphy). In this way, these cases of both real and glorified
fictional violence by the group towards Mexicans and immigrants makes them an easy
target for critique.

In addition to fears of the exploitation genre that *Machete* foregrounds, it also
uses the sensationalized sex and violence associated with the genre, including an opening
scene that involves a nude woman pulling a phone out of her vagina and a later scene
involving a threesome with Machete, a mother, and her daughter. Moreover, extreme
levels of violence happen frequently within the film, including a decapitation, a close-up
of a man being stabbed in the head, an on-camera strangulation, and a scene where a
wine-opener is stabbed through a man's eye. As a film that includes both sensationalized
violence and a crucified, gun-toting Catholic priest, *Machete* is meant to be both
shocking and controversial. In Sean Brayton’s article on *Machete*, he argues that the
exaggerated violence and the support for armed revolution works to counteract the
“liberal multicultural discourse in Hollywood” that often constructed Mexicans as
needing white saviors to fix national and community issues (Brayton 284). While gender
and heteronormativity were not the focus of Brayton’s piece, he does say that the reliance
on “the sex, violence, and stereotypes of exploitation eclipsed the political possibilities”
(Brayton 285). I would argue that the film’s reliance on the exploitation genre does, at
times, detract from an interesting political message because of its reliance upon the
sexual exploitation of women’s bodies while simultaneously critiquing the U.S. for
exploiting Mexican labor and bodies. However, the focus on direct action and even
revolution as a step to deal with violence and marginalization is an important contribution
to the discourse around immigration and S.B. 1070.
Documentary Films and S.B. 1070

Documentary films, as we think of them today, began in the 1920s, and differ from narrative fiction films in several key ways (Ellis and McLane ix). While narrative fiction films focus on entertainment and profit, documentaries can and oftentimes do both of those things, but they are created with a purpose in mind beyond entertainment and are shaped by this directive or goal (Ellis and McLane 5). As Bill Nichol’s describes it in his book, *Representing Reality: Issues and the Concepts in Documentary*,

“The pleasure and appeal of documentary film lies in its ability to make us see timely issues in need of attention… what they put before us are social issues and cultural values, current problems and possible solutions, actual situations and specific ways of representing them” (ix).

Unlike narrative film, documentaries carry with them a responsibility to do justice to the topic or purpose of the documentary, but it would be disingenuous to describe documentaries as innately more truthful, since what is focused on, whose stories are told, and in what way they are told allow documentary filmmakers to shape their narratives and portray their causes in specific ways (Nichols 10).

Yet even with this being the case, social justice documentaries become a powerful medium through which the directors and contributors can critique dominant policies and ideologies. When citizens of the nation imagine their culture and belief systems, the importance of history and representation becomes clear, and oftentimes the national imaginary excludes the marginalized. This exclusion is the gap that documentaries are able to fill – exposing the lives and struggles of queer people, immigrants, at risk youths,
and others. For Chicano scholars, documentaries allow the space to create works that highlight the place of Mexicans within the U.S. historical narrative that often excludes them, pointing out their contributions to the nation, be it as participants in the Civil War or as field workers responsible for harvesting crops that feed millions (Marcus 59).

Though many Mexican American families have been U.S. citizens for generations, they are not fully represented or embraced by the nation to which they belong, often left out of history or considered a problem that the nation must negotiate (Roman 120). By placing these documentaries in conversation with an exploitation film, it allows for an examination of the impact that genre can have upon what is presented, but it also highlights the prevalence of certain arguments regardless of genre. Additionally, though both documentary films covering the same topic, *SB 1070 The Faces* and *The State of Arizona*, choose to cover their subjects differently and have different target audiences.

*SB 1070 The Faces* is directed by Renato Avalos, a filmmaker and social justice activist, and created without the help of a distributor, with the director choosing to use social media, popular websites like Amazon, and other social justice organizations to screen and distribute the film (Smith). *SB 1070 The Faces* also chose to create the documentary almost entirely in Spanish where English is only used in the scenes that show press conferences or interviews with non-Spanish speaking protestors and organizers. While the documentary provides English subtitles, choosing to use Spanish as its primary language decentralizes Whiteness and instead locates the primary audience as Spanish speakers. Furthermore, the documentary not only covers press conferences in the United States, but also includes speeches given by Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, the
President of Mexico, and Patricia Espinosa, the Chancellor of Mexico, creating a transnational dialogue about the state of Arizona. *SB 1070 The Faces* makes no attempt to hide or lessen its anti-S.B. 1070 sentiment or its alignment with the undocumented immigrants of Arizona.

The explicit support for the undocumented population of Arizona can be seen in a myriad of ways. Within the first ten minutes of the film, it shows a lineup that includes white, black, and Latina/o men and women with a voiceover that says, “According to ‘reasonable suspicion,’ of the people you see, who do you think is undocumented?” The clear takeaway from this scene is that despite the claims of many Republican members of the state senate, the law clearly allows for racial profiling. Additionally, the interviews it conducts are primarily with both undocumented immigrants and those sympathetic to their cause. Luis Gutierrez, a Congressman from Illinois, features heavily within the documentary, and says, “This [the law] has nothing to do with reform, this has to do with racism, prejudice, and hatred that has come to visit us in Arizona.” One of the few supporters of S.B. 1070 who is interviewed is Daniel Webster, who is identified as a member of the Minutemen, an organization that’s perceived as anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican even outside the borders of Arizona and the Southwest. The documentary also emphasizes that those who side with Jan Brewer, the then Governor of Arizona, are “extreme” and includes cross-cuts of pro-S.B. 1070 supporters speaking about dangerous immigrants with family members crying because their loved ones were picked up by ICE and are in danger of being deported. Given that the documentary showcases numerous press conferences with pro-S.B. 1070 supporters, it cannot be said that it obscures their
perspective, but the supporters of the law are repeatedly countered by the suffering of undocumented immigrants as well as counter arguments from S.B. 1070 protestors. The goal, then, of this documentary is to emphasize the experiences of undocumented immigrants living in Arizona.

In contrast to SB 1070 The Faces, The State of Arizona: Battle over Illegal Immigration directed by Catherine Tambini and Carlos Sandoval is a much more widely watched and publicized documentary that was featured on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Additionally, both of the documentaries begin their timeline before the passing of S.B. 1070 and end over a year after the law was passed, and both cover key events like the recall of Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce. The State of Arizona, however, attempts to show both sides of the debate, interviewing not only undocumented immigrants and their families and civil rights activists but also Russell Pearce, a deputy sheriff, two Republican state representatives, as well as a 60 year old grandmother and staunch S.B. 1070 supporter. During one interview, Tambini explained that after a rough screening to some friends, they found that people were leaning toward the anti-S.B. 1070 side after watching the documentary. She said, “We realized that maybe we had gone overboard in making their case and had to swing it back so that both sides were more fairly represented” (Phillips). Despite the attempt to seem impartial, however, when Sandoval discusses why he chose to take on the topic for his documentary, he said, “I felt itchy and scared. All the talk about racial profiling and splitting up families just didn’t make any sense” (Phillips). The directors emphasize the impact of detention and deportation, and the film ends with one of the undocumented activists prominently
featured in the film finding himself in danger of deportation. His status at the end of the film is unknown, and the directors highlight this in the last moments of the film, reminding the viewers of the difference between the dangerous immigrants imagined by the conservative right and the lived reality for immigrants trying to survive in post-S.B. 1070 Arizona. In this way, both documentaries give voice to the experiences of undocumented immigrants and give them the space to discuss how the passing of Arizona’s law has impacted their lives, families, work, and feelings of safety within the state.

**Multiracial Coalition and Racial Critiques**

While these three films differ in key ways and address issues of undocumented immigration and the S.B. 1070 immigration law differently, all three align themselves with undocumented immigrants. I chose to put these into conversation with one another to show the overarching arguments that exist regardless of genre – the focus on the heteronormative family, undocumented immigrants as cheap laborers, and the normative gender roles. There are, of course, differences in how the films express these messages, but the messages themselves, are often similar. Furthermore, I am able to tease out the impact genre has when the messages are different—the contrast of peaceful protests and marches in the documentaries with the violent revolution of *Machete*. Moreover, the three films carefully construct both the climate of the U.S. that allows these laws to be created, and how pro and con sides of the S.B. 1070 immigration law are utilizing race, nationalism, and class to further their goals. The use of these identities in crafting a
message can subvert or reaffirm problematic structures. As Rosa Linda Fregoso argues, when documenting the life or struggle of those on the borderlands, there are “non-egalitarian power relationships between border subjects,” and this can reify “the persistence of racial, sexual and class intolerances in the borderlands” (171). To tell the story and struggles of undocumented immigrants in Arizona is not enough, to make the argument that undocumented immigrants should be included in the nation is not necessarily sufficient. The way that the argument is made must not reinforce harmful and limiting constructions of those who live on the margins in Arizona. In this way, how race, nationalism, and class is constructed by those fighting against the law becomes as important as the fight itself.

In *Machete*, the narrative focuses on fighting against government corruption and white racism, and the allies that help Machete are taken from all ethnic groups – though they are largely the poor in *Machete*. So while the focus is certainly on Machete, there is an emphasis on reaching across identity divides to solve issues. This does not counteract the focus on the individual in the film since *Machete* may recognize the systematic or institutionalized nature of problems, particularly those associated with marginalized groups – people of color, the poor, those without citizenship, it still locates the solution for those problems within a single, male character or a small group of people led by a male character. Moreover, it seems that the argument the film and the director is making is that a mythical hero needs to exist to fix the issues around racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and the border specifically because legal and cultural (in the sense of U.S. racism) change seems impossible. In some ways this is a limit of the genre, and yet it
does address the enormous undertaking it would be to create a fair immigration policy and amnesty for immigrants in the contemporary political climate, let alone radical changes that could lead to open border policies. However, despite the limitations of the film *Machete*, it does create a world where a multiracial and multiethnic revolution against corruption is possible. The armed revolution is, in this way, not the only important take away from the film, but rather a way for the viewers to see multiethnic and multiracial solidarity against racism within the culture, as represented by the civilian Minutemen-like organization, and the racism of the state, shown through the corrupt senator. The violent uprising seen in the film was viewed literally by some as a call for the marginalized to take up arms, but given the sensationalism of the exploitation genre, we can also see it as a metaphor for direct action – a call for protest, for active participation against the state and civilian powers that further marginalize those with the least amount of power. Though conceptualized differently than *Machete*, the documentary films also emphasize the power and possibility of multiethnic and multiracial solidarity.

The focus on multiethnic and multiracial solidarity is echoed in both of the documentaries with their emphasis on those allying with undocumented immigrants. During a rally in *The State of Arizona*, it shows an unidentified black woman speaking on one of the stages who says to the crowd,

“**We are natives of New Orleans. We are here to let you know that you do not stand alone. This fight is not only your fight here in Arizona, but it’s a universal**
fight. It’s an issue that blacks have been struggling with for a long time. Today we’re going to make S.B. 1070, BS 1070.”

The reference to a shared fight here and the shared experience of racial profiling does not mean the situations are the same, but it does acknowledge a shared experience of racism and embraces a solidarity across racial and ethnic lines. In *SB 1070 The Faces*, the documentary shows Al Sharpton along with a group of African Americans marching with Latinas/os in Phoenix, and Sharpton draws connections between the protests against the law and the Civil Rights Movement, saying, “This is a light that Martin Luther King lit, that Cesar Chavez lit, [and] this light will never go out.” The recognition of shared oppression, both racial/ethnic and economic with the allusion to Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers does not stop with African Americans.

Native Americans in Phoenix are pulled over and asked for their papers in *The State of Arizona*, with police officers not being able to differentiate between Native Americans and Latinas/os. Additionally, in *SB 1070 The Faces*, it shows a rally on May 29th, 2010 that is attended by members of the Tohono O’odham Nation with Mike Wilson, a member of the nation, giving a speech in which he says to the crowd, “My brothers and sisters indigenous, we are all immigrants this day.” The acknowledgement of shared oppression as well as the incorporation of non-Latina/o people of color in the fight against S.B. 1070 mirrors some of the same fictional content found in *Machete* and places the fight against the law in conversation with other fights against white racism and nationalism. Though certainly a critique can be made that we are not all immigrants and one’s status as a citizen or undocumented will not change because of a few words, but
these moments are important because they are not passive or glossing over the struggles and differences between groups. Rather, they are examples of active support and alignment with groups outside of one’s own identity categories to recognize the shared oppression experienced by the state.

In addition to the focus on multiracial and multiethnic solidarity, the films also deal with the history of exclusion and colonization along the border. For instance, in _Machete_, the character Sartana Rivera says, "We didn't cross the border; the border crossed us." This line connects Latina/o struggles in border states, including Arizona, to other U.S. struggles against white supremacy, particularly black slavery. However, it is also drawing attention to the fact that though it was not a true immigration, the first large influx of Mexicans into the United States happened as a result of the Mexico-U.S. War. In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which bequeathed a large portion of Mexico -- what is now considered the U.S. Southwest and California -- to the U.S., ended a war between the two countries and transformed over 100,000 citizens of Mexico into citizens of the United States (Jimenez 6). Despite the U.S. promise that these new citizens would retain their land, Mexican Americans were forced to prove unassailable documentation of land ownership, and the U.S. refused to recognize land shares, giving Mexican American land to the U.S. government who then bequeathed these areas to white citizens (Gomez 122). The dispossession of Mexican citizens from their land and the move from Mexican to U.S. citizenship references both the United States’ questionable policies regarding its own respect for borders as well as its preferential treatment of whites. In this way, both Native people and Chicanas/os have experienced the unlawful seizing of land by the U.S.
government, though with Chicanas/os being mestiza, there is the question of whether the land was ever rightfully Chicanas/os.

The critiques of race and nativism continue throughout *Machete*, but the issue is raised early in the film. In the first ten minutes of *Machete*, a reelection ad appears for Senator John McLaughlin. The beginning of the ad states, "The infestation has begun. Parasites have crossed our borders and are sickening our country, leaching off our system, destroying us from the inside," while images of maggots and cockroaches are shown crosscut with images of Mexicans. The ad goes on to say that Senator McLaughlin is for an electrified fence along the U.S.-Mexico border and "no amnesty for parasites." The ad depicts Mexicans running across the border and swimming across the Rio Grande with armed Border Patrol agents pursuing them and bullet holes appearing onscreen, indicating that some of the border crossers were shot. Furthermore, the quote "sickening our country" can be traced to discussions of disease like those posted by the Federation for American Immigrant Reform. Though the anti-Immigrant sentiment portrayed in *Machete* may seem extreme to some, it does represent some of the more anti-immigrant sentiments expressed, even by those in political office (Simek). In March of 2011, Virgil Peck, a Kansas Republican Representative spoke during a committee meeting on the control of hog population and said, "Looks like to me, if shooting these immigrating feral hogs works, maybe we have a (solution) to our immigration problem" (qtd in Fertig). Additionally, in 2010 in El Paso, Texas, an undocumented Mexican boy was shot and killed by Border Patrol officers for throwing rocks during their attempt to apprehend him, and since the boy attacked them, neither officers were reprimanded for
using deadly force (Torres and Sherman). Furthermore, in *The State of Arizona*, one of the pro-S.B. 1070 protestors is seen wearing a shirt that says, “Real border security requires ammo and a good aim,” reinforcing violence against undocumented immigrants. Statements like those made by Peck and protestors indicate a strong anti-Mexican immigrant sentiment as well as the violence behind these discourses, which we can also see highlighted in both *SB 1070 The Faces* and *The State of Arizona*.

In one of the early scenes of *The State of Arizona*, it shows an interview with Russell Pearce interview he argues that “assaults against the border patrol are up, they’re [undocumented immigrants] drug smugglers, human smugglers, gang members, child molesters.” The construction of undocumented people as dangerous and a detriment to the U.S. is echoed in the documentary by Michelle Dallacroce, a member of Mothers Against Illegal Aliens, who says, “This is an invasion. This is just like a home invasion if someone would invade my neighbor’s home and take their property or kill them.” Both of these lines echo the “extreme” statements found in *Machete*, emphasizing that while the film is certainly fiction, the ideas, anti-undocumented immigrant sentiment, and fear of immigrant bodies is not regulated merely to fiction. The dehumanization of undocumented immigrants, particularly given that the statements are made by white people, make clear that at least part of the issue rests on racial difference.

In *SB 1070 The Faces*, it shows Russell Pearce arguing that the law has nothing to do with race, and then shows a picture of the Arizona State Senator taken with a member of neo-Nazi group. This association is meant to reinforce the raced nature of S.B. 1070, but also highlight the connection between the racism and a desire for only white citizens.
within the U.S. These discourses reinforce the idea that undocumented immigrants are unwelcome in the United States and undesirable citizens, largely because of their race, and perceived as a threat. The threat narrative is echoed in how, during his run for President, Senator John McCain of Arizona discussed the need for tougher immigration policy and a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, falsely claiming that Phoenix had the second highest kidnapping rate in the world (Linkins). Given the closeness of Phoenix, Arizona to the Mexico border and the context in which he made this assertion, McCain was clearly making the argument that undocumented Latina/o immigrants in the U.S. were kidnapping and harming U.S. citizens. Furthermore, the Federation for American Immigrant Reform, an anti-illegal immigration group, posted on their website an article explaining that the spread of disease within the U.S. can be attributed to undocumented workers (FAIR). Portrayed in these discussions as diseased kidnappers, undocumented Mexican immigrants are clearly understood as a threat to the health and physical well-being of U.S. citizens. In both of the documentaries, they also provide a list of the anti-undocumented immigrant laws that preceded S.B. 1070 as well as the laws, none of which were successfully passed in Arizona, that came after the S.B. 1070. Many of these laws specifically targeted schoolchildren and attempted to revoke all access to medical care, constructing undocumented people as both beyond help and undeserving of aid. Additionally, both documentaries show raids led by Sheriff Joe Arpaio before the law was passed, connecting the law to a history of exclusion, incarceration, and surveillance of not only the undocumented population, but of the brown population of Arizona.
Only Here to Labor

In addition to the critiques surrounding racism and nationalism found in all three films, they also touch upon exploitation and conflict. *Machete* does not advocate for legal citizenship for undocumented immigrants within the U.S. or different border policies but rather argues that Mexican undocumented workers contribute to the country, are a part of the economic strength of the U.S., and should be allowed to work and live within the country. When a corrupt businessman in the film tries to convince Machete to kill Senator McLaughlin, he does so by arguing that the U.S. economy needs the Mexican labor that the state of Texas would not be able to survive without it, and that Senator McLaughlin wants to deport all Mexicans despite their contributions. The discussion becomes one of Mexican immigrants being useful to the United States precisely because they are easily exploitable laborers. This view, which is referenced frequently, reinforces capitalism and its exploitation of racially or ethnically marked others, rather than critiquing the system. Furthermore, the construction of Mexican laborers being particularly skilled workers, “glosses over variation among Mexican workers, ignores the role of inequality in structuring labor conditions, and diminishes workers’ agency on the job” (Gomberg-Muñoz 297). Despite its problematic nature, this counterargument is meant to push against the idea of undocumented immigrants as drains upon the U.S. system and can be found in both documentaries with Jorge Martinez, an undocumented immigrant and prominent contributor to *The State of Arizona* saying, “In fifteen years, I haven’t asked for a single dollar. Not from welfare. Nothing… We pay taxes.” Martinez emphasizes not only his position as a laborer, but also highlights how undocumented
immigrants contribute to the U.S. economy and taxes without receiving benefits. The low number of undocumented people using welfare programs have been backed up by numerous studies on the subject (Pena 111; Viladrich 823), but the continuing prevalence and political strength given to the argument that undocumented immigrants exploit the U.S. welfare system makes this argument a particularly useful one. Yet at the same time, the argument that Mexican immigrants should be allowed in the U.S. precisely because they are an easily exploitable labor force excludes many and reinforces the idea that Mexican immigrants function primarily as low-wage laborers that businesses should exploit because they will work for so little and not receive the social services they should have access to.

Additionally, both documentaries show numerous scenes of families working, with the Martinez family owning their own business selling food from a truck to construction workers and other blue collar laborers. The emphasis on undocumented people as laborers is reinforced in other ways as well with SB 1070 The Faces showing a press conference with Shakira where she specifically says that she’s concerned about S.B. 1070 because of “the consequences it can have on our Latino working families,” emphasizing the importance of undocumented immigrants to the U.S. workforce. The documentary later shows an elementary school aged girl who implores Arizona officials to be kinder to undocumented immigrants because they have “come to work, not to steal.” The use of the term “stealing” in this context, is part of an argument that believes that those who live in the U.S. are, because of their citizenship status, undeserving of assistance by the state. The focus on the value of undocumented labor and its importance
to the workforce is a common narrative in all three of the films, with one rancher in *The State of Arizona* stating that undocumented labor has been an important part of ranching labor for generations with no discussion of why specifically undocumented labor has been used, hiding the economic exploitation that often happens to workers in these positions.

Not only is class shown through the lens of undocumented people as laborers, particularly blue collar laborers, but also through the lens of lifestyle. In *The State of Arizona*, Mayor of Mesa, Arizona, Scott Smith speaks about how Arizona is “a great place to live” and a “paradise,” while the camera pans over sizeable mini-mansions with manicured green laws, sports cars, and fountains. When the documentary showcases the neighborhood where its undocumented families live, they are spaces with dirt lawns and patchy grass, old and dented cars, and cracked streets. Similar shots can be found in *SB 1070 The Faces* where the Cruz-Rosas family lives in a neighborhood with broken down cars, some missing windows, and run down houses, and others like Efigenia Cobix Cahan, live with multiple children in a small, old, sparsely furnished apartments. In *Machete*, Senator John McLaughlin and the businessmen within the film are fabulously wealthy with sprawling estates and expensive cars, while the Mexican characters in the film, both documented and undocumented, are shown either poor or, more rarely, middle class. In this way, the construction of difference is not only portrayed as racial difference but also a distinct class divide between those who support the law and those who do not, creating a feeling of David versus the Giant. This can also be seen in the scenes around organizing with Kris Kobach, the Kansas Secretary of State, who gives speeches in large,
well-appointed lecture halls about the importance of supporting S.B. 1070 (*SB 1070 The Faces*), while members of Somos America and the Puente Movement organize their protests in small buildings housed in strip malls (*The State of Arizona; SB 1070 The Faces*). These constructions of class not only emphasizes undocumented immigrants as workers who contribute to the U.S. economy, but also construct the fight against S.B. 1070 as one of the economically disenfranchised fighting against the power of the economic elite. While the focus on undocumented immigrants as laborers working to advance the interests of the U.S. state is a problematic one, these scenes emphasize how it is not the undocumented people who are stealing from U.S. citizens, but rather, that they are being exploited by U.S. businesses who underpay them.

**Gender, the Family, and the Construction of the Sympathetic Immigrant**

Given the construction of undocumented immigrants by pundits and the media as dangerous criminals who come to the U.S. to steal jobs from citizens or exploit the welfare system, one of the goals present in all three of the films is constructing a sympathetic undocumented immigrant as a counternarrative to the one espoused by S.B. 1070 supporters. The popular image of the undocumented immigrant in the media is that of a dangerous, Mexican man, who is a threat to public safety and is oftentimes involved with drug cartels, helping them smuggle illegal substances into the United States (*Fryberg et al. 98, 104*). Kathryn Kobor, a woman in her 60s and supporter of SB-1070 argues that undocumented immigrants used to be hardworking, good people who “owned their own businesses” but now “the illegals have drugs” (*The State of Arizona*).
Furthermore, one woman at a Russell Pearce speech wore a shirt that said “Illegals kill officers” (*The State of Arizona*). These sentiments are popular and reoccurring amongst supporters of S.B. 1070, and both Kathryn Kobor and Minuteman member, Daniel Webster, fear that increasing numbers of immigrants would cause a decreased quality of life with Kobor arguing, “I don’t want to live like I’m in Calcutta, having my neighbors living in boxes, having sewage run in the streets” (*SB 1070 The Faces, The State of Arizona*). The colonialist imagining of a country with a primarily brown population bringing to mind poverty and a danger to public health reinforces the idea of wealth and health existing in white spaces, furthering the need to exclude these dangerous immigrants and the change they might bring. Yet when looking at the fictional and non-fictional renderings found in the three films, we can see a different construction of the immigrant. Both of the documentaries as well as *Machete*, create a different, more sympathetic representation of the undocumented immigrant, combating the fears of White America while reinforcing heterosexuality, gender roles, and the nuclear family.

The first undocumented immigrant seen in the film *Machete* is a pregnant woman. She is running across the border and through the desert at night with the film’s version of the Minutemen tracking her down in trucks. Ultimately, they catch up to her and shoot her, the men laughing over her dead body. In this way, the first sympathetic immigrant seen in *Machete* is a woman and a mother, a significant deviation from the drug-trafficking, kidnapping male immigrant referenced by many conservatives in support of S.B. 1070. Moreover, it is not the undocumented immigrant who is a danger to U.S. citizens, but rather U.S. citizens are constructed as a danger to undocumented
immigrants. The film takes this concept further with the leader of the Minutemen group tracking down Luz, the head of the organization that protects and shelters undocumented immigrants, and shooting her through the eye. Though she survives, this violence is particularly gruesome and once again we see a woman bearing the brunt of anti-Latina/o violence, with Luz wearing an eyepatch for the rest of the film to cover the loss of her eye. The use of women, pregnancy, and children in these narratives places motherhood, womanhood, and childhood as innocent, in need of protection.

The image of the immigrant woman, particularly the undocumented immigrant mother, also features heavily in both documentaries. In *SB 1070 The Faces*, Patricia Rosas is a mother of three and grandmother of three, and she gets involved in protests of the law in part to keep her daughter and her son-in-law from having to leave the state to find a safer place to work. Efigenia Cobix Cahan is a mother of three, including one infant, from Veracruz who is now a single mother after her husband was caught and deported by ICE, and subsequently found dead in the Tucson desert after attempting to make his way back to her in Arizona. Her interview is given with her infant on her lap and her young son sitting next to her with Cahan crying as she describes the pain of husband’s death as well as his detainment by ICE when she was four and a half months pregnant (*SB 1070 The Faces*). Angelica Shou is a young mother and wife who is detained for months while her husband, Saul Juarez, talks about his fear and his and Angelica’s desire to work for “the well-being of our children.” Once Angelica is released, she tells the interviewer that “I am very happy with my children… While I was in prison, I always asked God to allow me to be here with them today” (*SB 1070 The Faces*). In
addition, the documentary interviews a young woman who is surrounded by her six children. She cries when she tells the interviewer that her, her children, and her husband are planning to leave Arizona for Los Angeles because their children are frightened (SB 1070 The Faces). In each of these cases, the role of mother rises to the forefront, and rather than seeing an image of a hardened, drug smuggling Mexican man, we are shown again and again the suffering of women who only wish to be with their children and provide them a good life. This construction of the suffering of women and children is meant to “signify victims and civilians” and maternal imagery is often used by organizations to gather support for marginalized and oppressed populations (Carpenter 302, 306).

Moreover, the focus remains placed on the normative, heterosexual family. Alfredo Gutierrez, former Arizona State Senator, speaks about how “over a thousand people a day are deported, and the families and children left behind have to fend themselves” (The State of Arizona). SB 1070 The Faces describes how many children end up in Child Protective Services after their parents are deported and are never returned to their families, and Salvador Reza argues that it is “unforgivable that a child, when he sees Arpaio or any sheriff, starts shaking and crying from fear.” Again and again, the documentaries return to the family as something that must be safeguarded and to children who must be protected. In this way, “children are aesthetically represented in a manner ensuring their recognition as victims worthy of compassion and are used to define a popular discourse on human rights” (Edelman 11). Moreover, the focus on children, even including interviews where children cry because their parents have been deported, work
to create a more sympathetic picture given that “filmic construction including the use of stylistic cinematography, parallel editing, and cross-cutting privilege bourgeois cultural codes regarding childhood and define the subject children as worthy victims” (Barthes 156). Children become representative of innocence, and the harming of children, either physically or psychologically through the removal of a parent, encourages those on the divide when it comes to immigration to recognize these children as victims of the immigration system. The construction of children in this way keeps the focus on couples and those with children, reinforcing the idea that people should care because these immigrants represent the normative family and the government is then responsible for creating non-normative kinship. There is no space for either the queer immigrant to be heard in these discussions or those who have non-normative kinship structures.

The focus on the family is reinforced in how the documentaries choose to cover men as well. *The State of Arizona* focuses on Jorge Martinez, his wife, his son, and their two dogs. Rather than the focus being on the mother, the film focuses on the father specifically because he’s active in the anti-S.B. 1070 protests and with the Puente Movement. Martinez tells the audience that he was never interested in politics until he “saw that they’re deporting people, deporting children, deporting mothers, deporting fathers. They’re disintegrating the family.” We watch as Martinez protests against S.B. 1070 with his son – the documentary never mentions why his wife does not attend these events – and we watch after he is arrested and in danger of deportation, his wife and son cry on the phone with him. Carlos Garcia, the only male immigrant we see without a wife and child in *The State of Arizona*, consistently brings up his family. While he was able to
get his citizenship after he was adopted, he comes from a family where a number of family members are still undocumented, which is what began his interest in social justice organizing around immigration. Moreover, when he spoke about the issues with S.B. 1070 he said, “If I invite my family over for dinner, I can be charged with harboring,” and he also described how he could be arrested for driving his grandfather to the grocery store. While the impact of the law on families is an important one, the construction of women primarily as mothers and of men as those who protect their families both rely on gender essentialism and a prioritization of the normative, heterosexual family. As Margot Canaday argues, the exclusion of non-normative gender and sexuality has been key to state building and identifying desirable and undesirable citizens (Canaday 53).

Additionally, both of these stories are meant to foreground the importance of family and the effect the law has on families, and to distance Garcia and Martinez from any negative associations the viewer might have with Mexican men.

The focus on the family and the connection of Mexican men to the family is a marked departure from *Machete* that makes no attempt to make Machete appear to be non-threatening. Machete is not made to be a sympathetic immigrant like the other undocumented people we see in the film, but rather stands in as an avenger of the wronged. As a former police officer in Mexico, Machete becomes representative of the attempt to bring back law and justice to a corrupt system, and as such his degradation at the hands of a racist senator and the Minutemen-like just reinforces the brutal and unjustified nature of the violence. The result of this choice is the reinforcement of the idea of the powerful male savior who steps in to help those who are unable to help
themselves, which is not unlike the protective role assumed by the men in *SB 1070 The Faces* and *The State of Arizona*.

If the documentaries engage in gender essentialism with its habitual situating of women in relation to their children, *Machete* reinforces gender roles through its glorification of male power and sexuality. As previously mentioned, Machete engages in sex with all of the named women in the film, sleeping with four women in three sexual encounters. Beyond the several nude scenes, all centered on women’s nudity, the film also engages in other kinds of sexist constructions of women. At the end of the film, Luz is blinded, wearing a bikini top, and fighting behind Machete after nursing him back to health. In this way, *Machete* imagines a world where Chicanas exist to sexually satisfy and help Chicanos. Luz may have done all the hard work that allowed the revolution to take place, including stockpiling the weapons they would later use, but ultimately she is not, or perhaps, cannot be the leader. The denial of leadership roles in the Chicano movement and in fictional works created by the men of the Chicano movement were frequent in Chicana feminist critiques of the Chicano Movement that decried the sexism that refused women leadership positions and sexually exploited women within the movement (Lopez 104; Hernandez 84). Furthermore, Sartana Rivera, played by Jessica Alba, serves as *La Malinche* given that she works for the government and arrests undocumented Mexican immigrants until the arrival of Machete and their subsequent sexual relationship convinces her to join the cause. *Malinche* was the interpreter and some say willing lover to Hernán Cortés and is evoked when a Chicana deviates from male goals or is thought to be aligned with against her race (Esquibel 24-25).
Additionally, both Sartana and Luz are both seen dressing Machete’s wounds and cooking for him, emphasizing their feminine roles. In this way, the power of men is reinforced, and women, even women who are not particularly feminine like Luz, fall behind male power and in-line with normative heterosexuality.

**Conclusion**

News articles continue to herald the possibility of the White Minority, changing families, and same sex marriage; and it is this atmosphere which gives rise to reactionary groups, politics, and policies (Tavernise). Research shows that members of the Minutemen fear a United States composed of a majority of people with beliefs and understandings of the U.S. oppositional to their own (DeChaine 44). The fear of invisibility or a nation dissimilar from the one that exists now underlie these concerns and explain the rise of these organizations. The fear of erasure by dominant groups in society can be seen in *Machete* during one of Senator McLaughlin speeches when he says, "Everywhere I go in this state people are talking about change. I say, why change? This is a great state founded on the principals of liberty." Or as Kyrsten Sinema, an Arizona State Representative argues, “People feel fear about their changing communities. They’re uncertain about what the future brings,” going on to quote a study that says that Arizona will become a majority minority by 2020 (*The State of Arizona*). Both the films and the documentaries were created during this time of change to highlight the conflict around the border, immigration, and S.B. 1070.
Given the conservative power within the U.S., it is likely that undocumented immigrants, and the communities that stand with them, will be fighting against the nativism and racism embedded within these laws for the foreseeable future. It is essential that the arguments used to protest laws like S.B. 1070 fight against power, whether it is the power of the state to use force against undocumented immigrants or to exploit cheap laborers for American gain. What is at stake, then, in the fight against Arizona’s law is the danger that even if this one battle is won, it will be done in such a way as to reinforce other systems of inequality. If the U.S. grants amnesty for children or families or farm laborers while excluding other undocumented immigrants, these exceptions will be limited in scope and work to further exclude some of the most marginalized of immigrants. While the films do important work in showcasing the lives and struggles experienced by undocumented immigrants, including the violence and racist constructions of undocumented immigrants within the U.S. state, the films are not without limitations. In an attempt to construct the undocumented immigrant as sympathetic to the viewer, the films often rely on gender essentialism, heteronormative kinship structures, and discourse that encourages the exploitation of undocumented laborers rather than pushing for a more inclusive, radical reinterpretation of the undocumented immigrant.
Chapter 3: Songs from the Border: Resistance, Representation and the Sympathetic Immigrant

The connection between music and the fight for civil or human rights is a strong one. As Leon F. Litwack mentions in his “‘Fight the Power!’ The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement,” whether it is contemporary music or old spirituals, music “made for powerful theater, and the drama often became critical to the success of the demonstrators” (3). Songs are a popular means of protest, spreading critique and gathering support, but it is also a convenient way to create a rallying cry around a movement, embedding images within the listener’s imagination that can work as its own counternarrative. Or, as Jeremy van Blommestein and Sarah Hope argue in their article about South African anti-apartheid and the U.S. Civil Rights movements, music establishes “a common identity among potential movement recruits through their connection to a particular musical taste, genre, or practice” and music itself is able to “illustrate history, generate nostalgia, or inspire action” (60). The passing of S.B. 1070 generated intense feelings around the country, both for those in support of the law and for those opposed to it. Like civil and human rights fights in the past, articulation of resistance to the law included artistic expression. Music, with its history of inspiring those opposed to cultural and political oppression, is a type of artistic expression ripe for analysis.
As K.M. Morant notes in her article on funk music and counter-culture, music has the ability to not only address the concerns of a community, but it can also spread knowledge of oppressive conditions and become a soundtrack for a historical moment (76). Like art, film, and literature, song helps define a movement or a moment in history, allowing those who create it to articulate their view on events as they unfold or paint their interpretation of events long past. Similarly to film, song also has the advantage of being easily accessible, and through the act of singing, one can engage with music differently than other art forms. As Timothy M. Dale argues in “The Revolution is Being Televised: The Case for Popular Culture as Public Sphere,”

Musicians can write political messages into lyrics, for example, that are heard by audiences and spread in digital form. A political message contained therein can have just as much impact as something written on an editorial page, even though it is expressed within this limited ‘public.’ For marginalized groups, this method can be especially effective, allowing communities to be created around dissenting ideas and back channels for communication (Dale 24-25).

Unsurprisingly, protest movements have often used song to spread their messages and galvanize their listeners to action. While much has been written on the protest marches that took place after S.B. 1070, the outpouring of music resistant to S.B. 1070 has received significantly less attention. Yet the songs created and performed post-S.B. 1070 reveal much about the resistance to the law.

In this chapter, I will place S.B. 1070 protest music into historical context. Protest music, while an art form, are also political texts. In light of this, I argue that protest songs
construct fellow resisters or imagine the movement’s allies by calling upon a
commonality of experience to create a type of transnational, transracial coalition where
the antagonist protestors must fight against the violence and discrimination of the state.
Finally, I look at how the protest music resists the dominant narratives around
undocumented immigrants and creates its own sympathetic immigrant who is not a
victimizer but rather a victim of the US state. Yet while the protest music at times
acknowledges the struggles of racial or ethnic others, the poor, and women, it builds its
critique through unacknowledged heteronormativity and at times, sexism. Moreover, the
intense focus on immigrants as laborers excludes many immigrants and draws upon
problematic constructions of Mexican immigrants as a source of cheap, exploitable labor.
This chapter will contribute to the scholarship on protest music and its use by progressive
movements for social justice. It will also expand on the discussion of protest
contributions to the fight against S.B. 1070 by discussing the use of protest music and the
way that this music contributed to the discourse around the law.

The United States Protest Song

The history of the protest song is a long one. As David M. Rosen points out in his
book, Protest Songs in America, we can trace the American protest song back to anti-
British protests. Not just the work of lifetime artists, politicians turned to song to inspire
colonists in the Americas to rise up against British rule, including Whig John Dickinson
and Thomas Paine, well known for his political pamphlet, Common Sense (Rosen 25-26).
While protest music worked to garner support for the American Revolution, some of the
most well-known protest music of early U.S. history was created to resist slavery. As Edna M. Edet points out, “deprived of the right to protest with impunity, the American black man sublimated his anger in song and story. Every confrontation with adversity was accompanied by songs reflecting and depicting his struggle” (38). Furthermore, the music created by slaves can be seen, in and of itself, an act of protest since it helped keep “alive a memory of African culture during slavery when the essence of African music – the percussion sound – was banned by enslavers” (Hobson 445). Unable to openly protest slavery, Black slaves couched their protests in spirituals and work songs, using biblical allegory to contest the violence of slavery and slave owners (Edet 38). While the pro-separatist colonials of the past were able to openly vocalize their protest of British rule, slaves in the U.S. were constrained in such a way as to make open rebellion fatally dangerous. However, song allowed a type of hidden protest where those living under slavery could give voice to their anger and build a sense of commonality of struggle, while simultaneously providing them with deniability. Protest music was given additional uses as well with Harriet Tubman, one of the most famous members of the Underground Railroad, using spirituals and hymns to communicate covert messages to those helping escaped slaves (Hobson 445). Protest songs continued post-Civil War in the blues, which allowed free black men and women to voice their displeasure with the segregation and violence prominent in the post-Civil War America (Edet 39). In this way, protest music was made to adapt to the people, place, and specific circumstances of those deploying it.

Racism, violence, and economic disparity would remain a salient topic in African American music. Funk and soul music of the 1960s and beyond also called attention to
the plight of African Americans in the United States. Whether it was James Brown’s 1968* Say It Loud, I’m Black and Proud*, Gil Scott Heron’s 1971* The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*, Marvin Gaye’s famous 1971 hit* What’s Going On*, or The Staple Singers’ 1968* Long Walk to D.C.*, African American music of the 1960s and 1970s protested the violence of war, called for community and togetherness, and decried the violence and poverty enacted upon Black America. In addition to pointing out the impact of systemic racism on the Black community, these songs worked to highlight the strength of these communities and how they were just as deserving, if not more deserving, of a good life than those who oppressed them (Morant 78). Both a rallying cry and a call for community love, these songs called out white racism and systemic exclusion while calling for Black love and pride. The power of the songs was such that several were translated into Spanish with the lyrics adapted and then used by the Chicano Movement (Mendoza 7).

While African American protest music strengthened the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, they were not the only source of protest music. The 1960s and 70s were a time of political upheaval with the war in Vietnam, changing cultural and sexual mores, and various PoCs fighting for economic and political power. The shooting at Kent State of unarmed student protestors led to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston to cancel classes in favor of a music marathon, and universities around the U.S. organized concerts for peace ("Students Protest: Make Music, Not War"). Bob Dylan’s* The Times They Are A-Changin,* epitomized the dissatisfaction the generation felt with the older generation and politicians with the lyrics:
come senators, congressmen / please heed the call / don’t stand in the doorway /
don’t block up the hall / for he that gets hurt / will be he who has stalled / there’s a
battle outside/and it is ragin’ / it’ll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls
/ for the times they are a-changin’.

Furthermore, Kenneth J. Bindas and Craig Houston argue that the youth of the 1960s
“identified problems such as civil rights, urban decay, rural poverty and the burgeoning
military-industrial complex as bastard children of the Establishment’s culture” (Bindas
and Houston 2). Yet, while the music of this period would become well-known, overall,
“rock, as a commodity, marketed these anti-Establishment themes in order to capture the
consumer whose ideals it mirrored… Antiwar music faced a limited market because
fewer than twenty nine percent of those aged 21-29 opposed the war” (Bindas and
Houston 4, 7). While songs promoting peace and pushing against the war would become
popular anthems heard for decades, other genres of music would find more traction in
their protest sentiment. Yet it is important to remember that during this period, songs in
support of Civil Rights and songs protesting war were not completely separate, as the
songs of both criticized the U.S. government’s violence in sending youths to fight in
Vietnam, killing protestors, and its systematic disenfranchisement of the poor. Nina
Simone’s jazzy 1967 song “Backlash Blues” dealt with all these issues, including
critiquing the job, housing, and educational system experienced by African Americans in
the U.S.

While not as well-known as the music associated with the Civil Rights or anti-war
protest songs, the Chicano Movement was building its own library of inspirational protest
music. In addition to their use and adaptation of Civil Rights songs, the Chicano Movement also had its own historical protest songs to draw from in the history of Mexican *corridos*. *Corrido*, a type of ballad music from Mexico, used the plight of the poor and peasants to highlight oppression (Mendoza 11-12). Using a form of music that inspired others during struggles in Mexico, Chicanas/os linked their experiences in the United States to those of Mexicans in Mexico, rejecting the assimilationist belief that Americans must break off cultural and language ties to become truly American. Rather than singing in the *corrido* in Spanish, as was the tradition in Mexico, the Chicano Movement created their own *corridos*, some in Spanish, as was the custom, and others in Spanglish, emphasizing the dual languages and cultures of Chicanos (Mendoza 13). With lyrics like “I crossed the border there in Matamoros / for lack of any other means, I crossed illegally / Gentlemen, I am telling you about how I’m suffering,” the *Corrido del Bracero* emphasized not only the experiences of Chicanos who lived in the U.S. for generations, but also the struggles of the undocumented (Mendoza 14-15). More than speaking about experiences and oppression, these *corridos* worked to reframe the Mexican immigrant, the Chicano, and their representation in the United States.

Rejecting the limitations and depictions of Chicana/os by white Americans, the music, art, and film created by the Chicano Movement was meant to create a counternarrative and inspire Chicanas/os to find pride in their culture/ethnicity and fight against the economic and cultural oppression they experienced in the United States. In this way, Chicano artists were not believed to be merely supplementary in the work they did for the Chicano Movement, but an integral part of reimagining and resisting current
depictions of Chicanas/os (Azcano 119-120). Calling for “the restoration of land grants, farm workers’ rights, better education, and… voting and political rights,” the songs of the Chicano Movement rejected both the assimilationist narrative pushed by previous generations as well as the racist representations of lazy, passive Mexicans advanced by white representations of Chicanas/os (Mendoza 26).

In addition to the corridos of the Chicano Movement, the United Farm Workers Union (UFW), relied upon huelga, or strike songs, to galvanize farm workers to action. One of the most famous, Solidaridad pa’ Siempre or Solidary Forever in English, became a rallying cry used as members of the UFW marched for workers’ rights in Sacramento, California as well as at rallies and union meetings (Mendoza 36-37; Azcona 76). Among the long list of abuses farm workers endured, the UFW emphasized how farmers exploited the labor of children, allowed no access to toilets during working hours, and made farm workers sleep in racially segregated shacks with no air conditioning or heating while making less than a dollar a day (“UFW History”). The songs were meant to inspire, with many of them glorifying the strength of the union, of fellow laborers, and of the worker’s importance to the feeding of Americans; but Mexican and Filipino migrant laborers also used the huelga as a way to rally people to the cause, inform them about the living and working conditions of farm laborers in the United States, and express their anger over these conditions (Mendoza 42-43). Those without a direct stake in the movement also contributed through music with Woodie Guthrie writing the poem “Plane Wreck at Los Gatos” that would later become the song “Deportee,” a song covered by many about the death of deported farm workers in a plane crash (Klein 349).
Like the Chicano Movement, the UFW translated songs associated with African American struggles into Spanish, turning *We Shall Overcome* into *Nosotros Venceremos*, which was utilized both in English and Spanish (Mendoza 45-46; Azcona 77). While this was a necessity partially born out of the lack of funds to hire artists to create unique songs (Azcona 88), it also allowed the UFW to align itself with other struggles. The connection between the struggles of the UFW and the struggles of the African American community were not the same, but the similarities in oppression were such that that some African American congregations used Spanish verses from *Nosotros Venceremos* in their recitations of *We Shall Overcome* (Mendoza 46). White supremacy and economic exploitation impacted both communities and songs were a way to emphasize a shared experience and create bonds across racial lines.

But it is the song *We Shall Overcome* that shows the power music has to create connections. With lyrics borrowed from African American slave hymns, the song was created and used in 1945 by tobacco workers before being taken up by the Civil Rights movement and later, the Chicano Movement ("We Shall Overcome: Postwar United States, 1945-1968"). Utilized by multiple movements because of its simple lyrics that can be applied to any number of struggles, *We Shall Overcome* is an example of the power of protest music to carry its messages outside of strict identity categories or time periods.

In contemporary music, hip hop has been instrumental in the articulation of resistance against various forms of state power. As John Haycock argues in his article on protest music, hip-hop has “provided a significant source of informal learning that has crossed racial, cultural, and geographical lines” with a history of being counter-
hegemonic (Haycock 431-432). Contemporarily, scholars have pointed out the ways artists have utilized hip-hop music to argue everything from corporate interests and U.S. violence created the conditions that led to the September 11th attacks to the importance of rap in Senegal to help build support for government resistance and political power (Chao 757-758; Fredericks 135). Hip-hop artists do not just address national issues, but, in the case of Katrina, have used rap to address both the struggles of African Americans in New Orleans post-Katrina as well as celebrate Black culture in Louisiana (George 29-30). In Sara Hakeem Grewal’s “Intra- and Interlingual Translation in Blackamerican Muslim Hip Hop” she argues that the adoption of hip hop by Black Muslims in the U.S. is a form of protest against white supremacy and Christianity, emphasizing hip-hop’s historically combative relationship with the U.S. state and its history of highlight injustice (Hakeem Grewal 38, 46).

Protest Songs and the Digital Age

With modern social media sites like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Tumblr along with convenient song sharing and streaming sites, contemporary protest music has additional avenues and easier transmission of music, not just in this country, but around the world. From Cameron David Warner’s discussion of how YouTube and protest music created by Chinese Tibetans have worked to strengthen a sense of transnational Tibetan identity to Lyndon C. S. Way’s scholarship on Turkish Pop music videos and their protest of Turkish governmental policies, the digital age has opened up new ways of transmitting music and messages across cities, states, and borders. Rather than protest music either
spreading through word of mouth at marches or through radio and the purchasing of albums, any song can be sang, recorded, and uploaded on sites like YouTube, song sharing sites, or private websites. This “democratization of information” allows for users of these sites to create their own works for quick dissemination and to have access to a wide audience without the need of a recording contract (Von Hippel 8-9). YouTube in particular has a large audience with over a billion users, and the site accommodates over seventy-six languages (YouTube Statistics). Because of its reach, YouTube has been utilized by modern protest movements ranging from the Occupy Wall Street in 2011, the California Proposition 8 protests in 2008, and other national and transnational protest movements (Vraga et al. 134).

The movement of protest music into online space holds true for S.B. 1070 songs as well. On May 19th, 2010, the Phoenix New Times featured an article introducing the album *A Line in the Sand* (Cizmar). Working with the Puente and No More Deaths organizations, the Phoenix New Times put out a call for songs protesting the Arizona law and were proud of both the range of genres represented on the album as well as the variety found in the artists themselves who varied in age, experience, and connection the mainstream music industry. As the author wrote,

> Contributors span the entire gamut of Phoenix’s music community – one band is still in high school, another is led by a middle-aged marketing professional, one folk-punk outfit just had a song on the soundtrack of a Michael Moore movie, another rapper is signed to a Def Jam imprint – and I wouldn’t have it any other way (Cizmar).
The album included songs ranging from folky tunes that sound remarkably similar to some of the music produced during the 1960s anti-war protests to electronica, hip hop, and alternative rock. The album was available for digital download, online streaming, and on music purchasing sites like iTunes. One of the contributors, Willy Northpole, had released his song, “Back to Mexico” as a free download four days before the release of _A Line in the Sand_ and would later go on to create and publish a music video for the song that would be uploaded on YouTube (Willy Northpole “Back to Mexico”).

Like Willy Northpole, there were other artists who chose to release their songs on social media. When Taboo from the Black Eyed Peas released his song “One Heart, One Beat,” it was not included on an album but rather uploaded onto YouTube on July 24, 2010 in a music video that featured the voices of other famous Latinos. Likewise, Marisa Ronstadt, the cousin of the famous singer Linda Ronstadt, uploaded her music video to YouTube in August of 2010 before later including it on her album _Blueberry Moon_ (Marisa Ronstadt “Freedom”). Talib Kweli, one of the most popular artists to create protest music against S.B. 1070, released his song “Papers Please” as a free download on May 22, 2010 (TC). The release of protest music on sites where the audience would be allowed to experience it for free at any time, also allows the music to reach a greater audience. Even when monetized, many of the songs were still available for free, making buying the albums a type of opt-in support for the movement.

Along with the use of social media to spread music, there were those who chose to have more traditional releases. Ry Cooder, a Grammy Award winning artist whose music career spans from the 1960s to today, released his song, “Quick Sand,” as a single.
in June of 2010 and later included it as part of his album *Pull Up Some Dust and Sit Down* with other songs critical of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America in addition to S.B. 1070 (Stanbridge). The music, all released in 2010 within months of the passing of the law, created an immediate call for support and ensured that the S.B. 1070 would remain in the consciousness of the public while the legality of the law was still being questioned. Additionally, with the music and artists spanning ages and genres, and the transmission varying, the protest music against the law and its opposition was available to anyone with phone or computer access. This is not, however, the first time we can see the power of music to reach across countries to create connections. As Beate Kutchke argues:

Evidence for the transnational character of protest music easily comes to mind: *Blowin’ in the Wind, Where Have All the Flowers Gone, We Shall Overcome, and El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido! (The People United Will Never Be Defeated!)*, for instance, were known by protesters around the world and provided the musicscape for the expression of dissent during protest marches in numerous countries. Furthermore, like the political activists, New-Leftists, politically engaged musicians shuttled between cities in different countries and continents and exchanged knowledge of musical styles, aesthetics and socio-political issues (322).

It is important to note that while the transnational aspect of protest music is not a recent development that social media and the internet allowed, social media and the internet made it easier for artists to spread the messages in their protest songs and increased the number of people able to participate and reach a wide audience.
Allies in Resistance

Though separated by decades, the protest music created to resist S.B. 1070 showed a similar desire to reach across racial lines to build coalition. Taboo rapped “One Heart, One Beat,” which was written explicitly about S.B. 1070 and featured powerful imagery as well as many Hollywood names. While the music video shows protesters and migrant laborers, some of whom are presumably immigrants, none of them speak in the music video. However, several Latina/o celebrities say they are against S.B. 1070, including the actress Eva Longoria, the famous boxer Oscar de la Hoya, the singer Shakira, and the labor rights activist Dolores Huerta. While the Latinas/os are certainly prominent in the video, though it is noteworthy that Shakira is Columbian rather than Mexican, and Taboo connects the fight against S.B. 1070 to other human and civil rights struggles and emphasizes the transnational struggle for human rights, placing S.B. 1070 into conversation with other, larger struggles.

First, the video highlights the transnational issues through its imagery, which includes flashes of famous peace, civil rights, and labor activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, Mahatma Gandhi, and Mother Teresa among others. The use of these figures links the situation in Arizona both to U.S. struggles in the case of the Civil Rights Movement, and to transnational movements, in the case of anti-colonialism activists in India, emphasizing the importance of transnational activism and consciousness. We can see this in the lyrics as well with Taboo singing, “We need to open doors / takes one to speak it / the nations won’t believe it / one nation, one people / we’re all considered
equal.” While the passage includes clear references to the Declaration of Independence, this section has radical implications. The pairing of “open doors” with “the nations won’t believe it” and “one nation, one people” calls for both a transnational activist consciousness and a borderless world. Taboo also says, “injustice break the walls,” clearly arguing for a borderless country. In this way, the fight against S.B. 1070 is not just part of an ongoing fight against racism or for labor rights, but in this instance, an example of the limitations of seeing nations as discrete and borders as walls to be protected.

The racist aspects of the law are highlighted in “One Heart, One Beat” as well with Taboo singing, “We ain’t the enemy or have these colored lines” and later in the song says, “we give America our blood, our sweat, and precious time.” Finally, in the section after he argues to take down walls or the nation’s border, he says, “racism is a flaw.” Taboo makes the argument that S.B. 1070 is largely a law built upon white supremacy. The one interjection in this is the section with Dolores Huerta where she says that while S.B. 1070 is a racist law, those impacted by the law are the farmworkers, nannies, and others responsible for providing Americans with food and shelter. While she does identify the law as discriminatory, she emphasizes its impact on laborers and the wrongness of the law specifically because it is hurting those who allow Americans to have the necessities of life. In addition to the connection with labor movements, the music video shows a pro-choice march with feminists holding “Legalize Abortion” signs. Though there is a clear desire to show solidarity across racial lines, the video aligns itself
against S.B. 1070 in such a way as to highlight that oppression, be it race, class, or gender based, is what should unite everyone.

While it is, perhaps, unsurprising that Taboo, a Latino rapper raised in East L.A., made a song about S.B. 1070, he was not the only rapper to create music in support of the undocumented immigrants of Arizona (Taboo and Dennis). Talib Kweli, a Black hip-hop artist and political activist also created music for the cause. The idea of shared racial and economic oppression returns in “Papers Please.” Kweli sings, “America was built on the backs of slaves / the same mentality that put blacks in graves / believes in the master race / is making Arizona a battle state.” Hip-hop has a long history of political critique, specifically regarding politicians and the part they have played in black poverty, economic exploitation, and inner city violence (Gilliam 233; Meyer and Snyder 231). This can be seen in Kweli’s song as he argues that the white supremacist ideology that allowed for slavery and the careless disregard for black lives is the same ideology that allows the policing and detainment of undocumented immigrants. However, Kweli does not end his comparison with Black and Latina/o people, but expands it when he raps “if you’re of the brown persuasion / maybe you could be Native / maybe you Mexican / it’s whatever, you’re not Caucasian.” With this expansion of his critique, Kweli eludes to the struggle of multiple racial groups but also highlights how, in a state like Arizona where over five percent of the population is Native, all people with brown skin are subject to policing (“Population Estimates Arizona”).

The support from the hip-hop community does not end with Taboo and Kweli. Willy Northpole, a rapper from Arizona, put out the song “Back to Mexico” with an
accompanying music video. With lyrics like “my fellow Mexicans / you know I got your back / welcome to our world / they did it to the Blacks / they did it to the Natives… they did it to the Jews / they did it to Iraq,” Northpole identifies not only the commonality in oppression between Latinos and African Americans, but the violence done against Native, Jewish, and Iraqi people. Specifically, the invocation of Jewish and Iraqi people moves the conversation from one of purely racial oppression to one of religious oppression and that of ethnic whites. Northpole’s condemnation of S.B. 1070 and use of coalitional language does not argue that it is just race creating unequal power relationships, but rather, structures that privilege white Christians.

As Shanna Lorenz discusses in “Black and Latino Hip Hop Alliances in the Age of State-sponsored Immigration Reform,” there is an increasing awareness among Black hip hop artists of the ways in which racial profiling and income disparity have impacted Black and Latino communities in similar ways (Lorenz 242-243). Furthermore, the history of Black collective action has ties to hip hop with groups like Public Enemy bringing government violence and neglect into the public imaginary, and scholars argue that Public enemy was so threatening to whiteness precisely because the views expressed in their songs were similar to the Black Power movement (Lorenz 243-244). As Beate Kutschke argues in “Protest Music, Urban Contexts and Global Perspectives,” urban environments “permit the mobilization not only of protesters, activists, and sympathizers, but also journalists and mass media that disseminate the protesters’ message” (321). The shared urban space, then, has allowed for a greater sense of commonality, which has been shown in scholarship that indicates African Americans feel a closeness to Latinas/os
(Jackson, Gerber, and Cain 281). It is noteworthy, however, that while Northpole focuses on ethnic/racialized groups, he, unlike Taboo, does not reference the Woman’s Movement or queer struggles despite their long history of fighting against state violence and discrimination.

In addition to Northpole’s critique of the U.S. for being racially and religiously intolerant, Northpole aligns himself with transnational migrants. Northpole raps the majority of the song standing in front of a Mexican flag with a racially diverse group, though most Latina/o, behind him. In addition to these signs of Mexican and immigrant support, the music video flashes to a sign with a brown fist upraised, a symbol associated with Brown Power. In this way, Northpole offers not merely support but gestures to a symbol meant to galvanize others to protest and fight against racist political powers. However, Taboo, Kweli, and Northpole were not the only rappers to lend their support to undocumented immigrants post-S.B. 1070 that focused on multiracial unity.

The connection between the undocumented immigrant struggle and Native struggles returns in Apollo Poet’s “Runaway Trail” where he raps, “call them an immigrant but not an alien / this was their land before you ever came to it / why don’t you tell us where all the Natives went / oh I forgot you murdered them and raped their kids.” Like Northpole and Kweli, Apollo Poet structures his argument in such a way that not only references Native people as oppressed, but calls out the government for its abuses. First he highlights the United States’ hypocrisy given that large parts of the U.S. were Mexico’s before it was taken by force by the U.S., and second, he emphasizes the violence and genocide against the Native population of the Americas as another example.
of the United States’ desire to steal land from others. Though these songs are specifically meant to oppose S.B. 1070 and support undocumented immigrants, the rappers draw connections between restrictive immigration policy and the detention and deporting of undocumented immigrants with the U.S. government’s history of slavery, genocide, colonization, and, as I believe these artists would call it, warmongering to gain land.

While the transnational coalitional politics referenced in the protest music against S.B. 1070 is not new, it hints at the potential for greater cooperation outside of identity politics. As Dust Jacket’s song, “The Same in My Boots,” argues, “so rise up men find faith again in the fact that we are one / they’ll do their damndest to divide us / let’s not let that day come again.” The emphasis on coalitional politics here can also be seen in recent resistance movements in Arizona and the nation. When the Arizona state legislature banned Mexican American Studies programs from Tucson Unified School District, Native organizations within Arizona lent their support to the teachers and students, including providing them with provisions during their march to the capital and joining them in street protests and rallies against the law (Precious Knowledge). During the Occupy Wall Street Movement, members allied themselves with labor unions across the United States, former Civil Rights activists, and African American churches to emphasize the shared economic struggles of multiple communities (Swicord, Balingit). The Black Lives Matter movement began because of the deaths of several young Black men and gained popularity on college campuses where young African Americans as well as Latinas/os protest against the widespread violence and discrimination against their communities (Faraji 4). However, one of the co-founders of the Black Lives Matter
hashtag that was used to organize nationwide protests is Alicia Garza, a Latina and member of National Domestic Workers Alliance (Larson 37). And as Salim Faraji argues, Black Lives Matter is also tied to Africa, as making the argument that Black Lives Matter cannot be a successful movement without a type of Pan African understanding of the movement and oppression of Black people throughout the world (4-6). The coalitional politics shown in recent movements, including Black Lives Matters, highlights the possibilities of working outside strict identity groups to promote change. It is this push toward a more inclusive type of organizing and conceptualization of the issues of precarious people in the U.S. that the protest music of S.B. 1070 references.

This is not the first time coalitional politics have been referenced in works combating S.B. 1070. While the films Machete, The State of Arizona, and SB 1070 The Faces also argue for coalitional politics, there are some key differences between the coalitional politics referenced in the films and the politics found on music combatting S.B. 1070. First, the films focus on U.S. coalition building. Whether it is Machete’s multiracial army rising up to defeat racist, corrupt politicians or the support shown by the Native and African American community in The State of Arizona and SB 1070 The Faces, the coalitions involve U.S. based people of color coming to the aid of undocumented workers. There are some transnational implications with the incorporation of Native people and given that the support offered by U.S. people of color are offered to those who hold citizenship elsewhere. However, the transnational coalitional politics made explicit in the music supporting S.B. 1070 is much more overt. Taboo’s use of images from around the world decentralizes the U.S, particularly the images of Latin
American and Indian struggles, and Northpole gestures to the United States’ war in Iraq to argue against U.S. foreign policy in matters outside of immigration. In this way, the use of music videos in the dissemination of the protest songs allows the lyrics to focus on the current struggle in Arizona while the images strengthen the idea that the struggle against the violence, exclusion, and neglect of the state is a transnational issue felt outside the borders of Arizona. As Shanna Lorenz argues, since 2009 Black hip-hop artists have been creating music to address the systemic surveillance, incarceration, and violence brought about by anti-immigrant sentiment and the subsequent racial profiling that it not only enables, but encourages (Lorenz 242-243). Furthermore, Lorenz argues that hip-hop artists use music videos to connect narratives of resistance across time and struggles (Lorenz 245). The images used in these music videos are engaging in what Andrew Goodwin calls “amplification” or “adding layers of meaning that are not present in the original song” (Lorenz 245; Goodwin 88). The music videos expand upon the lyrics and tie the fight against S.B. 1070 to other struggles and marginalized people.

Furthermore, while Machete shows poor and working class whites and African Americans joining the struggle, the struggle is portrayed as one primarily of Chicanas/os against an unjust government. It is multiracial and multiethnic but limited. The music, however, consistently references not only people of color but other, non-race based struggles. There is Taboo’s images of feminists fighting for abortion rights and labor marches, and Northpole’s support for non-Christians in his lyrics. However, both Machete and S.B. 1070 protest music focus on immigrants as laborers and parents, and this construction of immigrants has its limitations.
As previously discussed, constructing immigrants as laborers calls upon discourse that argues that Mexican immigrants should be allowed to become citizens based on the idea that they are a cheap, easily exploitable labor force. Moreover, this excludes children, the disabled, and others who may not be laborers in the U.S. economy. In this construction of undocumented people, citizenship or a lack of policing is predicated on immigrants’ ability to contribute to the U.S. labor force, whereas the construction of Mexican men as fathers and Mexican women as primarily mothers or children does similar work in focusing on normative family relations. As Amy L Brandzel argues, normative citizens project their fears and their low quality of life on the non-normative – be they queer, people of color, or the disabled (Brandzel 3). By arguing within the normative constraints of the state – undocumented immigrants are laborers and, presumably, heterosexuals that reside within normative family structures – the discourse around this reimagined undocumented immigrant creates an image that is, in itself, exclusionary.

Denying the construction of the undocumented Mexican immigrant as non-normative, both the films and the protest songs emphasize those who could appeal most to the white, straight citizen and the nation. This then implies that undocumented immigrants should be free from policing because and if they fall into normative categories – able-bodied, straight, cis-gendered laborers. The problem of the normative is exacerbated by the songs’ construction of women as primarily mothers or the children of fathers. This regulates women to their role as bearers or existing under paternal rule. In
these songs immigrant women are defined solely by their place within the heteronormative family and only seen in their relation to family.

**Representing the Enemy**

The protest music created around S.B. 1070 emphasizes the importance of allying across racial and national lines. Yet along with allies, it is important to know who or what is antagonist or enemy. Senate Bill 1070 was created by the Arizona state legislature, spearheaded by Russell Pearce, and signed into law by Governor Jan Brewer. The details of this are widespread and the personalities of the people involved in S.B. 1070 have been covered on blogs, twenty-four hour news stations, and in literature. Despite many other states signing similar and, in some cases, even more restrictive immigration laws, the focus on Arizona and the figures associated with S.B. 1070 created personalities that are easy rallying points for those in support of the law and targets for those opposed. Given the focus on Arizona, particularly Governor Brewer and Sheriff Joe Arpaio, it is unsurprising that many of the critiques of the law focus on these two in particular.

In Rich Rico’s song, “Death of S.B. 1070,” he sings, “this is the anti-Jan Brewer” and goes on to say, “this is Malcolm at the podium / bring the gun / the only way Arpaio won’t get me gone / this ain’t humanly correct / Arpaio keeps KKK’ing too much.” Anti-Brewer and Arpaio sentiment is echoed in Radiorain’s “What is Going On?” when he sings that Brewer signing the bill into law “has blackened the sun” and calls Sheriff Joe paranoid and delusional. Though neither Rico nor Radiorain show their dislike and distrust for Brewer and Arpaio like Dust Jacket, who in their song “The Same in My
Boots” refer to Brewer as a “Chupacabra” whose claws are embedded in Arpaio. The Chupacabra is a mythical beast in Latin America that attacks livestock and drains its blood, and the song calling Brewer a Chupacabra implies that she is a predator that drains her victims, in this case undocumented immigrants, of blood. In addition to the lyrics’ dehumanization of Brewer, Dust Jacket implies that she controls Arpaio. This is unlikely since Brewer became governor of Arizona long after Arpaio began marshalling his deputies against undocumented people, but it is noteworthy that Brewer, in this case, is portrayed as the spearhead of S.B. 1070. Brewer, the only woman popularized in the media for her role in S.B. 1070, becomes a mythical beast sucking the blood from innocent victims, while Pearce and Arpaio, the two men commonly associated with S.B. 1070, are not dehumanized. While the songs critique the two men, Jan Brewer is mentioned more often and, with the exception of Willy Northpole’s song, receives harsher treatment. It is worth noting that scholars have discussed how the legendary Chupacabra has been used as a representation of extreme systemic violence against Latinas/os around the U.S.-Mexico border (Calvo-Quirós 212-213), and the case could certainly be made that Brewer is a representative of this violence, but that it is only her that is compared to this beast is still troubling. In addition to the sexism implicit in the dehumanization of Brewer, the other limitation of these kinds of critiques is that they focus on the individual rather than the apparatuses that police, detain, and deport undocumented people.

While much of the music created to protest S.B. 1070 often targets Brewer and Arpaio, other songs point to the violence of the police and U.S. Border Patrol. Joey
Arroyo Band’s “Mexican You Show Me Your Papers,” focuses on the police with a story about a man pulled over by the police only to have the police officer say, “Mexican can you show me your papers / Mexican can you step out of the car / Mexican can you put your hands behind your back / Mexican can you understand English / Mexican can you spend the night in jail.” In the story, it is made clear that the person stopped by the police is not undocumented, but their brown skin made them a target of police harassment as the police officers associate brownness with a lack of citizenship or place within the country. In Talib Kweli’s “Papers Please,” he focuses on the U.S. Border Patrol, police force, and the federal government with lyrics that imply all are to blame for the state of Arizona.

Fighting border patrol / This is for all of the control / That’s why they’re forcing gentrification / Stopping you in the street demanding identification / Give us your tired and bored and your huddled masses / We’ll have them serving another master (“Papers Please”).

The use of “huddled masses” in the lyrics is clearly a reference the poem, The New Colossus, which is embedded on the State of Liberty, and the use of “serving another master” implies that the U.S. government abuses the immigrants once they arrive. Anger against the politicians appears often in the songs with Porches’ punk song, “Passive Agressive” [sic], arguing that politicians exploit people’s prejudice to advance their own agenda. The interesting assumption in these songs is the belief that individual members of the government or contemporary actions are leading the U.S. astray from its promise of freedom or succor when, in reality, immigration policies have always worked to exclude the undesirable and promote the interests of the wealthy and powerful. As Nicole M.
Guidotti-Hernandez argues in *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries*, citizenship and immigration within the borderlands has always involved violence, policing, and detention and citizenship as a national construction is explicitly exclusionary, meant to mark borders of belonging (Guidotti-Hernandez 4-6). What is happening in Arizona is not an exception to a benevolent state nation that allows all into its borders, but instead, is a regular and expected function of the democratic state.

Willy Northpole reinforces the construction of the U.S. government as an abusive entity but makes his critiques far more explicit in “Back to Mexico,” rapping, “I feel like it’s Bush again / even Colin Powell / Dear Jan Brewer / Dear Joe Arpaio / It’s time we fight back / OK to break the law / cuz they ain’t fighting fair.” In addition to the lyrics, the music video shows men wearing masks representing ex-Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama along with Senator John McCain all laughing together while busting open a piñata. The juxtaposition of the politicians laughing and violently hitting the piñata with the faces of Latinos and the image of person being stopped by the police is jarring and portrays the politicians as violent and uncaring as well as rich, given that they are the only ones in the video dressed in suits. While Northpole, like others, certainly locates his critique on figures in Arizona, he expands it to include those who hold federal office, even calling out Obama again in his later lyrics with “don’t want to help the homeless / don’t want to heal the sick / but just harass the people / who help build this shit / Barack where you at / the white clown house” and later goes on to say, “and Barack ain’t gonna save us / they gave us Barack to continue to play us.”
The multiple references to Obama is mostly likely due to his policies around immigration given that he, as previously stated, deported more immigrants than Bush in his tenure. Additionally, the last lines hint at a political sleight of hand where they, presumably the white, wealthy, and powerful, allowed Obama to become U.S. President to give the appearance of greater economic, educational, and political inclusion only for it to be a false promise. Most interesting about the critique in Northpole’s song is the move away from racial lines and the discussion of the failure of politicians, including those who are people of color, to address the struggles and exploitation of the poor and other PoCs. Ex-President Obama is not an unwilling participant in these scenes but a reveler in the violence along with the other politicians, placing him on the side of the rich and powerful who enable the violence and policing in the video.

While pundits and politicians on the right argue that Obama did little in his presidency to deal with the issue of immigration, on the left, there is a sharp critique of President Obama’s policies. Immigration scholars and activists point to the Obama administration’s early emphasis on criminal immigrants as a justification for the deportation of so many undocumented immigrants as an example of his anti-immigrant stance (Zug 970-71). A supporter of a wall being built along the Mexico border both to stop undocumented people from crossing and to halt the possibility of terrorists entering the U.S. through Mexico, Obama’s stance on immigration surprised many (Asumah 28, 30-31). The assumption that Obama, being a person of color himself, would be more sympathetic to other people of color was strong post-election, but as J. David Cisneros argues, in Obama’s first term as President, he often shied away from issues of race and
his construction of a “good immigrant” as a responsible entrepreneur that loved America was similar to the U.S. Presidents before him (362-363). Though Obama spoke out against S.B. 1070, his earlier responses to both the immigration issue and other racial issues made him appear weak on issues of race. Or, in the case of Northpole’s critique, in league with the powers that currently work to marginalize people of color. In this way, Obama is not the U.S. President who changes the oppression and marginalization of people of color, but rather President Obama becomes the figurehead that allows conservatives and liberals to ignore the lived realities of people of color while arguing that racism is over.

As many media commentators have pointed out, Obama often refrained from commenting on race in his early presidency, only becoming more open on the topic of race once his reelection was ensured and he entered his second term (Shear and Alcindor; Liptak; Jones; Coates). Yet another part of this critique is that, Republican or Democrat, white or Black, those who hold office, regardless of identity or affiliation, become part of the machine of making the United States. Immigration, a fundamental aspect of nation building, allows politicians to construct the racial, ethnic, religious, and economically desirable citizen. In effect, what Northpole’s critique hints at is not only the failure of a person of color to advocate for other marginalized people, but the failure of U.S. nation and democracy to live up to its promises of freedom, inclusivity, and equal opportunity. Despite progressive narratives that the U.S. is always improving and moving toward a better society, the promises are always in the future that never arrives.
The critique of the federal government, the local government, law enforcement, and even past U.S. Presidents is one of the most important aspects of S.B. 1070 protest songs. While arguments are made that Arizona is a particularly racist state, including a line in Apollo Poet’s “Runaway Trail,” most of the songs critique both local politicians but also, more broadly, white supremacy in U.S. culture and politics. A focus on the state ignores how Arizona is just one of many states to pass laws targeting undocumented Mexican immigrants. Furthermore, the federal government contributes to the anti-immigrant and anti-Latino sentiment. Current U.S. President Donald Trump during a campaign speech about Mexican immigration said,

They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people... It’s coming from more than Mexico. It’s coming from all over South and Latin America, and it’s coming probably – probably from the Middle East.

While President Donald Trump is known for his inflammatory language, that a presidential nominee could make such a statement and still win the highest office in the U.S. says much about the sentiment around immigrants outside the state of Arizona. Furthermore, the nativism shown by Donald Trump is not limited to him. But more than individual politicians, focusing the critique on systems of power rather than individuals highlights the widespread power differential reinforced by S.B. 1070. The recognition that Arizona is not an exception, but that the passing of S.B. 1070 makes clear what already exists, allows for a broader and more clear critique of what needs to change, not
just in Arizona, but in the United States and transnationally. Specifically, the nativism that encourages the militarization of borders, the disregard for the lives of people of color that allows and even supports violence against them, and the exploitation of labor that is allowed to take place when undocumented people are criminalized and have no legal recourse. In addition, laws like S.B. 1070 lead to a decrease in Mexican immigrants seeking much needed services, decreasing their use of health care and public assistance as well as needed aid in the case of domestic abuse, and these services disproportionately impact women and children (Toomey et al. 31; Arcidiacono 211). In this way, not only is the public sphere a place of danger, but the law ensures that undocumented immigrants, particularly women and children, are further marginalized by their inability to seek out government assistance.

**Rearticulating the Immigrant**

Protest music, in addition to inspiring its audience and moving them to action, can also reframe the discussion around issues. Given the contentious discourse around S.B. 1070, one of the most important jobs that these songs must do is rearticulate the undocumented immigrant in such a way as to make them sympathetic to the audience. While policymakers advocating for S.B. 1070 argue that undocumented immigrants are drug dealers, criminals, drains on the U.S. economy, and here to exploit the U.S. system for their own gain, artists that create protest songs must give a different perspective on the undocumented immigrant to combat these negative depictions. Yet the construction of
undocumented immigrants, even if sympathetic, must be done in such a way as to not reinforce exploitation and domination.

One of the most common ways to undermine negative depictions of immigrants is to change the image of the young, violent criminal. In Ry Cooder’s “Quick Sand,” he sings as an immigrant coming across the border from Mexico to the U.S. In the song, an elderly man accompanying the main character is left to die in the desert because he can’t make the trip. Rather than being dangerous or involved in crime, it is not the undocumented immigrant that is a danger to the U.S. but the U.S. that’s a danger to the immigrant man. Women, children, and the elderly are far less threatening than younger men and less likely to be tied to the type of violent crime that is purportedly perpetrated by undocumented immigrants. The picture of undocumented immigrants as women and children can be found in Marisa Ronstadt’s “Freedom” with the lines, “soon to be a mother of three in search of Lady Liberty / instead she’s chained to a bed, bringing life into the world / hauled off to the other side, leaving babies behind.” Not only referencing women and children this includes a familiar narrative of parents being deported and separated from their families. Unlike those who shy from the image of immigrant women and “anchor babies,” Ronstadt embraces it, saying, “have you ever woken up to the sound of bullets goin’ wild? / I want the best for my child like any mother.” Ronstadt paints Mexico as a dangerous and undesirable place, calling upon U.S. as a superior, or at least safer, country to gather sympathy for the undocumented in the song. The problem is not that Ronstadt highlights issues in Mexico but rather that the U.S. it portrayed as a place of undisputed freedom and safety.
While the argument that the United States is a safer option for this mother and her child, there is a danger in their argument in that it bolsters U.S. imperialism and exceptionalism. This allows the United States to argue that it is a benevolent savior, rescuing people from their oppressive governments and culture. While these kinds of arguments have been helpful to some since the U.S. has policies like the Violence Against Women Act that allow women to legally enter U.S. to escape violent marriages if there is not protection for women in their sending country, this sets a dangerous precedent of villainizing another culture and government to allow for immigration (Pearce et al. 26). Ronstadt furthers her argument for U.S. exceptionalism with a chorus that includes, “aching for freedom / yearning for freedom,” as if freedom is something that can only be found in the U.S or the United States is exceptionally free compared to other places in the world.

The association of immigrants with family is a common one and can be heard in multiple songs. In Apollo Poet’s “Runaway Trail,” he sings, "Mexican doesn’t mean drug cartels and heroin / it means close families, friendships and everything.” Explicitly calling out the depictions of Mexicans as criminals, Poet emphasizes the role of the family to make the argument that not only are Mexicans not criminals, but they are good family-oriented people and, therefore, less dangerous. Porches’ “Passive Agression“[sic] takes this critique a step further saying, “when her father brought her over she was still sucking on her thumb / when she was deported she was 18 years young” and goes on to describe this girl’s death in the desert while attempting to return home to her family. The stanza finishes with, “and her poor lonely father will never get to bury his only daughter.”
Once again, the song emphasizes the family, in this case a child that is dead and unable to reunite with her loved ones, but more than that, it reinforces the idea that the U.S. has put a system in place that separates children from their families and harms them, rather than the common discourse of the undocumented immigrant as detrimental to the nation.

While the emphasis on families is not inherently bad, the focus on reproductive, normative families is not without its problems. As Eithne Luibheid states in her book *Pregnant on Arrival: Making the Illegal Immigrant,* “nation-states need normative heterosexuality not only for biological and social reproduction of the citizenry but also for the cultivation of particular kinds of social, economic and affective relationships” (5). The dominance of heteronormative family structures privilege certain types of families over others, reinforcing the idea that because the families mentioned are legible as reproductive, normative families, they are acceptable and deserving of family unity. However, it is important to note that S.B. 1070 protest songs are not the only places where we can find these images. Both *SB 1070 The Faces* and *The State of Arizona* repeatedly show immigrant women surrounded by their children and extended families and when young Mexican men are interviewed, their families are always emphasized. In this way, the heteronormative family is thought to distance the Mexican man from the violence and criminality so often spoken about by those who want stricter immigration laws.

While the prevalence of family is common in S.B. 1070 protest songs, family is often accompanied by discourses around labor. In Joey Arroyo Band’s “Mexican You Show Me Your Papers” the immigrant in his song works multiple jobs because he has
“kids to raise.” In Dust Jacket’s “The Same in My Boots,” the man in the song, “arrived in Phoenix with very little voice / I spent a week without food to buy a pair of steel toed boots / I wait until four am in hopes they’re put to use…how can I feed my kids if I’m afraid to buy groceries.” Here it is not just labor and family that is mentioned but the impact S.B. 1070 and Joe Arpaio’s targeting of undocumented immigrants has on this man’s ability to work and provide for his family. Furthermore, Rich Rico argues, “who else is working dirt cheap / do the jobs that ain’t nobody else want to see.” The argument that undocumented immigrants have a place in the United States because of their cheap labor and their willingness to work dangerous or undesirable jobs is a problematic one given the United States’ history of exploiting Mexican labor.

**Conclusion**

Protest songs play an important part in movements against injustice. As Morant argues, “to transform an audience’s perception of history, the audience must know that a problem exists” (Morant 76). While it is not the only way one can be enlightened about the state of Arizona, it is a powerful tool in motivating those opposed to law. Music can be sung, translated, and passed to others to inspire them, inform them, and move them. In this way, the songs created to protest S.B. 1070 must be considered in the context of the long line of music created to aid those who are marginalized and oppressed. Music, at its best, can be transformative, allowing the audience and singers to connect with the struggle of others.
While protest songs have their limitations, certainly one of the strongest aspects of the protest songs created to resist S.B. 1070 is in their embracing of multiracial and transnational coalition building. Though all struggles and oppression must be understood within its particular context, the recognition that certain hierarchies of power function to marginalize, oppress, and restrict some to the benefit of others is an important step in realizing the type of widespread coalitional politics needed to fight against economic exploitation, white supremacy, heteronormativity, colonialism, systemic violence, the military industrial complex, and misogyny. Additionally, the songs located the problem in Arizona as not one born out of one place easily dismissed as racist, but as a symptom of problematic assumptions about nativism, race, citizenship, and labor present throughout the United States and elsewhere.

While the protest music created in hopes of overturning S.B. 1070 did much to support the fight against S.B. 1070, it is also important to recognize the areas where fault lines appear. In particular, the reliance upon the discourse of easily exploitable cheap labor and strong, heterosexual families to advance the cause of undocumented immigrants might help in the short term, but the long term impact of these types of arguments are detrimental to any movement for end oppression. They reinforce labor exploitation, gendered labor within the home, capitalism, and heteronormativity, which, ultimately, has far reaching consequences outside of S.B. 1070.
Chapter 4: Boycotting the Border: S.B. 1070 and Sound Strike

On July 21, 2010, Sound Strike held a press conference at the Hollywood Palladium Theater in Los Angeles, California. Tom Morello, guitarist for the rap metal band Rage Against the Machine and son of Ngethe Njoroge, the first Kenyan ambassador to the United Nations (Devenish 16), said, "We are here today to support the international boycott of the state of Arizona in the wake of the passage of S.B. 1070. We are here to use our music to unite people of all colors and economic strata in a single voice of solidarity to say, 'No, to legalized racial profiling’” (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). Rather than positioning themselves primarily as artists, Morello, along with fellow band member and Sound Strike founder, Zach de la Rocha and Conor Oberst from The Mystic Valley Band, aligned themselves with established Latino activists. The artists were introduced by Salvador Reza, civil rights activist and member of Arizona’s Puente Movement, a grassroots group focused on immigrant rights, assistance, and education. Additionally, they shared a stage with Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers of America. At this conference, Newman, Morello, and de la Rocha expressed their opposition to S.B. 1070 and their dedication to boycotting the state until the law was overturned. In addition to the boycott, Sound Strike’s concert in Los Angeles following the press release raised money to provide food and toys to undocumented immigrant children in Arizona. Joined by hundreds of musicians at its
height in 2010, including My Chemical Romance, Nine Inch Nails, Los Lobos, Maroon 5, Mos Def, Sonic Youth, Tigres del Norte, and Kanye West among others, Sound Strike also urged artists to do their part by protesting, contacting their senators, and donating time and money to organizations in Arizona helping to combat the law (Kennedy).

Sound Strike received significant publicity with its outspoken members, high profile bands, and direct action in opposing the bill. Yet the tactics used by Sound Strike are ones utilized by many other movements in order to force corporations, states, and the federal government to accede to their demands. In order to understand the importance and the place of Sound Strike within these movements, we must first look at some of the boycotts that have come before and the ways in which Sound Strike performs similar work as well as the way in which it creates its own narrative. Second, I will look at its construction of the sympathetic immigrant and its reliance upon women, children, and the heteronormative family to create a sympathetic view of undocumented immigrants, foregrounding those whose identity are the most normative. Though the focus on the heteronormative family is oftentimes similar to the work done by both the films and songs protesting S.B. 1070, I will also look at the often repeated use of the child in Sound Strike narratives and the role children play in advancing the groups position. Lastly, I will discuss its construction of coalitional politics and the transnational implications of Sound Strike as well as its future.
Boycotts as a Means of Protest

As Brayden G. King argues, “Movement tactics, such as protests, marches, and boycotts, figure prominently in the narratives of many social movements and are seen as important tools for offsetting the structural disadvantages of movements” (King 491). Unlike some form of protests, boycotts discourage spending, making it something one can participate in without the need of money for travel or time off from work for street protests. Furthermore, boycotts draw attention, including media attention, often allowing movements to get press coverage they otherwise would not have. As Jolie L. Holcomb discusses in her book *Moral Commerce*, boycotts have long been a key part of social movements in their attempt to cause social change in the U.S. From early resistance against England to the Quaker boycott of goods produced by slave labor, the history of protest in the United States has often relied upon boycotts to empower its followers to force greater powers to change. This popular form of resistance has been utilized to protest everything from labor conditions to consumptive practices responsible for climate change. In this way, consumers become “recruits to collective action,” and are encouraged to see their consumption practices as explicitly political (Dubuisson-Quellier 405).

Furthermore, S.B. 1070 is not the first instance of immigration issues and negative reactions to United States immigration policy leading to a boycott. In 1905, the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce asked Chinese citizens to refrain from purchasing U.S. goods, and the boycott spread from mainland China to the Chinese residing within the United States (Ts’ai 95-99). A reaction to violence perpetrated by white Americans
towards Chinese living in the U.S., immigration exclusion laws targeting Chinese nationals, and the forceful detention of Chinese citizens in the U.S. for reasons unknown led to a boycott of goods that would spread from business owners in China to college students. Specifically, the U.S. passed laws that forbade Chinese immigrants from settling in Hawaii and the Philippines, areas that had been open to Chinese immigration previously despite the desire by the U.S. government to keep Chinese people from the mainland U.S. (Ts’ai 101). The boycotts would include everything from household goods to American medicines once Chinese doctors joined the boycott (Ts’ai 99). In addition to demanding better treatment of Chinese people living the U.S., participants in the boycotts wanted less permissive policies on the part of the Qing government, who they believed favored the U.S. despite the United States’ treatment of Chinese immigrants (100-101). While unsuccessful in repealing Chinese exclusion laws in the United States, this attempt at using a boycott to both protest state abuses and fight against unfair treatment, not just nationally but transnationally, highlighted the abuses experienced by Chinese people living in the U.S. and was powerful enough to pressure President Theodore Roosevelt to give a speech in which he vowed to do his part to stop the abuses against Chinese citizens living in the U.S. (Ts’ai 109-110).

Boycotts over U.S. immigration law took place in large numbers again in 1924 after a Japanese man committed seppaku, or ritual suicide, in protest over the United States’ immigration exclusion law (Stalker 153). Similar to the response of the Chinese in 1905, members of the Japanese government and others boycotted U.S. goods in an attempt to force the United States to create more equitable and less racist immigration
policy. The boycott included, “housewives, students, and young men’s patriotic associations” as well as geishas (Stalker 158). In addition to boycotting U.S. goods, including cosmetics that were popular in Japan at the time, the arts industry joined the boycott and chose to restrict the showing of U.S. films in Japan to protest the treatment of Japanese immigrants living in the United States (Stalker 159). Like the Chinese, Japanese immigrants in the United States faced violence, discrimination in employment, immigration restrictions, and verbal assaults from white United States citizens (Stalker 163). The similarity in treatment of Asian immigrants by white United States citizens sparked an outcry for a transnational Asian consciousness to combat the oppressive policies of the U.S. government, yet similarly to the incident in China, not all Japanese officials agreed with the boycott and the government worked against its citizens to end the boycott before it created an international incident with the U.S. (Stalker 166). Yet interestingly, we once again see how boycotting due to immigration issues and oppressive state policies led to transnational movements to fight these policies. Additionally, we see the desire to reach across national, cultural, language, and religious borders to create coalitions to fight against oppressive policies.

Boycotts of the United States due to problematic policies are not new, including Mexican boycotts. The United Farm Workers (UFW) would hold several grape boycotts in the hope of forcing farmers to pay their workers reasonable wages and provide breaks (“Grape Free Zone” 9). By 1967, the UFW had successfully held grape boycotts, forcing farmers and the corporations to negotiate with unions over workers conditions, but Giumarra Vineyard Corporation refused to negotiate (Araiza 200). In response, the UFW
launched a boycott of all California grapes, eventually leading them to boycott Safeway both for its use of California grapes and its investment in the agriculture industry in California (Araiza 203). In addition to the Mexican and Filipino workers that made up the majority of migratory farm labor in the area, Chavez and his supporters reached out to the Black Panther Party. With the assistance of these groups as well as the community in Oakland, California, the UFW and their allies were able to completely close down a Safeway in Oakland (Araiza 200). In addition to the boycott, members of the Black Panther Party joined UFW workers on the picket lines around stores, offering shoppers rides to stores other than Safeway so those without reliable transportation could do their part in the boycott; this collaboration would eventually lead the grape growers to give in and agree to the union’s demands in 1970 (Araiza 204, 206). In 1972 when farm owners, upset over the UFW’s lettuce boycott, introduced Proposition 22, an initiative which would weaken unions and make certain types of boycotts illegal, the Black Panther Party would once again join with the UFW to campaign and encourage voter turn out to defeat Prop 22, a venture which proved successful (Araiza 208-209). While there were some obvious differences between these groups – racial as well as the divide between rural and urban, the acknowledgement of their shared economic struggle brought them together. These boycotts show that not only do boycott movements have transnational awareness, but also how coalitional politics around shared oppression, particularly economic and political marginalization, can lead to the creation of powerful allies. Yet labor issues were not the only source of Latina/o marginalization, and immigration would remain a salient
topic for Latinas/os in the United States with boycotts being one of the key tactics used to protest against national and state policies.

In 2005, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437. The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 called for a double layered fence along the border between Mexico and the United States, a mandate that any undocumented immigrant would be passed into the custody of the federal government for detention and deportation, and required undocumented immigrants to pay fines before voluntarily deporting themselves to Mexico among other stipulations. This law, under the guise of anti-terrorism, targeted the Mexican community, particularly undocumented Mexican immigrants, and led to the Great American Boycott of 2006. The Catholic Church would come out in opposition to the law, particularly the stipulation that would make it illegal to offer any assistance to undocumented immigrants, with 80 dioceses starting campaigns against the law and Cardinal Roger Mahoney urging Catholics to ignore the law if passed (Kerwin). Bolstered by the participation of radio and television stations in Mexico and the United States, demonstrations and protests against the law took place in both Mexico and the U.S. (McWilliams, Meier, and Garcia 349-351). During the last days of March 2006, students walked out of classrooms and marched in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Columbus, Detroit, Washington D.C., and Phoenix (Chavez 157). The protests culminated on May 1st, International Workers’ Day, when millions of Mexican workers left their jobs to march on the cities of Los Angeles, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Milwaukee, and New York (McWilliams, Meier, and Garcia 352). The day became known as the Great
American Boycott or a Day Without Mexicans as millions of others agreed to stop working, attending school, and purchasing in solidarity with undocumented workers in the U.S. (McWilliams, Meier, and Garcia 352). In addition to the Latina/o participants in the marches and boycott, members reached out to leaders in the Asian and African American communities, who subsequently added their support to the cause (Bada and Cardenas 177). H.R. 4437 would fail to pass the U.S. Senate, but the lack of either clear paths for undocumented immigrants to attain citizenship or a curb on undocumented migration over the border left both sides of the debate unsatisfied.

While some boycotts have focused on businesses, the U.S. government, or specific people, state boycotts are not uncommon. The NAACP boycotted South Carolina for flying a confederate flag at the state capital for fifteen years, only ending in July of 2015 after the state had the flag removed (“NAACP Ends Boycott of South Carolina”). Additionally, one of the most well-known contemporary boycotts by artists and the general public is the boycott of North Carolina. On May 23, 2016 North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed into law House Bill 2, a law that bans transgender people from using the bathrooms of their gender identity by making it state law that one must use the bathroom indicated by sex on their birth certificates (North Carolina House Bill 2). Within a week of the bill passing, the studio Lionsgate announced it was canceling its plan to film its Hulu series in Charlotte, and Stephen Schwartz, the composer of Wicked, announced he would not allow any institution in North Carolina to produce his shows (Bort). While these would be some of the first to boycott the state, they were far from the last. By July, sixty-eight companies would attempt to block the law, and the state
experienced everything from the cancelation of music stars like Demi Lovato and Bruce Springsteen to the NBA All-Star Game that would have been held in Charlotte (Chmielewski; Bort). In May of 2016, Christy Mallory and Brad Sears of The Williams Institute published a paper estimating that the state would lose billions of dollars for violating Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act, and the Affordable Care Act among others, and that is in addition to the millions of dollars already lost with organizations like PayPal, the Deutsche Bank, and CoStar choosing not to open planned expansions in North Carolina (Malllory and Sears 23-24). Though it has been nearly a year since the passing of HB2, the boycott remains strong with the NCAA announcing in February of 2017 that it would stop North Carolina from hosting national events despite being home to both the Duke Blue Devils and the North Carolina Tar Heels (Ellis). Jillian Johnson, a member of the Durham City Council as well as an LGBTQ and Black Lives Matter activist, posted on her personal blog, writing,

The people who are to blame for the jobs that we’re losing, the concerts that have been canceled, and the quick and traumatic decrease in our national and global reputation are not those whose companies, organizations, and governments are refusing to spend their money here in NC. Their actions are a critical part of the groundswell of local and national opposition that will eventually lead to the repeal of HB2. The only people to blame are our state legislators who voted in this terrible mess. We elected them, and we need to un-elect them (Johnson “HB2 and Consequences”).
Spreading through social media and taken up by artists, businesses, cities, and states, the boycott of North Carolina continues. Though HB2, like S.B. 1070, has yet to be repealed, the impact that the law has had on the state could work as a deterrent for other local officials considering similar laws. And like S.B. 1070, the boycott of North Carolina works to keep the struggle of marginalized people, in this case trans and gender non-conforming people, in the public consciousness.

**Sound Strike and the Boycott of Arizona**

Given the boycott’s long history of use in combatting both state and federal law, it is unsurprising that opponents of S.B. 1070 would use the boycott to contest the law. Boycotts are useful tools for social justice movements because they create two forms of disruption: mediated and market (King 492). Or as Brayden G. King describes it:

The first form of disruption involves activists exerting pressure by disrupting their targets accrual or use of market resources. The second form of disruption, mediated disruption draws attention to previous ignored problems and potentially damages a target’s image and reputation by linking it directly to these problems… Media attention to a movement tactic draws unwanted negative attention to a corporation, potentially threatening the corporation’s cultivated image (King 492).

In the case of Sound Strike and its supporters, the boycott caused financial hardship through the loss of album and ticket sales, the loss of revenue at venues that host concerts, and a loss to hotels and restaurants near venues that cater to concert attendees. Additionally, it kept S.B. 1070 and Arizona in the news and in people’s minds by
reminding them of the law and the adversity faced by undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, by partnering with the Puente Movement and hosting drives for undocumented immigrants, it gave those sympathetic to the cause knowledge on what they could do to help undocumented immigrants in Arizona while the law exists. Additionally, the boycotting of Arizona by popular entertainers meant that the message was highly publicized since those participating in the boycott were well-known celebrities.

Sound Strike was one group among many that responded to the threat posed by S.B. 1070 by choosing to boycott the state of Arizona in hopes that the economic pressure would cause the state to reverse its decision. Sound Strike officially began in May 2010, only a month after the passing of S.B. 1070 in Arizona, when the Facebook page as well as the now defunct website went live. Zach de la Rocha, a Mexican American singer songwriter from California and the founder of Sound Strike, is known for his activism and strong political views as well as being the frontman for the highly political Rage Against the Machine. With lyrics like “So raise your fists and march around/don’t dare take what you need/I’ll jail and bury those committed/and smother the rest in greed,” Rage Against the Machine’s music is known to be explicitly political, often critiquing U.S. policy and capitalism and along with lines such as “I’m the Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria/the noose and the rapist, the fields overseer/the agents of orange/the priests of Hiroshima/the cost of my desire/sleep now in the fire,” the band often ties capitalism, politics, and colonialism to the history of Western racism and violence (de la Rocha). While many bands incorporate some political commentary into
their music, Rage Against the Machine is noteworthy because it is a band whose music always purposefully carries a political message, touching on issues of racism, classism, violence, abuse, and more.

According to Salvador Reza, the activism present in de la Rocha’s music was one of the key reasons he was able to garner support from established activist groups, including the Puente Movement (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). Reza went on to quote lyrics from Rage Against the Machine’s albums during the press conference that highlighted de la Rocha’s long term support of the Mexican American community, and Reza gave a special acknowledgement to the singer for his active involvement in protests against Sheriff Joe Arpaio in 2007 (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). Though only one of many members of Sound Strike, de la Rocha featured heavily in interviews, press conferences, and other media related to the group and its goals in overturning S.B. 1070. His interviews spread to various social media and news sites, where he is often portrayed as not only the founder, but the spokesperson for Sound Strike and its criticisms of the S.B. 1070. The coverage received by Sound Strike allowed it to spread its message, not only across the country, but across the world through the use of social media and the press coverage received. With this media attention came the opportunity to create a counternarrative to the one advanced by supporters of S.B. 1070, and Sound Strike used its celebrity members and endorsers to spread its message. Moreover, Sound Strike, like many other boycotts, including the historic struggle of the United Farm Workers in California to the contemporary boycotts of the Black Lives Matter movement, are not only for undocumented immigrants or even Latinos, but a
boycott that calls for others to empathize with the struggle in Arizona and create a multiracial, multiethnic movement to fight oppression, surveillance, and violence.

The Sound Strike Boycott and Constructing the Sympathetic Immigrant

In order to create a counternarrative about undocumented immigrants, Sound Strike needed to replace the negative representation of undocumented immigrants with a more positive image. While Sound Strike highlighted many issues impacting immigrants, it is clear that they chose to focus on women and children rather than the male immigrants usually shown or evoked in popular media. Sheriff Joe Arpaio, members of the Arizona legislature, and others construct the undocumented immigrant as male and involved in illegal activities, often related to drug smuggling and violence (Arpaio and Sherman 44). As Eduardo Bonilla-Silva argues in *Racism Without Racists*, “notions of racial difference are human creations rather than eternal, essential categories,” where Mexicans are often constructed as violent, lazy, simple-minded, and immoral when compared with white U.S. citizens (8). Whereas these constructions of the undocumented immigrant focuses on male violence and supposed inferiority, Sound Strike constructed their sympathetic undocumented immigrant as women and children, connecting their immigrant woman to family and childbirth. This, once more, ties women to the heteronormative family and reinforces the idea that women receive their identity through their relation to the family and men.

One example of this can be seen in the image uploaded on August 30th to the Sound Strike Facebook page. Sound Strike posted a fake headline with an image of Dora
the Explorer in a mug shot with a black eye and a bloody nose and lip with the text
“Breaking News! Dora Stopped by Sheriffs in Arizona.” Dora, the main character of the
popular animated children’s show that has aired on Nickelodeon since 2000, is one of the
few Latinas in children’s programming and obviously a young child. Not only did Sound
Strike present S.B. 1070 as a danger to children in this instance, but the severity of the
wounds on a child was shocking, in part because it is such a familiar image. While the
Dora television show is known for having Dora travel around the world having
adventures, the picture shows her holding up a sign with the words, “Dora the Explorer:
Illegal Border Crossing Resisting Arrest.”

Sound Strike features children again in December of 2010. Rather than showing
violence against children, Sound Strike highlighted the dire circumstances faced by some
undocumented families. Joining up with the Puente Movement, Sound Strike held a toy
and food drive for December 18th’s International Migrants Day. Posting on their
Facebook as well as YouTube, Sound Strike stated that not only were they able to buy
forty tons of food and 2,000 toys for low income immigrants in Arizona, the produce
given to these families was bought from Native American co-ops in California. This
emphasizes the importance of caring for immigrant families, particularly children, and
the connections between Latinos and Native peoples in the Southwest. More importantly,
discourse around undocumented immigrants often involves ideas around theft,
particularly theft of jobs or U.S. resources, but the toy and food drive drew attention to
the financial difficulties of undocumented immigrants and especially undocumented
children. Moreover, this positions Sound Strike as an organization caring for children, a
population sympathetic to most, and positions the U.S. state as against the care and protection of children.

The topic of children would return again. In a video labeled “Mexican Kindergarten Kids vs Racist White Minutemen” linked on Sound Strike’s Facebook on August 21, 2011, the video from 2007 showed white protesters standing with signs stating “No Amnesty” and “More ICE” gathered around Mexican immigrants while nearby school children chanted, “Mexico.” The use of children here makes the anti-immigrant protestors look particularly bad, especially when some protestors turn their yelling to the children who are obviously elementary school age. Some of the protestors, all of whom are adults, began chanting “USA” back to the children and yelling at them about chanting “Mexico” when they were in America. Though no one is shown engaging in violence, the raised voices of a group of white adults towards a group of young, brown children is meant to startle and unnerve the viewer, who even if they support S.B. 1070, is unlikely to want to ally themselves with a group that harasses and scares children. The use of children here is similar to the way we see children used in the documentaries on S.B. 1070. As a particularly vulnerable population, children are utilized to gain sympathy for undocumented immigrants, while simultaneously showing pro-S.B. 1070 and anti-undocumented immigration supporters in a negative light.

While the children are obviously being featured in order to shed a negative light on the protestors, the incorporation of children into the narratives of undocumented immigration is an important one. As Silvia Rodriguez Vega points out, “Ultimately, the detention and/or deportation of a parent is the disintegration of the family unit. The
record high immigration raids translate to an exponential number of children that experience loss and trauma (Vega 1). The story of scary undocumented immigrants who smuggle drugs or rape women purposely leaves out any and all discussion of children and the impact that deportation has on them, especially in cases where the children are separated from their parents or forced to return to a country that they may not remember or have never lived. The situation is further complicated by the Deferred Action for Children Arrivals or DACA. While in office President Obama enacted DACA, but while DACA allows children who arrived in the U.S. before their sixteenth birthday to, if they meet the guidelines, have a two year renewable allowance to stay within the U.S., it does nothing to stop the deportation of their families nor does it create a path for citizenship (“Consideration of Deferred Action for Children Arrivals”). Because of the direct impact immigration policy has on immigrant children, they have not been passive actors in the debates around immigration. On the one hand, the contribution of undocumented youths to the resistance movement is an essential part of the story of resistance, and yet, we must ensure that children are not the only we protect or the focus of our discussions of undocumented immigration as the queer families and those without children also need protection from state violence.

As Ben Becker highlights in his article, “Under the Radar,” well over sixty thousand undocumented immigrants youths graduated from high school in the United States in 2009, and they have made their voices heard in support of the DREAM Act (Becker 6). The Trail of Dreams march from Miami, Florida to Washington D.C. in January of 2010 was not only an exceedingly long march, but its length reinforced the
seriousness of their commitment. Children would contribute to resistance efforts again when they began a hunger strike in front of Senator Chuck Schumer’s New York office (Becker 6). In addition to those acts, children marched through the streets of Phoenix in April of 2009 in protest of S.B. 1070, some as young as six, and when they reached Sheriff Arpaio’s office, they demanded that the President stop Sheriff Arpaio’s raids and work on immigration reform (Rodriguez Vega 10). In 2009, Sound Strike linked to a video uploaded to YouTube by Dennis Gilman that showed young children during the march, with one girl crying as she asked Obama to stop the raids and give her parents back to her (Obama! Listen!). While the interview was short, the girl’s obvious pain at the lack of parents drove home the impact S.B. 1070 has on families.

The subject of children and the impact immigration laws have on them came up again on October 11, 2011 when Sound Strike linked to an article by Ed Pilkington. Pinkerton’s article focused the immigration law passed in Alabama and how undocumented mothers and fathers were filling out power of attorney papers to ensure their children did not end up in foster care if they were deported. The article went on to interview children who discussed both their fears for their family and their lack of understanding as to why decades of residence had no impact on deportation policies (Pilkington). While some might argue that the use of children in these narratives, particularly children’s pain and suffering, was exploitive in nature, the focus on children is important to the discussion of immigration policy. Rather than exploitation, the focus on children’s voices can be viewed as an attempt to show how invested these children are in immigration policy and the impact immigration policy has on their lives. While they
may be too young to vote and possibly ineligible based on citizenship status, their fates are decided by others and rarely are they given space to become part of the debate. The focus on the children allows them to show that they are not ignorant of what is happening around them, and that they are invested and willing to fight for the change they wish to see.

However, while the participation of children in the discourse around immigration law and in the protests of S.B. 1070 are important to understanding the law and its consequences, it is not without its problems. As Lee Edelman discusses in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, the use of children in political discourse becomes “a repository of variously sentimentalized cultural identifications… the image of the Child, not to be confused with the lived experiences of any actual historical children, serves to regulate political discourse” (Edelman 11). Reproductive futurism, or the idea that reproduction gives birth to the future and its possibilities, is countered by queerness where “there is no baby and, in consequence, no future” and this lack of future is seen as “sterile, narcissistic enjoyments understood as inherently destructive of meaning” (Edelman 12-13). The focus on reproduction and the future encourages the protection of the symbolic Child even at the expense of those living. I am not arguing against the narratives of actual children, but rather how the Child is being utilized here as the symbolic representation of the future that all should protect. Similar arguments have been used to argue for why undocumented immigrants should not be allowed into the nation, why queer people should not teach at schools, why trans people should not be able to use the bathroom of their gender.
Sound Strike’s narratives are not merely to show the impact the law has on the children and their active participation in protest, for the stories of actual children are important to understanding the lives undocumented immigrants. Its narratives also position the state and those supporting S.B. 1070 as against the innocent construction of the child. In this way, the use of children here prioritize their protection and moves the discussion away from queer narratives and the concerns of immigrants without children. I am not attempting to argue that the concerns of children and the impact the deportation of parents has on a child is not important, but rather I argue that the foregrounding of children within the narratives of Sound Strike at times reinforces heteronormativity and obscures the violence of deportation outside of normative kinship. However, the organization also, importantly, highlights the often overlooked impact these policies have on actual immigrant children.

Even when the child is not foregrounded in Sound Strike narratives, its specter can still be found. During Sound Strike’s first press conference, Conor Oberst told the story of a family friend, an undocumented woman who was deported to Mexico, who was separated from her children and unable to return to the U.S. for at least ten years (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). At the same press conference, Zach de la Rocha told the story of Alma Minerva Chacon who gave birth to her daughter while handcuffed due to state detention (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). The shift from the dangerous undocumented immigrant man favored by those who support and passed S.B. 1070 to the image of the sympathetic female immigrant is used in such a way to place motherhood and family into the discussion of S.B. 1070. These two stories are the only
stories of immigrants told at the press conference, and both of them emphasize the importance of motherhood and family. In the first tale, it focuses on the pain of a mother taken away from her children and the violence done to the family. In the second story, it emphasizes the inhumane treatment of a woman giving birth to her child with de la Rocha stating that it was like “a scene from periods of history I thought had long been gone” (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). In both, the focus is on the woman solely in her role as mother.

Discussions of undocumented immigrants and their children are usually discussed through the pejorative term “anchor baby.” Anchor babies, or children whose parents do not have citizenship but gain citizenship in a country through their birth, are often reviled and considered a legal loophole for those opposed to undocumented immigration in the U.S. In 2010, Arizona state legislators introduced two bills – House Bill 2561 and Senate Bill 1309, both of these aimed at denying citizenship to children who did not have at least one parent who is a citizen or legal resident and limiting their ability to sponsor family members (H.B. 2561; S.B. 1309). As some scholars have noted, since 2000 the concern over these children increased with more search results, films, articles in newspapers, and coverage on television broadcasts covering the issue (Ignatow and Williams 60). Furthermore, when discussing these children, there is often the fear that undocumented people use their children to access social programs they would not be able to use otherwise, despite the laws that block undocumented immigrants from this and only allow children to sponsor their family if they meet certain income requirements and are twenty-one years old (Huang 386; Kendall 367-368).
Far from a discussion of “anchor babies” and immigrant women coming to exploit the U.S. system for citizenship and financial gain, this use of motherhood places the state as a violent system that dismantles the family and exposes mothers to inhumane circumstances. This shifts the focus from violence as something an undocumented immigrant enacts against U.S. citizens, particularly white citizens, to violence being something enacted by the state against immigrant mothers and the heteronormative family. Furthermore, de la Rocha’s invocation of history is used to connect the treatment of an undocumented woman in childbirth to past gendered racial abuses of the state, particularly calling to mind the treatment of women considered mentally disordered, African American women under slavery, and the experiences of women of color around the world as the result of colonialization. Additionally, when men are mentioned, it is usually in reference to their role within their families. On February 17, 2012, the Sound Strike Facebook page linked to an article on Colorlines about a father who was deported and separated from his children who are now in foster care in the United States and the U.S. is refusing to send the children to their parent in Mexico (Wessler). While there is a man as part of the story, the focus of the story is the family – a man is separated from his children and his wife, who while a U.S. citizen is unable to care for them alone due to poverty and a disability. The clear implication is that the family would be together and better off had the father been able to stay in the U.S., and the deportation of the father led to the destruction of this family.

The focus on motherhood and pregnant women as vulnerable populations hurt by the law appeared in the music and films created in support of S.B. 1070 as well as in
narratives supported by Sound Strike. In *Machete*, the film opens up with the image of a pregnant woman murdered, and both *SB 1070 The Faces* and *The State of Arizona: Battle over Illegal Immigration* emphasized the struggle of women trying to keep their families together. Additionally, the positive representation of pregnant undocumented women echoes the song “Freedom” by Marisa Ronstadt and her use of the image of a mother giving birth just to be deported and deprived of her newborn. In the stories told by Sound Strike, the films, and the songs, women and children become the dominant images of undocumented immigration. Men, when they are mentioned, are attached to families – fathers, young sons, etc. In this way, the family as seen through women and children become the dominant figures of resistance.

However, the construction of the heterosexual nuclear family as central to the argument for protecting undocumented immigrants is not without its problems. As Karma R. Chavez writes in her book on queer immigration and activism, there is often a desire to seem as normative as possible to gain rights, particularly when someone is an immigrant and in such a precarious position within the United States. It is, in fact, that normativity that many queer immigrants call upon to get their relationships recognized in immigration proceedings (Chavez 29). Perhaps instead of relying on heteronormative narratives, Sound Strike could feature explicitly queer people and their families, allowing the movement to create a space for even greater coalitional politics, resisting not only classism, nativism, and racism, but also heteronormativity. Rather than collapsing the undocumented immigrant population into a group of laboring parents and their children, a wider approach would allow Sound Strike to address the concerns of undocumented
immigrants who are queer, disabled, or single. While Sound Strike does mention disability in a post on October 14, 2010 where it describes a case where a man who was a U.S. citizen that was wrongfully deported to Mexico and unable to understand the paperwork due to a disability, out of the hundreds of posts made in 2010, no posts addressed disabled undocumented immigrants (“Mentally Ill Citizen Wrongfully Deported”). As Eithne Luibheid argues in *Queer Migrations*, laws attempting to exclude legal immigration into the United States for queer people existed up until 1990, and even after the laws were removed, queer immigrants faced additional roadblocks given that they could not use their partners to gain legal entry into the United States (Luibheid and Cantu xiii). Immigration policies within the U.S. have historically worked to privilege Northern European migration while dissuading and at times, forbidding, the immigration of people of color and ethnic whites, but from the beginning, immigration law also created exclusions for the disabled (Baynton 32-33). From early immigration laws meant to exclude the “lunatic” and “idiot” to later immigration laws targeting those who were “defective,” those with disabilities have a history of being considered undesirable members of the nation (Brayton 33). The privileging of the white, heterosexual, able-bodied migrant makes an inclusive representation even more important for these marginalized communities Though policies like DACA and the DREAM Act are important for children, these policies do not help the millions of other undocumented immigrants who also need protecting for the state.
Sound Strike and Coalitional Politics

Sound Strike, like many others who would critique S.B. 1070, located the discussion around the law as one not just important to Arizona or the U.S. but to the world as a whole, linking the precarity of brown people in Arizona to other struggles for civil rights. On the main Facebook page as well as during the press conference, the phrase “si se puede” was written and called upon several times. A phrase meaning, “yes, we can” in Spanish, it was a well-known and documented rallying cry by the United Farm Workers of America (UFW). The link between Sound Strike and labor struggles as well as civil rights movements in the U.S. and transnationally can also be seen in a discussion that happened on December 9, 2010. On December 9th an Arizona fan upset that their favorite band was boycotting the state wrote a letter asking for an end to the boycott. The spokesperson for Sound Strike, Javier Gonzalez, publically answered the complaint by discussing the racist dimensions of South African Apartheid and the important history of artists boycotting areas due to state sanctioned racial oppression (Gonzalez “MaryAnn Keyser”). The letter written by Javier not only emphasizes the importance of resisting racist policies through overt means, it also draws connections between resistance to S.B. 1070 and other struggles against violent, racist state policies, linking not only the actions of Arizona to worldwide oppression but the actions of Sound Strike to a history of transnational struggle.

Even the term, boycott, calls to mind other both domestic and transnational boycotts, including the Montgomery bus boycotts. The issue of racism and transnational struggle is affirmed through other posts, including a link to Columbian artists who
created a short video in support of undocumented immigrants on September 2, 2010, and a call to read an article about the Tohono O’odham Nation and how they are impacted by the border yet not included within these discussions (“Aterciopelados – Bandera;” “Tohono O’odham Nation”). The transnational thread of Sound Strike can also be seen in the existence of Sound Strike Berlin, and the support for Sound Strike given by Salman Rushdie, a famous Indian author. The announcement of the Berlin Sound Strike and the support of Rushdie was followed by a call to end racism as it exists all over the world, including Europe (“International Solidarity with AltoArizona”). In this way, Sound Strike identified itself not only as a group of artists interested in opposing S.B. 1070 but as a group invested in both national and transnational struggles against violence.

Furthermore, while supporters of S.B. 1070 emphasized the importance of stopping illegal actions (crossing national borders), divesting the U.S. of dangerous criminals (the coyotes that aid in crossing the border and the potential for Mexican criminals to flee to the U.S. to avoid detention in their home country), and protecting Americans (both in terms of safety from crime and job opportunity and security), Sound Strike moved away from reactionary constructions of undocumented immigration and emphasized the racism of the law. In an interview released on the Sound Strike website on June 28, 2010, Zach de la Rocha states:

It’s part of an entire state’s campaign to humiliate and criminalize an entire population. It’s intended to create a state of constant fear and constant intimidation, and by using this legal wording of ‘reasonable suspicion’ [it] clearly
opens a door for the police and state agencies to go after people because they are Latino (Sound Strike “The Sound Strike Movement”).

The discussion of “reasonable suspicion” in S.B. 1070 highlights one of the key criticisms of the law. While Arizona lawmakers argued that S.B. 1070 was necessary to protect legal citizens within its borders, the law effectively criminalizes the brown body in Arizona, placing it under inherent suspicion as being other, a non-citizen. While this certainly is most strongly felt by the Latino community that comprises over thirty percent of the population of Arizona, the use of brown rather than Latina/o is important in a state where Native Americans are over five percent of the population and often mistaken for Latinos (United States Census Bureau). Despite lawmaker’s insistence that the law only targets undocumented immigrants, all brown bodies in Arizona are subject to increased surveillance.

Furthermore, de la Rocha’s focus on humiliation, fear, and intimidation brought about by the law emphasizes the multiple levels of state violence felt by brown bodied people within the borders of the state. While the physical violence of capture and incarceration is certainly present, there also exists a psychological and emotional violence when one’s physical body is under constant suspicion, surveillance, and threat and is presumed to be an interloper within the state and without rights. The space one inhabits, particularly within the public domain, is unsafe. While this lack of safety is experienced most keenly by the undocumented immigrant who is under constant threat of expulsion from the nation and imprisonment for existing within the borders of the state, the lack of safety and belonging is, to a lesser extent, enacted against any brown bodied person who
can be stopped, searched, asked for their papers, and possibly detained if they cannot prove their legal residency. As David T. Goldberg argues in *The Threat of Race*, the racelessness or supposed race blindness of neoliberalism allows for an institutionalization of racism that simultaneously enacts racial inequity while denying racist intent (82). It is the lived realities of brown-bodied people in Arizona shows the lie of color blindness white lawmakers attempted to impart in their arguments about the law. Additionally, the impact of the law on undocumented women of color features heavily in both the press conferences given by Sound Strike and the stories it links to on its website and Facebook, emphasizing the struggles of these women and their fear for their children. It is not just expulsion from the nation they fear, but the struggles their children will face if they are deported and separated from them. Though Sound Strike focuses on Mexican undocumented immigrants, the situation that undocumented women find themselves in with the passing of S.B. 1070 and other anti-undocumented immigrant legislation is not solely a concern for Mexican women.

Focusing on racial violence and how this racialized violence impacts women are but a few of the ways that Sound Strike created a counter narrative of S.B. 1070. In addition, to the racism inherent in the law, the group sought to emphasize the role of capitalism and labor in the wake of S.B. 1070. In their article “SB1070 Action: What is Left to Do?” by Rachel Kennedy, the group calls out the U.S. government for its role in creating undocumented immigration, specifically referencing the passing of NAFTA in 1994 and its role in crippling the Mexican economy. This shifts the discussion from the illegality of undocumented immigrants within U.S. borders to a discussion of the
conditions created by the U.S. that leave Mexican workers without gainful employment in their home country. Furthermore, the Sound Strike home page denounces “old way demagogues” for “taking advantage of the pain everyday people feel in these tough economic times to poison their minds with finger pointing and anger towards the latest batch of ‘other people’ – immigrants” (“Basic Info”). In this instance, Sound Strike attempts to highlight how immigrants become politically convenient targets by those whose constituencies are experiencing economic hardship, which while this is a critique of Arizona politicians, it is also a broader critique of the federal government.

**Unemployment – The Immigrant Problem**

The blaming of immigrants, and specifically Mexican immigrants, for the lack of employment for white Americans is certainly not specific to this economic downturn. During the Great Depression, the U.S. deported Mexican immigrants whose labor had been essential on farms and ranches from California to the Midwest in order to supply white Americans with jobs, even including Mexican immigrants who had attained U.S. citizenship (Hernandez 81; Rosales and Simon 347). The state sanctioned purging of Mexicans, including Mexican Americans, from the U.S. to give white laborers work continued in the 1940s and 1950s with “Mexican deportation parties” and Operation Wetback (Hernandez 117). Though Mexican immigrants are not the only group targeted for intensified surveillance and violence during times of economic crisis, Asian immigrants along with other groups have experienced similar circumstances, Sound Strike’s statements emphasize the reasons for state violence – the need to uphold white
wealth and labor and create convenient targets for government officials to deflect attention away from any possible culpability as a lawmaker or weaknesses within the capitalist system. Scholarship has shown that “individuals who are especially likely to see the relation between immigrants and nonimmigrants as a zero-sum game—are particularly likely to hold negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration,” and because of this, arguments showing how immigrants benefit the economy usually lead to more favorable impressions of immigrants (Esses, Brochu, and Dickson 133). The members of Sound Strike repeatedly gesture to struggles outside of the specific circumstances in Arizona, making an argument for a type of consciousness that calls on people to recognize their own marginalized circumstances in the situation unfolding in Arizona whether that circumstance is the result of racialization or class oppression.

The narrative created by Sound Strike is quite different than the narrative supplied by lawmakers, which often focuses on immigrant abuse of the system and immigrant violence against citizens. In the video *Voices from the Ground*, immigrants spoke about their fears and issues within the state, with two in particular explaining how they supported the boycott because under capitalism, businesses care only about money and won’t put pressure on the government to overturn the law unless their businesses suffer (*Voices from the Ground*). Not only did this video show support for Sound Strike as a group, it specifically reinforced the role capitalism plays in S.B. 1070 and the usefulness of the boycott in putting political pressure on lawmakers in Arizona.

Sound Strike also emphasized the importance of undocumented immigrant labor. Dolores Huerta’s support of Sound Strike and critique of S.B. 1070 focused on migrant
farm labor and how the food Americans eat is provided by the labor of undocumented immigrants, making their presence in the U.S. a necessary part of the United States’ economy (Sound Strike “Sound Strike Press Conference”). The critique of U.S. policy and affirmation of Mexican immigrant importance to the U.S. made by Huerta is echoed elsewhere both in the street protests around S.B. 1070 and Arizona’s HB 2281 that banned Mexican American Studies from the Tucson Unified School District. The construction of Mexicans as hindrances, economically and culturally, was well-known before S.B. 1070 with Sergio Arau even making a satirical film to address the issue with his 2004 *A Day Without a Mexican*. The argument being made highlights the usefulness of Mexican immigrant labor and is oftentimes brought up alongside discussions of how Mexican immigrants engage in work that is rejected by unemployed whites. Invoking usefulness may be a persuasive argument, but it also reinforces the opposition’s position. Rather than moving the argument in a radical direction – Sound Strike questions capitalism and, as mentioned previously, critiques the U.S. for its exploitation of other nations, but it doesn’t question the right of the United States to patrol and restrict its borders or the idea that immigrants should be “useful” to the U.S. to gain admittance. The argument made reinforces the idea that immigrants need to fulfill an economic lack, and that these undocumented people are worth keeping because they are willing to do hard labor jobs with little pay that U.S. citizens would not choose for employment. Furthermore, as a group that exists to cut off capital from a state to enact change, Sound Strike uses the capitalist machine while at the same time rejecting the capitalist system that it is currently deploying for its own ends. The group itself emphasizes its popular,
wealthy, and famous musicians in order to not only financially undermine Arizona as a state but to encourage fans of these groups to reject S.B. 1070 as well. Sound Strike, as an organization, would be much less effective if its members were not part of the artistic elite of the music industry.

**Sound Strike as Multiracial Activism**

In addition to the race, gender, and class dimensions found in linking the experiences of undocumented immigrants in Arizona to the plight of economically disenfranchised people in other locations around the world, Sound Strike shows coalitional politics in its members. While many of the people who joined Sound Strike and showed their support are Latinas/os, it also includes white and black artists. Kanye West was one of the first artists to join, followed by Mos Def and others. While it is argued that “common experiences of racial profiling lays the groundwork for mutual solidarity and collective response,” it is also important to note that “for several of the black artists who have collaborated to create pro-immigrant tracks, friendships and professional relationships with Latinos and/or past experiences of police oppression have helped to bring into focus the crisis of Latino immigrants” (Lorenz 262, 264). Like the collaborations found between the Black Panther Party and United Farm Workers, an acknowledgement of shared disenfranchisement and oppression due to economic hardship and racialization allowed the artists to move beyond strict identity categories and recognize their similarities. Not only is there shared experiences of racism and class
oppression between Black and Latinas/os, but they often share urban spaces. As Shanna Lorenz argues:

The musical efforts to inspire interracial coalition building… are at their best when they strive to widen blacks’ and Latinos’ understandings of the socioeconomic bonds that connect them and of the global labor markets that have propelled international migration and inner-city poverty alike. Increasingly, black-led organizations have also begun to take up this important work, most notably the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, creating spaces of dialogue across interracial communities that share common challenges and struggles (Lorenz 270).

The alliances created between the Black and Latina/o community hint at a greater understanding of the systemic powers at work that create the lived realities of both groups.

The acknowledgement of shared oppression and its ability to create coalition was also found in the music and films explored in earlier chapters. In the films, Black and Native activists participate in protests and marches, and in the songs Black artists embrace the struggles of undocumented people as similar to their own. The policing of brown bodies in Arizona is certainly recognizable to many of artists that sang in support of undocumented immigrants, as it bears a clear resemblance to the policing of black bodies. Additionally, street harassment and violence enacted by law enforcement are familiar to both communities. While there are, of course, key differences in the histories and specific forms of racism experienced by each community, there is enough
commonality to create a sense of shared experience. Additionally, both Latinas/os and African Americans make their homes in urban neighborhoods from Chicago to Los Angeles, New York to Phoenix, and these urban areas are often riddled with underfunded schools and poverty, creating another bond between these groups. While each can accomplish much on their own, the mutual recognition of shared marginalization hints at the possibility for continued coalition building in the future. As Laura Pulido points out in her book *Black, Brown, Yellow & Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, if African American and Latina/o progressives worked together to bring about change, their numbers in many urban areas around the country would make them formidable, even against local and national politicians (232).

The coalitional politics shown in Sound Strike reinforce the examples of coalitional politics found in both the music and film created to resist the law. Once again we see artists gathering together not because of shared racial identity or similar citizenship status, but rather in an attempt to fight marginalization despite the differences between them. Black artists like Talib Kweli and Willy Northpole created music to combat the law because they felt a commonality, not of specific experience but of marginalization within the United States. When Native and African American leaders and supporters showed up to lend their support to the marches and protests, it was an attempt to reinforce a type of shared oppression. Similarly, the artists involved with Sound Strike showed that identity categories need not restrict our political investments and affiliations, but instead they can be a window to allow a fuller understanding of the oppression of others.
Sound Strike Now

At its height in 2010, Sound Strike included hundreds of musicians, even attracting artists and other creators to its cause. Though many musicians have left the group in the years since the passage of S.B. 1070, choosing to play in Arizona though still voicing their dissatisfaction with the law, Sound Strike continues with fifty bands still highlighted as active members (“Company Overview”). There are those who label the group as hurting those who they wish to help, citing the number of Latinos, both documented and undocumented, that work at hotels, concert venues, restaurants, and other industries that have suffered from the loss of income and tourism, and some argue that boycotts, petitions, and fundraising concerts will do nothing to help Latinos and undocumented immigrants in Arizona (Grant; D’Andrea; Brown). Whatever the arguments, certainly the boycotts by Sound Strike and other groups have impacted the state of Arizona significantly. A study released by the Center for American Progress found that in one year, the state of Arizona lost nearly two thousand jobs and $141 million of revenue due to the passing of S.B. 1070 (Fitz and Kelley 11). After seeing the economic toll the law has taken on the state, Sound Strike can work as a deterrent for future states who wish to pass similar laws.

While Sound Strike’s boycott gathered a great deal of press due to the fame of the entertainers involved with the group, they were not the only ones to garner press coverage. On April 28, 2010, the Los Angeles Times posted an article about the numerous groups calling for boycotts, followed by an article in the New York Times on
May 6, 2010 that affirmed many large Latino associations, including the National Council of La Raza, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and others, were asking that those opposed to the law boycott the state in a show of solidarity, allying themselves with groups like the United Food and Commercial Workers union as well as the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (Gorman and Riccardi; Preston). Cities all over the United States from San Francisco, California and Seattle, Washington to Columbus, Ohio, St. Paul, Minnesota, Boston, Massachusetts, and New York City all took part in the boycott of Arizona. So many cities signed on for the boycott, that the popular blog, Colorlines, kept a tally of the cities with passed or pending resolutions for the boycotts as well as the few that stood with Arizona in support – Costa Mesa, California and Yorba Linda, California among them.

Los Angeles, California passed its resolution to boycott of Arizona on May 12th, just three weeks after the passing of the law, which led to Arizona’s Corporation Commissioner, Gary Pierce, to threaten to cut off the twenty-five percent of Los Angeles’ power gained from the state of Arizona (Friedman). The loss of income for the state of Arizona as well as the public response from Arizona officials show both the influence and impact of these boycotts. Though this is not the first boycott of Arizona – in the 1980s and 1990s, the state legislature and later, the voters, chose to vote against creating a Martin Luther King Jr. Day, spurring both a boycott by the National Football League (NFL) among others and the “By the Time I Get to Arizona” song on Public Enemy’s 1991 *Apocalypse 91... The Enemy Strikes Black* album (Lee). The boycott of Arizona
following the rejection of Martin Luther King Jr. Day was led by Stevie Wonder and Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King Jr, and led the state to lose millions of dollars before Arizona’s citizens voted to bring the holiday to the state (Lorenz 245).

While Sound Strike was not able to force Arizona to overturn S.B. 1070, the movement did cause financial hardship for the state of Arizona and the high visibility of its members allowed the organization to share alternative stories of undocumented immigrants. The movement sparked a debate country-wide over the plight of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and the need for comprehensive immigration reform by the federal government to stop states from enacting their own immigration laws. Second, the backlash against Russell Pearce and his subsequent removal from office was a considerable boon for undocumented immigrants in Arizona, Lastly, and perhaps most importantly when thinking of the future, Sound Strike showed the strength of coalitional politics. Not only did it encourage its members to think outside of the situation in Arizona or even the United States, it reached out to activists and entertainers, to those outside of Latinas/os to form a coalition to fight against the law.

However, it is important to note that the same limitations found in the film and music protesting S.B. 1070 can also be found in the narratives of Sound Strike. At times, Sound Strike exacerbated already problematic constructions of the immigrant. The focus on the innocent child in need of protecting intensified the heteronormative debate shared by many in opposition to the law. Though members of Sound Strike, particularly Zach de la Rocha, are associated with radical politics and critiques, Sound Strike as an organization chose to foreground the struggles of the normative family and reductive
gender roles where undocumented men and women are defined by their relationship to children.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

While musicians, artists, and filmmakers created cultural artifacts to resist S.B. 1070, protestors took to the streets, and social justice and human rights organizations took their fights to the courts. In 2012, the United States Supreme Court struck down three of the provisions found within S.B. 1070. Specifically, the court removed the provisions that allowed police officers to arrest without warrant someone who they believed but could not prove was an undocumented immigrant, the provision stating that it is a crime for an undocumented person to work or attempt to find work in the state of Arizona, and lastly, the provision making it against Arizona law to not carry federal registration – for instance, a green card (Arizona et al. v. United States). It is, however, still against federal law to not carry federal registration paperwork, but the Supreme Court struck down the harsher penalties imposed by the state of Arizona (Arizona et al. v. United States 9). In September of 2016, Mark Brnovich, the Attorney General for the state of Arizona, put forth an opinion advising law enforcement officials to abstain from the requirement to establish the legal status of those suspected of being in the country illegally if that suspicion is brought about by race or ethnicity (Brnovich). With this opinion, Arizona’s S.B. 1070 lost the aspects of the legislation that led to its label as the “Papers Please” law, settling the lawsuit brought by American Civil Liberties Union, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, National Immigration Law
Center, and Service Employees International Union (Valle Del Sol et al. v. Whiting et al.). Though these changes are a win for the undocumented immigrants in Arizona and throughout the country where other states passed similar laws, the fight around undocumented immigration is still ongoing.

On March 16, 2017, President Trump released his budget proposal that included an additional $2.8 billion dollars for the detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants as well as the initial planning needed to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall (Mulvaney 50-53). It is into this climate that protests, like those conducted against S.B. 1070, must be seen as not only a regional or state resistance movement, but part of a larger conversation about the undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and the surveillance, detention, and deportation experienced by this community. Moreover, given that the fight for undocumented immigrants in the country is unlikely to abate in the near future, those invested in these fights must look at the consequences and effectiveness of certain types of discourse and protest.

As Zeynep Tufekci highlights in the article “Social Movements and Governments in the Digital Age: Evaluating a Complex Landscape,” social media and protests can keep a topic in the media, focus a discussion, and change the way a country engages in discourse, but what these avenues lack is a way to turn these messages into sustained change in the form of policy (Tufekci 2). Tufekci goes on to argue that social media does have a place in social justice movements, particularly in gathering “public attention, evading censorship, and coordination or logistics” (Tufekci 2). While film, music, and boycotts might not be responsible for changing the law, certainly they worked to keep the
issue in Arizona within the media and helped reframe the debate. The harmful constructions of undocumented immigrants as drug dealers, rapists, murderers, or drains on the U.S. economy are countered by seeing the real lives, family, and labor of undocumented workers in SB 1070 The Faces and The State of Arizona: Battle over Illegal Immigration. Seeing the struggles of undocumented immigrants in narrative films like Machete, contrasts with the discourse advanced in the film by anti-undocumented immigrant advocates in the film that paint the community as a “pestilence” that does not contribute to the U.S. in any meaningful way. Songs like “Mexican You Show Me Your Papers” change the conversation from one of undocumented illegality and danger to highlighting the violent and discriminatory practice of surveillance that renders all brown people as innately foreign to the nation. Boycotts, like the one held by Sound Strike, can make the consequences of passing anti-immigration laws detrimental enough to a local economy to deter some from implementing the laws. While these works cannot change the laws, they can change the discourse and through this, the minds of those who know little about undocumented immigrants, their experiences, or the impact the laws have on these communities.

Furthermore, the use of social media in protest movements diversifies the structure of protests with protests no longer needing a core group to organize where and when a protest will be held and what the central message of the protest is for those involved (Tufekci 13). In the protests of S.B. 1070, you have artists releasing their music on YouTube and other free social media sites, some artists, like Taboo, with connections to specific organizations or leaders of the anti-S.B. 1070 movement, while others released
their work without any official connections. The lack of a cohesive organized message might be seen as a drawback, but social media allows for greater involvement and dissemination of creative work, of organization outside of larger cities or hubs of social activism, and it does this without necessarily needing the mainstream media to spread the message (Von Hippel 8-10). Given the election of Donald Trump to the highest office in the U.S., the incorporation of social media in protest movements will be beneficial for those invested in resisting racist, Islamophobic, transphobic, and other discriminatory policies.

**Beyond Immigration, Borders, and Citizenship**

In August of 2015, the Pew Research Center polling data indicated that 72% of Americans believed that undocumented immigrants in the U.S. should be allowed to reside within the U.S. given certain qualifications – for instance, that they pay taxes, do not have felony convictions, etc. (Goo). In November 2016, Quinnipiac’s poll of U.S. voters found that 55% of Americans opposed a wall on the border between the U.S. and Mexico, and the same poll indicated that 72% of voters supported allowing undocumented immigrants to stay within the U.S. with 60% supporting a path to citizenship for them (Malloy and Smith 1, 7). While cultural production cannot change the law, artistic work is an important piece of resistance in that it does change the minds of people and these citizens can use their voice to influence their congressmen, local representatives, and state governments. However, it is also essential to reach out and form
coalitions with multiple groups to address not only the policies that impact our own communities but others as well.

In Amy L. Brandzel’s *Against Citizenship: The Violence of the Normative*, Brandzel begins her book with a discussion of S.B. 1070, arguing that the state law simply expanded upon policies already enacted by the federal government, specifically referencing President Obama’s “Secure Communities” program that tracked the resident status of those held by law enforcement (Brandzel 1-2). Brandzel goes on to discuss the ban on the Mexican American Studies program and argues that,

These [Mexican] nonnormative citizen-subjects haunt the narrative of citizenship and its reliance upon the promises of democracy, equality, and inclusion; they are *the specters of citizenship*, the nonnormative subjects that are products of, and excuses for, the vicious, boundary machinations of citizenship (Brandzel 2).

In this way, undocumented immigrants do not represent physical danger to the normative citizen through lawbreaking, but the danger of unseating established power. As I mentioned in the introduction, I, like Brandzel, identify normative as hegemonic, privileged identities – white, heterosexual, male, able-bodied, and middle-class (Brandzel 3). Within this context, Brandzel argues that we must not see what is happening in Arizona and other states around the country as purely an example of anti-Mexican sentiment or a racialized project aimed at undocumented people, but rather as part of an attempt to criminalize and marginalize the non-normative (Brandzel 2). In this way, the issues around citizenship and immigration should not be seen separately from Black Lives Matter, the fight in North Carolina for transgender people to be allowed to use the
restrooms of their gender, or President Trump’s current attempt to bar Muslims from entry into the United States. Though on the outset, they may seem to target different populations, all of these populations are marked as non-normative within the nation.

As Brandzel argues, normative citizens in order to exercise their privileges and deny responsibility for the failures of the U.S. to live up to its promises of inclusion and equality, focus on a return to a time when their privileges were more absolute (Brandzel 3). Certainly the election of President Trump and his attainment of the United States’ highest office shows this with Trump’s campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again.” The slogan is a reference to a time when those with privilege – the white, able-bodied, upper-class, male, and/or heterosexual – exercised their privilege without question. Trump was able to win the U.S. Presidency even though he refused to condemn the Ku Klux Klan early in his campaign and chose to ally himself with Steve Bannon who would become his White House Chief Strategist. Steve Bannon, whose role as Executive Chairman of Breitbart News marked an increase in sexist and racist content, believes that we are currently at war with Muslim-majority countries (Reilly and Heath). Additionally, Trump chose Mike Pence as his running mate, a man who voted against the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, who once stated he believes that same sex marriage would cause “societal collapse,” and opposed laws that would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation (Drabold; Pence 14796). Given Trump and Pence’s records, they did not win despite their catering to the fears of normative citizens but rather because of their reinforcement that normative citizens are special and deserving of privilege. Similarly, laws like S.B. 1070, are not truly to protect the safety of U.S.
citizens or even to ensure jobs for white laborers, since not all white laborers can be
classified as normative, but rather to ensure that the non-normative, the queer, the
disabled, the poor, and people of color do not change the playing field. S.B. 1070 is about
maintaining power. While some of this power comes from race, particularly in Arizona
where whites only made up 55.8% of the population in 2015, those are not the only
exclusionary projects being enacted (“U.S. Census Bureau”).

As Nicole M. Guidotti-Hernandez argues in *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries*, “citizenship is based on both universal and
exclusionary notions of belonging to the nation-state, conditioning gendered, sexualized,
and racialized subjects to police themselves and to understand that their existence is
subject to policing” (Guidotti-Hernandez 7). The violence of the state is then normalized
and seen as a typical and expected function of the nation to be expected by citizens. I do
not deny that undocumented immigrants, particularly those residing in states with
increased surveillance, experience intense threats to their livelihoods and lives, but
citizenship brings only a modicum of security within a nation. Violence against citizens,
policing of the populace, incarceration, and exclusionary laws are built to disenfranchise
and create a sense of ongoing threat to those most marginalized. The lack of what
Kathleen M. Coll defines as cultural citizenship, or people who are citizens but through
their marginalized status are not recognized as full citizens, offers opportunities for
coalition. While the specificity of experience may differ, the experience of
marginalization and relationship to power can create powerful connections.
The resistance to S.B. 1070 echoes these important coalitional moments. When Taboo’s “One Heart, One Beat” music video shows images of everything from the Women’s Movement marching for legalized abortion to Mahatma Gandhi protesting English colonization in a video protesting S.B. 1070, he is calling upon a shared relationship to power or history of marginalization. The idea of shared marginalization is reinforced by the work of Talib Kweli and other Black hip-hop artists that created music in support for undocumented immigrants in Arizona. In *SB 1070 The Faces*, the documentary shows Al Sharpton marching with undocumented immigrants and speaking of the connections between the fight of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement, Sharpton is not arguing that these are the same, but rather that they are about the economic, racial, and legislative exploitation experienced by both communities. Here, Sharpton highlights the limitations of citizenship, for certainly the marginalization, exclusion, and violence felt by the Black community was not due to their lack of citizenship but rather their lack of cultural citizenship within the nation. Moreover, Sound Strike used their platform to decry the violence in Israel and to support oppressed artists in other countries (Gonzalez “Let Alicia Keys Know;” “International Solidarity with AltoArizona”). The coalitions imagined by those protesting S.B. 1070 are both national and transnational, calling for the viewer, the listener, or the participant to see beyond their identity categories and join movements impacting those in other communities.
Limitations of S.B. 1070 Artistic Activism

While much of the creative production resisting S.B. 1070 has changed the narratives around undocumented immigrants and advocated for greater coalitional politics, it is not without its limitations. Given that the power of this form of activism is found in its ability to change the discourse, highlight injustice, and give voice to those who are often voiceless, one of the responsibilities of this type of activism is that it should expand rather than contract its subject. One of the dangers is found in catering to comforting, and often effective, narratives that privilege the normative. In Brandzel’s final chapter in Against Citizenship, she pulls upon Audre Lorde’s work “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” to speak about how resistance runs the risk of measuring individuals as they relate to capitalism and white supremacy (Brandzel 145). In the films, songs, and Sound Strike’s boycott of S.B. 1070, each of these forms of resistance, despite their different methods and genres, all emphasized the importance of undocumented immigrants in their roles as cheap laborers for the U.S. Though this argument might be effective, its reliance on capitalist exploitation has clear implications in racialized labor markets where racialized labor is often paid little. Moreover, it leaves little room for the unemployed, artists, entertainers, disabled, stay-at-home parents, and multiple other types of undocumented immigrants that exist within the borders of Arizona and the larger United States.

The focus on children and the heteronormative family in creative resistance, though important to a discussion of immigrant lives, often privileges the straight, reproductive family at the cost of the stories of queer and nonnormative immigrant
families. Given the focus on traditional marriage as the “natural” or “normal” form of kinship “the state not only produces heterosexuality as the norm but also inextricably links heteronormativity to a properly gendered, settled, racialized, and sexualized citizenry” (Brandzel 77). When Machete begins its tale of life on the border with an undocumented pregnant woman being shot and killed, when Efigenia Cobix Cahan and Angelica Shou from SB 1070 The Faces are emphasized for their roles as mothers, married to men, and producing children, and when Sound Strike chooses to focus on the stories of pregnant immigrant women giving birth while in detention, they are building a narrative relying upon the most normative of gender roles and sexuality. In this narrative, women’s importance is restricted to motherhood and their roles as caregivers and child bearers. While these stories are sympathetic and effective due to the ease with which many reproductive members of society can imagine themselves put in such precarious situations, it does so by reaffirming the normative narrative of the family advanced by the U.S. state. It positions undocumented immigrants within the role of acceptable or desirable citizen, and it does so at the expense of those who cannot or will not fall into these normative structures. Furthermore, the common emphasis on the imaginary innocent child harmed by S.B. 1070 works to privilege this imaginary child and its needs and concerns over the numerous other immigrants, be they queer, disabled, or elderly. This dissertation does not wish to assert that normative families have no place in the discussion of undocumented immigrants or the impact S.B. 1070 has on families in Arizona, but rather the reliance upon these narratives can commit its own type of
violence by marginalizing those who already experience exploitation and violence at the hands of the U.S. government.

Yet there are areas of improvement. While Sound Strike, for instance, often focused on normative representations of undocumented immigrants in 2010, they would later broaden their scope. On August 10, 2011, the organization posted on its Facebook gay man who was deported despite his husband being a U.S. citizen (“Gay Married Couple Loses Immigration Battle”). While the group, in general, remained focused on normative narratives, there were some attempts to expand and develop a more inclusive representation of undocumented immigrants. This dissertation is not arguing that these artists’ creative productions are a failure, but rather that they can and should do a better job of ensuring their message is one that attends to the diverse needs of the group for which it fights. Fighting against laws that render bodies illegal, that encourage surveillance, detention, and deportation is important, but it is just as important that we attend to how these messages might work to further marginalize those in most need of help.
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