

DREAMing the “Right” Way:
The Cultural Politics of the DREAM Act and *UndocuQueer* Social Movements

A Thesis

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Abstract

This thesis explores the cultural politics of immigration in the United States by identifying the possibilities and limitations for social and political change within a legal and historical context, as well as the organizing around the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act movement today. I argue that the online visibility and recognition of one such group, the *UndocuQueers*, reimagines and reworks current discourses, practices, and debates surrounding immigration. In the first section I take my cue from “queer migration” scholarship, which focuses on the plight of queer immigrants domestically. Delimiting the analysis to a United States context, this section revisits and critically elaborates scholarship by legal and non-legal scholars on past implementations and federal court decisions whose direct bearing and precedent function in racial formation, in gender binarizing, and in normalizing the sexuality of queer migrant bodies today. The second, final chapter reorients the thesis to our present historical conjuncture from 2001 to the present and explores the attendant legal battles over so-called “comprehensive immigration reform” and DREAM Activism. That is, “performing” undocumented status and queer affinity, the *UndocuQueers* work across, over, and beyond the discursive and material terrains on which their presence receive uneven considerations. I argue that status options of queer undocumented youth reveal current migration discussions’ limitations, from “conservative” and “liberal” standpoints alike, because they rely on formal notions of citizenship, national belonging, and inclusion. My project demonstrates how orienting our analysis to the

UndocuQueers highlights the tensions between the complicity and contradictions deeply embedded in the “problem-space” or “problematic” of migration today. In particular, I show how queer migrant youth of color forge claims to intelligibility and new modes of self-imagining through their narrative accounts and cultural productions. While “representation” is key to *UndocuQueers* forging claims to intelligibility, I conclude the thesis with a cautionary note on the politics of visibility.

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Introduction: Bids for Belonging: Undocumented Youth, The DREAM ACT, and the DACA Program

The DREAM Act is common-sense legislation drafted by both Republicans and Democrats that would give students who grew up in the United States a chance to contribute to our country's well-being by serving in the U.S. armed forces or pursuing a higher education. It's good for our economy, our security, and our nation. That's why the DREAM Act has long enjoyed bipartisan support. It's limited, targeted legislation that will allow only the best and brightest young people to earn their legal status after a rigorous and lengthy process, and applies to those brought to the United States as minors through no fault of their own by their parents, and who know no other home.

– *Luis Miranda*, The White House Blog¹

Former Director of Hispanic Media at the White House, Luis Miranda, posted the above epigraph to the White House Blog days before the 111th Congress failed to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act in December 2010.² The DREAM Act establishes only two pathways to legal documentation for undocumented youth: young people place their bodies on the line by serving in the armed forces or they prove their intellectual aptitude by promising to pursue education beyond high school. The stakes of passing this legislation appear low. After all, the nation-state profits from having willing and able youth contributing to the economy after college and serving in the army – at least so the dominant narrative suggests. The limited and targeted legislation, however, operates from the imperative to create a group of valued versus devalued individuals. Undocumented youth become a type of currency for social, political and economic ends in

¹ Luis Miranda, "Get the Facts About the DREAM Act," The White House Blog, updated December 1, 2010, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/12/01/get-facts-dream-act>, accessed March 12, 2013.

² I will hereafter refer to the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act simply as the DREAM Act.

the service of the nation-state, which failed to employ measures to fully address any immigration issue. As a consequence of the political urgency to quickly alleviate immigration concerns, the category of undocumented youth occupies a privileged position within contemporary United States immigration discourses and practices.³ That is, undocumented youth aid in the construction, maintenance, and reproduction of the national imaginary's notion of the American Dream. Miranda's commentary linking federal legislation with "only the best and brightest young people" captures the national imaginary's obsession with hard work, individualism, and the future preservation of the nation's children – the American Dream. Put another way, those who dream, must dream the "right" way.

Emerging out of our current historical conjuncture marked by anti-immigrant sentiment and violent local, state and federal legislative practices, this thesis charts the contemporary constitution of undocumented youth subjectivity in the United States. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, undocumented youth have emerged on the scene as actors in their performative articulations and expressions demanding human rights, means to legalization and the opportunity to live without fear of detention and deportation. My thesis shows how the personal accounts and cultural productions of DREAM activists and *UndocuQueers* highlights the tension between the complicity and contradictions deeply embedded in the "problem-space" or "problematic" of migration to and within the United States.⁴ In other words, the DREAMer accounts and *UndocuQueer* art works analyzed here

³ Unless otherwise specified, I use the word "immigrant" to refer to immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who have crossed international borders, regardless of documentation status. Though, to be sure, I will mostly be describing the practices of undocumented youth who were born in the United States. I also use "immigration" when referring to local, state, and federal initiatives to control the flow and movement of bodies in and out of the nation-state.

⁴ My use of "problem-space" and "problematic" here draws on Lawrence Grossberg's use in *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*. Grossberg draws on Stuart Hall's notion of the "historical conjuncture" to identify that multiplicity of "problems" that arise in a given society. The usefulness of "problematic" in my thesis is that it allows me to consider several "problems" connected to immigration and the interconnections therein. See Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

draw attention to the ways in which immigration reform – as a discourse and practice – enables youth protest and activism to challenge the multiple forms of discrimination and injustice faced daily.

I show how undocumented youth construct alternative means of legibility to themselves and to the American polity. I seek to better understand the paradox of how undocumented youth experience, feel, narrate and perform positive forms of belonging during a time of extreme hostility, increased criminalization of immigrants, and economic crisis. On the one hand, undocumented youth must conform to legible norms, usually invoking the American Dream rhetorical strategies, in order to advance their case for legalization and documentation. On the other hand, however, they also challenge the absurdity of maintaining borders through the use of increased militarization and violence by questioning implicit and explicit structural forms of oppression, such as racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. I argue that tactical strategies of inclusion, the desire for national belonging, and new modes of self-imagining by immigrant youth “outsiders” arise from within and travel beyond the limiting – and limited – frames of the nation-state and citizenship. The struggle over laying claim to identification and garnering support from the State takes place on the discursive terrain of signification and the material reproduction and incomplete project of nation-state building. To become legible undocumented youth must insist on their versions of the American Dream presented by their promises to make a better future for themselves, their families, and the United States. For instance, living in the shadows, “coming out,” and recalling traumatic experiences function as three tropes I analyze to illuminate the ways in which undocumented youth forge intelligibility. First person accounts of DREAMers in an independently published collection known simply as *Papers: Stories of Undocumented Youth* are examined to show how the tropes emerge and

overlap with one another. I also investigate the circulation of online artworks by Julio Salgado, whose cultural productions draw attention to a sub-group of DREAMer activists known as the *UndocuQueers*. DREAMer accounts and *UndocuQueer* art, I argue, index structures of attachment and feeling for queer migrant youth of color as they forge claims to intelligibility and perform new modes of self-imagining in an otherwise hostile environment.

In order to better understand the stakes of undocumented youths' claims, I will begin by charting two federal measures identifying and naming this particular social group into public existence: The DREAM Act and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.⁵ I start here because of how the stories of undocumented youth circulate within the public sphere as a popular script for the youth who speak out, and those who do so on their behalf. The following federal measures serve as two central events around which the discourses of undocumented youth emerge today. As my first chapter will show, the historical precedence of legal-judicial decisions and enactments functioned as a primary mechanism through which undocumented immigrants are made legible. As a relatively new legal category, undocumented youth take on a privileged position at the local, state, and federal levels.

The DREAM Act

The DREAM Act was first introduced in the United States House of Representatives in 2001, then in the Senate that same year.⁶ A version of the bill has been introduced in every Congressional session since 2001.⁷ The initial iteration of the DREAM Act would have allowed undocumented youth brought to the United States as children to adjust their status

⁵ I will hereafter refer to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals simply as "DACA."

⁶ In the House of Representatives in 2001 see U.S. Congress. House. 2001. *The Student Adjustment Act of 2001*. 107th Cong., H.R. 1918. For the Senate version see, U.S. Congress. Senate. 2001. *Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act*, 107th Cong., S. 1291.

⁷ Michael A. Olivas, "The Political Economy of the DREAM Act and the Legislative Process: A Case Study of Comprehensive Immigration Reform," *Wayne Law Review* 55, no. 4 (2009): 1785-86.

from undocumented resident to a formalized path for citizenship.⁸ Legal predecessors of the DREAM Act include the 1982 Supreme Court decision in *Plyer v. Doe*, which allowed undocumented Mexican minors in Texas to attend public elementary and secondary educational institutions free of tuition charges.⁹ *Plyer v. Doe* was the first Supreme Court decision determining undocumented youth's protections under federal law. Following *Plyer v. Doe*, all state governments were instructed to permit undocumented immigrant children into public elementary and secondary schools regardless of citizenship status. *Plyer*, it is argued, stands at the apex of federal legislation for undocumented youth protections in terms of educational reform.¹⁰ However, neither legislation nor the Supreme Court has addressed post-secondary education for undocumented youth. The DREAM Act aims to address the legal lacunae for undocumented youth seeking post-secondary education by making certain benefits available, such as legal residency, in-state tuition, access to personal loans, as well as state and federal financial assistance.

Today, the more restrictionist version of the DREAM Act affects migrant youth in several ways that remain controversial. In order to “adjust” from undocumented status to a “lawful permanent resident,” the person must meet the following requirements: 1) has lived in the United State for at least five years, 2) been younger than fifteen years old when they entered the county, 3) “has been a person of good moral character since the date the alien initially entered the United States,” 4) has not committed crimes under federal or state law, 5) has earned a high school diploma or the equivalent or has been admitted to an institution of higher education, and 6) be younger than 35 years old on the date the bill is passed.¹¹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jessica Sharron, “Passing the Dream Act: Opportunities for Undocumented Americans,” *Santa Clara Law Review* 47, no. 3 (2007): 602-610.

¹⁰ Michael A. Olivas, “IRIRA, the Dream Act, and Undocumented College Student Residency,” *Journal of College and University Law* 30, no. 2 (2004): 441.

¹¹ U.S. Congress. Senate. 2011. *DREAM Act of 2011*. 112th Cong., 1st sess. S.952.

Accompanying the bill is a provision that encourages immigrant youth to join the “uniformed services” if they are not currently enrolled in a college or university.¹² The DREAM Act repeals sections of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation (PRWOP) Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility (IIRIR) Act of 1996 granting access to higher education.¹³ The PRWORA and IIRIRA place limits on federal benefits to immigrant communities, but confer powers to states that address higher education.¹⁴ Fourteen states, including Texas, California, and New York have passed versions of the DREAM Act.¹⁵ Financial aid, student loans, and in-state tuition that were previously denied would be offered to immigrant youth seeking higher education under the DREAM Act.¹⁶ These requirements only allow undocumented youth to re-adjust to legal residential status as opposed to formal citizenship. In short, this narrowly tailored bill aims to alleviate only part of the larger problem with detention, deportation, and the growing number of undocumented persons in the United States. The DREAM Act tethers undocumented youth immigrants directly to education and military pursuits. Seeking higher education raises fewer concerns than undocumented youth joining military. In other words, the DREAM Act is discussed as a measure framed primarily around educational pursuits, not the military.

On June 27, 2013, a group known as the “Gang of Eight” in the United States Senate introduced an 844-page immigration reform bill that seeks to overhaul the entire federal immigration system. The DREAM Act language is part of this bill. The immigration reform bill passed in the Senate, but did not receive a committee hearing in the House of

¹² Ibid.

¹³ I will hereafter refer to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act as “PRWORA” and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act as “IIRIRA”.

¹⁴ Olivas, “IIRIRA,” 455.

¹⁵ Michael A. Olivas, “Dreams Deferred: Deferred Action, Prosecutorial Discretion, and the Vexing Case(s) of DREAM Act Students,” *William & Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 21, no. 2 (2012): 468-469.

¹⁶ Koko Ye Huang, “Reimagining and Redefining the Dream: A Proposal for Improving Access to Higher Education for Undocumented Immigrants,” *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 433-434.

Representatives. I have compared the language of the most recent version of the DREAM Act with the language in the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act” and conclude that the requirements discussed in this section remain similar across the two versions.¹⁷ Pathways to residential status and citizenship remain a long and arduous process for all undocumented immigrants.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program

On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama announced a federal memorandum known as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for undocumented youth residing in the United States without legal forms of documentation.¹⁸ In collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security, the DACA policy “stop[s] deporting undocumented immigrants who came to the United States before sixteen, have lived here for five years or more, and are in college or are high school grads or serve in the military.”¹⁹ Additionally, undocumented youth with clean criminal records and are no more than thirty years old would be eligible to apply.²⁰ The DACA program officially went into effect on August 15, 2012.²¹ Although undocumented youth are subject to detention and deportation under current federal immigration law, the federal government agrees to “defer” any action to forcibly remove or detain them. This policy directive came at a time when close to two

¹⁷ See Senator Charles E. Schumer’s website, <http://www.schumer.senate.gov/forms/immigration.pdf>. For a synthesized overview see National and Immigration Law Center, “Summary & Analysis: The Senate Bill as Introduced,” updated April 22, 2013, <http://nilc.org/s744summary1.html>, accessed April 24, 2013.

¹⁸ I will hereafter refer to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals simply as DACA.

¹⁹ Julia Preston and John H. Cushman Jr., “Obama to Permit Young Migrants to Remain in U.S.,” *New York Times*, June 15, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/16/us/us-to-stop-deporting-some-illegal-immigrants.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, accessed July 1, 2012.

²⁰ I use the term “youth” because this is the way that many of these young activist often self-identify and are identified by other migrant activist as well as those in the mainstream media. “Youth,” however, is not necessarily an accurate term because many of the leaders in the movement are in their mid to late twenties, and some are even older.

²¹ For a full list of the guidelines and application procedures see US Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process,” updated Jan. 18, 2013, <http://1.usa.gov/LhQrYl>, accessed April 15, 2013.

million undocumented youth resided in the United States, most of whom live in California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York.²² There are of course millions more – an estimated nine million more undocumented persons – whose access to legal recourse is limited if not outright unavailable.

During the White House press conference announcement President Obama remarked that “[Undocumented migrant youth] are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper.”²³ The president’s statement captures how the power that legal papers has come to galvanize immigration reform efforts, but particularly for immigrant youth. Having legal papers means legibility not only to the nation-state but also to the private sector for employment, worker benefits, and the illusion of upward mobility. The President’s call to defer deportations and detentions directly responds to social activism for the DREAM Act, first introduced in 2001.²⁴ President Obama’s directive alleviates some, not all, concerns and challenges immigrants face in the United States. If accepted as a DACA recipient, undocumented youth qualify for in-state college tuition, are permitted to enter the armed services, and should expect a lowered likelihood of deportation and detention. In a state of constant fear of detention, deportation, and separation from their families, these gains should be acknowledged as one step on the road to an immigration overhaul. Many individuals who do not qualify for DACA, however, remain at risk of forced removal and detention.²⁵

²² Pew Hispanic Center, “Up to 1.7 Million Unauthorized Immigrant Youth May Benefit from New Deportation Rules,” August 14, 2012, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/14/up-to-1-7-million-unauthorized-immigrant-youth-may-benefit-from-new-deportation-rules/>, accessed August 29, 2012.

²³ Preston and Cushman, “Obama to Permit Young Migrants to Remain in U.S.,” online.

²⁴ When referring to the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, I will use “DREAM Act” and “DREAMer” when referring to undocumented youth migrants whose activism centers around this particular legislation. The activism and strategies of the DREAM Activist community has constantly changed, developed, and emerged at different points in the past ten years. For excellent accounts see Chapter 3 in Chávez’s *Queer Migration Politics* and Walter Nicholls, *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

²⁵ Ted Hesson, “More Than 150,000 DREAMers Have Been Approved for Deferred Action,” *UniVision*, January 18, 2013, accessed April 23, 2013, <http://univisionnews.tumblr.com/post/40862348888/dreamers-approved-daca>.

“[T]his is not amnesty, this is not immunity. This is not a path to citizenship. It’s not a permanent fix. This is a temporary stopgap measure that lets us focus our resources wisely while giving a degree of relief and hope to talented, driven, patriotic young people,” the President clarified during the press conference.²⁶ According to the United States Immigration and Citizenship Services (USICS), as of 2013 a reported 475,458 people have qualified for and were granted DACA status.

The DACA program raises several points for consideration. First, that the president assured the public that his call to Homeland Security to stop deportations is not “amnesty” or “immunity” but a refocusing of resources is no doubt political posturing intended for conservative and liberal audiences alike. The president’s gesture of relief refers more to the abdication of the State from social responsibility than it does for the limited relief it offers to “talented, driven, patriotic young people” who know no other home. It is where State governing entities leave off that private initiatives pick up. “Costs” come in the form of increased militarized presence by Border Patrol agents and increased instances of incarceration along the Mexico-United States border.²⁷ The line between public and private blurs when, for example, private prison corporations in Arizona, like the Corrections Corporation of America, fund prisons along the border to detain “illegal” immigrants at the local and state levels.²⁸

Second, the DACA program highlights the improbability of passing any immigration initiatives at the federal level in the near future. The invocation for so-called Comprehensive

²⁶ Quoted from the official transcript, President Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President on Immigration,” June 15, 2012, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/15/remarks-president-immigration> accessed April 10, 2013.

²⁷ See Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishing, 2012).

²⁸ Laura Sullivan, “Prison Economics Help Drive Ariz. Immigration Law,” *National Public Radio* online, October 28, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/2010/10/28/130833741/prison-economics-help-drive-ariz-immigration-law>, accessed January 4, 2013. See also, Roxanne Lynne Doty and Elizabeth Shannon Wheatley, “Private Detention and the Immigration Industrial Complex,” *International Political Sociology* 7, no. 4 (2013): 426-443.

Immigration Reform shifts focus away from the movement of bodies, ideas, and practices into a hostile environment. When a person publicly announces support for immigration efforts and this declaration becomes the end in and of itself, the material consequence of suffering experienced by undocumented persons often goes unremarked if not trivialized. In other words, I am pointing out the gap between politicians' declarations of support and the lack of actual support on the ground. Furthermore, the negative associations specifically attached to brown bodies draw our attention to the fraught immigration histories, particularly when considering global capitalist regimes exploitation of immigrant labor.

Lastly, the DACA program generates a group conforming to the logics of “good migrant” versus “bad migrant.” The “good” undocumented youth is one who traveled to the United States unknowingly “as minors through no fault of their own by their parents” and therefore remain eligible to stay. The “bad” undocumented youth whose “knowingness” about immigrating to the country, or willful staying, marks them as criminals and a threat to national security. These “bad” undocumented youth and immigrants, in general, provide the rationale for increased militarized efforts along the U.S. “borders,” as well as other draconian measures launched against so-called “illegal” immigrants.²⁹ The imperative to interpolate “good” immigrants through the language of DACA and the DREAM Act while simultaneously repelling the “bad” migrants offers a too simplistic version of the dynamics of power operating here. The discourses produced about undocumented youth take our attention away from the structural and historical causes that have displaced millions of people.³⁰

²⁹ In his recent monograph, *Reform without Justice*, Alfonso Gonzales argues that the binarization of “good” and “bad” immigrants acts as a pacifying mechanism strategically called upon by political actors to maintain this very division. See Alfonso Gonzales, *Reform without Justice: Latino Migrant Politics and the Homeland Security State* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

³⁰ Tanya Maria Golash-Boza, *Immigration Nation: Raids, Detentions, and Deportations in Post-9/11 America* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishing, 2012).

Theoretical Frames and Thesis Outline

I am interested in the multiple, often contradictory, ways of thinking about what it means for so-called outsiders to lay claim to inclusion and belonging. Many of the first-person narrative accounts by undocumented youth immigrants, for instance, must first identify with the idea of what it means to be “American” before they call critical attention to who and what counts as a proper citizen-subject. In this way, some, but not all DREAMers perform what José Esteban Muñoz calls disidentification with the nation-state by adopting the dominant modes of identification (i.e. assimilable, familiar, docile, and loyal) while simultaneously working over and against these categories with subordinate modes of being (i.e. outsider, stranger, unafraid, and queer). In addition to the process of disidentification as “an ambivalent modality that cannot be conceptualized as a restrictive or ‘masterfully’ fixed move of identification,” which ultimately gives primacy to the realm of signification, undocumented immigrant youth of color also tap into public feelings when framing their claims to belonging and inclusion.³¹ The first-person accounts and artworks I examine do not merely express social and political dissatisfaction. Rather, the cultural productions signal how undocumented immigrant youth express their *feelings*, simultaneously about their individual positions and the failed immigration structures and institutions. My investment here is in an exploration of the ways in which certain feelings become tethered directly to undocumented youth narratives of legibility, specifically as these feelings are mobilized in their activism and protest. My thesis furthers the relations between legal studies, cultural studies, and immigration studies by focusing on the specific position of undocumented immigrant youth within the United States’ historical conjuncture.

³¹ José Esteban Muñoz, “Introduction,” in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xxx.

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall articulates the concept of “conjuncture” as “the complex historically specific terrain of a crisis which affects – but in uneven ways – a specific national-social formation as a whole.”³² Conjunctural analysis for a given socio-historical context means attending to the disruptions in the flow and order of things. Contradictions in global capital accumulation typically mark the conjuncture by highlighting the disparities between laborers and those who employ them. However, conjunctural analysis is never reducible to “economism.” Conjunctural analysis does not give total primacy to a strict and crude political economic frame but, instead, accounts for social and cultural factors as well. According to Hall, Antonio Gramsci’s elaboration of the conjuncture “supplements” traditional Marxian historical and materialist notions to include “the character of different types of political regimes, the importance of cultural and national-popular questions, and the role of civil society in the shifting balance of relations between different social forces in society.”³³ Gramsci neither betrays nor abandons ideological criticism based in capitalist modes of production, which up until Gramsci’s time, meant base and super-structure argumentation. Rather, Gramsci’s analysis shifts the terrain from one specific historical period and place to another. Writing during the height of Fascist Italy during the 1930s, Gramsci’s prison journals read as a recalibration of Marxism that attends to the specific historical, social, political, and cultural character of Italy.³⁴ Gramsci, therefore, opens up Marxism to consider the ways in which specific historical frames of reference elucidate political economic factors, as well as social and cultural factors playing out in geographically distinct locations in time. I recognize that Gramsci’s formulations of the conjuncture must

³² Stuart Hall quoted in Lawrence Grossberg, *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 41.

³³ Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s relevance for the study of race and ethnicity,” in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley, David and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 415.

³⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited by Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

“be delicately dis-interred from their concrete and specific historical embeddedness and transplanted to new soil with considerable care and patience.”³⁵ The new terrain on which I will cultivate Gramsci’s thought, following Stuart Hall, is on the United States immigration reform front.

In a similar fashion, Hall’s notion of “conjuncture” reflects on a time when the “Left” as he saw it failed to critically engage with questions of social welfare during the ascendancy of “Thatcherism” – extreme conservatism – in late twentieth century British society. A conjuncture, Hall argues, emerges from the instabilities, contradictions, and the pluralities within a time in space marked by either “crisis” and/or “stability.” In framing this thesis, I also take my cue from Lawrence Grossberg’s notion of “problem-space” or “problematics” found within a given historical conjuncture.³⁶ Conjunctural analysis, according to Grossberg, is “above all about the analysis of historically specific sociocultural contexts and the political constitution of those contexts” and how those very contexts come into being through vying forces of relation.³⁷ For Grossberg, conjunctural analysis of a specific historical configuration through “problematics” or “problem-spaces” renders the contemporary available to an analysis that considers what cultural forces de-construct and re-construct the social *milieu*. The “object of analysis,” taking on this theoretical trajectory, is never (and can never) fully account for all “forces” at play. Rather, the object develops within the given socio-historical contexts and it is the task of the scholar to parse out the inter-connections, interstices, and messiness of those very problematics that give rise to crisis.

³⁵ Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s relevance,” 413.

³⁶ Grossberg, Lawrence *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 40-55.

³⁷ Maribel Casas-Cortes, Sebastian Cobarrubias, Nicholas De Genova, Glenda Garelli, Giorgio Grappi, Charles Heller, Sabine Hess, et al. “New Keywords: Migration and Borders.” *Cultural Studies* no. 2 (2014): 4.

Framing today's conjuncture between 2001 to the present in a United States context, this thesis builds on cultural studies' recent interrogation of "migration" and "borders."³⁸ Following Raymond William's classic text on keywords, Nicholas De Genova, Sandro Mezzadra, and John Pickles argue that "migration" and "borders" are keywords that elude the field of cultural studies, citing the lack of these terms in *New Keywords, A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*.³⁹ To be sure, the editors in the special issue situate the growing field of "migration" and "borders" studies in relation to but distinct from scholarship that applies the analytics of "transnationalism" and "globalization." Analysts of "transnationalism" and "globalization" tend to rely exclusively on political economic frameworks to build their arguments without critical attention to other social processes such as racialization and sexualization. The authors seek to "[rethink] the logics of borders beyond their apparent role as tools of exclusion and violence" and, instead, "signal the more open and complex ways in which border react to diverse kinds of migrant subjectivities and thereby operate to produce differentiated forms of access and 'rights.'"⁴⁰ Scholars, especially those interested in Mexico-United States borderlands, have theorized the border for decades.⁴¹ What I take away from the cultural studies scholarship on "migration" and "borders" is attention to forms of cultural work and knowledge production that destabilize the axioms of regulation and control. Extending the field of cultural studies to "migration" and "border" in our current conjuncture requires considering the relationship between

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Interestingly, the authors of this recent article do not cite "immigration" by Lisa Lowe nor "border" by Mary Pat Brady in the 2007 publication of *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. See *Keywords for American Cultural Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

⁴⁰ Casas-Cortes et al., "New Keywords," 3.

⁴¹ For example, José D. Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinster/Aunt Lute Books, 1987); Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983).

theorist, practitioner and, most importantly, those immigrants whose experiences, stories and accounts become the points of reference of knowledge production.

In the shadows of post 9/11, Nathalie Peutz and Nicholas De Genova's description of the "homeland security state" in the United States aptly describes the administrative regulation and control of immigrant bodies in relation to the construction of the nation-state. De Genova writes,

Significant new deployments of migrant "illegality" as this sociopolitical condition has been significantly reconfigured in the United States in the aftermath of the proclamation of a purported War on Terrorism, and the concomitant implementation of draconian police powers domestically.⁴²

Federal measures such as the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (a.k.a. PATRIOT Act) and state measures like Arizona's Senate Bill 1070 become the rule followed by administrative apparatuses of the State to deal with the undocumented. Counter-terrorism efforts on the home front produce "culprits" through the criminalization of undocumented persons. Today, "encounters" one might have with or in approximation to undocumented persons oscillates between face-to-face interactions and more mediated forms of exchange by online self-generated platforms. I extend De Genova's arguments to consider social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, as well as mainstream national news sources in the production of undocumented immigrant culprits.⁴³ Examples of what immigrants look like and how "they" act saturate and foreclose on the claims produced and re-produced through these venues, working alongside and against the legal, judicial, and "political" spheres.

⁴² Nicholas De Genova, "The Production of Culprits: From Deportability to Detainability in the Aftermath of 'Homeland Security,'" *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 5 (2007): 421.

⁴³ I return to "virtual exchange" and online media platforms in my section on the *UndocuQueers*.

Individuals involved in the complicated processes of legibility and representation always exist tenuously in relation to the State.

Immigrants reflect a history of criminalization, pathologization, and de-humanization that maintain and reproduce the illusion of a homogenous nation-state.⁴⁴ Mae Ngai, for instance, highlights the ways in which nation-states include immigrant bodies as always inflicted with violence from administrative apparatuses in the form of harsh institutional regulations. Ngai argues that the “immigration regime of restriction” works precisely through the legal, extralegal, and juridical domains, and has for nearly 200 years.⁴⁵ Inhabiting various discursive and material sites within the United States terrain, the associations with the term “immigrant” draw from and extend the troubled histories for racialized and sexualized subjects. Benedict Anderson’s description of “imagined political communities” helps us apprehend how national imagination produces and re-produces ideological frames of reference. Whereas Anderson focuses on the “print-as-commodity,” my discussion elaborates and extends the pivotal notion of “imagined community” to consider the specific racial, sexual, gender, and class dimensions of this “imagined community” as it relates to undocumented youth in our historical conjuncture. Anderson’s deployment of “imagined community” helps frame my analysis by considering the ways in which subjects become differentially included into the project of the nation-state not only through print commodities, but also how virtual communications aid in the building and maintenance of the nation-state.

⁴⁴ Scholarship drawing out the specific links between the processes of state-sponsored racialization, sexualization, and immigration reforms and the violent techniques used in “nation building” are instructive here. For a non-exhaustive yet informative list, see: Nikhil Pal. Singh, *Black is A Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú, *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁴⁵ Mae M. Ngai, introduction to *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1-15.

The immigrant is often situated as a dialectical opposition in the project and functions of the nation-state. “[C]ultural productions emerging out of the contradictions of immigrant marginality,” Lisa Lowe argues, disrupt the myth of national identity by revealing its gaps and fissures, and intervene in the narrative of national development that would illegitimately locate ‘immigrant’ before history or exempt the ‘immigrant’ from history.⁴⁶ The “gaps” and “fissures” discussed by Lowe point to the contradictions between capitalist regimes and the nation-state. According to Marx, capital relies on “abstract labor” disinterested in labor sources, while the nation-state relies on “abstract citizens” whose granted participation in the political sphere depends on property.⁴⁷ “Culture” serves as the critical space for engaging national discourses on belonging, citizenship, labor, and property. For Lowe, Asian American cultural productions directly respond to the exclusionary social, political, and cultural representations of the nation-state. The racially coded “immigrant” generates critical “acts” as a response to their exclusion into the nation: “One of the important *acts* that the immigrant performs is breaking the dyadic, vertical determination that situates the subject in relation to the state, building instead horizontal community with and between others who are in different locations subject to and subject of the state.”⁴⁸ I extend Lowe’s notion of “culture” as a critical site of contradiction in capital and nation-state building to include the meaning-making practices by undocumented youth today.⁴⁹ My thesis takes up a specific set of scholarly productions known as “queer migration studies” that address the histories and legacies of specific queer immigration formations in the United States.

⁴⁶ Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 9.

⁴⁷ Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 13.

⁴⁸ Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 36.

⁴⁹ Here I draw inspiration from Grace Kyungwon Hong’s focused analysis on U.S. women of color feminism and Third World Feminism as the particular groups called attention to the “ruptures” in American capital. Grace Kyungwon Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Queer Migration Studies

During the 1990s and the 2000s, interdisciplinary scholarship in the humanities and the interpretive social sciences investigated the identities, experiences and practices of “queer migrants,” both domestically and internationally. David Eng, Saskia Sassen, Martin Manalansan, Eithne Luibhéid, Lionel Cantú Jr., M. Jacqui Alexander, and Gayatri Gopinath brought scholarly attention to the ways in which immigration control systems and queer diasporic communities are constituted through the categories of sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, and class.⁵⁰ More specifically, the authors, in their individual analyses, demonstrate how social markers of difference organize the incomplete project of nation-state building through the maintenance and regulation of United States borders. Additionally, these scholars linked their work to nation-state building efforts driven by settler colonial logics and imperial imperatives.⁵¹ These scholars rightly point out how queer migrants index histories of racialization and sexualization, which privileges the spatial and theoretical register of the nation-state and normative notions of citizenship.⁵² Informing most, if not all, of these trajectories is the analytic lens of heteronormativity, or how heterosexual relations normalize migrant processes.⁵³ I follow Lionel Cantú in making visible the “heteronormative power infused not only in U.S. immigration policy but also into the academic discourses on migration itself.”⁵⁴ I draw specifically from this group of scholars who, though coming from

⁵⁰ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); and Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú, *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

⁵¹ See Arnaldo Cruz and Martin F. Manalansan, *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

⁵² See Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

⁵³ Luibhéid, “Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (2008): 171.

⁵⁴ Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, Lionel Cantú, and Nancy Naples, *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 26.

varying disciplinary fields and locations, begin their projects with critical attention to the ways in which immigrant subjecthood forms materially and discursively through associations of borders, of how borders construct immigrant identities.

Queer migration scholarship, in direct conversation with this thesis, contributes to the discussion of “differentiated” forms of inclusion with attention to undocumented youth. I take my initial cue from Eithne Luibhéid’s question posed in a special issue of *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* titled “Queer/Migration: An Unruly Body of Scholarship.” “Queer migration” scholarship refers to the multiple trajectories which range from the reconfiguration of the temporal and geographical within queer migrant lives, to the exploration of how the histories of slavery, imperialism, and forced transportation shape present-day migration patterns.⁵⁵ Luibhéid asks,

How do we conceptualize queer migration – which is at once a set of grounded processes involving heterogeneous social groups and a series of theoretical and social justice questions that implicate but extend beyond migration and sexuality strictly defined, and that refuse to attach to bodies in any strictly identitarian manner – in order to challenge and reconfigure the dominant frameworks?⁵⁶

Luibhéid foregrounds sexuality as a structuring mechanism in all migratory processes to consider what Michel Foucault called “peripheral sexualities” that threaten the nation-state.⁵⁷ That is, those sexualities deemed immoral, undesirable, and unacceptable to the nation-state become the very conditions under which immigrant bodies are regulated and controlled.

⁵⁵ Eithne Luibhéid, “Queer/Migration,” 170.

⁵⁶ Eithne Luibhéid, “Queer/Migration,” 169.

⁵⁷ Luibhéid points to Foucault’s notion of “peripheral sexualities” as those that constitute normalized sexualities because of their so-called pathologization, especially as diagnosed by the medical establishment. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 39.

“Queer migration studies” extends to and elaborates on the important completed works of feminists on gender and queer scholars on race.⁵⁸ Luibhéid observes how

sexuality – and by extension, race, gender, and class – have been central to immigration control since its inception not because these are essential or biological identities that can be discovered within individual bodies, but because sexualization, racialization, and so on are larger social processes whose presence is made evident by classification of bodies into hierarchical schemes.⁵⁹

Drawing from U.S. women-of-color feminism and Third World Feminism, Luibhéid and others show how sexuality, women’s in particular, structures migration regulation and control systems. Additionally, because the sexuality of immigrants is always assumed “heterosexual,” immigration discourses and practices normalize heterosexuality as the national standard. This assumption implies that all immigrants are heterosexual, on the one hand, and all “queers” are domestic citizens, on the other hand. Scholars of queer migration, however, often neglect the role of youth in their analysis. This thesis intervenes by focusing on particular actors in the immigration reform movement today, specifically the role of queer undocumented youth. My thesis responds to this gap in the literature.

Road Map

Chapter One, an investigation of “queer migrants” in U.S. legal, juridical, and policy histories, offers an overview of the major immigration laws through which immigrants become interpellated through processes of racialization and sexualization. I begin my analysis in the late nineteenth century and end in the mid-1990s. Developing Chandan Reddy’s notion of “law as archive,” this chapter highlights how certain social groups became

⁵⁸ See Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

⁵⁹ Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), xxii.

incorporated, albeit unevenly, into the project of nation-state building through markers of “undesirability.” I pay special attention to the uses of violence administered in and through the processes of racialization and sexualization as “amendments” to existing statutes.

In Chapter Two, I examine the personal stories of undocumented youth and their cultural productions. I explore two instances of DREAMer and *UndocuQueer* cultural productions. The first, *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, serves as the entry point in my discussion on undocumented youth activism. The independently published collection of personal accounts provides rich insight into the formation of the narratives of undocumented youth narrative, as well as their tactical strategies for inclusion. Next, I turn the artworks of Julio Salgado to investigate how the contingents of *UndocuQueers* move us toward undocumented youth re-imaginings of their political and social sense of belonging.

Chapter 1: Excavating Queer Migration Legal Histories: The Legal Construction of the Racialized, Sexualized, and Undocumented Immigrant Subject

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which racial categories become sexual and the sexual becomes racial in and through American legal and juridical migrant history. Federal legislative enactments, Supreme Court decisions, and executive administrative decisions frame and enact the dynamics of racialization and sexualization in the legal and juridical spheres. Here, I rely on Wendy Brown's notion of the State. Brown argues, "[t]he domain we call the state is not a thing, a system, or a subject but a significantly unbounded terrain of powers and techniques, an ensemble of discourses, rules, and practices, cohabitating in limited, tension-ridden, often contradictory relation with one another."⁶⁰ While Brown's analysis focuses on how subordinated social groups that lay claims to "victimhood" in processes of governmental protection become further victimized, her explanation of the State as an "unbounded terrain of power and techniques" proves useful for unpacking the heterogeneous sites of state performances of legitimacy-making enactments. My point of departure builds on the incoherent and unstable, yet necessary, racial and sexual norms in State projects, extending crucially the "racial projects" described by Michael Omi and Howard Winant.⁶¹ I follow Chandan Reddy's notion of the "law as archive," in which the sexual and racial "remainders" work over, against and through one another in the law and

⁶⁰ Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 174.

⁶¹ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

legal spheres.⁶² Reddy theorizes how the racial projects of late-liberal modernity constitute immigrants' violent inclusion into the political sphere. Specifically, Reddy argues that this violent inclusion involves those racial and sexual "remainders" of decades past – specifically around the Civil Rights Movement – that can only be legislated through the "amendment" process.⁶³ For example, Reddy traces the "racial remainder" by examining the law's incapacity to deal with or address, but nonetheless violently incorporate, a queer Pakistani asylum seeker to the United States.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the section seeks to "open up" immigration policy as a strictly legal sphere; I contest the notion that only legal scholars perform the function of knowledge production about immigration policy.

Immigrant Sexual and Racial Legal Histories

Restriction of movement through legal recourse means restriction of particular bodies. One of the first federal measures to focus on markers of difference was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which denied Chinese women entry into the country on the grounds of alleged prostitution. The "Gold Rush" of 1848 established migrant circuits from Japan and China to the San Francisco area of California. These mostly male migrant workers of color stirred national anxiety around maintaining a "pure" white citizenry in this geographic location, as well as areas further north.⁶⁵ Scholars highlight this point in legal history because it is one of the first to authoritatively use racial identification, gender regulation, and the assumed "excessive" sexuality of the "Orient" woman.⁶⁶ That is, this law targeted Chinese

⁶² Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 171.

⁶³ Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 171.

⁶⁴ Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 162-166.

⁶⁵ Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

⁶⁶ Martha Mabie Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

women who migrated with their partners to North America before the legislative enactment, but also served to keep people from entering American territory. By prohibiting Chinese women into the nation-state, the law performed the function of curtailing Chinese reproduction in America. The so-called Chinese Exclusion Act operated in two senses: First, passage meant a form of regulation and control of certain bodies entering into the developing American citizenry at the time. Second, “Chinese woman” signified associations to “immoral,” illicit, and excessive sexual behavior.⁶⁷ The figure of the Chinese woman as a racialized and sexualized body carries symbolic weight. Iterations of federal legislation would follow suit by reinforcing the legal slippage between racial and sexual categories, on the one hand, and “immoral” and undesirable characteristics, on the other. The language of “good moral character” remains a part of federal initiatives today, as required in the DREAM Act. As queer migration scholar Eithne Luibhéid argues, these techniques of government, “which were pioneered on Chinese women because of fears about their sexuality, gradually became extended to every immigrant who sought to enter America.”⁶⁸ Luibhéid also draws our attention to the processes of racialization and sexual normalization in nation-state building as directives on migration.

Through exclusionary discourses and federal immigration measures, “homosexuality” is deployed by the State to discursively construct and reinforce one another’s relationship framed primarily through citizenship.⁶⁹ For example, historian Margot Canaday illustrates how “homosexuality” becomes intimately associated with state discourses regarding “moral turpitude” in early twentieth-century federal policies.⁷⁰ Canaday’s examination includes the

⁶⁷ Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 31-54.

⁶⁸ Luibhéid, *Entry Denied*, 32.

⁶⁹ Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 225.

⁷⁰ Canaday, *The Straight State*, 24.

historical archives on immigration administration, the armed forces, and welfare programs. The historical analysis shows how “homosexuality” works in tandem with federal efforts to mutually construct “homosexual” personhood. Tracing the figures of the “perverse,” “degenerates,” “sodomites,” “pederasts,” and “defectives” in Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) archives, Canaday shows how public charge provisions administered through the INS brought “homosexuality” directly to immigration debates at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁷¹ At the time, the gap shrank between immigration services and those administrative apparatuses that criminalized those deemed “immoral.”

Siobhan Somerville’s analysis of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) discusses the tensions between the process of racialization and sexual regulation.⁷² Somerville argues that the “1952 INA and its legislative history tell a particular and powerful story about how models of normative sexuality were enlisted to maintain racist structures in the state’s production of citizens during the Cold War era.”⁷³ This history includes the eugenic movement, as well as slave histories of rape and forced sterilization. Somerville highlights attempts to dismiss or work over these histories at the moment of the bill’s passages. Writing racism out of legislation erases an American history not reducible to the social, economic, and historical imperatives that drove the INA and similar legislation in the first place. “The INA’s removal of racial categories of exclusion,” Somerville argues, “indicates not the end of racialized and racist immigration and naturalization policies, but rather a recognition that the explicit *language* of race was losing legitimacy in official constructions of American citizenship.”⁷⁴ Therefore, the language in the INA shifts from racial to sexualized subjects.

⁷¹ Canaday, *The Straight State*, 44.

⁷² Hereafter referred to as the “INA”.

⁷³ Siobhan B. Somerville, “Sexual Aliens and the Racialized State: A Queer Reading of the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act,” in *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, eds. Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 87.

⁷⁴ Somerville, “Sexual Aliens,” 83 (original emphasis).

The “adulterer” and “homosexuals” emerge as figures that paper over and against prior racist language in the law.⁷⁵ Recasting categories in this way elides the racial dimensions upon which sexuality upholds and constitutes racialization. As Somerville argues, we not only see a process where markers of difference become mutually reinforced through the federal migration legislation, but we also see the dismissal of some markers over and against others – sexuality over and against racial classification.⁷⁶

Federal measures, like the Family Reunification Act of 1986, rely on services to migrant communities that center mostly on “patriarchal and heterosexual mandates” that “become prerequisites to gaining family or welfare support.”⁷⁷ Chandan Reddy’s more recent observations concerning the “family” and queer of color migrants to the United States reveals how national heterosexuality is reinforced through specific policies targeting immigrant populations at the end of the twentieth century. The State abdicates its role as service-provider for incoming migrant persons and, instead, shifts the role of caregiving to non-profit organizations. In other words, the family as a nationalist tool becomes the condition not only the immigrant’s admittance, but also for eligibility for certain benefits and privileges under Federal law. Reddy points out how the dissolution of welfare programs offered at the federal level to immigrant communities is based on onerous claims of national security. Through the gradual dissolution of welfare programs, a shift from state sponsored social organizations to more religious-based organizations focused on the family, become what immigrant communities come to rely on.⁷⁸ According to Reddy, this reinforces “the very immigrant homophobias that many claim are brought over by immigrant communities from their home

⁷⁵ Somerville, “Sexual Aliens,” 84.

⁷⁶ See also Siobhan B. Somerville, “Queer Loving,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11, no. 3 (2005): 335-370 and Chandan Reddy, “Time for Rights? Loving, Gay Marriage, and the Limits of Comparative Legal Justice,” in *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization*, eds. Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 148-174.

⁷⁷ Chandan Reddy, “Asian Diasporas, Neoliberalism, and Family,” *Social Text* 84/85 (2005): 110.

⁷⁸ Reddy, “Asian Diasporas,” 111.

countries.”⁷⁹ The Family Reunification Act centers the family in such a way that homophobia is fostered by traditionally conservative religious groups and the homophobic legislative enactments themselves.⁸⁰ Four years following the Family Reunification Act of 1986, the Immigration Act of 1990 officially lifted the bar restricting gay and lesbian people from migrating to the United States.⁸¹ Under the Immigration Act of 1990, smaller quotas were placed on the number of unskilled worker visa entries as opposed to larger quotas for family-oriented migrations to the United States.⁸² The nuclear family serves to determine who and what counts, which in turn limits what counts outside of normative family structures.⁸³ For instance, Shane Phelan shows how regulating sexual minorities through marriage is predominately centered on traditionalist notions of the family. As part of a larger project, Phelan shows how current treatment of sexual minorities, or “strangers,” exposes heteronormativity as the underlying ideal of citizenship produced through “traditional” marriages.⁸⁴

Following Reddy’s analysis linking the state and “family,” Luibhéid also provides examples in which the stringent processes of legalization are produced by immigration policy’s fixation on the family unit. Luibhéid locates the production and promotion of heterosexual identity codified in legislation passed in 1996: the Defense of Marriage Act

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Eithne Luibhéid “Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and Illegal Status,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (2008): 296-298.

⁸¹ Karma R. Chávez, *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 1. Chávez points out in a footnote that allow this ban on gays and lesbian migration to the United States appears as a gain, HIV-positive individuals were still barred from entering the country. The ban on HIV-positive individuals was not lifted until 2009 and implemented in 2010. For a short historical overview on the HIV ban see, “The HIV Ban,” accessed January 15, 2014, <http://immigrationequality.org/issues/hiv/the-hiv-ban/>. See also, “Memorandum,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), accessed June 1, 2014, http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Laws%20and%20Regulations/Memoranda/2009%20Memos%20By%20Month/September/HIV_HHS%20Rule.pdf

⁸² Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 158-159.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Shane Phelan. *Sexual Strangers: Gays, Lesbians, and Dilemmas of Citizenship* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 36.

(DOMA), Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (hereafter PRWORA), and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (hereafter IIRIRA).⁸⁵ Paying close attention to these three pieces of legislation, Luibhéid argues the trope of “responsibility” seeks to “produce” and “govern” the ideal family as procreative and heterosexual for immigrant communities.⁸⁶ Certain legal strictures emerge from this mid-1990s era of federal legislation. For instance, the affidavit system, in which those sponsoring an incoming migrant must file a legally binding petition of support showing that their income level is at least 125 percent of the federal poverty level, serves to generate specific archetypes of the citizen-subject.⁸⁷ Most poor immigrants are excluded from legalization processes due to the high costs for application fees. Foregrounding this legal measure as a result of these three pieces of federal legislation, Luibhéid demonstrates how affidavits rely on logics of “heteronormativity as responsibility” that promote the procreative family as the linchpin of society. As a means for allowing immigrants into the United States, the affidavit system requires those seeking legalization to adhere to the norms that are simultaneously moralizing, heterosexist, homophobic, and insidiously racialized.⁸⁸ With the above historical account of legislation, I have highlighted the way in which racialization as it crosses sexuality is part of an ongoing, dynamic process experienced by immigrant communities today.

⁸⁵ The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) was repealed on July 1, 2013. Though this was advantageous for domestic same-sex couples, couples where one spouse is undocumented remains a contested issue and is determined by a case-by-case basis. See “After DOMA: Immigration,” *Lambda Legal*, accessed February 1, 2015, <http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/after-doma-immigration>. See also, “Same-Sex Marriages,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.uscis.gov/family/same-sex-marriages>.

⁸⁶ Eithne Luibhéid, “Heteronormativity, Responsibility, and Neo-Liberal Governance in U.S. Immigration Control,” in *Passing Lines: Sexuality and Immigration*, eds. Bradley S. Epps, Keja Valens and Bill Johnson González (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, 2005), 91.

⁸⁷ Luibhéid, “Heteronormativity,” 85.

⁸⁸ Luibhéid has continued her arguments elsewhere on the “il/legality” of immigrants by illustrating how the economically privileged benefit. See Eithne Luibhéid “Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and Illegal Status,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (2008): 289-315. See also Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Freedom with violence animates my earlier reading of the DREAM Act whereby only two pathways to a form of “legalization” emerge: higher education and the military. Chandan Reddy illuminates how rights-seeking maneuvers by so-called progressive movements enact “freedom with violence,” whereby freedom’s condition is tethered directly to the racial and sexual violence imposed by the State. In our moment, and exemplified in the passage of an anti-GLBTQ hate crimes amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act in 2010, Reddy designates “freedom with violence” as a “unique structure of state violence and social emancipation” that works through racialization and sexualization.⁸⁹ Reddy frames his analysis of freedom with violence around the processes in which the race / sexuality nexus and nation-making reproduce forms of violence on queer immigrant of color communities. The DREAM Act and the DACA program function as a “freedom with violence,” insofar as adjustments to undocumented status are invested in violence toward the communities the legislation seeks to address. My final chapter explores the responses by undocumented youth to the federal measures charted in my introduction, as well as to the troubling – and troubled – histories and legacies outlined here.

⁸⁹ Reddy, *Freedom with Violence*, 219-246.

Chapter 2: The DREAMer Accounts in *Papers* and the Online Activism of Julio Salgado and the *UndocuQueers*

Setting the Stage for DREAMers and UndocuQueer Activism

A shift from invisibility to visibility for immigrants marks our historical conjuncture and sets the stage for our new millennia. Consider William V. Flores' discussion about the invisibility of undocumented persons at the end of the twentieth century. Flores writes, "The undocumented live out their lives in the shadows. Their masks of anonymity conceal their hopes and aspirations to be members of society. Their role as political actors for the most part remains as subterranean as their lives, hidden from public view."⁹⁰ Whereas Flores' observations describes a moment at the tail end of the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), when undocumented life meant living in the shadows and in utter silence, today's reform efforts have become more public in exhibition on the local, state, and federal levels. To be sure, these activist undertakings do not exemplify the first instances immigrants voiced, fought for or even publically contested anti-immigrant legislation and sentiment.⁹¹ Pro-immigrant reformers have historically concentrated on (farm) worker conditions, women's domestic work, and other forms of labor in the service economy in order to frame the issue of immigration as primarily economic. Part of the shift from invisibility to visibility has meant reframing past strategies and tactics, but also staging new actors, scenes and plots.

⁹⁰ William V. Flores, "Citizens vs. Citizenry: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship," in *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights*, eds. William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 276-277.

⁹¹ David Bacon, *The Children of NAFTA: Labor Wars on the U.S./Mexico Border* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

The DREAMers – as a category and active group of protestors – continuously participated in reform efforts, but their prominence at the turn of the twenty-first century is notable for several reasons. First, the construction of “youth” as a legal category has shifted activist and community energies away from another, larger plight of undocumented and displaced persons. According to the Pew Hispanic Research Center, nearly two million of the estimated eleven million “unauthorized” persons residing in the United States are undocumented youth.⁹² Alone, the numbers of those who qualify for programs like the DREAM Act and the DACA program versus those who do not elucidates the shifting terrain of immigration discourses and practices. Second, and directly connected to the first point, DREAMer activism, organizing, and protest not only shift attention and energy to a particular group of undocumented persons. In addition, undocumented youth activisms transform the debates such that in order to speak about or consider immigration reform one must specifically have in mind youth. The terms of the debate regarding immigration in the United States becomes markedly inflected in our millennia by undocumented youth. Third, and finally, the investments in undocumented youth voices open up the larger pro-immigration reform bloc to consider their successes as maps for moving forward.

In March 2010, for instance, the first “National Coming Out of the Shadows” demonstrations took place across American cities, inaugurating the “Unapologetic & Unafraid” campaign.⁹³ This nationwide event established the “coming out” strategy as a “rhetorical frame” previously deployed by queer activists in the 1980s.⁹⁴ Undocumented youth have appropriated “the closet” metaphor, as well as the “shadow” metaphor, in order to

⁹² Pew Hispanic Center, “Up to 1.7 Million Unauthorized Immigrant Youth May Benefit from New Deportation Rules,” August 14, 2012, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/08/14/up-to-1-7-million-unauthorized-immigrant-youth-may-benefit-from-new-deportation-rules/>, accessed August 29, 2012.

⁹³ Hinda Seif, “‘Unapologetic and Unafraid’: Immigrant Youth Come out from the Shadows,” *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 134 (2011): 59–75.

⁹⁴ Chávez, *Queer Migration Politics*, 84.

stake their claims publicly.⁹⁵ Many leading the charge in the DREAMer movement self-identify as LBGT and queer, which adds another to dimension to the appropriation of previous LGBT discourses, activist strategies, and rituals like “coming out.”⁹⁶

Scholars have recently begun to theorize the DREAM Act movement and DREAMers as a separate and distinct group of the larger immigration movements in the United States.⁹⁷ Sociologist Walter J. Nicholls, for instance, in his monograph about the DREAM Act movement, observes how undocumented youth enter national social and political spheres contemporarily through visible, public protests. Nicholls conducted fieldwork and interviews in Southern California from 2010 to 2013 and argued how “niche openings” that emerged and became occupied by the undocumented students did not appear overnight, as the public demonstrations would lead us to believe.⁹⁸ Instead, immigrant organizing since the 1980s created support networks, resources, and tactical strategies that contributed to the DREAMer strategies today. Therefore, the DREAMer movement cannot be completely isolated from the longer history of immigrant organizing and protest.

DREAMers’ declarative and performative articulations contest the invisibility, silence, and marginalization of undocumented persons living in the United States. Political theorist Cristina Beltrán argued that undocumented migrant experiences and organizing efforts are shaped by what she calls the “regime of enforced invisibility.”⁹⁹ That is, public policy, public sentiment, and law enforcement agencies work in accord to create, sustain, and reproduce a hostile environment aimed at silencing undocumented immigrants with violence

⁹⁵ See Chávez’s discussion on the “the closet” and “shadows”, Chávez, *Queer Migration Politics*, 84-91.

⁹⁶ Nicholls, *The DREAMers*, 125.

⁹⁷ For instance see Chávez, *Queer Migration Politics* and Inés Valdez, “Who’s the Toughest? Punishment and the Organization of Immigration Exclusion,” paper presented at the annual meeting for the Western Political Science Association, San Antonio, Texas, April 21–23, 2011.

⁹⁸ Nicholls, *The DREAMers*, 21–46.

⁹⁹ Cristina Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 134.

in the United States. Building on Hannah Arendt's political theories on human rights, Beltrán reasoned that the spectacular immigrant marches across the country in 2006 framed through the "desire for distinction" re-works the limitations of traditional scholarship on citizenship, national belonging, and most importantly, visibility. A response to the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005 (HR 4437), Beltrán contended, "These gatherings were politically significant less for the policy issues discussed and the agendas constructed than for their demands for recognition, fair treatment, and human dignity."¹⁰⁰ The highly visible demonstrations were less an act of protest against policy change than a demand for respect for human rights. Between 3.7 and 5 million protestors in 160 cities across the country protested the federal bill.¹⁰¹ Beltrán's analysis is important for recognizing the ways in which the undocumented use resistances to make their presence known to formal spheres of belonging and citizenship. As a pre-cursor to staging undocumented youth resistance in the years following, the 2006 nation-wide protests marked a significant shift in undocumented immigrant visibility.

Further, the 2006 immigrant marches and protests draw our attention to the heterogeneity internal to the immigrant social movement as a whole. Rather than assuming homogeneity and a solid political bloc, undocumented immigrants have different interests, purposes, and claims. The DREAMers, for example, represent a variety of claims and interests within the larger United States immigration reform movement specifically aimed at policy changes in higher education. Nicholls further contends: "the new discourses and views that emerged since 2010 have sat beside those produced in earlier stages of the movement, resulting in a cacophony of arguments, frames, utterances, strategies, and visions in the same

¹⁰⁰ Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity*, 13.

¹⁰¹ Irene Bloemraad, Taeku Lee, and Kim Voss, "The Protests of 2006: What Were They, How Do We Understand them, Where Do We Go?," in *Rallying for Immigrant Rights: The Fight for Inclusion in 21st Century America*, eds. Irene Bloemraad and Kim Voss (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-43.

social movement.”¹⁰² Indeed, the undocumented youth movement stands out because it produced multiple and contradictory discourses, ideas, practices, and schemas of citizenship and national belonging.

I now analyze a group of undocumented youth who, in their public articulations, writings, and aesthetic productions carve space for differential forms of inclusion and belonging predicated on, but certainly not reducible to, their narrative accounts and identifications with the larger migrant movement.¹⁰³ I chart DREAMer activism and the ways in which their stories produce new maps of meaning for migrant organizing and strategies.¹⁰⁴ This section focuses on the responses by undocumented youth to legislative initiatives directly addressing them. My analysis begins by focusing on the independent publication *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, which offers first-hand, personal stories from undocumented youth. In particular, I show how a new brand of immigrant youth activism centers on three tropes: coming out as undocumented, moving and organizing out of the shadows, and recalling past traumatic memories in staking claims to legalization and belonging. Following, I shift from a textual analysis to the online art works of Julio Salgado, a self-proclaimed *UndocuQueer*, whose works circulate on social media outlets and non-mainstream news sources.

¹⁰² Walter J. Nicholls, *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 17.

¹⁰³ My use of the phrase “differential forms of inclusion and belonging” is indebted to Aimee Carrillo Rowe’s notion of “differential belonging” in which she argues that certain groups are always left out of critical analysis. See Aimee Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines: On the Subject of Feminist Alliances* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ By “maps of meaning” I invoke Stuart Hall’s idea of creating alternative representations and sensibilities for otherwise marginal populations. Whereas Hall’s notion derives from his study of representations in popular media and culture, my narrowed use of “maps of meaning” elaborates and extends his formulation to consider cultural productions not necessarily marked as “popular.” See Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997).



Image 1: *Eliseo, I Dream*. Image by Julio Salgado.

Above, the image depicts a young boy by the name of Eliseo pointing toward the sky. Across the front of his red shirt reads “I DREAM,” referring, as many of involved in the DREAM movement do, to the notion (and myth) of the American dream. The deep blue background, colorful planets, and stars position Eliseo in space. The American dream becomes a visual referent in this image – if you are willing, and in the case of undocumented youth, qualified, to work hard enough the sky is the limit. “Most students are taught to dream and mold their future,” Eliseo writes, “I can see my future but I’m being told that I don’t have one.”¹⁰⁵ For twelve-year-old Eliseo, the image of him in space also represents his dream to become an astronomer, to study the universe. According to his personal account, he begins

¹⁰⁵ Eliseo, *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky, and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 3.

high school next year but is unnerved by the possibility of the inability to attend college to pursue his dream. Additionally, Eliseo's fear of his undocumented family's deportation causes him constant anxieties. Eliseo values his parents for their laborious efforts as farmworkers. He compares the death of a star, a process that takes ten billion years, to the sacrifices of his parents to ensure his survival and the protection of his dreams. "But the star doesn't just die, its matter and gas helps create new stars. The star sacrifices itself to create new life, just like my parents are doing for me," says Eliseo.¹⁰⁶ Eliseo's account opens the collection of undocumented youth stories. We, the readers, are drawn into his story about aspiration, opportunity, and sacrifice. We *feel* for, sympathize and, even, empathize with Eliseo. His story, like many in the collection, performs affective work in the service of calling attention to the burdens of the young and undocumented, their daily struggles, and offers a glimpse of hope for a better future.¹⁰⁷

Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth is a collection of accounts from thirty undocumented individuals ranging from ages ten to thirty-two.¹⁰⁸ Not including the Foreword, Introduction, and Artist's Statement, *Papers* consists of seventy-nine pages of personal accounts with accompanying illustrations by Julio Salgado, of which Eliseo's image above also serves as the publication's front cover. Graham Street Productions, a film and documentary production company started in 2006 in Portland, Oregon by Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine, first published the collection in 2012. *Paper*, or, the narrative texts, began circulating three years after the production of the documentary film under the same name in

¹⁰⁶ Eliseo, *Papers*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ In a different context, Ana Elena Puga explores how prominent immigrants rights activist and asylum seeker to the United States, Elvira Arellano, also invoked public sentiment and feelings in making her case to stay. Although Puga's article deals with the idea of "migrant melodrama," her insight into Arellano's case proves useful for thinking about the use of sentiment within a broader United States immigration framework. See Ana Elena Puga, "Migrant Melodrama and Elvira Arellano," *Latino Studies* 10, no. 3 (2012): 355–84.

¹⁰⁸ My use of the word "youth" aligns with individual actors in the DREAM Act who identify in this way. I have chosen to respect these identification practices.

2009. Since its production, *Papers* the documentary screens at high school and college campuses, as well as independent film selections across the nation. *Papers* – both the documentary and the written collection – can only be understood as direct responses to the pressures applied to all people involved in the current national immigration reform debates.

“The liberation movement of DREAMers,” says documentary film creator Anne Galisky, “is centered on the telling of their stories.”¹⁰⁹ The multiple accounts in the collection speak to the dreams, aspirations, and frustrations shared by the two million undocumented youth for whom pathways to naturalization are continually blocked. According to José Manuel, one of the film producers, the film served as the impetus for the collection and distribution of the stories in written form.¹¹⁰ The director, Anne Galisky, estimates that the editors received hundreds of hand-written letters, emails, and in-person testimonies when collecting individual stories. The documentary film features five undocumented youth: Simone, Juan Carlos, Monica, Yo Sub, and Jorge. Each describes the hardship, pain, and frustration that accompanied becoming aware of, and coming to understand, their undocumented status under United States federal law. Each of the featured individuals in the documentary film outlines their daily struggles, both mental and physical. Examples include the inability to apply for a driver’s license, for work permits and visas, submit applications to college after high school graduation, and experiencing a constant state of fear of being forced into detention or deported. The documentary film stages interviews with the five undocumented youth, relying on documentary film techniques focusing on faces and stories, to convey directly the faces of those struggling. The viewer witnesses a series of faces and stories that they may connect directly to undocumented youth. The focus on these five

¹⁰⁹ Anne Galisky, “Introduction,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), xi.

¹¹⁰ José Manuel, “Forward,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), vi.

individuals, and their families, offers a more in-depth perspective than the short, personal stories provide.

In the introduction, an image of a group of three people hold one another, presumably a mother and her two children, as they witness a person with the word “ICE” displayed on his back take two people away. Cut into two major frames, the image collapses the realities of experiencing deportations firsthand and those who must witness. Curiously, below the image is an excerpt from Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Friar Laurence explains Romeo’s fate of being banished from the kingdom due to his affair with Juliet. According to Romeo, banishment is a punishment worse than death, “And world’s exile is death: then banished, is death mis-term’d: calling death banishment...” The particular scene not only invokes Romeo’s disbelief in being banished from the kingdom, but also his severing from Juliet. Here, the scene tethers Romeo directly with both a place (Verona) and a person (Juliet). Banishment, in the context of *Romeo and Juliet*, signals the ultimate social misfortune. Romeo is ordered to leave the place and person he most loves. Juxtaposed against the image, the use of this particular scene frames the plight of undocumented youth and their stories as ones in constant fear of banishment, specifically from the United States.

Following the scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, Anne Galisky begins her introduction with the fears undocumented youth face of being deported and detained. Galisky cites the lack of identification “papers” – driver’s license and Social Security number – as that which marks the two million undocumented youth into a category designated as “Other.” Here, the power of legal papers comes to bear in multiple ways for the project of undocumented youth activism and organizing. That is, the campaign for undocumented youth centers on the lack of identification papers and the consistent public reference to this lack. Additionally, *Papers*, the written collection, also serves as a set of papers circulating the stories and struggles of

undocumented youth as they lay claims to legibility. This legibility, however, is often short lived by deportation from the United States: banishment. Galisky writes, “The word deportation implies that there is somewhere to go back to; banishment is the be sent away in the wilderness.”¹¹¹ In framing her introduction and the collection through “banishment,” Galisky highlights the tenuous link between undocumented youth and their intimate connections to the United States. Deportation often means being sent away to a foreign land that they have connection, ties, or affiliation with.

Divided into five “acts,” the collection of stories takes on a theatrical or dramaturgical play structure. The individual stories tell of the immigrant youth struggles, wherein the United States is set as the main stage. The five acts include: Act I – The Star Sacrifices Itself; Act II – The Brick Wall That Never Crumbles; Act III – For This, Sometimes I Cry; Act IV – I Could Not Be Silent Any Longer; and Act V – Setting An Upside-Down World Right-Side Up. Each of the individual acts contains between five to seven accounts. The individual stories all describe the processes of coming to understand their individual undocumentedness in hostile, unforgiving environments. Each of the acts, however, does not offer any one distinct theme. Rather, the stories cohere around three major tropes: coming out, leaving the shadows, and indicating the experiences of trauma, including but not limited to family separation, deportation and detention. The through line of the collection, what connects all of the stories, poetry, and illustrations in *Papers*, is the use of sentiment to reinforce the tropes mentioned previously. The stories at the end of the collection, however, culminate by highlighting the successes of the DREAM Act movement, which inscribes a sense of “hope” for the reader. The socio-political weight of telling one’s story and struggle gives the

¹¹¹ Galisky, “Introduction,” ix.

DREAMers, and their social movement in general, the traction to call attention to the hostilities faced daily by undocumented and displaced persons.

The personal accounts in *Papers* tell the stories of undocumented youth from all over the world. Whereas the tendency to speak about immigration issues in United States conflates speaking about those of “Latina/o” or “Hispanic” background, *Papers* disrupts this imperative to speak only to and about “Latina/o” issues.¹¹² As Jaime, 19, from South Korea describes about her feelings of depression and isolation upon realizing her undocumented status in the DREAM Act movement,

Unfortunately, people often believe that “undocumentation” is a small faction issue that only affects Latinos, but it can happen to anyone from any country who chooses to come to the United States. They can’t gain an education, access to civil rights or even simple thing such as nutrition.¹¹³

Papers features youth from ten countries. Each of the stories highlights a different angle of the undocumented youth struggle. These reflections range from economic hardships, mental and physical trauma, and racial discrimination to more “exceptional” accounts of high-achieving, captains of the high school sports team, and college graduates. Though exceptional narratives run throughout the independent publication, not all stories are painted as such. For instance, Alejandra, 24, tells of feeling like a criminal because at the age of 16 she knowingly “crossed the border.” While Alejandra’s story of knowingly crossing the Mexican border into the United States with her family can be substituted for reasoning by the political right, hers, like others, points to the harsh economic and social conditions from

¹¹² My thesis is interested in “Latina/o” responses to the immigration movement in the U.S. but recognizes the limitations in interrogating other, lived experiences not determined by the “the Latino threat narrative,” as argued by Leo Chavez in his 2008 monograph, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and Nation*. For more on contemporary look at “Latina/o” migrant issues see Arlene Dávila, Leith Mullings, Renato Rosaldo, et al., “On Latin@s and the Immigration Debate,” *American Anthropologist* 116, no. 1 (2014): 146-159.

¹¹³ Jaime, “Jaime, 19,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 67-68.

which they fled. “I know that I am better off being an ‘illegal alien’ in the U.S,” Alejandra says, “than a citizen in any other country in the world.”¹¹⁴

Accompanying each of the short stories in *Papers* is a visual representation drawn by Salgado.¹¹⁵ In his Artist Statement, Salgado claims he never met the people whose stories he illustrates with his drawings. Salgado writes, “Sometimes I had physical descriptions to go by but mostly I used my instinct. In this age of instant photo sharing, I purposely didn’t want to see photographs because I wanted to focus on their stories. I don’t have an explanation for this; it just worked better.”¹¹⁶ Salgado does not want photographic representations of the people he draws, which speaks to the creative capabilities of DREAMer activism to imagine what could be. I now turn specifically to virtual art works of Salgado. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson argue, “The regime of visibility has come to play an even larger role in the written autobiographical narratives, incorporated as another mode of telling within the text.”¹¹⁷ Though Smith and Watson describe the use of photography for supplementing autobiographical accounts, their arguments concerning the visual are notable because *Papers*, as a collection of short autobiographical accounts, has accompanying images and, therefore, operates in a creative regime of visibility. Here, the qualifier “creative” indicates the artistic energies by Salgado to imagine and place an image with the stories. Immigrant youth of color forge claims to intelligibility and new modes of self-imagining through their narrative accounts and cultural productions through the use of emotion and sentimentality. That is, the stories reveal how they are treated as a special class of non-citizen-subjects whose category

¹¹⁴ Alejandra, “Alejandra, 24,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 9.

¹¹⁵ Julio Salgado, “Artist’s Statement,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 81-82.

¹¹⁶ Julio Salgado, “Artist’s Statement,” 82.

¹¹⁷ Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 8.

takes on specific political urgency. The DREAM activist movement produces exceptional personal accounts that conform to the logics of “good” versus “bad” undocumented youth. The movement must do so in order to be taken seriously by the general United States public. My analysis now shifts to explore the artworks produced by Salgado, one of the DREAMers movement’s key cultural producers and voices.¹¹⁸

The Online Presence and Visibility of the UndocuQueers

I knew we existed. We, the UndocuQueers. We’d shared our stories, we’d bonded over loves lost, coming out to our loved ones, our educational struggles, the broken immigration system and the need for a place where we fit. Yet our stories weren’t out there. We existed, mostly, in silence.
–Yahaira, *Papers*¹¹⁹

Yahaira’s account, like other self-identified *UndocuQueers*, begins with personal struggles and hardship. Whereas the previous section demonstrated the “power of papers” for undocumented youth residing in U.S., this section turns to the sub-group known as the *UndocuQueers*. Julio Salgado first posted *UndocuQueer* art pieces to his Facebook page in 2010 because “Facebook wasn’t going to ask me for papers.”¹²⁰ Salgado asserts that people within the immigrant community “have to continue to show ourselves in dignified ways,” even when certain narratives are left out of the conversation.¹²¹ Based in the Bay area of California, Salgado collaborates with other artists and activists who organize around immigrant issues.¹²² Much of the success and visibility of the *UndocuQueer* art pieces has

¹¹⁹ Yahaira, “Yahaira, 26,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 74.

¹²⁰ Tierney Sneed, “Migrant Art Takes on Political Meaning,” *U.S. News*, April 16, 2013, <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/04/16/artists-explore-immigration-reform-debate>, accessed April 16, 2013.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Salgado is also the founder of *DreamersAdrift.com* which is an online blog for undocumented youth who share their stories through mediums such as art and YouTube videos. See also Channing Kennedy, “Undocumented Artist Gives American Apparel’s Farmer Ad a Political Twist,” *Colorlines.com*, June 1, 2012, accessed http://colorlines.com/archives/2012/06/undocumented_apparel.html, March 12, 2013.

been their ability to travel virtually across Facebook and Tumblr.¹²³ In fact, I came across Salgado's *UndocuQueer* pieces through mutual friends on Facebook. Personal awareness of the current immigration discourses has ultimately propelled Salgado, a self-identified *UndocuQueer* from Mexico, into making art as a form of protest. After finding out about his sister's kidney disease in 1995 Salgado and his family's visas expired forcing them into "undocumented status."¹²⁴ Doctors urged Salgado's family to stay in the United States, so they remained to seek medical treatment. In an article for *Colorlines.com*, Salgado writes, "Any parent whose child is almost dying will make the obvious and responsible decision to stay in the country and save their life."¹²⁵ Since this decision, he and his family remain in the United States. Over a span of ten years, Salgado received a degree in Journalism from California State University Long Beach and uniquely combines his artistic talents with his journalistic instinct as a method for communicating with simple words to articulate complex messages about immigration reform. According to his online Tumblr page, "I am UndocuQueer!" is an art project that aims to give "undocumented queers more of a presence in the discussion of migrant rights."¹²⁶

¹²³ Questions about what it means for virtual art to travel from one geographic location to the next via the Internet raise important questions about production, commodification, and reception.

¹²⁴ Mónica Novoa, "Julio Salgado: Creating Undocu-Love and Undocu-Queer Art," *Colorlines.com*, March 15, 2012, accessed March 17, 2013, <http://colorlines.com/droptheiword/blog/julio-salgado-undocu-love.html>.

¹²⁵ Novoa, "Julio Salgado," online.

¹²⁶ Julio Salgado, "I am UndocuQueer!," accessed March 20, 2013, <http://juliosalgado83.tumblr.com/post/15803758188/i-am-undocuqueer-is-an-art-project-in>.

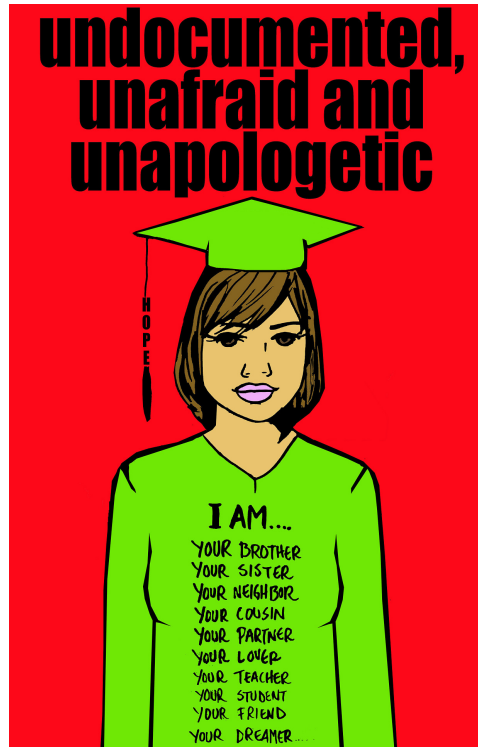


Image 2: *Undocumented, Unafraid and Unapologetic*. Image by Julio Salgado.

The above image articulates in its bold, lower case print the “undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic” campaign described at the beginning of this chapter. The image represents undocumented youth foregrounding relationships of familiarity and intimacy. The mortarboard, for instance, signifies the long associated tradition of academic achievement, of which many undocumented youth have already obtained. Undocumented youth are our brothers, sisters, neighbors, lovers, and our friends. As opposed to the domestic “sexual strangers” described by Shane Phelan at the turn of the twenty-first century, DREAMer accounts foreground and personalize their relationships to the assumed citizen-subject audience and viewership.¹²⁷ In so doing, undocumented youth play on accounts of “being just as American” as anyone else. Undocumented youth cannot be “strangers,” in Phelan’s

¹²⁷ Shane Phelan. *Sexual Strangers: Gays, Lesbians, and Dilemmas of Citizenship* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

account, because they grew up “American” and therefore do not threaten the social, political and moral fabrics, they argue. DREAMer accounts attempt to close the gap between the position of being “undocumented, unafraid, and unapologetic” and that of being recognized as present, familiar and non-threatening.

“In 2010, as photographs of undocumented college students getting arrested during acts of civil disobedience began to show up on my Facebook News Feed, I knew I just had to document what was happening,” says Salgado in his Artist Statement in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*.¹²⁸ Salgado continues,

Thanks to online media and social networking, my drawings began to go viral. They truly resonated with students across the nation who were being labeled, by some, as criminals. Students began to send me messages thanking me for posting the illustrations. But it was them I was thankful for. These brave students were coming out of the shadows and standing up for what is right. I was just very lucky to be able to draw them.¹²⁹

The emphasis on online media platforms like Facebook and Tumblr indicates new forms of activist organizing strategies and approaches. “Movement” signifies more than just physical, bodily movement, but the movement of ideas and claims to inclusion through virtual space. For instance, as Salgado explained in his reference to “coming out of the shadows,” meant showing solidarity with other undocumented persons.

¹²⁸ Julio Salgado, “Artist’s Statement,” in *Papers: Stories by Undocumented Youth*, eds. José Manuel, Cesar Pineda, Anne Galisky and Rebecca Shine (Portland, OR: Graham Street Productions, 2012), 81-82.

¹²⁹ Salgado, “Artist’s Statement,” 81-82.

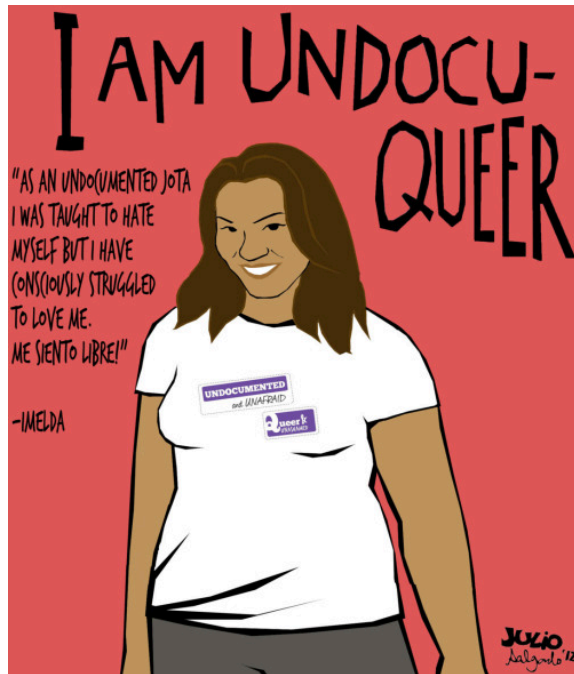


Image 3: *I Am UndocuQueer*. Image by Julio Salgado.

This artwork by Salgado based out of the Bay Area in California is part of a series of similar images titled “I Am UndocuQueer!” first published on his Tumblr website.¹³⁰ To most viewers, the simple drawings and plain language do not evoke any immediate reactions or feelings. The relaxed posture and large body fill most of the frame, resembling a candid photo taken by a friend. In fact, one could pass this image on the street, in their local grocery store, or on their Facebook newsfeed and not realize its symbolism, or think twice about its meaning. The bold, capital print at the top of the image set against a solid color draws your attention to the written words. The central human figure might catch your eye and demand that you read what they are saying. In this piece, Imelda states, “I was taught to hate myself but I have consciously struggled to love me. Me siento libre! [I feel free!]” Imelda is

¹³⁰ For more of Salgado’s published artworks see, <http://juliosalgado83.tumblr.com/archive>, accessed June 1, 2014.

referencing both the title and her experience as an undocumented queer youth immigrant. On her plain, white t-shirt are what appear to be stickers with writings that state: “Undocumented and Unafraid” and “Queer and Unashamed.” Imelda, then, identifies with a compilation of headings that suggest affirmation and empowerment through naming one’s position. The use of “queer” in this artwork resonates with the definition of “queer” offered by Cathy Cohen. Cohen argues, “sexual expression is something that always entails the possibility of change, movement, redefinition, and subversive performance - from year to year, from partner to partner, from day to day, from act to act.”¹³¹ Cohen is skeptical of the deployments of sexuality in “queer” activism and politics because it reinforces heteronormativity. That is, to name queer in the service of a sexual politics usually takes as its assumption the heteropatriarchal structures that are being called into question. Undocumented and unafraid affirms the denial of US citizenship but makes the viewer aware of a sense of empowerment as Imelda smiles. Indeed, Imelda *feels* free. Likewise, being queer and unashamed suggests the same affective responses associated with feeling free: proud, hopeful, and valued. We are not certain, however, if Imelda identifies with a racial group. The image and text are not random assortments, but, instead, highlight different monikers that groups of queer undocumented youth work with, through, and against in a socio-historical conjuncture framed around the DREAM Act and DACA. This artwork calls attention to immigration debates and discourses that are otherwise premised on legislative exclusionary principles and practices discussed in my earlier chapter. This aesthetic production, in its simplicity and brevity, invites the viewer to consider the multiplicity of experiences among undocumented youth. In addition, the artwork identifies the stakes in current immigration reform debates

¹³¹ Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3, no. 4 (1997): 439.

and discourses. What might it mean to reorient our conceptualizations about immigration through the lens of the *UndocuQueers*?

I focus on artworks by a self-identified *UndocuQueer*, Salgado, whose work I classify as “artivism” because of the possibilities that exist in the *UndocuQueer* narrative and cultural productions, specifically his artworks. That is, the *UndocuQueer* art brings together multiple, overlapping languages and affects in order to draw attention to the limitations of the DREAM Act and larger immigration debates. The efforts of *UndocuQueers*, however, should not be taken as completely isolated from these larger immigrant concerns. Rather, the investments here are in complicating the larger immigrant discourses by examining what is enabled and foreclosed in this historical conjuncture. I should note the limitations of the *UndocuQueers* as presenting radical intervention on all fronts of immigration reform debates. Instead, the *UndocuQueers* intervention is one that brings into virtual public spheres a political paradigm organized around and through both undocumented and queer narratives.

Putting a face to undocumented immigrants is one strategy that has received attention and has shaped immigration discourses as discussed through the figure of the undocumented youth immigrant in the beginning of this paper. Salgado explains, “In the past, one could see articles or interviews with a hidden face or an anonymous name. That would dehumanize the issue and by us coming out and saying we’re undocumented and unafraid, we’re putting a face to it.”¹³² By making their presence known online, people who use their real names are now leading migration discussions and forcing attention to their stories. Salgado’s artworks only feature real people, as is the case with Imelda. We might understand Salgado’s art work as a reflection on how contemporary migrant narratives rely on certain script traits – heterosexual, financially secure, of “moral character” to name a few – and the ways the

¹³² David Perry Interviews Julio Salgado, YouTube.com, April 3, 2012, accessed April 1, 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoasE69MUOQ>.

UndocuQueer narrative recasts what and who is valued. . Furthermore, since the *UndocuQueer* account lies outside a formal state of recognition, the movement reimagines what citizenship, national belonging, and inclusion might look like. That is, the *UndocuQueer* discussion happens outside a formal politics of visibility marshaled by the state, but nonetheless operates through a politics of visibility whereby antagonisms about whom and what is valued occur via the Internet. I explore this further in my conclusion.



Image 4: *I Exist! Yo Existo!* Image by Julio Salgado.

Even more prominent in the national conversations surrounding migration, racial politics and feminism is the cultural work produced by Favianna Rodriguez. Rodriguez is most closely associated with the phrase “Migration is Beautiful” and the accompanying Butterfly imagery used as an organizing tool more recently. According to Rodriguez, “The

butterfly symbol was not my idea. Immigrant rights activists have seen the butterfly as a symbol of fluid and peaceful migration for generations. To me, the monarch butterfly represents the dignity and resilience of migrants, and the right that all living beings have to move freely. I believe that we shouldn't allow our identity to be defined only by our suffering, nor by the actions that others have taken to devalue our families and our labor — rather, let us celebrate our beauty, pride, and resilience in the face of inequality and injustice.” While Rodriguez’s work deserves attention and praise, this thesis focuses on the work of Salgado precisely because the cultural work he produces moves us closer to articulating the specific intersections between queer and immigrant youth activism, as the above image shows.¹³³

“Artivism” is a portmanteau that combines “art” and “activist.” The term suggests an intimate relationship between art and activism expressed in and through an artist’s creations. Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre coin the term “digital artivism” in their article on Judy Baca, an urban muralist, digital artist, and professor of art at UCLA. The phrase describes the work that “advances the expression of a mode of liberatory consciousness that Chicana feminist philosopher Gloria Anzaldúa calls *la conciencia de la mestiza*, that is, the consciousness of the mixed-race woman.”¹³⁴ Invoking Anzaldúa’s *mestiza* consciousness, Latorre and Sandoval describe the ways in which Baca, who creates digital art with migrant youth community members, is someone who is “vested in the convergences between creative expression, social activism, and self-empowerment.”¹³⁵ In this way, Baca’s cultural

¹³³ Salgado and Rodriguez have collaborated on art pieces. For more about Favianna Rodriguez’s art and activism, see http://favianna.typepad.com/faviannacom_art_activism/, accessed June 1, 2014. For more about the national “Migration is Beautiful” campaign, see the “Artist’s Statement on Immigration Reform” to President Obama and Congress at <http://migrationisbeautiful.com/>, accessed June 2, 2014.

¹³⁴ Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre, “Chicana/o Artivism: Judy Baca’s Digital Work with Youth of Color,” *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, eds. Anna Everett, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 82.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

productions are informed by and created with the communities with whom she works. Instructive for my discussion here on Salgado's artworks are Latorre and Sandoval's conceptual attention to individuals and collectives seeking transformative change through the use of digital technologies. Self-generated online platforms and digital technologies become the venue through which alternative forms of thinking about immigration emerge and enact new forms of self-imagining. Salgado's artworks on the *UndocuQueers* serves as one of the ways undocumented youth not only imagine alternative modes of being, but these alternatives are also enacted online. "Ultimately," Latorre and Sandoval argue, "digital activism is a form of political activism that seeks egalitarian alliances and connections across difference. It requires a mode of consciousness that replicates the digital potentialities and egalitarianism of cyberspace."¹³⁶ While Baca and her group of students' work focuses on how digital art circulates on the streets of Los Angeles, Salgado and his *UndocuQueer* collaborators also use digital technologies and the Internet to relay their messages and art pieces. The collaborative work between Salgado and those who he draws is a testament to the boundary crossing between different groups involved in the immigration struggle. Of course, the Internet is not politics-free. According to Michelle Lee White, "Electronic technology, especially digital, seems to have pierced the protective bubble of fixed racial and ethnic identity by making it easy for us to create physically detached screen personas that transcend social realities. Yet in spite of the current cultural climate, which we like to believe has released us from the constraints of identity, the mechanisms of exclusion still persist."¹³⁷ I, however, want to stress the importance of *UndocuQueer* art as it emerges from individual narratives, bringing the messiness and complexity of their lives to bear. I read the

¹³⁶ Sandoval and Latorre, "Chicana/o Activism," 83.

¹³⁷ Michelle-Lee White, "Aftrotech and Outer Spaces," *Art Journal* 60, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 90, quoted in Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre, "Chicana/o Activism: Judy Baca's Digital Work with Youth of Color," *Learning Race and Ethnicity: Youth and Digital Media*, eds. Anna Everett, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 83.

UndocuQueer art, and the emerging *UndocuQueer* movement at large, as forms of organizing potential that keep the tensions open between immigration, race, gender, sexuality, and class via the Internet. In this way, the *UndocuQueer* art explores new political paradigms from which we might organize, build coalitions, and redefine citizenship. The last image, “I Exist!” shows that the *UndocuQueers* imagine themselves to ‘exist’ and must carry with them their multiple, overlapping identifications – discursively forced upon them and materially re-imagined – serve as a potential map for charting new alternative ways of being, knowing, and producing knowledge.

Conclusion

My thesis began with the assertion that undocumented youth offer a critique of current immigration discourses and practices, a critique that arises historically in the context of anti-immigrant hegemony and can be accessed through the examples of cultural productions. With the burgeoning of immigrant rights activism, particularly from youth, in the United States over the past decade, we might now ask how such critiques offer the fight over immigration reform today. With the ascendancy of visibility as criteria for the production of such critiques and subject identities, it becomes apparent that undocumented youth become a more salient identity formation than it was at one point. As I have shown, the role of undocumented youth in the “folding into” of immigrants rights highlights responses both from administrative apparatuses (the DREAM Act and the DACA Program) and from the subjects of intended inclusion (the DREAMers and the *UndocuQueers*). My thesis, then, both through its historical attention to the processes of racialization and sexualization and through its theoretical claims about our historical conjuncture, gives greater specificity to undocumented youth activism as contributing to a larger critique of immigration reform in the first part of the twenty-first century.

I began my first chapter in which I “excavated” both the legal-juridical construction of the racialized, sexual, immigrant subject, and the academic scholarship that examined this particular formation. I traced the historical legacies of the violent inclusion of immigrant subjects into the nation-state. Additionally, the inclusion of undocumented youth into this process illustrates the larger trajectory of immigrant rights in the United States through

violent incorporation. Undocumented youth protest and activism is worth considering because of their challenging accounts to this systemic violence. The DREAM Act and the DACA program, as I have argued, represent the administrative response to inclusion of undocumented youth through violence. For this reason, it is important to place these administrative responses alongside the historical formation of the immigrant in the United States.

In my second chapter, I examined *Papers*, a collection of personal accounts, offered the DREAM activists to convey their daily struggles. I have shown how the *UndocuQueers* resides in a nebulous position between valued and devalued, especially when considering the larger DREAM Act and immigration movement. They pose interesting and generative accounts that we might learn from in seeking out alternative modes of identification because undocumented youth tap into affective registers, which gain attention about their plight. In this way, the DREAM Act and the *UndocuQueer* movements rely on visibility and representation in seeking formal rights. In addition to my analysis of *Papers*, I argued that Julio Salgado's *UndocuQueer* artworks also presents alternative identifications in the form of his drawings online. Though I remain optimistic for the types of coalitions and collaborations that emerge through alternative identity formations among undocumented youth, I am also cautious of the coalitions that reinscribe the power dynamics they seek to overcome.

Whether in public demonstrations or through virtual mediums, the politics of visibility in relation to the undocumented youth movement requires further attention. Following Herman Gray, in a recent article of *American Quarterly*, I follow a similar line of inquiry in which he asks, "Will seeing more frequently and recognizing more clearly and complexly members of excluded and subordinate populations increase their social, political,

and economic access to life chances?”¹³⁸ Gray is skeptical of the increases in visibility among traditional and new media platforms. He argues that a shift from the discourses of “race” to “difference” in our historical conjuncture initiates a new racial regime of visibility.¹³⁹ Gray’s account pays attention to the visual (im)possibilities of African American representation in popular media. In this thesis, I have also consider the ways undocumented youth today rely on visibility, especially in traditional media like published texts and self-generated online platforms. Undocumented youth political organizing closely resembles the incitements to visibility described by Gray. Whereas formal recognition from the State was once the primary mode of rights claiming, the media has become one of the main venues through which marginalized groups and communities lay claim to recognition, representation, and visibility. Here, media is characterized in terms of the traditional venues like broadcast cable and newspapers, but does not include online spaces via the proliferation of the Internet. Gray argues that the recent “incitements to visibility” have become an end to itself, stalling any real progress for cultural and social justice. Following Foucault, Gray frames “incitement to visibility” as a dynamic of power that relies on the proliferation of difference in new media spaces to regulate bodies, ideas, and practices.

I am suggesting the achievements won by this undocumented youth should be celebrated, but I am also insisting that celebrating “coming out of the shadows” should be seen through a cautionary lens. When we consider how visibility of undocumented youth has increased over the past few years, especially on online and virtual platforms, it is important to ask to what end this visibility comes. The tendency to celebrate difference can deter attention from the structural and institutional biases that make such celebrations possible. The undocumented youth movement organizes around a particular group of visible people at

¹³⁸ Herman Gray, “Subject(ed) to Recognition,” *American Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2013): 773.

¹³⁹ Gray, “Subject(ed)”, 771.

the expense of other undocumented persons, such as the poor, the old, and those immobile bodies unable to make the journey. Though I have only gestured at it here, my research moving forward will examine the undocumented youth movement as part of an incitement to visibility that celebrates “differences.”

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