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Racialized Realities at the Intersection of Race and Undocumented Status: A Critical Narrative Inquiry Into the Lives of Undocumented Asian Students in Higher Education

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education

by

Rose Ann Rico Eborda Gutierrez

2022

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Racialized Realities at the Intersection of Race and Undocumented Status:

A Critical Narrative Inquiry Into the Lives of Undocumented Asian Students in Higher Education

by

Rose Ann Rico Eborda Gutierrez

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Robert T. Teranishi, Chair

The current contemporary narrative about undocumented immigration in the United States tells a single story that posits a Latin* lens, where Latin* individuals are racially profiled and criminalized. This single story is an incomplete narrative about undocumented individuals and their families. The purpose of this critical narrative inquiry is to create a cognitive frame to understand the racialized realities that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status through the stories of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California. Using a critical narrative inquiry methodology that is theoretically anchored in double-consciousness, critical consciousness, and liminal legality, this inquiry complicates undocumented status by showing varied ways people become undocumented that counters the dominant majoritarian narrative about coming to the U.S. the right way. Additionally, findings from this inquiry give language to

the protective adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms undocumented Asian students employed to negotiate a racialized subjectivity as “Asian” while navigating a material reality as undocumented in their educational journeys. Findings from this inquiry have implications for immigration policy, student services in higher education and careers and employment, and humanizing methodologies in educational research.

The dissertation of Rose Ann Rico Eborda Gutierrez is approved.

Cecilia Menjívar

Cecilia Rios-Aguilar

Mitchell J. Chang

Robert T. Teranishi, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2022

DEDICATION

To my parents—salamat po sa lahat nang sakripisyo na ginawa nyo po para sa ating pamilya.

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2. Nguyen, B. M. D., Nguyen, T-H., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Kurland, W. N., & Lee, N. W. K. S. (2021). Institutional pathfinders: Key lessons from program directors of AANAPISI grant-funded projects. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education.* Advanced online publication. **2021**

3. Nguyen, M. H., Chang, C. Y., Kim, V., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Le, A., Dumas, D., & Teranishi, R. T. (2020). Asian Americans, admissions, and college choice: An empirical test of claims of harm used in federal investigations. *Educational Researcher, 49*(5), 1-16. **2020**

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BOOK CHAPTERS, MONOGRAPHS, & OTHERS

1. Teranishi, R. T., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, & Le, A. (2022). Anti-Asian racism in the COVID era: Implications for higher education. In M. Bonous-Hammarth (Ed.), *Bridging marginality through inclusive higher education* (pp. 43-54). Palgrave Macmillan. **2022**

2. **Gutierrez, R. A. E.** (2019) Living liminal: Conceptualizing liminality for undocumented students of color. In D. Mitchell, Jr., J. Marie, & T. Steele (Eds.), *Intersectionality and higher education: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Peter Lang Publishing. **2019**

POLICY REPORTS & BRIEFS

1. **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Le, A., & Teranishi, R. T. (2021). *A racial reckoning: Anti-Asian racism and exclusion in higher education.* The Education Trust West and the Campaign for College Opportunity. **2021**

2. Le, A., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, & Teranishi, R. T. (2021). *Anti-Asian bullying and harassment: Symptoms of racism in K-12 schools during COVID-19.* The Education **2021**

Trust West.

3. Teranishi, R. T., Le, A., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Venturanza, R. J., Hafoka, 'I., Gogue, D. T-L., & Uluave, L. (2019). *Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in higher education: A call to action.* APIA Scholars and the Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education. **2019**

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

1. **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Liboon, C. A., & Dimagiba, A. (2021, September). Conceptualizing Reciprocity: Embodying Utang Na Loob, Pakisama, and Alalay as P/Filipina American Researchers and Evaluators. Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment, Online. **2021**

2. Nguyen, M. H., Chang, C. Y., Kim, V., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Le, A., Dumas, D., & Teranishi, R. T. (2021, April). Asian Americans, Admissions, and College Choice: An Empirical Test of Claims of Harm Used in Federal Investigations. American Educational Research Association, Online. **2021**

3. Teranishi, R. T., Le, A., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, & Venturanza, R. J. (2020, April). (In)visibility in Numbers: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander College Students and the Need for Data Disaggregation. Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, Long Beach, CA. (Conference canceled). **2020**

4. Nguyen, T-H., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Smith, J., Tran, Q-N., & Spangle, D. (2019, April). Sorting On-Line Resources for Learning in STEM Courses. American Educational Research Association, Toronto, CA. **2019**

5. **Gutierrez, R. A. E.** (2018, November). Neither Here nor There: At the Intersection of Nativism, Racism, and Xenophobia for Undocumented Students of Color. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Tampa, FL. **2018**

6. Le, A., **Gutierrez, R. A. E.**, Teranishi, R. T., Nguyen, T-H., Nguyen, B. M. D., Maramba, D., & Park, J. J. (2018, November). Preserving our Past, Celebrating our Present, and Envisioning our Future: Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) 10 Years Later. Association for the Study of Higher Education, Tampa, FL. **2018**

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Mary Elizabeth Jensen Fellowship, *University of California, Los Angeles* ($6,000) **2017**

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE INQUIRY

Coming to the Inquiry: Narrative Beginnings

I came to this inquiry as an immigrant and as a child of immigrants wanting to understand the stories of undocumented Asian students in higher education, whose stories often go untold—not knowing that my reality was as close to that of the participants in this inquiry. What I mean is that I did not know about the complexity and challenges my dad faced regarding his documents for his visa application process until recently, when my dad shared this detail on December 21, 2020.

I immigrated to the United States (U.S.), from the Philippines, in 1997, but my immigration story does not begin here. My family's immigration story begins with my father, who came to the U.S. in May 1990 through the family reunification program—through his brother's petition. An untold narrative within my dad's immigration story was the complicated process of having to create his birth certificate *during* the process of his visa application because he did not readily have it on hand.

In December 1989, the month I was born, my dad received a set of paperwork that confirmed his eligibility to come to the United States. This paperwork gave a set of directions for him to fill out and included instructions for him to submit additional paperwork like his birth certificate. The problem, however, was that there was no record of my dad's birth certificate in the Municipality of Maragondon. When my dad was born in 1954 in a rural area of the Philippines, they did not formally record his birth in the system. As he shared this story with me, my dad said, "People were just born." Fast forward to 1990, a birth certificate was a necessary document that needed to be included within his visa application process. As a result, my dad hired someone to create his birth certificate to be legally registered in the system in the

Philippines. This process cost about ₱5,000 Philippine Peso (PHP)[1]. My dad even shared how our family did not have the money at the time for the person to create this document in addition to the visa application. He had to borrow money from a family friend, and he continues to be forever indebted to this family because his own family could not even financially support him during this time. Nonetheless, due to the generosity of a family friend, my dad paid for his entire visa application, and he arrived in the U.S. May 1990.

That month, he was without a job, and shared how worried he was about my mom and me, who were in the Philippines because he went for about a month not sending any money to us. At that time, he lived in his brother's house, slept on the couch, and then moved to the garage. Finally, on June 17, 1990, he got his first job and began working multiple part-time jobs from cleaning fish at a restaurant, working as a janitor, and bagging groceries at supermarkets. For four years, my dad saved up monies with the goal of returning to the Philippines and marrying my mom, so he could begin the paperwork for us to immigrate to the United States.

I met my dad for the first time in 1994 and could recall a memory of a man, who everyone told me was my father—yet not knowing what a "father" was. During his trip in 1994, he married my mom and visited the office in Ternate, Cavite that held records of birth certificates. Due to his experiences of his birth certificate not being in the system in the Philippines, he told me that he had a gut feeling that he should check my birth certificate while he was in the Philippines. To his surprise, there was no record of me being born on a birth certificate in the system. Knowing what he knew about the visa application process and the paperwork that we would need to file later for my mom and me to be petitioned to the United

[1] In 1990, the conversation rate from the Philippine Peso (PHP) to the U.S. Dollars (USD) on average was ₱22.71 to $1.00 (Department of the Treasury, 1990).

States, he made sure to address this problem, so I had the legal documents for immigration. Three years later, my mom and I reunited with my dad in the U.S. in January 1997.

No, I am not undocumented, but I am a U.S.-naturalized citizen, who could have been easily undocumented. If my dad had not gone through what he did and taken the steps to have my birth certificate created legally, our immigration story would have looked different. And I am unsure, if you would be reading this right now and the other stories about the immigrant students, and more specifically, undocumented students, whom I got to know and better understand through their narratives.

Storytelling has been a way for People of Color and Indigenous community to pass down knowledge and make sense of their place in the world (Brayboy, 2005; hooks, 1990; San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002); stories carry power. Without my family's immigration story as passed on to me through stories from my mom and dad, I would not have been able to make sense of my own lived experience and draw connections between the scholarship about immigration and race. I invite you to read this inquiry with an understanding that the stories of participants from this inquiry are those that are often untold, overlooked, and omitted from broader discourses of race and immigration and literature about undocumented students in higher education.

Background

Asians are the fastest growing undocumented racial group in the U.S. (Kim & Yellow Horse, 2018). Yet undocumented Asians' stories are often untold within the contemporary undocumented narrative. Furthermore, out of the 467,000 undocumented students enrolled in

U.S. higher education, 25 percent identity as Asian and Pacific Islander[2] (Feldblum et al., 2021), yet higher education literature remains empirically sparse when we think about the stories and experiences of undocumented Asian and Asian American[3] students. Although literature about undocumented students have increased within the past two decades in higher education (Bjorklund, 2018), only a few empirical studies have focused on undocumented Asian and Asian American students (Buenavista, 2013, 2018; Cho, 2019; Enriquez, 2019; Salinas Velasco, 2015). Moreover, the current literature about undocumented students in higher education remains limited its examination and analysis of race. This inquiry fills an empirical gap in the literature about undocumented Asian and Asian American students who remain absent from the scholarship in higher education about undocumented students, and the broader, contemporary undocumented narrative. Omission in public discourse and scholarly literature insinuates insignificance and irrelevance to the point of erasure from the social imaginary which has material consequences for the ways undocumented Asian and Asian American students are treated and access resources and opportunities available to them.

Problem Statement

Undocumented Asian students experience a conflicting reality, where there lacks a cognitive frame in imagining their material reality as both undocumented *and* Asian. This is in

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[2] I use the term "Asian and Pacific Islander" to reflect the same language used in the original reporting of the data from the March 2021 report about undocumented students in higher education by The Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration. The data in the report aggregates undocumented Asians and Pacific Islanders.

[3] I use "Asian(s) and Asian American(s)" as two separate terms to make a distinction that not all Asian individuals identify with the political panethnic identity of "Asian American." In this inquiry, some participants identified as Asian while others identified with the political panethnic identity as Asian American. I do not use aggregated terms and other political panethnic identities such as Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Asian Pacific Islander (API), Asian and Pacific Islander American (APIA), and Asian Pacific American (APA) to avoid erasing experiences of Pacific Islanders within a panethnic identity and reproducing a narrative of these groups as a homogeneous group in the conversation of race and racialization (Gogue et al., 2022). I do use aggregated terms and panethnic identities if previous data sources I cite have used the terms.

part by two processes of racialization that undocumented Asian students must navigate that is located at the intersection of race and undocumented status (Cho, 2017, 2019). I refer to this intersection of race and undocumented status as a liminal space, or a state of being in between worlds, spaces, and experiences (Menjívar, 2006; Turner, 1969). This space of liminality at the intersection of race and undocumented status is a complicated space to navigate due to the two processes of racialization that occur in this liminal space: 1) undocumented Asians' racial identity is racialized with associations connected with the "model minority," or a minority who is academically successful, without challenges, and has overcome racism, and 2) undocumented status as racialized to be primarily a Latin*[4] issue. Cho (2017) names this quandary a "double-bind" and defines it as a shield by not being perceived as undocumented, where one can fly under the radar while simultaneously not receiving immediate access to resources or services for being undocumented since the contemporary undocumented narrative posits a Latin* lens. This inquiry calls attention to the ways undocumented Asian students in higher education experience a racialized liminal space, and more broadly, gives language to their stories, which are often untold within the broader contemporary undocumented narrative.

Purpose of the Inquiry

The purpose of this critical narrative inquiry is to create a cognitive frame to understand the racialized realities that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status through the stories of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California. More specifically, I analyze how undocumented Asian students experience liminality at the intersection of race and

[4] I use the term Latin* to consider individuals who identify as Latina, Latiné, Latino, Latina/o, Latin@, Latinx, Latin, or Latin American (Salinas, 2020). Salinas introduces the * (asterisk) in "Latin*" as a deliberate intervention or to create pause for readers to consider the multiple ways in which people from Latin American origin and diaspora in the United States identify at the intersection of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, geography, language, and phenotype. I do, however, use Latina, Latino, or Latinx when my participants use the term during interviews.

undocumented status. I use double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), critical consciousness (Freire, 2000), and liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006) in the theoretical framework of this inquiry, which is guided by an orientation that is desire-based (Tuck, 2009) within the methodological design to challenge current narratives of undocumented students that are often framed within frameworks of trauma. The following research questions guide this study with aims of answering the broader question: *What can researchers and scholars in higher education learn about how the intersection of race and undocumented status is experienced through their understanding of undocumented Asian students' stories?*

1. How is the story of undocumented immigration told from the perspective of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California, who overstayed their visa?"
2. What racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness" do undocumented Asian undergraduate students understand?
    a. How do undocumented Asian undergraduate students use this understanding to navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey?

The first research question expands the narrative about contemporary undocumented immigration, and more specifically, serves as an empirical counternarrative to the majoritarian narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) about contemporary immigration the posits a Latin* lens. Additionally, findings for this first research question reveal a more complicated U.S. immigration system and challenges another majoritarian narrative of coming to the United States the "right way." In answering this research question, I use reauthoring (Farmer-Hinton et al., 2013; Rivers et al., 2021) as a tool to actively engage in the process of counter-storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In other words, the findings for this first research question provides empirical evidence of

counternarratives from the narratives of undocumented Asian students and engages in counter-storytelling.

The second set of research question names and describes the strategies that undocumented Asian students from this inquiry employed to navigate a racialized liminal reality that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status. In other words, I answer this research question by giving language to the ways participates navigated higher education based on their understanding of how they were racialized as "model minorities" due to their racial identity as Asian *and* how the status of undocumented was racialized as a Latin* narrative. In answering the second set of research questions, I develop a term I coin as pedagogies of liminality to describe two main strategies participants used to navigate a racialized liminal space, or an in-between space, that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status.

Significance

Without scholarly attention on undocumented Asians, U.S. history remains incomplete in its understanding of immigration given the transnational journeys of Asians and Asian Americans that have shaped the United States in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. This study has practical implications in higher education for challenging the preconceived notions of faculty and staff about who is included in the undocumented narrative, so they can recreate institutional policies and practices that can expand educational opportunities for all undocumented students. Faculty and staff are not immune to reassigning racialized meanings to students and can often be "complicit in framing non-dominant students and their communities in ways that reinscribe and support dominant narratives" (Gutiérrez, 2006, p. 227). Moreover, institutional agents who work directly with undocumented students can reevaluate which students are using the campus resources they

provide and if resources from the institutions culturally speak to the unique needs of each undocumented student they intend to serve.

This study's urgency is time-sensitive because the current social context of COVID-19 and xenophobic political climate in the U.S. has provided a unique context to understand compounded and layered forms of marginalization that undocumented Asian students may be experiencing. As a result, this inquiry can offer rich empirical and theoretical insights. This study addresses the lack of empirical knowledge about undocumented Asian students in higher education; on a theoretical level, the examination of their racialization can provide insights to the distinct ways race operates when interwoven with other dimensions of social life like undocumented status. This study disrupts current racialized narratives about what it means to be Asian and what it looks like to be undocumented.

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is divided into two sections—the first being a review of the literature and the second being the theoretical framework which are two critical components that have informed my conceptual framework of the study. I begin the literature review by historicizing the racial construction and contemporary reconstruction of race or the racial formation of Asians and Asian Americans generally which is an important conceptual context to understand the next part of the literature review, how Asian American students are racialized in higher education. Then, I weave in a review of the scholarship on undocumented students in higher education with a deeper discussion on the literature that focuses on race. Thus, the literature review section of this chapter is divided into three sub-sections: 1) The (Re)construction of Race: Yellow Peril and "Model Minority," 2) The Racialization of Asian Americans in Higher Education, and 3) Undocumented Students in Higher Education. After reviewing the literature, I discuss the theoretical framework that uses double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), critical consciousness (Freire, 2000), and liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006) to examine the stories of undocumented Asian students in higher education, and more specifically, how they navigate, negotiate, and resist their racialized realities at the intersection of race and undocumented status.

Literature Review

The Construction of Race: Yellow Peril and "Model Minority"

Fixtures of the yellow peril stereotype were installed in the Western social imaginary based on essentializing the construction of Asian "Oriental" identity due to centuries of Western colonialism in "The East" (Said, 2014). Therefore, the racialization of Asians and Asian Americans must be understood through a historical lens of colonialism (Nakayama, 1977). The concept of racial meanings cannot be viewed through a narrow lens of domestic relations because

ascribing, assigning, and attaching racial meanings to a group are ultimately about legitimizing Western colonialism and imperialism while erecting West/White identities as superior (Okihiro, 1994). In other words, when portrayals of Chinese laborers as heathens and unassimilable in newspapers in the 1850s, racial features of the yellow peril had already infiltrated the national consciousness of the United States thus reinforcing a racial narrative that Chinese (yellow) persons were an economic and cultural threat or a peril to American society (Tchen & Yeats, 2014).

Firstly, I define racialization as a process through which racial meanings are ascribed, assigned, and attached to a particular group of people that contributes to the maintenance of racial inequity and reproduction of racism (Omi & Winant, 2015). Literature on the racialization of Asian Americans as either the yellow peril or "model minority" discuss these racial tropes as if they were constructed in different eras—even chronologically dividing headings in peer-reviewed articles and books as "Yellow Peril" first followed by "The Model Minority," as if the construction of the yellow peril came prior to the model minority stereotype. Okihirio (1994) argues that the yellow peril-model minority dialectic, "although at apparent disjunction, form a seamless continuum" (p. 141) where they "are not poles denoting opposite representations along a single line, but in fact form a circular relationship that moves in either direction" (p. 142) that maintain and justify White supremacy. Legal scholar Frank H. Wu (1995) adds that although the "model minority" took its more contemporary shape in the 1960s, ideas of Asians being "model" people came before then.

> "[Chinese] are more obedient and industrious than the negro, work as well without as with an overseer, and at the same time are more cleanly in their habits and persons that the freedmen. . . . The same report come from all the sugar estates where they have been introduced, and all accounts given of them by planters in

Arkansas, Alabama, and other States where they are employed in the culture of cotton." – Southern Press in 1850s (as cited in Wu, 1995, p. 231)

"Undoubtedly the underlying motive for this effort to bring in Chinese laborers was to punish the negro for having abandoned the control of his older master, and to regulate the conditions of his employment and the scale of wages to be paid him."
– Reconstruction Governor of Arkansas (as cited in Wu, 1995, p. 231)

The excerpts above provide an example as to how journalists and political leaders in the 1850s demonized Chinese immigrants as foreigners while simultaneously praising them as workers who were more obedient and industrious than Black laborers. In other words, Chinese laborers were concurrently *ex*cluded (as foreigners) and *in*cluded (due to their perceived work ethic) in U.S. society with the intent of exploiting and policing the behavior or recently freed Black slaves. Therefore, the ideological origins of the simultaneous construction of both the yellow peril and model minority stereotypes are rooted in anti-Blackness.

Resurrection of "Model Minority" and Positioning as "Honorary Whites"

The model minority stereotype took its more contemporary shape in the 1960s based on the narrative depictions of success achieved by Japanese and Chinese Americans in two news sources (Osajima, 2000; Zia, 2000). A sociologist, William Petterson, published the first article on January 9, 1966, entitled "Success Story, Japanese-American Style" in the *New York Times. U.S. News and World Report* published the second article, "Success of One Minority in the U.S." on December 26, 1966. Both articles tell a story of two Asian groups who experienced ostracization due to U.S. immigration laws and policies, physical assault, employment and housing

discrimination, and adversities in obtaining citizenship based on race. Yet, Japanese and Chinese Americans are portrayed as having "survived discrimination," (U.S. News and World Report, 1966, p. 7) essentially overcoming racism all because of their hard work, discipline, and obedience rooted in Asian cultural values. Within this narrative told about Japanese and Chinese Americans, both articles juxtapose their success to "problem minorities" (Petterson, 1966, p. 21), alluding to the Black community who were depicted as depending on "welfare checks" and "complaining about [their] hardships" (U.S. News and World Report, 1966, p. 6). Consequently, these articles refuel a narrative of competition that pits Asian Americans against other racially minoritized groups, specifically Blacks and position Asian Americans in proximity to Whites because they reached numerical parity with Whites socioeconomically and in education (Hirschman & Wong, 1984; Louie, 2004; Ong et al., 1994). Most significant to note is that this racial narrative of the "model minority" ascribed to Asian Americans was leveraged to advance arguments that racism no longer existed—because if one group "could climb over the highest barriers of [racism]" (Petterson, 1966, p. 43) and "survived discrimination," (U.S. News and World Report, 1966, p. 7) why can't other others?

The articles in *New York Times* and *U.S. News and World Report* became supporting narratives for the Moynihan Report that was published in the previous year by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The Moynihan Report of 1965, formally entitled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, attributes high poverty rates in the Black community to the Black family structure calling it a "tangle of pathology" that was born from slavery. More specifically, the Moynihan Report argues that there were too many single-headed households run by Black women who were incapable of raising children on their own thus blaming Black culture for its own economic failures which discounted generations of structural racial inequality and anti-Black racism. Thus, the

contemporary formation of the model minority stereotype successfully took its conceptual shape about Asian Americans in the national consciousness because their racial narrative reified stereotypes about Black culture which have been firmly fixed since the days of slavery (Lee, 2010). In other words, the "model minority" narrative had less to do with the actual success of Asian Americans and more about reinforcing a racialized narrative about the failures of the Black community in the U.S.

On the political front, the "model minority's" contemporary formation during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s aimed to delegitimize the Black Power Movement fighting for racial equity and "[diffuse] Black militants' claims that America was fundamentally a racist society" (Osajima, 2000, p. 450). A conceptual function of the "model minority" is to reproduce anti-Blackness due to the ways Blacks are racialized in relation to the way Asian Americans are racialized; belief in this racial narrative methodically removes systemic racism and structural inequality from racial discourse, and consequently extends ideologies of individualism and meritocracy and fueling neoliberal policies in education (Chen & Buell, 2018; Rhee, 2013). It can then be argued the ways Asians and Asian Americans have been racialized is part of a systematic design with an intended purpose to maintain White racial domination and hegemony (Chang & Kiang, 2009; Lee, 1999; Okihiro, 1994; Park, 2008; Wu, 2002).

Repositioning as "Ideologically Black"

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Cellar Act, catalyzed the ethnically diverse demographic changes in the U.S. Individuals immigrating to the U.S. were now coming from Asia, Central and South America, and Mexico rather than Europe. The group of Asian immigrants who came to the U.S. post-1965 were different from previous groups; they were coming from lower or working socioeconomic backgrounds and had less formal

education (Takaki, 1989). Many of whom were also Southeast Asian refugees resettling in the United States. This new group of Asian immigrants did not fit the current narrative of the "model minority," which had symbolic consequences for the ways they were racialized and repositioned in the racial order no longer in proximity to Whiteness, but as "ideologically Black."

Education scholars have built on the work of cultural anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1999), who describe the racial negotiations of non-White immigrants when they arrive to the U.S.—that they are either "ideologically Whitened" or "ideologically Blackened" based on their socioeconomic status. Scholars who have studied processes of racialization in regard to Asian and Asian American immigrant students have found that those who do not fit the mold of the "model minority" or cannot achieve academic measures of success are labeled as "ideologically Black" (DePouw, 2012; Lee, 2005; Reyes, 2007; Uy, 2018). Different from previous studies that focused on the experiences of East Asian students, these studies fill an empirical gap in the literature by centering the experiences of Southeast Asian students, who are part of the more recent wave of Asian immigration and provide more nuance to what it means to be Asian through the accounts of students themselves. Racializing Asian American students as "ideologically Black," however, uncover the conceptual limitations we have in understanding and explaining race. What I mean by that is when the racialization of Southeast Asian students did not fit a narrative in relation to Whites, the explanations based on empirical observations regarding the behaviors of Southeast Asian students were that students were displaying behaviors and characteristics of racialized perceptions and constructs of Blackness. And in doing so, the racialization of Southeast Asian students reproduced anti-Blackness in a different way than that model minority stereotype because this time, academic failures were explicitly associated with being racialized as "ideologically Black."

Additionally, findings from the ethnographic studies of Lee (2005) and Reyes (2007) illustrate how Southeast Asian American immigrant students partake in the process of racialization through negotiating contradictions and obscurities in how they are racialized by others that affect the ways they navigate everyday life and interactions with others. This repositioning of Asian American students' social location[5] in the racial order in proximity to Blacks reveal three conceptual insights in the literature. First, Asian American racialization is still bounded in a framework of the Black and White binary. In other words, how race is reconstructed for Asians will either move their position in two directions, one towards Whiteness or the other direction, towards Blackness. Second, within this binary framework of race, Asian and Asian American students are treated as passive objects in the discourse of their racialization, where race is ascribed for non-White immigrants, like Asians who are either "White*ned*" or "Blacken*ed*" (Ong, 1999). Lastly, the racial dichotomy in which Asian racialization occurs reinforces anti-Blackness because Whiteness and its properties (Harris, 1993) are treated as superior. For example, in the previous section, when Asian Americans have shown to be academically successful and reach a class status that has surpassed other historically racially minoritized groups and Whites, they are labeled as "model minorities" and honorary Whites which position them in proximity to Whiteness. This third conceptual insight also make clear and recognizable in the literature that the historical construction and reconstruction of race regarding Asian Americans is relational to the reconstruction of Blackness—in that the ways Asian Americans are racialized continue to be

[5] I use the term social location instead of social identity when referring to race because I locate race in a system of racism that is structurally depicted as a racial matrix or field based on Emirbayer and Desmond's (2015) racial theory of the racial order. A location is a place that can be moved as opposed to the term identity, which is characterized at the individual level to qualities, beliefs, values, and looks. In this study, the social location of Asian Americans in the racial order continue to shift; they have no static location based on ways they as a racial group are racialized depending on their constructed relationship to other racialized groups during a particular sociohistorical context.

rooted in anti-Blackness which itself reproduce anti-Black racism ideologies, thus upholding racial inequality and White supremacy.

Racialization of Asian Americans in Higher Education

Robert T. Teranishi opens with a critical question in the introduction of his book *Asians in the Ivory Tower: Dilemmas of Racial Inequality in American Higher Education*: "What's wrong with a positive stereotype?" (Teranishi, 2010, p. 3). Ten years after the publication of this book, scholars have debunked and deconstructed the model minority stereotype with empirical evidence demonstrating what *is* wrong with *this* seemingly positive stereotype. Yet, this question still rolls off the tongue among faculty, staff, and students in higher education discourse about Asian American students (Assalone & Fann, 2017). Therefore, the dilemma of racial inequality in U.S. American higher education remains for Asian and Asian American students who are de-minoritized while also being treated as a racial mascot in the affirmative action debate, which are further discussed in the following sub-sections below. It no longer suffices to keep debunking the model minority myth because this racial narrative remains pervasive in higher education and public discourse even though there is lineage of empirical evidence showing its fabrication.

De-Minoritized

When the model minority stereotype took its more contemporary shape in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement, it was reinforced in subsequent years to remain permanently fixed as a racial narrative to explain Asian American success. For example, after the two articles lauding Japanese and Chinese American success were published in 1966, two more articles reiterated the same narrative in the 1970s. *Newsweek* published "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites" on June 21, 1971 and the *Los Angeles Times* wrote a piece called "Japanese in U.S. Outdo Horatio Alger" in October 17, 1977. Newspapers cemented a narrative of academic and economic success in the

social consciousness about Asian Americans (they were even *outwhiting* the Whites) while simultaneously implying how the challenges within Black, Latin*, and Indigenous communities were based on culture rather than generational systemic racism and structural inequality. During this historical period writer Frank Chin wrote in 1974, "Whites love us [Asians] because we're not Black," thereby reckoning with a racial reality that is again, rooted in anti-Blackness.

Racial narratives in the media about Asian Americans that have shaped public discourse has had an impact on the ways Asian American students have been racialized in higher education. It did not help that the College Board published a report called *Reaching the Top*: *A Report of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement* in 1999 that concluded that Asian American students did not face educational barriers thus reinforcing the model minority myth. Scholars and policymakers have critiqued the methodological design of the report which only included East Asian students in the sample and then collapsed the data on Asian American students with White students. Still, once the report was published, there was no turning back. The racialization of Asian American students in higher education has had both symbolic and material consequences that have affected their educational experiences and opportunities (Chun, 1980; Gupta et al., 2011; Hurtado & Guillermo-Wann, 2013; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus et al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2016; Suzuki, 2002). Symbolically, Asian American students have not been considered in policy and social definitions of "minority" which then has materially shaped the ways they have been de-minoritized or "[removed from] from minority services and programs in higher education" (Lee, 2006, p. 13). Historically, Asian American students were not considered to be applicants in minority scholarships and recruitment for minority students for admissions due to the ways universities constructed and defined racial groups, which excluded Asian American students from the definition of "minority" (Takagi, 1992). On top of their exclusion from resources in colleges,

philanthropic organizations like Gates Millennium Scholars Program and scholarships sponsored by the Ford Foundation initially excluded Asian American students as qualified applicants (Doan, 2006; Park & Chang, 2010) thereby financially hindering their access to postsecondary education, especially for Asian Americans who came from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The justifications for de-minoritizing Asian Americans have relied on their racialized representations as self-sufficient students succeeding academically in addition to a perception of high numerical representations on college campuses (Lee, 2006). Asian American students have been described as "hordes" like in a video created by former University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) student Alexandra Wallace that went viral in 2011. The term "hordes" conjures images of a large group taking over thus reviving the yellow peril stereotype in a higher education when there is a large demographic representation of Asian American students on a campus. While the model minority stereotype prevails and is more recognizable in higher education literature, it is survived by relics of the yellow peril that is evoked when Asian and Asian American students are viewed as academic competition because they have outperformed their White peers or perceived as overrepresented at elite Ivy league institutions (Wu, 1995); when in fact, approximately half of Asian American students are enrolled in community colleges (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education [CARE], 2008).

Racial Mascot and Affirmative Action

Opponents of affirmative action have painted a portrait that Asian American students are victims of affirmative action policies in college admissions although empirical evidence proves no harm has been done to Asian American students who do not go to their first-choice college or university (Nguyen et al., 2020). This contemporary narrative, however, has not always been the dominant story. Dana Y. Takagi (1990) documents the shift in discourse regarding Asian American

students and college admissions from 1983 to 1990 through her use of interviews, documents, and collection of media stories. Takagi finds that elite universities like Brown and Stanford conceded bias in their admissions process towards Asian Americans. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights investigated UCLA and Harvard and found UCLA responsible for discriminatory practices but cleared Harvard of charges (Takagi, 1990). While Berkeley was not investigated, the Chancellor of the time, Ira Michael Heyman, publicly apologized for "disadvantaging" Asians Americans in the admissions process in 1989 (Takagi, 1990; Wang, 1995). Then Professor of UCLA School of Law Jerry Kang described and termed the discrimination against Asian American students in college admissions that favored Whites as "negative action" (Kang, 1996). However, in 1989, neoconservative intellectuals and politicians leveraged the discrimination happening to Asian American students in admissions and redirected the cause to affirmative action as opposed to addressing institutional racism that manifests in admissions practices (Nakanishi, 1989; Takagi, 1990).

A resurgence of this narrative in the late 1980s has informed the contemporary affirmative action debate, where Asian American students have been used as racial mascots. The term racial mascot was first used by legal scholar Sumi Cho at a conference in 1994. Cho introduced it as:

> The adoption of a racial group, or even an individual of color by a white political figure or constituency—a practice I refer to as mascotting—is necessary to deflect charges of racism and preserve the redeemed status of whiteness. Indeed, is it possible to imagine a winning campaign by the anti-affirmative action movement absent the conservative deployment of racial mascots? It hasn't happened yet (as cited in Allred, 2007, p. 69).

As a racial mascot in affirmative action discourse, Asian American students are portrayed stereotypically as models of success due to their hard work and discipline (Allred, 2007). Using Asian American students as a racial mascot has become a political tactic for neoconservative politicians to argue that Asian American students are victims of affirmative action policies which then shield them from charges of racism by opposing affirmative action (Allred, 2007; Chin et al., 1996; Takagi, 1993). Although Asian American students were historically included in affirmation action, they are rarely recognized as beneficiaries because they are perceived as overrepresented in selective higher education institutions (Lee, 2008).

In the current affirmation action discourse, Poon and Segoshi (2018) argue that the current literature frames Asian Americans as passive objects of their racialization. In other words, the process of racialization is done on to them—racial meanings are ascribed, attached, and assigned *to* them—without examining how Asian Americans can also engage in this process. Their study uncovers a significant contribution to the literature in that they find how Asian American advocacy groups racialized themselves to influence the affirmative action debate that complicates our understanding of the reconstruction of race for Asian Americans. Within Asian Americans' attempt to racialize themselves, Poon and Negoshi (2018) discover an "ideological rift" (p. 259) among the ways Asian American advocacy groups presented racialized depictions about who Asian Americans are and how they are impacted by affirmative action. Their study confirms how the racialization of Asian Americans is "continuously contested and negotiated within and among racial groups" (Kim, 1999, p. 107) thus suggesting additional future research to examine the ways Asian Americans engage in processes of racial formation.

Higher education scholarship that that focuses on race and examines the racialization of Asian American students are primarily situated in affirmative action discourse. Thus, there exists an empirical gap about what we know about the racialization of Asian and Asian American students in higher education outside affirmative action. We have yet to examine how race functions and is reconstructed in the contemporary system of racism that continues to reposition Asian American students in the racial order for an intended purpose.

Undocumented Students in Higher Education

U.S. laws and policies communicate in written documents that it is illegal to discriminate against individuals based on race, gender, and sex. Yet, being undocumented is the only social category where the law has been justified to exclude individuals based on their legal status, thus illegality is a legal construction that rationalizes and justifies the systemic discrimination and exclusion of people. For undocumented students with goals of pursuing higher education, they go through a process of what it means to be "illegal" because they have had access to public education in K-12 due to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982 which is not extended to postsecondary education (Gonzales, 2011, 2016). With 98,000 undocumented students graduating from high school each year (Zong & Batalova, 2019), higher education policymakers and practitioners must rely on researchers to understand their experiences that change with time and depend on state and federal policies.

The literature on undocumented students in higher education has increased within the past two decades. Scholars like Leisy J. Abrego (2006, 2008) is credited for the seminal pieces she published in the early 2000s that put undocumented students as a priority on the minds of policymakers in higher education. While many scholars have worked and conducted studies with undocumented students in K-12, research regarding this population's experiences in college

remained limited because not many were open to talk about their lives (rightfully so) with others. Immigration policies like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) gave some undocumented students a perceived sense of security with their status that has allowed them to talk openly with researchers, which in turn gave scholars the opportunity to empirically study the educational experiences of undocumented students beyond high school.

This body of literature has confirmed that legal status unquestionably impacts undocumented students' access to and navigation in postsecondary education (Abrego, 2006; Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Gonzales & Burciaga, 2018). Moreover, studies have demonstrated the specific challenges of undocumented students which include accessing and completing college due to financial aid policies (Bozick et al., 2015; Diaz-Strong et al., 2011; Flores, 2010; Ngo & Astudillo, 2019; Murillo, 2017; Villarrage-Orjuela & Kerr, 2017), navigating higher education as a system and in their daily experiences in college (Allen et al., 2018; Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018; Perez Huber & Malagon, 2007; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Teranishi et al., 2015), and figuring out viable pathways after graduating college (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010; Gonzales & Burciaga, 2018). Despite the structural disadvantages undocumented students face because of their legal status, another body of literature emphasizes their resilience, resourcefulness, and activism (Abrego, 2011; Chang, 2016; Enriquez, 2011; Muñoz, 2018; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012; Perez, 2012; Terriquez, 2015). As a result, these studies have informed state policymakers to pass state legislations allowing undocumented students to pay in-state resident tuition, lowering costs in attending college and higher education institutional stakeholders to create programs and services on campus geared to serve undocumented students (Gildersleeve et al., 2010; Sanchez & So, 2015).

While this literature is critical in providing insights into the experiences of undocumented college students, these studies did not examine the role of race that shape the various experiences of undocumented students, more specifically undocumented Asian students. In the most recent literature review of undocumented students in higher education from 2001 to 2016 (Bjorklund, 2018), out of the 81 sources in the article, two articles focused on Asian and Pacific Islanders (Buenavista, 2016; Chan, 2010). Furthermore, a more recent body of scholarship empirically shows that legal status is not the strongest determining factor in the postsecondary outcomes and opportunities of undocumented students—that race, too, plays a role (Enriquez, 2017; Hsin & Reed, 2019; Valdez & Golash-Boza, 2020). Yet again, these studies are divorced from understanding the overlapping nature of racism and illegality and what this layered interaction looks like in higher education which shapes undocumented students' perception and material reality of exclusion and inclusion on campus and the general undocumented community. As a result, this study aims to fill an empirical gap connecting the fluid, contextual, and relational nature of race and racialization that is continuously contested and negotiated with undocumented status among undocumented Asian students.

Additionally, my study aims to address a theoretical gap within the existing literature on undocumented students regarding race and racism in college. Theory building about race in the scholarship of undocumented students has been outpaced by empirical research. Studies on undocumented students often use Critical Race Theory (CRT) when examining race (Castro-Salazar & Bagley, 2010; Muñoz & Maldonado, 2012), yet these studies lack a racial theory that contextually define and operationalize racism to undergird the tenets of CRT. Other studies use frameworks drawn from sociology and education to analyze how political legislations, xenophobic social climates, neighborhood organizations, and institutional agents impact educational

opportunities for undocumented students (Golash-Boza & Valdez, 2018; Raza et al., 2019, Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). While this body of literature provides a comprehensive theorization of various social, political, economic, and institutional contexts, there is less theoretical consideration for individual characteristics like how race, legal status, and the interaction of the two plays out in these contexts. Moreover, a more recent body of literature that does use an intersectional approach (Enriquez, 2017; Valdez & Golash-Boza, 2020) confirms evidence from previous literature that race *does* matter in addition to gender and class. Yet, none of these studies, at its theoretical core, advance our understandings of the current structural dynamics of race or how race operates in a system during this contemporary period. Thus, I aim to fill a theoretical gap in the literature by using intersectionality as an analytical tool within the methodological design of the study and a theoretical framework undergirded by a racial theory like double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903). Additionally, I use critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) to understand how undocumented Asian themselves navigate, negotiate, and resists racialized narratives about who they are and what it means and looks like to be undocumented *and* Asian within a liminal space, which is informed by Menjívar's (2006) of liminal legality.

Much of the literature on the racialization of Asian and Asian Americans have been in relation to the ways Blacks have been racialized. For undocumented Asian students, we have yet to understand how race operates in their lives as it intersects with their undocumented status because their racialization enters another racial paradigm, a Latin* paradigm because the current undocumented narrative posits a Latin* lens. Sociologist Laura E. Enriquez's (2019) recent study on undocumented college students' experiences through a relational theory of race has been the most promising in beginning to understand the contradictory experiences of undocumented Asian students' perception of both exclusion and inclusion on campus. While Enriquez (2019) does not

solely focus on undocumented Asian students, the contribution of her work has revealed “how the construction and experience of illegality are deeply racialized” (p. 258). This is where my study departs from the current literature and aims to build on to the former works of scholars who study race, immigration, and higher education to make the explicit connections where the throughline has not been drawn yet.

From this literature review, we learn in the first section that the historical construction and reconstruction of race and the ways Asian Americans have been racialized is rooted in anti-Blackness. As a result, these racialized narratives about “Asian” and “Asianness” have been used to advance abstract liberal ideologies of meritocracy and individualism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). In the second section, we learn that the racial discourse on Asian American students in higher education de-minoritizes or removes them from minority services and programs and treats them as racial mascots in the affirmative action debate. Additionally, Poon and Segoshi (2018) show how Asian Americans can and *do* participate in constructing their own racial narratives and are not passive objects of their racialization. Lastly, the third section of this literature review has shown that the studies of scholars within the last two decades have been instrumental in shaping the state and institutional policies to support undocumented students’ pathways to higher education. While this body of literature has had significant empirical contributions in the higher education literature about undocumented students, these studies have yet to theorize race and its relationship to undocumented status that focus on the racialized narratives of undocumented Asian students. The purpose of this study is to bridge the empirical gap across race and immigration in higher education with a focus on undocumented Asian students and develop a cognitive frame to understand how oppression is experienced, navigated, and resisted at the intersection of race and undocumented status.

Theoretical Framework

The experiences of undocumented Asian students are unique in that they occupy a racialized liminal space at the intersection of race and undocumented status. This liminal space is layered with two processes of racialization, where: 1) undocumented Asians' racial identity is racialized with associations connected with the "model minority," or a minority who is academically successful, without challenges, and has overcome racism, and 2) undocumented status as racialized to be primarily a Latin* issue. Cho (2017) names this dilemma a "double-bind" and defines it as a shield by not being perceived as undocumented, where one can fly under the radar while simultaneously not receiving immediate access to resources or services for being undocumented since the contemporary undocumented narrative posits a Latin* lens. To answer the research questions of this inquiry, and more specifically, examining how a racialized liminal space is navigated, negotiated, and resisted by undocumented Asian students in higher education, I combine theories of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), critical consciousness (Freire, 2000), and liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006). Using these three concepts as theoretical anchors for the inquiry allowed for an intersectional and multi-faceted analysis, where double-consciousness gave insight to the racial analysis. Critical consciousness contributed to a frame to understand how participants acted in resisting their racialized subjectivities. And lastly, liminal legality offered insights as to how migration or legal status is theorized within a concept of liminality or an in-between, precarious space.

Double-Consciousness

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—

> an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1903, p. 2)

In Du Bois's (1903) seminal work *The Souls of Black Folks*, he described double-consciousness through his own lens as an African American man and more broadly, the experiences of Black men in U.S. society. In a widely cited excerpt above, we see Du Bois (1903) describing this lens of double-consciousness as a "peculiar sensation," where Black folks were able to simultaneously understand their racialized reality as Black in the United States through their own lived experiences and how others saw them. As a theoretical concept, double-consciousness is still relevant in ways we understand race and racialization. Moreover, Du Bois (1903) describes the ways Black individuals in the United States see themselves through what Du Bois called the veil. Du Bois used the veil as a metaphor that represents a separation of Blacks from the White world. Through the veil, however, Black folks have been able to cultivate a type of "two-ness:" one way of looking at oneself through the eyes of others and at the same time, the other way of understanding oneself based on one's actual reality.

Double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), as part of the conceptual framework of this inquiry, is relevant in making sense of the data and answering the research questions. As a theoretical anchor, it allowed me to analyze participants' understanding of their racialized selves in relation to racialized stories in broader society about race, immigration, and undocumented status in higher education. Double-consciousness as experienced by undocumented Asians is unique in that they are able to use this awareness or seeing a racialized subjectivity through the White (colonial) gaze (Chou & Feagin, 2008) as "model minorities," to strategically navigate

their material reality as undocumented due to the ways that undocumented status, illegality, and immigration has been racialized as a Latin* issue (Alcalde, 2016; Armenta, 2016; García, 2017; Menjívar, 2021).

Critical Consciousness

While double-consciousness is a useful theoretical tool to understand how one navigates and negotiates racialization, it is without limitations. Double-consciousness strictly focuses on a racial analysis; therefore, I combine Freire's (2000) conceptualization of critical consciousness to address the distinct ways undocumented Asian students from this inquiry navigated, negotiated, and *resisted* the racialized processes that they experienced at the intersection of race and undocumented status.

Freire (1970) initially conceived the term conscientização[6] or critical consciousness in his work with adult labors in Brazil. Freire recognized that systemic inequities are maintained when the individuals who are affected the most were unable to understand and make sense of the social conditions that shaped their lives. He then proposed a cyclical relationship between critical analysis, sense of agency, and critical action. In other words, critical consciousness can be understood as one's perception of their "social, political, and economic contradictions, and [taking] action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2000, p. 35). Critical consciousness as a theoretical tool, combined with double-consciousness, gives way to analyze the ways participants in this inquiry navigated and negotiated while also *resisted* racialized subjectivities and processes. Moreover, critical consciousness aligns with the broader framework within the methodological design of this inquiry that is desire-based (Tuck, 2009). In other words, as a theoretical concept, it shapes the analysis of this critical narrative inquiry in a way

[6] In Portuguese, conscientization or critical consciousness is translated from conscientização.

that focuses on participants' agency or sense of power within oppressive structures and critical action through daily individual resistance against their oppressive conditions (Martin, 2003). The combined use of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) then can provide a more expansive, intersectional, and multi-faceted analysis of data or participants' stories within this inquiry.

Liminal Legality

Moreover, I use Menjívar's (2006) concept of liminal legality to conceptualize the liminal space that undocumented Asian students must navigate regarding their legal status. By combining Menjívar's (2006) theorization of liminal legality with double-consciousness, I can examine liminality through an analysis of race. This is particularly key to the inquiry because as mentioned before, undocumented Asian students experience two processes of racialization at the intersection of race and undocumented status. Liminal legality offers a window into the precarious nature of their statuses whether participants had or did not have DACA for this inquiry. Additionally, how participants in the inquiry experienced liminal legality is compounded with racialized processes, which result in experiencing a racialized liminal space that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status. Double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) then offers insights as to how participants from this inquiry used a specific set of adaptive strategies and copying mechanisms to navigate this racialized liminal space.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Inquiry and Research Questions

To reiterate, the purpose of this inquiry is to create a cognitive frame to understand the racialized realities that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status through the stories of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California. More specifically, I analyze how undocumented Asian students experience liminality at the intersection of race and undocumented status. The following research questions guide this study with aims of answering the broader question: *What can researchers and scholars in higher education learn about how the intersection of race and undocumented status is experienced through their understanding of undocumented Asian students' stories?*

1. How is the story of undocumented immigration told from the perspective of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California, who overstayed their visa?"
2. What racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness" do undocumented Asian undergraduate students understand?
    a. How do undocumented Asian undergraduate students use this understanding to navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey?

Research Design

This qualitative study used critical narrative inquiry as a methodology. Narrative inquiry's intellectual roots originate from anthropology and sociology. Jerome Bruner (1986) has been credited to establish narrative inquiry as a legitimate form of methodology in social science research, and the term made its entrance in the field of education through D. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly's article published in *Educational Researcher* in 1990. In the article,

Clandinin and Connelly argue that “narrative inquiry embodies theoretical ideas about educational experience as lived and told stories” (Kim, 2019, p. 18). Narrative inquiry, then, can be used in educational research since narrative is an approach to organize human experience because humans lead storied lives as individuals (individually) an in relation to others (socially). Simply put, “the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 2) since life’s narratives are the context for making meaning and sense of situations.

This inquiry, however, is distinct from traditional narrative inquiry in that I used a critical paradigmatic position instead of an interpretive one (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022). In other words, I explored and understood the ways participants in this inquiry constructed meaning of their stories and experiences, couched in varying and changing social contexts, with an emphasis to the dialectic dialogues between our relationship as researcher and participant (Pino Gavidia & Adu, 2022). Simply put, while participants shared their stories, I constantly moved between spaces of sociality, temporarily, and place (Clandinin et al., 2007) while paying close attention to how we simultaneously were co-constructing knowledge through storytelling due to our dialogues. Moreover, a critical paradigm posits that “narratives do not spring from the minds of individuals but are social creations” (Smith & Sparkes, 2005, p. 3).

I used critical narrative inquiry to attend to and contend with ambiguities and contradictions at the intersection of race and undocumented status that cannot be accurately painted in statistical portraits. To make certain that the examination of racialization is not an abstract concept floating in the ivory tower or detached from daily realities, this inquiry used a critical narrative mode of knowing, which attempts to understand the *meaning* of human actions and experiences, which have been shaped by their social, political, and economic contexts (Pino

Gavidia & Adu, 2022). The term narrative comes from Latin *narrat-* ("related," "told"), *narrare* ("to tell"), or late Latin *narrativus* ("telling a story"), which are all similar to Latin *gnârus* ("knowing") with origins from the ancient Sanskrit *gnâ* ("to know") (Kim, 2016, p. 6). Therefore, a narrative is a form of knowledge that has two parts, telling, as well as knowing (Kim, 2016). Historically, Asians in the U.S. were not permitted to tell their stories or sometimes, even talk (Kingston, 1980). Contemporarily, undocumented students engaged in activism are uplifting their stories through personal narratives. Using critical narrative inquiry then is meaningful for undocumented Asian students, who are knowledge carriers and tellers, because of its emphasis on their voice "that contain particular expressions and phrases with their own meanings and nuances, the cuttings from the cloth of languages" (Takaki, 1989, p. vii).

Ethics

Research ethics is at the heart of critical narrative inquiry, not because researchers are required to meet standards and guidelines of their institution's Institutional Review Board; ethical qualitative researchers have a responsibility to their participants in treating them not as subjects of a study, but humans who are trusting researchers to listen with empathy and honor their personal life stories when retold in the researcher's findings. Power dynamics exist in researcher-participant relationships, and one of the ways to offset this unequal scale is for researchers to embed reciprocity in the research not solely as a practice, but an embodied way of being in relation to their participants (Tachine & Nicolazzo, 2022). As a practice, qualitative researchers have often compensated participants for their time with gift cards, monies, or copies of published material like a book (Lareau, 2011). For this inquiry, I monetarily compensated each of my participants $30 per hour of participation throughout the research process. My participants are undocumented meaning I considered that they cannot legally work in the U.S.,

unless they have DACA, and are challenged to earn monies. To that end, I compensated all participants above the minimum wage with consideration that the cost of living in California is expensive[7]. The participants in this inquiry are also college students; attending college during the global COVID-19 pandemic can be a hefty cost and strenuous on a student and their family, especially for a student who is undocumented.

The truth, however, is that no amount of money can ever equate to the time participants gave and the stories of self they have shared with us, researchers. Therefore, I thoroughly thought about how to embody reciprocity throughout the research design from the first initial conversation with a participant to the last interview and how I, the researcher, analyzed, wrote, and shared the findings in this inquiry. Moreover, I took practical safeguards to ensure identities of undocumented participants were protected because their undocumented status offers no sense of legal protection. Therefore, I used pseudonyms throughout the study in all research materials, removed identifiers in transcripts, and reviewed and explained the consent form of the study with participants providing them an opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, I used a waiver to consent approved by the Institutional Review Board (allowing verbal consent) because signed consent forms are a potential risk for participants by linking their signed names on paper to their undocumented status (Hernández et al., 2013).

Access, Recruitment, and Participants

I have been involved and organized with a Southern California Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander educators' group with undocumented Asian and Asian American members since I moved and began my doctoral program in the fall of 2017. Additionally, I have worked with undocumented Asian students and undocumented students in mixed-status families

[7] The minimum wage in California during the time of data collection was $14.00 according to California Department of Industrial Relations.

as a former teaching assistant and have continued to mentor these students even after my formal role ended. Through my engagement in local community organizations and former work with undocumented students, I used social networks and recruit participants through snowball sampling (Patton, 2015) because undocumented Asians may not disclose their status as openly given the current context of COVID-19, when Asians and Asian Americans are more vulnerable to anti-Asian violence and racism. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: 1) students are those who are currently or have recently enrolled in postsecondary education since many undocumented students stopout or discontinue temporarily, 2) identify as undocumented, 3) identify as Asian, 4) between the ages of 18 and 29, and 5) attend or previously attended college in California to account for context that impact undocumented student reception. Participants' demographic profiles are below in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Profiles

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age Came to U.S.	Immigrant Generation	Country of Origin	DACA
Cel Jeon	Woman (she/hers)	Filipino	11	1.5-generation	Philippines	No
John Snow	Man (he/his)	Korean	7	1.5-generation	South Korea	No
Maria Ambrosio	Non-binary (they/them)	Filipino	13	1.25-generation	Philippines	No
Nabi Lee	Woman (she/hers)	Korean	1	1.75-generation	South Korea	Yes

Putri Susanto	Woman (she/hers)	Indonesian (Javanese)	3	1.75-generation	Indonesia	Yes
Raymond Smith	Man (he/him)	Filipino	4	1.75-generation	Singapore	No
Shannon Kim	Woman (she/hers)	Korean	9	1.5-generation	South Korea	Yes

Note. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals=DACA.

Data Collection

I combined two genres of narrative inquiry, biographical and arts-based, and collected spoken data (i.e., interviews and reflection community dialogues) and visual data (i.e., photographs) respectively to capture a more nuanced story about each participant; each form of data tells its own story (Keats, 2009). This inquiry used four phases in data collection (see Table 2) that allowed me to triangulate data for a more nuanced story about each participant that is necessary for a critical narrative inquiry. Below, I describe how I collected data and why I used a particular method to answer the research questions. This section is divided into six sub-sections. First, I contextualize what qualitative research, and more particularly, this inquiry, during COVID-19. And second, I describe each of the four phases of data collection: 1) screening, 2) life story interviews, 3) photovoice, and 4) group dialogue.

Table 2

Phases and Methods of Data Collection

Phase	Duration	Method
1	10 minutes	Screening (structured)
2	1) 1.5-2 hours	Interviews:

	2) 30-45 minutes	1) Life story interviews (semi-structured/unstructured) 2) Follow-up interviews (structured)
3	1-2 hours	Photovoice (unstructured)
4	1 hour	Reflection community dialogue (semi-structured)

Qualitative Research During COVID-19

Pre-COVID-19, qualitative researchers traditionally met in-person with participants when they collected qualitative interview data. Based on the current social circumstances due to the global pandemic, I collected data by speaking with participants on Zoom. This allowed me to take preventive measures and ensure the health and safety of my participants and myself. Prior to COVID-19, Zoom was used as a research tool to collect qualitative interview data, which was especially useful when participants and researchers were geographically dispersed (Archibald et al., 2019). Zoom is cloud-based video communications application that allows individuals to set up virtual audio and video meetings, webinars, and live chats with collaborative capabilities (Zoom Video Communications, Inc., 2019). Participants on Zoom do not need a registered account to attend a Zoom meeting and only need a meeting ID and a passcode, if the host requires it for an added layer of privacy. Moreover, Zoom is compatible with Mac, Windows, Linux, iOD, and Android operating systems. Those who do not have access to a computer, laptop, or tablet can also call in a Zoom meeting through a mobile device, which makes Zoom an application that is accessible for many people. An important technical element of Zoom is its ability to securely record and store sessions with the Advanced Encryption Standard 256. Zoom's system encrypts highly sensitive data (Zoom Video Communications, Inc., 2019), which is required for this study with a vulnerable population like undocumented students. In other

words, Zoom uses a one-time encryption key for that specific session only and cannot be accessed by third-party software, including Zoom.

Although Zoom uses advanced encryption and is a valuable technological tool for qualitative researchers in the time of COVID-19, I took an extra layer of precaution by not recording the interviews on Zoom. Even though I used Zoom as an application to connect with participants and collect data for this inquiry, I do not use the platform's recording function. Instead, I used an external device, a high-quality audio recorder to record the audio of the sessions with participants. This way, no video and audio files with the participant's image and voice was saved on the local or cloud server since I worked with a vulnerable population. I created a new meeting ID for each meeting with individual participants in addition to a passcode which eliminates any form of unwanted or disruptive intrusion, also known as Zoombombing.

Phase I: Screening

After recruiting potential participants for the inquiry, I met with each person via Zoom to see if they were eligible to be a part of the inquiry. The purpose of the screening was two-fold: 1) to see if potential participants were eligible and 2) if they were eligible, to understand, how if at all, they made meaning of their race and undocumented status. During the screening process, I first introduced myself and shared the reasons for conducting the inquiry. More specifically, I made explicit that while I identify as an immigrant myself—having immigrated to the U.S. at seven years old from the Philippines—I did not identify as undocumented due to the naturalization of my citizenship. I was upfront with my positionality and reasons for conducting this inquiry at the onset with potential participants to build rapport and trust. Second, I shared the purpose of the study using the study information sheet and asked five questions to determine their eligibility. If an individual was not eligible, I would thank them for their time and end the

Zoom session. If an individual was eligible, I would continue with the conversation and let them know that they were eligible for the study. Afterwards, I told participants that I would be asking them two questions to understand their experiences as someone who identifies as undocumented and Asian. I shared that these two questions would provide me an initial understanding of how they made meaning of their experiences that would shape what I asked during their life story interviews. Before asking the questions, I asked for verbal consent to record our conversation through the audio recorder. These two questions were structured the same for all participants and are below:

1. What does it mean to be an undocumented student who is Asian during this particular moment in time?
2. Describe a situation when you thought or felt being an undocumented Asian student impacted your experience.

I did not ask follow-up questions during this brief structured interview. My goal in asking these two questions was to gauge their understanding of how they made sense of their race and undocumented status based on how they answered the questions. Their answers helped me navigate the semi-structured and unstructured format of the life story interview, or the second phase of data collection. Additionally, I used participants' answers as a part of the larger analysis, where I was able to broaden, burrow, and restory (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) the data through critical narrative inquiry.

Phase II: Life Story Interviews and Follow-Up Interviews

After conducting screenings with each participant, I moved to the second phase of data collection and conducted semi-structured/unstructured, in-depth interviews through a life story approach. Life story interviews, as a method of data collection, allowed me to locate a

participant's narrative in a historical and social context because "personal narratives are never simply 'personal'" (Kim, 2016, p. 126). Furthermore, life story interview is a "method of looking at life as a whole and of carrying out an in-depth study of individual lives" (Atkinson, 2012, p. 116). Feminist curriculum scholar and narrative researcher, Petra Munro used life story in her work, *Subject to Fiction*, to "highlight gendered constructions of power, resistance, and agency" (Munro, 1998, p. 9). Informed by Munro's work that explored the effects of social structures on the lives of people, I used life story interviews because as a method, it provided an opportunity to examine the structural dynamics of race and its impact on undocumented Asian students' lives.

The life story interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I told participants we would be discussing three main themes within our conversation together: 1) their immigration story and how they became undocumented, 2) their story in accessing and experiencing higher education, and 3) their understanding of the intersection of race and undocumented status. Yet, they were unstructured after initial questions that touched on each of the three themes above. The unstructured format made it possible for participants to share what they wanted without feeling constrained with the direction of the research. Although the life story interview was primarily unstructured, explicitly communicating to participants the three main themes provided parameters that allowed me to answer the first and second research questions of the larger inquiry.

The structure of the life story interview is as follows. First, I took the first couple of minutes to ask how the participant was doing to build rapport, especially in a virtual setting like Zoom. Afterwards, I explained the structure of the life story interview. During this time, I asked for verbal consent again to record our conversation together through the audio recorded. Additionally, before beginning the formal interview, I asked the participant if they had any

questions prior to us beginning and me hitting record. After the life story interview ended, I explicitly told the participant, “I stopped recording,” to give a verbal cue that the formal interview process was completed. I, then, took the time to debrief with them for two to three minutes, which was not recorded on the audio recording device, to give space for participants to share anything they may be more comfortable sharing without having a device recording them. Although I did not record the short debrief sessions after the life story interviews, I took notes of exact words used by participants during this conversation and reflected on the entire data collection process through analytic memos. After the life story interviews, I followed up two days later with the next steps of the data collection process to provide participants and myself time to process our in-depth conversation together.

I conducted follow-up interviews after collecting and analyzing data from the life story interviews and photovoice sessions. The follow-up interviews were structured, which helped me clarify details within each participants’ story. This was the reason why it was important for me to have done analysis on the life story interviews and photovoice sessions because it provided me a more comprehensive picture of a participant’s story. The structured nature of the follow-up interview allowed me to fill in the gaps, where I needed more details to provide nuance in their stories. These interviews further helped me answer research questions one and two in the broader inquiry.

Phase III: Photovoice

After I spoke with each participant, we moved to the third phase of data collection. I used photovoice as a method to collect visual data or photographs, which then allowed me to answer the second and third research questions of the larger inquiry. Photovoice is an arts-based, qualitative participatory method that involves a “process by which people can identify, represent,

and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). Wang and Burris (1997) identified three goals of photovoice in developing the concept: 1) to enable to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns; 2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about community issues; and 3) to reach policymakers (p. 370). Photovoice has a transformative component because it uses images to deconstruct social problems through inquiry with participants acting as collaborators during the process. In this case, participants of the inquiry engaged in in co-constructing knowledge with the me, the researcher, who gave them an opportunity to analyze the data and make meaning and sense of their own life through the data. Through this method of collecting data, participants were not passive objects of others' interpretation of their lives, but rather subjects, active participators, in the ways they documented and engaged with how they saw their storied lives as undocumented Asian students. Photographs also serve as literal and metaphorical lenses of participants' narratives *being seen* and *as seen* through their eyes, especially if they have not disclosed their status to the general public.

What preceded the photovoice activity is as follows. First, I sent a follow up email after conducting the life story interview with directions of the photovoice activity. I asked participants to take photographs that answered the following question: What stories would you like someone to understand through your lens? More specifically, take photos that remind you of spaces that feel safe and like you belong as a person who is an undocumented Asian. I gave participants two weeks to take five photographs, and once they finished, they emailed the photographs to me. We then scheduled a time to meet over Zoom to discuss and analyze the photos together. Second, in between the time that participants shared their photos with me and our scheduled photovoice meeting, I created a MURAL board that displayed all their photos on one screen. MURAL is a

digital whiteboard, where multiple individuals and teams can visually collaborate in real time while using different computers. MURAL is free for educators and students. After I set up a MURAL board for each participant, I created a unique password for each of their boards, so they and I were the only individuals that could access their board. Lastly, I sent participants an email a day before our photovoice session to reminder them of our meeting. This email included their unique password to the MURAL board, directions to access the MURAL board using the password, a quick video that explained open and axial coding (Saldaña, 2015), and brief article that further explained open and axial coding in detail. Since we would be conducting co-analysis together, I gave participants resources to understand the coding we would engage with together.

When it was time to meet for the photovoice session, the participant and I logged into Zoom together and accessed the MURAL board on our individual devices. I first asked how participants were doing to continue to build rapport, as I got to know them through the third phase of data collection. Afterwards, I explained the structure of the photovoice activity. Then, I asked for verbal consent to record our conversation together and gave participants an opportunity to ask any questions prior to beginning the activity. I also shared with participants that we would be engaging in a two to three minute debrief unrecorded session—similar to the debrief we did together after the life story interviews. The photovoice activity began with participants sharing the story behind each photo and their reason for choosing this photo to answer the prompt for the activity. After participants engaged in visual storytelling about each of their five photographs, we proceeded with open coding. In addition to the video and article I shared with participants the night prior, I explained what open and axial coding was again and provided an opportunity to them to ask any clarifying questions. After conducting open coding together for each of the photos, participants and I engaged in axial coding, or breaking down the open codes we had

initially identified into core themes. This process allowed participants to engage in co-constructing knowledge with me, the researcher, because analysis required them to think deeply about their photos as data. This activity became a reflective process for them. For me, the researcher, the process gave nuance to answering the second research question while humanizing participants' stories and experiences, which gave insight to the third research question.

After I stopped recording our conversation during the photovoice activity, I said explicitly, "I stopped recording." I followed the same steps of debriefing with participants without the audio recorder recording our dialogue in the same way I did the life story interviews. This debrief remained consistent during each of the one-on-one interactions during data collection with participants to provide them space to think and say what they were comfortable sharing without being recorded.

Phase IV: Reflection Community Dialogues

Once I conducted life story interviews and photovoice sessions with all participants, I scheduled a reflection community dialogue with them. Ideally, there would have only been one reflection community dialogue, so all participants were able to meet one another. However, I divided the reflection community dialogues into two groups due to varying schedules of participants. Participants looked forward to this phase of the research process because they were able to meet other participants, and more specifically, other undocumented Asian students. Meeting others who identified as undocumented Asian was significant for many of them because participants did not have a space, where they could discuss their experiences as undocumented Asians. Additionally, the reflection community dialogues allowed me to humanize the research process and put into practice what a desire-based orientation (Tuck, 2009) looked like in

research. The conversation gave participants an opportunity to reflect and process out how they experienced the inquiry.

When I met with the two groups, I first asked how everybody was doing and provided five minutes to do an informal introduction. I also asked an icebreaker question to alleviate any stress or anxiety that may go into group dialogues with unfamiliar people. The introductions included participants sharing their names, pronouns (if they were comfortable sharing), major or program of study, and what they were doing at the time. The icebreaker question was, "If we were to have met in person, what is one food you would have liked to have eaten at our gathering?" I asked this question intentionally using my cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) because food has a quality of bringing people together. This way, participants can comment on one another's answer to build community prior to beginning the formal reflection dialogue. I did not record this initial conversation to build genuine rapport and community with one another off the record. After going over introductions, I then shared the purpose of the reflection community dialogue, asked for verbal consent prior to recording the formal dialogue, and asked if there were any questions prior to beginning our conversation together. The reflection community dialogue was semi-structured and asked about: 1) what participants' overall experience in the inquiry, 2) how it felt sharing an in-depth account of their immigration story and experiences of being undocumented, and 3) what participants learned from the inquiry process about themselves and about their story. After the semi-structured questions, I asked participants if they wanted to share their photo collage with others because this was a part of the data collection process that all thoroughly enjoyed and kept bringing up during the reflection community dialogue. I shared my screen to show each of their MURAL boards one by one, and each participant took turns telling stories about their photographs. While participants shared

stories behind their photos and reasons for choosing it as a part of the photovoice activity, other participants engaged with them through the Zoom chat. The reflection community dialogue built a sense of community with participants, and they exchanged personal information with one another afterwards.

Data Analysis

I worked with seven participants in this inquiry through five phases of data collection. This meant that I analyzed seven screening transcripts, seven life story interviews, 35 photos, seven photovoice transcripts, two groups dialogue transcripts, and seven follow-up interview transcripts that totaled 30 transcripts and 35 photos (see Table 3). I organized the codes and codebooks through MaxQDA, a qualitative research software the allowed me to upload and code transcripts and photographs. I used multiple forms of data analysis (see Table 3) to interrogate the relationship between image, voice, narrative, and theory to conduct a *critical* narrative inquiry. Distinct from a traditional form of analyzing narrative inquiry, I use thematic narrative analysis to identify themes across the narratives of all participants. Identifying themes in participants' stories in this inquiry is important because all the participants often do not hear stories about other undocumented Asian students. Drawing connections between their stories and naming them as themes in the analysis and then discussing these themes during member checks affirmed and validated their experiences—that they were not alone.

Table 3

Modes of Analysis

Phase	Method	Data Source	Modes of Analysis
1	Screening	Transcripts (7)	In vivo

2	Life story and follow-up interviews	Transcripts (14)	Thematic narrative analysis
3	Photovoice	Photos (35) Transcripts (7)	Co-analysis: Open coding and axial coding Individual analysis: thematic narrative analysis
4	Reflection community dialogues	Transcripts (7)	Thematic narrative analysis

In analyzing the data, I operated from a broader framework that is desire-based (Tuck, 2009) in the methodological design of this inquiry and a position the posits research as Projects in Humanization (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017). Additionally, I combined Delgado Bernal's (1998) notion of cultural intuition as an additional conceptual anchor in analyzing the findings for all the research questions. A researcher's cultural intuition "extends one's personal experience to include collective experience and community memory, and points to the importance of participants' engaging in the analysis of data" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, pp. 563-564). My positionality as an outsider within (Collins, 1986) as a 1.5-generation immigrant from Asia, and more specifically, the Philippines, who studies the intersection of race and immigration in higher education provided an essential ingredient to my cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) in attending to the human capacity as a researcher to center and sustain my relationship with participants throughout and after the inquiry (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017).

First, I analyzed the transcript from the screening using *in vivo*. I employed *in vivo* (Saldaña, 2015) to capture the exact language used by participants that focused on language around race and undocumented status. Using *in vivo* to analyze the transcript from the screening allowed me to gauge to what extent participants understood and could express the ways they made meaning of their race and undocumented status—in other words, gain an initial understanding of their critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). This way, I used *in vivo* intentionally to support how I navigated the second phase of the data collection process, or life story interviews. Second, I used thematic narrative analysis for the life story interviews, photovoice, and reflection community dialogues in an iterative systematic process and recursive process. A thematic narrative analysis is an inductive approach, which helped contextualize all the data using the conceptual framework of the inquiry. Thematic narrative analysis required me to sit and listen to the audio data prior to analyzing and coding the transcripts to train my brain to listen to the participant's voice. During this critical narrative inquiry, it was important for me, the researcher, to recognize and distinguish the voice *of* the participants rather than my own during analysis. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to this as wakefulness or being wakeful of the data. Wakefulness takes practice and time, so I listened to the audio data from the life story interviews, photovoice, and reflection community dialogues at least five times for each participant to listen to their voice as they were telling their stories. After listening to the audio data multiple times, I then analyzed the interview transcripts using narrative analytical techniques of *broadening* to contextualize and locate the participant's story in a broader sociohistorical and cultural context; *burrowing* to detail understandings, perceptions, and feelings or a certain event's impact on the participant; and *restorying* to reorder participant narratives into a coherent, chronological story because stories are not told linearly (Connelly &

Clandinin, 1990). This reconstructed story then became the narrative for further analysis, where I drew themes across the stories of all the participants to retell their narratives in the findings section of this inquiry.

For the photovoice session, I conducted co-analysis using open and axial coding with participants. Photovoice as a participatory method that focused on participants' contextualization and codification of the visual data to address unequal power dynamics between researchers and participants, treating participants as active interpreters (knowers and tellers) of their own lived experienced as opposed to mere reporters (Kim, 2016). After creating the initial codebook of open codes (see Table 4), I deleted duplicates and collapsed the open codes. There are some words with singular and plural that I kept since they are different words. For example, a participant had codes for both "brown" and "browns." One is plural, and I did not delete it because the singular is different from the plural form. This also showed up in another code "accomplishment" versus "accomplishments."

Then, I listened to the section of the audio data, where we conducted axial coding. This part of the photovoice activity is where I used thematic narrative analysis to identify themes that cut across the stories of all the participants' photos. Again, this is part of a broader iterative and recursive process in analyzing the data alongside the life story interviews and reflection community dialogues. Lastly, I strictly used *burrowing* as a mode of analysis for the follow-up interview because the purpose of the follow-up interviews was to fill the gaps within the participant's larger narrative.

Table 4

Photovoice Open Codes

Participant	Initial Number of Open Codes	Final Number of Open Codes

Cel	179	158
John	106	96
Maria	85	77
Nabi	110	100
Putri	116	112
Raymond	153	150
Shannon	139	131

Note. The initial number of codes include all the open codes, even duplicates on the MURAL board during the photovoice activity. The final number of codes are the collapsed version of the open codes, where the researcher deleted duplicates.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

To ensure methodological rigor, I practiced reflexivity by taking two steps back from the research (Dodgson, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2018). This meant that I studied, questioned, and dissected parts of my own point of view as a researcher by writing analytic memos before and after interactions with participants and during data analysis. Studying race ethically and rigorously means that I, the researcher, need to unearth unconsciousness assumptions and beliefs in my own thinking about race that may impede critical thought and analysis (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015). If not, I can fall trap to reproducing the same racial logics I am addressing in this inquiry. Additionally, I conducted member-checks after writing the major findings and provided an opportunity for each participant to comment on the findings (Creswell, 2014). Member-checks ensured that participants maintained their voice throughout the study, even during the active writing process of the findings. This way, participants felt empowered in

sharing their story, and at the same time, I was able to hold myself accountable in portraying their narratives accurately.

Limitations

This inquiry is not without limitations. The first being that the undocumented students from this study are those who were comfortable disclosing their status and working with a researcher. This means that we do not know the perspectives of the undocumented Asian students who chose not to disclose their status with others. Nonetheless, the perspectives of students from this study are still significant because they expanded the narratives about immigration to the U.S. and more specifically, how people become undocumented by overstaying their visas. Additionally, participants gave insight as to how undocumented can be experienced through a layered lens of race. The second limitation is that this inquiry's scope was bounded to participants in California. Using California as a geographic context, however, was critical to recruit participants who were willing to participate in the inquiry during a social context of COVID-19 where anti-Asian violence and racism had increased on top of the 45th administration that created a hostile climate towards immigrants; the state of California has a more receptive climate for undocumented immigrants generally and undocumented students more specifically in higher education institutions. The third limitation is that this inquiry took place during the COVID-19 global pandemic, which disrupted the traditional ways of conducting qualitative research. During this time, researchers needed to find alternative and innovative ways to continue conducting research while protecting the safety and health of their participants and themselves by means of physically distancing or not meeting in person. The contextual limitation of COVID-19, however, makes this study's relevance more compelling and timelier because COVID-19 provided a unique context to examine how the intersection of race and

undocumented status is experienced by undocumented Asian students, who may have experienced compounded layers of systemic oppression due to their marginalized identities. Even with these limitations, the findings from this critical narrative inquiry offer rich insight empirically, theoretically, and methodologically to the literature on race and undocumented students in higher education.

Positionality

After the U.S. federal government decided that it would give a one-time "stimulus" check to Americans at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I received a text from a friend, who initiated a request in a group text late March 2020. It read, "As you know, our friend, Maribelle (pseudonym) has had a ridiculously tough year. There are 12 of us on this thread. If we all donate $100 out of our relief check, she gets her relief fund too. If anyone willing? No shame or worries if you are unable. <3" Two people replied willing to donate their share, and I, too, said, "Also down," without hesitation. Although I am a doctoral student on a regularly tight budget, the COVID-19 pandemic urged me to be hypervigilant in preparing to mentally and financially support my parents who are essential workers, earning their wages by the hour. Even with a heightened sense of caution when it comes to my spending, I was quick to respond in a matter of seconds of reading the text without hesitation. You see, our friend Maribelle is undocumented. Even though she pays taxes, contributes to society through her profession, and in many ways, *is* a U.S. American, she and other undocumented individuals will not be receiving this relief check from the government because of their undocumented status.

My immediate response to agreeing to the request without further questions or thought revealed how much I carry *kapwa* in my way of being as a friend that has also translated itself into my identity as a researcher. Like many words in Tagalog (i.e., a language spoken by

Filipinos), *kapwa* does not have a direct translation in U.S. English even though some scholars have tried to explain it as a "shared identity" and "being with others" (Enriquez, 2004; Reyes, 2015). Tagalog is a language that has untranslatable depth because the meaning of each word spoken is felt and embodied in the way we know, live, and exist as a Filipino people. *Kapwa*, a cornerstone of Filipino values (Enriquez, 1978, 2004), can be described as seeing oneself as a part of others. This means there is a sense of care and responsibility to the village and each other as people because we see each other as one. I use village as a term intentionally because in the Philippines, we use *barangay*—a Tagalog term that translates to "village," which in U.S. English refers to what we know as neighborhoods or communities in the United States.

Because the concept of *kapwa* has been woven in the fibers of my being through my upbringing as a 1.5-generation immigrant from the Philippines, throughout this inquiry, I asked myself, "What does it mean to *care for* and *be responsible about* the ways I conduct my research to honor my participants' stories?" especially since I will be working with a vulnerable population such as undocumented students. Although I am an immigrant, who emigrated from the Philippines in January 1997 at seven years old, I am a naturalized U.S.-citizen and are not faced with the same challenges of undocumented folks. Moreover, there are power dynamics that exist in a researcher-participant relationship compounded with the fact that participants in this inquiry are undocumented and the researcher (me) is a U.S.-citizen. How, then, can I reduce the inequality as opposed to reproducing it when I design the study and implement my plan? This question brought me to the term reciprocity, a word becoming more ubiquitous in research design as it pertains to methodological ethics, yet still difficult to define and even more challenging to put into practice. Drawing knowledge from my cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) of how I have come to understand what reciprocity is without reading it in a book, I

thought about all the ways my parents modeled reciprocity in their relationship with others through *pakikisama*, or the ways they interacted and got along with other people through communal practices (Enriquez, 1992). Filipinos do not have a Tagalog word for reciprocity because it is cemented in the way we build and sustain our relationships through action.

As a qualitative researcher, I have a responsibility of conducting methodologically rigorous work while honoring the stories as they are told to me by participants, retold through my findings, and relived when read out loud. With an ontological position that is desire-based (Tuck, 2009) and research questions that seek to understand the stories of undocumented Asian students, who overstayed their visa in a way that humanizes their experiences, critical narrative inquiry is the most appropriate methodology in conducting this research study. Acknowledging that I worked with a vulnerable population during a sociopolitical climate of heightened xenophobia, critical narrative inquiry also made room to highlight ethical matters in research that prioritized protecting participants' identity, treated participants as co-constructors of knowledge throughout the study, and followed a recursive and reflexive process of engaging in research in a non-extractive manner.

CHAPTER IV: RESTORYING IMMIGRATION

> It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principles of nkali—how they are told, who tells them, when they are told, how many stories are told are really dependent on power. Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. (Adichie, 2009, 09:38)

I remember my social studies teacher in 7th grade saying that (his)stories are told by winners. I did not understand what my teacher meant as a 13-year-old. The K-12 curriculum in Virginia Beach, VA in the early 2000s did not allow me to develop a critical analytical lens in examining U.S. history, especially when it came to an understanding of race. A liberal arts undergraduate education was my first introduction to racial discourse in the classroom, where I watched Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk in 2009. The excerpt above is from Adichie's (2009) TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," where she critically engaged the audience to think about stories in relationship to power—those who have had power to tell stories, how many stories are told about a particular group of people, and in what ways stories are told about a particular group of people based on the perceptions of those who had have the power to tell them. We cannot separate our ability to understand stories about different groups of people in society without thinking about power, and the ways in which power concretely shapes a story of a people that becomes the single (dominant) story. Adichie's TED talk gave me an entry point in writing this findings chapter to interrogate what my 7th grade social studies teacher said

regarding the intersection of storytelling and power. This findings chapter further exposes the danger of a single story about 21st century immigration in the United States.

The purpose of this first findings chapter is two-fold: 1) to serve as an empirical counternarrative to the majoritarian narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) about contemporary immigration that posits a Latin* lens and 2) to use reauthoring (Farmer-Hinton et al., 2013; Rivers et al., 2021) as a tool to actively engage in the process of counter-storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In other words, this chapters provides empirical evidence of counternarratives from the narratives of undocumented Asian students *and* engages in counter-storytelling. Below I use parallel stories (Craig, 1999) as a narrative representational structure of reauthoring these stories (Craig, 1999). The parallel stories (Craig, 1999), which are stories of undocumented immigration in the U.S. and undocumented Asian students' stories of immigration to the U.S., answer the first research question of this inquiry, "How is the story of undocumented immigration told from the perspective of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California, who overstayed their visa?"

Parallel Stories: Stories of Undocumented Immigration in the U.S. and Undocumented Asian Students' Stories of Immigration to the U.S.

I use narrative representation forms in writing this chapter to present parallel stories (Craig, 1999) or two collections of stories that parallel one another in our current society about 21st century immigration. Craig (1999) uses parallel stories as a method in her study about a teacher's experience in school as she incorporates "the narrative of a school as an institution" with "the stories of a teacher's experiences within that school" (p. 401). In other words, the former is constructed from stories *about* a school, and the latter highlights an individual's story, and direct perspective, in working at that school. Stories *of* a school are often incomplete while

an individual's story, like the teacher in Craig's (1999) study, provides a more nuanced portrayal of how a school is experienced that centers the narratives of individuals working at these educational institutions. I adapt Craig's (1999) method of parallel stories as a representational form to present the stories of undocumented immigration and undocumented Asian students' stories of immigration. As a result, the latter parallel story (i.e., undocumented Asian students' story of immigration) contextualizes the experiences of participants in this study and acts as a counternarrative to the incomplete majoritarian narrative about immigration from the former parallel story (i.e., stories of undocumented immigration).

Stories of Undocumented Immigration in the United States: A Single Story

The current discourse on undocumented immigration is racialized with an emphasis on anti-immigrant rhetoric of Latin* bodies crossing the U.S.-Mexico border (Flores-Gonzales & Schachter, 2017; Selod, 2018). Contemporary stories of immigration, and more specifically, undocumentedness has been racialized as a Mexicanization of immigration (Menjívar, 2021). This phenomenon is better understood as racialized illegality (Enriquez, 2019; García, 2017; Menjívar, 2021) to capture "how undocumented immigrants experience illegality differently based on how they are racialized in the United States" (Enriquez, 2019, p. 258). Racialized illegality shapes the construction of a single story about undocumented immigration in the 21st century and has harmful consequences for Latin* communities, where Latin* immigrants are profiled and criminalized as undocumented, even if they are legal citizens of the United States (Alcalde, 2016; Armenta, 2016; García, 2017).

To understand the discourse surrounding undocumented immigration through the lens of participants from this inquiry, I asked them at the onset of their life story interviews what their current thoughts were about the narratives about undocumented immigrants crossing the U.S.-

Mexico border that is often emphasized in the media, and to what extent, if at all, did this narrative resonate with their experiences. While participants could empathize with the harsh realities of having an undocumented status in the U.S. when hearing stories about undocumented immigrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, this narrative did not resonate with any of them. This is simply because participants from this inquiry came to the U.S. through an authorized legal entry and became undocumented by overstaying their visa. Furthermore, the racialization of undocumented has further rendered undocumented Asians largely absent from the contemporary undocumented public discourse and scholarship in higher education (Chan, 2013; Cho, 2017; Salinas Velasco et al., 2015). Cel further elaborated on the racialized discourse of undocumented below:

> I feel like people don't like put me in that category of being undocumented because you know, like what we see in media, like they have this like reputation of like what undocumented looks like. And it’s mostly like, like Latinx community, they don't look at other, uh, race or ethnicity. . . . There's Black undocumented immigrants. There's like Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian immigrants, undocumented immigrants. So I feel like when people have told me like, “Oh, you don't look undocumented,” and it's just like, why would you put, uh, you know, a status on a race?

Above, Cel confirms the current scholarship about undocumented immigration being racialized as Latin*, especially as constructed through the media (Menjívar, 2016). Due to the racialization of undocumented as a Latin* issue, others do not have any preconceived notion or assumptions that she could possibly be undocumented. Cel, like all the other participants in this inquiry, are not racially profiled and criminalized on their college campuses for being undocumented because

of how undocumented is racialized. We also see can observe from this excerpt that when Cel has shared with others that she is, in fact, undocumented, they reply with, "Oh, you don't look undocumented," as if there is a particular "look" to being undocumented. This detail from Cel's excerpt confirms what Enriquez (2019) found in her study comparing the racialized experiences of undocumented Latin* and Asian students. Enriquez (2019) found that racial and immigrant stereotypes contributed to the construction of racialized illegality that conflated being Latin* with undocumented status. At the same time, undocumented Asians remained overlooked by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE; Enriquez, 2019), and doubted about their undocumented status even when they outright disclosed their status to others as we see towards the end of Cel's excerpt. The single story about undocumented immigration, and more specifically, how this topic is racialized as a Latin* issue not only has harmful consequences to the Latin* community; Maria shared below the impact of being overlooked and omitted from the contemporary undocumented public discourse has had on them:

> I think it's particularly dangerous to continue having that like that stereotypic okay—or sorry, the racialization of someone who is undocumented as being Latinx. It's particularly dangerous when you realize that non-Latinx groups are actually the fastest growing and like that's how our population is growing right now. Umm, and if we continue to be excluded from the undocumented narrative like a lot will, I don't know, it's just like—I feel like I'm just gonna, like everyone is just gonna face like the same things that I had to deal with, which aren't fun.

Maria's excerpt above shows her level of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) and understanding of the dangers to a single story, and more specifically, the harmful consequences

of undocumented being racialized as a Latin* issue for both Latin* and Asian immigrant communities. Although race in the U.S. is a social, political, and legal construct, race remains to have material consequences that shape the conditions of racialized individuals in the U.S. (Haney López, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014). In Maria's case along with the other participants in this inquiry, the racialization of undocumented as Latin* consequently excludes undocumented Asians from the larger undocumented narrative (Enriquez, 2019). Related to what Adichie (2009) said towards the end of her TED Talk, "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are *incomplete*. They make one story become the only story" (13:12). John went on to say:

> Because when I think about like the undocumented community as a whole—like a lot of people, when they think about undocumented, they think of undocumented people as, um, as like the Latinx community. Um, and, and like, I feel like something that the people in the outside don't really know is that, um, that the undocumented Asian community is growing. I think we said that in our last meeting that the undocumented Asian community is growing and the experiences that we go through are not always similar to the other undocumented communities, um, that we, uh, that we also face like our own unique challenges on due to, due to like how society views us.

Although Asians are the fastest growing racial group within the undocumented community (Kim & Yellow Horse, 2018), stories about undocumented Asians continue to be overlooked, untold, and omitted from the contemporary undocumented narrative. John, in his story above, recognized and knew that statistics around Asians being the fastest growing racial group within the undocumented community. Continuing to discuss the negative impact of an

undocumented status and the conditions in which individuals from Latin America become undocumented are important to our understanding of contemporary immigration, *and* we need to expand the scholarly and public discourse on immigration to include the stories of undocumented Asian students, as told through their perspective, so their unique challenges can be addressed.

This single story is particularly dangerous to Asians and Asian Americans, who live in a U.S. society of narrative scarcity (Nguyen, 2016), where there are a few stories told about Asians and Asian Americans. Narrative scarcity is a deprivation of representation, complexity, and nuance about stories of a certain race or community. In contrast, narrative plentitude is having an abundance of stories about a particular group of people to the point that we are able to understand their complexity as fully human (Nguyen, 2016). Too often, stories about undocumented Asian students are nonexistent in the discussion about undocumented students within the ivory towers although approximately 25 percent of undocumented students enrolled in higher education identify as Asian and Pacific Islander. This narrative scarcity (Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2021; Nguyen, 2016) about undocumented Asian students mold the cognitive frame in our social consciousness to render their existence *non*existent, making it difficult to imagine that an undocumented reality does exist for Asians and Asian Americans.

The impact of narrative scarcity on an individual level, and more specifically, the consciousness of a person was apparent for Cel, John, and Raymond who took a long pause when I asked them about what was particularly unique about their im/migration story and becoming undocumented. Cel responded to my question with, "I can't think of anything specifically about knowing what other people go through. So like how would I know my experiences are unique? I haven't heard of other stories." When Cel said this during her life story interview, she apologized for not understanding and answering the question. I immediately said

to her that her response gave profound insight about the dangers of a single story and more specifically, the dangers of hearing a single story about undocumented immigration. Because Cel, like so many other participants in this inquiry, has been socialized to see undocumented immigration as a Latin* topic as constructed by the media and public discourse (Alcalde, 2016; Menjívar, 2016) to the point that she did not know what other undocumented Asians have gone through—what their stories are because "[she] [hasn't] heard of other stories." Additionally, and noteworthy of pointing out is that Cel did not know her experiences (of immigration and becoming undocumented) were unique due to narrative scarcity (Nguyen, 2016). In other words, the single story about undocumented immigration permeated Cel's imaginary to the point that it consumed her own reality in a way that she even questioned her own existence as valid and true. Nabi's excerpt below exemplifies how narrative scarcity (Nguyen, 2016) can be internalized to the point that you begin to believe that your own story, your own life, is irrelevant to the eyes of others:

> I think also just not seeing it, not hearing about it makes me think, "It is irrelevant." It makes me think, "There's not enough people of like us, so others will care," or it's like it's just not as pressing of an issue just because I don't hear about it.

Nabi had to "unlearn and relearn" that her im/migration story and becoming undocumented was relevant. By unlearning the contemporary narrative of undocumented immigration, which tells a single story, and relearning that her im/migration story and how she and her family became undocumented is part of the broader narrative of immigration, she felt emboldened to say, "It is very important, and it's not political, it is just my damn life."

To combat the single story of undocumented immigration and expand the contemporary narrative about undocumented immigrants to include the narratives of undocumented Asians, I present counternarratives of the participants from this inquiry. I further engage in Lee and Ramakrishnan's (2021) call to action for social scientists to "work toward narrative plentitude by contributing to both research production and plentitude" (p. 1) in their article, "From Research Scarcity to Research Plentitude for Asian Americans." Through storytelling and me, as the researcher, seeking to understand what insights can be gained from our understanding of undocumented Asians students' stories in becoming undocumented, I restory undocumented immigration below using the counterstories of the participants in this inquiry.

Undocumented Asian Students' Stories of Immigration to the U.S.: Nuanced Stories in Becoming Undocumented

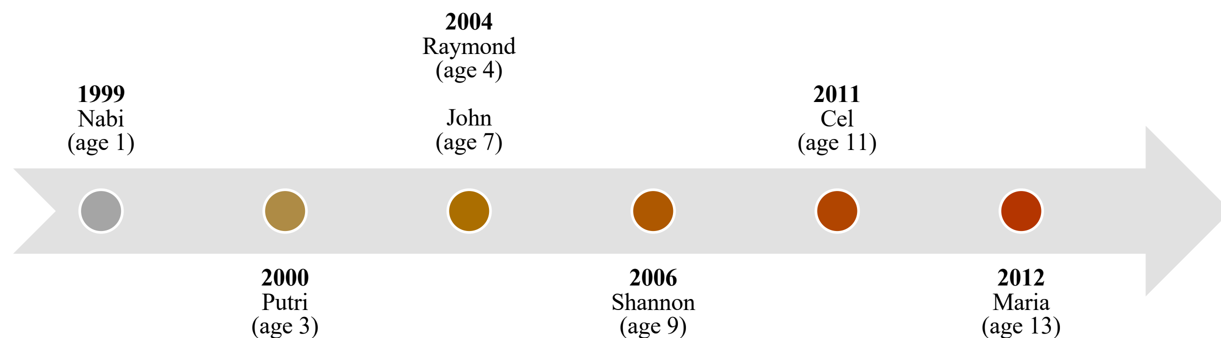
When I spoke with all seven participants during their life story interviews, at the beginning, they all said that they could not relate to the dominant narrative about undocumented immigration, which is a narrative about families and individuals crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Maria even mentioned that "thinking about borders is interesting" because of how borders are portrayed in the media as "very physical, very distinct like a wall." For Maria, they said:

> I didn't think that I really crossed the border [giggles]. You know, I didn't feel like it. I mean I definitely knew that I was like flying over the ocean. . . . Umm, it was—like we went over here with like a tourist visa. Umm, so like that entrance process was like completely legal for me, so I don't even know if there was like a border cross there. Umm, and it's just like the overstaying part that makes me undocumented.

Maria's excerpt shows that there were no physical boundaries or borders they encountered when immigrating to the United States on an airplane. When individuals fly across the ocean and enter the U.S., having crossed the United States "border" is not a main narrative. The concept of borders is socially constructed similarly to that of illegality in the U.S. (Flores & Schachter, 2018). The majoritarian narrative of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border to become undocumented did not resonate with Maria because to them, the act of coming to the U.S. on an airplane did not feel like they crossed a border. In fact, they emphasized that entering the country was a "legal" act; having overstayed their visa was what made Maria and their mom and sister undocumented. Like Maria's story, all other six participants did not conceive their entrance to the United States as having crossed a border. The current discourse about undocumented immigration also did not resonate with any of the other participants because this dominant narrative focuses on becoming undocumented by crossing the U.S.-Mexico border unauthorized. Instead, all participants emphasized how they entered the United States *legally* through visas (e.g., B-2, E-2, and H1-B), so them becoming undocumented is part of a broader discourse of illegality as a social construct (Flores & Schachter, 2018).

Figure 1

Timeline of Participants' Arrival to the U.S



The story of undocumented immigration is told differently from each of the participants from this inquiry even though all overstayed their visa. There are two general types of U.S. visas: non-immigrant and immigrant visas. Under those two types, there are over 50 visa categories (U.S. Department of State, 2022). In this inquiry, participants migrated to the United States under three visa categories: B-2, E-2, and H1-B (see Table 5). Maria, Nabi, Putri, and Cel all came to the United States with their families on tourist visas or B-2 visas. Raymond and Shannon came to the United States with their families as dependents on an H1-B visa or a non-immigrant visa that allowed their parents to work in the U.S. Since Raymond and Shannon were dependents under their parents' H1-B visas, they had H-4 status. John came as a dependent under his father's E-2 visa, formally known as an E-2 Treaty Investor Visa, which allowed his dad to set up and run a business in the United States.

Table 5

Participants' Country of Origin and Visa Category

Participant	Country of Origin	Visa Category
Maria Ambrosio	Philippines	B-2 (tourism)
Nabi Lee	South Korea	B-2 (tourism)
Putri Susanto	Indonesia	B-2 (tourism)
Cel Jeon	Philippines	B-2 (tourism)
John Snow	South Korea	E-2 (treaty investor)
Raymond Smith	Singapore	H1-B (specialty occupations) with H-4 status
Shannon Kim	South Korea	H1-B (specialty occupations) with H-4 status

Individuals, who overstay their visa and become undocumented are steadily increasing (Warren, 2019), yet the current scholarship about undocumented students in higher education

remain sparse in discussing how undocumented students become undocumented beyond the majoritarian narrative of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. After having spoken with participants and listening to their im/migration stories, I identified two main themes that cut across their narratives: 1) varied reasons for choosing to overstay their visas and 2) a complicated visa renewal process. Although there are two thematic narratives that weave the seven participants' stories together, there exists more nuance within each of their stories regarding the circumstances and conditions in which they became undocumented. Becoming undocumented is much more complex, fluid, and contextual and can change with time and current policies (Menjívar, 2006), and this is demonstrated by the stories of participants below.

Varied Reasons for Overstaying. Within the majoritarian story of undocumented immigration or single story about undocumented immigration in the U.S., there is a narrative that tells a story about children not having a choice to come to the U.S. However, the narratives of participants from this inquiry tell a different story, especially the im/migration story of Cel, Maria, and Putri and the choice of overstaying their visas. Visa overstayers account for about 46 percent of the 10.7 million undocumented immigrants in the United States (Warren, 2019), yet literature in higher education about undocumented students remains sparse in showing the reasons as to the reasons and circumstances of visa overstayers and their families.

Visa overstayers is a broad category within the undocumented population, and to provide individuals and families better support, we need to understand their varied and unique circumstances. The stories of Cel, Maria, and Putri below provide us a nuanced portrait about circumstances that shaped their family's im/migration story and how they became undocumented. Below, is an excerpt from Cel's life story interview, where she describes she and her mom's im/migration story to the United States. Cel's story expands the narratives about

immigrant families coming to the U.S. for better opportunities and shows nuance about she and her mom's choices about overstaying their visas.

> I remember I just turned 10. . . . I knew that coming here [United States], I was going to be a TNT like, I wasn't told like, oh, we're going to Disneyland. . . . Like I was told, like, "We're going to stay here." And at that age I already knew what TNT meant because like I had family members who went abroad, like Hong Kong or like Korea and they were all, they were a TNT there. And like, I've had like a family member from Korea that got deported. And I was like, I don't know, probably like eight. And like, it's like my mom's family. Like, they're all like, like OFWs so I've always heard of that term, but when my mom likes, I don't know why exactly she came here. I think it's just like financial issues, like just general financial issues. Like, you know, there's not a lot of jobs in the Philippines. Like, especially like, if you're a little bit older, um, you know, in the Philippines they tend to hire like freshly graduates students.

From this excerpt, we see Cel's critical consciousness and more specifically, her critical awareness in use (Freire, 2000). Cel knew that she would be undocumented when she and her mom migrated to the U.S. with her usage of "TNT." In Tagalog, "TNT" stands for "tago ng tago." In English, "tago ng tago" translates verbatim to "hiding and hiding," which loosely translates to "perpetual hiding." Filipinos use the word TNT to refer to individuals in the Filipino community without the legal paperwork, who stay in a country—in other words, undocumented. Not only was Cel familiar with the language of "TNT," but she knew what the consequences of being TNT or undocumented meant because of how she saw a family member having been

deported from South Korea when she was eight years old. Nonetheless, Cel still chose to migrate to the U.S. with her mom.

While Cel cannot fully describe as to why her mom decided to come to the U.S., she attributed their im/migration story to the inequitable employment opportunities in the Philippines for those who do not have a college degree. While Cel's mom did attend college in the Philippines, she did not graduate. Opportunities for Filipinos in the Philippines without college degrees are slim, and for them to financially contribute to the family household, many Filipinos work abroad and are known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW; Rodriquez, 2010). Filipinos from the Philippines are one of the largest exports of labor to the point that the exportation of Filipino labor has been institutionalized by the state (Rodriquez, 2010). In 2020, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2022) estimated that there were about 1.77 million OFWs. Because of the prevalent discourse in the Philippines about im/migrating overseas for work, Cel was familiar with the terms OFW and TNT, and the financial implications this had on her family at a young age. Choosing to overstay her tourist visa and become TNT or undocumented in the U.S. to her meant that they would still have better financial opportunities than living in the Philippines.

Paralleling Cel's story is that of Maria's, whose mother also decided to im/migrate and overstay their tourist visa for better employment opportunities in addition to family issues at home. Although Maria's mom received a bachelor's degree in the Philippines, she decided to seek work abroad due to conflict at home with Maria's father. In addition to having better employment opportunities in the U.S., one of the main reasons that Maria, their mom, and their younger sister came to the U.S. and overstayed their visa was to break free from the physical abuse of Maria's father. Below, Maria shares that they did not find out about their father's

spending habits and abuse towards their mother until after they were older and having already migrated to the U.S.

> Umm, and like I only found out after, I only found out about like my dad like using drugs and like spending a lot of money on it like two years after I moved to the U.S. when my grandpa just like told me all about it one night, and I found out that like my m—like when—that my dad was also just like very like physically abusive to my mom. Umm, which is—which makes sense why she was working here a lot too now. Umm, and like obviously like we would get hit would like slippers and brooms and stuff like that, umm but like when my mom was like figuring out how to like, or like arranging our papers to move here, she was actually in the U.S.

When Maria found out from their grandfather, at 15 years old, about their dad's drug use and harmful spending habits, Maria began to put pieces together as to the reason why their mom spent a lot of time abroad working. More specifically, when Maria was younger and their mom lived in the Philippines, Maria's dad was "physically abusive to [their mom]." Maria went on to say:

> Like, like I didn't even ever want to go home, like I was scared to go home from school, and he would always pick us up at like—so our school would close at like—the gates would close at like 7:00 [pm], and he would get there at like 8:30 [pm]. Umm, I don't know what he was doing [laughs]. Umm, but like honestly like I didn't even mind waiting at school because like being at home was worse because like I was just scared to be around my dad because he would be just so

> irritable and he would just like yell and hit us like all the time even for like little things, umm so I was actually like really excited to move here [laughs].

The excerpt from Maria's story demonstrates the impact of Maria's father physical abuse on their mental and emotional well-being. Maria, at a point, "didn't even mind waiting at school" late (one hour and 30 minutes after the school had already closed). For Maria, waiting in the dark at school felt safer than being at home because they were "just scared to be around [their] father" because he was "so irritable" to the point of hitting and yelling at them without reason. As Maria recounted these series of events, they mentioned that as they got older, it made more sense as to why their mom was strategically figuring out ways to bring Maria and Maria's younger sister to the United States. For example, Maria's mom was arranging their paperwork for Maria and Maria's younger sister to come to the U.S. behind their father's back. Maria said, "My dad didn't know that my mom was doing this because obviously he would stop it and like it was not something that she wanted." Maria's family did not have relatives in the U.S., and to break free from an environment of abuse, one of the few options they had was to apply for a tourist visa. A B-2 visa, or tourist visa, allows a maximum stay of 180 days per entry. Afterwards, it requires the carrier to leave the U.S. and then reapply for the visa, which currently costs about $160 per application (U.S. Travel Docs, n.d.). This process cost time and money, which Maria's family did not have in addition to compromising their safety in having permanently left the Philippines without their father's knowledge.

Also paralleling Cel's and Maria's story of coming to the U.S. to "[seek] better opportunities," as Putri had put it, is Putri's im/migration story and reason for overstaying her and her family's tourist visa. Putri came to the U.S. at three years old with her father, mother, older brother, and younger brother in 2000 on a tourist visa from Indonesia. Putri's story is

unique in that she described her family's life in Indonesia as privileged. Both of her parents graduated with their master's degree: her father had a master's in engineering, and her mother had a master's in economics. She also mentioned that her subethnic group, identifying as Javanese, is the largest ethnic group in Indonesia. However, her parents decided to come to the U.S. due to the country's inclusive policies on disabilities as shown below:

> It was just me, my brother, my older brother, and my mom and dad. My parents decided to migrate to the U.S. because my [younger] brother was born with autism. And so in Indonesia, like those with disabilities, like learning disabilities and, um, like mental disabilities, they're, they're seen as like, uh, it's very stigmatized to the point where. . . . they weren't allowed in schools, they weren't allowed in different places. And so there wasn't, there wasn't really a solid help for my brother. . . . At the time I had an, we had an uncle. . . . he immigrated to the U.S. um, a couple of years before we did, but he got him through the lottery system. And so, when he got in, he was telling my mom. . . . like the U.S. you know, they have good opportunities for, um, for students with disabilities, you know, like, um, like at least Southern California Unified School District. . . . they really cater to that.

With Putri's story, it is important to understand her and her family's privileges. They were able to pay for the visa application and travel of five individuals from Indonesia to the U.S. With the educational background of her parents, they thought they would be able to figure out pathways to citizenship and have a smooth transition to the United States, but that did not happen given the time Putri and her family im/migrated to the U.S. She further details her story below:

> And so my family, at that point. . . . they decided that we are just going to raise, uh, my [older] brother and I in the U.S. because. . . . they thought that, you know, it wouldn't be a problem for me to kind of learn, you know, so it's like to be easier. Right. Um, and so I think when we, when my parents had moved, they thought that it would be easier to, I think the thought was like, apply to get a green card, but, um, et cetera, et cetera. But then I feel like, um, around that time afterwards, uh, 9/11 happened. Right. And so there was like a tough, there was harsher restrictions on guaranteeing visas and green cards. And so I think that's where it became super difficult.

Putri and her family im/migrated to the U.S. in 2000, and the year that followed, 9/11 (i.e., September 11, 2001) happened. Putri's family did not plan for a hostile context of reception for im/migrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), and the sociopolitical climate in the U.S. in 2001 changed their entire lives. Putri does not recall much of her family's im/migration story but does remember the challenges in applying to get a green card around that time, which was shaped by events like 9/11, where xenophobia, and more specifically, Islamophobia heightened (Kishi, 2017). As a result, Putri and her family overstayed their tourist visas.

Complicated Visa Renewal Process. Opponents of undocumented immigration often argue that undocumented immigrants should come to the U.S. or do things the "right way" (Chomsky, 2014). The stories of John and Raymond reveal a more complicated visa renewal process—that even when immigrants follow the U.S. immigration process for visa renewals, there are events that happen that can be out of their control that lead to undocumentation.

John becoming undocumented due to overstaying his visa is more complicated than the act of overstaying itself. John came to the U.S. with his family back in 2004 with his mom, dad,

and younger brother because his dad wanted his brother and him “to have like a better education and a better future.” They came under an E-2 visa because his dad was going to own a business that his grandfather used to own. John was seven years old when he and his family migrated to the United States. He thought, “It was just going to be like a vacation, where we’re just going to be in the here for like a month or two, go to Disneyland [laughs], and just go back to like our home country [South Korea], but we didn’t.” Since then, John had grown up and gone to school in the U.S.

Because John was a dependent under his parents’ E-2 visa, which could be renewed indefinitely if their family business was still running, John had a legal status to be in the country. However, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) states that those holding an E-2 visa “may be accompanied or followed by spouses and unmarried children who are under 21 years of age” (USCIS, 2022). In other words, when John turned 21, he would no longer qualify to be a dependent under his parents’ E-2 visa meaning he would need to change his visa status to a different category that would make his residency legal in the United States. John’s family took the necessary and correct steps in renewing their E-2 visas early February 2017 because John would be turning 21 in November 2017. Yet unknown circumstances during the renewal process caused delay as demonstrated by his story below:

> My family—they, um, had to reapply for the E-2 visa, cause like their time was up and then they also sponsor me—not sponsor me—but like applied me for the F-1 visa for, so that, um, I can legally stay in the United States and, um, attend school. Um, but I don't know if it's because it was like Trump administration, but like our visas were delayed for a long, long time. And then, um, we were supposed to get our visa like around September or November. My birthday is on

November 2017, that was when I was going to be turning 21. Um, and we were hoping we will get our visas before that so. . . . we would, um, I would be able to like apply for the F-1 visa, but we didn't get our visas until January 2018. And once our visa came, my E-2 visa actually came too. But then mine expired in December [2017]. So when it expired we're like, shoot, we, I don't know. We don't know like what to do. So we reached out to our lawyer, but then the lawyer pretty much said that, um, there isn't much that we can do for him. We can like petition him, but there's like a very low chance that whoever's going to get that petition would let him apply for the F-1 visa. Um, so pretty much like after that, um, we, there wasn't anything we can do. So I ended up becoming undocumented in, um, I want to say January 2018, because that's when we found, uh, found out about my status being expired.

John's story about how he became undocumented is a story that reveals nuance within the larger narrative of visa overstayers; it is much more complicated than doing things "the right way." Based on my conversations with John, his parents knew the implications of John turning 21 in November 2017. As a result, John's parents were proactive in starting the paperwork as "early as maybe February or January" to submit their application before June "through the help of a lawyer." As demonstrated above, John's family applied to renew their E-2 visas on time in 2017 because they had planned on John applying for an F-1 visa thereafter. However, during John's parents' renewal process for their E-2 visa, the process took longer than usual. John and his family cannot pinpoint the cause of their application's delay, but we do know that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services have had backlogged cases and continues to have backlogs

in processing different immigration and renewal applications that have resulted in litigations against USCIS and the U.S. State Department (Chishti & Gelatt, 2022).

The backlogged system of USCIS is not considered as a valid reason for an individual overstaying their visa. The current narrative about visa overstayers predominately attributes the overstay to the *act of* overstaying, which is an individualistic way of thinking as to how one becomes undocumented as opposed to examining the larger system and processes that could possibly shape the timeline and expiration of an individual's current legal status. In other words, and exemplified by John's story of becoming undocumented, there are circumstances out of a person's control in becoming undocumented. Even when a family like John's takes the proper, necessary, and timely steps within the renewal process, unknown things happen within the processes of USCIS that may throw a wrench in a family's timeline—in this case, an expiration to John's legal status at the time that caused him ineligible to apply for an F-1 visa. Even their family's lawyer was unable to help them out in providing advice for pathways to a legal status for John, especially in applying for an F-1 visa because on paper, John had overstayed his current visa. Without any feasible solution, John had become undocumented by what people would constitute as overstaying one's visa.

Like John, Raymond's story exposes more holes in a complex system of visa renewals when it came to working with an immigration lawyer that may not have known the most appropriate step to take regarding Raymond's family's visa statuses and circumstances. Raymond and his family (i.e., mom, dad, and older brother) had migrated to the United States when he was four years old with a H-4 status due to his parents' H1-B visas. The H1-B visa is a temporary visa category that allowed employers in the U.S. to hired workers outside the U.S. in "specialty occupations" (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). More specifically, the "specialty

occupation” is one that requires “highly specialized knowledge and the attainment of at least a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent” (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). In this case, both of Raymond’s parents had obtained a master’s degree in the Philippines in architecture. His parents then used their degrees to migrate and work in Singapore prior to coming to the U.S.

Since an H1-B status is a temporary visa category, those who hold this status will need to renew their visas. According to Raymond, “because [his parents] knew their visa was about to expire. . . . they had been going through the process to get like a green card.” There were “no issues in filling out paperwork and cooperating with [their] lawyer up until. . . . he noticed that their visas were about to expire.” From what Raymond recalled:

> The dates [overlapped] to where even if [the lawyer] submitted the paperwork that their visa still would have been valid in order to get their green card. And for some reason, like without the lawyer telling us, instead of filing the paperwork to get the green card, he had instead. . . . went to renew our—my mom and dad’s visa instead. And when that didn’t work out, then they weren’t able to get their green cards. And then at that point, my parents already had a job, and we were pretty much settled in. . . . We’ve been living in the U.S. for quite a while already. And when that happened, like my parents kind of didn’t really know what to do. . . . My parents got really upset with the lawyer and tried filing a case against him, but like, uh, they didn’t really have the, the funds to support that. So they kind of just stopped pursuing.

Raymond’s story of becoming undocumented hints at the lengthy process that his parents had been preparing for regarding their H1-B visa and viable pathways for a securer legal residency in the U.S. For Raymond and his family, their H1-B visas had been extended multiple times from

different employers to the point that they were taking the necessary steps to apply for green cards, officially known as a Permanent Resident Card. Holders of an H1-B visa are permitted to stay for a period of three years, and when they near the third year, they are able to apply for an extension up to a total of six years (USCIS, n.d.). There are limited circumstances where individuals with an H1-B visa can extend their stay beyond the six years (USCIS, n.d.), which was the case for Raymond's parents, where their employer filed an I-140 Immigrant Petition for his parents to obtain lawful permanent resident status or a green card.

Moreover, Raymond's story gives insight regarding the different types of immigration lawyers who work with im/migrants during their application process. Raymond's family's situation was a unique one given the circumstances that surrounded their H1-B status. Not all immigration lawyers are equipped to know what to do with varying situations because immigration, and more specifically, people's circumstances, are distinctly different and unique. In other words, one lawyer may be trained and is competent in handling one case but may not be as knowledgeable in knowing the most appropriate action to take based on another family's unique situation. In this case, instead of filing the paperwork for Raymond's parents to obtain a green card, the lawyer instead renewed their H1-B visas. There were implications in not filing the correct paperwork for Raymond's family, and one of them being becoming undocumented. Raymond's H-4 status as a dependent on his parents' H1-B status was only valid if his parents' H1-B status did not expire. Due to the misfiling of paperwork, Raymond's parents' visas expired, which led to them overstaying their current visa and becoming undocumented. At that point, they were ineligible to extend their H1-B status.

I end this section with a quote from James Baldwin (2016) who said, "History is not the past; it is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history." The counterstories

(Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of participants from this inquiry empirically counter the majoritarian narrative about undocumented U.S. immigration. In other words, the parallel story of undocumented Asian students' stories of immigration empirically provides a documented history of the participants from this inquiry that is often overlooked and omitted from the current higher education literature about undocumented students. Findings from this chapter is not only a powerful account of expanding the representation of narratives within the undocumented community, but it also serves as way for researchers and scholars to draw insights to better understand human experience as shown through contextualized narratives. In the words of Don T. Nakanishi imprinted in front of Daniel G. Solórzano's office door at University of California, Los Angeles, "We are the evidence." The counterstories of undocumented Asian students from this inquiry *are* the (empirical) evidence.

Conclusion

To return us to full circle, Adichie (2009) reminds us towards the end of her TED Talk a consequence of the single story: "it robs people of dignity" (13:58). Adichie (2009) continued to say, "When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story of any place, we regain a kind of paradise" (18:22). In writing this findings chapter, my participants and I engaged in the process of reauthoring immigration as a form of resistance to the majoritarian narrative (Delgado, 1993) of contemporary immigration, which tells a single story about undocumented immigration to the United States. By presenting counternarratives as empirical evidence in research to further build a more nuanced story of immigration that includes many stories, which engages in narrative plentitude (Nguyen, 2016), we can develop and provide targeted support for undocumented Asian students at our colleges and universities. But first, we

must understand who they are, where they have come from, and what they have experienced. Researchers and scholars can begin to do this by listening to their stories.

In this first findings chapter, I answer the first research question: How is the story of undocumented immigration told from the perspective of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California, who overstayed their visa? I contextualized storying as research and restorying as knowledge production (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017) through parallel stories (Craig, 1999) from participants' life story interviews. The counterstories of participants are "real expressions of human experience from which we can build knowledge," which is a "primary goal of educational research" (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017, p. 378S). Presenting these stories as empirical evidence in research allows researchers to address issues of intersectional justice, racial equity, and social change in higher education. Moreover, findings from this chapter have broader implications for the current discourse about 21st century undocumented immigration and immigration policy federally and by state.

CHAPTER V: PEDAGOGIES OF LIMINALITY

The undocumented Asian students from this inquiry inhabit a liminal space between race and undocumented status. The term liminality originates from social anthropologist Victor Turner's (1969) use of a liminal space as "neither here nor there; [people] are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony" (p. 95) in his research on tribal rituals of initiation and its processes of separation, transition, and incorporation. Moreover, I am informed by Menjívar's (2006) theorization of liminality within the context of immigration and legal statuses of im/migrants as liminal legality. In short, liminality or a liminal space is a state of being in between worlds, spaces, and experiences, which are often ambiguously defined. What further complicates living in liminality, which is located at the intersection of race and undocumented status, is that there are two processes of racialization that occur in this liminal space for undocumented Asians (Cho, 2019). The first process being their racialization as "model minorities," which is connected to their racialized identity as Asian in the U.S. and the second process being the racialization of undocumented as a Latin* issue (Cho, 2019). This second findings chapter sheds light on the second question of the inquiry: What racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness" do undocumented Asian undergraduate students understand? Additionally, within this question, I further explore and describe: How do undocumented Asian undergraduate students use this understanding to navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey?

To answer the second set of research questions from this inquiry, I use the data from this findings chapter to further theorize a racialized liminal space informed by the theoretical framework of this inquiry, as experienced by participants. In educational research, scholars have used the term liminality in relation to undocumented students in two ways: 1) to describe higher

education institutions as a liminal, transitory state up until graduation and 2) to describe the state of limbo and precarious life undocumented students experience due to their undocumented status (Gonzales, 2016; Gonzales & Burciaga, 2018; Pérez, 2012; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2011; Teranishi et al., 2015; Torres & Wicks-Asbun, 2014). However, the literature on liminality about undocumented students in higher education does not examine liminality through the lens of race. In other words, the current literature about undocumented students and liminality is void of a racial analysis. Findings from this critical narrative inquiry addresses the gap in the literature. More specifically, the findings below offer insight as to what it looks like and what it means to live in a racialized liminal space. Using the theoretical framework of this inquiry that anchors double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), and liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006), I name and describe the strategies that undocumented Asian students employed to navigate a racialized liminal reality.

I divide this chapter into two main sections. The first section answers the first question: What racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness" do undocumented Asian undergraduate students understand? Moreover, the first section explains how undocumented Asians are caught in a double-bind (Cho, 2017) based on racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness." The second section answers the second question: How do undocumented Asian undergraduate students use this understanding to navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey? and describes two strategies they employ, which are hiding in plain sight and resistant joy. Furthermore, this second section explains their tools of navigation as a pragmatic disposition and specific set of strategies that undocumented Asian students enacted in negotiating and navigating a racialized liminal position at the intersection of race and undocumented status.

Caught in a Double-Bind with the Model Minority Myth

The liminal space that is located at the intersection of race and undocumented status is a complicated space to navigate due to the two processes of racialization that happen in that space for undocumented Asians. Liminality as experienced by undocumented Asian students in this inquiry is a layered racialized space for two reasons. First, within this liminal space, undocumented Asians' racial identity is racialized with associations connected with the "model minority," and two, their undocumented status is racialized to be a Latin* issue. Cho (2017) names this quandary a "double-bind" and defines it as a shield by not being perceived as undocumented, where one can fly under the radar while simultaneously not receiving immediate access to resources or services for being undocumented since the contemporary undocumented narrative posits a Latin* lens. A racialized liminal space for undocumented Asian students in this inquiry affected them both ways, where they were caught in a conceptual and material double-bind (Cho, 2019); they could not win in any way because of the compounded nature of the racialization they experienced due to their racial identity and undocumented status. They all understood the racialized narrative about Asian and Asian American students in higher education to be "model minorities." Below, John describes this understanding and further explains how it has affected him in relation to his undocumented status:

> But because I was undocumented and because like, I was an undocumented Asian student, I feel like, um, this idea of model minority kind of affected me. . . . and I know like the model minority, isn't a good thing, but I always kind of looked at that as like, um, as something I needed to achieve, like someone who graduated from college and then go get a job was because I wasn't able to achieve that. Um, it was like very, um, it was very hard. It was very hard on me not being, not

> knowing, like knowing that I wasn't able, able to like, reach that goal on the other people set off me. And I know that like, I shouldn't let others, what others think affect me, it did. . . . the idea of like frustration, that's the feeling that I get, um, because of like these limitations that are set upon me. Um, and I was in college, like, I didn't know, I can do internships. Like I was like, shoot, because I'm undocumented. I can't do internships. Um, and like in college, like even now after graduation, like I always felt frustrated because there are some things that I want to achieve. There are things that I want to do, but I just can't do them. And I just like, feel like I'm kind of like tied down and I just can't really move forward.

John refers to two limitations above. The first being the conceptual limitations that others have placed on him to be a "model minority" because of his racialized identity as Asian. The second being real or material limitations based on his undocumented status. The model minority myth has places unrealistic measures of success for John that has affected his mental health (Gupta et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2009) because he knew that it was unattainable. Although he knew that model minority myth was clearly a myth, this does not take away from the fact that hearing this racialized narrative about what it means and looks like to be "Asian," goes away; he has internalized them and continues to actively resist these stereotypes for himself, which is an example of how he uses both his double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) simultaneously. Additionally, the legal limitations of being undocumented has led to frustration and stress because John feels "tied down" and not having the ability to push forward based on a socially constructed status. Cel also described how the model minority myth has affected her:

> Well, I dropped out of being a business major because I was very bad at it. And people have said that to me, they're like, you're supposed to be good at math. And I was like, why would you say that? And they'd say you're Asian. . . . And so when they would say that. . . . Like I would say that I'm such a disgrace to my community. I'm not that smart. And like, you know, you have these like expectations for yourself that you want to reach because that's how they see your community.

Cel was previously a business major but switched to sociology because she had difficulty in courses like economics. She discussed with me how the math problems she had to solve in business courses were hard. When explaining to others that she had dropped out due to these reasons, people questioned her decision because they assumed Cel was "supposed to be good at math" because she was Asian. The model minority stereotype affected Cel in a way, where she internalized racism (Gupta et al., 2011) and even thought to herself that she was a "disgrace to [her] community" because she was not living up to the expectations that she heard about Asian and Asian American students. The stories of Cel and John confirm the existing literature about the negative impact of the model minority myth on the mental health, academic self-concept, self-esteem, and belonging of Asian and Asian American students (Gupta et al., Lee et al., 2009; Qin et al., 2008)

Additionally, participants from this inquiry understood and could express the psychological impact the model minority has had on them in addition to the systemic ways they have been excluded from receiving the necessary support they needed as undocumented. Cel continued to say:

> And it's like, you know, like that model minority, like they forget about the struggles that Asians like—they don't think undocumented Asians exists. And so they, like, they felt like we don't have that much like stories for undocumented Asians. We don't have that much resources specifically for undocumented Asian. I think like, you know, model minority. . . . it's not a good thing because they forget that I struggle. They forget that the system doesn't work with me. It works against me.

Cel emphasizes how the racialized narratives about the model minority myth hinders people's ability to imagine her reality of being undocumented. The model minority myth is a conceptual barrier (Teranishi, 2010) to society's understanding that Asian and Asian American students can encompass other identities such as being low-income and undocumented. Due to this racialized narrative about Asian and Asian American students, Cel states that people "forget that [she] [struggles]." She makes it clear that she understands that this racialized narrative is connected to a larger system of inequality that is against her, not for her. What Cel mentioned is connected to the ways Putri discussed the model minority myth:

> I think when people think about Asians in, especially in like a university setting, they think that they don't struggle as much more. They're more like white adjacent within, um, in the setting. But then they also don't understand like the nuances of kind of like Southeast Asians versus east Asian versus south Asians. And like, all those stories are so different and everyone looks different. Everyone has like different experiences and they came to the university in like a different way. . . . I think our experiences get very swept under the rug or we're not taking us seriously.

Putri explains how people's perception of Asians in higher education are "white adjacent." Putri demonstrates her double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) to society's perception as to how Asians are triangulated within a Black and White paradigm in the United States (Kim, 1999)—that they are often perceived in proximity to Whiteness. In other words, people do not view Asian and Asian American students in higher education as a population who has challenges even though there are over 24 subgroups of Asian Americans (CARE, 2008). Because Asian and Asian American students are racialized as "model minorities" in higher education, they have been historically systemically excluded from diversity programs meant and created for racially minoritized students (Gutierrez et al., 2021; Lee, 2006). For undocumented Asian students, like the participants in this inquiry, this is harmful because they are not able to receive the appropriate and culturally relevant resources because others cannot fathom that their reality can exist.

Maria further contextualized and makes clear how complicated this experience is as someone who is undocumented *and* Asian:

> I feel like sometimes I still have tendencies where I feel like I have to prove myself, where it's like, "Ahh, I have to like go above and beyond or like I have to push myself," or I have to feel like I'm exhausted for my worth to be valid. . . . And it's like I don't know, and it's like it's so exhausting doing that like over and over and especially because like that's what colleges want because at the end of the day, to [my university], I am human capital to them.

Maria has thought about how internalizing the model minority myth is compounded when their undocumented status is taken into consideration. Not only does Maria think they have to prove themselves in the eyes of others because of this racialized narrative, we also see how Maria

makes sense of proving their deservingness to the university because of their potential educational and economic contribution, as “human capital,” as an undocumented student enrolled in higher education.

The ways undocumented Asian students experienced liminality as Asian and undocumented is complex due to the ways their racial identity is racialized as “model minorities” and their undocumented status is racialized as a Latin* narrative. How these social categories are racialized gives insight for a missing cognitive frame for U.S. society to understand that undocumented *and* Asian can exist as a reality for others; the participants of this inquiry are evidence of that. Raymond reveals that dangers of having limited cognitive frames to understand human experience:

> I don't want to limit this sort of idea as, as, as one image, because then when you do that, then that's when stereotypes come in. That's when, when like misconceptions come in and I—and that's, that's a very, that's very dangerous territory. . . . It becomes dangerous territory where when you have that stereotype it's how do you interpret it? Do you do, do you like, do you like talk down on someone with those kinds of eyes [in reference to Asian phenotypic stereotypes]? Or do you, do you accept them?

Raymond recognizes the harmful consequences to stereotypes. And since Asians are racialized as “model minorities,” in the U.S., if someone has internalized that stereotype and believe it, they cannot see outside of that stereotype. In this case, the danger that is done onto undocumented Asians here is that they are omitted from the broader undocumented narrative. And when they are included, the narrative plays into their stereotype as “model minorities” within the undocumented community (Kim, 2021) that then creates tension and pits them with other

undocumented communities—in this case undocumented Latin* people who are stereotyped as criminals and undeserving (Alcalde, 2016; Armenta, 2016; García, 2017). In the next section, I describe how they navigate a complicated racialized liminal space.

Hiding in Plain Sight

The first strategy is navigating a racialized liminal space that undocumented Asian students used to navigate their educational journeys and everyday realities is by hiding in plain sight. The undocumented Asians in this inquiry used their double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) to strategically disclose their status to others. In Du Bois's (1903) seminal work *The Souls of Black Folks*, he described double-consciousness through his own lens as an African American man and more broadly, the experiences of Black men in U.S. society. Double-consciousness, as a theoretical concept, is still relevant in being able to describe the ways Black individuals in the United States see themselves through what Du Bois called the veil. Du Bois used the veil as a metaphor that represents a separation of Blacks from the White world. Through the veil, however, Black folks have been able to cultivate a type of "two-ness:" one way of looking at oneself through the eyes of others and at the same time, the other way of understanding oneself based on one's actual reality. Moreover, double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), as part of the conceptual framework of this inquiry, is relevant in making sense of the data presented in this chapter and answering the second set of research questions of this inquiry. What makes experiencing double-consciousness unique for undocumented Asians is their ability to use this awareness or seeing a racialized subjectivity through the White (colonial) gaze (Chou & Feagin, 2008), to strategically navigate their material reality as undocumented due to the ways that undocumented status, illegality, and immigration has been racialized as a Latin* issue (Alcalde, 2016; Armenta, 2016; García, 2017; Menjívar, 2021).

Whether consciously or subconsciously, undocumented Asian students were aware of how others racialized them as “Asian” or “model minorities.” Because others viewed them as “model minorities,” they were not perceived as undocumented because those two images did not go hand in hand in people’s imaginary. Due to this, undocumented Asian students from this inquiry used their understanding of a racialized subjectivity to navigate their material world as undocumented, where they could hide in plain sight by not saying anything about their status.

Undocumented Asian and Asian Americans’ choice to be silent within this context is a strategy to protect themselves (Osajima, 1993) out of fear of being outed and deported. The concept of silence is further complicated in the case of undocumented Asian students because it is not act of complicity to oppression, but rather a strategy of survival (Figueroa, 2017) to navigate their liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006) while using their critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). Shannon provides a clear example of choosing not to disclose or practicing non-disclosure (Buenavista, 2013) when she said, “I feel like in a lot of cases, undocumented folks try to stay away from anything that will get them in legal trouble in the fear of deportation.” Shannon, after having recently graduated, is now working in New York, and she has not disclosed her status to any of her co-workers. Even with DACA, she still takes the necessary precautions in practicing non-disclosure (Buenavista, 2013) in fear of her safety because at the end of the day, having DACA is a temporary status and very much a precarious one without a pathway to citizenship. Using her double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) simultaneously, Shannon understood that she can hide in plain sight because others do not perceive her as undocumented because of the ways society has racialized undocumented—positing a Latin* lens on the narrative. How undocumented is racialized provides Shannon an

ability to externally distance herself from her undocumented status, where co-workers and other people would not suspect her to be undocumented.

In other cases, participants in this inquiry did choose to speak up about their undocumented status. We see this from the excerpt below from Nabi:

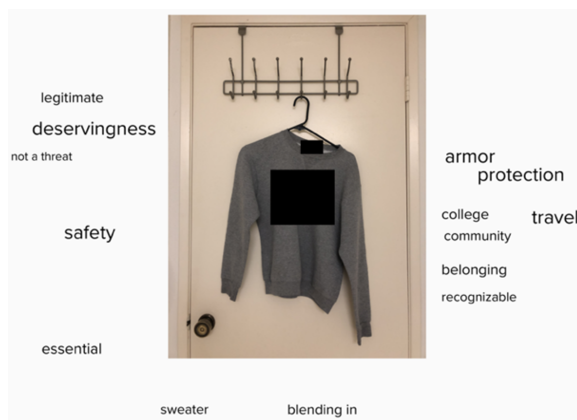
> I try to flex this privilege a little, like I can understand it. I can see that. . . . I think that has been my experience for a great majority of my life and the reason I am able to like swivel in and out of all these spaces and have a voice in these spaces and have a place in these spaces. And I think being Asian umm does lend me those sorts of privileges as both being White palatable. . . . but also inherently a person of color [laughs] that you know is, is seen as a person of color, is seen as a foreigner. And it's like, "All right then," you know. I feel like sometimes I feel like a chameleon. I can go in these spaces. But I think the most important thing to me has been trying to find my center, everywhere I go, and trying to be very true and authentic everywhere I go. It's kind of a struggle.

Here we see how Nabi uses her double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) at the same time through her awareness of how she is perceived and racialized due to being Asian, and more specifically, she uses the words, "White palatable." In other words, Nabi understands how others see her as a Korean woman is non-threatening in the eyes of others. This racialized understanding lends her the agency (and she uses it) to "swivel in and out of all these spaces and have a voice in these spaces. . . . like a chameleon." Nabi has shared that when she has disclosed her status to large groups of people as a campus tour guide at her university, they embraced her story and commended her for her courage to share. Nabi knew that people's reactions would have been different if it were a Latin* individual or someone with a darker

complexion had said what she shared during her campus tours. Because she understands how people receive her and her undocumented story, she "[flexed] this privilege" to advocated for the larger undocumented community on her college campus, so others can be more understanding about the topic. Nabi's story shows her ability to understand her social position changes given the context, where Nabi has a critical awareness of the complexity of her privileges and the other interlocking systems of oppression that she experiences (Collins, 1990).

Figure 2

Nabi's University Sweater



Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Nabi.

Figure 2 is visual data from the photovoice session, where I conducted co-analysis with Nabi. In addition to being able to hide in plain sight, Nabi described her university sweater as an "armor" and an additional layer of "protection" from "safety" especially when she traveled throughout the state of California. Nabi told an insightful story about her university sweater:

> I think for a lot of people, you know, they might've bought like a t-shirt, a sweater of whatever school they might've gone to just to show sense of belonging community. And also a sense of pride. . . . But for me, it was also my armor, my protection as I travel, because I became very keen on traveling both by plane and

> by car and sometimes closer to the [U.S.-Mexico] border. . . . I don't have the particular documentation that I need to get full protection in this country. So what else can I flex? What else can I use and indicate I am American, or I am citizen worth the—I am worthy of being in place in this country if I'm ever stopped by anybody, whether that is TSA agents, border patrol agents, whether that is just someone on the street. How do I prove that to somebody? And one of the best ways to prove that, I guess—one of the best ways we're told by society by culture, um, both my Asian culture and my American culture that I am worthy, or I am deserving of something is to show and prove my education. Having that [university] emblem, you know, being a part of [this] system is a major boost. [My university] I think is a pretty big school that most people in the country can recognize or think I've heard of that at least once, you know. That name recognition is a major boost wearing that around.

In addition to her double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), Nabi used her critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) to critically analyze her situation and took action by problem-solving how she could feel and be safer when traveling. Due to the ways undocumented is racialized as a Latin* issue (Menjívar, 2021), Nabi said that people do not make assumptions about her being undocumented because of how they see her as "Asian." Even so, she still makes a conscious effort, a strategic decision on her part, of wearing a university sweater when using public transportation because "being associated with a university" signals belonging and prestige in this country.

For Nabi, wearing clothing with the university's emblem did not just mean showing pride or her sense of belonging to her university community. Above, we see Nabi's thought process

and reasoning as to why she chooses to wear her university sweater when she travels. In one of the sentences, she emphasized, “What else can I flex?” to “indicate” to others that she is a U.S. citizen, who is worthy of being in this country because of her association with a prestigious university. To be clear, this does not mean that Nabi believes an undocumented person’s worthiness or deservingness to be in the U.S. should be tied to their potential to contribute to U.S. society as someone going through the higher education system. On that contrary, Nabi challenged the DREAMer narrative, which justifies undocumented youth’s pathways to citizenship based on their educational and economic achievements (Abrego & Negrón-Gonzales, 2020). When Nabi and I spoke during her life story interview, she told me a story about a phone conversation with her mom after having attended a student of color conference at her university. In this story, she told her mom on the phone, “Mom we don’t need a reason. . . . We are the reason. We’re just human. That’s it, like that’s the reason. We don’t need anything more.” Here, Nabi is aware of the associations and meanings that people attach to a prestigious university—that people would not question her legal status because she is a student attending this university.

While undocumented Asians from this inquiry could remain undetected as also expressed by John, Raymond, Cel, and Putri, who had friends that acted surprised when they disclosed their status to them, Maria notes how in the grand scheme of things, hiding in plain sight is more complicated than it sounds because they still do not receive the resources that they need. Maria mentioned that although undocumented *and* Asian is an “existence that is just incompatible [laughs] with people’s conceptions of undocumented,” where they can remain undetected, or not racially profiled by ICE on college campuses (Enriquez, 2019), Maria explained that this does not make it any better for them:

> In some ways like again being invisible is safe because you're not the target, but my material reality doesn't go away when, just because like people won't believe me it doesn't mean that my situation will change, or that it'll get better, or that I'm safer in anyway because it feels like you're safe but it's not because you're more at risk because you're not meeting the needs that you need.

Above, we see that the material consequences of being undocumented does not go away just because someone else cannot conceptually conceive their reality. For Maria, having the option to hide in plain sight does not make them feel any safer. Noteworthy is Maria's ability to recognize that invisibility only complicates their situation and makes them more susceptible to harm because they are not receiving the appropriate resources and support. Due to the racialization of Asian American students in higher education as being successful or "model minorities," participants had an ability to distance themselves physically from others' perception of an undocumented reality while still living undocumented internally.

Resistant Joy

Literature about undocumented students has primarily discussed their lives through the lens of trauma, and while trauma is a part of their lives, it is not the only aspect that defines their life (Pérez Huber, 2019). I operated from a position of desire (Tuck, 2009) in designing and carrying out critical narrative inquiry methodology for this study and asset-based frameworks (Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2017). In doing so, I identified a broader story about joy that helped participants navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey—thus answering the second question in this findings chapter. In this section, I center the participants' joy and discuss their form of joy as a strategy of resistance to dominant majoritarian

narratives and immigration laws that dehumanize them due to their undocumented status. More specifically, I name this strategy as resistant joy.

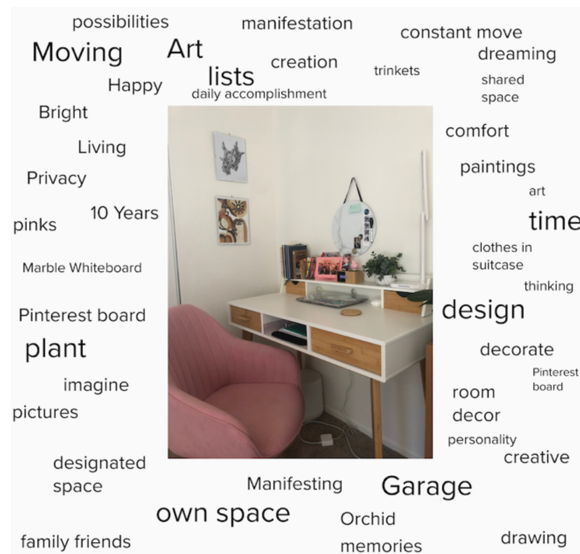
To conceptualize resistant joy as strategy that undocumented Asian students used in this inquiry, in addition to the theoretical framework, I draw from the scholarship and literature about Black joy (Destine & Destine, 2020, 2021; Jordan, 2000; Lewis-Giggetts, 2022) and critical hope (Bozalek et al., 2014; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Freire, 1994). Black joy is conceptualized as an emotional weapon of resistance and tool for resilience to the systemic racial discrimination, brutalization, and violence that Black individuals continue to experience in the U.S. (Destine & Destine, 2020, 2021; Jordan, 2000; Lewis-Giggetts, 2022). Additionally, critical hope means the ability to assess one's individual conditions in connection to larger systems of oppression and still be able to envision possibilities for a better future (Bozalek et al., 2014; Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Freire, 1994). For participants in this inquiry, they not only envisioned possibilities for a better future, but they also actively created it using their critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). The multiple ways they created joy in their lives becomes their form of *resistance* in resistant joy. Below, I divide resistant joy into three sub-sections to describe the ways participants from this inquiry employed resistant joy as a pedagogy to live out their full humanity despite the conceptual limitations and legal imposition others have placed on them as undocumented Asian students. We see that participants used resistant joy in 1) the spaces they created, 2) the activities they did, and 3) the conversations they had with themselves. I include both visual and transcript data below to deeply contextualize what participants and I discussed during the activity.

The Spaces They Created

The first way we see participants from this inquiry used resistant joy is in the spaces they created. This is evident in the stories of Cel, Maria, and Putri as shown in their photos.

Figure 3

Cel's Corner of Her Bedroom



Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Cel.

The significance of Cel's photo that shows the corner of her bedroom with her desk is that this is the first time she ever had a space she could call her own. Below she tells her story about what it looked like for her and her mom to be housing insecure:

> We would constantly like move houses and like always having a shared space. . . . It was just me and my mom, like when we moved from SoCal, um, we didn't have a place to live back here and like the only place that was a for us—we actually lived in the garage of my mom's friend's, um, place. . . . I remember always having to do my homework really late, um, because. . . . I didn't wanna be out there making noise. I had to do my homework late outside, um, on their office desk. . . . And just having a space is so hard and like that—like during those times, like teenage years. . . . I always went to my friend's house. . . . And I was

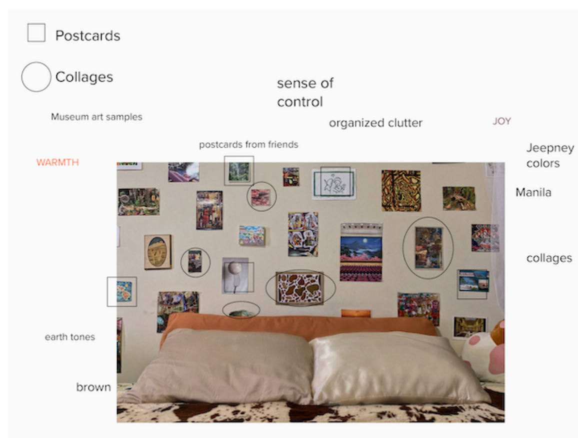
like, I wouldn't have people over. I've never had friends over at any place because we didn't have our own.

When Cel and her mom moved to Northern California, their only housing option was to live with Cel's mom's friend's apartment. This family had three children, and so Cel and her mom stayed in their garage. Cel recalled a time when it was difficult for her to do her homework because she did not have her own desk. The only desk in the house was an office desk in the living room of the main apartment. Because the desk was in a shared space, she was uncomfortable taking up the space during the day, so Cel chose to do her homework late night. Even then, she found this difficult because she would need to be quiet, not make a lot of noise, so she did not wake up people in the house. Additionally, she mentioned that because she and her mom had never had a space of their own, she "never had friends over."

When Cel talked about the backstory behind her photo (Figure 3), she exuded joy on the Zoom screen because she finally had her "own space." While she mentioned that it is a tiny corner of her bedroom, this corner felt like a space where she could "imagine," "manifest," and "create" endless possibilities for herself. Cel took the time to personally design her desk to remind her what brings her joy, which includes pictures of her friends, art, and images from Pinterest. Cel described herself as an individual that enjoyed creating, so for her to have an opportunity to thoughtfully curate her space also affected her mental and psychological well-being (Mastandrea et al., 2019).

Figure 4

Maria's Bedroom Wall



Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Maria.

Similar to Cel's story is that of Maria's, who also has taken the time to design their own space, wherever they moved to. The story behind Maria's photo is below:

> I just really liked the fact that I could decorate. And for a while I did actually want to become an interior designer. [laughs] But at the same time, I kind of figured that it was just like a hobby to me and almost like a comfort. Like, I, it brings me joy and I don't really want to profit off of something that, um, I don't see it as labor. I see it as a form of almost like healing, but not really because I, I especially, um, I've moved a lot. Um, in high school, I moved three times before that I moved once. And then in college I moved a lot like between dorms and between sublets and always was consistent, was like the ability to decorate like my room. And I always would have like a wall of like art that I really liked. And, um, some of these are like, I made myself, um, I'll put like a circle on the ones that I did make myself.

Above, we see that Maria and their family also moved often during Maria's teenage years in the U.S. When Maria began college, they no longer lived with their mom, yet they continued to move a lot "between dorms and between sublets." What remained consistent for Maria

throughout all the moves was their "ability to decorate [their] room." For Maria, the act of creating is a form of healing, which is consistent with the literature about the connection between art and healing (Stuckey et al., 2010). Additionally, Maria shared that having the ability to design their bedroom wall was also a way for them to express their sense of control. Maria further elaborated on this by saying:

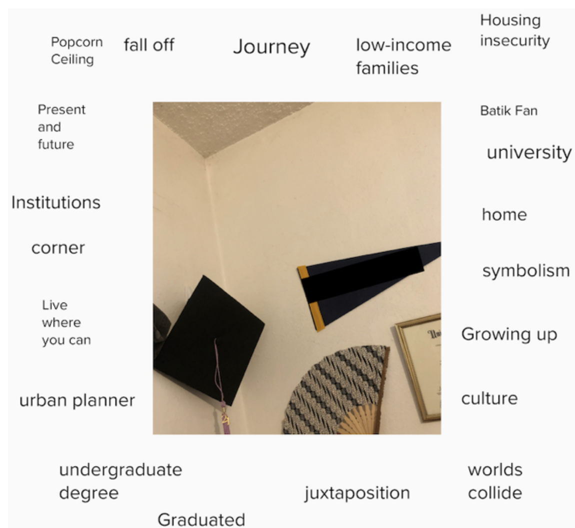
> I appreciated [it] because I would always want like organization and control in my life because that was something that I never had. Um, and even now I can't really say that. I feel like I have full control or agency in my life because of just like the reality that I live in being undocumented. . . . I feel like visual clutter brings me comfort because it kind of reminds me that I can't always have control in my life. And sometimes it there's actually beauty and joy in like disorder. Um, and especially as someone who rarely has like control elsewhere kind of like creating order out of disorder is kind of fun sometimes.

Because of Maria's undocumented status and having experienced liminality legality (Menjívar, 2006) in the U.S., they felt like they never had "full control or agency in [their] life." In addition to creation as a form of healing (Stuckey et al., 2010), Maria curated their wall with collages, paintings, drawings, and postcards on their wall to visually take control of the "organized clutter" in their life and make something meaningful out of it. Moreover, this wall was a way for Maria to see the beauty they have experienced in both the Philippines and the United States despite their undocumented status. Maria's wall symbolized the collection of memories as depicted in the visual images. These images literally show the joy Maria has experienced and continues to experience through the memories that they have created through the use of their critical

consciousness (Freire, 2000), and more specifically, an action to resist the limitations society has placed on them.

Figure 5

Putri's Corner of Accomplishments



Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Putri.

Like Cel and Maria, Putri also created a space in the corner of her room. What makes hers different is that instead of photos, paintings, and drawings, Putri used artifacts that pertained to her Indonesian culture and educational trajectory in higher education. Putri's story behind this photo is below:

> So I have my graduation cap and then I had like an Indonesian flag or Asian kind of bucket styled fan. And then I have like my undergraduate degree there and then something on the top corner. It's um, it's popcorn ceilings basically. And so I think popcorn ceiling is just interesting. Maybe it's like the urban planner in me, but like the way, um, the way a lot of like low-income families live within and houses with popcorn to me because they're not as—um, like the way they were created basically was, um, because it's like a lot cheaper to make, a lot faster to like hide

> mistakes. Right. And then, so I see a lot of like tweets about like, like, you know, you're poor when you have like popcorn [ceilings]. . . . It's like an older kind of house or like a more a low-income house. It's like popcorn ceiling. . . . I think it's interesting the way like to have that and then like kind of just the post to like my, um, my institution, right. . . . And just like what I've gone through—this is like my path and this is like the future, like what I've done to kind of get myself out of this situation.

What is notable about Putri's photo is her mention of the popcorn ceiling. She studied urban planning. Based on her knowledge of the field and lived experience, Putri associates popcorn ceilings with low-income houses because they are "a lot cheaper to make" and "a lot faster to like hide mistakes." Moreover, Putri intentionally placed the Indonesian flag, graduation cap, and undergraduate diploma in the corner where she could see the popcorn ceiling. This placement created a juxtaposition of her journey, so Putri could reflect on her pathways in life—where she has come from and where is heading. Her last sentence requires attention, when she said, "What I've done to kind of get myself out of this situation," because it reveals the level of agency—informed by her critical consciousness (Freire, 2000)—that she understands and activates despite an undocumented status that imposes limitations on her educational and professional trajectories for the future.

When I triangulated the photovoice data with the life story interviews and conducted a thematic narrative analysis, I identified a broader narrative in which creating spaces was significant for Cel, Maria, and Putri. Whether it was curating a corner of their bedroom or designing a large collage of visual images on a wall, Cel, Maria, and Putri actively created spaces that gave them joy. As they looked at these areas of their room, they were reminded of

what made them human. While they understood that they had an undocumented status, they did not let that deter living out their full humanity, particularly in the spaces that was theirs.

The Activities They Did

The second ways we see participants from this inquiry used resistant joy was in the activities they did. This is evident in the stories of John, Raymond, and Shannon as shown in their photos.

Figure 6

John's Rock Gym

Note. From photovoice co-analysis with John.

John had expressed earlier his frustration about the limitations that others have placed on him. These limitations include being racialized as a "model minority," who peers and members of his church perceived to be academically successful without having challenges in college. Being racialized as a "model minority," due to his Asian identity, and more specifically, Korean identity, compounded with the limitation that his undocumented status placed on his, especially because John does not have DACA. To cope with his frustration and stress, John found

community and an opportunity to create his own accomplishments at a rock gym nearby. The story behind John’s rock gym photo is below:

> I guess like for me exercising, whether that's just like working out, like on the treadmill, doing weights, or just climbing something about, um, weight training and all that, and just climbing something that makes it stress free. Is that, um, when I'm doing those activities, it feels like I'm accomplishing something. Um, so there are times, especially when I was in college. Um, and just thinking about like, what's, what's my next step after graduating from college, um, there was a lot of like, I guess, frustration, um, realizing that there are things that I can't do because of my status. There are limitations because of my status, but just by going to the gym, um, and just by exercising, I was able to just like, kind of like, just exercising just makes me feel like relieving, like makes me feel like I'm believing my stress because I feel like I'm accomplishing my goals. . . . just taking things like step-by-step I think.

John uses exercise to relieve stress. More specifically, he highlights how doing activities like weight training and rock climbing has given him the opportunity to create fitness goals associated with these activities, where he can feel a sense of accomplishment. John understands how difficult it is to see the bigger picture in life, and in the past, feeling discouraged because of the limitations that an undocumented status has had on his life. By going to a rock gym, he could create measurable goals, achieve them in a timely manner, and see the outcomes of his hard work. John described exercising as a form of self-care, where he could improve on mental and physical health. John’s story behind his rock gym photo shows am embodied ethos of refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2018) to the systems that continue to oppress him. In other words, John

consciously and actively refuses to let the limitations that society has placed on him from living out his full humanity. John resists these limitations by creating joy for himself through the activities he engages with at the rock gym.

Figure 7

Raymond's Hike

Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Raymond.

A physical activity that another participant, Raymond, perceived as a stress reliver was hiking. Like John, Raymond had described hiking as a way for him to overcome obstacles due to the varying levels of difficulty with hiking paths. Additionally, hiking is an activity that Raymond had not done before until January 2021, and this was one of the photos he took during his first hike with friends. Raymond's story behind this photo is below:

> It's, it was a very, very calming experience. Um, I really liked the, I really liked that feeling of like separating yourself, um, from like the world and like, just maybe for like an hour or two, you just kinda forget about everything. . . . I liked the separation from the world mainly because like, um, I guess with the way I think things tend to like snowball really quickly and like all these, these things

> that I'm thinking about, whether it be like things that I'm anxious about or just things that I have to do, you know, um, like pile up really quickly and, and can get a little overwhelming sometimes. So being able to just forget [00:07:30] about it and like, just be with friends and just hike it is, is really nice. Um, it, it gives me a chance to like slow down, slow down and, um, uh, like without trying to sound redundant, like just escape really.

What is unique about Raymond's story about hiking is how he described this activity as an "escape"—a way for him to separate himself from the world around him and "slow down." This is important for Raymond because he mentioned having a deep sense of anxiety during the pandemic, where he would quickly spiral in his head about thoughts, he could not control yet continued to worry about regarding school and life. For Raymond, his anxiety became "overwhelming," so engaging in a physical and sensory outdoor activity like hiking helped him to be calm. By being in nature and engaging in intimate conversations with his friends during the hike, Raymond was able to escape the anxious thoughts that consumed his mind. He was able to focus on the activity itself while reflecting on the beauty that surrounded him in nature while building community. For Raymond, an activity like hiking made him forgot about the worries attached to his undocumented identity.

Figure 8

Shannon's Basketball Game

Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Shannon.

Shannon recently graduated and had moved to New York when I had met her for the study. She acknowledged her privilege in having DACA because she was able to find an opportunity after graduation and work outside of California, where she had attended college for her undergraduate degree. When doing the photoactivity with Shannon, she had chosen to take a picture of a basketball game she had attended. The reason and story behind Shannon's photo are below:

> There's a lot of people [there], and I genuinely don't really like a lot of people, but in a sense I do, because everybody there has like their own stories. Um, we don't have an identification, like nobody's telling each other, like I'm American, I'm not American kind of thing. We all just blend in together. We all have a good time. Uh, we're there for an entertainment. . . . But, um, as a crowd together, we're like either rooting for one team or another. So I feel like again, that like brings people together regardless of like the immigration status, um, sometimes regardless of race, gender, religion, and those other factors.

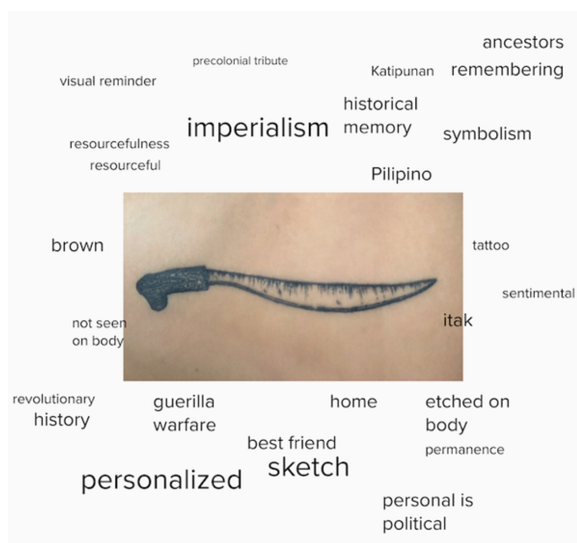
Based on the story about this photo that Shannon told, we see that she enjoys activities like attending basketball games because it is a "shared activity" that "bring people together regardless of immigration status" and other social identities. To Shannon, she does not have to worry about having conversations about her undocumented status or proving to another individual that she's "American," because everyone is there to have "good time." In some ways, Shannon feels a sense of "safety" in large crowds like this one because she and others are not concerned about her undocumented status. Attending a basketball game with her co-workers and random strangers gives her an opportunity to live out her full humanity.

The Conversations They Had with Themselves

The third way we see participants from this inquiry used resistant joy is in the conversations they had with themselves. This is evident in the stories of Maria and John as shown in their photos.

Figure 9

Maria's Tattoo



Note. From photovoice co-analysis with Maria.

When I asked participants to take photographs of spaces that made them feel safety and belonging, Maria interpreted and conceptualized this space to the itak tattoo on her body. Itak is a narrow sword in the Philippines used for harvesting crops, and in the past, an itak was used as a weapon during the wars the Philippines fought with their colonizers. Maria's story about this photo is below:

> It's like a piece of home, um, a symbolic piece of home that also reminds me that I wouldn't be here, um, without like my ancestors who fought for our freedom. Um, and especially being undocumented, I think, um, like I said before, I was like trying to almost erase my identity because I wanted to feel safer and I just didn't really want to, you know, signal stuff, um, to other people that, hey, like this person is like an immigrant or something like that. Um, but I feel like having this on my body's like, obviously it's hidden, but like having it on my body and like, you know, when I like go to shower, like I always just see it. And it's like, hey, like, you know, at the end of the day, like this country is not your friend, the state is not your friend. Um, and despite like conforming to what they want or like, you know, being whatever, a law-abiding non-citizen, isn't exactly like, I feel like it's, it's hard, it's more harmful to me in the end because I lose myself and I don't want to do that anymore.

This tattoo is incredibly personal to Maria because their best friend sketched the drawing for the tattoo artist to use as reference for Maria's tattoo. Moreover, for Maria, an itak is a "piece of home" that they will always carry with them because it is etched permanently on their body. This permanence is significant for Maria because it serves as a daily "visual reminder" of the strength of their Pilipino ancestors who fought for the Philippines's freedom. In relation to Maria's

undocumented identity, they find joy and continue to build the mental fortitude by reminding themselves what this tattoo deeply symbolizes and represents: “revolutionary history,” “historical memory,” and “resourcefulness” of her ancestors, the Pilipino people. Whenever Maria has had conversations with themselves about the labels imposed on them due to their undocumented identity, the itak tattoo reminds Maria to not “lose [themselves]” and be consumed by the dominant majoritarian narratives about immigrants, and more specifically, undocumented folks in this country. Maria has mentioned that in the past, they have conformed to U.S. society and the harm that this has done on their psyche; Maria refuses to let this happen anymore, and the itak tattoo provides them the possibility to find the strength from their ancestors because Maria carries this historical memory with them through the tattoo on their body. Maria’s story about their itak tattoo demonstrates their use of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000) while navigating their liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006).

Figure 10

John’s Bible

John was another individual who also had conversations with himself. What is unique about the conversations John had with himself is that he describes these monologues as dialogues with God. Due to John's upbringing in a Christian household, he described himself to have a strong spiritual relationship with God. For John, he attributes his strength and ability to imagine future possibilities despite not having DACA because of his trust in God; when life is out of John's control, he lets go, and lets God. John finds safety in his relationship with God, and the story behind his photo is below:

> So like a religion is like a big part of me where I'm just like, because I'm a Christian and I just reading the Bible and just like, um, just believing in God is something that is, um, that is part of, part of my identity where I'm just believing in God and just like, um, in the Bible, they always talk about how like, um, no matter what, what you face like bad, God will always give you strength. And it's just like, just my identity as a Christian is like a way for me to just, um, kind of like know that I'm not alone, I'm in this journey as an undocumented API. Um, knowing that, um, just knowing that like, it's like, God has my back. . . . It's like, again, it's very similar to like the first two pictures where like, it's like a place where I can be myself again. Um, although like I would say that I don't really feel that way at a church, um, because of like the things I experienced as an undocumented API, but just like, um, I guess like in the Christian world, we kind of say like our relationship with God and just like my relationship with God, that's something that I care about a lot, and that's something that I feel safe about. Um, and again, like if I don't really have anyone to talk to, I just pray about it. I just like pray about my, um, my stress or just like what I'm supposed to do next.

Through John's photo and story, we see that for him, religion is not about attending church because he does not necessarily feel a sense of safety or belonging with his Korean community at church; many of them do not know that John is undocumented. As a result, John must navigate that space strategically to not out himself or his family's situation. For John, it is his personal relationship with God that makes him feel like he is not alone even as an undocumented Korean, who did not know other undocumented Koreans. John draws his strength from faith—his belief that "God has [his] back" no matter what. During the times that he had no one to speak with about his challenges regarding his undocumented status, John found refuge in the word by simply knowing that he could pray about his anxiety, worries, and fears and release it all to God.

Conclusion

Based on the data, I coin the term pedagogies of liminality to describe the strategies participants from this inquiry used to navigate the intersection of race and undocumented status based on their understanding of their racialized identity as Asian and a racialized identity of undocumented. Pedagogies of liminality is not only a title of this findings chapter, but it is also broader narrative from the stories of undocumented Asians students from this inquiry. It is a social and rhetorical frame by which we can begin to interpret how undocumented Asian students experience the intersection of race and undocumented status. More specifically, pedagogies of liminality are protective adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms to negotiate a racialized subjectivity as "Asian" and navigate a material reality as undocumented in their educational journeys. This chapter uses pedagogies of liminality as more than an elaborate metaphor. It literally and figuratively emerges from undocumented Asian students' narratives of this inquiry.

Additionally, it is important that I name and give language to the ways participants from this inquiry embodied an ethos of refusal (Tuck & Yang, 2018) through the ways they employed resistant joy. This meant that despite being racialized as “model minorities” and having material constraints in their lives due to their undocumented status, they all refused to let these systems of oppression constrain their capacity to live out their full humanity. This is expressed by the joy they chose to create and live out in their everyday lives in the spaces they created, activities they did, and conversations they had with themselves, which were informed simultaneously by their use of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) and critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). Resistant joy is their daily resistance to a world that continued to dehumanize them. The resistant joy they used is noteworthy because during the time I collected data and spoke with participants, racial violence towards the Asian and American community ensued due to the racialized rhetoric of COVID-19 and xenophobic attitudes towards immigrants were prevalent. Giving language to undocumented Asian students’ experiences is key for them to make sense of their own lived experience that is often untold in the broader undocumented narratives. This chapter can provide possibilities for them to reclaim their power because now, they have a way to express and explain their agency.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Discussion

This inquiry examined the stories of seven undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California through a desire-based orientation (Tuck, 2009). Although literature about undocumented students have increased within the past two decades in higher education (Bjorklund, 2018), only a few empirical studies have focused on undocumented Asian students (Buenavista, 2013, 2018; Cho, 2019; Enriquez, 2019; Salinas Velasco et al., 2015). Moreover, the current literature about undocumented students in higher education remains limited its examination and analysis of race. The purpose of this inquiry is to create a cognitive frame to understand the racialized realities that exists at the intersection of race and undocumented status through the stories of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California. More specifically, I analyzed how undocumented Asian students experienced liminality at the intersection of race and undocumented status. The following research questions guided this study with aims of answering the broader question: *What can researchers and scholars in higher education learn about how the intersection of race and undocumented status is experienced through their understanding of undocumented Asian students' stories?*

1. How is the story of undocumented immigration told from the perspective of undocumented Asian undergraduate students in California, who overstayed their visa?
2. What racialized narratives about "Asian" and "Asianness" do undocumented Asian undergraduate students understand?

a. How do undocumented Asian undergraduate students use this understanding to navigate borders and boundaries, both imagined and real, in their undergraduate journey?

I employed critical narrative inquiry methodology (Bhattacharya, 2017) and operated from an orientation that is desire-based (Tuck, 2009) and a position the posits research as Projects in Humanization (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017). Moreover, I used concepts of double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), critical consciousness (Freire, 2000), and liminal legality (Menjívar, 2006) within my conceptual framework as theoretical anchors to design the study and analyze the data. Data sources included 10-minute screening interviews, 1.5-2 hours of in-depth life story interviews, 35 photos that were co-analyzed during a 1-1.5-hour photovoice session, two reflection community dialogues, 30-minute follow-up interviews, interim texts, and analytic memos. By using multi-modal methods in data collection and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978), I was able to deeply contextualize and humanize participants' stories without diluting their narratives to research data and answer the research questions. Data collection took place from March 2021 to February 2022.

Findings from this inquiry provides empirical and theoretical contributions to the scholarship about undocumented students and race in higher education. Empirically, the first findings offered counternarratives as empirical evidence to combat the dominant majoritarian narrative about undocumented immigration that is harmful to both the Latin* and Asian undocumented community. The counternarratives of undocumented Asian students who overstayed their visa reveal a more complex immigration system and challenge majoritarian ideas of coming to the U.S. "the right way." In fact, the counternarratives of participants from this inquiry demonstrate that all of them came to the U.S. "the right way"—authorized and with

legal paperwork. Varying circumstances, and to some, out of their own control, led to them becoming undocumented. Findings from this chapter complicate undocumented status by showing the distinct and different ways that people become undocumented.

Theoretically, the second findings chapter named and gave language to the strategies undocumented Asian students employed based on their racialized liminal position at the intersection of race and undocumented status. Participants' stories lend insight into the ways undocumented status is differentially experienced by racialization. This expands the literature on racialized illegality as experienced in higher educational settings, which can help researchers and practitioners in higher education better support undocumented Asian students due to the ways they experience undocumented distinctly in varied spaces and contexts. Moreover, findings from the second chapter confirm how studying Asians and Asian Americans can offer insights to a better understanding and a more refined language about race for educational researchers. More broadly, this inquiry contributes to a broader racial discourse about race and racialization in higher education.

This critical narrative inquiry set out to humanize research in higher education, and this inquiry has methodological contributions to research. Educational research and much of social science research has been concerned about documenting damage, pain, and trauma or damage-centered narratives about minoritized populations and vulnerable communities (Tuck, 2009). The literature about undocumented students in higher education has traditionally discussed these students' experiences within frameworks of trauma—understandably so, as trauma is a part of the undocumented experience, but trauma is only a part of a person's entire story. The methodological design of the inquiry lends insights as to the possibilities of what humanizing research can look like for vulnerable populations, like undocumented students, in research.

Having operated from a desire-based orientation during analysis gave me the ability to name and give language to the ways participants from this inquiry embodied an ethos of refusal in retelling participants' stories as written and read through the findings. In other words, despite being racialized as "model minorities" and having material constraints in their lives due to their undocumented status in addition to how undocumented status is racialized as a Latin* narrative, participants in this inquiry all refused to let these systems of oppression constrain their capacity to live out their full humanity. Conversations from the reflection community dialogues, which was further confirmed during members, show the impact of humanizing research for participants when employing methods within frameworks of desire and humanization (San Pedro & Kinloch, 2017; Tuck, 2009).

Implications

Immigration Policy

Firstly, findings from this inquiry have implication for immigration policy. As I write this section of the dissertation in April 2022, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced on April 12, 2022, that individuals who have DACA could now file Form I-821D or renew their DACA status. While this news is moment of celebration for the undocumented community for those who have DACA, there are still many undocumented folks without DACA. Four out of the seven participants in this inquiry (i.e., Maria, Cel, John, and Raymond) did not have DACA. After I finished data collection, I stayed in touch with a few of my participants, primarily the ones without DACA. They reached out to me for support, guidance, and continued mentorship regarding post-graduation pathways. Undocumented individuals without DACA will continue to live in a state of limbo. Additionally, as the years go by, many undocumented

immigrants will no longer be eligible for DACA based on the requirements below (USCIS, 2022):

- Are under 31 years of age as of June 15, 2012;
- Came to the U.S. while under the age of 16;
- Have continuously resided in the U.S. from June 15, 2007 to the present. (For purposes of calculating this five-year period, brief absences from the United States for humanitarian reasons will not be included);
- Entered the U.S. without inspection or fell out of lawful visa status before June 15, 2012;
- Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS;
- Are currently in school, have graduated from high school, have obtained a GED, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or armed forces;
- Have not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor, or more than three misdemeanors of any kind; and
- Do not pose a threat to national security or public safety.

While DACA has provided opportunities for undocumented individuals, and many undocumented students in higher education to work, this policy does not have pathways for citizenship. DACA is not a viable policy to address the needs of undocumented individuals in this country as it is currently written. As seen by the requirements above, more individuals who immigrate to the U.S. later down the line, whether that is through authorized or unauthorized entries, and become undocumented will no longer be eligible DACA because they will fall out of the dates of eligibility. Plus, as of right now, USCIS is not processing any new DACA applications leaving many undocumented individuals in a state of limbo.

Moreover, discourse about immigration policy extends beyond DACA. There are many Asian individuals who are also in statuses of precarity, whose stories remain untold by mainstream media and are not capture in research. For example, Cambodian American refugees, who were granted Lawful Permanent Residency (LPR) in the U.S. can be deported back to Cambodia if convicted of certain crimes (Zelnick, 2021). Zelnick (2021) demonstrates how even those with LPR statuses in the U.S. can be deportable refugees given the current immigration policies and laws. Additionally, we have still yet to understand individuals from countries in Asia like Burma (Myanmar) and Nepal, who have Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and how they are are navigating their status and lives in the U.S. TPS is also a precarious status, and individuals from Asia with TPS are often overlooked within the broader discourse of immigration policy.

By working with participants, who overstayed their visas, findings from this inquiry reveal a more complex immigration system. Participants' immigration stories to the United States reveal the many ways they and their families have become undocumented. These stories often go untold, and as a result, public and political discourse remain ill-informed on the many realities and unique needs of an undocumented population in this country that is racially and ethnically diverse. Politicians and lawmakers need a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to immigration policy that is informed by research from various disciplines. Moreover, it is important to consider how each state plays a role in the broader policy context when thinking about supporting immigrant and undocumented students since each state has its own set of policies that vary across the nation.

Student Services Across P-20 and Access to Careers and Employment

Secondly, findings from this inquiry have implications for student services across P-20 regarding culturally relevant and racially conscious advising, mental health, and financial aid. All of the undocumented Asian students from this inquiry revealed having to figure out how to access higher education on their own, with little to no help. A part of this was because others did not know and/or understand they were undocumented. When participants shared their undocumented status to friends and some staff at undocumented centers, others responded with surprise, disbelief, and shock—as if there is a particular look to being undocumented. Participants shared that when they sought for support at their undocumented student centers on campus, they were initially intimidated because they did not see others like them. Findings from this inquiry give insight to the ways spaces are racialized in higher education, even the ones that were designed for all undocumented students. Student affairs practitioners working at undocumented student centers and advocates for undocumented students on college campuses need to reevaluate the ways processes of racialization may be shaping their resources and outreach for undocumented students, who identify as Asian, Black, and Pacific Islander in addition to supporting post-graduation pathways and careers towards employment for those without DACA.

Moreover, when I spoke to a few of the participants, they cried during their interviews revealing how much trauma they are still processing even for some who have told their stories before to others. As mentioned, it is important that these resources are culturally relevant and race conscious to attend to the cultural and racial nuances when supporting students. More funding should be allocated to mental health resources for immigrant and immigrant-origin families and made available to undocumented students without them needing to fill out more documentation. Often, filling out more documentation to access resources can be intimidating for

undocumented students since they already live in a state of precarity without legal paperwork in the U.S. Individuals working with undocumented students should also be trained in how to understand. Additionally, staff in the offices of financial aid at colleges and universities should know their state and institution's financial aid policies in supporting undocumented students. Undocumented students in this inquiry shared how employees in the financial aid offices at their institutions did not know what advice to give them based on their situation, especially for those without DACA. This led to more stress and anxiety, and often, the students would end up going to community-based organizations instead that better understood the laws and policies that affected them.

Due to the diverse racial and ethnic demography of California in addition to more inclusive policies for undocumented students, higher education institutions in California are uniquely positioned to create connections with local political and community-based organizations that also focus on career opportunities and employment As a result, there is potential for cross-racial and -ethnic solidarities that can strengthen coalition building within the immigrant justice and labor movements between Asian and Latin* communities that extends outside of higher education to support immigrant and undocumented communities broadly.

Humanizing Research

Lastly, this inquiry has implications for the futurity of higher education research that moves beyond ethicality and works toward humanization (Pérez Huber, 2019), especially when conducting research with vulnerable populations like undocumented students. Higher education researchers are becoming more critical about the ways they engage with vulnerable populations like undocumented students (Tachine & Nicolazzo, 2022). I used an orientation of desire, or desire-based framework (Tuck, 2009), to construct a more expansive representation of how a

vulnerable population, such as undocumented students, made sense of their engagement within the inquiry process. A desire-based framework holds the power of "shifting discourse away from damage and toward desire and complexity. . . . not fetishize damage, but rather, celebrates [participants'] survivance" (Tuck, 2009, p. 422). Moreover, San Pedro and Kinloch (2017) frame educational research as Projects in Humanization (PiH) that allows educational researchers to engage in transformative praxis and storying with participants. They assert that PiH establishes a more "inclusive, interconnected, and [decolonial]" way of "[disrupting] systemic inequalities found in Western constructs of educational research" (p. 373S).

Storytelling, collaborative methods, participatory methods, visual methods, and decolonial approaches should be further explored as a part of critical qualitative inquiry. More specifically, visual methods like photovoice are emerging to be an alternative way of collecting data that captures the experiences of participants and reimagines power and the construction of knowledge (Kortegast et al., 2019, 2020; Phelps-Ward et al., 2021). Findings from this inquiry show the possibility of humanizing research in practice. This inquiry pushes the ontological boundaries of researchers and scholars in higher education in terms of how we think about conducting research that deconstructs power dynamics between researchers and participants and (re)constructing knowledge with participants that humanizes their experiences.

Future Directions

Without understanding the contributions of Asians and Asian Americans in shaping United States history and how they, too, matter in the fight for equity, U.S. America's racial and social consciousness will drowse into a deep slumber hindering our nation to reimagine possibilities of racial equity and racial solidarity that can transform the present and future society. Future research about undocumented students should explore the following topics: 1) the

extent to which higher education institutions are supporting undocumented students without DACA as they complete their degrees; 2) studies focusing on specific subgroups of undocumented Asian students to better understand how race, ethnicity, and culture shape experiences in being undocumented; 3) studies that focus on undocumented Pacific Islander students (not aggregating them with undocumented Asian students) to better understand how Pacific Islander students become undocumented because Pacific Islander students have a different history that is tied to the current occupation and militarization of the U.S. in the Pacific islands; and 4) the impact of racialized illegality on the educational experiences of undocumented Black students as they access and experience higher education. Through future studies that analyze how racial oppression is experienced at the intersection for various communities, especially as it concerns immigration, researchers and scholars can gain a better understanding of human condition as shaped by changing social, political, and economic contexts. To that end, we, as a society, can use this understanding to address issues of racial equity to create a more just future.

APPENDIX A: ORAL CONSENT FORM

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate in this study. I know we are living through unprecedented times with the global pandemic that has amplified inequalities we know already exist in the lives of People of Color, low-income families, and undocumented communities. So again, I thank you for giving me your time today and willingness to share your story as a part of this study.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary, and if at any time you choose to withdraw or no longer participate in this study, you will not be penalized.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the research study is to understand the experiences of undocumented Asian students who are in college. You were chosen for this study because you identify as someone who is undocumented due visa overstay, identify as Asian, and are currently enrolled or recently attended a college or university in California.

Participation
If you agree to participate, I will ask you to:

- Volunteer to participate in an individual interview (think of this as a conversation about your life) for about 1-2 hours.
- Volunteer to participate in a photograph activity, where you'll answer a prompt by taking and selecting three pictures to share with me. We will then discuss why and what the pictures mean to you in a separate conversation that will take about 1-1.5 hours.
- Volunteer to participate in a reflection community dialogue that will take about an hour.

Confidentiality
Your safety and privacy are my highest priorities for this study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. Because of your legal status, **I will be asking your oral consent** instead of requiring you to sign a consent form agreeing to volunteer for the study to minimize any risk that connects you back to this study.

Additionally, I will take practical safeguards in my protocols to ensure your identity is protected. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing all audio password-encrypted external hard drive that only the researcher can access. Prior to all audio recordings, the researcher will have participants create a pseudonym to be referenced throughout the interview. Your pseudonym will be used throughout the interviews. I will use pseudonyms throughout the study in all research materials; this means that your real name will not be used or found in any of the research materials. When I transcribe the interview, I will remove any personal information that could possibly connect back to your identity.

All files and audio recordings will also be stored in one password-encrypted external hard drive kept at the researcher's private residence that will only be accessed by the researcher. The external hard drive will not be removed the researcher's private residence.

Principal Investigator
If you have any questions Rose Ann E. Gutierrez at raegutierrez@g.ucla.edu and [researcher phone number redacted].

UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP)
If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

APPENDIX B: SCREENING PROTOCOL

Thank you for calling me, Rose Ann E. Gutierrez, about the research on immigration status and race. I'd like to ask you a few questions to determine whether you are eligible for the research. Before I begin the screening, I'd like to tell you a little about the research. This research seeks to understand the experiences of undocumented Asian students in college. In other words, this study is interested in learning how race (being Asian) and undocumented status (being undocumented) affects the experiences undocumented Asian students in college.

Would you like to continue with the screening? [*If no, thank the person for their time, and hang-up. If yes, continue with protocol.*] The screening will take about five minutes. I will ask you about racial identity, ethnic identity, and immigration status in addition to your current enrollment status as a student. You don't have to answer any questions you don't wish to answer or are uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. Your participation in the screening is voluntary.

Your answers will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for me. After the screening, if you don't qualify for the study, your answers will be kept without your name. If you do qualify for the research and decide to participate, your answers will be kept with the research record, but I will only be using your pseudonym. Your real name will not be used in any of the research materials.

Would you like to continue with the screening? [*If no, thank the person and hang-up. If yes, continue with the screening.*]

Screening Questions:

1. At what age did you come to the United States? From where?
2. Do you identify as a person who has overstayed their visa?
3. How do you racially or ethnically identify?
4. Are you currently enrolled in a college or university? If not, what month and year were you last enrolled?
5. Does your college or university have any resources for undocumented students (i.e., an undocumented resource center or a person with the role of supporting undocumented students)?

Thank you for answering the screening questions. [*Indicate whether the person is eligible, requires additional screening, or is not eligible and explain why.*] Do you have any questions about the screening or the research? I'm going to give you my phone number if you have any questions later. Do you have a pen or pencil? If you have questions about the research screening, you may call me, and I'll answer your questions.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or if you wish to voice any problems or concerns you may have about the study to someone other than the researchers, please call the UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program at (310) 825-7122.

Thank you again for your time and willingness to answer the questions.

APPENDIX C: LIFE STORY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

First, I'd like to thank you for taking time out of your day in having a conversation with me. I know we are living through unprecedented times with the global pandemic that has amplified inequalities we know already exist in the lives of People of Color, low-income families, and undocumented communities. So again, I thank you for giving me your time today and willingness to share your story as a part of this study.

As mentioned in our previous conversations, this study is about understanding experiences of undocumented Asian students who are in college. I will ask you questions about you and your family's migration story and experiences in college, more specifically about what it is like and means to be undocumented and Asian. There are no right or wrong answers, and if you are uncomfortable answering a question, you can let me know, and we can skip it.

As a reminder, this conversation will be recorded through an audio recorder I have placed next to audio speaker on my laptop/phone. Even though Zoom has advanced security measures, I'm taking extra precautions to ensure that your identity is protected throughout the entire study. That's why I will not be recording on Zoom, so no image of yours is recorded and saved on my local or cloud server. Anything you say will remain confidential. Your real name and anything that may be used to identify you will not be used for the study to, again, ensure your protection and safety.

Our conversation should take about one to two hours. If at any time during our conversation you want to turn your camera off, you made do so. If you also would like to take a break or a moment with yourself, please let me know. It is okay to do that as well.

[Review study information sheet and consent form. Researcher asks for verbal consent.]

We've reviewed these materials before, but again, do you have any questions before we begin?

[Participant responds. Researcher and participant discuss questions if participant has any.]

Great! If any other questions come up during our talk, please feel free to ask. Let's begin.

Closing

That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you again for giving me your time and sharing with me your story about who you are, your family, and your educational experiences. I understand that by you even having this conversation with me that you are entrusting me with your story, so as a researcher, I will do my best to honor and respect what you have shared as a participant in this study. What you have told me has been helpful for my research.

Before we say goodbye, I have a final question for you. Would you be willing to do a follow-up interview if I have any additional questions for you after reviewing our conversation today?

[Yes.] – Wonderful! I'll be in touch if anything comes up.

[No.] – That is okay, and I completely understand and respect that time you've given me today.

Do you have any questions for me?

[Participant responds. Researcher and participant discuss questions if participant has any.]

If you do think of a question or anything else that comes up for you, please feel free to contact me. Thank you again!

APPENDIX D: PHOTOVOICE INSTRUCTIONS

About

Again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study and sharing your story with me based on our last conversation. Since this study is about understanding the narratives of undocumented Asian students who are in college, another part of this study asks participants to take photographs to answer the following question: *What stories would you like to understand through the lens of somebody who is an undocumented Asian student? More specifically, take photos of spaces that make you feel comfortable or like you belong as an undocumented Asian.*

This process is meant to capture what you have to say through visual imagery, which can be helpful in describing any experience you may have that can't be put into simple words.

Instructions

You will have two weeks to take photographs and select five that you'll share with me; we'll talk about them afterwards. You can take whatever picture you like with the following question in mind: *What stories would you like to understand through the lens of somebody who is an undocumented Asian student? More specifically, take photos of spaces that make you feel comfortable or like you belong as an undocumented Asian.*

While taking your photos, please **do not** include any person(s) in the photo you are taking. This also means that if you are taking a photo and there is a framed photograph or other photos with people in the background, to either turn the framed photograph or remove background photos from the shot. Since photos are a form of data that I'm collecting in this study, I want to ensure I'm protecting your identity and anybody else that can be identifiable in these photos. If framed photography or any background photos are removed from the photos you take, we can discuss their meaning and significance in our conversation about the photos you have chosen to share later.

APPENDIX E: PHOTOVOICE PROTOCOL

Introduction

Thank you for sharing with me the five photos from the activity. As mentioned in our previous conversations, this study is about understanding the narratives or stories of undocumented Asian students who are in college. The photograph activity was meant to capture parts of your story through visual imagery, which can be helpful in describing any experience that can't easily be express in words. You took photos with the following questions in mind: *What stories would you like to understand through the lens of somebody who is an undocumented Asian student? More specifically, take photos of spaces that make you feel comfortable or like you belong as an undocumented Asian.* I'm excited to discuss what these images mean to you!

During our conversation, you will be an active participator in the coding process of research. What this means is that you will help me understand what these pictures mean to you by talking about them, and together, we'll identify words and concepts that connect them back to the activity's questions. The reason behind this being is that the method or way I'm conducting this study is to make sure your voice and how you tell your story is through your words.

As a reminder, this conversation will be recorded through an audio recorder I have placed next to audio speaker on my laptop/phone. Even though Zoom has advanced security measures, I'm taking extra precautions to ensure that your identity is protected throughout the entire study. That's why I will not be recording on Zoom, so no image of yours is recorded and saved on my local or cloud server. Anything you say will remain confidential. Your real name and anything that may be used to identify you will not be used for the study to, again, ensure your protection and safety.

Our conversation should take about one hour to an hour and a half. If at any time during our conversation you want to turn your camera off, you made do so. If you also would like to take a break or a moment with yourself, please let me know. It is okay to do that as well.

[Researcher asks for verbal consent.]

Do you have any questions before we begin?

[Participant responds. Researcher and participant discuss questions if participant has any.]

Great! If any other questions come up during our talk, please feel free to ask. Let's begin.

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