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Echándole Ganas: Undocumented, Latino Students
Fighting for Collegiate Survival in their
United States Homeland

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

by

Jaime Liborio Del Razo

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Echándole Ganas: Undocumented, Latino Students
Fighting for Collegiate Survival in their
United States Homeland

by

Jaime Liborio Del Razo
Doctor of Philosophy in Education
University of California, Los Angeles, 2012
Professor Peter McLaren, Chair

This study examines the college aspirations and access of Latino, undocumented students. In a time when college access is limited and a college education is necessary, the issue of academically qualified, undocumented students trying to enter the higher education system under tremendous odds is one that deserves a closer study. This dissertation unearths the methods that undocumented, Latino students utilize to gain access and succeed in U.S. colleges despite the financial constraints and social stigma associated with being an undocumented, Latino student in the U.S. The theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory is used to analyze the stratification of immigration status in the U.S. along with examining the consequences of racialization of the term “undocumented”.

Utilizing a mixed methods approach that uses qualitative and quantitative methods, this study benefits from 16 in-depth interviews with undocumented Latino students from Arizona and California and 290 complete surveys from undocumented Latino students across the United States. It was found that undocumented Latino students' challenges include dehumanization, denial of material resources like financial aid, and de facto/de jure oppression. By using support networks and a strong sense of hope, undocumented Latino students found ways to navigate their way to college. Last, by exploring the entanglement of racism and nativism, undocumented students provided a unique insight to these two forms of oppression.

The dissertation of Jaime Liborio Del Razo is approved.

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana

Hiroshi Motomura

Daniel Solorzano

Peter McLaren, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

Dedication Page

I dedicate this work to the millions of undocumented students who continue to endure unjust treatment while they continue to fight for justice. May God's light always shine upon you all as you march forward to a better tomorrow. *El sueño sigue.*

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

“It’s like the song from Los Tigres del Norte, *‘Aunque la jaula sea de oro, no deja de ser prisión’* [Even though the cage is made of gold, it doesn’t stop being a prison].” The quote above is how Chalo¹, an undocumented Latino student and lifelong Boy Scout, described his life in the United States. He was grateful for everything this country had given him and recognized that his life was probably better in the U.S. than in his home country. However, he still felt like a prisoner who may have exchanged one bad cell for a better one. He felt this way because he realized that despite excelling in the opportunities he had available to him, this country still confined him to a world where he still cannot travel broadly, still cannot compete for academic opportunities with his colleagues, and still cannot benefit from the social programs that he, and other undocumented workers, helps sustain. This is a story of students growing up undocumented in the United States and their struggles to make it to college.

According to a 2005 report by the Bell Policy Center, approximately 65,000 undocumented students who have lived in the United States for 5 or more years will graduate from U.S. high schools each year (Protopsaltis, 2005). The majority of these students will be unable to attend any college due to their inability to pay tuition and fees since they cannot be hired to work and cannot access public funds (Chavez, Soriano, & Oliverez, 2007). Furthermore, depending on the state they reside in, many of these students are charged tuition equivalent to the tuition of international students which can

¹ Chalo is a pseudonym for one of the students in this study.

be two to three times the regular tuition fees (Seif, 2004). These challenges combined make it incredibly difficult for undocumented students to achieve their educational dreams of attending college (Protopsaltis, 2005; Ruge & Iza, 2005; Yates, 2004).

One of the unique challenges facing undocumented students in U.S. public schools is the constant stigma of “illegality” that surfaces through various legal and public means (Chavez, et al., 2007; De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003; P. E. Green, 2003; Seif, 2004; C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; C. Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008; M. M. Suarez-Orozco, 1996). Beginning with our immigration laws, any person in the United States without authorization of the federal government is considered to be here “illegally” (Aleinikoff, Martin, & Motomura, 2007). This immigration system has resulted in a caste of people legally marginalized due to their immigration status and further oppressed by their alienage, within the United States (López & López, 2010; Olivas, 2012; Orner & Andes, 2008). This marginalization and oppression is seen in the countless examples of harsh and unjust treatment and criminal depiction of undocumented people. I argue that this type of stigmatization results in a feeling of isolation and liminality of undocumented students. Hence, the specificity of these students’ immigrant status experience sets them apart in significant ways that were initiated by the legal classification of their person.

Given that a majority of undocumented students are from Latin America (J. S. Passel, 2005), this issue also becomes racialized so that Chicano/Latino U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents become the face and target for xenophobic attacks along with undocumented people in the United States (Acuña, 1988; Santa Ana, 2002) . A historical example of this racialization was “Operation Wetback,” a massive INS (Immigration and

Naturalization Service) project that, according to the INS, resulted in the removal of 80,000 undocumented workers with a special focus on Mexicans. However, it is estimated that over 1 million immigrants and U.S. citizens were removed with many leaving voluntarily, for fear of being forcefully removed by the INS (Perea, 1997). In addition, this racialization has often resulted in creating a divisive wedge in the Latino community between those who are “legal” and those who are “illegal”(De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003). Hence, this entanglement of racism within the immigration debate is one that deserves closer consideration.

This study involved a critical examination of the challenges that undocumented, Latino students face as they make their way to college, the opportunities they create to overcome these challenges, and how racism becomes involved in this struggle for college access. By using a theoretical framework that is embedded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), I utilize CRT’s roots in Critical Legal Studies (CLS) to explore how laws disrupt the availability of resources for college-bound undocumented, Latino students.

Enough is not known nor documented about the experiences of undocumented students. The literature of immigrant students no doubt contains undocumented students as part of its subjects but only a small amount actually make it their focus and the entirety of their pool of subjects. This study examined three things: (1) The various methods undocumented students employ to academically achieve beyond high school; (2) The methods that undocumented students use to replace the opportunities that are offered to their peers but not to them; and (3) The ways that undocumented students become racialized and how it impacts their academic aspirations. By limiting the subjects only to undocumented students, this study provides current information on this growing and

important population and brings the issue of undocumented students access to college front and center.

Research Questions

Situated within the current struggles for undocumented immigrant rights, this study examines how current, college-bound, undocumented, Latino students are navigating the narrow door openings of opportunities for a college education. This study was guided by two research questions:

1. How do undocumented, Latino students navigate the legal and educational system to receive a college education in the United States?
 - a. How are undocumented students compensating for the lack of resources that are available to their peers who are not undocumented?
2. How does being undocumented become racialized for these students and what are the consequences of this racialization?

The first question asks how undocumented Latino students are making it to college within two important societal structures that divide those who are undocumented and those who are not. These two societal structures are the educational structure and legal structure in the United States. These structures intersect to create educational policy that often hinders the educational attainment of marginalized community in general and undocumented students in particular. By focusing specifically on this academic navigation to college, this study documents the careful and often difficult way that undocumented students are pursuing a college education in the face of uncertainty common to anyone matriculating to college but unique to undocumented students who do it with no federal

aid, a stigma of their status, and a legal certainty of being deported if they are apprehended by immigration authorities. What I found was that despite the enormous social and legal challenges, undocumented students' sense of hope drove them to find creative avenues of support and empowerment that aided them on their road to college.

The second question asks how undocumented Latino students are interpreting, comparing, contrasting, and experiencing racism as undocumented Latinos. Regardless of immigration status, Latinos have experienced nativism that racially stereotypes them as being foreign (Garcia Bedolla, 2005). The views by undocumented students who experience both nativism and racism, independently at times but often combined, provides new information on how we theorize about issues relating to race and racism. The racialization of the term "undocumented" as being only Latino was something that even undocumented Latinos reject. The findings also showed a recursive relationship between nativism and racism that was best described as an entanglement rather than an intersection.

Significance of study

The significance of this work lies within the compelling stories of undocumented students (whose presence in this country was not of their choosing) and the often restricted educational policies and immigration laws that govern them as they make their way into and through the U.S. higher educational system. From a macro and micro perspective of this work, I examine the struggles endured by some of our brightest and promising students that are undocumented and Latino. I explore how the legal system affects the college matriculation of undocumented Latino students and I utilize my

theoretical framework as a tool that challenges the societal morality of our current immigration system that continues to oppress a large and growing population of undocumented students. Additionally, the importance of this study can be seen through a historical lens. History has shown that legally oppressing large segments of a country's population has resulted in large social problems for the country's future. Hence, we must address the needs (in particular, the educational needs) of the undocumented population that is not shrinking but in fact, growing.

This research project is an important step towards telling the story of undocumented students whose academic excellence and systemic denial to fiscal resources challenges the notion of meritocracy for college access. Thousands of undocumented students enter U.S. classrooms, adhere to the social pressures of demonstrating academic excellence, and get admitted to colleges across the United States. They have proven to have the motivation and intellectual capacity to excel, despite the economic, legal, and social challenges they encounter in the United States. For all these reasons they must not be legally restricted from accessing the same benefits of other similar deserving students. To do otherwise, will not advance this country's promise of equality but will continue to keep members of U.S. society structurally and legally oppressed for years to come.

It is the dreams and hopes of most parents to provide for their children a better life and world than the one they have experienced themselves. For families with undocumented students, barriers that restrict college access due to their immigrant status in this country hinder these dreams and hopes. A study that questions why a student's immigrant status precludes them from accessing education is important. It is important because it exposes the structures of domination and subordination that undocumented

students live under and questions notions of meritocracy that do not hold up when we discuss academically successful undocumented students. Undocumented students occupy our classrooms and possess dreams for a college education. For the sake of these students, we must be willing to examine how we can define citizenship and membership in this country. We must do this if not for their families, then for the belief that access to education should not have barriers that cannot be legally overcome.

CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature

Immigration Theory

Migration is a world phenomenon that has existed as long as humans have lived and it has existed before the concept of a 'nation-state' was developed. Human beings' early adventure into the unknown in search for food or adventure provided a template of mass human movement that future generations continue to follow today. In Jared Diamond's Guns, Germs, and Steel, the author describes how human migration plays a central role in the development of civilizations that help create the nation-state as we know it today (Diamond, 2005).

However, it is the nation-state that causes forced migration to happen as it seeks to protect its borders from *any more* migrants entering (Brubaker, 1992; Brubaker & German Marshall Fund of the United States., 1989). This kind of protectiveness is similar to what we see happening in the United States. Through national policies like Operation Gate Keeper and the building of the wall across the US/Mexico border, to vigilante groups like the Minute Men who see it is as their task to "tell the government to do its job in securing this border [U.S./Mexican border] or we will shut it down ourselves" (Seper, 2005). Yet powerful countries like the U.S. are often at the heart of why workers lose jobs in their home countries (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005). This forces many of them to seek out jobs beyond their homelands and migrate to places like the U.S. where jobs that Americans will not fill are available for them (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Immigrants are not solely leaving their home countries because they are escaping extreme levels of poverty (i.e. Push Theory of immigration) but they are also leaving because their labor is needed by host countries like the United States (i.e. Pull theory of immigration). Portes and Rumbaut's seminal work, Immigrant America: A portrait discusses at length this idea of push and pull of immigrants to its country. Immigrants in a sense are being pushed out of their country due to diminishing resources for them and their families to live. They are also being pulled into countries like the United States that needs them and has benefited tremendously from the labor and contributions of immigrant communities. Indeed, immigrants are "very much welcomed, if not by everyone, at least by a very influential group – namely, the small, medium, and large enterprises in agriculture, services, and industry that have come to rely on and profit from this source of labor" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006, Pg. 24). These push and pull structures set up good conditions for large amounts of migration to take place despite a growing xenophobia especially against the undocumented population.

Much of the popular discourse calls undocumented migrants "illegal aliens" and finds many reasons to both fear and hate them (Akers Chacon, Davis, & Cardona, 2006). Yet, the U.S. exploits their labor and denies them basic services such as legal and educational benefits that they earn (R. J. Garcia, 2003). Debates over immigration policies seldom take into account the responsibility that the United States as a country shares by way of its actions around immigration procedures, and domestic and foreign policies. In most cases, depending on the country of origin, an immigrant can expect a wait time of several years (as long as 22 years) before their case is fully reviewed and processed (Lopez, 2008; State, 2008). These factors combine to create the present situation where millions of

undocumented people, who reside in the United States, contribute to the economy yet are often found barren of basic human needs (Akers Chacon, et al., 2006; Chomsky, 2007).

It is estimated that there are nearly 12 million undocumented people residing in the United States (Passel, 2006). Only estimates of this population are possible since it is a community that often lives in the shadows given the negative public perception and immigration raids that threaten their stay in this country (Alba & Nee, 2003; Orner & Andes, 2008). Many undocumented people are in need of social services but are denied access due to their residency status (Akers Chacon, et al., 2006). In a 2004 report, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) stated the following:

...the children of immigrants are more likely to be disadvantaged than the children of natives. They are more likely to be poor (24 percent versus 16 percent); more likely to be uninsured (22 percent versus 10 percent); more likely to have no usual source of medical care (14 percent versus 4 percent); and more likely not to have a steady source of food (37 percent versus 27 percent) (NILC, 2004, p. 2)

The above quotation describes a population that is expanding and is being squeezed ever tighter by the legal strings of our courts and social chains of public opinion. Furthermore, it captures the economic challenges that many immigrant children face in the United States and in our public schools.

It is important to note that the U.S. cannot exempt itself from responsibility with respect to why undocumented migration exists in this country. U.S. foreign policy has played a significant role in influencing a vast migration of people from their country of origin to the United States (M. M. Suarez-Orozco, 1996). Industrial nation-states, like the United States, are inextricably implicated in motivating large-scale migration around the

world, especially in developing countries that share an economic relationship with the host nation-state (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). It would be great if the U.S. welcomed these incoming immigrants as future citizens or as “Americans in waiting” but instead “the opposite is true; we treat new immigrants as outsiders until shown otherwise” (Motomura, 2006, Pg. 9).

The standard of living enjoyed by many Americans is, in part, at the expense and exploitation of the resources of other countries. U.S. policies like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have resulted in large-scale industrialization in Mexico. One example of NAFTA’s effects are large scale industrialized corn farms which have absorbed tiny family farms that have existed for centuries (Nadal, 2000). This absorption of small businesses, where only profit matters, has resulted in Mexican workers being out of jobs and seeking employment elsewhere, like the United States. Hence, NAFTA represents a U.S. foreign policy, which benefits its citizens but does not account for any type of employment disruption it may be causing abroad. This results in large-scale migration to occur from the sending state to the host state, which is many times due to foreign policy like the one listed above.

In Ethical Borders: NAFTA, Globalization, and Mexican Migration (Hing, 2010), Bill Ong Hing presents a compelling argument for a more fluid border between Mexico and the U.S., which would benefit both countries. By taking a global look at the phenomenon of undocumented migration, the author is able to draw parallels to the EU and how we could use it as a model to fix our own immigration challenges in U.S. In a careful critique of NAFTA, Hing exposes the damage that NAFTA has inflicted on Mexico and presents a

number of changes to our current U.S. immigration laws that would alleviate some of this damage.

Early undocumented migration has usually been associated with males making the trip and then (though not always) sending for their wives and children (Alba & Nee, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). However, scholars have provided arguments for the importance of studying gender in migration studies especially how it connects to the study of migrant youth (Curran, Shafer, Donato, & Garap, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006). A growing number of women making the dangerous trip across the border with their male partners or to reunite with them after they have established themselves, has also resulted in immigrant youth making the trip with their mothers. One important reason for studying the effects of a genderization of migration is the children they bring with them and the lives they lead once they grow up in the United States. Though gender itself is not the focus of my study, I will examine the connections with gender within the lives of their children, which enter U.S. classrooms, thrive academically, and have aspirations for attending college.

Undocumented students in California schools are a direct result of the large demand for their parent's labor by businesses across our state and our country. Portes discusses the direct and indirect relationship that employers have in mobilizing migrants to come to the United States from several parts of Latin America:

Networks are established not only between migrants and their kin and friends in their countries of origins but between migrants and their employers. Every time a building contractor or a restaurant owner approaches one of his migrant workers for a referral. Every time the manager of a corporate chain contacts one of his cleaning subcontractors for

additional services, they mobilize networks that run deep into Mexico, Central America, and other sending nations (Portes, 2006, Time: 1:00:14).

Indeed, this underground causal relationship that Portes describes above maintains a constant flow of migrants that fill the economic requests that U.S. corporations and businesses have learned to access and depend on.

Legal Cases

The law is an important part of the social mindset and a large part of our social order. This is most evidently true when discussing undocumented students. The law cases that follow are important to contextualize the beneficial and detrimental ways that the law has directly and indirectly affected undocumented students in the past and in the present.

Plyler v. Doe ("*Plyler v. Doe*"). In 1977, a city ordinance governing several Texas school districts, specifically the Tyler Independent School District, claimed that undocumented students were causing an extreme financial burden on the state of Texas and that U.S. citizen and legal resident students were being given a substandard education due to the costs of educating undocumented students ("*Plyler v. Doe*," 1982). A class action lawsuit was filed and it eventually was argued at the U.S. Supreme Court. In a close 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court struck down this ordinance as being unconstitutional by citing the Equal Protection Clause found in the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. A portion of the amendment read, "...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws".

Litigants arguing on behalf of Plyler claimed that undocumented students could not be considered “persons within its jurisdiction” since undocumented students were in the United States without authorization. The majority of the Court disagreed with this premise by stating that undocumented students were persons in the general sense and that the fourteenth amendment did not distinguish between authorized and unauthorized persons within any jurisdiction. The majority opinion of the Court also stated that undocumented students had no control of their current unauthorized status nor had any power to rectify it since they were minors who were brought here by their parents (*Plyler v. Doe*, "Plyler v. Doe," 1982).

The Plyler decision was huge in its impact and reach since it provided a very powerful precedence that deterred any other state from denying public education to undocumented students. But at the same time, it also reminded everyone in the country about the divisive issue of immigration in the United States, given the close 5-4 decision. This divisive issue continues today.

Leticia A. Decision (1985). Prior to the Leticia A. decision, undocumented students entering colleges and universities in California were required to pay out-of-state tuition which is about three to four times higher than in-state tuition. This out-of-state tuition only magnified the cost for higher education since a vast majority of undocumented students come from families with low fiscal resources and are ineligible for any state or federal financial aid. The Leticia A. decision brought some relief to this grim reality.

In the case of *Leticia A. v. Board of Regents*, the California Superior Court held that any person who had been in California for a year and a day could qualify as a California resident for college tuition purposes only (Rosas, 1995). This case strengthened a state’s

rights to determine who could qualify for in-state tuition. Though the federal government regulates our immigration laws, the power that states have on impacting the lives of immigrants, especially as it relates to educational access, is one that continues today. This is particularly true when discussing the higher education opportunities of undocumented students. The impact that the Leticia A. decision had on undocumented students was that it permitted undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, which reduced this part of the college cost by 66%-75%. However, they still needed to get accepted into college and still were ineligible for federal financial aid.

Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. In 1986, with the undocumented population hovering above 4 million people (J. Passel, 2005), an amnesty was granted where over a million undocumented immigrants were allowed to fix their status and become documented immigrants and citizens (Bean, Edmonston, Passel, & Program for Research on Immigration Policy (U.S.), 1990). This act was called the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. But along with this amnesty, the act also further scrutinized the border by imposing harder restrictions on those wishing to immigrate to the United States. The idea for the act was to legalize some of the undocumented people who are here now and strengthen the U.S. immigration policy to restrict the flow of those still coming over to the United States. On both counts, IRCA fell short. Though amnesty was available, it was not available for all. A requirement of proof of residency for the past three years made it difficult to prove for many since there was a considerable amount of immigrants who had only entered the United States during the harvest season in agricultural markets and many who did not have evidence of their time in the country (Bean, et al., 1990).

However, over a million people were able to fix their status and this resulted in a number of undocumented students in becoming documented migrants, as well. This was important because it allowed college-going undocumented students to become eligible for federal and state financial aid. Thus, permitting a number of qualified students to enter college and universities across the country.

Bradford Decision (1991). In the case of Regents of University of California v. Superior Court, the University of California (UC) provided a compact, which effectively reversed the Leticia A. decision, it is also known as the Bradford decision (Rosas, 1995). An employee of the UC claimed that he had been asked to resign due to his refusal to implement the Leticia A. decision. Upon suing the UC, the university rescinded the policy of allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition less than 7 years since this policy had been implemented. The California State University and Community Colleges soon followed and undocumented students were back to being charged out-of-state tuition for those seeking a college education in California. The beginning of the 1990's began with this landmark decision and it foreshadowed the more damaging legislation that was soon to follow.

California Proposition 187 (1994). The Save Our State (S.O.S.) initiative was the title for California's Proposition 187. Under the California Public Initiatives policy, a group known as the "Save Our State" organization launched a legislative attack on immigrants across the state of California when they introduced Proposition 187. This initiative specifically targeted the undocumented population in California by claiming that their presence and growing numbers in California were a social and economic strain on the state

(California Proposition 187, "Proposition 187," 1994). This language was very similar to the Texas ordinance filed under the Plyler case discussed earlier in this paper.

Proposition 187 outlined several points that the state was to adhere to regarding undocumented people (California Proposition 187, "Proposition 187," 1994). They included:

1. Denial of Medical services: Proof of legal residence was required for anyone needing medical attention in California with exception of immunizations or extreme life-threatening emergencies;
2. Denial of Social Services: Proof of legal residence was required for anyone needing social services in California. This included mental health, homeless shelters, and food banks;
3. Denial of Educational Services: Proof of legal residence was required for anyone wishing to enroll in a California public school. This included kindergarten through college; and
4. Transform all California educational institutions into reporting agencies for the Immigration & Naturalization Services (INS) agency: The text of this part of the proposition read, "Each school district shall provide information to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Attorney General of California, and the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service regarding any enrollee or pupil, or parent or guardian, attending a public elementary or secondary school in the school district determined or reasonably suspected to be in violation of federal immigration laws within forty-five days after becoming aware of apparent violation" (Section 7 of California Proposition 187, "Proposition 187," 1994).

Mobilizations occurred on both sides of the immigrant debate. In October of 1996, the City of Los Angeles saw large public demonstrations in the form of huge marches and student walkouts (Martin, 1995).

The campaign in support of Proposition 187 took on a racist element to it. As Bosniak writes, “...the racism argument charged that supporters of Prop. 187 are motivated by animus against the growing population of Latinos in California, Mexicans in particular;” (L. S. Bosniak, 1996, Pg. 560) As a strong supporter of Proposition 187, Governor Pete Wilson ran several commercials during this time that depicted brown people running across the Mexican/California border “as an announcer ominously spoke, “They keep coming”” (R. J. Garcia, 1995, Pg. 135). This type of depiction of Latinos, especially Mexicans, intensified a sense of fear of not just undocumented people but Latinos in general.

Proposition 187 successfully passed with 60% of the vote (Martin, 1995). An immediate injunction was filed claiming that Proposition 187 was unconstitutional and that the state had overreached into federal immigration laws (Hayter, 2004). Most of the provisions were eventually tossed out with the exception of not allowing undocumented people to receive state financial aid for college.

Studies have shown immigration is a traumatic event resulting in a strong feeling of loss and sadness (C. Suarez-Orozco, 2000; C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). In Children of Immigration (C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), the authors describe this feeling when they write,

Indeed, by any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a family can undergo. It removes family members from many of their relationships and a predictable context... Immigrants are stripped of many other significant

relationships... They also lose the social roles that provide them with culturally scripted notions of how they fit into the world. Initially, without a sense of competence, control, and belonging, many immigrants will feel marginalized. These changes in relationships, contexts, and roles are highly disorienting and nearly inevitably lead to a keen sense of loss (C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, Pg. 70)

Immigrant children cope with these experiences described in the quote above while also dealing with their own youth and adult development. This is particularly important when discussing undocumented students who add a layer of legal risk to an already heavy burden. Proposition 187 added bricks to the already heavy load undocumented students carry in the United States by classifying them as economic and educational burdens who are taking advantage of social programs in United States (M. M. Suarez-Orozco, 1996).

Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. Under President Clinton's Welfare Reform initiative, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 imposed strict immigration reforms. One such measure was IIRIRA's federal restriction for states in providing in-state tuition to anyone that another US citizen or documented resident could not benefit from (IIRIRA, "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996," 1996) Though this restriction did not change things much for California's undocumented college going population (they were ineligible for in-state tuition due to the Bradford decision), it did federalize this restriction across the country.

This idea that undocumented people in the United States come here primarily for educational benefits goes against research that states that the primary reason that

undocumented people come to the United States is to work and to reunite with family (Bean, et al., 1990; NILC, 2004; J. Passel, 2005; Passel, 2006).

California AB 540 (2001). Under the leadership of the late California Assembly member, Marco Antonio Firebaugh, California AB 540 was passed by the state assembly and senate and signed by Governor Davis in 2001. This California law allowed anyone to register as a California resident for college tuition purposes provided they met the following requirements:

1. Must have attended a high school in California for three or more years;
2. Must have graduated from a California high school or attained the equivalent of a high school diploma;
3. Must register or currently be enrolled in one of the three state institutions of higher learning; and
4. Must file an affidavit with the college or university stating that one has filed an application to legalize their status or will do so as soon as they are eligible (California AB540, "AB540," 2001).

Once again, undocumented students were allowed to pay in-state tuition in California. The carefully written AB 540 did not conflict with IIRIRA since it gave an opportunity for any US citizen or documented resident to qualify under AB540 (Deering, 2002). Soon after, other states like Texas, Nebraska, and Nevada implemented their own version of AB540.

The reason AB540, and similar legislation like it in other states, is important is because they permit undocumented students who meet the requirements to pay in-state tuition as opposed to out-of-state tuition at a time when college tuition costs are on a

historical rise. Figure 4.1 below shows a cost comparison between in-state and out-of-state tuition of the three public college systems in the state of California.

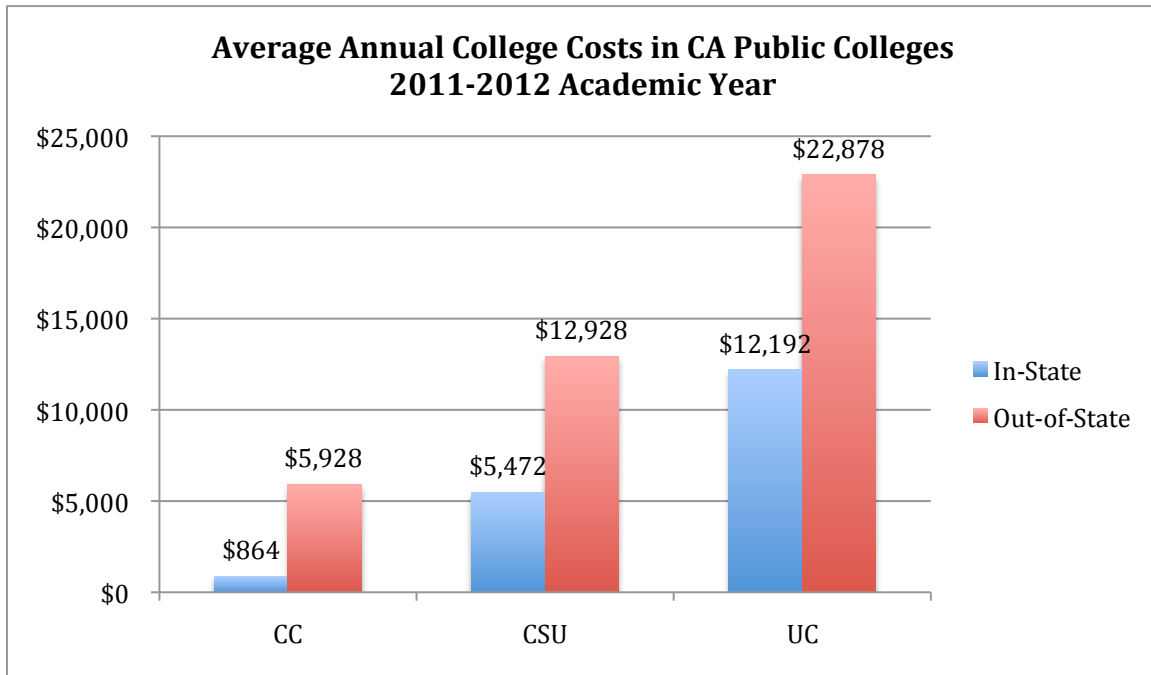


Figure 4.1

As Figure 4.1 shows, the cost differences between a Community College (CC), a California State University (CSU), and a University of California (UC) are \$5,064, \$7,456, and \$10,686, respectively. For a population of low-income students who cannot legally work in the United States, these costs differences can be the biggest deterrent in going to college.

CA AB130 & AB131 "CA DREAM Act" (2011). California's AB130 & AB131, also known as the CA DREAM Act, permits all students who qualify under AB540 to compete for grants and scholarships by California public colleges. The difference between both pieces of legislations is that AB130 permits AB540 students to compete for grants and scholarships that are funded *only* by private resources while AB131 permits AB540 students to compete for grants and scholarships that are funded by all sources including

publicly funded ones like Cal Grant awards. AB130 went into effect on January 1, 2012 and AB131 will go into effect on January 1, 2013. Neither AB130 nor AB131 provide a path to citizenship and are only meant to address eligibility requirements to compete for scholarships and awards in the state of California.

These law cases are important to keep in mind when discussing undocumented students for two key reasons. First, they provide an important history lesson about the cyclical pattern of beneficial and detrimental legal policies affecting undocumented immigrants. So, legislation like AB540 are not “new” in a historical sense (see Leticia A. Decision – 1985) though in a generational sense they are new. Hence, those wishing to advocate to not have AB540 removed should review the arguments that overturned similar legislation in the past (see Bradford Decision – 1991). Second, these cases provide important information on how the law can be used to benefit undocumented students, as in the Plyler Case (1982). Not only does Plyler permit undocumented students to receive a K-12 public education but it also helped dismiss major provisions in anti-immigration legislation like California Proposition 187, showing the strength of these type of law cases (Olivas, 2012).

Migrant Youth

Given the large area of migration studies, only a few migration and education scholars, alike, have provided insight into the lives of immigrant youth in the United States (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gordon, 1964; Orellana, 2009; Passel, 2006; Portes, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995, 2001; C. Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). Some scholars like Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco and Orellana have focused a

large part of their academic work on how immigrant youth make sense of their “new home” (Orellana, 2009; C. Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). And though some of the immigrant youth that these scholars have studied have been undocumented students, the focus of their work has not been solely looking at undocumented students. However, the ethnographic work of these scholars provides a valuable blueprint for the qualitative methods I intend on employing in my work.

Orellana’s Translating Childhood: Immigrant Youth, Language, and Culture provides a close look at immigrant youth who interact with the world as language brokers for the adults in their lives (Orellana, 2009). By telling the stories of the youth in her book, she uncovers more than just the lives of these students but how society treats them within schools, community, and government agencies, which informs the reader of societal barriers that still exist for many immigrant youth, including undocumented youth.

Few scholars have researched the lives of undocumented youth in the United States who are considered some of the most vulnerable and marginalized students on college campuses today (Chavez, et al., 2007; P. E. Green, 2003; Motomura, 2008; Perez Huber & Malagon, 2007; Perry, 2006). William Perez’ recent book, We are Americans, examines the lives of 16 undocumented (and formerly undocumented) students across the high school-graduate school pipeline and presents a compelling story of qualified yet restricted undocumented students (Perez, 2009). He argues that we are not capitalizing on the enormous human potential of millions of undocumented students currently residing in the U.S. By systemically denying them access to college, we are limiting the U.S. potential to further existing areas of research and preventing new areas from forming. Through his work with these students, Perez provides a view into the lives of these academically

talented students and lends a strong argument for immigration reform in the United States like the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act.

In Persistent Inequality: Contemporary Realities in the Education of Undocumented Latina/o Students (López & López, 2010), the authors present a critical analysis of educational and legal policies like Plyler, the DREAM Act, and NCLB. Using a CRT framework, they see how these laws have and can impact the educational attainment of undocumented students in the United States. The authors conclude that unless large immigration reform is passed, the U.S. will continue to produce “highly educated undocumented persons whose job prospects are completely curtailed by their immigration status” (López & López, 2010, Pg. 13).

In Undocumented Latino College Students: Their Socioemotional and Academic Experiences (Pérez & Cortés, 2011), the authors provide one of the few mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative, study that explores the academic experiences of undocumented students. Pérez & Cortés found that the legal, academic, and social limitations associated with being undocumented like inability to secure financial aid for college, resulted in feelings of despair, anguish, and fear. This work was very timely given the resurgence of a student movement of those who call themselves DREAMers after the piece of legislation that would help provide a path to citizenship for them. The subjects for this study were community college students.

I add to this body of work by providing additional voices to this topic of research through interviews in the qualitative portion of my study, further explained later in this methodology chapter. In addition, I also surround these voices with a quantitative analysis of undocumented students across the country. By couching the qualitative portion of my

study within this quantitative analysis, I present a mixed methods study to this area of research. My research project was different than Pérez and Cortés in that my subject pool were college-bound students who were still in high school or who had recently graduated high school. Hence, my study examined the college matriculation of undocumented, Latino students. This is a type of research study that is seldom done in this body of work.

Migration scholars contend that excluding undocumented students from academic access in our country is both detrimental to the students and to our country alike (Perry, 2006; C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Trueba & Bartolomê, 2000). This argument is based on the premise that education is still a major source of upward mobility, which enriches people's lives and strengthens the middle class (Portes, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Suarez-Orozco touches on key issues surrounding the stress and traumas that children of immigrants and immigrant children encounter as they make their way through the United States (C. Suarez-Orozco, 2000). In particular, the author looks at what immigrant children experience as they go through the U.S. educational system. How they become inspired by their academic success but are quickly marginalized by the culture in the U.S. who calls them "illegal" and does not want them here.

Given the growing number of undocumented students in our schools (Passel, 2006), it is important to research how undocumented students make sense of the educational, legal, and political system in the United States. Qualitative research has shown, through the voice of undocumented students themselves, that undocumented students not only endure the same conditions of our most impoverished communities but have an added social barrier of "illegality" that they face on their road to college (Gonzalez, Plata, Garcia, Torres,

& Urrieta, 2003; P. E. Green, 2003; Perez Huber & Malagon, 2007; Perez, 2009). It is this “illegality” that many times imposes on these students something that Suarez-Orozco calls, “negative social-mirroring”(C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). It is a model that examines “structural exclusions” like State propositions and National policies that are anti-immigrant and provides a context of a U.S. social climate of hostility towards immigrant children. In turn, the children internalize this social climate with very negative views about themselves that originate from those they label “Americans”(C. Suarez-Orozco, 2000). I contend that this form of negative social mirroring results in many undocumented students rejecting themselves from the college application process.

In “Undocumented Students’ Access to College: The American Dream Denied” (Chavez, et al., 2007), the authors describe how immigration policy detrimentally affects undocumented students. In the lives of pre-college undocumented students, they are told that U.S. education is a path to upward mobility, only to find out that this opportunity does not include them. The students are usually awakened to this fact during the second half of their high school years. My research shows that this type of awakening usually results in a sense of unfairness within the students and consequently, results in more limited college options for them.

The question of whether or not undocumented students, as active participants in our community, should be allowed to access public services available to citizens and documented migrants is one that deserves closer examination. Some legal scholars have presented arguments in favor of allowing undocumented students to have equal access to college and post-secondary benefits (Ruge & Iza, 2005; Yates, 2004). And others have approached this issue from a political standpoint embedded in a historical legacy of

immigrant rights inequality (Seif, 2004). I contend that undocumented students, as members and contributors of our society, deserve the public entitlements that citizens and documented migrants have, especially public education at the pre-college and college levels.

De Genova & Ramos-Zayas discuss this divisiveness in their Chicago ethnographic study between two Latino communities, Puerto Rican and Mexicans, where they concluded that their “research enables an interrogation of the institution of U.S. citizenship itself as a model for producing social inequality and racialized subordination, within a larger framework of U.S. nationalism as a racial formation” (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003, p. 3). So despite the minority status of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans in the U.S., the pitting of these two communities by immigration status works to the detriment of Latino unity and in favor of White supremacy. De Genova and Ramos-Zayas provide an example of this when they write,

Puerto Ricans often countered mass-media and journalistic depictions of Latinos as “immigrants” by deflecting “foreignness” and “illegality” onto “Mexicans,” while also advancing claims of legitimacy for their own entitlement to welfare benefits and other rights by emphasizing the political relationship between Puerto Rico and the U.S. nation-state, bilingualism, military service, and other evidence of having “paid their dues” and established their proper membership in an “American nation.” (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003, p. 58)

This type of internal divisiveness along with an illegal categorization sanctioned by the State results in further intensifying this stigma of “illegality” previously mentioned.

The issue of membership in our society is the pivot point where undocumented students live. Perry argues that substantive membership in a society should be sufficient in

allowing undocumented student to access financial aid (Perry, 2006). Key to this argument is time spent in U.S. schools and civic participation in the communities that these students reside in. These are the same requirements that can be found in current and proposed legal policy (i.e. DREAM ACT "DREAM Act of 2007," 2007).

Bosniak problematizes the whole notion of what it means to be a citizen by critically deconstructing the effects that the current legal and political systems have on the different types of people that are occupants of this country (L. Bosniak, 2006). For example, our current legal immigration system divides up the inhabitants of the country based on their status. The effect of this stratification implies that those with more rights and privileges must somehow be better than those below them. It assumes an automatic power dynamic with citizens on top. The author correctly uses the works of other scholars to show how this type of system imposes on U.S. society a structure that not only encourages inequality but also actually mandates it by law and policy. Further, this type of structure also lends itself to be highly political as it is imbedded on the notion of American nationalism where U.S. citizenship is seen as the ultimate prize for the immigrants seeking to come here. Unfortunately, these concepts contradict the notion of what a democracy is supposed to be. A system that is both accountable and responsible for those it governs.

A combination of these philosophical, legal, educational, and historical issues led me to question, how are undocumented students navigating the educational system in the face of legal uncertainty and harsh stigma imposed on them due to their immigration status? Further, how does the issue of racism interfere with the already oppressive conditions of nativism that these undocumented students are facing? It was these questions that help me construct my research questions that drove the study in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) with an emphasis on its roots in legal theory. My interest in utilizing CRT is to examine how Latino, undocumented students become racialized due to their race and immigration status. Observing how the immigration status of undocumented students goes from being a legal issue to one that is racialized was of interest to me in this study. However, given the important role that the legal system plays in the student's immigration status, issues concerning the law are present throughout this dissertation.

The Law

The direct and indirect ways that laws influence behavior in positive and negative ways was important when taking on this project. Given undocumented students unauthorized status in the U.S. and the risk of being deported, the law became a construct to include as part of my theoretical framework. Since I use the term "law" often and throughout the study, it is important that I operationalize this term. Gifis defines the law as "the legislative pronouncement of the rules which should guide one's actions in society" (Gifis, 1996, p. 283). Law enforcement, especially of immigration law, is important to consider when dealing with the intersectionality of race and the law (K. R. Johnson, 2009), which I do in this dissertation. Hence, I define the law as *a set of rules that are enforced by the state² to govern the people and resources within its jurisdiction.*

² The state is any level of government be it Federal, State, or local.

Critical Race Theory

Freire once wrote, “Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (Freire, 2006, Pg. 79). I see CRT as a step towards this liberation by disrupting the mainstream ideology that dominates much of academic and social thought in the United States. Indeed, CRT’s focus on the lived experiences of people of color provides a space for transformation of the researcher and reader to take place. A critique of CRT is that privileging the lived experience of people of color biases it (Kennedy, 1989). However, it is important to be reminded that “knowledge acquired in school – or anywhere, for that matter – is never neutral or objective”, it is as McLaren writes, “...a social construction deeply rooted in a nexus of power relations” (McLaren, 2007, Pg. 196). CRT interrogates this power relation especially as it relates to the power that race and racism has on marginalized people.

Critical Race Theory is relevant to my study of the college matriculation of undocumented Latino students because of the intersectionality or entanglement that racism and nativism has on the lives of these students. The tenets of CRT in higher education are: “(a) the centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination; (b) the challenge to dominant ideology; (c) the commitment to social justice; (d) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (e) the transdisciplinary perspective” (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, P. 63). Each of these tenets relates to the theoretical approach I take in this study. In the paragraphs that follow, I elaborate on each of these tenets and how they relate to my study.

Tenet 1. “The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination” – In my study not only am I looking at undocumented students but more specifically undocumented Latino students. Putting race and racism, in all facets, as a lens along with the students’ legal subordination enforced by the U.S. immigration law system permits me to see how these two forces work in tandem to create a legal form of oppression. This legal form of oppression is directly linked to issues of race and racism when one considers the history of our immigration laws (Hing, 2004). Undocumented students, like other marginalized groups in U.S. society, are oppressed. They are oppressed by their inability to be substantive members of a society that they help maintain and support (Chomsky, 2007; Perry, 2006). Thus creating an imbalance of power where they live under a state of exploitation, marginalization, victimizations, and a constant threat of deportation. For the purpose of this study, I utilize the definition of oppression laid out by Prilleltensky & Gonock (1996) when they write,

Oppression entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996).

Since undocumented students are not only restricted access to material resources but are also, via the media, implanted with dehumanizing views of themselves, then it is appropriate to use the word oppression when describing the situation of undocumented students.

In the history of the United States, immigration laws have existed that had a racist subtext associated with them (Akers Chacon, et al., 2006; Hing, 2004). Whether one considers the Chinese Exclusion Laws of the late 19th Century into the 20th Century, Operation Wetback of the 1950's, or the current way that undocumented migrants are being painted in the popular media, race continues to play a role when discussing immigration law by their ability to overlap with one another in these different legislations (R. J. Garcia, 1995; K. R. Johnson, 2009; Sánchez, 1997).

But what of the few laws that tend to favor immigrants of color? It may be possible that these “favorable laws” are similar to Derrick Bell’s interest convergence theory. Bell writes that “the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it convergences with the interests of whites” (Bell, 1995, Pg. 22). Bell wrote this to describe how cases like *Brown v. Board* or the 1964 Civil Rights Act are passed only when the interests of people of color and whites converge. Laws that have favored immigrants of color may be similar to this convergence theory proposed by Bell especially when we see how immigrants are used as scapegoats when economic times are hard in the United States but celebrated when times are better (Hing, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

Tenet 2. “The challenge of dominant ideology” – The experiences of academically successful, undocumented students directly challenge the notion of meritocracy in the United States. If meritocracy rewards those who succeed in certain valued norms set by society³, then academically successful, undocumented students challenge this notion of meritocracy. They challenge it when they are excluded from receiving any type of public financial assistance that other academically successful students (who are not

³ In the case of academics, merit would be those who are academically successful and one reward would be acceptance into colleges.

undocumented) receive. Albeit that laws exist that preclude public universities from offering any financial aid to undocumented students, it also provides a convenient way for these institutions to further limit undocumented Latino students from accessing a higher education. Institutions of higher learning hide behind the illusion of meritocracy as they continue to marginalize Latino students (Solorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). These institutions reflect the dominant ideology of society that similarly prevent academically successful undocumented students from accessing college but rather live under a legal form of marginalization.

Tenet 3. "The commitment to social justice" – I define social justice to be an ideal where equality is achieved in our society regardless of an individual's race, color, economic class, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity. The legal subordination of undocumented students provides an imbalance of social justice in the U.S. (and indeed in the world) by legally oppressing large segments of a growing population. It is this population that often takes jobs at the lowest rung of employment. Both the students and advocates for these students take a social justice stand when taking on these students' plight because it stands against the idea that students who were brought to the United States with no fault of their own should not be denied opportunities that they and their parents pay to sustain in their society.

Tenet 4. "The centrality of experiential knowledge" – My study, especially through its qualitative approach, focuses on telling these students' stories. By permitting the students' stories in the qualitative portion to drive this dissertation, the experiential knowledge of the undocumented students in my study become the main focus of the

dissertation. With that said, the statistics from my quantitative portion of the study, also delivers a powerful narrative whose voices are interpreted by the survey findings associated with this dissertation. Delgado describes storytelling by outgroups as a means of subverting the dominant group's story/theory especially since the dominant group's theories/stories are portrayed as being natural and superior (Delgado, 2000). By privileging the stories of the college-bound, undocumented Latino students in my study, I provide a study that explores how undocumented students perceive and navigate the U.S. educational system despite the enormous odds placed against them.

Tenet 5. "The transdisciplinary perspective" – The field of education is transdisciplinary, which permits my study to be aligned with this tenet quite easily. However, I especially look in the area of law, critical legal studies, and Chicano studies to inform my theoretical framework. This multi-disciplinary inquiry permitted me to approach the lives of undocumented students from several viewpoints that helped depict a more complete and accurate picture of their struggle for validation, freedom, and equality.

As I conducted my study and analyzed my data, I observed how undocumented Latino students' immigration status became racialized within and outside their cultural surroundings. In telling the story of undocumented, Latino students, I will focus on bringing the voices of these students forth while introducing how the law is making a direct impact on the decisions they are making. The law will be very relevant here in challenging how an open society like the U.S. uses its laws, specifically its immigration laws, to create a caste system where citizens are on top and undocumented people are at the bottom. By having CRT as the bedrock of my theoretical framework, it permitted me to examine how

under extreme pressures by the dominant society, marginalized groups retreat into their own community for acceptance and protection.

This can lead to a sense of cultural belonging and maybe even cultural nationalism by undocumented Latino students. It is important here to note that my use of cultural nationalism comes not from a position of superiority but one that is often employed when a group is systematically oppressed and finds refuge often times only within the community that will accept them – theirs (A. M. Johnson, 2000). This nationalism is born of necessity when the only place that one can feel a sense of belonging is within their cultural community. The theory of cultural nationalism is explained by Johnson as one which rejects the notion of integration where the communities of color enter as subordinate to white norms and practices that are often seen by whites as natural (A. M. Johnson, 2000). Indeed, as Johnson correctly points out, “In order to integrate properly into society, African Americans, like other ethnic groups, must proceed on their own terms from a position of strength and solidarity” (A. M. Johnson, 2000, Pg. 410). This strength and solidarity originates from the cultural nationalism exhibited from communities of color. Undocumented students show evidence of this cultural nationalism as a way of rejecting the feelings of fear and hate they have experienced in their lives and in the media.

An important part of my theoretical framework is the navigational capital that Yosso discusses in her work. The term “navigate” refers to Yosso’s description of Navigational Capital as “skills of maneuvering through social institutions” that recognizes the students’ agency despite operating within very tight constraints (Yosso, 2006, p. 44). Yosso discusses how Latino students navigate an educational system that was not designed for them but are still judged by it. Similarly, with undocumented Latino students, not only

must they navigate the educational system like other Latinos, but they have an added layer of legality that they must navigate. It is this additional layer that I examine and present in my work. An example of how this layer surfaces is by looking at microaggressions.

Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) describes microaggressions as “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed towards people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (p. 60). These examples of microaggressions are real and are experienced by people of color. As a student of color myself, I am witness to these types of microaggressions. Similar to students of color, undocumented students also experience microaggressions. My research shows that undocumented students experience this when school personnel discover that they are undocumented. Suddenly, any college help they receive becomes diluted because many college advisors believe that they will probably not be able to make it in college given their immigrant status. This type of microaggression due to a college counselor’s views on immigration hinders undocumented students from furthering their education beyond high school.

Through this theoretical framework, I will demonstrate that the current legal system imposes a structure of oppression on a large number of students who have positively contributed to our society. More importantly a large number of students who’s potential to do more is systematically and legally suppressed.

Position of the researcher

My theoretical framework is also influenced by my own lived experience as a Chicano, son of Mexican immigrants, growing up in a predominantly immigrant community of *Mexicanos* in the *barrio* (neighborhood) of Boyle Heights. Further, I am thoroughly

committed to the college recruitment (outreach) of people of color given the structural racial inequality that has existed for so many for too long. My involvement in outreach began in my first year in college, speaking at high schools and other colleges. I had just finished my 4-year service in the U.S. Army and my college experience seemed worlds away from the life I had lived as a soldier. This inspired me to work on trying to motivate as many students to choose college over the military or other practices detrimental to their future, since my own experience in the Gulf War made me rethink my views of the Army. Subsequently as a teacher and then as director for a University of California recruitment program, my professional work always encompassed sending more kids of color into college.

However, the one area where I felt most frustrated, where I felt I could not help, was in the area of undocumented students. An example of this involves a student who approached me when I was working as a student for the recruitment corps for UC Berkeley. I was an undergraduate when first approached on this issue during one of my Berkeley presentations by a student ranked number two at a high school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. She showed me her very high grades but was sad because she was not going to be able to go to college. I was shocked and asked why not? She said that her counselor had told her it would be too expensive. I told her not to worry about it because there is financial aid for students with great financial need (having been one of these students myself, I knew it worked). She said she did not qualify and I asked why not? She said it was because she was undocumented and that she was not eligible for financial aid. I felt paralyzed, and not knowing what to tell her, I told her not to give up and that there would be a way (unfortunately, at the time, I could not find a way). My paralysis, I am sure,

was nowhere near the anxiety that the student felt her senior year. I believe that education can be a vehicle of upward mobility and I cringe at any effort by the State to limit this opportunity to anyone because of his or her race, economic status, gender, immigration status, sexual orientation, or any other forms of discrimination.

More stories like the one above soon followed me during my college years, during my professional career, and even now as a graduate student who still works extensively with undocumented students inside and outside of academia. My involvement includes running two scholarship programs that benefit undocumented students, where every year we award over 30 scholarships to undocumented students across the country. Though it is fortunate that we are able to award over \$15,000 each year to these deserving scholars, it is unfortunate that these 30+ scholarships only represent about 1.5% of the total applications we receive each year and an alarming 0.04% of the 65,000 undocumented students who graduate every year from high schools across the United States. Every year, I see the dreams of extremely talented, college-bound undocumented students being challenged by the realization that their immigration status will play a role in limiting their access to college. My experience on this issue has often been up close and personal with my students, and it is the impetus of why I do the work I do.

My interest in race comes from my own observation of how the issues of race and racism are implicated in this area of study. First, majority of undocumented people are Latino (Passel & Cohn, 2009). This creates a face for the undocumented population and that face tends to be Latino. In addition to this is the feeling of racism that comes with being isolated as an undocumented student. My research points to a feeling of alienage that undocumented students exhibit that makes them feel different in a negative way inside the

media, in their schools, by their teachers, even by their own community. This is a stigmatization that I return to, often in this dissertation, that examined the amount of negativity that exists and the impact it had on my subjects. This is why a close use of Critical Race Theory was important in providing me with a lens of how race, a socially constructed identity, extends itself into the lives of undocumented, Latino students.

CHAPTER 4: Methodology

My research questions focused on how the legal system affects undocumented students' path to college and to completing college. By focusing on this overarching theme it also notices how the students are compensating for their lack of resources due to their undocumented status and the impact on these students from the racialization of being undocumented. Operationalizing these three areas for a mixed method study can be quite challenging, especially the quantitative piece. Though surveys provide an opportunity for me to see, in large numbers, how undocumented students are dealing with race and legal barriers, it is quite challenging to determine which survey questions to ask that can get to these areas. Because of this, I looked at other survey models like the CIRP freshman survey to see how best to craft the survey questions.⁴ In addition, the qualitative portion of my study was informed by the quantitative part of the study (more on this further in this section).

I used a mixed-method approach for my study that utilized quantitative analysis such as Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS), Scale analysis, and t-test of significance using a national survey to collect data about college-bound, undocumented, Latino students. My qualitative data collection methods consisted of long interviews with students along with a discourse analysis of the students' college application essay. In addition, my data analysis used a grounded approach that helped me uncover the codes and categories that

⁴ Given the small amount of literature about undocumented students at the start of the study in 2010, I was unable to locate a survey that is similar to what I want to accomplish in this study.

eventually led to the emerged themes of my study. I chose a mixed-method approach because it best captured a close look at the voices of these undocumented students via the qualitative portion of my methods and a macro look at the lives of undocumented students via the quantitative piece. Mixed methods studies, such as this one, result in a corroboration of findings and a confirmation of grounded theories by using quantitative methods to support qualitative findings and vice versa (R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). I did this by directly and theoretically informing my interview and survey questions with the broader research questions I was examining. By doing so, my intention is that this study will help educational researchers better understand the academic struggles of Latino, college-bound, undocumented students.

The research conducted about undocumented students has used primarily qualitative methods (Gonzalez, et al., 2003; Orner & Andes, 2008; Perez, 2009; Seif, 2004) and few have used quantitative methods (Pérez & Cortés, 2011; Perez, Espinoza, Coronado, & Cortes, 2009). The quantitative methods used by Perez et al (2009) were regression and cluster analyses from data collected in 104 surveys from undocumented students (high school, community college, and university). The researchers concluded that strong personal protective factors (such as stakeholders who advised and supported the students) provided sufficient academic scaffolding to permit the students to be more successful in college than those who had weak personal protective factors. Much of the qualitative methods employed in studying undocumented students have been through interviews. Through my own study, I used similar quantitative and qualitative methods to inform responses to the research questions for this study. I saw similar themes emerge from both methods that help describe the legal impediments, lack of resources, and racialization these

students experience for being undocumented. However, other themes emerged, in lieu of these expectations that were confirming and surprising. This was especially true when discussing the qualitative portion of my study.

Qualitative Section

Site Selection

The site from where I recruited most of my California subjects was from a community organization I will call Opening the Gates of College (OGC)⁵, located in a southern city of Los Angeles county that provides information and support for college-bound, undocumented students. OGC has been in existence now for almost 8 years and brings together undocumented high school seniors and community college students. The mission of OGC is to provide a “safe space” that delivers academic and legal advice to undocumented students every school semester (twice/year). The term “safe space” is used here intentionally to highlight the importance that safety plays in the lives of these students. Through my own community work with undocumented students, and through my preliminary findings in small pilot studies I conducted prior to this study, I found that the issue of safety from immigration authorities due to their unauthorized presence is paramount in the lives of undocumented students and their families. The findings in this dissertation confirmed this notion. So the mission of OGC is to provide a “safe space” where only undocumented students are invited to attend as participants so they can speak

⁵ Pseudonyms will be used for all proper names in this dissertation.

honestly and openly of their status while receiving important academic and legal advice about going to college as an undocumented student.

I selected this site to recruit subjects for three main reasons. First, this organization has the type of population I am interested in researching: Latino, college-bound, undocumented students. The organization usually brings together about 100 undocumented high school seniors and first year community college students. Second, the site is very accessible since I am a co-founder⁶ and a leader in the organization. I have been a consistent presenter in workshops and a key member since its inception and I have a long relationship with all of its members and many of its participants. There was strong support for this study as many of the participants had indicated an interest in helping me in my research when the time came for collecting information from them. Third, this site has a network of supporters and organizations that advocate for undocumented students, which assisted in further recruiting more participants for this study. The supporters that provide their services to the organization are lawyers and legal organizations that advocate for immigrant rights, especially undocumented students. The organizations that provide their services to the organization are mostly college student groups that advocate for college access for undocumented students. Most of the time, the presenters themselves are undocumented or were undocumented at one point in their lives. These types of networks went a long way in providing participants for this study. My own involvement brought me legitimacy with undocumented students, which I was privileged to receive from them.

⁶ This organization was a response to the lack of support and information that was being given to undocumented students in this community. It began as a 2 hour financial aid workshop for undocumented students and has since grown into a full fledged organization that puts on semester workshops for the undocumented students in the area.

Participant selection

My OGC participant selection was as follows:

1. I made a brief presentation about my research project at the Spring 2011 workshop for this organization explaining the purpose of my study and reasons for asking for participation. I explained that the goal of my project was to study the ways that undocumented students navigate the educational system to receive a college education despite the legal challenges that they confront throughout the process.
2. After my brief presentation, I passed out a sign-up sheet (see Appendix E) that was circulated among the attendees, which I in turn collected at the end of the workshop. I made it a point to tell the attendees that not participating in my study will not, in anyway, limit any assistance that the organization is able to provide. Further, I made sure to tell the attendees that participation in my study will be completely anonymous and that their personal information will not be shared with anyone other than myself per IRB policy.
3. Utilizing the above-mentioned sign-up sheet, I set up in-person meetings with the students who signed up. I intended to contact 5 women and 5 men on my sign up sheet from this California site. To strive for a gender balance in my study, I wanted to ensure that there was an equal amount of women and men in the final number of participants. A gender balance is important in all studies to ensure that we, as researchers, are not making conclusions about our population of study based on the data of predominately one gender (unless this population

consists of only one gender, which mine did not). Further, I was also interested in seeing the differences and similarities that existed across genders of undocumented Latino students⁷. My selection procedure for obtaining a gender balance was by using names on my sign up sheet and looking at their respective gender box selection on my sign up sheet. Once I reached 5 participants from one gender group, I stopped contacting that gender of students. I continued contacting students of the other gender with the intention of receiving a balance of both genders.

4. After our interview, I asked that each student fill out the online survey I had created for the quantitative portion of my study. I emailed them an Internet link to my survey and ask them to complete the survey online. The purpose for having the student complete the survey was to obtain some additional information on each student I interviewed.
5. After the initial survey, I requested a follow up interview and I asked that each student provide me with a copy of his or her college admission essay to be analyzed along with the student's interviews. Unfortunately, I was only able to receive about half of the follow up materials from the final 16 students in my study. Fortunately, the information I initially collected from the students was sufficiently rich in data that was needed for the findings in this dissertation.

My reason for selecting students who are finishing high school and entering college is due to my interest in looking at the transition to college, which spans right before college

⁷ However, given that the majority of our participants that attend OGC's workshops are primarily women, I was unable to secure the five men needed. So I relied on an email solicitation to obtain the final male students, which is explained in the email recruitment section of this chapter.

and the first year in college. The transition to college and their first year in college can be the most precarious for students especially non-traditional students like the ones I intend on interviewing.

Email recruitment

Recruitment of my Arizona students came from an email solicitation that utilized snowball methodology to place me in contact with these students. An ally and advocate in the state of Arizona forwarded my request to five of her students, who in turn agreed to be interviewed for my study. I travelled to the state of Arizona and conducted the interviews with these five students and remained in contact with them, via email, for follow up interviews that this study conducted. Recruitment for the remaining California students I needed utilized the same recruitment strategy and I travelled around Southern California to collect the interviews.

Through my own 10-year involvement as an advocate for undocumented students, several organizations and undocumented students offered unsolicited assistance in recruiting college-bound, Latino undocumented students to interview for my study such as those students who are currently participating in the undocumented and unafraid campaign where undocumented students are openly declaring themselves undocumented across the country (Romo, 2011). Their knowledge of my scholarly work on undocumented students specifically and my advocacy of undocumented students in general, has gained me credibility amongst these "network of allies" for undocumented students. Despite this credibility and my own experience in keeping undocumented student's identity private, I provided further protection of my intended subjects by strategically

limiting my contact information of undocumented students in the study. A three-step process was followed to ensure this:

1. Step 1: I sent out an email to these "network of allies" describing my request for college-bound, Latino undocumented students to interview (See appendix for sample email). In this email, I provided instructions that these students be assured that non-participation in my study will not result, in any way, them not receiving any services from the "network of allies" they currently know. Nor will non-participation in my study result in me not providing any assistance or services to these students. The email further described that the intent of my interview was to gather information about the college matriculation of undocumented students and to look at the challenges that undocumented students face and overcome here in the United States. The email also indicate that I was looking for 16 undocumented students who were at least 18 years of age and who were college-bound, and that I intend on interviewing 8 women and 8 men. If a student was interested in being interviewed, the email asked that they set up a time and place to meet with me to be interviewed. I was open to meet with the student wherever she/he wished but it had to be in a private room where she/he feels comfortable. As a post-script, my email contained a short autobiography as a means of providing information about me and introducing myself with a potential interviewee.
2. Step 2: I conducted semi-structured interviews with the students utilizing a student interview protocol (see appendices section). I did not ask for any identifying materials be sent or given at any time. I conducted the interview and left without collecting any contact information from them. This ensured anonymity from them

to me and I avoided putting them at risk from any of data in the study being traced back to them.

3. Step 3: All interview recordings and transcriptions were compiled and locked in a file cabinet when not being analyzed by me. I was the only person with a key to the lock.

A combination of the participation selection at the OGC site and the email recruitment explained above resulted in me securing the 16 subjects I intended to collect for the qualitative portion of my study.

Data Collection

My first round of interviews, which were conducted during the summer months of 2011 focused on questions surrounding my research questions and sub question, which were:

1. How do undocumented, Latino students navigate the legal and educational system to receive a college education in the United States?
 - a. How are undocumented students compensating for the lack of resources that are available to their peers who are not undocumented?
2. How does being undocumented become racialized for these students and what are the consequences of this racialization?

As these initial rounds of interviews began, my main purpose was to collect the data necessary for my study. However, the reciprocal relationship that ensued from our interviews permitted me to also be a resource for these students should they request my assistance on their road to college.

After interviewing the students at the initial interview during the summer months of 2011, I utilized the fall months of 2011 to (1) Transcribe the student interviews; (2) do any spot follow ups with the students; and (3) Analyze the student's college admission essays.

My second round of interviews, which were conducted during the winter months of 2011/2012 focused on following up on the student's progress and further inquiries into the responses they had given in the initial interview.

I kept in regular contact with the students over the summer via only email. I conducted my follow up interviews that surfaced from the initial interview. I closed every interview by asking the student to add any additional information she/he would like to add about the entire interview process.

Textual Analysis

I utilized the student's college admission essays to further inform the data. The reason why I chose to include their college admission essays was to illuminate how undocumented, Latino students have overcome legal barriers to attend college. I employed the total analytical process outlined by Charles Bazerman in "Analyzing the Multidimensionality of Texts in Education" (Bazerman, C., 2006, In J. L. Green, Camilli, Elmore, & American Educational Research Association., 2006). The reason why I chose to use this method was for the systematic checklist it has for executing this method. It carefully lists in a chronological order how the method is applied to a corpus of texts I analyze and the author describes how content analysis could accompany it. Below is a synopsis of the procedure:

- Identify what is it you want to find out from the texts

- Collect the corpus of texts (in my case, it is the college application surveys)
- Focus on the aspects of the texts that will tell you what you need to know
- Develop and refine codes and categories that will be used for the texts
- Systematically go through all the texts following the categories I have
- Examine the results of coding in various formats like color coding and indexing
- Articulate the patterns I find and write up the findings
- Before making any final conclusions, reread texts to see if findings make sense
- Write an argument that brings out the meaning and implications of the findings (Bazerman, 2006, In J. L. Green, et al., 2006, p. 79)

These texts provided me with a way of triangulating the data that I analyze from the students. Further, the importance of including the college admission essays is “that texts are parts of actual social relations – written in specific circumstances at specific times and read in specific circumstances at specific times, thereby realizing concrete social transactions” (Bazerman, 2006, In J. L. Green, et al., 2006, p. 77). My experience in working with college-bound students is that these essays represent a highly reflective piece of writing that the students invested a lot of their time and themselves in the process. The essays assisted in further describing the college ambitions that these students possessed at the time of their writing and how that ambition remained or withered since the time when they wrote them. Though the purpose of my study was to look at how the undocumented student experience has affected the students, I did not ask them to specifically focus on

their immigrant experience in their essay. It is true that many undocumented students do not see themselves as immigrants but consider the United States their home (Perez, 2009).

Conducting the interviews

I made arrangements to meet the students at a place and time that was convenient for them during the summer 2011 and winter 2011/2012 months to conduct the two sets of interviews. These spaces included homes, school classrooms, community centers, university conference rooms, professors' offices, and the community college where we meet during the OGC semester workshops. I made sure to adhere to IRB procedures and policies during each interview and ensure that the subjects' anonymity was protected. All interview recordings and transcriptions were compiled and locked in a file cabinet when not being analyzed by me. I was the only person with a key to the lock.

These semi-structured interviews were focused on understanding what undocumented students consider to be their main challenges in trying to receive a college education, what they are doing to overcome these obstacles, and how race played a factor in this journey. Each interview began with a set of warm-up questions and then I moved the conversation to more serious themes like what have been some of the major challenges in their lives and what they saw as their future opportunities. Prior to the interview, I also encouraged the interviewee to speak in either Spanish or English or both (code switching) in order to best describe what they wish to convey in their answer. As a native Spanish speaker, I understand the need to code-switch when Spanish may provide a better descriptor of what they are feeling. Their use of language choice and code switching was something that I paid particular attention to along with the content of their responses.

Many of the interviewees did code-switch and 3 of the 16 interviews were entirely in Spanish.

Data Analysis

The analytical process I used for my data was as follows:

- I read the interview transcripts and essays several times. Also, I listened to my interviews several times. My goal was to instill my information sources⁸ into my memory.
- After becoming very familiar with my information sources, I began coding my data utilizing a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) that permits me to discover regularities that emerge from the information sources.
- After coding my data, I organized them into categories using a top down approach that was informed by my theoretical framework. These categories were then subsequently organized into themes.
- Utilizing a grounded theory approach to my information sources, I built theories that grew out of the data that privileges a bottom-up approach. But I also used a top-down approach when I used my theoretical framework of CRT to see how race is being mediated in my data. Alternating between both a bottom-up and top-down approach provided an exhaustive look at my data

⁸ Utilizing Fred Erickson's term of "information sources", it refers to the interviews transcripts, college application essays, memos, and any other textual documents I collect including the audio interviews themselves. They become data once the researcher analyzes them.

as I sought to reduce my data down to what I eventually included in this dissertation.

- I reduced my codes so that they fit into a codes index to help organize my data and I created frequency charts from my data. The index was also important in seeing contrasts that existed in my data and to examine those codes that occur more often and less often.
- I triangulated my data by conducting member checks with the participants and by comparing the survey responses with the student's interviews.
- Analytical memos were written throughout the analysis process to provide more insights into what I am uncovering in my information sources as they become data.

Substantively, I began with some codes I expected to be present but I allowed new patterns to emerge that led me to new codes and categories. Some of these codes included:

- **Navigating the system** – Examples of student navigating their way through obstacles for educational purposes.
- **Sense of unfairness with the system** – Examples of student expressing that she/he is being unfairly treated because she/he is undocumented.
- **Compensating for unfairness of system** – Examples of student making up for lack of resources available to other students who are not undocumented.
- **Feeling Racialized** – Examples of students feeling like her/his race is being negatively used.
- **“Undocumented” as a form of racialization** – Examples of students comparing being undocumented as a form of racism.

- **Resiliency** – Examples of students persevering despite opportunities to give up.
- **No Funding** – Examples of students describing the barring of public financial aid as a challenge for getting a college education.

The use of Atlas.ti was essential in organizing my qualitative data. Atlas.ti allowed me to code all documents within one hermeneutical unit, which then permitted to generate a series of output reports that compiled codes, memos, categories and themes. Additionally, it provided me with frequency reports in a spreadsheet format, which facilitated generating frequency counts of the codes used in the study. This permitted me less time organizing my data and more time analyzing my data. One could make the argument that organizing the data is part of analyzing the data but I found that even within Atlas.ti, one must still be cognizant of how the data is being organized. Similar to SPSS or any other computer program, software does what the user asks it to do and not what the user *wants* it to do. Hence, I never lost control of my data nor my ability to organize it. Atlas.ti simply facilitated the process of this method. Below is an excerpt of report that Atlas.ti organized for my code, “Undocumented -> Latino,” in my data.

P 8: Maribel⁹ Interview.docx - 8:56 [What race do you think...] (395:401) (Super)

Codes: [RACISM/NATIVISM] [Undocumented ->Latino]

No memos

J: What race do you think the general public attaches the term “undocumented” to?

⁹ Pseudonym

M: Mexican. Just yesterday, I saw the news where they said that people from Mexico are coming because of the drug wars and they said that people are coming here illegally. And it's always Mexico.

The excerpt above provides, in addition to the quote, the document number (p.8), title of the document (Maribel Interview), Document and line number (8:56), Category (RACISM/NATIVISM), and code (Undocumented -> Latino). Because Atlas.ti indexes the coded data for me, I am able to not spend time creating an index myself. Further, once Atlas.ti has indexed the data, I can run frequency counts across different variables like students, co-occurring codes, and total counts themselves. When I did this in my study, it helped point me to codes that were occurring most often and also the ones that were outliers that may be telling me something new.

A combination of Atlas.ti and spending a lot of time reading my documents, and listening to my interviews permitted me to see what was most salient in my qualitative data and helped drive the dissertation. All together, I used the data to best examine how undocumented students navigate the educational and legal system to receive a college education and how race impacts this pursuit.

Before moving on to the quantitative section of my study, it is important to note a few reasons why and how my two methods spoke with one another and why I chose to do a mixed methods study. My research questions aimed to answer how undocumented students make it through the educational system, which many times involves the legal system, as they pursued a college education and how race played a role in this pursuit. At first glance, it appears that a qualitative study would have sufficed in answering these questions. This is true and I will concede this point. However, situating this qualitative

study within a national context of undocumented students across the United States provided both a way of triangulating the locally collected data against a national sample and allowed me to see the common and different struggles that undocumented students are currently facing all over the country in this current and hostile immigration climate. By conducting the qualitative portion of my study first and then subsequently analyzing my data as I outlined above (i.e. coding, indexing, and creating themes) permitted me to have a more complete and rich understanding of the college matriculation of undocumented students. Both my qualitative and quantitative data spoke to one another and helped me be one of the few that are documenting the struggle of college access by all undocumented students across the country. I accomplished this by couching my qualitative study within the national context – further explained in the quantitative section.

Quantitative Section

To ensure that the quantitative part of my study corroborated with the qualitative part of my study, I operationalized my research questions within my survey and my selection of variables. This means I created survey questions that can be answered in a quantifiable way that best informed my research questions. What my research questions were trying to uncover is (1) what undocumented students see as impediments that the law and educational policy enforces; (2) how the students are reacting to these impediments; and (3) how race is playing a role in their lives as they move towards their college dreams and aspirations. The quantitative method I used was Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression since it provides me with a series of tests and analysis that can measure the statistical significance of predictors and variables that I gather and control for

in my study. More specifically, I used OLS regression as a means of determining the significance of being undocumented especially as it varies from state to state. Gathering data in a survey from the different states in the country can accomplish this.

Collecting the Data

My primary source for soliciting respondents for my survey was from an organization's website that sponsors scholarships specifically for undocumented Latino students. This organization is called Chicano Action Network¹⁰ (CAN) and as one of its founding members, I have provided the lead thinking and organizing of the scholarship program for undocumented students. The name of the scholarship is called the "CAN Scholarship" and the scholarship is offered to undocumented Latino students across the United States including Puerto Rico. In its inaugural year of the scholarship, it received over 1900 applications from across the country of which nearly 50% came from outside of California. Applications were received from places like California, Texas, North Carolina, and Illinois but also from places like Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. I am both a member of this organization and the chair for its scholarship program. As scholarship committee chair, I had the opportunity to review a majority of the scholarship applications we received last year or about 1000 scholarships. This permitted me to see, first hand, the enormous need that I assumed was out there and that studies report on. Additionally, I am also the Webmaster for the website. After explaining my project to the organization, they agreed to support my plans for conducting a national survey of undocumented Latino

¹⁰ Pseudonym.

students and granted me access to post a survey request on their website and utilize their list-serve to recruit undocumented students to complete my survey.

During the month of December 2010 and coordinating with the release of the CAN Scholarship application, I posted a link on the CAN website asking for respondents to complete an online survey (see Appendix D) which was uploaded on SurveyMonkey.com. I also sent out a message to our national list-serve that solicited more volunteers to complete the survey. The data in my survey was linked to my research questions, which were:

1. How do undocumented, Latino students navigate the legal and educational system to receive a college education in the United States?
 - a. How are undocumented students compensating for the lack of resources that are available to their peers who are not undocumented?
2. How does being undocumented become racialized for these students and what are the consequences of this racialization?

This study collected data using an anonymous, online survey about the college matriculation of undocumented students. The survey was uploaded onto SurveyMonkey.com and the survey was set up to not collect any identifying information. Additionally, I configured the survey to not collect IP addresses, which is something SurveyMonkey.com offers. Accessing the survey required the respondent to click on an Internet link, provided by SurveyMonkey.com that then took the respondent to the online survey. The survey link was posted on the CAN website. The link informed potential respondents that participating in the survey was completely optional and anonymous. Additionally, it informed the scholarship applicants that participation or non-participation

in the survey will not have any impact on the scholarship evaluation process that CAN was conducting if they were also submitting an application for the scholarship offered on the same website. Below is the Survey Internet Posting I used to solicit respondents:

Attention Students: Undocumented students are being sought for an anonymous, confidential survey about their college aspirations and challenges.

[CAN] supports and has given permission for the researcher, Jaime L. Del Razo, to post a link to his survey on our website. Jaime L. Del Razo is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. Choosing not to participate in the survey will not affect your [CAN] Scholarship Application in any way.

If you are interested in participating in the survey please click on the link below.

The survey should not take more than 5 minutes. Thank you for your consideration.

<CMUS Survey Link>

The posting was accompanied with an Internet button that took the respondent to another site to conduct the survey.

Ordinary Least Squares Regression (OLS)

By choosing OLS regression, it permitted me to isolate some variables that are affecting the lives of undocumented students. Ordinary least squares regression helped assess how reduced opportunities for undocumented students (as opposed to students who are not undocumented) contributed to their college ambition. This was especially true when these students were confronted with the enforcement of harsher laws and when racial perceptions were increased. Conversely, the more support undocumented students received via educational institutions and community organizations, the more successful

they were in matriculating into the institutions of higher learning. The statistical model I created attempted to find out how much support (or lack thereof) they received and how this support statistically contributed to the student’s ambition to go to college. In particular, I was interested in seeing how this differed from state to state.

For example, by conducting a national survey, I want to see how students differ between states like North Carolina, Florida, California, and Texas. In this example before the study was conducted, each successive state provided more opportunities for undocumented students than the previous one. Please see table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 - State Laws governing college opportunities for undocumented students

State	Estimated undocumented population (& Percentage) in January 2009 ¹¹	Permits undocumented students to enroll in all of its public colleges	Permits in-state residency for tuition purposes to undocumented students	Permits undocumented students to compete for state aid
North Carolina	370,000 (3%)	No	No	No
Florida	720,000 (7%)	Yes	No	No
California	2,600,000 (24%)	Yes	Yes	No
Texas	1,680,000 (16%)	Yes	Yes	Yes

¹¹ Estimates are from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

As the table above shows, North Carolina, before the start of the study,¹² did not permit undocumented students to enroll into all of its public colleges nor did it provide any type of state aid. Florida permitted undocumented students to enroll into all of their public colleges but only as out-of-state students, which usually meant 3-4 times higher tuition than in-state residents. California permitted undocumented students to enroll as in-state students (provided they met certain requirements – see AB540) but did not permit them to compete for state aid¹³. Finally, Texas permitted them to enroll as in-state students and permitted them to compete for state aid. I was interested in seeing how these state laws affected undocumented students' hopes, aspirations, and plans for attending college. By utilizing different quantitative analyses, I compared the different states between each other and from the total data I collect from my national survey.

My assumptions of what provided the best conditions for undocumented students to go to college were confirmed in my study. These assumptions were:

- Residing in a state that permits undocumented students to compete for state aid
- Residing in a state that permits undocumented students to qualify for in-state resident tuition
- A student's awareness of their legal rights and opportunities
- A stable family financial situation
- Access to college-going advisers (be it academic and/or non/academic)

¹² Currently North Carolina rescinded the bar on public college enrollment for undocumented students. My reason for leaving this example in was to make a methodological point of how I approached the quantitative portion of my study.

¹³ Since the end of the study, California has passed AB130 & AB131, which permits students to compete for private and public state aid, respectively. AB130 went into effect on January 2012 and AB131 will go into effect on January 2013

I designed a statistical model that utilized OLS to systematically hold for each variable to see which contributes most through a series of correlation tests. By using the college going literature to identify the variables that most contribute to non-traditional students college success, I included those in my statistical model to permit me to see if there was a significant difference between undocumented students that reside in different states with different resources. The most basic model I used is described below:

My dependent variables (Y) was the amount of college plans that the students have done and planned for their future, which will be measured by their college aspirations and steps towards going to college in the national survey questions.

My independent variables (X) were the following:

- State laws that prohibit undocumented students from applying to college
- State laws that permit undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition
- State laws that permit undocumented students to compete for state college aid
- Number of college advisers and support programs that undocumented students have available to them
- Negative racial perceptions that undocumented students believe others have of themselves

The model below can also represent my statistical model:

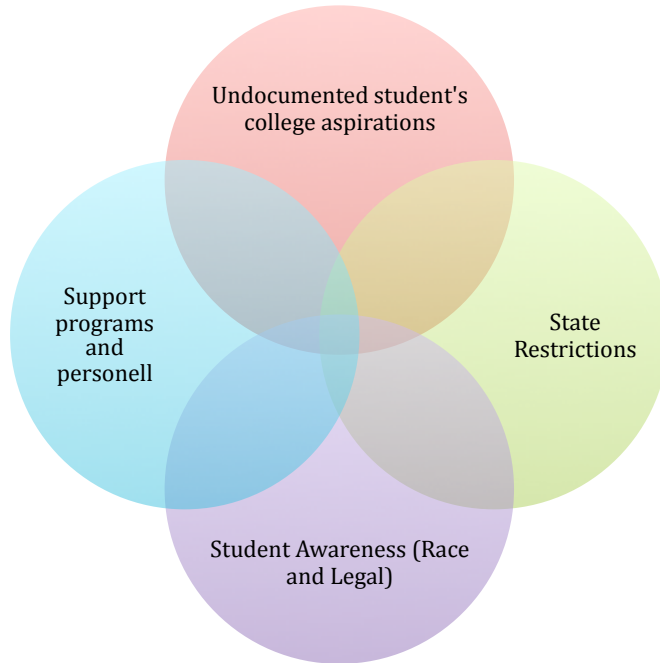


Figure 4.1

In Figure 4.1 above, the three independent variables are **Support programs and personnel**, **State restrictions**, and **Student awareness (Race and Legal)**. My dependent variable is **Undocumented student's college aspirations**. In essence, what I did was examine how much each of the independent variables contributes to the dependent variable (Undocumented student's college aspirations). Within each of the independent variables are other independent variables that have been clustered into the model, which I also examined in my study. For example, the state restrictions circle has several concentric circles that vary depending on the state the undocumented student resides in (see figure 4.2 below).

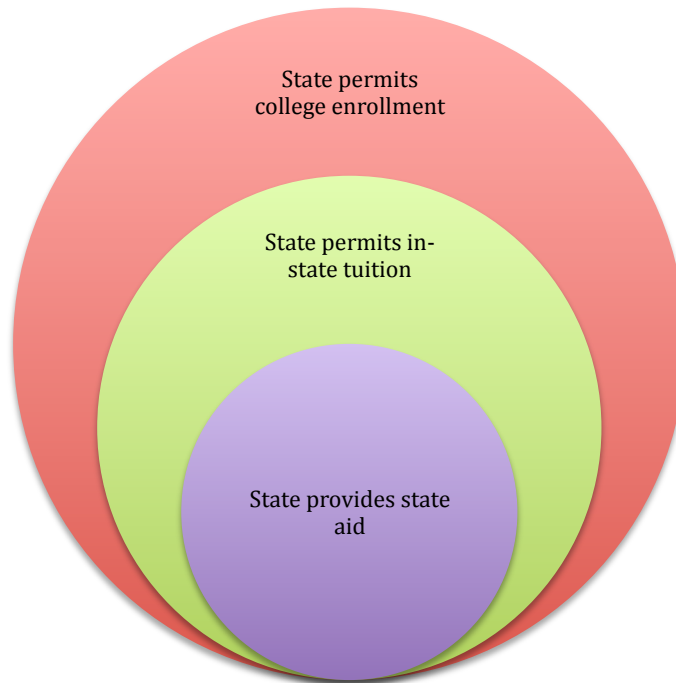


Figure 4.2

The outer circle represents states that permit college enrollment, the middle circle represents states that permit college enrollment but also permit in-state tuition for undocumented students that qualify, and the inner most circle represents states that permit college enrollment and permit in-state tuition and permit undocumented students to compete for state aid. A cross section analysis of the differences across the states were key in highlighting the importance that state laws played in helping or hindering undocumented students' college aspirations.

T-Test of significance

I used a series of t-tests to compare means across independent variables to determine whether mean differences between variables were significant or not. Given the

importance on how race and other policy structures hindered undocumented Latino students' path to college, being able to identify how significant those mean differences were proved to be very helpful in analyzing my data.

An important part of running a t-test was ensuring that I had one nominal variable and one measurement variable. My measurement variable was the responses I gathered that described the students' plans and aspirations to go to college (my dependent variable). My nominal variable was broken down into a series of two values depending on the opportunities (or lack of) provided by each state. For example, my first sets of nominal values were "states that permit undocumented students to enroll into college" and "states that do not permit undocumented students to enroll into college". Comparing these two populations provided evidence that the opportunities (or lack of) provided by each state affected an undocumented student's decision to aspire to go to college. Hence, the effects of the law are not just enforced at the admission office but self enforced by diminishing an undocumented student's desire to go to college. And as the evidence often suggests in this study and others, these students are college-ready and college-eligible. These t-tests provided valuable information on the college aspirations of undocumented Latino students by comparing these sets of means across the states.

Scale Analysis. Four different measures were used in my study. They were Status Scale, Law Scale, Resources Scale, and Racism/Nativism Scale. Each of these scales utilized different Likert items from the survey and combined measured the effects that immigration status had on undocumented students (Status Scale), effects that the law had on undocumented students (Law Scale), effects that resources, or lack of, had on

undocumented students (Resources Scale), and effects that race and immigration status had on undocumented students (Racism Scale). I calculated Chronbach's Alpha for each scale and utilized George and Mallery's (2011) rule of thumb to determine the internal reliability of each scale: $\alpha > .9$ – excellent; $\alpha > .8$ – good; $\alpha > .7$ – acceptable; $\alpha > .6$ – questionable; $\alpha > .5$ – poor; $\alpha < .5$ – unacceptable" (p. 231) .

Test for Assumptions

Utilizing the variety of tests used above required that certain assumptions not be violated.

- Homoscedasticity – This assumption requires me to have an equal variance of residuals at every value of my independent variable (x). To check this, I plotted my residuals versus my predicted value and other possible independent variables. If heteroscedasticity was present, then I worked with shorter segments of my data that eliminates most of this effect and results in a more homoscedastic model.
- Linearity – Multicollinearity is a condition that exists when we have predictors who overlap a lot with each other. This situation is quite common so when running my analysis I guarded against large overlap amongst the predictors I used in the analysis.
- Normality – It is assumed that my data will be normal across all my values of my independent variable (x). By taking a slice of the predictors across my predicted values, I saw that this data was normally distributed to confirm

normality. If it was not, I used a series of transformations on my data to “normalize” the data.

Descriptive statistics. An important part of my quantitative data included the collection of descriptive statistics that came from the survey. Given the popularity of the scholarships we provide for undocumented students across the country, our website receives about 200-300 hits a day and about 10-20 emails a day during the scholarship application phase (usually between December and February). Based on the 1900 applications we received last year, our organization was able to gather a glimpse of what the national picture of undocumented Latino students was across the country. We were able to do this through our two debriefings we conducted with all the scholarship readers throughout the summer. Through my national survey, I captured a description of these students and provided that information in a graphical presentation. Given the dearth of information on undocumented Latino students (and undocumented students, in general), the data collected provided a contemporary look at the opportunities (or lack thereof) that these students are facing in the United States.

Though I received close to 1,000 surveys in my raw data file for the surveys, I reduced the data down to 290 complete surveys of undocumented students who had graduated high school in 2011, to provide the most complete match with the 16 interviews from undocumented students who had also graduated in 2011.

Software

I used SPSS to compile, clean, and run the analysis collected from the national survey. The use of SPSS was an efficient method to run the analysis listed above. It also provided the figures and graphs I used for my findings chapters in this dissertation.

Mixed Methodology: Qualitative & Quantitative

I benefited tremendously by conducting a mixed method approach by helping to see patterns in one method that informed the other method. I believe that was one of the best things I discovered in conducting a mixed methods study. The quantitative portion of my study was tied backed to my qualitative portion of my study and vice versa. I recommend that those interested in conducting a mixed method study not shy away from doing so but be prepared to make adjustments along the way as did I when I saw that the survey left me with unanswered questions, which then could be added to my interview protocol for the qualitative portion of my study. These adjustments were used sparingly and only when needed to help me answer my research questions.

My timeline and outcomes for both methods are presented below:

Table 4.2
CMUS Study Data Collection Time Line

Data Collected	Time Frame (Months/Year)	Method Section
44-item questionnaire (Survey)	December 2010 – October 2011	Quantitative
California Interviews	June 2011 – September 2011	Qualitative
Arizona Interviews	June 2011	Qualitative
Follow Up Interviews (8 of the original 16 students)	January 2011- March 2011	Qualitative
Personal Statements (8 of the original 16 students)	December 2011	Qualitative

Though my collection of data required adjustments along the way, this study proved to be rich with data not documented before much less studied in this way.

Chapter 5: “Entre Las Sombras” (Among the Shadows): The challenges of being an undocumented student in the 21st Century United States

Undocumented Latino students are facing some of the most difficult living conditions in the U.S. as indicated in the introduction of this study. One research challenge is gaining access to these students who, for good reason, often do not wish to reveal their immigration status and indeed feel, as one undocumented student indicated, “Estamos entre las sombras” (*We are among the shadows*). This chapter will provide current data on the challenges of being an undocumented student in the 21st century.

In this chapter, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that there are a number of struggles that undocumented Latino students are facing as they aspire to make their way to college. These include being legally removed from this country, being disqualified from any school funding, and being stigmatized as being a burden on U.S. society. In addition to these challenges, there are also material challenges like ineligibility to academic programs and being excluded from legally working in the United States. Though not necessarily the focus of this study but definitely pertinent, these students are also fighting the many other challenges that poor, Latino students are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Hence, the layers of oppressive conditions for these young aspiring scholars are many and complex. The themes that emerged and were most salient in exploring the challenges of these students were: (1) A struggle to fight for their own humanity in their own U.S. homeland; (2) Financial aid limitations for college, which included being ineligible for most aid and being unable to secure legal employment to pay

for their school; and (3) Minimal legal protection and oppression that is not just de facto but also de jure. These themes combined make up the key barriers that will be presented in this chapter. Before exploring each theme, I will present general descriptives of my quantitative and qualitative data sources so that it may provide an important backdrop to the students in the study.

Surveying the landscape

Voices of thousands of undocumented people are silenced every day by the portrayal of them as criminals and undesirables. When a population is shunned, as undocumented people are, it is common for a population to not want to surface or air any grievances they may have within the community and country they reside in. This has historically been the case for marginalized populations in the United States (Acuña, 1988; Haney-López, 2006; Hing, 2004; Irons, 2002; Takaki, 1998). By being in school, undocumented students mitigate this stigma in so far that other resources are harnessed, which may not be available to other undocumented non-students, to help push back against the negative views about them and to offer new opportunities otherwise not available. One method for undocumented students to voice their concerns and ideas is through anonymous means such as this study and others like it. Providing an opportunity for undocumented students to present their views serves, in itself, as an important vehicle of expression and an outlet that few are rarely given. As previously mentioned in my methods chapter, I created an anonymous online survey where undocumented students presented some of their views on their feelings about their immigration status along with

key demographic materials. The survey for this study was entitled College Matriculation of Undocumented Students or CMUS for short.

The survey was completely anonymous to maximize protection for the respondents. The survey was accessed two ways: (1) By visiting a website of an organization that focuses on providing scholarships for undocumented students; and (2) By receiving an email with the survey's URL on it. In both cases, snowball methodology was used to recruit undocumented students to the survey. A total of 290 complete surveys were collected from undocumented students who graduated from high school as the class of 2011. What follows are some brief and key demographics for the survey.

Gender

Of these 290 complete surveys, the vast majority (72.4%) of respondents were women (See Figure 5.1 below). Since the data was collected at a site where college-bound, undocumented Latino students frequent, this type of collection is commensurate with research that shows the trailing of Latino males behind their female counterparts on their road to college (Gándara, 2009).

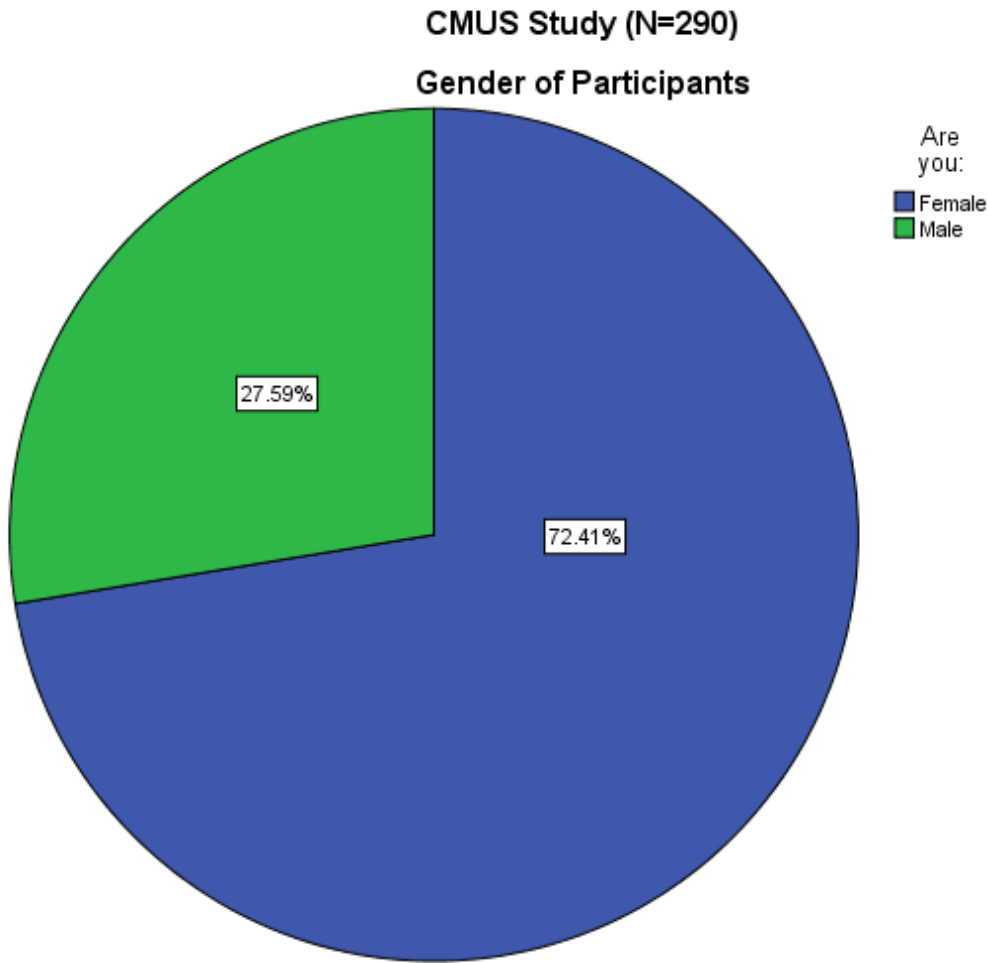


Figure 5.1

As the chart above shows, there is almost a three to one ratio that women have to men in the survey data. This data suggests that undocumented Latino students, as a subset of Latino students, are also experiencing a higher rate of Latinas going to college compared to Latinos. This higher number of Latinas presence is also seen in other spaces where college-bound, undocumented Latino students gather such as the OGC organizations from where a majority of the subjects for the qualitative portion of the study were recruited. This means that not only are Latinos generally associated as being the face of undocumented students but it is Latinas that are specifically the face of college-bound, undocumented students.

This study does not focus specifically on gender but more research needs to be done to address questions like, “What are the differences in college-going rates between undocumented women and men?” and “How are undocumented Latinas navigating the educational system that are similar to other Latinas and how are they different?” There needs to be more research about undocumented students in general but specifically about the intersectionality of gender and undocumented status.

Race/Ethnicity

Table 5.1 is a description of the different racial identities for the respondents in the survey:

Table 5.1
CMUS Study (N=290)
Racial/Ethnic Identification

Race/Ethnicity¹⁴	Count	Percent
African American/Black	0	0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.3%
Asian American/Asian	2	0.7%
Mexican American/Chicano	197	67.9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0%
Other Latino	76	26.2%
Puerto Rican	1	0.3%
White/Caucasian	2	0.7%
<i>Other (Please Specify)</i>	33	11.4%
<i>Brazilian</i>	1	
<i>Hispanic</i>	2	
<i>Hispanic/Latina</i>	1	
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	1	
<i>Italian</i>	1	
<i>Mexican</i>	22	
<i>Mexicana</i>	1	
<i>Peruvian</i>	1	
<i>Salvadorian</i>	1	
<i>Undocumented Mexican</i>	1	
<i>Venezuelan</i>	1	

¹⁴ Aside from those races/ethnicities listed under the “Other” categories, the choices listed are from the HERI Freshman survey, which match similar racial categorizations in the U.S. census. The author acknowledges that racial identification is more nuanced than these categories, which is why there was an “other” category. However, because these racial categories were present, it can influence a respondent to categorize him/herself into one of these categories.

As one can see in Table 5.1 the issue of a common racial identity within the Latino respondents varied according to races and even specific national identities. A significant majority of the students in the survey identified themselves as Mexican-American/Chicano (almost 68%). Some chose “other Latino” (26.2%) as a means of identifying themselves while others chose to identify themselves specifically as a nationality or specific Latino (11.4%). Only 1 student identified himself as Puerto Rican¹⁵. A vast majority of the respondents were Mexican-American/Chicano, which matches what current data projects as being the majority of the undocumented population in the United States (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Last, the 33 students in the sample who identified themselves as “Other” used terms most associated as being Mexican but other students also had entries such as Brazilian, Italian, and Undocumented Mexican.

Class

According to U.S. Census Bureau, poverty in the U.S. is determined by using “a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family’s total income is less than the family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it are considered in poverty” (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Smith, 2011). Since CMUS survey participants were asked both how many family members were living in their home and what is their household income, a cross tab analysis, Table 5.2, permits us to see how many of the 290 respondents would qualify as living below the poverty line.

¹⁵ It is important to note that Puerto Ricans are not considered undocumented since Puerto Rico is part of the U.S. Territories. I chose to keep this case in the study because one could identify themselves as Puerto Rican and not be from Puerto Rico.

Table 5.2			
CMUS Study (N=290)			
Number of Respondents Living Below the U.S. Poverty Line			
Household Size	Poverty Threshold for 2010 (U.S. Census, 2010)	Number of respondents	Number of respondents with reported household incomes below the poverty line
1	\$11,139	1	1 of 1 (100%)
2	\$14,218	3	0 of 3 (0%)
3	\$17,374	7	4 of 7 (57.1%)
4	\$22,314	31	24 of 31 (77.4%)
5	\$26,439	61	45 of 61 (73.7%)
6	\$29,897	94	76 of 94 (80.9%)
7	\$34,009	52	43 of 52 (82.7%)
8	\$37,934	19	15 of 19 (78.9%)
9 or more	\$45,220	22	19 of 22 (86.4%)
		290	227 of 290 (78.3%)

Household incomes were conservatively reported in Table 5.2. For example, if a student with a household of 4 reported that the household income was between \$20,000 and \$24,999, then that student was not counted as under the poverty line because the poverty line for a household of four is designated at \$22,314 which is within the income range that the students were asked to select. Therefore the number of respondents below the poverty line could be much higher than the 78.3% reported in the table above. Nonetheless, the

large amount of respondents living in poverty is significantly higher than the national average of 15.1%. In fact, it is more than 5 times higher than the national average.

Scale Measures

In addition to the current demographic information that was collected in the survey, a variety of other items included challenges, resources, and racial implications for the undocumented Latino students in the study. I created four measures to study this. I am labeling them as Status Scale, Law Scale, Resources Scale, and Discrimination Scale. I will introduce the first two of these four measures in this chapter and reserve the last two measures for the following two chapters, as they provide pertinent statistical information for those corresponding chapters. The Status Scale will be introduced first and the Law Scale will be introduced in the final section of this chapter.

Status Scale

The Status Scale used a 7-item scale that measured the student's self-perception of their immigration status and how it affected different aspects of their life including academic issues. The participants answered statements using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree" with 3= "Undecided." Chronbach's Alpha for the Status scale was 0.722, which indicates an acceptable internal reliability for the scale. The Mean (M) for this Status scale was 4.31 with over 82% of the

participants agreeing with all the seven items in the scale¹⁶. Below is a bar chart, Figure 5.2, which shows the means across each item in the scale.

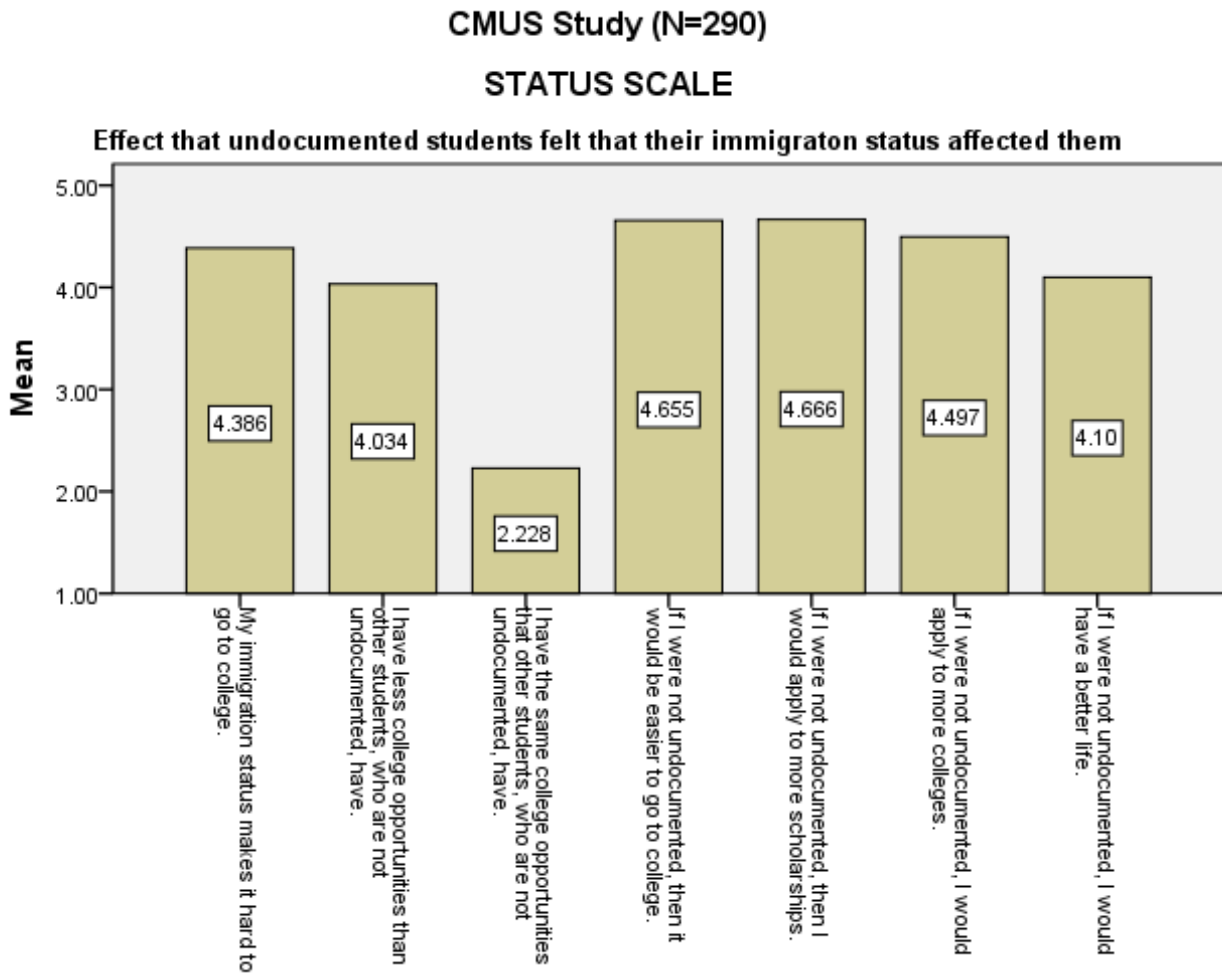


Figure 5.2

As is evident by respondents in the graph above (Figure 5.2), these participants saw their immigration status as playing a big role in their lives especially as it related to going to college. If college is seen as the vehicle for upward mobility, then anything that hinders a person’s ability to apply and go to college can be considered as hindering this process. The

¹⁶ One of the items in the scale presented a *negatively* worded statement. Hence I reversed the responses for this item to fit with the other *positively* worded statements in the scale. The item I reversed was “I have the same college opportunities that other students, who are not undocumented, have.”

data from the survey in the graph above (Figure 5.2), suggests that a student's undocumented immigration status limits the number of colleges and scholarship applications they submit and their ability to matriculate to college in addition to limiting their ability to have a better life. Another important observation is the two questions that compared themselves to other students who are not undocumented. These two questions showed a mirror effect between the positively and negatively worded statements. This is important because it provides further evidence that the participants understood the differences between these two questions and their responses corresponded with each other by reporting that their opportunities were less than other students who were not undocumented. This helps provide further validity and evidence that suggests that the respondents were sincere in giving their opinion, possibly because there are so few options for these students' voices to be heard. In the section that follows we will hear from these students and provide a more qualitative examination of these students views.

“Tenemos una voz” (We have a voice)

Similar to the subjects in my quantitative data, all of the 16 in-depth interviews that I conducted were also from undocumented students that were graduating from high school as the class of 2011. This permitted me to match the larger sample in my quantitative data with the qualitative data by sharing the same immigration status, race, and high school graduating class. Table 5.3 below provides a broad look at the students interviewed with some key descriptives for each of them. As indicated in my methods chapter, a gender balance was reached between female and male and 5 of the 16 interviewees were from the state of Arizona. Most of the students were from Mexico with the exception of one female

student and one male student who were from Guatemala and El Salvador, respectively. Also, based on their household income and size, 11 of the 16 students (68.8%) of the students lived below the poverty level according to the poverty thresholds mentioned previously.

Table 5.3
CMUS Study (N=16)
General Descriptives of Interviews Conducted with the High School Class of 2011

Name¹⁷	Gender	Country of Origin	Age brought to the U.S.	State of Residence	Household Size	~Household Income
Oscar	Male	Mexico	2 months old	Arizona	4	\$24K - \$26K
Agusto	Male	Mexico	1 year old	California	6	\$20,000
Daniel	Male	Mexico	1 year old	California	5	\$22,000
Monica	Female	Mexico	1 year old	Arizona	5	\$14,000
Carmen	Female	Mexico	3 years old	Arizona	5	\$12,000
Maribel	Female	Mexico	3 years old	California	5	\$35,000
Leticia	Female	Mexico	5 years old	California	11	\$10,000
Chalo	Male	Mexico	6 years old	California	5	\$15K - \$20K
Ramón	Male	Mexico	6 years old	California	7	\$35,000
Luis	Male	Mexico	7 years old	Arizona	7	\$20,000
Susana	Female	Mexico	8 years old	Arizona	6	\$30,000
Alejandra	Female	Mexico	10 years old	California	4	\$12,000
Sylvia	Female	Mexico	11 years old	California	5	\$10,000
Raul	Male	El Salvador	13 years old	California	4	\$25,000
Maximiliano	Male	Mexico	14 years old	California	5	<\$60,000
Salef	Female	Guatemala	14 years old	California	9	\$20,000

¹⁷ Pseudonyms were used for all names including all other proper names in the study.

The undocumented Latino students who participated in the interviews provided an insight into their lives with the intent that their stories would help further their mission to have an equal place in the U.S. Using qualitative methods, these narratives were collected and analyzed to present the salient themes that emerged from the data. As listed previously at the start of the chapter, these emerged themes were: (1) A struggle to fight for their own humanity in their own U.S. homeland; (2) Financial Aid Limitations for college, which included being ineligible for most aid and being unable to secure legal employment to pay for their school; and (3) Minimal legal protection and oppression that is not just de facto but also de jure. I will examine each of these themes in the narratives that follow. Additionally, a portrait of each student will be provided whenever they are first introduced throughout the themes in this dissertation to permit the themes to be the structure of the chapters. What follows is a closer look at the lives of these college-bound, undocumented Latino students and how they viewed their challenges of being undocumented in 21st century United States.

Fighting for their humanity in their U.S. Homeland

For many undocumented Latino students, the United States has been the only country they have ever known. These students identify themselves with U.S. customs and practices and many identify themselves as “American” (Perez, 2009). Despite this, undocumented Latino students are in a constant struggle to be recognized as part of this country while they continue to fight for their humanity. The immigration industrial complex, headed up by corporations and politicians, benefits from exploiting the labor of these students and their parents, while dehumanizing them via the media (Golash-Boza,

2009). A theme that surfaced amongst the undocumented Latino students interviewed, focuses on how they cope and fight against dehumanization and to be recognized as belonging to the U.S. - which they consider home.

Sylvia. Sylvia is originally from Oaxaca, Mexico where she lived with her grandma and brother because her parents had made the decision to come to the United States in search of work. Sylvia's journey of migration began at the age of 11 and consisted of a treacherous pace across the desert with her parents and older brother where she almost lost her parents and her own life due to exhaustion and dehydration. After a 7-day journey, Sylvia and her family settled in the Los Angeles area, where she excelled in high school and finished her senior year with straight A's. Although eligible to apply to the most prestigious schools in California, she made the decision to go to a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution so she could continue helping out the family with the money she earned working at a shoe store in the underground economy. At the time of her participation in the study, she had just graduated high school and was attending a community college in Los Angeles County and was interested in becoming a doctor.

Sylvia was very proud of her accomplishments and always sought out to help others even if it came at a personal cost to her. In the passage below, Sylvia had been explaining to me how a group of teachers had created a college going program at her high school but that they were excluding all undocumented students from participating. Having experienced this sense of exclusion before, Sylvia formed and led an AB540¹⁸ student group on her campus to help those students who had been excluded. However, when these teachers

¹⁸ AB 540 is a California bill that passed into law that permits undocumented students who fit certain requirements to pay in-state tuition in its public colleges. This law provided a legitimacy and identity for many undocumented students in California (Abrego, 2008).

found out about Sylvia's efforts, they, according to Sylvia, ridiculed her for her efforts and refused to allow her to neither make announcements in their classrooms nor post any flyers. Sylvia also told me that one teacher threw the flyer back in her face after she had handed her the announcement. When asked how this experience had made her feel she responded by saying,

They made me feel like if I wasn't a human. They made me feel like an animal that couldn't be with humans. At first it did hurt me. But then most of us, like the AB540 students, we just decided to forget about it and do our own thing. We started doing the group. And most of us, we were like AB540 but also some of the other kids were people who had papers and they were helping us all. And they would sell things with us and everything. And it was really good having people that were from here in the group. But it was just that group [the teacher's group] that made me feel really bad like if I was an animal that was going to do something really, really bad to them so that is why they didn't want me to be there.

The quote above exemplifies the dehumanization of undocumented students, not just in the media, but in the schools they are required to attend. This dehumanization that Sylvia recounts above is indicative of how undocumented students are being treated across the country with terms like "illegal alien" or "illegal" that begin to place undocumented migrants as being less human (Hing, 2006). This dehumanization is something that the students in my study endured and fought against. In the case of Sylvia, what made things worse was that she later explained to me that the reason she was most hurt by these teachers was because she had been close to two of them until they found out she was undocumented. Once the teachers found out about her immigration status, these same teachers avoided her and no longer spoke to her outside of regular instruction. Sylvia described this as "being betrayed by people I thought cared about me." These types of psychological traumas can have a detrimental affect on immigrant children when the adults

who were meant to help them end up being the source of pain and distress (C. Suarez-Orozco, 2000).

Despite this difficult situation, Sylvia fought back by helping create her own space at the school, even when it meant outing herself and enduring such painful treatment. As the quote above indicates, Sylvia formed her own group because she was being excluded from the group the teachers had formed. Similar to Sylvia, 15 of the 16 interviewed students formed or joined AB540 groups as a form of resistance and fighting back against the negative stigmatization of being undocumented. Such was the case of the following student.

Ramón. Ramón is a runner. He would want me to start his description with that initial sentence. Ramón is originally from Tijuana, Mexico and came to the U.S. when he was 6 years old in search of a better life with his mother and two brothers. The San Diego neighborhood where they eventually settled was a tough neighborhood with high gang activity and high drug use rates. Ramón attributed his mother's vigilance over him as the reason why he succeeded and wished to succeed at the highest level. He grew up in very cramped quarters all his life and having the floor as his bed every night was something normal for him. All the family members that he lived with were undocumented with the exception of his cousin. Growing up with a number of domestic problems at home, he used school and running as his outlet to escape. At his high school in San Diego, he excelled in academics and as he put it, "I got A's all the time." He also was very involved in various community organizations and he created his own AB540 group on campus to help students in similar situations like himself. He was elected ASB president and in his senior year was chosen prom king. But his biggest accomplishment was his running where he excelled at the local, state, and national level. A number of universities like UCLA and UC Davis tried to

recruit him to run for their colleges, but because of his immigration status they were unable to offer the full scholarship that they typically award most top athletes. Ramón was very disappointed and settled on attending the local community college to begin his college career despite being accepted and recruited by top universities in his home state of California. Ramón's academic goal was as he put it, "something in counseling. I want to motivate people to see that there is hope."

After discussing how his immigration status had resulted in severely limiting his college options despite being such a stellar scholar, athlete, and leader at his high school, Ramón described how he felt. He said,

I felt useless. Throughout this time you see your mom working so hard, you want to help her and you can't. I kind of knew what was happening so it didn't hit me so hard but I felt useless. What am I going to do? Sell drugs? What am I going to do? I tried to look at all my decisions where I should go, what paths I should take. I started talking to people and they told me, 'no, there is nothing.' And so yeah, useless. That's the best word I could use to describe it. Useless. You couldn't do anything. You worked so hard for all four years but for what?

Ramón used the word "useless" several times to describe how he felt about seeing so many opportunities go by the way side despite all the hard work he had put into his school and community. Useless is defined as being of no use and hence, not needed. Many times throughout the interviews with other students in this study, this notion of not being needed or being of no use was something the interviewed students used to describe how they felt when they first discovered that their immigration status would be an issue for their college plans. In fact, with the exception of one student, all students interviewed depicted similar feelings that Ramón shared in the quote above or in other words, 93.8% of the students interviewed felt similar to Ramón.

It's important to remind the reader that the students describing this emotional toll of dehumanization were very recent high school graduates or were just finishing up high school. As the graph below, Figure 5.3 suggests, most undocumented students tend to discover in high school, a very formative time in a person's life, that their immigration status will affect their plans for college.

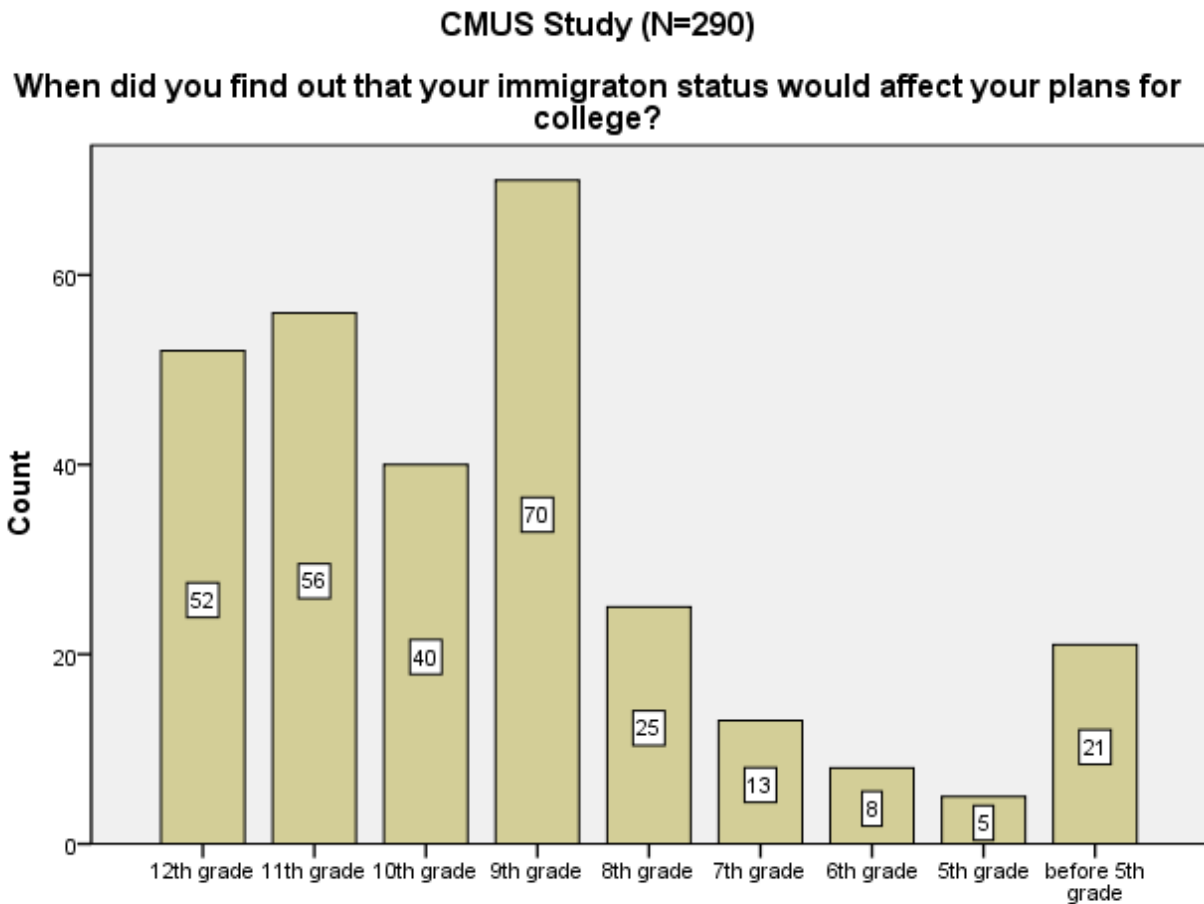


Figure 5.3

As Figure 5.3 shows, 218 of the 290 (75.2%) CMUS survey participants reported finding out in high school that their immigration status would be an issue for their college plans. Because high school is usually attached to a time of personal growth and academic

development, one has to wonder how these students managed to make it out of high school with college as an option. This will be the focus of chapter six. The following student had the additional challenge of caring for a baby while she made her way to college as an undocumented student.

Carmen. Carmen was born in Tijuana but before coming to Arizona, grew up in neighboring Sonora, Mexico. Carmen crossed the Sonora/Arizona desert twice because the first time she and her family tried to cross, the U.S. border patrol caught them. Her father was imprisoned and she, her mother, and her 6-month-old baby brother, whom her mother carried on her back, were all deported back to Mexico. The second time, they were successful in crossing and settled in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Carmen began working at a young age to support her family while still attending high school and passing all her classes. Carmen is a single working mother who had her baby when she was still in high school. Despite this, she still managed to graduate from high school on time with her fellow classmates and planned on going to college to study business. Below she discusses the difficulty of being part of the US while struggling to see the purpose of even trying to be part of it.

Carmen: As a person, I do feel part of this country because I follow all the rules of the United States. I obey all the rules. I would go to school every day. I would take college courses at night. I had the right to just stop going to school and drop out but I chose not to. I chose what the country wanted me to do. I have never been arrested. I have never committed a crime. I have been respectful and loyal to this country. Yet this is what I get for it. I don't get the opportunities that a person that actually exists here.

Jaime: How does that make you feel?

Carmen: Well it just makes me feel that it should be equal. That it shouldn't be so discriminative against us (*Carmen begins to cry but continues talking*). Like, we have the right, too. Like if we are good citizens and if we have never committed a crime. We followed the rules of the United States. We never hurt anybody here. We tried

our hardest to be part of it and yet we don't get that right to be part of the U.S. Then, what's the point of actually trying?

Carmen struggled to make her point about the tension that exists with her wanting to live the “American Dream” by following all that is expected of her by the U.S., which she considers her home, but then being reminded that she is not part of it. Carmen later discussed how she was concerned about going back to Mexico because it is a country that she no longer knows since she was brought to the U.S. at such a young age, along with the fear of not knowing what would happen to her baby in the U.S. if she were removed to Mexico. Carmen and other undocumented students like her “find themselves in a labyrinth of liminality not of their own making and with virtually all exits blocked” (C. Suarez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suarez-Orozco, 2011, Pg. 461). This state of liminality is similar to the Chicano identity. Chicanos do not feel welcomed in the United States but are not Mexican nationals so Mexico is not their home either. They are between two countries that have helped shaped their identity but existing at the border of both (Acuña, 1988; Anzaldúa, 1999; Rendon, 1971; Vigil, 1998). But in the case of undocumented Latino students, it is different by the number of legal restrictions that only pertain to undocumented students living in the United States.¹⁹ In addition to fighting to make a place for themselves in their school, there is also an internal fight about whether or not they belong in their homeland.

Salef. Salef is an undocumented Latina who arrived to the U.S. when she was 14 years old. Salef's story of migration was unlike Carmen's because Salef had to cross two borders to get to the United States. She recalls being told to “shut up” several times by her guide when she was crossing Mexico because her Guatemalan accent almost gave her away

¹⁹ Its important to note that there are undocumented students who identify themselves as Chicanos and hence, also experience the Chicano sense of liminality.

to the Mexican immigration authorities. I asked her if she had faced other problems coming through Mexico and she said that the rest of the trip was quite calm for her once she got to the Mexico/US border because she had a tourist visa to enter. However, she explained that only her and her brother were able to secure visas but that the rest of her family members (Mom, Dad, and older brothers and sisters) had to cross through the desert where her mother suffered permanent injuries on her feet. Salef and her family settled in South Central Los Angeles, where Salef attended an urban high school, plans on graduating, and attending a California State University where she intends on majoring in kinesiology. Below, Salef begins to explain what she considers are the central challenges that undocumented students are facing today.

Los temas principales, ahorita, lo que uno quiere como un estudiante AB540 es poder obtener un diploma y trabajar e ir a la escuela para ser como los demás. Entonces los temas principales son tener una mejor vida como los demás. No nomás por que somos la minoría o indocumentados no deberíamos ser retirados como que no tenemos una voz. Entonces yo siento que los temas principales es que nosotros podemos sobre salir y que somos como cualquier otra persona y ser lo mismo por que somos seres humanos y tenemos las mismas capacidades como los demás de ser líderes. *[The main point, at the moment, what one wants as an AB540 student is being able to obtain a diploma, work, and go to college like everyone else. Hence, the main points are to have a better life like everyone else. Just because we are the minority or undocumented does not mean we should be put aside like we do not have a voice. Therefore, I feel that the main point is that we can overcome and that we are like any other person and be the same because we are human beings with the same capacities like everyone else to become leaders²⁰.]*

When asked if she felt that currently AB540 students were being treated like the other students who are not undocumented, she responded,

No. Somos bastante excluidos de muchas cosas. Nos tratan diferentes que los demás. Por ejemplo en mi escuela, me toca hacer presentaciones de AB540. Como no saben mucho de nosotros, tenemos que dar presentaciones de la AB540 para explicar los requisitos y para decirles que somos iguales. Entonces muchos tiran comentarios por ejemplo, “Oh son indocumentados entonces son inmigrantes” como

²⁰ The author did all translations.

somos animales raros, tal vez. Entonces entra bastante tristeza y frustración a la vez. [No. We are largely excluded from many things. They treat us different from everyone else. For example, in my high school, I get to do AB540 presentations. Since they do not know much about us, we have to give AB540 presentations to explain the requirements and to tell them that we are equal to them. Then, many of them throw out comments like, "Oh, you are undocumented then you are immigrants" as if we were some strange animal. So I am overcome with sadness and frustration at that moment.]

In both passages above, Salef evokes this sentiment that she must state several times that she is a human being and not an animal. Similar to Sylvia's previous account of people making her feel like she was not human, Salef discusses that she too felt that she was being seen like "some strange animal" and reiterated that undocumented students were equal to "everyone else" meaning those who are not undocumented. This was all being done despite Salef offering the school a valuable service by conducting these presentations for their classrooms.

These four student voices above exemplified the emotional toll that other undocumented students faced as they went through their daily life in the U.S., a country they consider their home and for some, the only country they have ever known. At the heart of these conversations was a sense of dehumanization that was occurring in different ways by teachers, students, and by way of college access limitations. Despite these student's sense of being part of the U.S. and playing by its rules, doing well in school, and exemplifying good citizenship, they began to question if what they were doing was really worth it. They found themselves in this dehumanized state of liminality that provides enormous challenges to overcome in addition to the challenges that Latino high school students are facing today (i.e. high drop out rate, poverty, institutional racism, etc.). These four voices best exemplified the common thread of dehumanization and struggle that was evident across the students interviewed. Nonetheless, these students continued to

persevere any way they could and sought out resources that inevitably would help them get through high school and hopefully obtain a college education. This navigation of the resources will be further discussed in the chapter that follows. My second emerged theme that described the current challenges for undocumented students was funding for their college education.

Financial Aid Limitations

Undocumented students cannot apply for most financial aid but neither can they legally work to pay for their college education. This was the most frustrating element that the undocumented students interviewed had about funding their college education. It was this double denial of funding that made it almost impossible for these student's dreams of going to college a reality. This is despite a very high college aspiration by every student interviewed and surveyed as evident by the pie chart below (Figure 5.4).

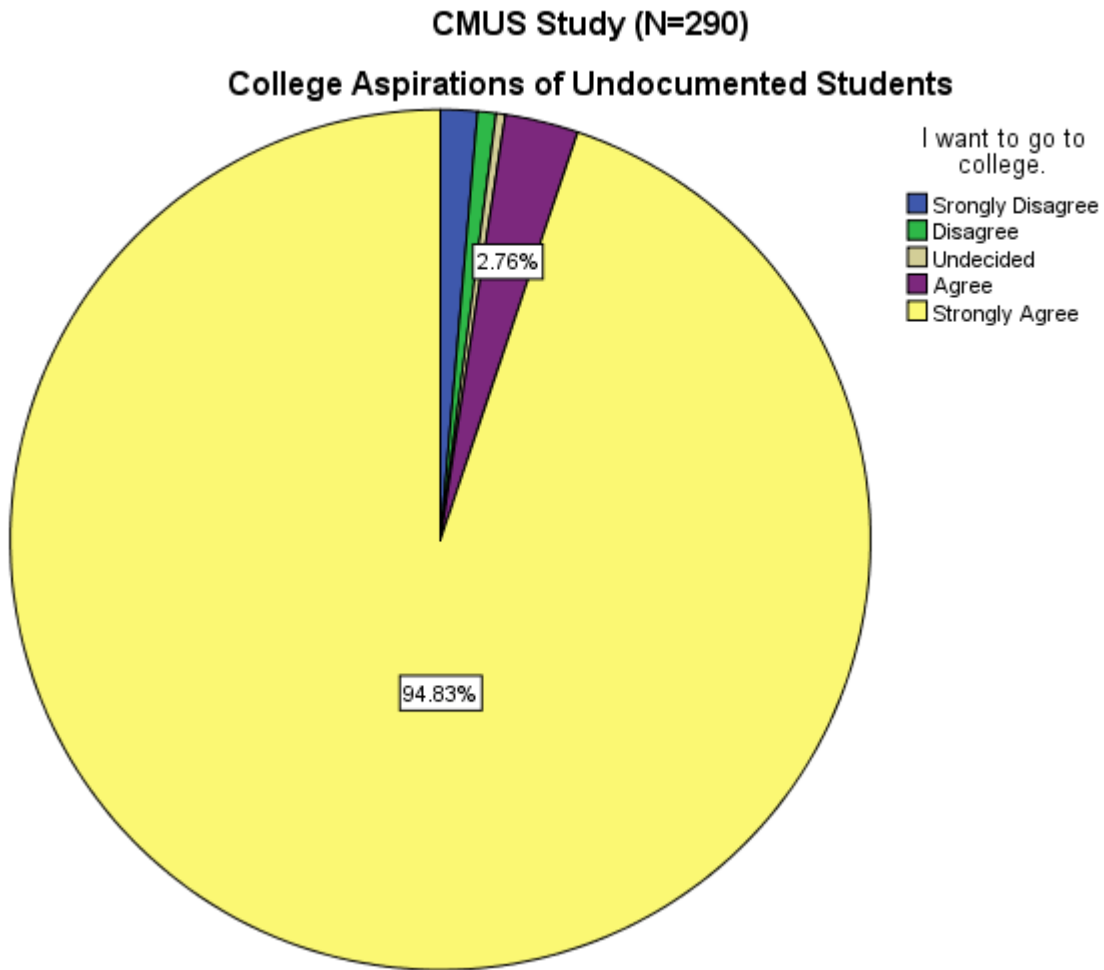


Figure 5.4

Despite this high college aspiration by these students in my survey sample above (Figure 5.4), financial aid limitations placed on this population of students was and is the most enormous hurdle to climb. What follows are the voices of undocumented students and the challenges of funding a college education with little funds at home, little financial aid opportunities, and the inability to legally work in the U.S.

Alejandra. Alejandra is originally from Guanajuato, Mexico. She lives in one of the south cities of Los Angeles County. At the age of 5 months, Alejandra and her family relocated to Tijuana where her dad was able to able to migrate to the U.S. in search for

work so he could support Alejandra, her mother, and her younger brother. Fortunately for Alejandra, she and her family were able to secure visas to visit her father in Los Angeles and even after she permanently moved to the U.S. at the age of 10, she was still able to return to Mexico to visit until the visas expired, soon after her *quinceañera* [15th year birthday]. Once settled in the U.S., Alejandra welcomed a new baby brother but was saddened when the family discovered that he had cancer a few years later. Alejandra struggles with not spending enough time with her baby brother so she can stay focused on college and feels like her sacrifices may not be worth it if her brother does not make it. Like so many students in this study, Alejandra excelled in school and was accepted to various UC's and CSU's but due to funding issues, settled on attending a local community college.

Alejandra discusses how she found out that her status would be an issue to go to college and how she felt about it. She said,

And then a couple weeks later he [her teacher] was talking about financial aid. But of a class of 33 students, 3 students were set apart. And those students were AB540 students. And he told us, "You know what? You guys know your situation, you guys can't apply for financial aid." And we were like, "yeah we know". So we sat apart and we started looking for scholarships and doing our homework. And I was just like, I was like, yeah I can't get financial aid. That's when it hit me. I am out here. I felt left out again cuz I couldn't get financial aid. I felt like this black hole in me. What am I going to do? What's next? I've been doing all this for college but now I can't go to college because I can't afford it. This is it. I can't do anything. That's when I was just like, what's next? What am I going to do? How am I going to get the money?

Alejandra took a moment to gather herself and continued speaking by anticipating someone who might say that money should not be a reason to deter anyone from going to college by stating,

And then you know how they say like 'don't let money be the reason why you don't go to school.' It is easy to say that. It's very easy (Alejandra teared up but continued speaking) but what if that is the only reason why you can't be what you want to be? I know there are jobs but we cannot even get a job. It's hard for us to even find a job.

Here Alejandra depicts how many undocumented students come to realize that college will probably be out of their reach due to their inability to apply for financial aid and their inability to work to put themselves through college. This double denial of funding cripples many undocumented students' plans to successfully matriculate into college. Indeed, the barrier that is paramount to undocumented students achieving a higher education is their ineligibility to apply and receive federal and/or state financial aid despite their families investment into the system (Perry, 2006). This compounded measure of financial distress results in adding to the dehumanize stigma discussed in the previous section. Alejandra described it "like this black hole in me." The undocumented students depicted similar painful experiences when they discovered that funding would not be available for them to go to college.

Luis. Luis is originally from Veracruz, Mexico. Luis's journey of migration occurred at the age of 7 when he, his mother, and little sister crossed the cold Sonora/Arizona desert in the months of December. Luis remembers crossing many cold rivers and yelling out for his dad several times. So much so, that his mother had to cover his mouth to avoid the U.S. border patrol from hearing them while she carried Luis's sister on her back. Eventually, the family was reunited and they settled in the Phoenix, Arizona area where three younger brothers joined the family soon after. Like so many students in this study, they come from mixed status families. Luis became very involved in school activities, community organizing, and excelled tremendously in high school. At the time of the study, Luis was contemplating going out of state for a college education since Arizona's Proposition 300 required all undocumented students to pay for out-of-state tuition, he figured he might as

well pay out of state tuition somewhere else other than Arizona. Luis's plans are to enter the medical field or law specializing in immigration law.

Though there are many issues that undocumented students are facing, the inability to fund their college education is what causes the biggest barrier for them and it is the one academic challenge that surfaced the most amongst the students in the study. In fact, over 96% of the students surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that their biggest challenge in going to college is money as indicated in the pie chart (Figure 5.5) below,

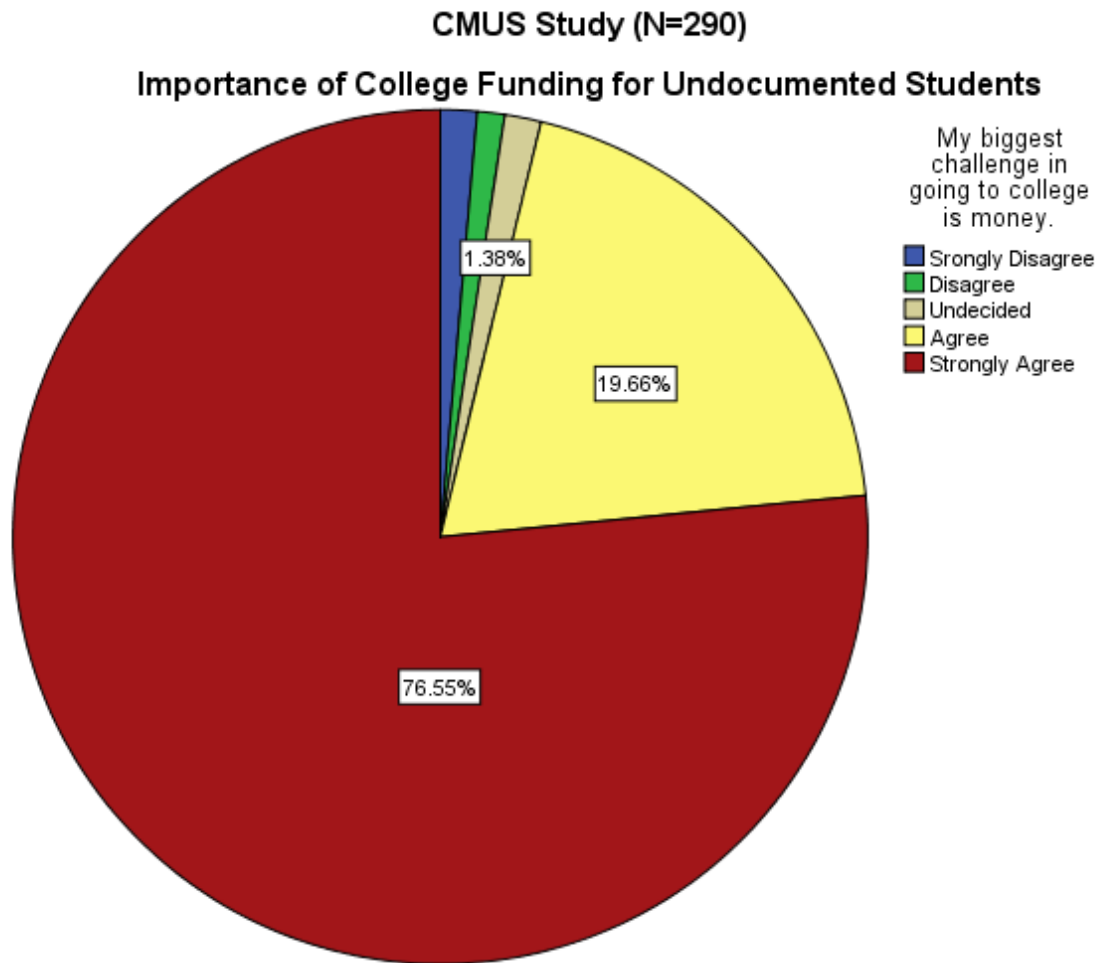


Figure 5.5

Similar to the students in the survey, 100% of the students interviewed said that paying for college was the biggest challenge in going to college. During my interview with Luis, while he discussed the differences between students who were undocumented and those who were not, we had the following exchange,

Jaime: What are the most obvious opportunities that students who are documented have that students who are not undocumented do not have?

Luis: FAFSA.

Jaime: How does it make you feel that they have that opportunity and you don't?

Luis: It makes me feel like I am worth nothing. That I am not worth being spent on cuz they are basically spending on other students. And some of these students end up slacking it and not end up doing what is right for them. So I feel like I am not worth being spent on. When I know that if they were to spend on me, whatever money they give me, I am going to use it and make something out of it. So that's the most obvious thing: It's FAFSA for undocumented students.

The way that Luis translates lack of financial aid to feeling like he is worth nothing shows a strong connection to the way that money continues to be used as the key commodity that represents a person's self worth. Regardless of whether or not one subscribes to this capitalist notion, it does manage to manifest itself deep within those communities that have very little money. In the case of Luis above, he is quick to answer that FAFSA is the most obvious opportunity that he is unable to secure so that he may continue on his road to college. He also mentions that some students, who are not undocumented, tend to not take full advantage of the opportunities that he and others like him only wish they had. So in addition to not being able to fund their college education due to their ineligibility for financial aid, these students are receiving subtext messages that their value as students and even human beings is low.

Raul. Raul is originally from El Salvador and wants to go to college to be a surgeon. Raul's long journey of migration was filled with danger where he was robbed, assaulted, and forced to live under very harsh conditions during his month-long trip to reach the United States. Raul's mother had left to the U.S. in search for work when Raul was 11 years old. When Raul turned 14, his mother sent for him under the guidance of an adult male friend of the family. His female cousin of similar age also joined him on his journey. The first river Luis crossed divided El Salvador and Guatemala. In Guatemala, seven men with guns assaulted them and left them tied up while they fled with all their money. Raul recalls that he and his cousin were crying and saying goodbye to each other for they feared for their lives. Eventually, the man that was travelling with them managed to loosen the knots and freed himself, Raul, and his cousin. Crossing into Mexico was equally difficult through a very cold river but they managed to make it to the Mexico/U.S. border on the Rio Grande. This final passage across this very cold and dangerous river was difficult and followed by being packed with 10 others in the bed of a small pickup truck. The remaining part of Raul's journey involved crossing Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to finally make it to California where he was reunited with his mother whom he had not seen for 3 years. Throughout Raul's long journey, he stayed in terrible rat and flea infested houses. Raul was a very shy and quiet high school student by his own account and I cannot dismiss the notion that Raul's traumatic journey of migration contributed to him being this way. Despite all of this, Raul managed to get accepted to the local California State University, which he attributed to his involvement in SALEF (Salvadoran American Leadership & Educational Fund).

Lack of financial aid is not just limited to government aid but also impacts other avenues of funding that are closed to many undocumented students. Such was the case for Raul when he found out that one of the few organizations offering funding that did not have a resident or citizen restriction, ended up denying Raul access to the funds when he came in for an interview. Raul recounts this painful memory,

Me habían calificado para darme una beca de \$2,500. Y pues llegue y estaban muchos estudiantes que habían sido aceptados también. Al llegar, llene la solicitud de registración y note que me hicieron la pregunta que si era un US citizen. Y pues puse que no. Y después me llevaron a otro lugar y me dijeron que, "I don't mean to discourage you but the government gives money to the organization and we can't give money to undocumented students." Y me dijeron, "You can still stay here and do the group activities." Y me quede aquí. Una de las actividades era "¿Que piensan de los estudiantes indocumentados?" Y me sentí que era el único que pelea por eso. Y los demás decían que no deben tener la igualdad que ellos. Y cuando me vinieron a recoger me quede muy enojado. Perdón. (los ojos de Raul se llenaron de lagrimas y tomo un tiempo para recuperarse). Perdón. Esto fue el ano pasado así que se me hizo mas fuerte el sentimiento. [*I had been selected to receive a scholarship award of \$2,500. I arrived and there were many students that had been selected, as well. Upon arriving, I filled out the registration application and I noticed that it asked if I was a U.S. citizen. I checked that I was not. And then, they pulled me off to the side and they told me "I don't mean to discourage you but the government gives money to the organization and we can't give money to undocumented students." And then they told me, "You can still stay here and do the group activities." And so I stayed there. One of the activities asked "what do the students think about undocumented students?" And I felt that I was the only one fighting for it. And the rest of the students were saying that they should not have the same equality as them. And when they came to pick me up, I was really mad. Sorry (Raul's eyes became filled with tears and he took some time to compose himself) Sorry. This just happened last year so I still get overcome with emotion.*]

Raul's recollection of this event was very painful for him and though he managed to finish the interview, there were several moments when I asked if we should stop but he insisted that he wanted to finish so we continued. In Raul's story, we see how even the few glimpses of hope for college funding can have an unfortunate outcome once the undocumented student follows up with the opportunity. Other students reported similar things happening to them where they were selected for a great opportunity, only to find out

that the organization had to reject them due to their immigration status. This financial situation was an important theme to consider, and possibly, the most important challenge that the undocumented students in this study faced on their road to college.

What is important in Raul's story above is that government financial aid trickles down to organizations (and universities) that receive federal aid and thus, do not permit themselves to assist undocumented students with funding. This is similar to Ramón's story about how he was unable to get an athletic scholarship because the UC's could not offer it to undocumented students. This means that being ineligible for federal financial aid is not just limited to being unable to fill out a FAFSA but may also involve being ineligible for any organization, agency, or university funds that receives any federal monies. Additionally, if the states have anti-immigration state laws, then state funding is also included into these limitations. We will explore this final emerged theme for this chapter next.

De Jure Oppression

Undocumented immigrants, and thus undocumented students, face both de facto and de jure oppression. De facto is defined as "in fact; by virtue of the deed or accomplishment; in reality; actually" (Gifis, 1996, p. 131). For example, Gifis defines de facto segregation as "segregation which results without purposeful action by government officials; real or actual segregation which results from social, psychological, or economic conditions" (p. 131). De jure is defined as "by right; by justice; lawful; legitimate" (Gifis, 1996, p. 134). For example, "de jure segregation refers to segregation directly intended and approved by law or otherwise issuing from an official racial classification" (p. 134). Hence, de facto segregation is a social condition that exists without it being written in the

law while de jure segregation is a social condition that exists that is written in the law itself. Using Prilleltensky & Gonock (1996) definition of oppression, which states,

Oppression entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination, and resistance, where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and by implanting in the subordinated persons or groups fear or self-deprecating views about themselves (p. 129),

undocumented immigrants would be considered living under oppression given the unequal power relation they have in the U.S., by the way they are marginalized and subordinated, by the way they are restricted access to resources that the dominating group has, and by the stigma of being undocumented that is placed on them in our society (Akers Chacon, et al., 2006; Chomsky, 2007; Hing, 2004, 2006, 2010; López & López, 2010; Perez, 2009; Pérez, 2012; Pérez & Cortés, 2011; Perez, et al., 2009). Since part of the oppression undocumented immigrants face is because they are subject to deportation in accordance with our immigration laws, then undocumented immigrants can be considered to be living in a state of de jure oppression due to their immigration status.

Whereas de jure is what the law actually says, de facto is not explicitly written in the law. In discrimination cases like de facto racial discrimination, because one is Latino as an example, one could go to court and fight this type of discrimination as being against the law. However, what if the law clearly states that one must be removed if one is here without authorization? As is the case of Arizona's SB1070 that mandates that law enforcement officials check the immigration status of a person she/he comes into legal contact with if

she/he has reasonable suspicion that the person is in the U.S. without authorization. This type of action is no longer de facto but de jure because it is written in the law.

Undocumented Latino students face the same de facto harassment for being a Latino and face the very real possibility of being removed by law, which is de jure. Hence, this double legal layer of de jure and de facto oppression blankets the undocumented community. This omnipresent gaze of the law is something that many undocumented students face on a daily basis. Some undocumented students portray a stronger defiance against it but the thought of removal is something that never truly leaves them because their unauthorized presence is something that is considered illegal in the United States. So anti-immigration laws become de jure oppression as Jim Crow laws were considered de jure segregation. This distinction of how undocumented students are living in a state of de jure oppression will be key for examining the data in this section. First we will begin by reviewing the legal scale for the survey data.

Legal Scale

The Legal scale used a 4-item scale that measured the effect that students felt the law, especially state laws, had on college access for the students. The participants provided responses using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1= "Strongly Disagree" to 5= "Strongly Agree" with 3= "Undecided." Chronbach's Alpha for the Legal scale was 0.816, which indicates a good internal reliability for the scale. The Mean (M) for the scale was 4.00, which means that, on average, the participants agreed more often than not that the law was becoming a barrier for these students to attend college. In fact, over 73% of the participants agreed with all the four items in the scale, which is a high agreement on how

much the law affects the participants intent of going to college. Below is bar chart (Figure 5.6) that shows the means across each item in the scale.

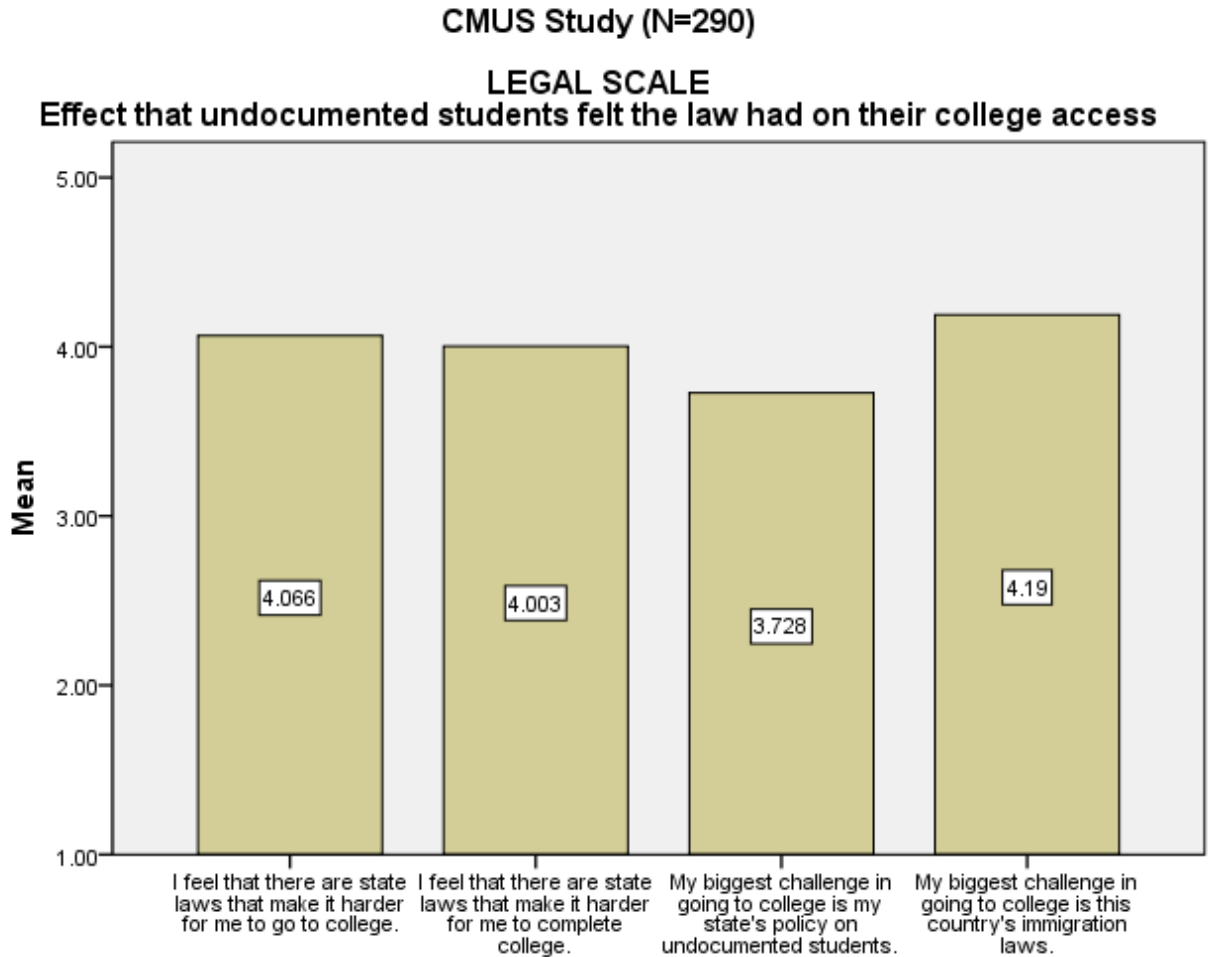


Figure 5.6

As indicated in Figure 5.6, these students felt that state laws created barriers for them to enter and complete a college education. The importance of this finding is that these students already belong to a marginalized group in the United States, Latinos, who suffer under various forms of de facto oppression (Acuña, 1988; Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education., 1970; Muñoz, 1989; Vigil, 1998), but what differentiates

them from their own Latino community is the de jure oppression of being deported that is a constant thing on their mind as they make their way to college.

As mentioned above, de facto oppression exists today in various forms but de jure oppression is less so. This is not the case when we examine the lives of undocumented students in the U.S. According to immigration law, these students can be apprehended and removed from the U.S. with no legal representation. They are for all intents and purposes in the country without authorization, which then makes it legal for the government to place undocumented students in removal proceedings as has been the case these past three years where record numbers of individuals have been removed and families separated with little chance to be reunited. Recently the U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) reported the following removals for the past three fiscal years:

- FY 2009: 389,834 removals
- FY 2010: 392,862 removals
- FY 2011: 396,906 removals (I.C.E., 2011)

Hence, over a million removals have occurred these past three years under the current administration. Of relative importance is the heightened fear that these removals give to those who reside in this country without authorization and the license that is given to those that harbor an anti-immigrant sentiment, as was the case in Arizona under Sherriff Arpaio, whose reputation as being anti-Latino was well known in his state, especially by the Latino community.

Susana. Susana is originally from Sonora, Mexico where she lived until the age of 8 years old. It was then that her father, whom she had never met, sent for her and her mom to join him in the U.S. Susana's journey of migration involved the cold winter month of

January across the Sonora/Arizona desert. Susana found it too difficult to talk about her journey but she did mention that it was really scary for her. Susana is an only child and lived with her parents, her two cousins, and her aunt in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Susana made the decision to take the first semester of college off while she worked to raise money to pay her college tuition, while the university she got admitted to agree to defer her enrollment. Susana plans on majoring in early education and to one day be a preschool teacher.

Below, Susana describes how safety is an issue for her as an undocumented student and her reaction to the police every time she sees a squad car.

There is always a thing that if I get caught by the police then I am going to get deported like that (*she snaps her finger*). If you are documented, then the idea of driving next to a cop, you don't even worry about being deported. But for me, there is always this fear that the cop may do something to me. Oh my God, what if this car is not working? What if they stop me? It happens to me every single time, every time I see a cop. My heart stops! I know I don't look it but I feel so scared. There is still that feeling that I know I am undocumented. My whole life could end with us being stopped by the cops. This thought always freaks me out. Instead of being safe when I see a cop, I feel scared. And I feel scared for my parents, as well. If they got deported, it would be hard. It's very difficult. You can't even go out to the store without feeling like this. It's hard.

In the quote above, Susana describes this sense of constant criminal vigilance that she lives under as she tries to continue to focus on school and developing into an adult. This is similar to the apprehension that may be felt by people of color when they view the police due to a long history of racial profiling in the United States. In this case, law enforcement is more appropriate term to use than just the law because it involves an interpretation of the law. However, these same police officers are supposed to be very knowledgeable about the law and be representative of the law. It is for this reason that I chose to include this example of how "the law" impacts, directly and indirectly, the lives of undocumented

students. In the example that follows, a more direct application of law enforcement is presented and is more traceable to an existing state law.

Luis experience with law enforcement involves his father who was incarcerated when Arizona's SB1070 was enforced by Sheriff Arpaio. Luis's father had been pulled over for an alleged broken taillight and then asked to provide proof of residency. When his father could not provide it, he was detained in one of Sheriff's Arpaio's cell. Luis retells the story that his father told him.

We got treated like dogs. They feed us the expired stuff. And they just throw it at us. He even told us, they would lock us in a cell most of the time. Cuz, supposedly we are the bad ones. Nobody could get near us not even murderers. They were free to get good food. They would get rice or beans something better than what they did. They would go outside, walk around. He said he had trouble sleeping, too, cuz it was cold and its basically mostly stone. They came at night and they packed 30 of them in one little room. That's not right what they are doing. Especially here in Arizona. I know they are in jail and they committed a crime, as they say, but it was for the better of my family. And he pays taxes. He would always do his taxes. That is helping out the state. I don't understand why the federal government hasn't put a stop to it. Cuz it seems to me bad cuz they are treating them like animals, like here, catch your food or the way they pack you there. If you have breathing room or a little space there to sleep, if you can sleep, good for you. If you can't, o'well.

Abuse such as this is not something that is written in the law as it exemplifies an abuse of power.²¹ However, it is important to note that laws like SB1070 provide a greater freedom for de facto harassment like this to occur within many Latino communities but more specifically, and with full backing of these laws, these undocumented students and their parents (L. S. Bosniak, 1996; Santa Ana, 2002; M. M. Suarez-Orozco, 1996). This de jure oppression that results in the two examples above by Susana and Luis, shows just how difficult and isolating living while undocumented can be, especially when one considers

²¹ At the time of interview, Sherriff Arpaio was still operating with impunity in the state of Arizona but since then, the U.S. justice Department filed a law suit against Arpaio for "rampant discrimination against Latinos in its police and jail operations" (Hensley, 2012)

that in both examples, neither Luis nor Susana felt that they could receive legal help since they saw it was laws like SB1070 that intimidated them both.

Effects of State Laws on College Aspirations

The law impacts almost every aspect of our lives but in the case of undocumented immigrants, it is so much more. The law is real. It legally binds us as a society with rules that can be just or unjust. What made it incredibly hard for civil rights laws to be enacted were existing racist state laws that legally oppressed people according to their race (i.e. Jim Crow Laws). The same is occurring today with anti-immigrant laws that are being passed and enacted in states across the U.S. that are legally oppressing this population of undocumented immigrants and thus undocumented students.

With the growing national debate around immigration, state governments have taken it upon themselves to implement state laws that have both hindered and helped undocumented students in their own states. From state DREAM acts to draconian anti-immigrant laws, the spectrum is wide on what states are doing to address their own immigration population.

As of October 2011, twelve states had laws permitting undocumented students to enroll into their post-secondary public institutions while paying in-state tuition rates provided they met specific requirements²². These states²³ and the year they enacted the laws are as follows: California (2001); Texas (2001); New York (2002); Utah (2002); Washington (2003-2004); Oklahoma (2003-2004); Illinois (2003-2004); Kansas (2003-

²² <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/educ/undocumented-student-tuition-state-action.aspx>

²³ Wisconsin passed a similar law in 2009 but then revoked it in 2011

2004); New Mexico (2005-2006); Nebraska (2005-2006); Maryland (2011); and Connecticut (2011).

Meanwhile states that prohibit in-state tuition for undocumented students and the year it was enacted are: Arizona (2006); Colorado (2006); Georgia (2008); South Carolina (2008); Indiana (2011)

States that bar undocumented students from enrolling into state colleges and universities are South Carolina (2008) and Alabama (2011). Consequently, Alabama can be added to the list of state prohibiting in-state tuition for undocumented students since they are not even allowed to enroll into their public colleges.

Last, only three states allow undocumented students to compete for state-funded financial aid also known as “state dream acts”. These states are Texas (2001), New Mexico (2005), and California (2011).

Hence, these states can be divided into two groups: those with pro-immigrant state laws and those with anti-immigrant state laws²⁴. Within these two groups, you can further divide each into two more groups. The pro-immigrant group can be divided into those that allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition and those that also provide state-funded aid. The anti-immigrant group can be divided into those that prohibit undocumented students from paying in-state tuition and those that bar undocumented student all together from enrolling into its state colleges and universities. Table 5.4 below better illustrates this point.

²⁴ Its important to note that though some states had pro-immigrant state laws in the books this does not mean that there was a pro-immigrant sentiment across the state. It simply means that pro-immigrant state laws were present.

Table 5.4
CMUS Study 2010-2011

Pro-Immigrant State Laws²⁵		Anti-Immigrant State Laws	
Allow In-State Tuition	Eligible for State Aid	Ban In-State Tuition	Bar College Enrollment
California, Texas, New York, Utah, Washington, Oklahoma, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Maryland, & Connecticut	Texas, New Mexico, & California	Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, South Carolina, Indiana, & Alabama	South Carolina & Alabama

Disaggregating the survey data into those states that have pro-immigrant state laws and those states that have anti-immigrant state laws, I wanted to see what the difference was with the law scale at the start of this section. In revisiting this Law scale (Chronbach's $\alpha=0.816$), we see that the item mean for the law scale was 4.00 with 73% of students agreeing with all four items in the scale. By isolating only those states that had anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant state laws as shown on the table above, we can compare the

²⁵ Though I labeled these two groups with "Pro-immigrant state laws" and "Anti-immigrant state laws", I wish to point out that immigration is primarily the responsibility of the federal government. However, states can and do assist with immigration enforcement under section 287(g) of the INA (Aleinikoff, et al., 2007, p. 440). Some of these laws have been dismissed or weakened by the courts while others have been upheld. At the time that this study was published, the U.S. Supreme Court had heard arguments on Arizona's "Anti-Immigrant" state law, SB1070, but had not yet ruled on its appeal.

Means across both sets of data to see how much of an affect these state laws had on the students in the survey. This data can be seen in Table 5.5 below,

Table 5.5			
CMUS Study			
Effect of State Laws on Respondents Views of Legal Limitations for Their College Plans			
	Item Mean (M)	% Agreeing	Chronbach's Alpha
Anti Immigrant State Laws (N=30)	4.58	94.2%	0.690
Pro Immigrant State Laws (N=206)	3.87	69.1%	0.808
DIFFERENCES	0.71	25.1%	

As evident from the Table 5.5 above, we see a large difference in how students from states with anti-immigrant laws and states with pro-immigrant laws interpreted how their state laws affected their college plans. Student from states with anti-immigrant state laws had an item mean that was 0.71 higher than their counterparts from states with pro-immigrant state laws. They also agreed over 25% more with the 4 items in the scale. This data helps to better understand why Susana and Luis, both living in Arizona, had such suspicion of the law in their state.

To determine if the item mean (M) difference above was statistically significant, I conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare difference in views that undocumented students had about how laws in their states had on their college plans. What I found was that there was a significant difference in each of the four items in the law scale. The results can be seen in Table 5.6 below,

<p style="text-align: center;">Table 5.6 CMUS Study (N=236) T-tests of significances comparing undocumented student views between states with anti-immigrant laws and pro-immigrant laws</p>				
Item	M	SD	t	p
I feel that there are state laws that make it harder for me to go to college.	4.56 Anti-immigrant	0.568 Anti-immigrant	-3.214	0.001
	3.90 Pro-immigrant	1.109 Pro-Immigrant		
I feel that there are state laws that make it harder for me to complete college.	4.56 Anti-immigrant	0.626 Anti-immigrant	-3.372	0.001
	3.90 Pro-immigrant	1.050 Pro-Immigrant		
My biggest challenge in going to college is my state's policy on undocumented students	4.47 Anti-immigrant	0.776 Anti-immigrant	-3.804	0.000
	3.59 Pro-immigrant	1.230 Pro-Immigrant		
My biggest challenge in going to college is this country's immigration laws.	4.70 Anti-immigrant	0.535 Anti-immigrant	-3.017	0.003
	4.09 Pro-immigrant	1.092 Pro-Immigrant		

The data above demonstrates that in every item in the law scale, the difference between undocumented students in states with anti-immigrant state laws and undocumented students in state with pro-immigrant state laws was significant. These results suggest that anti-immigrant state laws have a significant negative affect on how a student views their college opportunities and plans compared to states with pro-immigrant state laws.

In this section of the chapter we examined how the theme of de jure oppression was unique to undocumented students because of the legal obligation of federal authorities and state authorities have on detaining and possibly removing undocumented students. The data shows that laws, especially anti-immigrant state laws, provide a sense of constant vigilance even when it's clearly de facto. This vigilance can originate from the de jure oppression in the lives of undocumented people in the U.S. and this is something that emerged across all the students interviewed in the study and was statistically significant in the survey respondents. The challenges that the law presents are constant and always changing.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the themes that were most salient within the broader theme of challenges that current undocumented students are facing. These themes provided a current landscape and included: (1) A struggle to fight for their own humanity in their own U.S. homeland; (2) Financial Aid Limitations for their college expenses, which included being ineligible for most aid and being unable to secure legal employment to pay for college; and (3) Minimal legal protection and oppression that is not just de facto but also de jure. These challenges were each depicted in the data provided.

The stigma of being undocumented and dehumanizing of undocumented people does not stop in the media but includes people in the schools that undocumented students attend. The survey data showed that students saw their immigration laws as limiting their ability to apply to college, go to college, and ultimately, have a better life. The interviewed students felt treated as being less than human and some students even felt as though

people saw them as animals, all while these students attended high school and looked for ways to make it to college. What was clear was that undocumented students were not just fighting to get a college education but fighting to be recognized as human beings and as equals. This challenge required students to have very strong self-worth to overcome dehumanizing affects described in this chapter and some found it by starting or getting involved in their own AB540 student groups.

Despite fighting for their own humanity in their schools, financial aid limitations continued to be the most urgent item that most undocumented students in the study wish could be remedied. Their sincere intent to continue learning in institutions of higher learning is something that is being hindered primarily by these students' inability to secure funding for their college education either by government aid or by legally working in this country. This truly is the biggest challenge that I saw across all the participants in the study, both in the survey and the interviews; with over 97% of the survey respondents reporting that they saw it as their biggest challenge. This challenge called for the students to create their own revenue streams, which will be discussed in the chapter that follows.

Finally, the student's undocumented immigration status complicated an already tenuous relationship that many Latinos have with law enforcement in their community. This results in creating a police state for the undocumented population, which includes the subjects in this study. Jim Crow laws were oppressive towards communities of color, especially African Americans, and similar oppressive state laws are being unleashed on the undocumented population today. Despite that removal by immigration authorities are not considered criminal cases, they are considered "criminal" in the eyes of human rights advocates and the dignity of these students in the study. These legal challenges are real

and are ultimately, the ones that threaten these students the most as they make their way to college. These legal challenges become heightened when the students reside in states that have anti-immigration laws. These differences were evident by the statistical significant differences between anti-immigrant state laws and pro-immigrant state laws from the survey data. Though de facto oppression still exists amongst many marginalized communities in the U.S., de jure oppression is less so except when we discuss undocumented students and how they live in constant vigilance that they will be discovered by immigration authorities and removed from a homeland they consider their own. It is this legal difference that distinguishes this population from those who are in this country without authorization.

All of these challenges together, dehumanization, no financial aid, and de jure oppression, create enormous obstacles for undocumented students to navigate as they search for a college education in the country they call home – the United States. Until true immigration reform occurs, this country cannot continue to boast that they are a country of immigrants where each succeeds based on their own merits. Undocumented students such as the ones in this study complicate this notion of meritocracy in the United States by demonstrating that though they academically succeed by their own merits and in accordance with what the U.S. wishes them to be, they are limited to the rewards that follow (i.e. attending college). Hence, meritocracy becomes an empty word to many of the students in the study and the thousands of undocumented students across the country. In the chapter that follows, I will report on how these students managed to find hope and funding to fuel their resiliency to matriculate into college.

Chapter 6: “El Camino de la Esperanza” (*The Hopeful Road*): Undocumented Students in Search of Resources to Navigate the Road to College

Hope is a powerful word to the undocumented population because too often it is the only thing that keeps them moving forward in a world full of many obstacles. One student shared one of his grandfather’s saying that states, “a smart person knows everything about something and something about everything.” This saying stresses the importance of being knowledgeable about the world around us but also about being very knowledgeable about one thing. In the lives of the students in the study, they sought out a little knowledge about the world around them and all the knowledge they could gather on one thing: how to make it to and through college given their difficult circumstances. This chapter will examine the hope that undocumented Latino students receive, where it comes from and how it attributes to their resiliency in navigating the many obstacles on their road to college.

Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2006) provides an important lens to view many of the findings in this chapter and will be referenced throughout the sections of this chapter. Yosso’s community cultural wealth is a framework of six different forms of capital, which counter the deficit thinking that Latino students enter classrooms as empty vessels, and instead affirms that these students come with a wealth of skills that are often overlooked by the educator and schools. The six different forms of capital and their definitions are listed below:

1. Aspirational Capital: The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers;

2. Linguistic Capital: Intellectual and social skills learned through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style;
3. Navigational Capital: Skills of maneuvering through social institutions;
4. Social Capital: Networks of people and community resources;
5. Familial Capital: cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.
6. Resistant Capital: Knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality. (Yosso, 2006)

Throughout the findings in this chapter, multiple layers of these forms of capital were evident in the themes that attributed to how undocumented students made their way to college. Equally important was how Community Cultural Wealth challenged the quantitative portion of the dissertation. Though it is possible for all six components of Yosso's community cultural wealth to be present in all themes in this chapter, I will highlight the most relevant in each of the themes.

The four themes that emerged when analyzing the road to college for the students in this study were (1) A Source of Hope: How a student's hope originates from their support system or *familia*; (2) Revenue: How students generated funds to pay for college, which is their biggest challenge in going to college; (3) Network: The importance that organizations and people played in helping expand these students network of help; and (4) Empowerment: The importance of feeling empowered and the role it played in keeping the students motivated to make it to college in light of difficult conditions. These were the four major elements that I found in my data that helped undocumented students on their road to college, and they were the themes evident across all of the interviews.

As a matter of organizing the four themes in this chapter and also showing the path to college that undocumented students in this study used to get to college, I present the following graphic with Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth concepts embedded within the themes. Figure 6.1 represents the students' path to college via these four themes with Yosso's Community Cultural Wealth concepts imbedded in parenthesis.

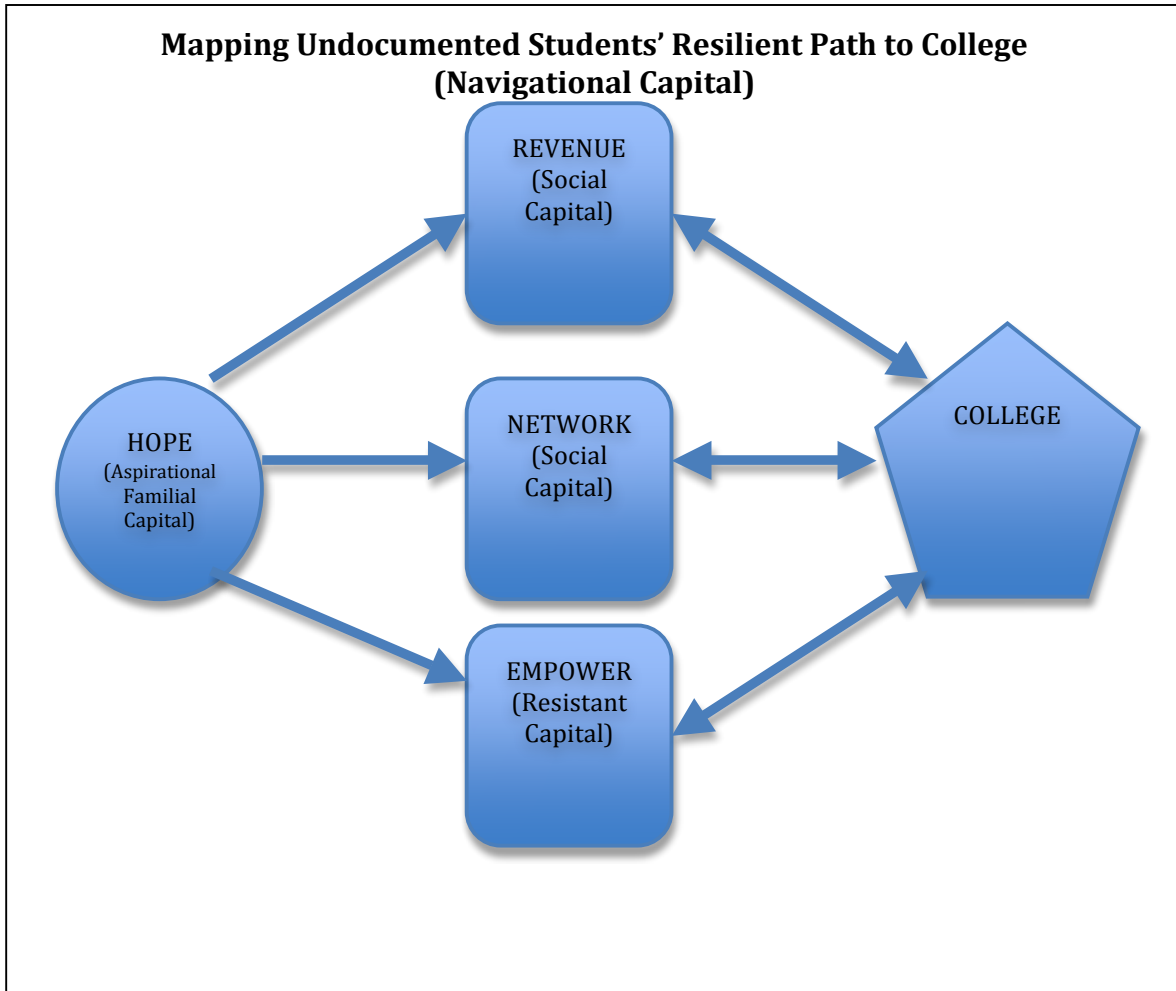


Figure 6.1

Figure 6.1 shows that the origin of the path to college began with hope (Aspirational Capital), the belief that one-day things will get better for them²⁶. The source of this hope comes from these students' *familia* or support system who help keep them going on their path to college (Familial Capital). Using this hope the students received from their *familia*, they used it to enter three different areas that will be referred to as: Revenue (Social Capital), Network (Social Capital), and Empowerment (Resistant Capital). Each of these three served a very specific purpose in helping undocumented students get to college and each of them was evident with the undocumented students in the study. After entering these three areas, the students used these resources to help them get to their eventual goal: College. This chapter will examine these four themes.

Given that the goal of this study is to uncover how undocumented students are navigating the road to college, discovering what happens in college after the students arrive is part of a bigger study I plan on continuing in future work. However, based on my experience in working with undocumented college students, I expect that upon entering college, these students will be able to use their college attendance to help them return to these areas of Revenue, Network, and Empowerment to provide new opportunities to raise additional funds for college, increase their network of undocumented students and allies, and become more empowered as a student capable of finishing college. Thus, creating a recursive relationship that continues until the student's college education is complete.

²⁶ Though the importance of hope was essential in beginning the road to college for many of the undocumented students in this study, in itself was not the only starting point but the one element that was most salient in the data collected

Before examining the four main themes of the chapter, I will present some statistics from the survey data that show a macro look at undocumented students views of resources that they may or may not agree were made available to them.

A Macro Look

Reviewing some of the statistical data of the survey, primarily the scale analysis, will allow us to get a broad look at a large group of undocumented students' views about the resources available or not available to them. The data that follows provides an important backdrop to the issues we will be examining with the student voices in this study.

Resource Scale

The Resources Scale used a 7-item scale that measured the student's views on the different type of academic resources that the student had or did not have available to them. The participants answered statements using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1="Strongly Disagree" to 5="Strongly Agree" with 3="Undecided." Chronbach's Alpha for the Resources scale was 0.764, which indicates an acceptable internal reliability for the scale. The Mean (M) for this Resources scale was 3.29 with over 51% of the participants agreeing with all the seven items in the scale²⁷. Along with the importance of the number of respondents that agreed with the statements above (51%), it's important to see the number of students who disagreed. A total of 37.8% of the students disagreed with the

²⁷ One of the items in the scale presented a *negatively* worded statement. Hence I reversed the responses for this item to fit with the other *positively* worded statements in the scale. The item I reversed was "I have no one who helps me with going to college."

items in this scale. This scale provided the most variability of all the measures in this study as is evident by where the mean lies on each item. Below is a bar chart, Figure 6.2, which shows the means across each item in the scale.

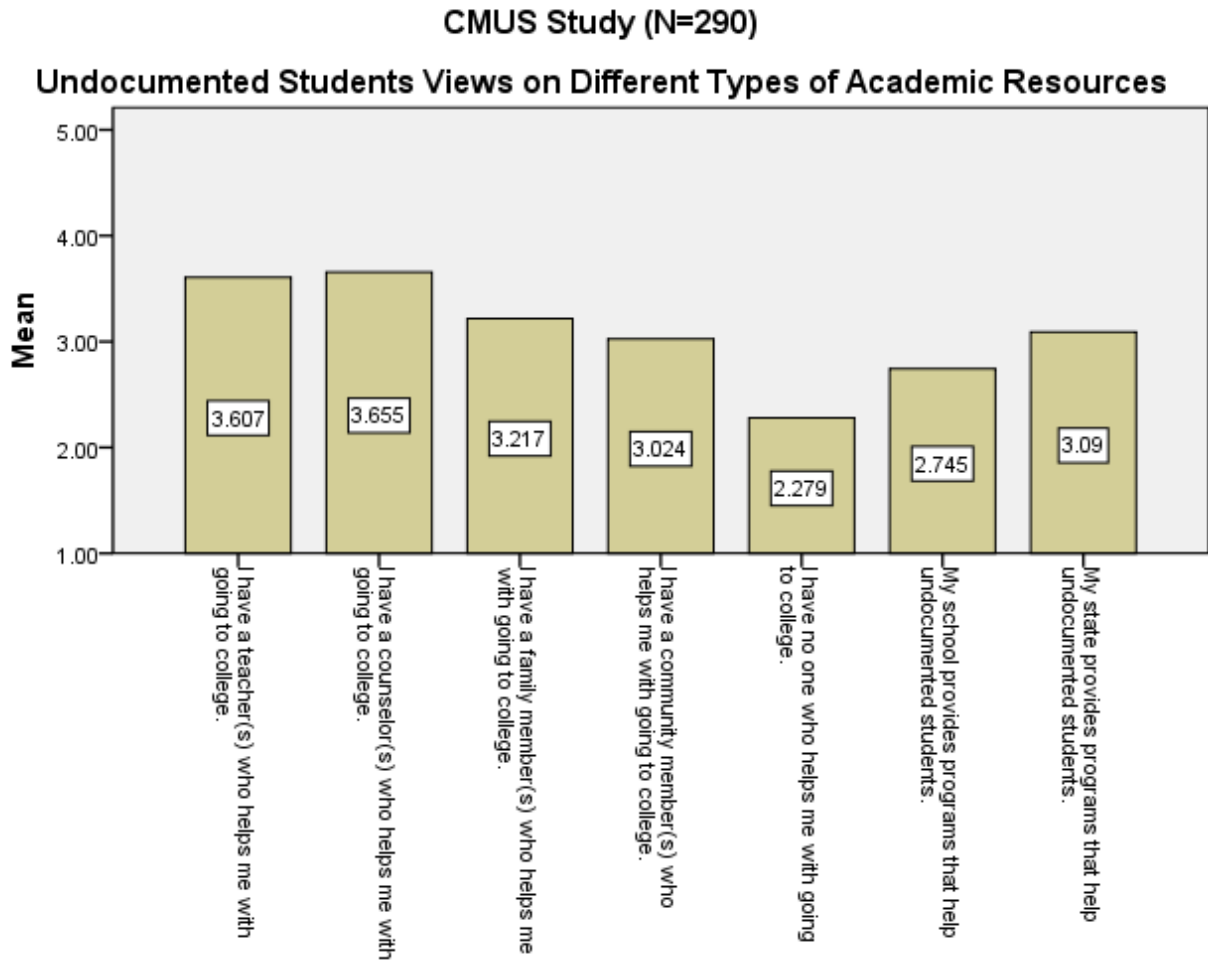


Figure 6.2

As can be seen from figure 6.2, the mean for all items with the exception of two items (“I have no one who helps with going to college” and “My school provides program programs that help undocumented students”) had a majority of the respondents agreeing with the items, even just slightly. Over 66% of the respondents disagreed that they had no one who helps them with going to college and only 18.6% agreed that that they had no one who

helps them with going to college. The percentage of students agreeing and disagreeing that their schools provided programs for attending college were 33.8% and 47.6%, respectively. Hence, there was not a majority agreement or disagreement for this item. This suggests that undocumented students are divided on their views that their schools are providing programs to help them, undocumented students, to go to college. These statistics show that though a majority of the respondents agreed that they had at least one person helping them, it was not evident that schools, as a whole, were places where they received the most help.

The survey data showed that 64.2% and 65.8% of the respondents agreed that teacher and counselors, respectively, helped them, undocumented students, in going to college. It is important to note that these students viewed teachers and counselors differently than school programs by noticing that a majority agreed that teachers and counselors helped them in going to college but not a majority agreed that school programs did. This suggests that the respondents saw teachers and counselors as different than programs that their schools provided.

State programs, community members, and family members showed no majorities in agreement or disagreement by the respondents as far as helping the undocumented students go to college. However, this is where Community Cultural Wealth is important to reference because though the quantitative numbers would lead one to believe that community members and family had minimal affect on their path to college, qualitative portion of the study will show how much of affect families and community had on them. Nonetheless, the differences amongst these programs are best captured in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 CMUS Study (N=290) Undocumented Students Views on Help Received from Different Resources			
Item	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
I have a counselor(s) who helps me with going to college.	21.4%	12.8%	65.8%
I have a teacher(s) who helps me with going to college.	24.8%	11.0%	64.2%
I have a family member(s) who helps me with going to college.	35.8%	13.1%	51.1%
I have a community member(s) who helps me with going to college.	40.3%	19.7%	40.0%
My state provides programs that help undocumented students.	28.0%	32.4%	39.6%
My school provides programs that help undocumented students.	47.6%	18.6%	33.8%
I have a no one who helps me with going to college.	66.6%	14.8%	18.6%

As can be seen from Table 6.1, only three items had a majority agreement and only one item had a majority disagreement. The data suggests that counselors, teachers, and family members were the main sources of help for undocumented students. The data also suggests that a large majority of the respondents had at least one person who helped them with going to college. But to better understand how students from the survey are experiencing these statistics, we turn to the student voices in the interviews.

A Source of Hope: La Familia and Friends

The resiliency of undocumented students in this study originated from the hope that was given to them by their *familia* and friends. Hope is the idea that one day things will get better for you. For undocumented students in the United States, this idea fuels these students resiliency to make it to college and it is their *familia* that is an important source of that hope. In the student voices that follow, I will show how hope is generated from their *familia* and friends.

In each of the emerged themes in this chapter, the students in this study used several forms of capital described in Yosso's community cultural wealth but this emerged theme of "Hope" showed a strong use of Familial Capital that eventually led to Aspirational Capital found in so many of the students. The students in this study pointed to their *familia* and friends as the source of hope, which they attributed as what kept them going on their road to college. In the student voices that follow, there is evidence of how their *familia* and friends played a role in becoming a source of hope for these students.

Maximiliano. Maximiliano is originally from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. His father went to the United States to work the farm fields of Fresno when Maximiliano was quite young. Years later, he sent for him, his two siblings, and his mother by paying for visas to bring them to the United States, which they did when Maximiliano was 15 years old. They settled in one of the cities in west Los Angeles County. He immediately enrolled into high school when he only knew 2-3 phrases in English. In the 9th grade, he enrolled into ELD courses but by the end of the 12th grade, he was taking AP English and had been actively involved in multiple student organizations on his high school campus. The visas that his family had obtained soon expired, which resulted in all five members of his family being

out of authorized immigrant status and considered undocumented. Thus, all family members are undocumented. Maximiliano plans on majoring in Political Science with a minor in Physics and Economics. His college plans involve attending his local community college and transferring to his dream school, Harvard.

Similar to many students interviewed, the source of hope began at home with his family. More than any other source of hope, the students attribute their parents as the source from where their hope originated. Below, Maximiliano discusses who and what motivated him to go to college.

Jaime: ¿Quién y/o que lo motivo a ir a la universidad?

Maximiliano: Mi papa y mi mama. Mi papa se fue cuando yo estaba bien joven para trabajar en la agricultura en Fresno. Entonces mi mama es muy importante. Ella siempre nos inculco la importancia de la educación. Si no fuera por ella, no hubiera tenido tanto amor a la literatura. Para ella, la literatura es lo mejor. Porque ella siempre nos inculco a leer, leer, y leer. Es bueno porque así se aprende.

[Jaime: Who and/or what motivated you to go to college? Maximiliano: My father and my mother. My father left when I was very young to do agricultural work in Fresno. Hence, my mother becomes very important. She always instilled in us the importance of education. If it were not for her, I would not have so much love for literature. For her, literature was the best. Because she always instilled in us to read, read, and read. It's good because that's how one learns.]

As Maximiliano gives credit to both parents, he especially points out his mom as the one who instilled in him a love for literature and how she encouraged the importance of an education. His mother's academic expectation shows that even though she, as well as her son, may not have authorized immigrant status in this country, her expectations for her children to succeed was still high. Maximiliano used his mother's expectation or familial capital to fuel his sense of hope to make it in this country. By knowing that his mother, who was also undocumented and working in a low paying job, could still be so hopeful about education, then Maximiliano felt he could be the same. The students I interviewed pointed

to this as being a big source of why they have been able to achieve in light of all the barriers they had and have in front of them.

It was not just family that helped inspire hope in these students. It also included close friends, teachers, counselors, and mentors. This was especially important to this population of students since many of them left behind their families and friends and were unable to visit them in their home country due to their immigration status. In a sense, these friends became like family to them.

Monica. Monica is originally from Mexico City, D.F., Mexico and came to the United States at the age of 1. Monica's father was already in the U.S. when her mother decided to make the journey across the desert between Sonora and Arizona with her sister and brother when they were 3 and 4 years old, respectively. Being a 1 year-old baby, she does not remember this journey across the desert. However, from stories told to her, she said that her mother carried Monica the whole way, brother and sister in each hand, and a backpack where she carried Monica's baby supplies and water. Monica said that the water ran out several times and that she and her siblings were sick often during the crossing. They finally made it and settled near the city of Phoenix, Arizona where she attended U.S. public schools her whole life. She comes from a very religious Catholic home and plans on majoring in Broadcast journalism if she can come up with the money to attend the school that accepted her, Arizona State University.

As described above, Monica came from a very Catholic home where acts of service were very important as part of her faith. During our interview, I asked Monica how she had managed to make it so far given the obstacles she had described to me previously. Monica said,

My teachers, my family, and my faith. I teach Sunday school. The children motivate me. My kids, they keep me happy. Knowing that someone else looks up to me kind of keeps me going. The love and support I get from a strong Mexican household, everyone is so united. That's what keeps me going. When all else fails, you have your family.

In this quote, Monica mentions her teachers, her family, and her faith as being her support system to keep going. She also includes the kids in her Sunday school class that she teaches as what keeps her going. This concept of being a role model to others is an important motivator for these students and will be discussed later in this chapter. Monica viewed her Sunday school students as “my kids” and referred to them along with her teachers as being part of the support system she received from her family.

Monica also mentions another source of hope, the words of encouragement from her teacher. During our interview, Monica spoke at length of her favorite teacher, Mrs. Villanueva, and how her curriculum was geared towards teaching them the subject matter (English) while also providing stories of encouragement for her students, especially undocumented students. Monica points to the importance that words had for her when she mentioned something her teacher always said to her when she was down. Monica said, “My teacher, Mrs. Villanueva, has always told me to not lose hope; she always says ‘there is a rainbow after the rain is over’. Its things like that that gives me hope”. Monica shows how much words mean especially when they come from one’s teachers or mentors. This was the case for the students in this study and a consistent theme that arose throughout the study. The students I interviewed mentioned how much encouraging words, especially from their teachers, meant to them. Carmen, a student from the previous chapter, captures this point excellently when she says,

It’s not so much what they give you but what they tell you that is most important. More than the materials, it’s more important. Because it tells me that I can do it. It

motivates me. They believe in me. They say I can do it. So I believe I can do it. You get this feeling inside of you. It gives you butterflies in your stomach. They told me I can do it and I did it.

The materials that Carmen is referring to in the quote above were the baby supplies some teachers had given to her. Carmen, as described previously, was a teenage, single mom while in high school and fortunately had teachers who helped buy baby supplies for her. But despite being very grateful for this show of humanity from her teachers, Carmen still felt that the words from her teacher were more important to her because it helped her to stay motivated because they believed in her. Monica said something very similar when she said, “The most important thing are people’s inspirational words. They help you when you are down.” Carmen and Monica point to the importance that teachers and their verbal encouragement meant to students in the study. These words provided hope, which in turn helped to keep them going on their road to college.

Teachers became a big source of the student’s hope as they made their way to college. The survey data showed teachers as an important resource that helped the respondents in going to college. As Figure 6.3 shows, over 64% of the respondents agreed with the statement, “I have a teacher who helps with going to college”. See Figure 6.3 below.

CMUS Survey (N=290)
Teacher's Involvement in Assisting Undocumented Students in College Matriculation

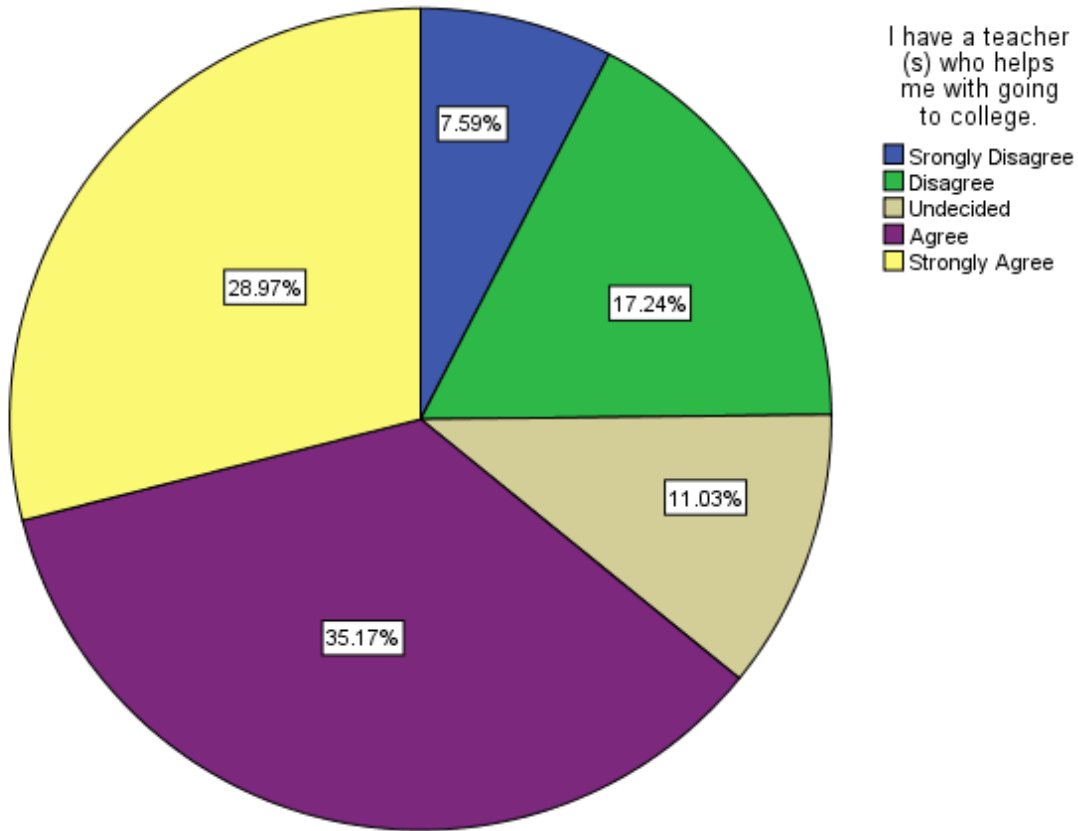


Figure 6.3

As Figure 6.3 shows, a clear majority of the students surveyed attributed their teachers as being someone who helped them with going to college and the students interviewed support this claim. Aside from being their classroom teachers who educated them in high school course work, some of these teachers became their advocates and gave them hope in what at times can seem like a hopeless world for undocumented students.

Teacher involvement in helping undocumented students apply to colleges was also important when we look at the survey data. An independent-samples t-test was conducted with the survey data to compare average number of colleges that the respondents applied

for admission and those who agreed or disagreed that they had received help from their teachers. There was a significant difference between both groups of respondents. On average, those *agreeing* that they received help from their teachers applied to 4.6 colleges (M=4.6, SD=2.70) and on average, those *disagreeing* that they received help from their teachers applied to 3.1 colleges (M=3.1, SD=2.47). The corresponding t statistic and p-value for this test was $t(256) = -3.925$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value is below 0.05 or 5%, then this means that the probability that the mean differences would occur randomly between two other sets of similar groups is less than 5% or not very probable. Hence, these results suggest that those students who agreed that they received college help from their teachers were more likely to apply to more colleges than those who did not. This is an important distinction between both groups.

Finally, Monica reminds us how important this concept of hope is when she links it to being a source of hope for students. When she points out the importance that her family, teachers, and faith have had on her road to college.

That's the biggest thing; don't lose hope, that's what my support system has given me. It's not in our hands anymore. We can't change all these laws that don't allow undocumented students to move on. They always tell me just have faith. Just pray that one-day things are going to change for you because you deserve it. They say God knows you deserve it but He doesn't give you anything you can't handle. All of this that we are going through is just to make you stronger. So you can keep going cuz its not the end.

Monica attributes her support system as a source of her hope that she carries within her to not give up on her dreams of college, despite the harsh impact that Arizona's state laws have had on undocumented students in her state. This hope that fuels Monica's resiliency to not give up because as she puts it, "it's not the end" was something that was seen throughout all of the students interviewed. They showed a very strong sense of

Aspirational capital that Yosso describes in her work as “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of barriers” (Yosso, 2006, pg. 41) Despite the many barriers, legal and otherwise, these undocumented students refused to surrender that their future was predetermined by their unauthorized status and they sought out opportunities to keep their college dreams alive. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez Orozco described how a sense of hope could help protect children of immigrants against the “negative social mirroring” they encountered in the United States (C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). This sense of hope help shields many of the undocumented students in my study, who are also children of immigrants, from the “negative mirroring that they encounter” and made them “better able to maintain a sense of pride and healthy self-esteem” (pg. 101). It is this sense of hope that gave students the courage and conviction to move forward into the world in search of resources to help pave the way to college and motivated them to face the challenges. The first and most important challenge for undocumented students was revenue.

Revenue: Careful Navigation in Search of Funds

Funding their college education is very important for undocumented students and a top concern for a vast majority of them. As Figure 6.4 shows, when asked, “Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?” over 84% of the students reported that this was a major concern because they were not sure they would have enough funds to complete their college education. Close to 12% of the students reported that they had some concerns and only a little over 4% said that they had no concerns about their ability to finance their college education. Since this 4% translates to

12 students in the survey sample (N=290), then it is possible that these 12 students had secured sufficient funding to finance their entire college expenses. This shows that not all undocumented students are unable to pay for college but it does show that it is only a small percentage of them that are able to do so.

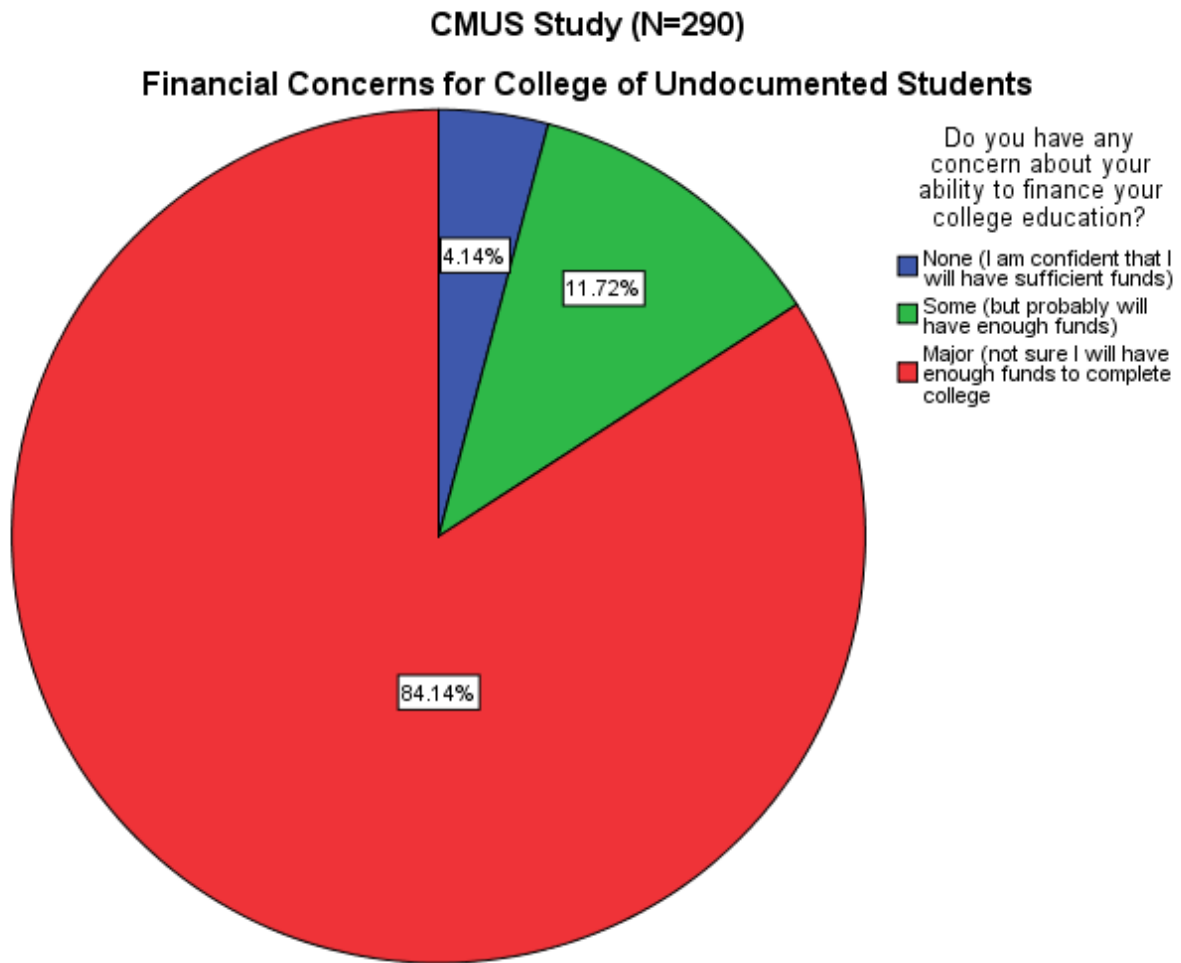


Figure 6.4

These percentages are staggering when we compare it to the national norms found in 2011 CIRP Freshman Survey (Pryor, DeAngelo, Blake, Hurtado, & Tran, 2011), which asked the same question to the entering 2011 Freshman class. Table 6.2 helps make this point more clearly.

Table 6.2			
2011 CIRP Freshman Survey and CMUS Survey Comparison			
Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?	<u>2011 CIRP Freshman Survey</u> Weighted National Norms – All Respondents	<u>CMUS Study (N=290)</u> Non-Weighted All Respondents	Differences
None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds)	32.6%	4.1%	28.5%
Some (but probably will have enough funds)	55.5%	11.7%	43.8%
Major (Not sure I will have enough funds to complete college)	11.9%	84.1%	-72.2%

As Table 6.2 shows, almost a third (32.6%) of National 2011 Freshman class were not concerned about paying for their college expenses while only 4.1% of the CMUS respondents reported feeling this way; a difference of 28.5%. But as previously mentioned, the most staggering difference was how less than 12% of the National 2011 freshman class had a major concern about paying for their college expenses while over 84% of the CMUS respondents reported feeling this way. That is a difference of over 72%.

As the challenges of financing their college education was explained in the previous chapter, undocumented students are ineligible for most forms of public financial aid and very few forms of private aid like scholarships and fellowships. What was discovered in this theme of Revenue was that similar to their parents, many students resorted to working in the underground economy not just to save money for college but also to contribute to the survival of their families.

The students that participated in the interview earned income in a variety of ways. The three methods that surfaced the most amongst the students I interviewed were Scholarships, Fellowships, and Working in the underground economy. Each of them had their own particular benefits and challenges, as we shall see in the stories that follow.

Scholarships are one way of raising funds and undocumented students are quite aware of that. For undocumented students, this is an important avenue of funds since they are not allowed to apply for any type of federal aid, which is what most economically disadvantaged Latino students do to fund their college expenses. However, as Monica points out on the quote below, there are few scholarships available for them and those scholarships that do permit undocumented students to apply are usually highly competitive. Monica responds to her challenges in securing scholarships for her college education. She said,

It's hard. You have to be more resourceful. We have been through millions of websites to find scholarships. The first thing I look for is requirements. Some don't specify that you have to be a resident and then you look a little closer and its there. Arghh. I have to go through a lot like that. Then, I find a scholarship for undocumented students, which is like one in 50. But those are hard to get because undocumented students tend to be good students. So the competition amongst undocumented students is harder than those that are not.

Monica describes her experience in hunting for scholarships that permit undocumented students to apply. She explains how frustrating it can be when she discovers that so few of them are for her. This description is indicative of many undocumented students in general and specifically for the students in this study. The students I interviewed described a very similar story to Monica and though discouraging, many continued to apply for scholarships.

As a scholarship provider for undocumented students myself, I can attest to the enormous competition that exists amongst scholarships for undocumented students. In the

four years of running a scholarship for undocumented students, we have received well over 5,500 applications across the country and have awarded 62 scholarships or 1.1%. This level of competition is magnified when you consider that most of these students were highly academic successful students similar to those surveyed and interviewed in this study. Nonetheless, scholarships remained an important source of revenue for students interviewed in the study and most of the students (14 of 16 or 87.5%) reported receiving at least one scholarship.

The survey data equally showed how important scholarships were for them. When asked how much of their first year's educational expenses did they expect to cover from "aid which need not be repaid" like scholarships, over 82% responded that this type of aid would cover at least some amount of their first year expenses. Over 21% expected this type of aid to cover 76%-100% of their first year college expenses. This suggests that undocumented students are well aware of the importance of scholarships in helping them pay their way to college. Another type of aid that fits within this category is fellowships. The following student discusses how he secured a fellowship with an organization that worked closely with the police department.

Daniel. Daniel is originally from Zacatecas, Mexico and came to the U.S. when he was one and half years old. His father was already in the U.S. and managed to fly his family to the U.S., which consisted of mother, older and younger sister, and him. His younger brother was born in the United States years after the family arrived. The family moved around a lot but finally settled in one of the south cities of Los Angeles County. Despite his immigration status, Daniel is part of a police youth program and wants to become a police officer. At the

time of the interview he had recently graduated high school just two months prior, was attending a local community college, and majoring in business.

Given his experience in a police youth program, Daniel saw an opportunity to locate a fellowship with an organization that worked closely with the police department. Using his connection with the police youth program, Daniel informed the person running the fellowship, Rachel, that he was interested in the fellowship but that his undocumented status prevented him from providing a social security number. Not only did he secure the fellowship but Rachel came up with a creative way to help pay this student. Daniel said, “They paid the other kids with a social through a check. But for us that don’t have a social, we got gift cards and bus passes. They helped us out. They said they would pay me in different ways. I thought that was pretty cool.” The student’s networking skills and the social capital he brought to the table were key in helping secure this fellowship. Using Yosso’s definition of Social Capital as “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2006, pg. 45), Daniel used his social capital, he had gained as a participant in the police youth program, to help secure this rare fellowship that accepted and found creative ways of helping undocumented students. Important in this example is how organizations are funding undocumented students while still ensuring that they stay within the restrictions of any existing policies their organizations may have.

Even though not as many students in the study reported securing fellowship as they did scholarships, it was still an important finding in the data because it provided a creative way that some undocumented students were using to generate revenue. Many organizations are interested in including undocumented students in securing fellowships with them but feel that they are unable to pay them because of their status. It was

important to discover how an organization that works very closely with the police department was able to not only provide a fellowship for an undocumented student but also found a way to compensate him without issuing him a check. Colleges and organizations can benefit from this example.

As discussed in the previous chapter, over 78% of the survey respondents and over 68% of the students interviewed were living under the poverty line. Needless to say, securing income for college expenses determines whether or not the students ultimately enroll and persist in college. In addition to scholarships and fellowships, finding work in the underground economy was another method for generating funds for the students interviewed. Some students used their entrepreneurial attitude to create ways to make money on their own.

Chalo. Chalo is originally from Coahuila, Mexico and came to this country when he was 6 years old. His father had come earlier when he heard that one of his sisters in the U.S. was dying. His father eventually settled in the U.S. and was employed as a dishwasher, where he still remains to this day. Chalo, his younger brother, and mother crossed with visas that they received from Chalo's mother who had had an approved visa when she was quite young. The visas eventually expired, which resulted in his family losing their authorized status in the U.S. and were now considered undocumented. Chalo's youngest brother was born a couple of years after they arrived and is the only U.S. citizen of the family. The family settled in the San Gabriel Valley of Los Angeles County. Chalo began working at a very young age and has several businesses he started up such as wedding coordinator and dance instructor for *quinceañeras* (15th year birthday parties). At the time of the interview he had graduated from high school two months prior, had just started

at a community college, and was majoring in Electrical Engineering with an emphasis in Computer Science.

As seen from his biography above, Chalo considered himself self-employed and used his own skills and creativity to help pay for his expenses. He shared his ideas with other students. He said,

It's hard to find jobs and I tell them to go to a mom and pop shop and try to remake their menus. Most students have access to computers and can work with word and PowerPoint and put pictures of their food on a power point presentation. And then they can create a slide show that changes their picture of their food. You could go up to them with an example and say, "Oh, I see you don't have anything like this for your restaurant" and tell them "I can provide your restaurant with a virtual menu like this" and they end up wanting it. That's what I did. That's the idea I give them.

Chalo's understanding of technology and those who use it, prompted him to come up with this very creative way for him and other undocumented students to provide a service that businesses would pay for. These were creative methods employed for generating funds by using the skills of technology that some teens may have. Finding employment in the underground economy was beneficial at times as was the case for Chalo but for others, their status affected them in similar ways that it affected their parents.

In order to survive, undocumented students parents work in the underground economy to provide an income to sustain the family. Often times, these jobs were low paying, exploitative, and with long hours. The students reported that their parents often encouraged them to go to college so that they would not have to work in these kinds of jobs. This is common amongst many families in general but specifically within immigrant families where many view the United States as a place where their children will have a better life and where their children will financially succeed at a higher level than the parents (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Immigrant children who are here with authorization

have shown the ability to assimilate and succeed at high levels in the United States especially when compared with other children of immigrants who are born in the United States (C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). However, when it comes to undocumented children we can encounter a situation of segmented assimilation. Segmented assimilation changes this straight-line path into the American mainstream due to various factors (e.g. non-acceptance, racial discrimination, lack of resources) and ultimately disrupts this upward mobility by the children of immigrants, resulting in them not improving upon their parents' economic status (Portes, 1996; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 2006). A unique distinction amongst children of immigrants is that undocumented students do not possess an authorized immigration status in this country and thus acceptance as an individual who can benefit from public structures (i.e. public financial aid) is non-existent for many. Hence, many choose to enter the underground economy into jobs like those of their parents to see if they can generate funds for their college education and sometimes, for their own survival. Many students in this study worked in this underground economy and demonstrated many of the injustices that their parents had undergone. However, they still viewed it as a source of funds for them, which they hoped would help in paying for college. In the final stories that follow for this theme of Revenue, the students discuss what they have had to endure in these jobs in order to secure funds for college.

Agusto. Agusto is originally from Jalisco, Mexico and came by plane to the U.S. with travel visas with his mother and older sister. He was 1 ½ years old when he left Mexico. His father met the family in Los Angeles where the family eventually settled in one of the south cities of Los Angeles County. The family eventually grew to six with the arrival of

Augusto's little sister and brother. Like many other undocumented students, Augusto comes from a mixed-status family. Augusto plans on attending a local community college and majoring in Engineering or Business.

Augusto knew that paying for college would be a big expense so despite securing a scholarship, it was still not enough to cover all his expenses. Below, Augusto shares how he worked with the janitors at his school to try to save money for college.

I tried to do it once a week. I would tell them to give me \$5 to help them out, like after school, or sometimes during lunchtime. I would tell them, I could clean up something during lunch. Like students would drop hot cheetos on the floor and I could pick them up. I would also pick up bottles and recycle them, too.

Even though it was tough for his friends to see him picking up trash with the janitors, Augusto mentioned how he "had to do what he had to do" to make money for college.

Augusto also tried working in other cities to help generate money. He said, "I also went to Anaheim. I told my friends that I can clean houses and the owners can donate whatever they can. It was hard to do this but I had to do this because I am going to school and to pay for school." Augusto's strong desire to go to college superseded any other personal concerns he had about picking up trash at his high school or cleaning houses in strange cities. He was very determined to find funds that could help him pay for college. Similar to Augusto was Leticia, who also had a story of working as a means of raising funds for college but she had a different circumstance than him.

Leticia. Leticia is originally from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico and came to the U.S. when she was 5 years old. Leticia's journey of migration was through the *cerros* (the highlands) that separate Tijuana from the U.S. She crossed with her mother, her older sister who was pregnant at the time, and her sister-in-law. Leticia remembers the journey as being very scary as they crossed through the night with ant-infested food and

contaminated water, which they consumed due to lack of resources. After 7 failed attempts to cross, they finally made it. Her father had already made the trip to the U.S. and once reunited, he brought the family to one of the south cities of Los Angeles County where they eventually settled. Leticia lost her mom to cancer when she was in the 9th grade and this tragic experience is what makes her determined to become a registered nurse that aids cancer patients. Leticia became a teenage mother during her senior year in high school but still managed to graduate on time with a 3.3 GPA. She took two years off to work before she enrolled into her local community college.

Leticia saw herself in a difficult financial situation when she became pregnant in high school and was forced to work to create a funding stream to support her family.

Below she describes how she did it.

In my senior year, I got pregnant, so after I graduated; I stayed home and looked for a job. I found one where I worked in a warehouse opening boxes but that soon ended. So one day, I made *raspados* [shaved ice] and went to my old high school and sold them. But it was hard for my son. He was so little. He was 3 months or 4 months. My *suegra* [mother-in-law] couldn't take care of him so I took him with me when I went selling. I started making food like ceviche, burritos, tortas, y enchiladas and I would sell them at businesses, like fabricas (warehouses) with my son. It was embarrassing because they would tell me "What are you doing here? You went to school here." I would tell them that I have to because I have no papers. It was hard but I had to do it.

Leticia described how difficult it was to earn money to feed her child while trying to save some money for college. So despite having a 3-month old baby with no day care, Leticia used her cooking skills to create a source of revenue to pay first to support her son and second to save any money for college. Leticia found it difficult and embarrassing to be selling food on the streets especially when she considered that these difficult moments included her son. The following excerpt for her college personal statement shows how her son unfortunately shared the challenges she endured. Leticia wrote, "it was very hard

talking[sic] my son with me because he would be crying because the heat of the sun would bother him. Even my son was part of those moments". Leticia's sacrifices became her son's sacrifices, too. Leticia would eventually go to college after she had saved enough money to pay for tuition. This occurred two years after she graduated from high school.

Susana, whom we met in the previous chapter, described how she was going to find money to go college, which she had deferred for a semester because she did not have enough to start in the fall.

Susana: And now my challenges are getting a job and working to pay for college next year. I am going to work all summer and this fall semester so I can start in January. I am not going to give up on school. I plan on going back in January. I am still going to be applying for scholarships, too.

Jaime: What kind of work do you plan on doing?

Susana: Housekeeping in a hotel. I remember working in this in the 8th grade and I am going to try to get that job back again. And this other girl said she can help me get into Burger King. And I am going to be babysitting starting August so there is that. Just looking for anything that can help me. And I saw something from [telemarketing] that helps high school graduates. I think I will be good at selling stuff for them but then I think I am going to apply for this job and then it hits me that they are going to ask me for my social and arghhhhh. It's very frustrating. These things hit me. It's very sad. I just want to go to school. I got to go. I am getting the money.

Though it is impressive to examine the resiliency that these students had to find financial means to pay for their college education, the risk that they may end up working under the same conditions as their parents was most troubling because it threatens to keep these students in the same cycle of exploitation that their parents endure as undocumented workers. Schools are powerful agents that assist with the reproduction of social and economic classes in the United States (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Yet despite undocumented students' ability to break, or attempt to break, this cyclical process imposed by schools,

Susana shows that their immigration status makes it that much harder for them than other marginalized communities.

Blue-collar work is not something this author views as subservient to white collar work. Working-class jobs provide ample opportunities for both cognitive and non-cognitive learning to take place (Rose, 2004). However, when these types of jobs are the only ones that people are provided and more so when they come with the type of exploitation that is evident in many of them, then they create a systemic reproduction of an underclass of people of which they and their undocumented children cannot escape. Hence, the threat that these Latino undocumented students may not be able to break the cycle of poverty is greater for them than for other Latinos who can legally work in this country.

Network: Social Skills at Work

As mentioned previously, many of the students attributed the hope their parents gave them as the courage they needed to branch out and join clubs and organizations that could help them make it to college. In these organizations, these students developed and sharpened their social skills, which resulted in creating greater social capital or “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2006, pg. 45) that they could then turn into help in making it to college.

Students attributed many organizations and programs to helping them get to college. Some of the most recognizable were AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), MESA (Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement), and MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán). I think the student that best captured what each of these programs did for them was Augusto when he said, “MEChA helped me to stay organized

because we organize events. MESA helps me with Math and Science - how to bundle things. AVID helped me to stay on task. That way I don't have a lot of work at the end." Several students attributed their involvement in at least one of these three programs as being beneficial. One thing that was common amongst all three of these programs is that these academic programs did not have social security requirements attached to them unlike many other academic programs. This social security requirement prevented many qualified undocumented students from joining programs, while the absence of this requirement provided enormous benefits to undocumented students.

Oscar. Oscar is originally from Baja California, Mexico and came to the U.S when he was 2 months old. Being so young he has no recollection of the journey and his family tells him that there was no border back then since they lived in Mexicali at the time. The family settled near Phoenix, Arizona where Oscar attended public schools and recently graduated from high school. His younger sister is a U.S. citizen and the rest (Oscar's parents and himself) are all undocumented immigrants. Oscar's goal is to become a dentist and open up his own dentist office where he can help his community.

Oscar describes a program below that provided opportunities for students like him to take college courses while he was still in high school.

It's helped me in paying for my college courses while I have been in high school. I have programs that help me pay for school. This program was in place before Proposition 300, when they didn't get in the way. Now with this law, some of my friends can't do it.

Oscar went on to say that even though this program was unable to help him take college courses, the program continued to allow undocumented students to be part of it. Similar to MESA, MEChA, and AVID, this program did not require a social security number to be a participant. This provided opportunities for undocumented students like Oscar. However,

when Arizona's Proposition 300 was passed, which required undocumented students to pay out-of-state tuition, it made it too difficult for programs like this to keep providing services to undocumented students. The reason for this was because these programs were now required to show proof of residency to receive in-state tuition for the students they serve. In the case of undocumented students, these programs found it too expensive to pay for undocumented students given the higher out-of-state tuition rates they would have to pay for each of them. This is an example of a de facto result of laws like Proposition 300 that does not literally prevent programs in providing services to undocumented students but ends up making it incredibly difficult for them to continue doing so.

Undocumented students in the study used involvement in programs as a way of making up for denied opportunities. For example, when Monica was informed that the internship she had been awarded was not going to be possible once they discovered that she was undocumented, she set out to find other opportunities. Below, Monica describes how she made up for denied opportunities.

Monica: You have to work with what you have. Even though I have been denied from the internship, I am involved in other things. I have had to network more. I have been active in clubs. I met a lot of people that might be able to help me. I get involved with people who might be able to help us. Like the Hispanic club, where we had different people in it. Native Americans, African-Americans. We even had a scholarship fund. I couldn't get it because I was an officer. But we gave it to another undocumented student. I also met with the MEChA at ASU. I try to get by.

Jaime: Any other programs that help in making up for these lack of opportunities?

Monica: Like my Hispanics student association helped me find scholarships. And the MEChA at ASU helped to get sponsorships and clubs I could get in contact with. It helped me because I can put it on my resume. I had all these experiences ever since I was a freshman. I was friends with the dean of students and the president of the college. It felt good to be recognized.

Despite being disappointed for being denied a fellowship she had been awarded once they found out she was undocumented, Monica did not let it stop her from becoming very involved in a variety of other clubs and expanding her network of allies across the college campus. By knowing people like the dean of students, Monica was able to increase her social capital and the network of people who could help her and other undocumented students.

Students also joined programs that some would consider unlikely for undocumented students. For example, Maximiliano applied and was accepted as the first Latino to attend a university's African American Outreach program that provided tours of California colleges to high school students. Below, Maximiliano describes the process and what occurred on the trip.

Por ejemplo en [University] hacen un programa de [African American Student Outreach Program]. Y ellos [su escuela] me dijeron que no podía aplicar por no ser afro-americano. Pero yo fui el primer estudiante que es Latino que aplico y aceptado. Era el único Latino que fue en ese paseo. Al principio nadie me quería hablar pero después fuimos a 5 universidades en 4 días. Y al final todos eran mis amigos...Después de esta experiencia, mi consejera me mandaba estudiantes para ayudar que apliquen al programa. Les ayude y los han aceptado. Y la directora del programa de [University African American Student Outreach] me dijo que mi perspectiva es buena. Es importante de no seguir la reglas en una cosa buena. *[For example, at University they do a program of African American Student Outreach. And they (his high school) told me that I could not apply because I was not African American. But I became the first student who was Latino that applied and was accepted. At first, nobody wanted to talk to me but then we went to 5 universities in 4 days. And in the end, they all became my friends... After this experience, my counselor sent me students to help them in applying to the program. I helped them and they have been accepted. And the program director for University African American Student Outreach told me that my perspective was good. It's important to not follow the rules when it's a good thing.]*

This trip expanded Maximiliano's social capital beyond the Latino community into the African American community of counselors and colleagues. Maximiliano's determination to not be deterred to applying to programs that Latinos don't usually participate in, points to

the resourcefulness found in many undocumented students. It also points to the few resources available to students of color, that traditionally African-American recruitment programs like this are one of the few available to not just Latino students but undocumented Latino students.

Along with these long standing programs listed above, new programs have surfaced as the movement to pass the Federal DREAM Act has grown. Regional and state DREAM organizations have provided opportunities for students to be embedded into the networks that run deep into the undocumented student population and its allies.

Raul discusses how his involvement in DREAM Team LA has helped him learn about the DREAM Act and given him an opportunity to join the fight for their rights as undocumented students. Raul says,

Me uní al DREAM team LA. Conocí a un estudiante de Cash for College y ahí conocí al estudiante de DREAM Team LA. Y así es como recibí mas información del DREAM Act. Y con DREAM Team L.A. he peleado con ellos para nuestros derechos. [I joined DREAM team L.A. I met a student from Cash for College and that is where I met the student from DREAM Team L.A. And that's how I got more information on the DREAM Act. And with DREAM Team L.A., we have fought together for our rights.]

Raul had previously been quite emotional about being denied an internship opportunity, which was discussed in chapter 5, but was able to bounce back when he discussed his involvement in DREAM Team LA. Organizations such as this are crucial for providing a safe space of solidarity for undocumented students as it has been for Raul and many students in this study. In fact 13 of the 16 students interviewed (81.3%) reported being active in an organization that advocated for undocumented students.

The important role that clubs play is not limited to providing valuable services, which many do, but also in their ability to introduce these students to a network of similar students who have successfully navigated the educational system into college. This

increases the social capital of these students, which then enables them to further their own navigation and the navigation of others, which leads to a sense of empowerment. This is what we will examine in the final emerged theme in this chapter.

Empowerment: Keeping the Dream Alive

Given the challenges of dehumanization that was discussed in the previous chapter, undocumented students' need to feel empowered were important to both validate their existence in this country and their desire to receive a college education in their U.S. homeland. As mentioned at the start of the chapter, their support system (their *familia*) was a source of hope and empowerment, the students used this to instill this in other students, which helped in empowering them as they made their way to college. We begin by taking a look at Maribel.

Maribel. Maribel is originally from Mexico City, D.F., Mexico and came to the U.S. when she was 3 years old. She remembers her mother placing her in a car with people she did not know, kissing her and telling her she loved her. Maribel thought they were going for a car ride but soon noticed that the ride was taking a long time. All she remembers from the crossing was that immigration officials asked what her name was and she answered, "Maribel." Soon after crossing she was reunited with her father whom she had not seen in years since he had come to the U.S., years before she and her mother did. Her little sister and brother grew the family to 5 leaving only Maribel and her parents as being undocumented and the two youngest being U.S. citizens. Maribel attended all public schools in south central Los Angeles and was accepted to numerous schools but chose to

attend a Cal State University where she will be studying education so she can fulfill her plans of opening a culturally aware day care program in her community.

In the quote below, Maribel explains how she mentored an 11th grade student who was also undocumented like her. She noticed similar stresses in this student that she had gone through in high school before her senior year. Maribel mentioned that many times the student felt so sick that it started affecting her health and that she found it hard to focus when she met with Maribel. Maribel related to this student and it reminded her of how she felt when she was in the 11th grade. Below Maribel finished telling me about her student and how she viewed the help she gave and why she did it.

Maribel: She is an 11th grade student and undocumented. I told her to apply to college. She is struggling. But she doesn't know much. She didn't know she could not get fee waivers. So I told her to save money so she could pay for them. She is kind of lost and I am trying to help her. She told me a lot of personal things. She had to give up the swim team because of health problems. I said it was ok. Your health first. And she started crying. I told her it was ok and that I am trying to help her.

Jaime: How much does helping others motivate you to go to college?

Maribel: Well in helping others, as much as I am helping them, others are helping me. So it kind of reflects all over. It's not a matter of helping others but it's about sympathizing with them.

Jaime: Why do you do it?

Maribel: I don't know, I always help people. It makes me feel great to help others.

Maribel shows in the passage above that helping people is a form of empowerment for her in a way that makes her feel great. This was a common theme across many of the students I interviewed. Many of them felt a sense of self-worth by helping others. This helped counter much of the dehumanization we discussed in the previous chapter. Maribel, along with other undocumented students in this study, refused to surrender to stigmatization of being undocumented by finding strength in what they could do as opposed to what they

could not do. This helped improve their self-esteem and their ability to have agency in a world that told them they had neither. The students' mentorship of others and their empowerment created a form of resistance against those who thought they should not be in this country let alone attend a college in the U.S. or in other words, they created or expanded upon their Resistant Capital that is "knowledges and skills cultivated through behavior that challenges inequality" (Yosso, 2006, pg. 49).

Maribel in a follow up interview shared that she had started an AB540 group at her old high school and that she was expanding her mentoring skills to a wider audience. Many students in my study described similar experiences of either starting or joining organizations that advocated for undocumented students as a means of empowering other undocumented students and in turn empowering themselves. In fact, 12 of the 16 (75%) students interviewed started or were very active in such groups.

Chalo describes how in his AB540 group, which he started, fundraised to award scholarships to their members. He said, "Yeah, I created other organizations. I have different AB540 organizations at my high school. We fundraise all year. We give new students scholarships. Helping others motivates me. I am reminded that I am not alone." Chalo showed a form of empowerment where in helping others it motivated him because he saw he was not alone in this struggle. When a person is responsible for others, they are less likely to give up because they know that their message to others is dependent on their own success and ability to model for their students the road to college. Even though an over-commitment to extra-curricular programs can jeopardize a student's ability to finish school, involvement in clubs and organizations can be an asset towards academic

completion because students are able to contextualize their role as students within a greater mission of community improvement and empowerment.

Sylvia provides an example of how she provides assistance to other undocumented students with the limited funds she has.

When others get sick and they don't want to go to the doctor, I pay for them with my money. Like this one girl was sick, I told her I didn't have much but we could do something with it. My mom gave me money to give to her, too. And we took her to the clinic. And other times, people need it for books, bus, and I help them. Even though I am left without anything.

It's amazing how those with so little tend to give so much. This selfless spirit of giving was something that was evident across all the students I interviewed.

Student empowerment was also important for these students because it permitted them to question society's assumptions of them and even take action to defend themselves against these injustices by using their resistant capital. The following two students questioned how race and equality was being portrayed to them in the United States.

Oscar saw how race played a role on his activism in trying to pass the DREAM Act in his state of Arizona. He said,

I have worked with organizations that have worked to pass the DREAM act. I passed out fliers with mi familia. Some people need to open their eyes and not be full of whiteness. I know this state only allows people from that ethnicity to get ahead. It bothers me that people like me can't advance.

Oscar, as a high school student and given his situation, begins to make assertions on how race is a participant on his pursuit to fix his immigration status. This issue of race will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter. Oscar's empowerment included politicization where he saw how race made it difficult to move ahead in the U.S.

Luis furthers this discussion by describing why the general public may not see how they and other oppressed people are living in a state of inequality. Luis responded,

It has to do with equality. People in general assume that everything is equal. I took a social issues class. I learned that people who say there is equality are like Arpaio or Brewer; they see it because they are getting the same benefits. Yeah, they are like “we all get the same amount.” It’s them. It’s there little group who say there is equality but poor people don’t see that. If they get hurt, where do they go? But if Arpaio gets hurt he can get help.

Luis describes how a privileged class of people may not see social inequality because these same people are not experiencing it so they believe that no one is. However, oppressed groups are in a unique position to examine this because it becomes not simply an item to study but a lived experience that they face on a daily basis (Harding, 1993).

In this final theme of empowerment, undocumented students used their talents to help other undocumented students while in turn, empowering themselves as leaders who contribute to their society. Additionally, this sense of empowerment also empowered them to question their place in society and those in power. Empowerment became an important element as the students continued on their way to college.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the different resources that undocumented students are using to make their way to college and how a sense of hope helps keep them going in light of immense adversity. The students’ hope originated from their *familia* or support system and kept them going into three key areas that would help them get to college. These areas were Revenue, Network, and Empowerment. Revenue provided a source of funds that was necessary to pay for their college education, which the students agreed was their biggest barrier in securing a college education. Network was their introduction into organizations and people who could help them expand their network of allies for students like

themselves. Empowerment was creating opportunities for the students to develop a strong sense of self-worth that translated into feeling an agency that made them matter and feel important in their world.

The evidence in my study showed that the road to college originated with the first emerged theme, hope, that came from the words of encouragement that their *familia* or support system gave to them. Hope is this belief that one day things will get better. For undocumented students who face enormous challenges on an every day basis, clinging to hope, at times, became all they had to hold on to and helped them overcome difficult disappointments that were related to their undocumented status. With hope firmly in place and supported by their familia, the students then moved on to the other three areas discussed in this chapter.

The theme of Revenue showed the different ways that students were generating funds to pay for college, which they viewed as the most pressing challenge on their road to college. As shown in the data presented, scholarships and creative fellowships became a valuable source of funding despite the scarcity of these types of aids for undocumented students. With a majority of the students being scholarship recipients, the students I interviewed pointed to the importance that scholarships are for this population of students whose immigration status excludes them from most forms of public aid and many private scholarships. Students also worked in the underground economy to help save money for college and at times, for economic survival to feed their families. The concern for students working in the underground economy was the threat that they remain in this type of work and not break the cycle of exploitative jobs that their parents were stuck in as

undocumented workers. Nonetheless, the students benefitted from this source of Revenue and have used it to save money for college.

The theme of Network showed how involvement in different organizations and meeting new people could help introduce them into the network of people and organizations that advocated for and/or supported undocumented students. This permitted the students to increase and use their social capital to help discover new resources that would eventually help lead them to college. A combination of old organizations that have traditionally helped underserved students and new DREAM organizations that specifically help undocumented students, provided important sources of college assistance that undocumented students used to become more informed about how to get to college.

The final theme of Empowerment showed how undocumented students' use of being leaders and mentors served to not only help other undocumented students but also served to give them a sense of self-worth that they had something to contribute to society. This helped fortify their belief that they could keep going because they saw how their mentorship and leadership mattered in other people's lives.

Navigating the difficult but hopeful road to college by undocumented students requires a multitude of ways to secure financial funds for college, help from a variety of organizations and people, and a strong sense of empowerment that one gets from helping others who are also in need. All of this is guided by this strong sense of hope that originates from those who love and care about them. As Maximiliano put it when he described how he felt about the road to college he was currently on,

El camino que yo he hecho no lo hice solo. Lo hice con la gente que me ha apoyado.
A veces hay momentos difíciles pero me dirijo ha donde voy con el poema de Robert

Frost que dice, "I took the road less travelled". Y eso es lo que he hecho yo. [*The path that I have created, I did not do it alone. I did it with the people who supported me. At times, there were difficult moments but I am guided to where I am going by the Robert Frost poem that says, "I took the road less travelled." And that is what I have done.*]

Indeed, Maximiliano along with so many other undocumented students *took the road less travelled* and this author hopes that *it will make all the difference* in the helping them travel onward in this hopeful road to college.

Chapter 7: “The Same But Different”: The Entanglement Between Race and Immigration Status for Undocumented Latino Students

Derrick Bell once wrote, “The law had created two worlds, so separate that communication between them was almost impossible. State-mandated or condoned separation bred suspicion and hatred, fostered rumors and misunderstandings, and created conditions that made extremely difficult any steps toward its reduction” (Bell, 1992, Pg. 110). Even though Bell was discussing legal segregation, this quote could easily describe the current social condition involving the undocumented population. Through the voices of the undocumented students in this chapter, they will share the “other” world that the law, at least in part, has created. Anti-immigrant laws deepen the separations between their supporters and protesters so much that I wonder if any communication can ever truly exist. Anti-immigrant laws are not state-mandated separation of undocumented people but are state-condoned by the way the way these laws force them to live in the shadows of society. Undocumented populations, like those voices found in this chapter, live in very separate worlds from those who do not wish them here, which make assumptions of them by the race they represent. Bell used words like suspicion, hatred, rumors, and misunderstandings to describe the products of legal segregation in the quote above. Anti-immigrant laws like SB1070 assist in perpetuating this similar environment of suspicion, hatred, rumors, and misunderstandings between both sides of the immigration debate. However, when speaking with undocumented students, this environment of suspicion becomes more damaging with the real threat of deportations for the Latino students. Bell

concludes his quote by saying that this same law that creates these two separate worlds makes it “extremely difficult” for any effort to eradicate racist conditions. But he did not say impossible.

Racism in the U.S. is prevalent in many facets of society. Whether we look at housing, education, or employment, we will find some form of racism in the form of policies or practices (Tatum, 2003). So is the case in the lives of the undocumented population. This chapter will examine how undocumented students are interpreting and experiencing racism and how racism becomes entangled within a nativist sentiment spurred on by anti-immigrant laws. I will argue that anti-immigrant laws create a more discriminatory environment for Latinos in general and undocumented Latinos specifically.

Race is a social construct reinforced by law (Haney-López, 2006). Tatum writes that “the original creation of racial categories was in the service of oppression”(Tatum, 2003, p. 17). This oppression would classify as racism. The U.S. has a long history of laws that supported racist practices against people of color (Acuña, 1988; Bell, 1992, 1995; Delgado, et al., 2001; R. J. Garcia, 1995; Haney-López, 2003; Irons, 2002; Takaki, 1998; Zinn, 2003). Given that U.S. has a long history of laws that supported racist practices, racism is then an ideology that has been further reinforced by law. This is especially true when we discuss how racism becomes entangled with the nativist and racist subtext in anti-immigrant laws. As Critical Legal Studies (CLS) would remind us, all law is politics and tends to serve those in power (Cole, 2012). So is the case with anti-immigrant laws where interests diverge between polarizing views about the presence of undocumented people and an underlying institutional racism against a growing Latino presence.

I explore two themes in this chapter. The first theme is *the entanglement of racism and nativism*. This theme looks at the similarities between nativism and racism as seen through the eyes of the undocumented students in this study. However, due to the potential legal consequence of these students' possible deportation, these students remind us, how nativism has consequences beyond the damaging results of racism. The second theme is *De facto racism of unaided, undocumented students*. This theme examines how anti-immigrant laws can increase levels of racism of undocumented Latino students. Benefitting from interview and survey samples in different states, I will examine how racism differs between states with anti-immigrant laws and those with pro-immigrant laws. Together these two themes will support the chapter's overall goal of looking at how undocumented students deal with racism and how it becomes entangled with nativist laws that are complicit with this ideology.

I am informed about my definition of racism from an Chicano Studies perspective and through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens, where it is acknowledged that racism is embedded in a painful history of oppression that still exists today. Racism is more than a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, it is a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices to marginalize communities of color by those who exert economic, military, political, and/or legal power (Tatum, 2003). Racism is the intended or unintended outcome that results in the subordination of one race by the dominant position of another race. Nativism, as another form of oppression, follows in a similar definition. Nativism is the intended or unintended outcome that results in the subordination of immigrants by the dominant position of more established inhabitants that can and do exert power. This nativism against immigrants is contradictory in that it blames immigrants for

stealing jobs by working longer for lower pay while at the same time it accuses immigrants of being “lazy” and taking advantage of all the social services the U.S. has to offer (Sánchez, 1997). This chapter will examine how both of these forms of oppression work together to provide a harsher reality for the undocumented students in this study.

Undocumented Views on Discrimination

A sample of 290 undocumented students provided their views on discrimination on the CMUS survey. The data that follows provides an opportunity to look at how discrimination is perceived from a larger scale. By doing so, we can provide a broad look at the affects that racism and nativism have on undocumented, Latino students.

Discrimination Scale

The Discrimination Scale used a 5-item scale that measured the student’s views on immigrant and racial discrimination, and the effect, if any, it had on the student. The participants answered statements using a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from 1= “Strongly Disagree” to 5= “Strongly Agree” with 3= “Undecided.” Chronbach’s Alpha for the Discrimination scale was 0.758, which indicates an acceptable internal reliability for the scale. The Mean (M) for this Discrimination scale was 3.371 with 51.4% of the participants agreeing with all the five items in the scale. A total of 28.7% of the students disagreed with the items in this scale. Below is a bar chart, Figure 7.1, which shows the means across each item in the scale to provide a closer look.

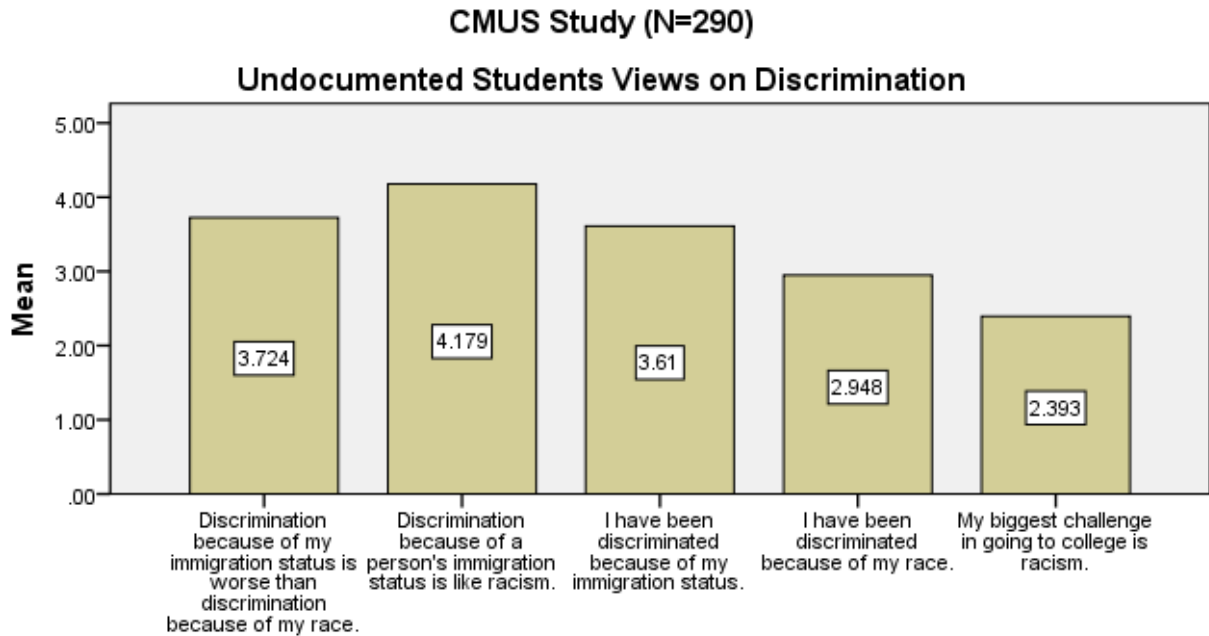


Figure 7.1

Figure 7.1 suggests that respondents, on average, agreed that their views on discrimination by their immigration status were more prevalent to them than discrimination by their race. This conclusion is reached by noticing that there is a higher agreement on discrimination related to their immigration status than their discrimination based solely on race. Table 7.1 below breaks down the percentages of each item so as to examine more closely the agreement and disagreement of each item.

Table 7.1
CMUS Study (N=290)
Undocumented Students Views On Discrimination

Item	Disagree	Undecided	Agree
Discrimination because of a person's immigration status is like racism.	8.3%	12.8%	79.0%
I have been discriminated because of my immigration status.	23.1%	15.9%	61.0%
Discrimination because of my immigration status is worse than discrimination because of my race.	15.5%	26.2%	58.3%
I have been discriminated because of my race.	41.4%	18.6%	40.0%
My biggest challenge in going to college is racism.	60.7%	20.7%	18.6%

As Table 7.1 shows, the respondents, on average, agreed more about discrimination related to their immigration status than discrimination by their race. They were especially in agreement on discrimination of immigration status being like racism (close to 80%). However, the respondents were almost equally divided (41.4% vs. 40.0%) on whether they had ever been racially discriminated and the respondents disagreed (60.7%) that racism was their biggest challenge in going to college. This perspective does not mean necessarily that the respondents were not affected by racism. However, it does suggest that compared to immigration status, racism was not as detrimental to them as was nativism. Since the survey respondents were high school seniors, a time when most undocumented students are coming to terms with their college limitations due to their immigration status as

discussed in chapter 5, it is not surprising that they viewed nativism as being worse than racism.

There was a strong correlation between the discriminatory experiences by race and immigration status of the respondents. The data is shown in Figure 7.2 below.

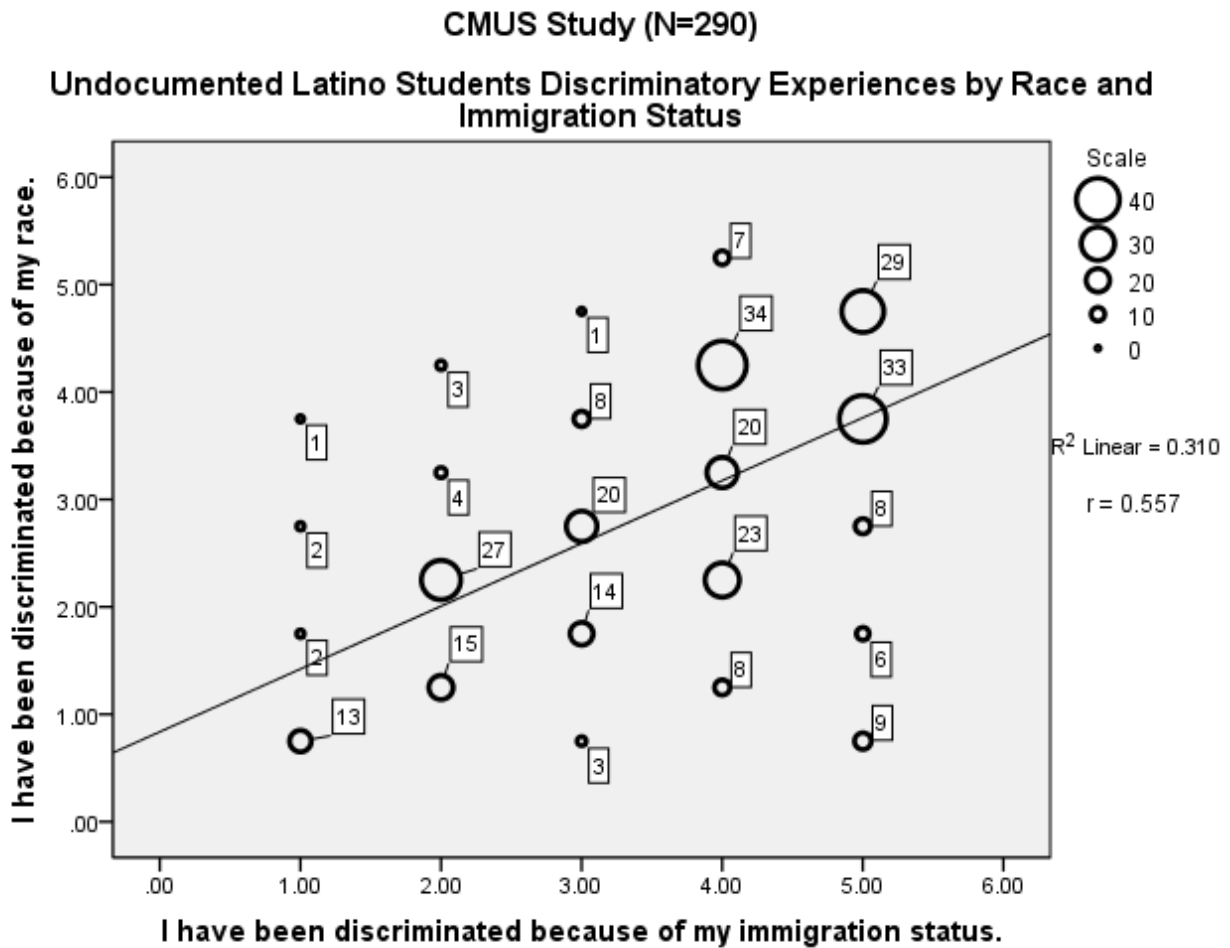


Figure 7.2

Discrimination by race and discrimination by immigration status were strongly correlated, $r(288) = 0.58, p < .01$. Figure 7.2 shows a positive correlation between the two variables, which means that those respondents that agreed that they had been discriminated by their immigration status tended to agree that they had been discriminated by their race.

Likewise, those respondents that disagreed that they had been discriminated by their immigration status tended to disagree that they had been discriminated by their race. These statistics suggest a closer connection regarding how undocumented students are comparing racism and nativism. The survey respondents reported a correlation between racism and nativism but not necessarily how they were interpreting this overlap in their daily life. To better understand this overlap, we move to the qualitative portion of this study to see how these undocumented Latino students that were interviewed, spoke openly about racism and nativism and the relevancy to their lives.

Entanglement of Nativism and Racism

Before moving to the student voices, I wish to note that I use the word entanglement deliberately to compare these two topics, nativism and racism. I did this in keeping with Grosfoguel's use of the word where he describes the intersectionality of hierarchical forms of domination like racism (Grosfoguel, 2011). Nativism becomes racialized utilizing a *suspected foreignness* of Latinos to create a group that is subjugated from that of the "native" White majority. This is particularly true when speaking with undocumented Latino students because they experience these two forms of oppression, nativism and racism, from both sides as a Latina/o and an undocumented person. Hence, this tension between racism and nativism is best explained through an entanglement of both forms of oppression. To continue with this section, we will see how students define and view race and racism.

Student Views on Race and Racism

We begin by examining how the interviewed students defined race and racism. The students' views on race were quite varied. Only a slight majority of the students (9 of 16 or 56.3%) used race definitions that are quite familiar such as country of origin, color, cultures, and ethnicity. However, seven students had different definitions of race. Four of those seven students dismissed the notion of different races and indicated that there is just one human race while the other three students said that race was more about how you think or have things in common. Therefore, the definition of race for the undocumented students interviewed could be compartmentalized into three groups. These are:

1. Familiar Definition Group – Those who believe that race refers to country of origin, color, culture, and/or ethnicity;
2. One Race Group – Those who believe we are all part of one human race; and
3. Common Interest Group – Those who believe that a race is a group with a common interest.

Using these groupings, I summarized how the students would classify themselves as part of a race and for the most part, the students answered the question in a similar fashion that they defined race. For example, both Maribel and Leticia defined race as “where you come from” (Familiar Definition Group) and self-identified themselves racially as Mexican and Latina, respectively. Chalo and Ramón defined race as “The way you think” and “A group who shares common goals”, respectively. They would be considered in the Common Interest Group. Chalo racially self-identified himself as “DREAMers” and Ramón racially self-identified himself as “Cross-Country runner.” Again, similar to Maribel and Leticia, Chalo and Ramón’s racial self-identification seemed informed from their definition of race.

The same connection between race and racial self-identification happened with the One Race Group. Luis and Sylvia defined race as “There is no certain race just a human race” and “We are all part of one race”, respectively. Luis’s racial self-identification was “I would not because we are one race” and Sylvia’s racial self-identification was “I wouldn’t. All of us are humans.” Hence, across all three groups, there was a strong association between how one racially self-identifies and their definition of race. However, when the students were asked how they would define racism, this compartmentalization seemed to disappear.

Regardless of how the students defined race or racially self-identified, their definition of racism was as “something that was harmful.” Oscar, from the familiar definition group, defined racism as “Harming. Putting other ethnicity at risk. Like trying to dominate over another ethnicity.” Maximiliano, from the common interest group, defined racism as “El racismo es cuando una persona le limite los derechos humanos a alguien sin el consentimiento de uno (*Racism is when one person limits someone’s human rights without her/his consent*).” And Raul, from the one race group, defined racism as “No dar oportunidad a los semejantes (*To not give an opportunity to your fellowman or fellow woman*)”. Hence, there was much more commonality on what is racism across all the groups. The students for the most part saw racism as a negative thing and as a form of discrimination that is harmful, hurtful, or limiting. Throughout the interviews, regardless of how they self-identified or what their definition of race was, all students agreed that racism was a destructive institution with many consequences. This is important to note because regardless of how any of the students viewed race and how it might have influenced how they racially classified themselves, there was a total agreement by all the students of two things, (1) Racism exists; and (2) Racism is harmful. This contradicts the

rhetoric that implies that racism does not exist because race does not exist. To the contrary, the qualitative data showed that regardless of the student's definition of race and their own racial identity, they still saw and experienced the destructive and hurtful damage of racism.

All students with the exception of one reported experiencing acts of racism or a total of 93.8% of the students interviewed. This was remarkably different than the data reported on the survey where only 42.7% agreed that they had been discriminated because of their race. It is possible that the reason for this difference was that the survey asked if they had been *discriminated because of their race* and the interview asked if they had *ever experienced racism*. Another reason might be because the experiences with racism that the interviewed students reported were often times examples of nativism. In fact, when the students were asked if there was an overlap between discrimination because of their race and discrimination because of their status, 100% of the students said yes. The next section will look at this intersection between racism and nativism.

Racism and Nativism overlap

Nativism and racism melded together for many of the undocumented Latino students I interviewed. Racism towards Latinos is often from a nativist origin that questions the citizenship or foreignness of Latinos in the United States (Garcia Bedolla, 2005). The students in the study supported this notion by the very close overlap between racism and nativism. Table 7.2 captures how the 16 interviewed students saw this overlap and whether they thought one form of oppression was worse than the other.

Table 7.2
CMUS Study (N=16)

Name	Overlap between racism and nativism?	Is one worse than the other?
Maribel	Yes. People think all Mexicans are undocumented.	No. All discrimination is bad.
Alejandra	Yes. Brown means no papers.	No. Both are bad.
Monica	Yes. The combine into one thing.	No. Both are equally bad.
Luis	Yes, because they think all Mexicans are undocumented.	No. Both are the same thing.
Agusto	Yes. ICE will take me away for being Mexican.	No. It's the same thing.
Carmen	Yes. They go hand in hand.	No. They are about the same.
Susana	Yes. The laws in Arizona make it harder to be Mexican.	No. They are about the same. The only difference is as an undocumented student, I am fighting against those who want to stop me from becoming, but racism is fighting against those because of who I am.
Sylvia	Yes. Completely. They will both hurt you.	No. They are same.
Maximiliano	Si. Lo discriminan por donde nacen. [<i>Yes. They discriminate you because of where you are born.</i>]	Si, por la raza de uno porque luego se pelean por eso. [<i>Yes, because of one's race because later they fight because of it.</i>]
Raul	Si. La mayoría no le da la minoría las mismas oportunidades. [<i>Yes. The majority does not give the minority the same opportunities.</i>]	Si, por la raza, especialmente cuando es la misma raza de uno que lo hace. [<i>Yes, by race, especially when it's one race that does it.</i>]
Salef	Si, porque piensan si eres Latino eres indocumentado. [<i>Yes, because they think that if you are Latino, then you are undocumented.</i>]	Si, por su estatus porque lo van y lo deportan a uno. [<i>Yes, because of one's status because they go and they deport you.</i>]
Chalo	Yes. People think Mexican means undocumented.	Yes, Nativism. Because both hurts you mentally but the other can hurt you by changing your life.
Oscar	Yes. Everyone thinks Mexicans are undocumented.	Yes, nativism. Because I am not an alien, I am a human being.
Ramón	Yes. It's the same thing.	Yes, nativism. It takes opportunities away.
Daniel	Yes, because think Mexican, and they think Undocumented.	Yes, Nativism. It's more personal and hurts more.
Leticia	Yes. Part of Latinos are immigrants.	Yes, Race. It stereotypes Latinos.

As table 7.2 shows, when the students were asked if they felt that discrimination by race or by status overlapped, all students (100%) said it did with most of them saying when people think of Latino, they think undocumented and vice versa. Similar to this connection between being discriminated by race and discriminated by immigration status was the 79.0% of the survey respondents that felt that discrimination by immigration status is like racism. However, when the interviewed students were asked if they felt that one form of discrimination, immigration status or race, was worse than the other, only half (50%) of the students said no and the other half said yes. Three of the 16 students (18.8%) said they felt that being discriminated by race was worse and 5 of the 16 students (31.3%) said they felt that being discriminated by status was worse. This 31.3% is different than the 58.3% of the survey respondents that felt that immigration status discrimination was worse than racial discrimination. A possible reason for this difference, aside from sample size, was the interviewed students were addressing questions on race when being interviewed and the survey respondent's may have been more focused on immigration status since most of the survey questions were addressing immigration issues. Nonetheless, this finding is one example where the interview data and survey data contrasted instead of supported each other and the reasons for it were inconclusive. Another difference was when we compared the responses, interview and survey, within their own states.

Four of the five Arizona interviewed students (80%) did not see either form of discrimination as being worse and only 1 of the 5 Arizona interviewed students (20%) saw discrimination by status as being worse. A total of 62.5% of Arizona survey respondents felt that discrimination by their immigration status was worse than discrimination by their

race. Similar to the overall comparison, there was a large difference between these two sets from the state of Arizona. If we look at California, 8 of the 11 interviewed students (72.7%) saw one form of discrimination as being worse than the other with 5 of the 11 students (45.5%) viewing discrimination by immigration status as being worse. The California survey respondents reported 58.3% that discrimination by their immigration status was worse than discrimination by their race. Though the percentage difference between the quantitative and qualitative data was smaller in California than in Arizona, we still saw majority agreement by the interviewed students that discrimination by immigration status is worse than discrimination by race. Again, it could be that the context of the interview and the survey differed sufficiently to create these results. This consistent entanglement of the quantitative and qualitative data did not allow me to make a clear conjecture but instead pointed me to a tension that exists between these two forms of oppression.

These findings indicate that undocumented Latino students viewed nativism and racism differently but also saw them as the same. Indeed, Chalo stated that when describing both nativism and racism, "It's the same but different." They were the same in that they were oppressive, hurtful, and damaging but they were different in the consequences of possible deportation. The differences between racism and nativism were more nuanced in the interviews but the survey data provides evidence that nativism is a much more urgent issue to undocumented students. In both the survey data and the interviews, the participants determined that nativism is a form of racism. The student's interpretation of race and nativism perhaps also demonstrates the close correlation between the two. In the eyes of the interviewees, racism and nativism could operate as one

and the same, both are harmful to immigrant communities and create a sense of fear of the “othered.”

“Undocumented means Latino”

The interviewed students reported that it’s racist for people to assume that just because someone is Latino, that they must be undocumented. Hence, similar to U.S. born Latinos, they take up the rhetoric of fighting against this racist ideology that being Latino means you are undocumented. This section will examine why the students saw this idea that undocumented means Latino as being racist and it’s important to see how they come to this conclusion. Even though current research shows that the overwhelming majority of the undocumented population is Latino (Passel & Cohn, 2011), it is important to note that the students did not disagree that they were the majority but they did disagree that only Latinos were undocumented.

When the interviewed students were asked what race do they think the general public thinks of when they hear the word “undocumented”, the students answered with “Mexicans”, “Latinos”, “Central Americans,” or “Hispanics” and majority of them pointed to the media as the reason why this is the case. As undocumented Latino students, it may not have been surprising that they viewed their own race as the ones most targeted as being undocumented. However, the reasons they believed that they were being targeted varied. For example, when asked which race do people generally attribute with the word “Undocumented”, Augusto was quick to respond, “Mexicans. The ones they hate the most.” Augusto had been harassed several times by a police officer in a city in South Los Angeles County and attributed his reasoning to the way he was treated by the police. Augusto shared

that a police officer accused him of being a *Narco*²⁸ and “messing up the country because you guys are taking all the jobs”. Similar to Augusto, Carmen from Phoenix, AZ, also was quick to say that “Mexicans” were the race the general public would think of when they hear the word undocumented. And like Augusto, Carmen used law enforcement as the reason why she made this connection. Carmen explains,

Then how Arpaio targets us. He sees a Mexican and he stops you because he thinks you are undocumented. But he won't stop a white person, who may be undocumented. That is racism. I have seen it first hand at the super [market]. There were black people. White people. And he didn't stop them. But he stopped Mexicans and took them away.

Carmen, as did the many other Arizona students I interviewed, attributed racist practices such as those above to their state laws, specifically SB1070. Whether or not the authors of this anti-immigrant law intended it to be a racist law, the outcome of this law results in racist practices such as the one Carmen describes above. Hence, creating a racist and hostile environment for undocumented and not undocumented Latinos alike. Monica, who was also from Phoenix, Arizona, referenced law enforcement and was more specific when she mentioned her skin color to describe this connection, Monica said, “Being a dark-skinned Mexican. I joke with my light-skinned Mexican friends like ‘oh they won't pull you over but me, they will for sure’.” So because Monica is more “dark-skinned” she realizes that this may result in her being racially profiled under the anti-immigrant state laws in this country. What is important to note here is that this is not just a case of racial profiling but in the case of undocumented students, it can and has resulted in them being deported from the United States. It is this one distinction that separates undocumented Latinos from

²⁸ A *Narco* is a term mostly used in Spanish speaking communities to refer to a narcotics trafficker or some one who transports drugs.

Latinos who are not undocumented. It is this consequence of removal that is present in the minds of undocumented students, along with the racism they encounter.

The most reported reason why the interviewed students believed that the general public would think of Latinos when they hear the word undocumented was because of the media. Almost every student reported that it was the media (i.e. TV, Newspapers, Online news) that makes Latinos the face of undocumented people in the United States. Oscar, an Arizona student, describes how subtle messages are transmitted to the public,

I think because of the media. I saw a lot of news programs where they are talking about crime, where they say at the bottom "illegal Mexican". Notice they never say a legal citizen attacked a woman. For them, they always say a man attacked a woman. But if it's an undocumented person, they always point it out. Whenever violence is reported, they don't ever say anything about race unless it is an undocumented person, then its stuff like, 'Illegal alien', 'An Illegal", or 'A Mexican'. The media plays a big role in stereotypes.

Oscar's careful reading of how suspect descriptions carry with them racial and nativist overtones when the news is reported in the media, especially violent crimes involving undocumented people. This type of bias helps frame the reasons why popular opinion is that undocumented means Latino and its association with crime. This is similar to the xenophobic ads involving Latinos that were used during California's Proposition 187 campaign (Santa Ana, 2002). This media biasness points to the most occurring reason why the students in the study believed that undocumented means Latino. This furthered their reasoning why they saw racism and nativism as being the same given the strong correlation between public views on being undocumented and being Latino.

In the stories and statistics listed above, what is most prominent was how these racist practices against the students could also be considered nativist since almost every form of racist insult or degradation could be traced back to Latinos being "foreigners." This

is especially disheartening to many of the Mexicans in the study given the history of conquest that Mexicans have on their native lands that are now considered the U.S. southwest (Acuña, 1988; Zinn, 2003). Regardless of this historical amnesia or suppression, Latinos generally and Mexicans specifically have been targeted as being foreign and have been at the receiving end of many racist practices whether they are undocumented or not.

However, the constant reminder of possible removal (deportation) from their U.S. homeland was something that was unique to this population of Latinos and something that the Latino students in this study feared. Augusto makes this point when he said, “With the situation that I am in, knowing immigration can pop into my house and they can take me and my parents away and leave my little brother and sister all alone and I won’t know what will happen to them. That is what we live with.” Augusto described how racism and nativism overlapped for him. He saw removal by immigration authorities as both a nativist and racist practice. It is this unique, real threat that results in labeling this theme, an entanglement of racism and nativism. This is not to say that U.S. citizen Latinos have never been illegally deported. History would remind us otherwise²⁹. However, the threat of deportation of undocumented people is legal and done on behalf of the U.S. citizenry, Latinos and non-Latinos alike. And it is this threat, unintended or intended, that results in the de facto racism that many undocumented students face every day.

²⁹ The United States’ government implementation of Operation “Wetback” was responsible for the deportation of over 1 million immigrants and U.S. Citizens. Its goal was to remove 80,000 undocumented workers with special focus on Mexicans (J. R. Garcia, 1980).

De Facto racism of unaided, undocumented students

Laws that have an anti-immigrant subtext make it easier for harbored racism to surface against undocumented students and more difficult for undocumented students to seek assistance from the law. Although laws are not always intended to carry out racism, their racist undertones of some laws make it easier for individuals to spur a hateful rhetoric by a supposed backing of the law such as was the case in California's proposition 187 (M. M. Suarez-Orozco, 1996) and is the case now with SB1070.

Views on nativism are seen as harsher and difficult to fight than racism by undocumented students due to the legal backing of state and federal laws and undocumented people's inability to go to the law when they have been exploited for fear of being removed (deported). The doors of legal redress appear shut to undocumented students. Given the students' immigration status and fear of being removed, undocumented students may not go to law enforcement to protect them. As Olivas points out, "the undocumented are forced deeper into the shadows as they are hunted down, harmed, or deported – in the contexts of employment, civic life, and the larger social community" (Olivas, 2012, Pg. 4). Hence, making it harder for undocumented students to ask for legal assistance when they are victims of crimes against both their legal rights and human rights.

A nativist/racist system of oppression is most harshly felt when state laws and policies are complicit with an anti-immigrant agenda. For example, the racism that undocumented students faced in California were more of a form of racial microaggressions (Solórzano, et al., 2000) whereas the racism of the undocumented students in Arizona was more blatant. This is not to undermine or minimize the racism that the California students

experienced but to stress the differences between the two states. To examine these differences more closely, I will separate the voices of the California students from the Arizona students to see how the rhetoric changes when we read one set from the other. Then, I will present statistical data on how the survey respondents support these differences from two sets of states.

Voices from California

When Daniel and Chalo were asked if they had ever experienced racism, both of them responded with similar stories about assumptions that they did not speak English. Here is what each said. Daniel describes an encounter at one of his jobs that he worked at. He said,

It gets me mad when you experience it. Like at the sushi place I worked at. Like the first thing a white guy does with his broken Spanish is ask me if someone speaks English and I am like, dude, I speak English. It really pisses me off. Just cuz you're brown and working at a restaurant, then you don't speak English. Really man? C'mon. It's ignorant.

Daniel, who had been living in the U.S. since the age of 1 year old, was upset and considered it racist when people assumed that one does not speak English if one is Latino and works in a restaurant. Chalo also responded with a similar story when asked if he had ever experienced racism. Below he describes an incident when he was boarding a plane on a school field trip. He said,

Once there was a field trip to Washington D.C. and they wanted me to go so bad, that everyone pitched in for me to go. Everyone that went had documents but my teacher said 'Nobody bring anything except their school IDs'. So that everyone is the same.' So when we got there, the security guard was quick to criticize me. He looked at me and said, 'Oh, y tu pasaporte?' [*Oh, and your passport?*] And I responded in English and I said 'We are a student group' and he stepped back surprised. And then

I realized that if you are a Latino, people assume you don't know English. Racism has changed but it's still out there.

Chalo, who had grown up in the U.S. since the age of 6 years old, viewed not the asking of the passport so much as being racist but that he was asked in Spanish assuming that he did not speak English. These racial microaggressions depicted by these two students assume foreignness just for being Latino. The California students also reported similar treatment, not related to language.

Salef describes two similar incidents when she was using public transportation.

Salef, who has been in the U.S. since the age of 14 years old, described unfair treatment by the bus driver compared to white commuters. She said, "Una vez me pare a la puerta de atrás y me grito muy feo. Me grito que me mueva porque me iba caer. [*One time, I stood at the back door and he yelled at me very badly. He yelled at me to move because I was going to fall*]." The reason why Salef felt that she was being mistreated was not because this bus driver spoke to her rudely but it was because of the unequal treatment when the bus driver spoke to white commuters in a different manner. Salef went on to say,

Pero tres veces, con el mismo conductor, he visto que cuando se sube una persona blanca y se para por la parte de la puerta, le habla en una manera mas baja. Mira, solamente por que era blanco le habla mejor. Siempre pasa eso, siempre. [It's happened three times, with the same driver, I have seen that when a White person gets on and they stand by the back door, he speaks to them in a softer manner. Look, just because they are White, he speaks to them better. This always happens, always.]"

And so Salef notices that White people on buses are spoken to in a more professional way despite the fact that all commuters pay the same fee. Salef experienced and critiqued this type of White privilege that she encountered on the bus several times in our interview.

Another similar incident to this resulted in her being removed from the bus.

Salef, on her way to visit a college, describes how equal fare did not result in equal treatment. She said,

Me subí, le pagué, y le enseñe mi pase pero el dijo que el pase que tenía no era correcto. Entonces me dijo que tenía que bajarme. Pero note que suficiente gente blanca se habían subido y llevaban el mismo pase y pagaron lo mismo que yo pague y no les dijo que se bajaran.” *[I got on, I paid, and I showed him my bus pass but he said that the pass I had was incorrect. Then he told me to I had to get off the bus. But I noticed that sufficient White people had boarded and they had the same bus pass and they paid the same that I did and he did not tell them to get off the bus.]*

And so again, Salef notices unfair treatment because she is not White. She concluded by saying, “No es justo que porque uno es Latino que lo traten así. Entonces, si lo he sufrido (el racismo). [It is not fair that because one is Latino, that one be treated like that. So, yes I have suffered (racism.)]” Salef describes these two incidents on the bus as being racist encounters for her and identifies White privilege as the source of this racism.

Maribel describes a time when working at an elite tennis tournament where she was one of the few people of color. Maribel, who has been in the U.S. since the age of 3 years old, was able to secure a job that paid her for setting up refreshments for an affluent group of tennis fans. Her boss, who was aware of Maribel’s immigrant status and was a strong supporter of her, told her she could have some food along with the guests. So when she lined up to get some food, she described the following exchange she had with a White woman. She said, “Everyone was White and the students were students of color. Then, this White lady said, ‘What are you doing?’ ‘We are getting something to eat.’ ‘Who is your boss?’ And we said who she was. And she said ‘Oh no, she would not hire someone like you.’” After being told to leave, Maribel and the other students told her boss what had happened. Luckily for them, her boss was very supportive and made an announcement to all the guests that these students worked for her and that they need to be treated with

respect. Maribel commented feeling proud that her boss had stood up for them but when she returned to the line, she overheard another White woman say, “Oh, they hired brown kids this time.” These racial microaggressions, that are subtle racist remarks, result in creating a racist environment where one’s race is the subject and origin of this mistreatment. This is especially true when terms like Mexican are used in a derogatory way.

In two separate incidents Maribel and Alejandra describe racist insults told to them for being Mexican. Maribel recalls traveling with her little sister, who was a light-skinned 7-year-old Latina, to a university where she was hoping to secure an internship. She said, “My little sister and I got on the bus and when we got to [the University], some lady asked her if she was looking for her mom. And I said ‘It’s my sister.’ And this white lady said, “There is no way that a white person would mix with a Mexican that’s just nasty.” Maribel felt dejected and stunned by this white woman’s comment and by the time she gathered some thoughts, the woman was gone. Alejandra encountered a similar incident when she visited a college campus. While walking on the campus, Alejandra noticed that there were not many students that looked like her and described the following incident, “Then there were some Caucasian girls, about 20 years old, and we were a group of students of color walking by and she said, ‘Oh my God, Mexicans!’ and they left laughing. And I felt mad. What? Aren’t Mexicans supposed to be here? I felt discriminated against.” Alejandra, like Maribel, felt stunned by this group of White students who made a word like Mexican sound so derogatory.

The feeling of being dehumanized surfaced again like it did in Chapter 5 when Alejandra described how she felt when confronted with racism. She said, “Your race is not

the only one here. We are people, too. We may not belong here, we may be here illegally, but we are people. I was really mad and disappointed.” Alejandra’s sentiments echoed what many students said about their feelings towards racism. Like their feelings towards nativism, they had a combination of feelings that included anger and sadness.

Alejandra provided this critique of how the treatment of immigrants is a form of racism. She said,

We are still being disenfranchised from the entire society. People who have papers are up here [*puts hand above her head*] and people who don’t are down here [*moved hand downward*]. Like with the African Americans. They were told they were separate but equal but that wasn’t true. And it’s the same for us. From kindergarten, we are taught that we are all equal but when we try to pursue our happiness, we are not able to because we don’t have a [social] security number. We are not equal because our society tells us we are not.

This critique of how institutional racism is imposed on undocumented people shows how the stratification of citizenry is similar to the second-class citizenship that people of color have endured in U.S. history, notably African Americans as Alejandra points out. Similar to the rhetoric in the previous theme, *the entanglement of racism and nativism*, we see how the students define racist practices as being linked with their immigration status. In studying and reading the voices of these students, one can see that these two oppressive ideologies become almost indistinguishable in the voices of these undocumented Latino students.

To see how these voices from California compare to Arizona students, we turn to their Arizona accounts of racism.

Voices from Arizona: A harsher reality

The Arizona students tended to provide a harsher experience with racism that was more blatant and with higher propensity. These first sets of voices pointed to Arizona's anti-immigrant state law, SB1070.

In the exchange below, Susana, a recent high school graduate from a high school in Phoenix, describes her experience with racism.

Susana: Everything I have ever experienced is due to racism. SB 1070 was racist. It was against us. How do you know if someone is undocumented? You don't. That's racism. White people look at you weird when you enter a room. If you go to a place with your parents, they look at you weird. They know you are Mexican or Hispanic and they give you dirty looks. You just feel completely irritated.

Jaime: Are there any similarities between being discriminated because of your race and being discriminated because of your immigration status?

Susana: Yes. And the fact that you are both, it sucks even more. I am sure a White person who has no papers doesn't deal with this type of discrimination. But we have to deal with this all the time. Discrimination and racism is terrible. But being discriminated against because of SB 1070 or other laws is harder.

Susana points to laws like SB1070 as being racist and creating a racist environment. She also identifies White people as those who are conducting racial microaggressions and benefiting from this institutional racism by not being subject to it even if the person is in the country without legal authorization like Susana. As she states in her quote above, it is more difficult if you are both Latina and undocumented especially in a state like Arizona where laws like SB1070 facilitates racist discourse in social interactions.

Similar to Susana, Carmen also points to Arizona's SB1070 as something that discriminates against her. Carmen said,

Well, SB1070, it discriminates against me because I look like a Latina. As others would say, I look like a *Paisa*³⁰. So they can directly look at me and say, 'Oh, she is a Mexican. She doesn't belong here.' They can arrest me and I could get deported. I can even do time and then get deported. And for what? For doing nothing.

Carmen's description at how SB1070 is being used to racial profile Latinas/os supports Susana's views on how a law like SB1070, whether intended or unintended, results in outcomes where marginalized groups, like undocumented Latino people, feel that the law itself is the reason why people are being racist against them.

At the time of the interview, major provisions of SB1070 had been suspended while the appeals process eventually led it to the U.S. Supreme Court for a final decision on its constitutionality. Many of the lower courts had thrown out its provisions. Below, Susana describes how she felt about the decisions of the lower courts. Susana said,

I felt relieved. I felt happy. But then again, it took the courts to cancel it (SB1070). You mean to tell me that could not have happen before? C'mon. Really? We were not going to trust the police if it stayed in place. We still don't because we are oppressed and we are scared. It felt good to know that it wasn't going to go through but the damage was done. Suspicion because of SB1070 continued cuz people in the community made us suspicious of each other.

Susana was glad that SB1070, at the time, was legally not supposed to be implemented, but was frustrated at the damage caused by merely passing such a law in her state of Arizona. It was the suspicion that was embedded into the community that created a state of criminalization for her and other undocumented people.

Luis' depiction of what it is like being an undocumented person in Arizona evoked memories of another state of oppression where life was extremely cruel. He said,

³⁰ A *paisa* is short for *paisano*, which means countrymen/women and in this case a person from Mexico or a Latin American country. It can be used in the Latino community to differentiate between those born in the United States and those born in Mexico or a Latin American country.

It's hard. It feels like you live here and there is nothing you can do. You can't escape. Like in a gas chamber. Like Hitler runs. You are scared that people are going to stop you for what you are. Or by my accent. Or if you don't know a word in English. It's like living in constant fear.

Luis' comparison to living under Nazi rule is comparable to many other undocumented students' descriptions of what life is like in Arizona. Though I am sure Luis recognizes that his extreme comparison was to make a point, Luis uses his interest and knowledge of history to make his point. His description of living under "constant fear" is quite adequate to how many other undocumented students felt.

Similar to Luis, Monica discusses how she feels while living in Arizona. Though, Monica has not broken a single law since she arrived to Arizona, has been a model student at her high school, and teaches Sunday school at her local church, here is what she said,

You don't feel that safe. You are looked at as a criminal. It's hard being seen as a criminal. I am not a criminal. Can you imagine having that hanging over your head? I even have had people, racist people, call me names. And my dad has seen even more racist people. But they are older and they can cope with it better. But when you are 18 years old, you feel like you are under a microscope. They think you are a criminal. There are certain malls that you don't feel comfortable going to because they think you are a criminal.

Monica's constant reference to feeling like people see her as a criminal creates this state of criminalization for her where she feels she needs to assert that she is not a criminal. Under the constant gaze of criminalization, Monica compares it to being under a microscope.

Monica also talks about how racist people called her derogatory names that she chose not to repeat in the interview. Her fellow Arizonians who were also interviewed in this study were more descriptive on these derogatory terms.

Like all families, a visit to the grocery store is necessary to purchase food and other home necessities. For these undocumented students living in Arizona, visit to the grocery store was a challenge. Oscar talks about one such visit. He said,

One time going to the grocery store, my mother, grandmother, and me saw some guy. He was some older guy standing outside the store who asked if we had some spare change. I said, 'No we don't but if you wait, when we come out we'll give you some.' And he said, 'Oh, you wetbacks all you do is get your food stamps and welfare checks.' And I said, 'We don't get food stamps. We don't need government support. We take care of ourselves' He judged us before he knew us.

The use of the term “wetback” is nativist in nature but often used as a racist insult towards Latinos. In this case, Oscar was being hurled this insult not just to him but to his mother and grandmother yet Oscar managed to not retaliate with another insult and instead explained that his family did not receive government aid. When I asked if insults like “wetback” were commonly used in Arizona, he said yes and shared how his mom gets told that at work. He said,

Oscar: My mom has been called wetback at her work.

Jaime: Where does she work?

Oscar: At a hotel. They also have tried to exploit her by paying her only \$25 a week. She protested, her boss just says 'oh, you wetbacks are all the same. Always trying to take money.' I hate it that she has to put up with this.

The sheer casualness that this racist insult was used by the stories that the Arizona students shared is indicative of not just the cruelty of racist people but how laws, with racist subtexts, can plant the seeds of racism allowing them to sprout out towards people like these students and their family members.

Monica had a similar incident happen to her when she went to the store with her mom and aunts. She said,

I've heard racial slurs against my mom like at the grocery store. My mom always goes grocery shopping with my *Tías* [Aunts]. You know, these are older, Mexican *Señoras* [Married women] going to the Supermarket and people roll their eyes and say bad disgusting things to them. Why do people need to be disgusted or give these disgusting looks? Or when my father is driving, why do they need to yell stuff like, “Go back where you come from, you Mexicans!” No hate crimes but small things.

Similar to before, Monica does not repeat the racial slurs but based on Oscar's description, one can imagine what Monica's mom and her aunts endure when they go to the grocery store to purchase food for their families.

Carmen shared how the same thing happened to her when she went to the store with her mother. She said, "I have experienced racism. Once we went to the store with my mom at this store. You hear people say, 'Oh they are Wetbacks.' They tend to be older white people. And they say, 'oh look at those wetbacks.'" One could almost conclude from Carmen, Monica, and Oscar that maybe they should no longer go grocery shopping but avoiding common places like grocery stores is exactly what racism does. It pushes you away from and slowly segregates you further and further till the only place you are racist free is your home, until that gets taken away.

As we examined the stories of the students from Arizona, one could almost imagine that we were reading stories from the past where racist laws were common place and racism was much more blatant. But these voices from the students in Arizona were recorded in 2011, only a few weeks after these students' high school graduation. Though I cannot prove causality of the racist practices happening due to laws like SB1070, I do not believe it is that simple. I do contend that anti-immigrant laws like SB1070 results in contributing to an already racist mentality by some groups of people and grants a permissive culture of racism to become more open, mean, and cruel to people of color and in this case, to undocumented people of color. To see how the survey respondents support this concept, we turn to the survey data.

Survey data showed a difference between respondents with pro-immigrant state laws and anti-immigrant state laws³¹. As the following two figures show, there was a large difference between how undocumented students felt about being discriminated by their immigration status and being discriminated by their race dependent on whether they lived in states with anti-immigrant laws and states with pro-immigrant laws. See figures 7.3 and 7.4 below.

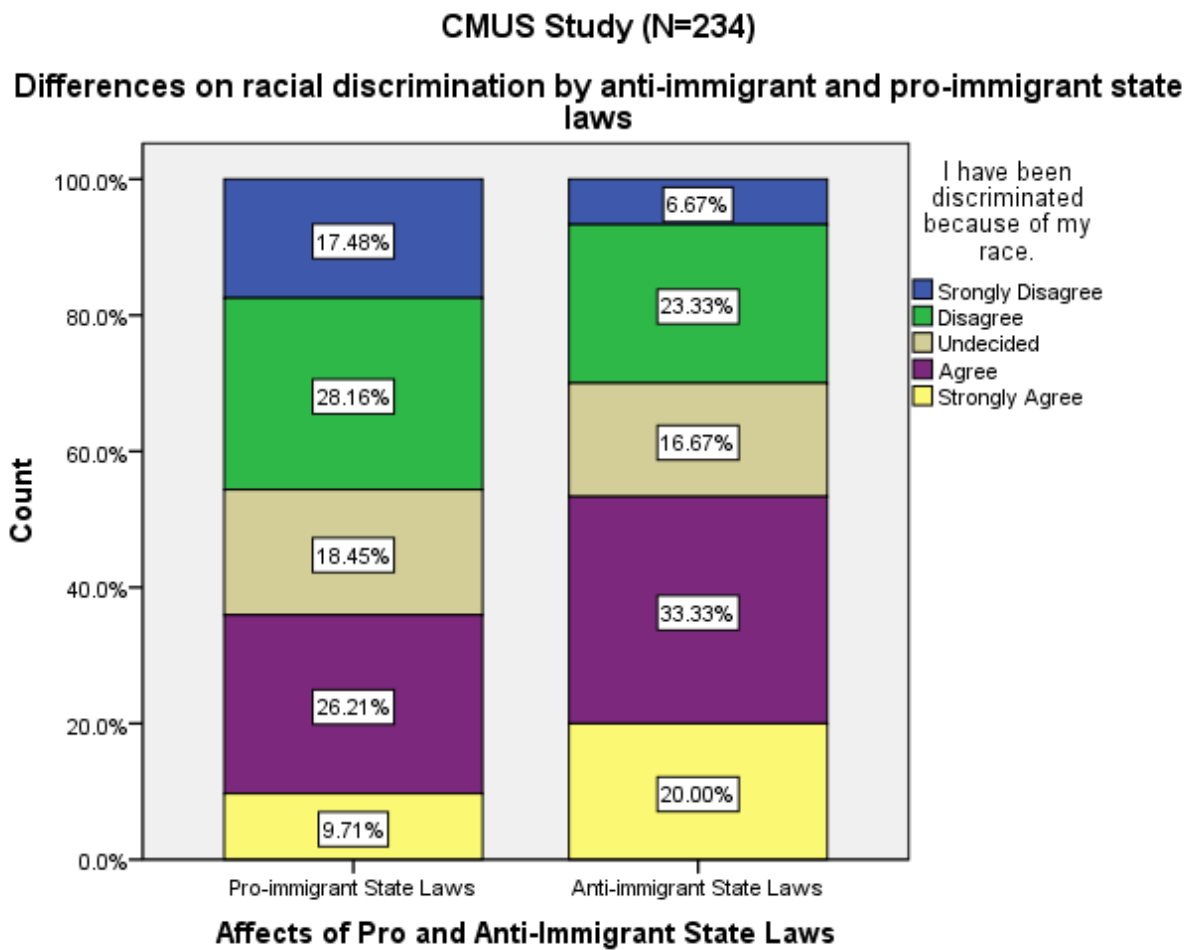


Figure 7.3

³¹ This does not mean that states with pro-immigrant state laws are states that are welcoming to undocumented students. It simply means that laws are in place that can assist immigrants in the state, specifically undocumented immigrants.

Figure 7.3 above shows that 53.3% of undocumented students in states with anti-immigrant laws agreed that they had been discriminated because of their race compared to 35.9% who agreed from states with pro-immigrant state laws. A similar trend held true for discrimination by immigration status.

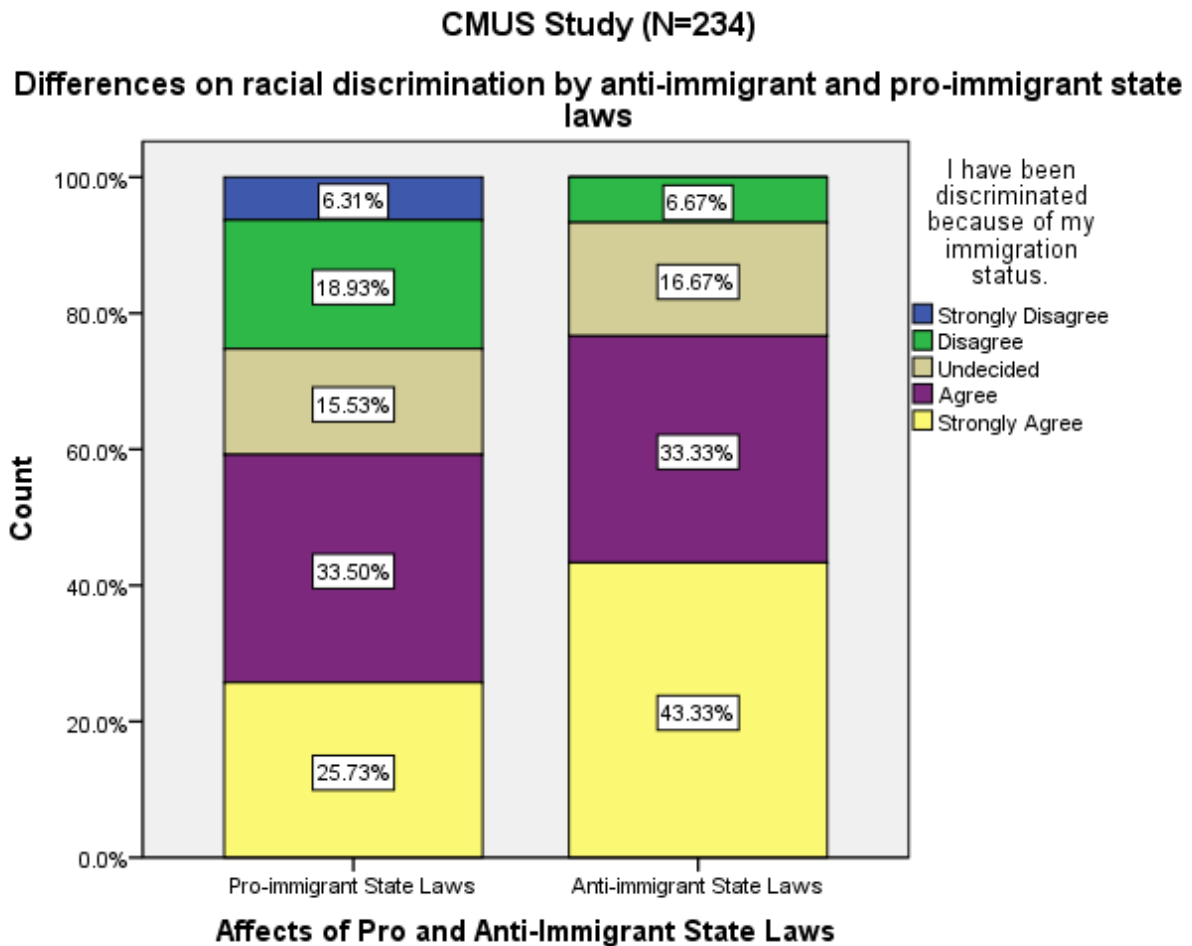


Figure 7.4

Figure 7.4 above shows that 76.3% of undocumented students in states with anti-immigrant laws agreed that they had been discriminated because of their race compared to 59.2% who agreed from states with pro-immigrant state laws. The reason why these data

are important is because we must remember that these laws, and laws like this, are being enforced in our name, as citizens and residents. Hence, we must question the morality of these laws especially when we consider the oppressive forms that the students are living under. To determine how significant these differences are between these groups of states, we turn to a means comparisons test.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted with the survey data above to compare undocumented students who had been discriminated by race or immigration status for states with pro-immigrant laws and states with anti-immigrant laws. First, I will address discrimination by racial discrimination. There was a significant difference for racial discrimination between states with pro-immigrant laws ($M=2.8, SD=1.3$) and states with anti-immigrant laws ($M=3.4, SD=1.2$). The corresponding t-statistic and p-value for this test was $t(234) = -2.190$ and $p=0.030$. These results suggest that undocumented students residing in states with anti-immigrant state laws had higher levels of racial discrimination. Second, I will address discrimination by immigration status. There was a significant difference for immigrant status discrimination between states with pro-immigrant laws ($M=3.5, SD=1.2$) and states with anti-immigrant laws ($M=4.1, SD=0.9$). The corresponding t-statistic and p-value for this test was $t(234) = -2.549$ and $p=0.011$. These results suggest that undocumented students residing in states with anti-immigrant state laws had higher levels of immigrant status discrimination. Hence, in both cases, states with anti-immigrant laws tended to have higher levels of discrimination according to the respondents.

Nativism happens to undocumented and not undocumented people alike. For example, both an undocumented Latino person and a U.S. born Latino can be racially

insulted from a nativist origin. Both will be subjected to mental harm. However, the undocumented person's risks can be increased if the insult is coming from someone who may report them to immigration authorities or if the insult is from immigration authorities themselves. Nativist insults at Latinos hurts all Latinos. However, nativism in practice with existing laws can result in a physical removal from the country. That is a constant deportable threat to undocumented people generally and specifically for the undocumented Latino students in this study. In comparing both the California student voices and the Arizona student voices we see how laws, whether intended or unintended, can have a detrimental effect on the lives of people of color living in those states especially if these people are undocumented.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined how racism and nativism become entangled in a dual form of oppression that equates a foreignness to Latinos, regardless of immigration status or time in this country, and forces even those Latinos that are undocumented to fight against this form of discrimination. Through the themes of *the entanglement of racism and nativism* and *De facto racism of unaided, undocumented students*, we saw how racism and nativism become almost synonymous but distinct by the threat of deportation that undocumented students face.

Undocumented Latino students in this study had different definitions for race and some even stated that there was no such thing as race. When it came to self-identifying themselves as part of a race, their self-classification followed their corresponding definition of race. However, all the students were in agreement that racism exists and that it was

damaging to our society. Specifically, they saw how being undocumented becomes racialized by their views on how the public associates being undocumented with being Latino. Furthermore, the students' painful recollections of being targeted merely because they "fit" the undocumented prototype highly affected their place of belonging in the U.S. Clearly; they were seen and treated as unwanted outsiders. Despite being undocumented and Latino themselves, the students rejected this notion that all undocumented people are Latino.

The students' views on discrimination tended to merge together different forms of oppression as being equally bad and harmful. An overlap or entanglement of racism and nativism became something all students agreed with. Similarly, the survey data showed that nativism was a form of racism. However, when positioned against each other, not all agreed that both were equally harmful. Although the findings do not account for this discrepancy, one of the reasons for this may be that students do not understand the interlink between racism and nativism and how historically these have played out together. Across the interviewed students, half saw them as equally bad while the other half felt that one form of discrimination was worse than the other. It is here where the survey data diverged from this opinion with data supporting a much higher percentage that nativism was a worse form of oppression than racism.

Last, we looked at how anti-immigrant laws, whether intended or not, provided a higher percentage of racial discrimination as reported by both the interview and survey data. Whether we look at the more racist insults the students and their families endured in Arizona or the higher percentages of discrimination from anti-immigrant state laws, the

one thing that was evident is that these laws created and condoned a more oppressive environment for all Latinos but specifically for Latino, undocumented students.

A history of racism against Latinos has been fueled by a suspected foreignness that is nativist at its origin. By examining racism through the voices of those who are oppressed by both nativism and racism, as undocumented Latino students are, we begin to see just how similar these two forms of oppression are. But equally as important, undocumented Latino students provide an important reminder about how their situation is different than that of Latinos who are not undocumented. Despite sharing the cruel and oppressive situation of racism with all Latinos, undocumented Latino students live with the daily and extremely heightened fear that at any moment they could be deported. Though I concede that this has happened to U.S. born Latinos and may still in certain extreme cases, for undocumented Latino students, these extreme cases are a daily occurrence for them and their loved ones. So when they view racism and nativism, it is, “the same but different.”

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

This dissertation set out to study how undocumented Latino students made their way to college in the face of what seemed to be insurmountable challenges. I proposed to study how undocumented students incorporate a number of strategies to make their way through college and how racism affects this process. What I discovered was that in addition to finding their way to college, these undocumented students used a true meaning of hope to fight through the oppressive forces of racism and nativism.

These students did not view college going as an option but as an obligation to the sacrifices they and their families had made in coming to the United States. Although most of the students in my study may not have had what Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (1995) called a “dual frame of reference,” they did use their parents’ stories of how difficult life had been back home to continue pushing on towards college. A “dual frame of reference” gives immigrants a higher resiliency to the stresses of American life based on their ability to compare these stresses to more difficult conditions back in their home country (C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995). These students recounted stories of struggle but they never lost hope that tomorrow would be better. They sought out opportunities to not just help themselves but also to help others along the way. They valued this as an important part of being successful. By empowering others, they passed on their hope to other undocumented students and empowered themselves in knowing that they matter in this world. Fueled by love and hope from their *familia* and friends, the undocumented students in my study created a hope that transcends wishful thinking. Instead this new hope that

translates into a courage that bravely faces their dangerous world of dehumanization and denied opportunities. Using their social capital they generated some revenue and networks to assist them on yet another crossing.

Across all themes that emerged in this study, the persistent under-layer of xenophobia and racism found itself emerging everywhere across the data. Along the way, racism, in its various forms, challenged these students' road to college and their right to exist in this country as a student, resident, and human being. Hence, this study was more than about the civil rights of undocumented students but about their human rights. This leads me to conclude that if one is to advocate for the rights of undocumented Latino students, it must include an analysis of race and xenophobia and how they both become entangled with one another.

Review of findings

In chapter 5, I presented the challenges that undocumented students were currently facing. The key challenges undocumented students reported were: (1) A struggle to fight for their own humanity in their own U.S. homeland; (2) Financial Aid Limitations for their college expenses, which included being ineligible for most aid and being unable to secure legal employment to pay for their school; and (3) Minimal legal protection and oppression that is not just *de facto* but also *de jure*. Each of these worked together to create barriers for these students' road to college.

The stories of dehumanization that the undocumented students shared in this study was an example of how making people appear less than human (dehumanization) serves to make it easier to oppress them. It is, as Freire wrote, "For oppressors, 'human beings'

refers only to themselves; other people are things” (Freire, 2006, p. 57) and how Hing wrote, “Dehumanization commodifies the immigrants. The immigrant-as-commodity is not precious. Rather, the immigrants-as-commodities are likened to ‘hazardous waste dumps.’” (Hing, 2006, p. 209). So by making them less than human and more like a commodity, it makes it easier not just for people to mistreat them but also to normalize the mistreatment by people in society.

The students in this study provide strong evidence that the most pressing challenge for college-bound, undocumented students is paying for college. However, there are multiple challenges associated with financial aid for college students. First, they are ineligible for federal financial aid, which is what most poor students use to pay for college. Based on the survey and interview data, a vast majority of these students were below the poverty level, which would classify them as poor. Second, depending on the state of residence, these students could be paying out-state-tuition, which can be 3 times more costly than in-state tuition. Third, many scholarships, fellowships, internships that receive federal monies (and depending on the state, state money), could disqualify undocumented students from being awarded this financial help even after they had been notified they had been selected for such awards. Last, undocumented students cannot receive work permits and thus, “working their way through college like me” becomes an empty slogan. As substantive members of our society, undocumented students should be allowed to benefit from the same fiscal resources, like financial aid, that they and their parents pay into (Perry, 2006). Though some states, like California, Texas, and New Mexico, have taken brave stances in providing state public financial aid to undocumented students, it is not enough and does not cover all undocumented students.

The unauthorized presence of undocumented people creates a real legal threat to their livelihood, their ability to travel within and outside their hometown, and their ability to remain in the place they call their home due to the threat of deportation. The students in my study showed a high concern with the legal system especially with those laws that were clearly anti-immigrant like Arizona's SB1070. Over a million people have been removed during the past 3 years in the U.S. (I.C.E., 2011), which results in a state of heightened vigilance that the students in the study reported. But regardless of whether an undocumented student has experienced removal, there is still a *de jure* oppression that they are subjected to based on the real fear of deportation. These students "live in the shadows and margins of American society, fearing detection, detention, and deportation, even if statistical probability of these misfortunes is low" (Motomura, 2006, p. 180). The findings showed that when the probability for deportation seemed higher, as is did for the students in Arizona, the fear was heightened compared to their counterparts who lived in states with "pro-immigrant" laws.

In chapter 6, I presented how undocumented students utilized different resources they had available to them to make it to college. These included (1) A Source of Hope: How a student's hope originates from their support system or *familia*; (2) Revenue: How a students generated funds to pay for college, which is their biggest challenge in going to college; (3) Network: The importance that organizations and people played in helping expand these students network of help; and (4) Empowerment: The importance of feeling empowered and the role it played in keeping the students motivated to make it to college in light of difficult conditions. Combined, these resources helped undocumented students navigate the road to college.

Hope came from a familial and aspirational capital that helped nurture the students' dreams for a better tomorrow in the face of enormous challenges (Yosso, 2006). The students from both sets of data, quantitative and qualitative, attributed educators at their schools as being an important reason why their road to college was facilitated. At times, it was acts and words of kindness that their teachers bestowed on them that kept them going especially when the challenges seemed too daunting and overwhelming. True acts of caring by educators go a long way in alleviating the detrimental effects that their students may be experiencing (Valenzuela, 1999). For undocumented students, acts of caring are needed more than ever to counter the many challenges they have before them and will encounter as they matriculate to college.

The ability to generate an income is very important for undocumented students. This study showed that in addition to scholarships, many students found some creative ways to pay for college like using their social capital, or their "networks of people and community resources" (Yosso, 2006, pg. 45), to land fellowships or using technical skills to create virtual menus for restaurants. They also worked in the underground economy, which threatened to create a cycle of labor exploitation that their parents worked under. Oppression is characterized by one's inability to rise out of a cycle of marginalization despite possessing the skills and talents to do so (Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1996). Though it was impressive to see the lengths that undocumented students would go through to pay for their college expenses, it is disconcerting to know that these students may be part of the social reproduction that would limit them now and in the future.

Networks of clubs, organizations, and programs that did not require proof of residency helped undocumented students continue on their road to college. The students

in the study showed that organizations and programs like MEChA, MESA, and AVID helped students receive college resources that were denied to them in other programs. By participating in these programs and others like these, undocumented students were able to extend their network of people and resources that could help them make it to college. This was especially true when it came to organizations, whose focus was advocacy for and with undocumented students. DREAM³² organizations are especially effective at introducing students to large network of undocumented students and allies who actively advocate for undocumented students at the regional, state, and federal level (Orner & Andes, 2008). These clubs, organizations, and programs increased the social capital, or their “networks of people and community resources” (Yosso, 2006, pg. 45), that undocumented students needed as they prepared to enter college in the fall.

Undocumented students showed high levels of empowerment when they became involved in helping other students, especially other undocumented students. By experiencing a feeling of validation and being needed, the undocumented students in my study used these feelings to counter negative imagery they faced due to their status. Students who feel as though they have a voice, especially those from marginalized groups, tend to experience levels of personal empowerment (Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009). This is especially true for organizations focused on issues of social justice (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006), which was the case for the AB540 students organizations that some of the undocumented students formed. This

³² Referencing the DREAM Act which a piece of federal legislation that would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented people provided certain requirements are met and they complete 2 years in college or serve 2 years in the military.

empowerment was experienced all around by both the helper (undocumented students in this study) and receiver (other undocumented students).

In chapter 7, I explored two themes. These themes were the *entanglement of racism and nativism* and *de facto racism of unaided, undocumented students*. The findings showed that the racialization of undocumented Latino students came from feeling that only Latinos are the undocumented people in the United States. This was often accompanied with anti-immigrant laws with racist subtext that further fueled this racialization in these students' daily lives especially for those living in states with anti-immigrant laws like Arizona.

The entanglement of racism and nativism showed the messiness that comes when theorizing how these two oppressive ideologies intersect, fuel, and pull against each other. The research presented in this final finding chapter suggests a recursive relationship between racism and nativism. An origin of racism against Latinos can be traced back to a foreignness that is projected on Latinos which is rooted in nativism. At the same time, an origin of nativism exists against Latinos because they are immigrants of color and not white. An intersection of hierarchical forms of domination can best be described as an entanglement (Grosfoguel, 2011).

The de facto racism that was experienced by undocumented Latinos was different than other Latinos because of the very limited police protection that undocumented people feel they can receive from law enforcement. Hence, anti-immigrant laws, whether intended or not, resulted in higher levels of racial discrimination amongst the undocumented students in my study. Similar to Santa Ana's work on how Latinos were criminally depicted in the California media during proposition 187 (Santa Ana, 2002), Arizona students in my

study attributed their state's legalization of SB1070 as a source of their criminalization with no where to turn to for legal assistance.

The findings in this dissertation provided a needed documentation of these student's voices and provide for us a better understanding of their daily lives. It is the hope of the author that this understanding will lead to action that will help alleviate the unfair burden placed on the shoulders of these brave students.

Revisiting the Research Questions

My first research question asked,

How do undocumented, Latino students navigate the legal and educational system to receive a college education in the United States? How are undocumented students compensating for the lack of resources that are available to their peers who are not undocumented?

Before I conducted this study, I wanted to find out how undocumented, Latino students were making it to college with limited resources but with enormous challenges. What I found was that undocumented students are navigating the legal and educational system by using a variety of skills that were explained using Yosso's community cultural wealth theory. The undocumented students in the study showed that they were not empty vessels floating aimlessly with the tide but instead used hope, revenue, motivation, and empowerment to tread lightly through this thorny path to college. The path was difficult often times because the law says they cannot legally work so they endure exploitative jobs like their parents to survive and earn money for college. But there was also some good news along this path. They became entrepreneurs and came up with creative and

innovative ways to pay for college. They were denied to all forms of federal student aid and depending on which state they lived in, some were denied state aid and barred from public college enrollment. Like low income students, undocumented students come from households who are below the poverty line and are in need of financial aid to help pay for college. Unlike other students, undocumented students are ineligible for financial aid so they make due with what they have by declining acceptances to major universities and they lower their expectations of “living the college life” and instead make just enough money to pay tuition. Undocumented students scoured through the few scholarships available to them and competed to receive any funds that would keep them going, always forward, never saying stop, never saying ‘I will not make it.’

These stories of perseverance included Leticia, who after having her baby while she was a senior in high school could have given up but decided to bury her pride, make some *tortas* and other Mexican food and went out to sell her food with her 3-month baby boy by her side. She searched for ways to survive and earn enough to make it to college. She is now finishing up her first year in college and she is grateful for the sacrifices she’s made to get her where she is now. She is ever hopeful and determined to succeed.

Then there is Maximiliano, who compensates for the denied resources he is unable to receive by creating spaces for him to be free and liberated of the stigmatization of being undocumented from those around him that try to make him feel less than human. He speaks of being like an undercover detective who does not let anyone know about his status but is constantly investigating new ways to reject the notion that he does not belong here, in his U.S. homeland.

There is also Susana, who prepared herself to enter the underground economy of working hotels and fast food restaurants where undocumented workers endure substandard wages to survive. I worry, what will become of her. The last time we spoke, she still had not earned enough money to pay for one semester of tuition for the university who had deferred her registration until she could pay her first installment.

Last there is Ramón. As the U.S. prepares to send its running team to the London Olympics this summer, we will not know if they are sending their best runners because Ramón is not allowed to compete for a spot. And like sports, there are many other fields like education, medicine, and law, where we will never know just how much better we can be as a country because we continuously make it illegal for some of our own homegrown talent to enter these fields. We will never know how much we are missing out on the talents we have educated because we lack the moral courage to sow the human talents of the students who learned with us, taught with us, and grew with us in our classrooms and with our lives.

These four students were just a sampling of how undocumented students within and outside this study are navigating the educational and legal system to receive a college education. They demonstrate that compensating for denied opportunities is difficult, very difficult, but not impossible. Driven to succeed. Ever forward, ever hopeful.

My second research question asked,

How does being undocumented become racialized for these students and what are the consequences of this racialization?

Before the study began, I was interested in finding out how race and racism was implicated in my study. Through a CRT lens and by focusing on the centrality of experiential knowledge of these Latino, undocumented students and the centrality of race and racism, I saw the circular relationship that nativism and racism have with one another. The undocumented students in my study concluded with the same conditional statement that they felt the general public would have about them and that is, “If you are undocumented, then you are Latino”. This resulted in them concluding that Latinos are the only face of undocumented people. This was a conclusion that they felt was racist. The consequence of this type of racialization was a double layer of oppression for being undocumented and for being Latino. The students were put in a position to defend not just undocumented people but also the notion that all undocumented people were Latino. So their fight was against nativism and racism.

More harmful than this public perception of “illegality” that was marked Latino, were anti-immigrant laws, like SB1070, that racially profiled Latinos as being undocumented, regardless of whether or not the authors of the bill intended it to have that affect. Consequently, the data in this dissertation shows that states with anti-immigrant laws tended to have higher levels racism and more cruel acts of racial discrimination. Hence, undocumented students became twice racialized and it resulted in living under a dual layer of oppression.

Contributions

The contributions of this dissertation are multi-dimensional. They include contributions to advocates and allies, educational policy, and theory. Each is listed below.

Advocates and Allies

The immigration debate divides the country between those who spew an anti-immigrant rhetoric against immigrants, especially undocumented people, and those who support immigration reforms. However, even within those who support immigration reform, there are those who do not support an adjustment of status for undocumented people. This results in an even smaller pool of people whom I consider advocates or allies of undocumented people.

This study contributes to a collection of scholars who work with undocumented students in and outside their research. This study documents the voice of undocumented students who are often silenced in the noise of politics and fear. This study provides a language and a story line to combat the anti-immigrant sentiment that seems to be all over the media these days, progressive and conservative alike. This study takes a stand for undocumented students' right to exist and their right to allow them to go as far as their talents will take them.

Throughout the study, undocumented students paid their respects to the many allies and educators that have helped them along the way. They told me to not forget about these allies and educators when I was done with my dissertation. They called them "strong leaders" and "angels" that have looked after them and asked for nothing in return except to see them succeed. I hope this study is helpful to these advocates and allies, or "leaders and angels," by becoming a resource that gives them new ideas on how to better understand and help "their kids." I hope it reminds them just how important their work is and why they should keep going despite similar, though not equivalent, feelings of solitude that their

undocumented students are experiencing. To them, I simply say, you are doing the right thing. Keep helping them. They need your help. And you are not alone.

Educational Policy

This dissertation can assist push forward immigration legislation like the Federal DREAM Act. I, however, hope it will do so without the military component attached to it.

The Dream Act is an essential piece of legislation that allows qualified students who live in the United States to pursue their American dream of going to college. The DREAM Act is gaining momentum and in 2010, it came up 5 votes of short of passing the U.S. Senate (Foley, 2010). The DREAM Act is a path to citizenship for undocumented youth living in the United States. It provides conditional permanent resident status to undocumented youth who (1) entered the country before the age of 16; (2) have been living continuously in the United States for at least 5 years; and (3) have graduated from high school or received their GED. This conditional permanent resident status can lead to citizenship provided that the individual completes 2 years of college or military service (Batalova & Fix, 2006).

I propose a revised DREAM Act that removes the military component as one of the paths to citizenship in this bill. The important role that education carries in the bill is exemplified by its inclusion in the title (i.e. Development, Relief, and *Education* for Alien Minors [emphasis added]) and as such, I would recommend that education continue to be the focus of the bill. With the elimination of the military draft towards the end of the Vietnam War, the United States moved to an all-volunteer force to supply our Armed Forces with service members (Warner & Asch, 2001). This all-volunteer force has resulted in recruiting tactics that disproportionately target marginalized communities like

minorities and non-citizens (Amaya, 2007). I would like to be clear that I honor the service of our women and men in uniform. My recommendation for removal of the military service clause is to ensure that military service not be used as a pathway to citizenship. As an educator and U.S Army war veteran, I prefer that education serve as the pathway to citizenship. Many scholars have agreed that the undocumented population is a vulnerable population within the United States which often times has been the target of exploitation with limited or no legal resources (Alba & Nee, 2003; Gonzalez, et al., 2003; P. E. Green, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Seif, 2004; C. Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; Waldinger, 2006; Zhou, 2006). This vulnerability might result in undocumented youth, who are not college bound, enlisting in U.S. Armed forces without considering the inherent dangers associated with that choice. Throughout the history of our schools, we can see that education has always been a point of integration into American society for young immigrants (Graham, 2005; C. Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). The DREAM Act, without the military clause, will keep with this tradition of integration by providing further access into colleges and universities.

The students in this study are all DREAMers and would benefit from this piece of legislation. The implications of this study are directly linked to the passage of the DREAM act by informing legislators of the lives of these students that we educated in our pre-college classrooms but then left to fend for themselves in cruel and inhumane conditions.

State DREAM acts are another area where this dissertation could inform policy makers. As was evident throughout the dissertation, states with pro-immigrant state laws showed better living conditions, educational aspirations, and less harmful rhetoric than those with anti-immigrant laws. State DREAM acts are laws that not only improve

undocumented students lives but also help legitimize their presence in their state of residence (Abrego, 2008).

Theoretical

This study attempts to advance our understanding of the intersectionality of racism and nativism. By examining the issue of racism and nativism through the lives of those who experience both directly (i.e. undocumented students), a recursive relationship between these two ideologies became more apparent. I concluded that each could be an origin for one another and Figure 8.1 shows the back and forth relationship I am describing in this recursion.

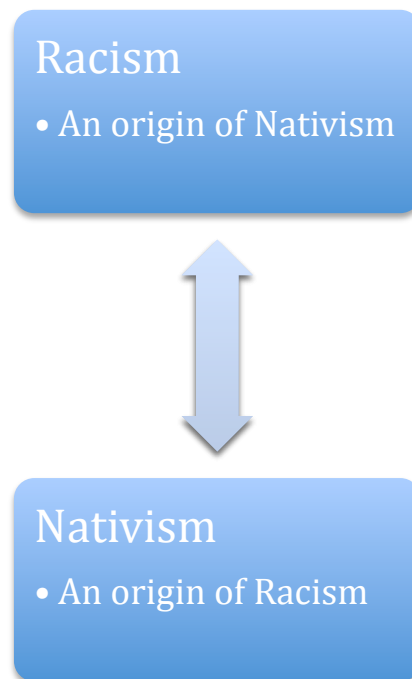


Figure 8.1

This recursive model is experienced differently between undocumented Latinos and those Latinos that are not undocumented as is evident in the research presented in this

dissertation. Whereas U.S. born Latinos may view racism as a detrimental force against their social mobility, undocumented Latinos in the survey data saw nativism as being more harmful. However, the response from the interview data was mixed and was not commensurate with the survey data. This redirected me to develop this recursive model between racism and nativism, which I hope will advance our understanding of the relations of these two ideologies.

Future Research

There needs to be much more research in this field to confirm what we may assume and to shed new light on what we still do not know of this growing population of undocumented students.

Longitudinal data is needed to track and document the stories of these students to best inform how they make it to college, what happens after they make it, and what happens to them after they graduate. Further inquiries include: Will these students all finish college? What new resources did the students discover in college? What resources are still used and which ones (if any) were abandoned? What happens to them after college? How do they use the education they have earned in college to make a living?

Another important area of future research is in the area of gender. How does gender play a role in the undocumented population? Is there a difference in the college trajectory between undocumented men and undocumented women? What about the intersectionality between being undocumented and being LGBT? Throughout the study, when students described that they “came out” about their immigration status, I noticed similarities to “coming out” as an LGBT person. Both groups are very similar in a variety of

ways. They are both stigmatized for being themselves, they both did not have a choice of being that way, they both are careful to whom and how they come out, and they are both marginalized in the United States.

Last, with the slow and sometimes stopped and reverse progress of immigration reform, does Hope for undocumented students diminish over the years, stay the same, or grow stronger? How long can the students keep hoping for a better tomorrow when Hope becomes an empty political slogan and immigration becomes a political football that is tossed around between conservatives and progressives alike? Questions like these still need answers and are worthy of scholarly inquiry.

Believe

My research has made me step back and analyze the stories, histories, and opinions of undocumented Latino students. These students' stories inspire one to keep working, to always keep trying, and to always Believe. When I think about my students in this study, I am reminded to never give up and to always remember that the true mark of an educator-student is not by the number of diplomas or academic awards one receives but by being grateful for the gift of knowledge that is constructed and gather for all to partake.

The issue of undocumented migration is not one that is solely tied to corrupt foreign governments but instead is tied to the foreign policies of the United States. In as long as the U.S. continues to exploit people inside and outside it's borders, it will always have people searching for a better way of life even if it involves entering the country without authorization. By entering a discussion on how we can assist those who work amongst us that are undocumented, perhaps then it can assist us in closely examining, and hopefully

changing, the policies that the U.S. employs all over the world. Freire reminds us “humans exist in a world which they are constantly re-creating and transforming” (Freire, 2006). Let’s not be afraid to change the world. We are not static objects trapped inside a world where the norm is to say, “that’s just the way it is”, but instead we are dynamic human beings that push against that which binds us. I believe that education is the light that illuminates the darkness of ignorance, bigotry, and oppression. To hinder anyone from achieving an education only serves to impede our united ability for a more humane and just world where everyone benefits and no one is harmed. We have the ability to dream and hope for that better world if we only believe.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student Interview Protocol

Introduction

- Begin interview by introducing yourself, reviewing purpose of study, purpose of interview, and providing them a copy of the information sheet.
- Review the information sheet for the study and request their verbal consent to participate in the study.
- Remind student that all information provided will be strictly confidential and they will have the option to not answer any question and/or end the interview at any time.
- Review structure of interview and obtain permission to record interview.
- Ask if there are any questions of me before we begin.

Background Information

1. What year are you in college/high school?
2. What is your major/intended major?
3. Tell me about yourself
 - a. What race/ethnicity would you classify yourself as?
4. What is your country of origin?
5. How many family members lived with you when you were in high school?

- a. Can you list them for me? (For example, when I was in high school, I lived with my father, my two older brothers, and my younger sister used to switch between living with us and my mom).
 - b. How many of these family members are citizens?
 - c. How many of these family members are undocumented?
6. What is your family's annual household income? If you do not live with your family, what is your annual household income?

Interview Focus 1 – Navigational skills

1. Would you mind telling me about your journey of migration to this country?
 - a. What has life been like for you here?
2. When did you realize that your status/situation would be an issue for things you wanted to do in this country, like attending college?
3. What did you do when you found out that your status/situation would be an issue?
How did you feel? Would you mind telling me about what that was like?
4. Why did you attend college/will you attend college? Who and what motivated you to go to college? Who and what has motivated you to stay in college?
5. Tell me how you have been able to make your way to college. What have been some of the biggest impediments and supports?
6. Tell me what its like to be an AB540 student and attending college. What are some of the biggest challenges? Are there any benefits? If so what are they?
7. What are the some of the issues that are central for AB540 students to get through college?

8. Is safety an issue for you and other AB540 students? How would you define a “safe space”? Do you have a place like that at your school? Do you have a place like this outside of school?
9. Have there been any educational opportunities that you could not participate in because of your status/situation? How does that make you feel? Tell me about it.
10. What changes would you like to see in our legal system that would benefit undocumented students like you? Why do you think these changes have not occurred thus far? What will it take for these changes to happen?

Interview Focus 1(a) – Differences amongst students

11. What are some of the most obvious opportunities that students, who are not undocumented, have that you and other undocumented students do not have? How does this make you feel? Tell me about it.
12. What are some of the “not-so-obvious” opportunities that students, who are not undocumented, have that you and other undocumented students do not have? Why would these not be so obvious to the average person?
13. For the opportunities you listed that you and other undocumented students do not have, do you make up for them in other ways? If so, what are those ways? Tell me about them.
14. Are there people and/or programs that provide assistance in making up for these opportunities you do not have? Tell me about them. Do you think other undocumented students have access to people and/or programs like these?

15. Do you think it is fair that undocumented students need to make up for these opportunities? Why?

Interview Focus 2 – Racialization

1. How would you define “race”? Would you classify yourself as part of a race(s)? If so, what race(s)?
2. How would you define “racism”?
3. Based on these definitions of “race” and “racism”, have you ever experienced or witnessed “racism”? How did it make you feel? Tell me about it.
4. Are there any similarities between being discriminated because of your race and being discriminated because of your immigration status? Tell me about them.
5. Do the consequences of being discriminated because of your race and immigration status ever overlap?
6. Is there one form of discrimination that is worse than the other? Which is it and why do you believe this?
7. Do you think discrimination because of someone’s immigration status is a form of racism? If so, why and how does this happen? Tell me about it.
8. What race do you think the general public attaches the term “undocumented” to? Why do you think the general public does this? What contributes to their connection between (the race mentioned by the student) and the term “undocumented”?
9. How would you describe yourself to a stranger? To a friend? What about yourself? How do you see yourself?

Close

Anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

Thank you very much.

Appendix B: CMUS (College Matriculation of Undocumented Students) Survey

Initial Questions

1. Are you an undocumented student?	Yes (1)	No (0)
2. What state do you live in?		

[If answer to survey question 1 is no or if answer to survey question 2 is not in the United States, then the student is not eligible. If the student is not eligible, then the following statement will appear: “You are not eligible to participate in this survey and should not complete the remainder of this survey.”]

Likert Scale Questions

Please select a response that best describes your feelings about each statement.

3	I want to go to college.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

4	My immigration status makes it hard to go to college.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

5	I feel that there are state laws that make it harder for me to go to college	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

6	I feel that there are state	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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	laws that make it harder for me to complete college.	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Disagree (1)
7	I have the same college opportunities that other students, who are not undocumented, have.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
8	I have less college opportunities than other students, who are not undocumented, have.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
9	My biggest challenge in going to college is money.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
10	My biggest challenge in going to college is racism.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
11	My biggest challenge in going to college is my grades.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)

12	My biggest challenge in going to college is this country's immigration laws.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
13	My biggest challenge in going to college is my state's policy on undocumented students.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
14	My biggest challenge in going to college is my gender.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
15	My state provides programs that help undocumented students.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
16	My school provides programs that help undocumented students.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
17	I have a teacher(s) who helps me with going to	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree

	college.					(1)
18	I have a counselor(s) who helps me with going to college.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
19	I have a family member(s) who helps me with going to college.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
20	I have a community member(s) who helps me with going to college.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
21	I have no one who helps me with going to college.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
22	If I were not undocumented, then it would be easier to go to college.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
23	If I were not	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly

	undocumented, then I would apply to more scholarships.	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Disagree (1)
24	If I were not undocumented, I would apply to more colleges.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
25	If I were not undocumented, I would have a better life.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
26	I have been discriminated against because of my race.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
27	I have been discriminated against because of my gender.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
28	I have been discriminated against because of my immigrant status.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)

29	Discrimination because of my immigration status is worse than discrimination because of my race.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
30	Discrimination because of a person' immigration status is like racism.	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)

Future Plans Questions

31. When did you find out that your immigration status would affect your plans for college?

- 12th grade
- 11th grade
- 10th grade
- 9th grade
- 8th grade
- 7th grade
- 6th grade
- 5th grade

- before 5th grade

32. Within one year after graduating from high school, I did or I plan on...[Check all that apply]

- Getting a fulltime job and not go to college
- Attending a university
- Not doing anything
- Attending a community college
- Staying at home to ...
 - Raise a family
 - Help out the family

33. To how many colleges did you apply for admission this year?*

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7-10
- 11 or more
- none

34. What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?*

* Denotes questions adapted from the CIRP Freshman Survey
<<http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php>>

- Vocational Certificate
- Associate (A.A. or equivalent)
- Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- Ph.D. or Ed.D.
- M.D., D.O., D.D.S., or D.V.M
- J.D. (Law)
- B.D. or M.DIV. (Divinity)
- None
- other

Demographic Questions

35. Are you*:

- Female
- Male

36. How old are you? _____

37. What year did you or will you graduate high school?*

- 2011
- 2010
- 2009 or earlier
- Did not or will not graduate high school

38. Will you be enrolling, or are you enrolled, in college by fall 2011?*

- Yes

- No

39. What was your average grade in high school?*

- A or A+
- A-
- B+
- B
- B-
- C+
- C
- D
- F

40. Are you: (Mark all that apply)*

- White/Caucasian
- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian American/Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Mexican American/Chicano
- Puerto Rican
- Other Latino
- Other

41. How many family members live in your home? _____

a. How many family members who live in your home are citizens? _____

b. How many family members who live in your home are undocumented? _____

42. Is your total annual household income*

- Less than \$10,000?
- \$10,000 – \$14,999?
- \$15,000 – \$19,999?
- \$20,000 – \$24,999?
- \$25,000 – \$29,999?
- \$30,000 – \$39,999?
- \$40,000 – \$49,999?
- \$50,000 – \$59,999?
- \$60,000 – \$74,999?
- \$75,000 – \$99,999?
- \$100,000 or more?

43. Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your college education?

(Mark one)*

- None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds)
- Some (but probably will have enough funds)
- Major (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college)

44. How much of your first year's educational expenses (room, board, tuition, and fees)

do you expect to cover from each of the sources listed below? (Mark one answer from each possible source)*

	0 %	1% to 25%	26% to 50%	51% to 75%	76% to 99%	100 %
Family resources (parents, relatives, spouse, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My own resources (savings from work, work-study, other income)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid, which need not be repaid (grant, scholarships, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aid, which must be repaid (loans, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal fundraisers for my education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other than above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for completing this survey.

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