

Aspiring Citizens:
Undocumented Youth's Pursuit of Community and Rights in Arizona

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2014 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2014

ABSTRACT

In recent years the state of Arizona passed a series of laws affecting undocumented immigrants, including Proposition 300 in 2006 outlawing in-state tuition for undocumented youth. However, there has also been a reaction from these youth who refused to be relegated to the shadows and are demanding rights. Using mixed ethnographic methods, this dissertation research analyzes how undocumented Mexican youth in Arizona have experienced liminality after the passage of Proposition 300 as well as their ability to utilize their increased marginalization in order to build community amongst themselves and fight for basic rights—a process known as cultural citizenship. These immigrant youth are of the 1.5 generation, who are brought to the United States at a young age, grow up in the country and share characteristics with both first and second-generation immigrants.

Even though undocumented 1.5 generation immigrants are raised and acculturated within this country and treated the same as other children while in the public school system, they have been denied basic rights upon approaching adulthood because of their illegality. This includes limiting access to affordable higher education as well as public services and legal work. Consequently, they are unable to fully incorporate into U.S. society and they end up transitioning into illegality after leaving school. This is especially true in Arizona, a state that has passed some of the strictest anti-immigrant laws in the country aiming to deter undocumented immigrants from staying in the state. However, I argue that this increased marginalization has had an unintended consequence of creating a space that allowed for these youth to come together and form a community. I further posit that this community provides valuable social capital and access to resources and

information that mitigates the possibility of downward assimilation. Moreover, this community offers its members a safety net that allows them to publically claim their undocumented status in order to fight for their right to have a pathway towards citizenship. As a result, they have been able to gain some victories, but are still fighting for their ultimate goal to become citizens.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for their time, assistance and support throughout this long journey. I am grateful to all the Dreamers who welcomed me into their organization and helped me with this research. I would have not been able to complete this dissertation without your willingness to tell me your Dreamer stories and I treasure the opportunity that I got to know each one of you. I am especially appreciative of Elizabeth's help throughout my research, your advice and support helped me a great deal.

I would like to express my gratitude to all my committee members. First, I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Takeyuki (Gaku) Tsuda, for your guidance, feedback and encouragement. Your advice and insights were invaluable and your accessibility unmatched. Thank you for being one of the best advisors a graduate student could expect. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Marie Provine, who served as my co-chair for my master's project in Justice Studies, assisted my acceptance to the PhD program and graciously agreed to serve on my dissertation committee—your consistent support throughout the years is immensely valued. In addition, I would like to acknowledge my third member of my committee, Dr. Amber Wutich, who has been instrumental in my success throughout the past five years. Your rigorous training in methods my first year in the program reignited my interest in research and brought me to love methods. Thank you for your consistent mentorship, letting me barge in on you in times of “crisis” and listening to me and offering helpful, unbiased advice. Lastly, although not an official committee member, I must recognize Dr. Alexandra Brewis Slade for serving as a remarkable supervisor and mentor. Thank you for the guidance as I

traversed work, school and parenthood. I am grateful for all the opportunities you have given me and for fostering an environment that has allowed me to succeed on many different fronts.

I must also acknowledge my friends and family, whom have been stabilizing forces throughout this journey. First, to my greatest champion, Manuel Hernandez Saenz—thank you so very much for the support throughout these many years, living through being ignored while I toiled away on the computer, accompanying me on my field work, helping me get by day-to-day, listening to my frustrations and always encouraging me to move forward. I truly could not have done this without you! I am grateful to my mother who not only enrolled me in college when I was eighteen and not sure what I was going to do with my life, but also for the emotional and financial support throughout the years. Although my father departed this earth before his time, I want to thank him for teaching me to be a critical thinker and always encouraging me to excel in school. To my brother and sister, I completed this PhD in part for you. Thank you for always encouraging my pursuit of higher education and for all the prideful words you have offered me over the years. Mona Scott, you inspired me to continue my education when I first sat in on your class Guanajuato so many years ago. Thank you for being a constant guiding force supporting me and giving me much needed breaks during stressful times throughout the last eight years of graduate school. I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students and colleagues. Catherine Nichols, thank you for keeping me grounded in the first few semesters of the program. Meg du Brey, Meredith Gartin, Rhian Stotts and Deborah Williams, thank you for your willingness to help edit at the last minute. Melissa Beresford, I am grateful for the hours of seemingly endless discussions

of school, research and career, and always offering a sounding board when issues arose. You helped me make it over the finish line, down to the last minute! I am also appreciative of to all my other close friends and colleagues who have been unconditionally supportive through all these years.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge those who have affected my long educational journey over the past fifteen years. My co-chair for my master's project, Dr. Monica Varsayni, who was instrumental in the decision to continue my studies. Thank you for asking me the daunting question of "what I was going to do next?" and encouraging me to continue my research. Other significant influences on my anthropological career have been two people from my undergraduate studies. I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Allan Burns, who took me to Mexico on his ethnographic field school and continued to write letters of recommendations throughout the years. And finally, thank you to Dr. Alayne Unterberger, who took me to her field site in Mexico so many years ago and showed me what it means to be an anthropologist.

This research was funded by the School of Human Evolution and Social Change as well as the Graduate Professional Student Association.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2006 I first started working with undocumented¹ immigrant youth. At that time I was completing my master's degree as well as working for one of Arizona's state universities as an admissions counselor. I became interested in the topic when I was at a college fair at a local high school and a young Latino man approached my table and asked me how he could apply to the university. I gave him a paper application and when he looked at the page where it had space for his personal information, he closed the application, looked at me apprehensively, and then asked me how he could apply if he did not have a social security number. He was the first undocumented high school student to ask me that question. I did not have an answer, but I realized that this took great courage on his part. While I soon found out that at that time there was an unofficial system in place to help undocumented students, I wondered how these students found a pathway to college, what networks they had, and what their support system looked like. Thus, I started my research with undocumented college students.

Throughout 2006 and into 2007, when I was conducting my master's project, I was barely able to find seven undocumented college students to interview, although I suspected there were many more. When I asked the participants if they knew other undocumented students going to college, the typical answer was no or perhaps their parents knew someone who knew someone. For example, one of my female respondents told me that she had only heard of other undocumented college students through family

¹ The term undocumented or unauthorized immigrant in this paper signifies a person who is residing in the country without a valid visitor/work visa or who has overstayed her visa. However, this review will be citing studies that focus on immigrants in general, as well as specific research on the undocumented. Thus, I will use the terms undocumented or unauthorized to qualify specific research pertaining to this population.

friends, but she personally had not met any of them. Her friends in college were U.S. citizens who mostly did not know she was undocumented. Thus, undocumented students did not have a close network of people with similar experiences upon whom they could rely. However, a couple years after finishing my master's degree, I started to notice something happening on the university's campus that made me question whether or not they had been able to build a community.

I finished my MA research in the spring of 2007. The Arizona legislature was preparing to implement Proposition 300 later that year, which would force undocumented youth to pay out-of-state tuition. Shortly after graduating with my master's degree, I changed positions on campus and was no longer working in university admissions. Thus, I was no longer directly connected to what was happening with undocumented students applying and attending the university after the state increased tuition. However, three years later, the landscape had changed for undocumented youth. One day in 2010, I was walking to my office on campus and noticed signs around the major walkways simply stating "DREAM Act Now."² This was significant to me because these signs promoted legislation that would allow for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrant youth, and many people at the time did not know about it. It was then that I began to wonder what was happening and who was putting these signs up. This was especially intriguing because just a few years earlier, not many even knew that undocumented college students were enrolled in college.

One year afterwards, in 2011, when I started my dissertation research, I learned that undocumented college students had found each other. They did so shortly after the

² The DREAM Act is discussed in detail in the next section.

implementation of Proposition 300, and they had created a supportive social network that they had lacked just a few years earlier. This ethnography is an account of the empowerment of undocumented youth over the past several years through community building. This fast-moving story emerges through information derived from mixed-methods of participant observation, netnography, and archival research. Each methodology provided unique insights into the historical context, motivations, activities, and challenges confronting the youth I studied. In the process of my research, I employ, build upon, and critique several theories or assumptions often associated with undocumented immigrants.

First, I challenge the notion that anti-immigrant laws effectively deter undocumented immigrants from coming to and remaining in a politically defined region (e.g. state). I argue that the increased marginality created through anti-immigrant laws is exactly what allows for community formation by those most affected. It is this collective of individuals that are then able to demand rights. Second, I argue that not all undocumented immigrants have the same experiences—that undocumented youth possess valuable knowledge and skills that differ from their parents. It is this human capital that allows for unauthorized youth to effectively fight for their rights. Third, I posit that the community that undocumented immigrant youth in Arizona created provides valuable resources to its members. As a result, those closely involved with the community avoid downward assimilation into an underclass. Lastly, I challenge the mistaken belief that "cultural citizenship" (as defined by Rosaldo and Flores 1997) is about demanding rights on the basis of cultural differences. Instead, groups of individuals experience marginalization based upon these cultural differences, but the actual claim to rights is an

assertion that one becomes a member of civic society based upon their similarities to other citizens. Moreover, I challenge the assumption in cultural citizenship that an ethnic group, more specifically Latinos who have legal citizenship, create cultural citizenship by extending their community to the undocumented. In fact, I found it is these undocumented youth who have created and enacted their own cultural citizenship, gaining rights in the process.

This dissertation is laid out in six chapters. This first chapter introduces undocumented immigrants' social incorporation, defines cultural citizenship and discusses prior research on undocumented youth's political participation. I conclude the chapter by outlining the methodology employed to carry out this research. The next chapter discusses how Arizona has one of the largest populations of undocumented immigrants in the country. Against the backdrop of a historical overview of national immigration laws, I discuss the specific laws targeting immigrants in this state, which resulted in Arizona becoming one of the nation's most hostile places for unauthorized immigrants and their children. After discussing the politics of undocumented immigration, Chapter 3 begins the theoretical and analytical argument for this dissertation. I take Turner's (1969) idea of liminality and explain how Arizona's anti-immigrant legislation increased the marginality of undocumented immigrant youth. At the same time, these laws—intended to deter immigrants from being in the state—actually had the unintended consequence of creating a space for undocumented youth to come together and form a community, laying the foundation to enact their cultural citizenship.

In Chapter 4, I examine a variety of topics surrounding the benefits of community. This includes how Arizona's undocumented immigrant youth built valuable social connections inside and outside their own network that have provided access to social, emotional, and monetary resources. The protection this community provides allows undocumented youth to come out of the shadows in order to claim rights. The fifth and culminating ethnographic chapter discusses how these youth have mobilized their community to publically fight for rights, activating their cultural citizenship. I conclude the dissertation with an update on where undocumented youth are today and what future directions they may take. In addition, I discuss gaps in my research and suggest further avenues of inquiry.

Acculturation and the 1.5 Generation

While some U.S. migration literature focuses on undocumented immigrants in general (Chavez 1991; Chavez 1992; Coutin 2003; Flores 1997; Flores 2003), little is known about undocumented youth brought to the country at a young age who grow up in the American school system. These immigrants are considered the 1.5 generation because they were born outside of the U.S. and then brought to the country at a young age. Since they are partially raised in the United States, they share characteristics with both first and second-generation immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Rumbaut and Ima 1988). However, for previous research purposes they have often been lumped together with second-generation immigrants.

There is evidence that second-generation immigrants, that include the 1.5 generation, assimilate to U.S. society better than their first-generation parents. Portes and

Rumbaut (2001) performed the first comprehensive study of the post-1965 immigrant second-generation. Through surveys, in-depth interviews and school data in San Diego and Miami, the authors study the trajectories of various groups of second-generation immigrant youth including Mexicans, Cubans, Nicaraguans, Columbians, Dominican Republicans, Haitians, Trinidadians, Jamaicans, Filipinos, Chinese, Laotians, Cambodians, and Vietnamese. They investigated immigrant youth's self-esteem, language ability, identity, amounts of perceived discrimination, achievement, ambition and school and family life.

Portes and Rumbaut state that the current second-generation is experiencing adaptation to mainstream America through segmented assimilation, or alternative paths of integration. Depending upon immigrant backgrounds and nationalities, the second-generation can incorporate themselves into three trajectories: 1) successful middle-class adaptation; 2) downward assimilation into the underclass; or 3) economic success while maintaining their immigrant values and beliefs. By looking at educational achievement, Portes and Rumbaut are optimistic about immigrant children's incorporation. Common stories of success support immigrant parents' goals and give reason to anticipate that most, if not all, members of the second-generation will successfully join the American mainstream in the future (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:268). However, Portes and Rumbaut also point out that the chosen path of incorporation depends on a variety of decisive factors that include:

- 1) the history of the first-generation; 2) the pace of acculturation among parents and children and its bearing on normative integration; 3) the barriers, cultural and economic, confronted by second-generation youth in their quest for successful adaptation; 4) the family and community resources for confronting these barriers (2001:45-46).

Thus, examples of determinants that affect successful incorporation include weak family resources and poor schools. Another obstacle that is not fully addressed in their book is legal status. For instance, within their sample there are 1.5 generation immigrants who may not have legal documentation. Without legal status, these youth cannot become fully incorporated into society, especially because they are denied equal access to post-secondary education and employment. Therefore, undocumented immigrants often face steeper obstacles for economic and societal incorporation than “legal” immigrants, and they also encounter opposing messages. For example, parents cannot work legally, yet their children are granted many of the same benefits as children who are citizens.

While undocumented immigrants are excluded in many ways, they are also afforded some benefits such as the ability for their undocumented children to attend K-12 public school (*Plyler vs. Doe*, US Supreme Court 457 US 202, 1982). The ability to attend school helps these children acculturate to U.S. society. Research shows that immigrants who come to the United States at an early age and live here for a long period of time are more acculturated than those who come here later in life (Berry 1997). Some variables used to measure acculturation include: language acquisition and use, cultural identity, personal relationships, family beliefs, values, and practicing of cultural traditions (Cuellar et al. 1995; Magaña et al. 1996). According to Berry (1997), the process of acculturation includes the learning of new behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that are necessary to integrate into daily life in order to function in a new culture.

Attending school has been shown to be the primary source of immigrant acculturation (Gibson 1998; Suarez-Orozco, et. al 2008). Zhou (1997) agrees that school

attendance is a critical first step in gaining information and expertise, which students will be able to capitalize on later in their lives and successfully adapt to American culture. Formal education is a way to teach immigrants about history, language, cultural ideals, and norms of the new culture (Berry 1997). Thus, it is usually easier for the second-generation, which includes the 1.5 generation, and subsequent generations to acculturate.

Although 1.5 generation immigrants may have spent a considerable amount of time in their home country, once they arrive here, they are raised in a similar manner to U.S. citizens: they often speak English fluently and understand U.S. society better than their parents (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Rumbaut and Ima 1988). As such, it can be argued that they are in a better position than their undocumented parents to gain the legal rights afforded to U.S. citizens, such as the right to work legally, the right to vote, and currently in Arizona the right to be recognized as in-state residents for college tuition purposes. My research takes these challenges as a starting point.

Once undocumented students reach high school and start investigating the options to continue onto college or enter the workforce, they begin to realize that they are transitioning into “illegality”—because they are denied many rights that other young adults enjoy, such as the ability to drive, access to in-state tuition and financial aid, and access to legal work (Gonzalez 2008). This transition can be difficult and leaves few, if any options for undocumented youth to become productive members of society. As a result, after high school, undocumented youth face a greater chance of downward assimilation because legal barriers steer them in that direction (Abrego 2006; Gonzales 2008). Thus, even if unauthorized immigrants youth are able to rapidly acculturate and socially integrate, there are still political barriers preventing full incorporation. While

many scholars investigate the transition of undocumented youth into illegality (Abrego 2006; Gonzales 2008), I explore their fight to transition back into legality.

Undocumented Immigrants and Political Participation

Until recently, there have not been as many research studies on undocumented immigrants, nor of the 1.5 undocumented generation. The reason perhaps is because before 9/11 in 2001 and the economic downturn starting in 2007, unauthorized immigrants (both first and 1.5 generation) were not blocked from accessing state-funded programs (e.g. English language classes) and could attend college fairly easily if they excelled academically. However, in recent years there has been increased antagonism towards undocumented immigrants, which has prompted research geared specifically towards undocumented immigrants manifesting various levels of political incorporation. For example, Varsanyi (2005) found that undocumented immigrants engage in different types of civic participation even though they cannot vote. This includes participating in labor unions, endorsing candidates for office, attending campaign rallies and participating in “getting out the vote.” While Varsanyi did not distinguish between first and 1.5 generation immigrants, there are other recent studies of undocumented immigrant youth’s political incorporation.

Seif’s (2004) research showed that Californian undocumented college students participated politically in order to fight the state for educational rights through petitioning, speaking with the press, attending community events, and wearing political t-shirts, among other things. As a result, these undocumented youth were able to persuade the legislature to pass A.B. 540, which granted them the right to pay in-state tuition for

college. In another example of undocumented youth's political engagement, Gonzales (2008) describes their participation in the 2006 national immigrant rights marches across the country—protesting a Congressional bill that would have criminalized all undocumented immigrants and anyone who gave them aid. There are still, however, many questions to be answered about this population. Research sites should also be more diverse. All the research cited here has been conducted in California. This research, conducted in Arizona, helps to bridge that gap.

Cultural Citizenship: An Introduction

Cultural citizenship takes the position that subordinated groups can utilize agency and gain membership within society despite their cultural and ethnic diversity. It is a process by which disenfranchised groups claim identity, space, and rights (Flores and Benmayor 1997). Within the cultural citizenship framework a shared sense of identity helps create community where people feel safe; space is necessary for both building community and for publically fight for rights; and claiming rights is the ultimate goal. However, the definition that is most widely employed by Rosaldo and Flores (1997) is problematic because it suggests that rights are gained by exerting differences from the mainstream society. They define *cultural citizenship* as: "the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong, in the sense of participating in the nations-state's democratic process" (Rosaldo and Flores 1997:57). I argue that rights are demanded based upon similarities to the majority citizenry, rather than differences. Thus, I seek to clarify what is cultural citizenship and how it is created and employed.

In order for cultural citizenship to form, rights of a group must first be taken away. According to Rosaldo (1997), cultural citizenship works within a realm of an unequal playing field where the mainstream concept of citizenship focuses on white males—those who differ in age, sexuality, race and gender are excluded from this concept. For instance, “racial minorities, women, gays, the disabled and others, struggle for full citizenship and full membership in U.S. society [and have] involved demands that extend beyond those of traditional white males” (Flores 2003:296). Latinos, racial and ethnic minorities themselves, are aware of these inequalities and long to belong, to be heard, and to be seen. Cultural citizenship is therefore a response to the dominant ideology (Rosaldo 1997). However, it is not just a response to the “dominant ideology” that makes cultural citizenship possible, but it can occur when the state deliberately limits or takes away rights from a group of people. In fact, the claim to rights often happens in civic realms such as schools, city government or trade unions (Rosaldo 2004), where rights were intentionally limited in the first place. It is this increased marginalization that allows for community creation, because those affected can come together in solidarity.

Cultural citizenship also refers to immigrants’ ability to build community that has a shared sense of identity and purpose, which is used to claim rights (Rosaldo 1994). I agree that community is necessary in order to gain rights, but the shared identity and purpose only serves to bring cohesion to the community. I contend that the demand for rights is not based upon their cultural differences that help form the community, but rather, their claim to rights relies upon the desire to have the same rights as citizens. That is, those demanding rights are doing so based upon a shared sense of American ideals and values.

I argue that many factors contributed to the “perfect storm” that allowed Arizonan undocumented immigrant youth to create and enact their *cultural citizenship*. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, undocumented immigrants became the target of tough anti-immigrant laws (Chavez 2008; Magaña 2013). This was further exacerbated by the economic downturn that began in 2007. As the housing market and economy worsened, attitudes towards undocumented Mexican immigrants in Arizona also deteriorated (Diaz et al. 2011). Before this time, undocumented children were able to live fairly “normal” lives. That is, they were able to access education and social services rather easily, and once they graduated high school they could access state-funded scholarships without a social security number. They even could get jobs fairly easily after graduating from college. Thus, while they still were in the shadows and marginalized without a widely supportive community, they could find ways to achieve their goals with few obstacles. However, once states enacted anti-immigrant legislation, especially in Arizona in the form of Proposition 300, they became singled out and directly marginalized. After 2006 it was much more difficult for undocumented youth to attend college, get a decent paying job, and drive. Overall fear of deportation increased dramatically.

While these Arizona laws increased undocumented youth’s marginality, I argue that it was precisely this alienation that allowed for them to find each other and form a community in Arizona. Along with their in-depth understanding of the U.S. social and political structure, they have used this community to enact cultural citizenship and fight for their rights based upon the fact that they are similar to other citizens. They are able to do so because they grew up in the country and understand what it is to be American. As a result, they have gained some victories. For example, in 2011 President Obama granted

them deferred action, which gives them temporary legal status. However, they still lack many rights in Arizona and they do not have a pathway to citizenship. As a result they are still fighting for comprehensive immigration reform.

Research Design

Study Population

I conducted my research with a group called the Arizona Dreamer Alliance (ADA) and one of its most active chapters (College Dreamers)³ located in the metropolitan Phoenix area. This group is led by young, undocumented, 1.5 generation immigrants. The group's main purpose is to lobby for the DREAM Act and immigrants' rights more generally. This organization is primarily made up of undocumented youth of Mexican decent, but the membership also includes undocumented youth from other countries, as well as allies who are permanent residents and citizens. However, for the purpose of this research I focused solely on Mexican-descended youth.

ADA currently serves as a governing body uniting many different chapters. The first and original chapter, College Dreamers, started in 2009 on a university's⁴ campus in the Phoenix area. Membership consisted of a large group of undocumented college students who were enrolled at the university when Proposition 300 passed. At the time of my research, this was by far the largest chapter because there were still many undocumented college students enrolled in the university. However, there were also several other chapters, including ones for high-school students, artists, queer/gay youth,

³ Arizona Dreamer Alliance and College Dreamers are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the origination and its members.

⁴ To protect the identity of the organization and my participants, I simply refer to the "university" instead of naming the specific institution.

and a group of parents. ADA has meetings that are open to the public. Members tend to belong to one or more chapters.

The term “Dreamer” is a label that many undocumented youth use to describe themselves. Deriving from the DREAM Act, the term became popular towards the end of 2010, the last time the DREAM Act was introduced in Congress. The term “Dreamer” thus refers to undocumented immigrant youth. Here is what ADA has to say about the terms “Dreamer” and “undocumented immigrant” in one of the education packets that group members handed out during a workshop:

Families, educators, community members, and immigrant youth themselves know that youth growing up in this country are anything but undocumented. Immigrant youth are documented in the honor roll certificates they receive, in the sports and clubs they belong to, in the high schools they attend and the relationships that they build.

This guide will use the word “undocumented” to refer to a student’s legal immigration status and not to undermine the roots that students have built in their communities. Sometimes instead of using “undocumented,” this guide will use the word Dreamer or Dreamers. (ADA Education Packet, obtained May 2011).

“Dreamer” has now become synonymous with undocumented youth, regardless of whether or not they are actively engaged in fighting for the DREAM Act. However, when I use the term in this dissertation, I am referring to members of ADA, as well as any undocumented immigrant youth who has attended a meeting, event, rally or workshop sponsored or promoted by the alliance or any other immigrant-rights group. That is, for purposes of this dissertation, Dreamers are the ones fighting for a pathway to citizenship.

Although they are Dreamers, the challenge for undocumented youth is that they are highly diverse. They live dispersed throughout the Phoenix Metropolitan area and they attended different types of schools, some with high Latino populations, others with

high Anglo populations, and some in wealthier school districts than others. They have different experiences, different family structures, different hopes and dreams. Some are older, while others are still in high school or recently graduated. Nonetheless, the members of ADA all have two things in common—first, they are undocumented and face similar obstacles in day-to-day life due to their legal status; and second, they want to fight for their right to have access to an affordable college education or join the military and legally contribute to society through work and service. Thus, for the purpose of this research they share similar characteristics as part of an alliance to fight for the right to become citizens.

Entering the Field

When I started my fieldwork at the end of May of 2011, I found that entering ADA was somewhat difficult. The alliance at that time was not as well organized as it is today. The ADA had a basic website with contact information and a calendar that listed events, but because it was close to summer, there were no meetings scheduled. Luckily, I found that there was an ADA information workshop open to the community on pathways for Dreamers to attend college. The event was at a local high school and it was there that I first learned about what the alliance was planning for the upcoming year. However, my first real break into the organization was in August of 2011, when I attended a gallery exhibition of an ADA member's photos about Dreamers.

I met a few active members at that event and explained my interest in becoming involved with the group for my research. As a result, they invited me to an “executive” meeting where all the presidents of each individual ADA chapter attend to discuss

pertinent business. After I attended a few events and meetings, I asked the leader of ADA if I could meet with her to discuss my research and whether or not she thought it would be feasible to observe the group for research purposes. I explained that I would be a participant observer, attending meeting and events as a member of the alliance, but that I would be doing so from a position as a researcher. Following our discussion, I was allowed to formally ask for permission of the ADA's executive board and was subsequently given authorization to become a participant observer. My overall entrance into the community was not difficult, as the alliance members welcomed newcomers, but my personal background may have posed minor difficulties for me.

As a white woman in her mid-thirties, my position as a researcher was somewhat outside the norm for the members of this group. At meetings I would often be the only Caucasian person in attendance and I was often the oldest person there. Most of these Dreamers were under the age of 26. However, while I believe this was an issue in the beginning, I worked hard to build rapport with members by consistently attending meetings and events while engaging with members on a personal level. Moreover, I believe the fact that I had lived in Mexico and spoke Spanish had some influence on my acceptance in the group.

While I perceived that my age and my "whiteness" was a hindrance, it also served as a source of "power," which I had to carefully negotiate while conducting my research. Members of ADA are activists in the community, and as a researcher I had to be careful to ensure that my involvement with the group would not influence the outcome of my research. That is, as a researcher I wanted my presence within the group to impact their lives as minimally as possible, as if I were not present. For example, there were a couple

of “jokes” about how I could do something for them because I was “white.” In one instance they were trying to find out where a private event was located because they wanted to protest it. During the meeting a couple of members jokingly singled me out as someone who could get that information from the organizers specifically because of the color of my skin. However, as my ethical position as a researcher, I did not volunteer my services in any way that could have swayed any outcome of what ADA was trying to accomplish. I did not sense that there was an implicit agreement that I was obligated to help them in some way, but I was often asked to volunteer for events. While I did offer my time to help with events and activities, I avoided taking leadership in any of their endeavors. Therefore, I was able to participate in a variety of events while minimizing the effect of my presence.

Data Collection Methods

This ethnography uses multiple methods to help fully develop the picture of the undocumented immigrant youth movement in Arizona. Data collection methods included participant observation, informal interviews, semi-structured interviews, content analysis of newspaper articles and email archives, and online participant observation (netnography). I officially started this research in May 2011 and conducted one year of active field research. Once I finished my interviews in June 2012, I remained engaged with the community, even if peripherally. I continued to do “passive” research by keeping up with events and happenings and communicating with informants through online social networking sites.

Field Notes

I wrote detailed field notes on a regular basis throughout my fieldwork. Descriptive field notes illustrated my observations through watching and listening and also included any interactions, observations, and notes about informal and semi-structured interviews that I conducted (Bernard 2006). I also made methodological and analytical notes, which allowed me to reflect on research methods and preliminary analyses (Bernard 2006). Finally, my initial field notes during the first six months of fieldwork helped me to identify important domains and questions. In addition to the literature, these informed the specific questions I explored in the semi-structured interviews.

Participant Observation & Informal Interviews

One of my primary methods of data collection was participant observation, which is where the observer actively participates in the daily lives and activities of the people being studied while noting observations (Dewalt et al. 1998; Spradley 1980). As a participant observer, I started attending ADA meetings in order to gain access to the population of undocumented youth. By attending regular meetings and actively speaking with the members, I began to gain the rapport needed to conduct interviews and ensure open and honest responses from my informants (Bernard 2006). In addition, I participated in a recall campaign alongside members. I also attended ADA-sponsored events.

During the initial phase of participant observation, I also conducted informal interviews with a wide variety of members in order to gain an understanding of relevant topics for the semi-structured interviews. The informal interviews also helped build

rapport and can uncover overlooked topics of interest (Bernard 2006). I asked about reasons for fighting for the DREAM Act, how members became involved in ADA, personal goals, relationships with friends and family, day-to-day activities, and political participation. Participant observation also allowed me to identify key informants with a breadth of knowledge and access to information, who are in addition trustworthy, observant, and articulate (Bernard 2006; Johnson 1990). These key informants helped me verify the information I obtained through other fieldwork methods, e.g. information that I found in archives or past events that were brought up in discussions. These key informants also helped me recruit other interview subjects.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I decided to employ a purposive sampling strategy to choose informants for formal interviews. In this method, the researcher identifies a group or community to investigate and then selects people within that population to interview (Bernard 2006). Although the non-probability sampling methods limit the ability to generalize the findings, I decided this was the best method of choosing informants for this exploratory research. My goal was to discover key themes that could be used for further systematic investigations.

I recruited 19 participants for semi-structured interviews; eleven females and eight males. Respondents were all 1.5 generation, originally born in Mexico and undocumented at the time of the interview. They had arrived in the U.S. before the age of 15, and were between the ages of 18-26. Only three participants had arrived after the

age of 11, but the rest had entered the country before the age of ten. Moreover, all grew up and graduated from high school in the Phoenix-metro area.

I conducted interviews in two phases. The first set in December 2011 was with 12 participants who were actively engaged with the alliance. They had been involved with ADA between six months to three years and had attended meetings and events regularly, as well as volunteered for outreach events and the recall campaigns. Most of these participants were Dreamers whom I saw regularly at meetings and had gotten to know well through my participant observation. Thus, I had a well-developed rapport with them, which allowed me to elicit rich responses to questions.

According to previous research, a sample size of 12 informants is sufficient in order to capture the most salient themes for a heterogeneous population (Guest et al. 2006). In fact, I reached saturation with 12 participants, but I decided to interview newer members for the second phase of formal interviews in order to see if I would elicit different responses to my interview questions. Thus, I interviewed seven more Dreamers in May of 2012. These participants had been members of the alliance for fewer than six months, but were actively involved with the group through attending meetings and events. I chose these respondents to test whether or not I would find different information with younger youth who may not have been able to attend college. I also wanted to see if they found the same benefits of their involvement as the previous interviewees. Nevertheless, their responses were also similar to the responses to the original 12 interviews. Thus, upon reaching saturation I decided to stop interviews.

With the permission of the participants, I digitally recorded all the interviews, while taking field notes so that both the interview and my observations supplemented

each other (Dewalt et al. 1998). Interview questions were open-ended to elicit the most information possible (Bernard 2006), and were specifically formulated to address my research objectives. Questions included topics surrounding their migration story, from arrival to present day; plans, dreams and goals; level of schooling and educational experiences; how life had changed with the anti-immigrant laws in Arizona; situations in which they had “come out” as undocumented; any encounters with law enforcement; their identity; how they became involved in the alliance and how membership had affected their life; relationships with other ADA members; participation in political movements; and use of the internet when connecting with group members.

It is also important to note that respondents were given 25 dollars in exchange for their time. I decided to offer this gift in order to incentivize participation as well as to provide some small measure of financial support for a population that has had difficulties earning money in traditional labor market. However, while I believe that the respondents were grateful for the money, I also sensed that they would have been willing to share their stories without that incentive. That is, most participants were open about their status and thought that it was important to share their history with an outsider. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. All recorded interviews were transcribed in their entirety by a professional transcribing service in order to capture every salient theme during the coding and analysis phase.

Online Research & Netnography

A substantial amount of my research took place through the internet. I not only searched for published news stories, but I also was a participant observer online. This

procedure, known as “netnography,” is defined as “participant-observational research based in online field work [that] uses computer-mediated communications as a source of data to arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomena” (Kozinets 2010). This method is often used in conjunction with other research methods, such as the ones I stated above. In fact, access to these resources greatly supplemented the participant observation and interviews for two reasons. First, I was able to verify and supplement my informants past accounts with archival material stored online. Second, I was able to keep apprised of ADA’s activities more closely between meetings as many of their events and demonstrations happened at the last minute.

My sources of online ethnography were Facebook and the Arizona Dreamer Alliance’s “Google group.” Facebook is an online social networking site that allows for individuals to have their own personal “pages” as well as organizations to have “pages” and/or “groups.” A Facebook page is different than a Facebook group. A page is open to the public, where a “group” may or may not be open. A “like” on Facebook is where individuals signal that they support a page, but individuals can become members of a group only by “joining” it. Whenever the owner of a page or a group posts something on their virtual “wall” it will appear in all the group members “news feed,” as well as anyone who has liked the page. Members see their news feed when they first log onto Facebook. Individuals can increase their online network by “Friending” someone on Facebook. This allows each other to see their personal pages including photos and “wall posts” or any public activity that an individual does through Facebook.

The Arizona Dreamer Alliance and most of its chapters had Facebook pages. I immediately “liked” those pages so that I could be updated on their happenings. In addition, ADA has a private Facebook group that I requested to join shortly after I had initiated my participant-observation. Furthermore, several ADA members “friended” me early into my research, so I was able to view their personal pages and interact with them outside of meetings and events. Therefore, I was able to keep regularly apprised of events and information between the weekly meetings I attended.

A Google group, on the other hand, is a forum where members of the group can send emails and communicate. For the ADA Google group, people must be invited to join in order to send or receive email messages. Google stores an archive of all messages sent so that members, new or old, can view the messages at any time. I was given permission to join the Google group shortly after starting my participant observation. There were over five thousand emails in the Google group archive at the time I conducted my research. To determine relevant emails, I used the “google search” button to conduct a word search, based upon key words from the literature. My goal was to find emails pertaining to my research questions. I ended up selecting 676 emails that I categorized under the following groups: deportation and detainment; events, workshops, and fundraisers; meeting notes; news media; press releases; protests, actions and; voter registration and canvassing; and school and scholarships. In addition to emails, I completed a web search and found over 100 news stories for analysis about undocumented immigrant youth in Arizona between the dates of January 2007 and January 2012.

Methods of Data Analysis

I conducted content analysis on all of the text from my field notes, the transcriptions from interviews, and newspaper articles. I took an inductive approach to the content analysis (Krippendorff 2012) that was informed by theoretical concepts such as liminality, social capital, community building, and the use of the public sphere for demanding rights. I created a set of codes (or themes) based off of these concepts from the literature and then applied these codes to all of the texts. Once I completed coding I was able to conduct a systematic analysis of the data in order to draw conclusions (Bernard and Ryan 2010).

I identified the following 5 overarching themes and their corresponding subthemes: *social capital* including the subthemes of sharing information, bonding capital/strong ties, and bridging capital/weak ties; *claiming space* with subthemes of internet, public and private space; *civic participation* including subthemes of local/state participation, national participation, and civil disobedience; *identity and representation* with subthemes of identifying as American, diversity, and dignity and respect; and lastly *thriving in adversity* including the subthemes of limitations/difficulties from being undocumented, agency/working within the system, awards/accolades, and education and training. I developed a codebook and each subtheme had a corresponding definition and inclusion and exclusion criteria.

I analyzed the data at the sentence level and coded the content using the text analysis software MAXQDA. That is, I used the subthemes to conduct the content analysis of the data by systematically going line-by-line through all the text and using the software program to highlight and code passages that corresponded to my prescribed

themes and code definitions. Once completed, I was able to methodically assess what themes were used most to finish my analysis of the data.

For the 676 emails, I used QDA Miner and its Wordstat function, which is another text analysis software that allows for exploratory text mining and visualization. That is, it can produce a diagram that allows you to quickly identify key themes and extract the relevant passages. I imported all the emails into QDA Miner and ran Wordstat, which was able to group emails together that had shared key words that matched my themes. I was then able to pull out and export the key passages from these emails that I then used for detailed content analysis and coding. As a result, I ended up conducting content analysis on approximately 100 passages that corresponded with my pre-determined themes above.

As a result of my analysis most of the original subthemes are represented in this write up of this dissertation. I found the most salient codes to come from the themes of social capital, civic participation, and claiming space, which aligns with the cultural citizenship literature. However, for the themes of *identity and representation* and *thriving in adversity* I only found the subthemes of identifying as American, limitations/difficulties being undocumented, and agency/working within the system as relevant to this dissertation. These themes coincide with literature on liminality as well as the research on how human capital provides valuable resources for unauthorized immigrants. The exemplar quotes used in the write-up of the results were extracted because they most closely represented the code definitions.

Ethical Considerations

When I embarked on this dissertation project I was fearful that it would be difficult to find undocumented youth to interview, a problem I encountered when I conducted my master's research. Historically unauthorized immigrants have been "hidden in the shadows" and reluctant to talk about their status. The Institutional Review Board deems undocumented immigrants as a vulnerable population, thus extra precautions must be taken when soliciting participation to safe-guard their identity. However, I was pleasantly surprised that the population of Dreamers I worked with were the opposite of hidden in the shadows. In fact, they were very open and vocal about their status and wished for others to hear their stories. For example, when I stated that I would not disclose their identities in my write-up of results, many said that I could use their names. I nevertheless created pseudonyms for all informants' names, organizations and specific places to provide protection of this information.

Chapter 2: Immigration and Arizona: A Historical Overview

It is important to understand the context of immigration to the U.S. and more specifically Arizona before discussing how undocumented youth came to fight for their rights. Undocumented immigration to the United States is one of the most politically controversial topics today. Due to various perceived threats from foreigners, such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11, drug trafficking, and more recently, an economic depression, border enforcement and immigration control continue to be a main policy issue for local, state and federal governments (Chavez 2008; Massey et al. 2002). Historically immigration enforcement has been a federal responsibility, but recently that has changed as local governments have started to do their own immigration control. As a result, Arizona legislatures have passed laws specifically targeting undocumented immigrants, including 1.5 undocumented immigrants.

Over the past two decades there have been changes to federal laws that have allowed many states to adopt policies targeting the undocumented in attempt to deter unauthorized immigration. Nonetheless, there are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States, of which seven million (59%) are from Mexico (Hoefer et al. 2010; Passel and Cohn 2009). Unauthorized immigrants comprise 4.5 percent of the country's population and an estimated 5.4 percent of its workforce (Passel and Cohen 2009). A majority of these immigrants live in the following ten receiving states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, and Virginia—Arizona is the sixth largest receiving state (Passel and Cohn 2009). There are numerous reasons that help explain why Arizona has a large

population of unauthorized immigrants. Thus, this chapter outlines the history of migration policies affecting the state over the past several decades, which led to the situation where Dreamers were disenfranchised.

Demographics in Arizona

Arizona has a total of 5.1 million people living throughout the state⁵. The largest portion of the population, 3 million, lives in the Phoenix-metropolitan area, which resides within Maricopa County. The overall demographics of the population are as follows: 57.1% White, 30.8% Latino, 4 % American Indian, 3.6 % Black, 2.5% Asian, and 2.1% other. Thus, the Latino population is the largest ethnic minority in the state. The Latino population consists mainly of people of Mexican descent. Of the approximately 1.3 million Latinos in Arizona in 2009, 91.6% identify themselves as Mexican, 1.6% as Puerto Rican, 1.9% as “Central American” (primarily Guatemalan and Salvadoran), 1.1% as “South American” (mainly Colombian and Peruvian), and less than 5% identified as from another Latino group.

Within the Latino immigrant population, Passel and Cohn (2009) estimated that there were one half million undocumented immigrants in the state of Arizona in 2008. However, in 2011 Passel and Cohn published revised numbers that showed a two-year decline in the undocumented population with approximately 400,000 unauthorized immigrants in Arizona. However, this population still places Arizona in the top ten receiving states for unauthorized immigrants. This is a total of 6% of the entire

⁵ This demographic data is taken from Passel and Cohn (2009) and taken from McConnell (2013), in which the author takes demographic statistics from the 2000 Census and the 2009 American Community Survey data for Arizona.

population in the state and a total of 38.6 % of the Latino population. Of these, an estimated 40,000 or 10% are 1.5 generation undocumented youth. There are historical reasons why there is such a large population of unauthorized immigrants in the state and in the country.

History of Undocumented Immigration to the U.S.

Mexican immigration to the United States has been a long tradition, but over the last few decades it has been at the forefront of policy-makers' attention. In *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Migration in the Era of Economic Integration*, Massey et al. (2002) highlight the important issues regarding immigration before and after the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). As a result of U.S. federal policies and laws, the authors argue that there has actually been an increase, rather than a decrease, of undocumented immigrant settlement. They outline the history of Mexican migration to the United States since the 1900s and also how the U.S. government has encouraged immigration for labor purposes throughout the years. For example, as a result of the United States' participation in World War II—which resulted in the displacement of native-born farmers who were fighting the war—from 1942 to 1964 the government sponsored the Bracero program in order to recruit much needed agricultural workers. Massey et al. state that in 1965 the civil rights movement succeeded in disbanding the Bracero program as migrant workers, but the result of the elimination of this “guest worker” program was the era of undocumented migration. Even though there had long been migration between Mexico and the United States, the adoption of IRCA significantly changed the character of that migration.

1986-1996: From IRCA to IIRIRA

IRCA legislation granted a pathway to citizenship for the nearly 3 million undocumented labor migrants residing in the country. Yet, at the same time the government granted legal rights, it also closed off the border, making migration into the United States more difficult and dangerous. Border enforcement, however, did not curb the number of immigrants coming to work in the United States. As Massey et al note, in the past, migration happened in a circular fashion where migrant workers came to the country to work for part of the year and then returned home. However, with increased border militarization, immigrants often choose to settle in the United States and may also bring their whole family to live with them to avoid multiple, dangerous border crossings. As a result, the number of permanent migrants in the United States has increased drastically from nearly 3 million to approximately 11 million in only a couple of decades after the implementation of IRCA. The increase in the migrant population has also resulted in the dispersal of immigrants to various states across the country instead of the six historical receiving states of California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey.

Arizona is one of the states where the population of undocumented immigrants increased dramatically. There are other reasons why this happened in addition to the decrease of circular migration and increase of permanent settlement. In 1993 the Federal border patrol in Texas enacted “Operation Hold the Line” and in 1994 California they implemented “Operations Gatekeeper” in order to deter unauthorized immigrants from entering those states. Consequently, immigrants chose to cross the border in Arizona, which increased the undocumented population in the state drastically in the mid-1990s

(Magaña 2013; Massey et al. 2002; Plascencia 2013). As a result, the state's policy makers have tried to reduce undocumented migration by passing strict laws, which was made possible by changes in federal legislation in 1996.

Historically, immigration enforcement has been under federal jurisdiction, but in 1996 under the Clinton administration, the national government passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA), which had several parts (Fragomen 1997). First, it created tougher consequences of visa over-stayers, undocumented migrants, and employers who knowingly hired unauthorized workers. It also provided more funding for border security and technology. Additionally, the act had a provision, 287(g), which allowed for local law enforcement agencies to implement immigration policies after having proper training (Magaña 2013). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it paved the way for states to be able to reduce the amount of public assistance they offer to the undocumented (Andreas 2001; Flores and Benmayor 1997; Fragomen 1997; Massey et al. 2002). For example, Section 505 of IIRIRA, restricts postsecondary education benefits for unauthorized immigrants. However, there is ambiguity over this section, which prompted some states to clearly make laws clarifying what they would and would not allow regarding postsecondary benefits. Thus, while immigration is mostly a federally controlled domain, with IIRIRA, states were able to take some immigration matters into their own hands.

1996-2006: The Consequences of IIRIRA in Arizona

After IIRIRA passed in 1996, Arizona began to create its own laws targeting undocumented immigrants. Over the next fifteen years many things happened, but the

terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, spread fear of immigrants across the country. This fear was more pronounced when the local newspaper, the Arizona Republic, printed a story about how many of the terrorists lived and trained in the metro-Phoenix area (Magaña 2013). Moreover, there were reports that more terrorists were going to come through the Arizona border with Mexico, fueling public anxiety and panic (Magaña 2013). In addition to fear in Arizona, there was also fear throughout the country to curb terrorism and illegal immigration. Not only was the threat of foreigners a factor, but at the start of the economic downturn in 2007 and 2008 immigrants became the scapegoat for the financial crisis because they were seen as an economic burden upon the country (McDowell and Provine 2013). Thus, throughout the past decade there were many reasons to target undocumented immigrants in hopes of deterring them from remaining in the country.

In December 2005, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4437, “The Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act.” This law would have made it an aggravated felony to be in the country “illegally” instead of a misdemeanor, and would have made it a crime for someone to assist an undocumented immigrant. The bill passed overwhelmingly in the House of Representatives with 239 for and 132 against⁶.

In response to H.R. 4437 and similar state laws that were proposed around the same time, documented and undocumented immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds and advocacy groups came together in mass protest in April and May of 2006 (Barreto et al. 2008; Chavez 2008; Getrich 2008; Pantoja et al. 2008). There were

⁶ Information about H.R. 4437 can be found at: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/109/hr4437>

demonstrations in over 140 cities and 39 states. The most visible protests were in large cities such as Phoenix, Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., Seattle, Atlanta and Chicago—participants per city ranged from an estimated 200,000 in Phoenix to 1 million in Los Angeles (Pantoja et al. 2008; and CNN⁷). As a result of the demonstrations across the country, the bill never made it to the Senate for a vote. However, citizens from across the country, and especially in the state of Arizona, still remained fearful of immigrants. This resulted in a series of strict laws geared towards deterring unauthorized immigrants from entering and living in the state.

The next table lists all the laws that the Arizona legislature enacted between 1996-2011 (Plascencia 2013). These include declaring Arizona an “English only” state, preventing bail for undocumented people, requiring business owners to verify employment authorization, among others.

Table 7.1 Arizona measures to regulate migration and migrants

Years	Policy action	Brief description
1996	Driver licenses	Required proof of U.S. citizenship or authorized presence
1997	“Chandler roundup” [“looking Mexican”]	Chandler police department and INS apprehension of individuals ‘suspected’ of being present without formal authorization; U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents are detained ¹
2000	Proposition 203, english for children	Limits English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction
2004	Proposition 200, protect Arizona now	A multi provision statute targeted at non-citizens; included provisions regarding voting, public benefits, mandates state employees to report persons suspected of being present without authorization, and others
2005	Day labor law (H.B. 2592)	Prohibits local government from constructing or maintaining a day labor site used by “aliens” who are “not entitled to lawful residence”
2005	“Coyote” law (anti-smuggling)	Aimed at reducing human smuggling; though used to charge “undocumented” individuals with ‘self-smuggling’
2006	Proposition 100	The law denies bail to “undocumented” persons
2006	Proposition 300	Denies in-state tuition for students without a social security number (“undocumented” students)
2006	Proposition 103, english-only	Asserts that Arizona’s official language is English, and mandates all official actions to be conducted in English
2007	HB 2779, FLEA/LAWA, employer sanctions	Allows for the cancellation of “licenses” of businesses that employ persons without employment authorization
2010	HB2281	A measure to prohibit ethnic studies programs
2010	SB1070/HB2162	Establishes the policy of attrition through enforcement; requires local law enforcement officials to verify migration status, and other provisions
2011	SB 1611; SB 1308, SB 1309; et al	Not enacted

See Romero and Serag (2004–2005), Romero (2006) for a detailed discussion of the event

Table 1: Outline of Arizona anti-immigrant laws from 1996-2011 taken from Plascencia (2013).

⁷ CNN article accessed at: <http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/04/10/immigration/index.html>

Out of all these laws, Proposition 300 is the one that most affects undocumented immigrant youth. This legislation ensures that only citizens or legal permanent residents are able to: 1) participate in state subsidized adult immigrant education classes; 2) receive in-state residency status for tuition purposes at community colleges and universities; 3) obtain state subsidized tuition waivers and financial assistance; 4) receive state childcare assistance; and 5) participate in state sponsored literacy programs. In addition, the law mandates that the Board of Education, community colleges and universities report the number of ineligible applicants who apply for these programs.⁸

In effect, Proposition 300 prohibits unauthorized residents from accessing social services that the federal government does not federally command nor fund. In addition, the Arizona state legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2008 in the latter part of 2009⁹. This bill made it obligatory for state employees—including anyone employed at a public school or college—to report the names to Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) of anyone they suspected to be undocumented and trying to access public assistance. However, not much media coverage was given to HB 2008, and it is not clear how many agencies complied and what, if anything, ICE did with any names that were reported. Nevertheless, the climate in Arizona was very hostile and undocumented immigrant youth were feeling the consequences of these laws.

Proposition 300 effectively tripled the cost of tuition at the three state universities and limited access to state-funded scholarships that undocumented youth had been able to

⁸ Information located in the official Arizona Voting Pamphlet at:
<http://www.azsos.gov/election/2006/Info/PubPamphlet/english/Prop300.htm>

⁹ Information about HB 2008 was obtained from the Arizona Republic article published on December 18, 2009 and accessed on February 14, 2014 at:
<http://www.azcentral.com/news/election/azelections/articles/2009/12/18/20091218desreports1218.html>

access in previous years. Therefore, the tuition of undocumented students who were enrolled in one of the three state universities as full time students rose from five thousand dollars per year to over sixteen thousand a year. As a result, an estimated 3,850 enrolled students, a majority registered at community colleges, did not provide the required proof of citizenship and were denied in-state tuition.¹⁰ Other laws targeting unauthorized immigrants also played a part in worsening the environment for students who would graduate with a degree.

E-Verify and Employment for Undocumented Immigrants

In 2007 Arizona passed HB 2779 the Legal Arizona Workers Act (LAWA) that implemented employer sanctions for businesses who knowingly hire someone without proper employment authorization. Any employer found to have violated this law risks having their business license revoked. In order for employers to comply with this mandate, they must now use E-Verify to confirm work eligibility. E-Verify, a federal initiative, was originally launched under a different name in 1997 along with IIRIRA. In 2006, under the Bush Administration, it was strengthened and expanded to be a web-based service. It received the name E-verify in 2007 (Rosenblum 2011). This system allows employers to verify work eligibility by checking that the social security number is valid and that it matches the name associated with it. Thus, the number cannot be faked because the identification a potential worker provides must match the name associated with it.

¹⁰ Data taken from Arizona Republic Article printed on January 9th, 2008 and accessed on February 16, 2014 at: <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0108az-asustudents08-on.html>

As a result of the Arizona law, in 2011 there were an estimated 36,000 employers enrolled, by far the highest number of employers in any state. The next three largest numbers of employers were in Missouri, California, and Georgia. Missouri had ~22,000 and Georgia with ~18,000. Both states had laws requiring only employers that receive public contracts to verify employment eligibility, all others are exempt. California on the other hand had no such provision, but still had a fairly high rate of employers using the system (Rosenblum 2011). This signifies that the environment for undocumented workers was far more difficult and hostile in Arizona. But what does E-Verify mean for undocumented immigrants looking for work?

Before employers were made to verify the identity and social security number of potential workers, a person could falsify a social security number and obtain a fake identification card. There was no way to check to see if the social security number was valid. Now, however, employers using this system can verify the social security number to make sure it is legitimate and matches the identification of the person claiming to own that number. However, what E-Verify cannot do is verify that the name and social security number actually matches the person using it (Meissner and Rosenblum 2009). That is, someone can commit identity fraud and use an actual social security number of a citizen and falsify identification to match the name of the social security number. Thus, while it is still possible to obtain work, the possibility of obtaining an actual social security number poses problems for many undocumented immigrants. In fact, Lofstrom et al. (2011) found that LAWA and E-Verify did not statistically have much affect on the possibility of undocumented workers finding employment in comparison to other low-skilled workers. However, the authors noted that there was most likely a shift from

formal wage based jobs to contract employment or to self-employment, which has more lenient verification rules. Yet, undocumented immigrant youth in college are most likely not interested in the same low-waged jobs their parents have. That is, they wish to have formal employment in higher skilled jobs, which requires legal work authorization. After LAWAW the prospects of finding a decent job for graduates diminished.

Other Laws Affecting Undocumented Immigrants in Arizona

In 2010, Arizona led the nation in passing the harshest immigration legislation at the state level: SB 1070 “Support our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act.” In its original form, this law required that state officials “assist in the enforcement of federal immigration laws” and established “crimes involving trespassing by illegal aliens, stopping to hire or soliciting work under specified circumstances, and transporting, harboring or concealing unlawful aliens, and their respective penalties.” The most controversial parts of this law were contested by various civil rights groups including the ACLU, MALDEF, National Immigration Law Center (NILC), Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), ACLU of Arizona, National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as the Department of Justice. These organizations argued that SB1070 impinged upon the federal government’s jurisdiction over immigration control. In July of 2010 the lower courts in Arizona placed an injunction of many of the law’s provisions, which Arizona appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Two years later in June of 2012, the high court overturned the most controversial provisions of the act except for the one that “requires police officers to make a reasonable attempt when determining the immigration

status of a person stopped, detained or arrested” (Magaña 2013:25). However, law officials have to have “reasonable suspicion” that the person in question is residing in the country illegally. Although SB 1070 was never fully enforced, it nonetheless created fear among undocumented immigrants, which further relegated them to living in the periphery of society.

The DREAM Act: A Pathway to Citizenship?

Undocumented children and youth are allowed to attend K-12 public schools across the nation as a result of *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982. However, in Arizona, they are denied equal access to postsecondary education. That is, with Proposition 300, which enforces Section 505 of IIRIRA and outlaws in-state tuition rights for undocumented residents, the cost of attending college is nearly impossible for most undocumented youth. The Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, in its various forms, would repeal Section 505 of IIRIRA. It would allow for recipients to pay in-state tuition, obtain work permits, have the ability access financial aid as well as grant a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth should they meet several criteria.

The most recent version of the DREAM Act included the following conditions to be eligible for permanent residency with a pathway to citizenship: “(1) entered the United States before his or her 16th birthday and has been present in the United States for at least five years immediately preceding this Act's enactment; (2) is a person of good moral character; (3) is not inadmissible or deportable under specified grounds of the Immigration and Nationality Act; (4) has not participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or

political opinion; (5) has not been convicted of certain offenses under federal or state law; (6) has been admitted to an institution of higher education (IHE) or has earned a high school diploma or general education development certificate in the United States; (7) has never been under a final order of exclusion, deportation, or removal unless the alien has remained in the United States under color of law after such order's issuance, or received the order before attaining the age of 16; and (8) was under age 30 on the date of this Act's enactment.”¹¹ Those who met these criteria could apply for temporary residency that would allow them to attend college as an in-state resident and access financial aid. Moreover, after a period of waiting, they could eventually apply for citizenship.

The DREAM Act was first introduced in Congress in 1995 by Senator Richard Durbin (IL-Democrat), but failed to pass¹². It was reintroduced as part of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, which passed the Senate but was not taken up by the House of Representatives. Different iterations of this law were introduced at various times throughout the last decade, but failed to receive the support needed to pass. In 2010, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (NV-Democrat) reintroduced the DREAM Act as part of the Defense Bill. It passed the House of Representatives, but failed to get enough votes in the Senate to become law. This was the closest that any version of this law had ever come to passing in Congress. After the DREAM Act's failure in 2010, U.S. senators and advocacy groups, including Dreamers, began putting pressure on President Obama to use his executive power to grant relief to undocumented youth.

¹¹ Text taken from the original DREAM Act bill of 2010, accessed on the Library of Congress's website at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:SN03992:@@L&summ2=m&>

¹² Information on the DREAM Act in Congress was taken from “Legislative Background on the DREAM Act: Recent Action in Congress” at www.congressionaldebates.com from November 2010.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Starting in the spring of 2011, Democratic members of Congress, as well as immigrant advocacy groups, including Dreamers, began pressuring the Obama Administration to use its executive power and prosecutorial discretion to grant relief of deportation for Dreamers (Olivas 2012). Prosecutorial discretion is the “authority to not enforce immigration laws against certain individuals and groups” (Sivaprasad Whadia 2011:3). As a result of this pressure, two things happened that affected Dreamers. First, the “Morton Memo” was issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director (ICE) John Morton on June 17, 2011. This memo directed ICE attorneys to use their discretionary power to avoid pursuing deportation for undocumented immigrants with familial, educational, military or other strong ties to the U.S. in order to spend their limited resources on pursuing more high-priority cases (Sivaprasad Whadia 2011). One of the 19 considerations for non-enforcement was directed at unauthorized immigrants who have demonstrated: “pursuit of education in the United States, with particular consideration given to those who have graduated from a U.S. high school or have successfully pursued or are pursuing a college or advanced degrees at a legitimate institution of higher education in the United States” (Sivaprasad Whadia 2011:5). Advocacy groups continued to pressure the administration for more specific reform geared towards undocumented youth.

One year later President Obama, during the midst of a re-election campaign where he needed the Latino vote, responded positively. In June 15th 2012, the President announced that he was granting Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Under this executive order, undocumented immigrant youth can apply for temporary residency

if they meet the following criteria: “are between the ages of 15 and 30 (as of June 15, 2012); came to the United State before the age of 16; were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012; have lived in the United States continuously for at least five years (i.e. since June 15, 2007); are currently in school, have graduated from high school or earned a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), or are honorably discharged veterans of the US armed forces or Coast Guard; and have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanors; and do not other pose a threat to public safety or national security” (Batalova et al. 2013:1). Applicants have to file paperwork along with supporting documentation as well as a \$465 fee. The processing time is approximately six months.¹³ Approved DACA recipients receive an Employment Authorization Document that is good for two years and is renewable (Fiflis 2013). Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals mirrors the DREAM Act in many ways, but it is only a temporary measure that does not give full rights to Dreamers.

Summary

Many factors led to Arizona becoming one of the largest anti-immigrant states in the country. Situated on the border of Mexico, Arizona has a long history of receiving Mexican-descended immigrants. However, over the past few decades, fear of immigrants as terrorists and drug smugglers, in addition to the recent recession, has fueled support for strict laws targeting unauthorized immigrants. As a result, several laws aimed towards keeping “unwanted” immigrants out of the state were passed and the climate in Arizona became increasingly hostile. However, I argue that these laws—especially Proposition

¹³ All information on Deferred Action was taken from the USCIS official webpage: <http://www.uscis.gov/i-821d>.

300 that specifically targeted the 1.5 undocumented youth's access to higher education—are what caused Dreamers to come together to fight for their rights to be able to live and work legally in this country. Thus, the next three chapters focus on how these laws in Arizona allowed for community formation, that then led to the ability to fight for and gain rights.

Chapter 3: Neither Here nor There: Community Creation as a Result of Being on the Margins

I feel like I'm neither here nor there, you know? I'm just some dead space that's living in the house and that's it. –Ruben

This chapter focuses on a time period from 2007 to 2009 in order to discuss key arguments that I employ for this dissertation. I utilize data from interviews and archival material to illustrate how Dreamers experience marginality and how the Arizona Dreamer community was formed. I first set the stage by addressing immigrant liminality and how undocumented immigrant youth experience “in-between-ness” at different stages of their life due to their ambiguous legal status. They are stuck in-between two social statuses because although they feel “American,” as they grow older they are legally excluded from participating in many everyday activities. This has a profound effect upon undocumented youth such as difficulties finding work and attending college.

Although they experience this “in-between-ness,” the fact that they are being raised “American” and understand the social system allows them to combat their marginality. The second half of this chapter discusses how Dreamers utilize their knowledge about the U.S. social structure in order to exert agency and create community that has a shared sense of identity. I conclude by arguing that this community is foundational for many things. Most importantly, it allows for the possibility of cultural citizenship, where undocumented youth can collectively fight for their right to become U.S. citizens.

Liminality, Resources and Community: A Review of the Literature

Every society excludes groups of people that differ from the mainstream culture, and undocumented immigrants, including first-generation and the 1.5 generation, are no exception within U.S. society. Undocumented youth are often categorized with first-generation undocumented immigrants. As such, the first part of this literature review will discuss how undocumented immigrants in general experience outsiderhood, and then will move into how “Dreamers” differ greatly from their first-generation parents and thus are able to create their own community.

In *Purity and Danger* (1966), Mary Douglas states that society has an internal structure, outlying borders, and margins. Within this structure, there are things that do not fit into the norm—they cannot be categorized because they are unclear and ambiguous—therefore they are seen as impure and polluting. As a result, anything that is not easily classified is subsequently categorized as “dirty” and “dangerous” in order to protect inherent cultural norms and systems of classification from inconsistency (Douglas 1966). Douglas’ idea of impurity can be applied to all undocumented immigrants because they are not easily classified into the majority social category of “American” due to their problematical legal status. Leo Chavez argues that Mexicans in the United States are seen as a threat to the nation because the discourse surrounding immigrants refers to them as “people out of place” (2008:42). Thus, in Douglas’ theory, undocumented immigrants become marginal because they do not fit into valued, pre-established cultural categories.

While immigrants vary in national origin, social, human and economic capital, and legal status, they all experience liminality at some point within the receiving society. Park (1928) first used the term “marginal man” to describe the transitional phase upon

entrance into the host society. He describes this state of marginality as typically permanent. Coutin (2003) uses the term "space of nonexistence" to explain the marginal "place" where unauthorized immigrants "reside" in the United States. Since they are undocumented, they are not technically here and there is no record of their presence. Moreover, they are "denied legal rights, social services, and full personhood, and can be detained and deported if apprehended by immigration authorities" (Coutin 2003:175). For example, Coutin states that unauthorized immigrants participate in the informal economy as gardeners or house cleaners and are paid in cash, leaving no trace of their employment. They do not possess a driver's licenses and therefore cannot drive legally and they do not have records of their leases or utilities.

It is also important to note that there are different spaces of nonexistence, including the physical, legal, and social, which make social mobility very difficult. However, Coutin also points out that the undocumented are not completely relegated to the space of nonexistence and that they actually have some proof of their presence even if they are technically not "legally" here—they live, attend school, ride public transportation, interact socially, et cetera. Therefore, depending on the social context, undocumented immigrants can cross back and forth between society and the hidden space of nonexistence. While undocumented immigrants in general live in this situation, unauthorized immigrant youth, who are the 1.5 generation, face even more ambiguous messages about incorporation into the host society because they can cross over into "existence" more easily than their undocumented parents. Thus they are not completely outsiders, but rather they straddle both categories of assimilated and "illegal."

Where first-generation immigrants entering the country as adults clearly are treated as outsiders with little hope of legal incorporation, immigrant youth who grow up in the country are culturally more assimilated and thus more difficult to categorize. They are accepted into the country's public school system and educated alongside "citizen" children, but they confront obstacles as they approach adulthood. Therefore, where their parents reside in Coutin's "space of nonexistence," undocumented youth are liminal beings—meaning that they are between two social statuses of somewhat "legal" and "illegal," at least until reaching adulthood.

The theory of *liminality*, developed by Victor Turner in the mid-twentieth century, is a useful concept to apply to undocumented immigrant youth. Often times, immigrants, especially the undocumented, are excluded from social, cultural, political and economic structures; there is no guarantee that they will ever fully integrate into the mainstream society (Coutin 2003; Menjivar 2006). This is especially true for undocumented immigrant youth who, using Turner's terminology, are "betwixt and between" two statuses. They are neither fully American nor completely foreign. Even though they experience legal rights comparable to other U.S. children, they do not fully incorporate into society.

In Turner's book, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, he explains what he calls *liminality* and *communitas*. He states that there is a structure (society) and an anti-structure (where society does not reside) within the social order—there cannot be structure without anti-structure. *Communitas* emerges once people enter the anti-structure during certain cultural rituals such as rites of passage. Thus *communitas* is at the edges of society, or is liminal, and when a person enters *communitas* they experience liminality.

Turner (1967) argues that there are three stages to the rites of passage: 1) being a member of society; 2) removal from society (in order to transform); and 3) re-entering society anew. He focuses specifically on puberty rites for males and states that once these boys enter the second phase they become “liminal persona” or “transitional beings,” who are “structurally invisible” (Turner 1967:96). These boys are liminal because they are between two social statuses, child and adult and they have no classification once in this liminal phase of the ritual process. It is this second, liminal, stage that is most important for discussing unauthorized immigrant youth’s ability to create community.

Although undocumented youth do not experience a formal rite of passage, these three stages look as follows for them: 1) as children they are treated as a member of society by attending school and experience liminal legality; 2) once they become adults they are somewhat removed from society and labeled as illegal and are denied basic rights given to other others, such as legal employment; 3) they struggle to transition back into society by gaining a pathway to citizenship. Understanding these stages are valuable when looking at the periods inclusion and exclusion unauthorized youth face throughout different phases of their lives.

Liminal Legality

Menjívar (2006) pulls key points from Coutin's “space of nonexistence” and Turner's “liminality” to explore the state of Salvadoran refugees in the United States. She uses the term “liminal legality” to explain the ambiguous, quasi-legal situation in which refugees find themselves while living in the country. Refugees are technically here legally, but they do not have the same rights as citizens. For example, they cannot travel

outside of the United States and expect to be able to re-enter the country again. Furthermore, refugees have no guarantee that they will be granted legal permanent residency and are thus in an uncertain state. The term “liminal legality” refers to a temporary condition, which may end up being indefinite, or even worse, may change to the status of “undocumented.” Menjívar argues that this state of being is a nonlinear process that impinges on immigrant incorporation into society. This uncertainty affects a variety of aspects of everyday life, such as limiting access to the job and housing markets, hindering the ability to stay connected with family “back home,” and causing difficulties shaping identity. Menjivar points out that these immigrants live in the same communities as other legal or non-legal immigrants, but not all immigrant experiences are the same.

Undocumented youth also experience liminal legality, but much differently than refugees. As children they are welcomed into the K-12 school system and treated as U.S. citizens, and often they do not realize that they are undocumented. However, at the same time they do not have the full rights of citizen children—they are not able to access public assistance such as reduced lunch, Medicaid, extracurricular state-funded educational programs, among others. Thus, like Menjivar’s refugees, undocumented youth have some rights and not others. However, the protection that public schools offer starts to diminish as they grow older and become adults hence their liminal legality fades as they become “illegal.”

More recently, Gonzales (2011) conducted extensive research with undocumented youth in California and found that they experience a “transition to illegality.” That is, during their adolescence they experience liminal legality because they can legally attend

public school, and in fact, the K-12 education provides them protection because they are treated like other (citizen) children while there. Thus, they are in a protected state up through high school, but this “zone of safety” dwindles as they approach adulthood and disappears after they graduate (Gonzales 2011). Around the age of sixteen, when their peers start driving, applying for college, and getting jobs, undocumented youth begin to feel truly liminal. They start to realize that they do not have the same rights as others. While many of Gonzales’ (2011) respondents experienced this transition into illegality, he also states that the process is not uniform among undocumented youth. Many may feel this transition immediately in or after high school, especially if they do not go onto college. Those who go on to college still feel some protected status, but after receiving their degrees they complete the transition to illegality. Gonzales notes that K-12 and post-secondary institutions provide adult mentors and allies who provide support and help unauthorized youth succeed in school. Thus, regardless of educational attainment, undocumented youth still end up in the same types of low-wage jobs as their undocumented peers who did not attend college. However, I suggest that educational institutions are not the only places where undocumented youth can find support systems that help mitigate downward assimilation¹⁴. In addition to the support and mentorship that schools provide, undocumented youth in Arizona have found similar support systems among themselves.

Although the Arizona Dreamer Alliance (ADA) has a relatively small membership of undocumented youth, those who become involved reap the benefits of that support system. Nonetheless, even if unauthorized youth are members of ADA, they

¹⁴ Downward assimilation means that immigrants incorporate into the underclass. Refer to chapter 1 for a more complete discussion of segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

still experience liminality because of their legal status. In fact, increased liminality is the reason why many join the alliance. They have the benefit of human capital, the knowledge and skills that allow a person to act in new and different ways (Coleman 1988 & 1999). Thus, undocumented immigrant youth develop beneficial human capital that is pertinent to navigating the U.S. social structure.

Estrada (2010) uses the term American Generation Resources (AGR) to describe the valuable knowledge (human capital) that legal immigrant children, who participate in family street-vending businesses, have over their first-generation parents. AGR includes English language skills, knowledge of popular culture and technology, and “citizenship.” Estrada argues that children’s citizenship acts a protection for their undocumented family members who may be approached by legal officials. They do so by taking ownership over their families’ illegal street vending businesses when approached by police because they know that they will simply incur a fine rather than risk deportation. Citizenship also provides immigrant youth the ability to get a driver’s license so that they can provide transportation for the family business. While these are all certainly advantages, I argue that AGR describes not just immigrant youth with citizenship, but also undocumented youth, who, because of their upbringing and assimilation in American society, have knowledge of the social system.

By attending public school, undocumented children become acculturated, speaking English fluently, learning popular culture and technology, but they still lack the legal right to be in the country. While they are technically not here legally, they have legitimate claims to the same rights as citizens because they are treated and educated as American citizens while in public school. For example, they have to say the pledge of

allegiance to the United States on a daily basis alongside other children with citizenship. I argue therefore that it is not necessarily citizenship itself that is the foundation of Estrada's American Generational Resource, but rather the knowledge of civic rights and the indoctrination of what it is to be American, regardless of legal status, that is so valuable to immigrant youth who are raised in the U.S.

The ability to navigate the social structure places undocumented youth in a better position to become citizens over other first-generation immigrants. This is because those who are not raised in the country cannot claim to be an "insider" and do not fully understand their rights and how to navigate the legal system. Undocumented youth begin to understand this advantage once their rights are taken away and they have limited options for work or continued education. Once in a liminal state, their AGR act as an advantage for them in the quest to transition back into legality. It is this knowledge that allows them to demand rights based upon similarities.

Liminality for undocumented youth increased drastically in Arizona once anti-immigrant laws enforced stricter regulations upon immigrants. The anti-immigrant laws in the mid to late 2000s intended to curb immigration and disincentivize immigrants to remain in the state. In addition to closing the loophole of using a fake social security number for employment, it became more expensive to attend school and there was an overall fear of deportation. Legislators changed the social and political structure within the state to make life more difficult for undocumented immigrants and these laws sent a clear message that they were not welcome in the state.

What politicians and citizens who supported these initiatives did not realize is that they would have the unintended consequences of sparking resistance among

undocumented youth. For example, before Proposition 300 in 2006 took away in-state tuition rights for undocumented youth, they were able to live fairly normal lives and attend college relatively easily. Thus, there was no imminent need to fight for the DREAM Act because they were allowed to attend college and, if they chose, they could easily use false documents to find work. However, after the laws passed it created a situation in which unauthorized youth had no choice but to fight for their rights. Therefore, as daily life became more challenging, undocumented youth found ways to exert their agency and work within the structure in order to survive.

While structure and agency are not a primary focus of this dissertation, these concepts are important when discussing undocumented immigrant youth's ability to become politically active and they deserve clarification. Here, when I say social structure, I am referring to the "economic, political, and social relations among individuals and groups" (Geertz 1973:362). More specifically, it is the state and local policies that allow or restrict the rights of undocumented youth to live "normal" lives such as attending school and earning a living. According to Sewell (1992) structures are not fixed, but rather they are "dynamic" and continually changing (p. 27). Thus having American Generational Resources allows immigrant youth the flexibility to adapt to the changing social structure because they have "insider" knowledge. The term agency refers to a person's ability to engage with and possibly transform social structures. They can do this because they have the knowledge of the rules of the structure and this knowledge empowers them to act (Sewell 1992). Sewell (1992) further argues that agency is both individual as well as collective. Therefore, for this dissertation, agency is seen as both individual because undocumented youth choose to become involved with an organization

to fight for rights, but also collective because without a strong community of undocumented youth this would not be possible.

Community

As a response to the liminality that undocumented youth experience, they have exercised agency and taken action to create their own community. This is especially impressive because in Arizona immigrant youth are dispersed throughout the major metropolitan area as well as the state. Community can come in many forms consisting of family, friends, co-workers, and from people who share the same social or political affinities, but it does not need to be confined to a physical location (Rosaldo and Flores 1997).

Whether familial, work related, or based in friendship, people's communities often derived from geographically dispersed networks of social relations rather than being contained within a well-bounded physical space. Community, in the sense of webs of significant relationships, rarely coincided with ones' immediate neighborhood (Rosaldo and Flores 1997:72).

Communities can transcend the local, state, national, and even reach into the global sphere. Community is important for both documented and undocumented immigrants alike because it provides a variety of valuable resources. However, for the undocumented, having a network of individuals provides access to much-needed resources and a variety of support, including the ability to fight for rights.

In *Citizens vs. Citizenry: Undocumented Immigrants and Latino Cultural Citizenship*, Flores (1997) says of unauthorized immigrants that they "live out their lives in the shadows," their aspirations and political participation often hidden. Nevertheless, he argues that the Chicano community has extended its membership to undocumented

immigrants, and as a result has created a space for them to participate politically. In three different cases in San Jose, California, Flores highlights how the Chicano community, consisting of both documented and undocumented immigrants, collectively fought for their rights.

In the first instance, Flores (1997) describes a 1973 case where a medical clinic received a county grant to provide health services to the poor in the area. However, the county also required the clinic to ask for proof of residency and calculate the number of “illegal” aliens that used their services. The clinic staff refused to do so and the staff, activists, and immigrants held strategy meetings together. Moreover, the clinic printed their brochures with a new philosophy that “Health Care is a Right, Not a Privilege,” and they refused to let their free clinic—that was built for the poorer immigrants in the community—be taken over by the county. By using the terms *familia* (family), *hermanas* (sisters), and *hermanos* (brothers), Latinos extended their community to include the undocumented, and as a result they gained their rights to have unrestricted access to healthcare.

In the second instance, Flores demonstrates how, in the late 1970s, undocumented families found out that they had to provide proof of their children’s immunizations in order for them to attend school. They were afraid that the school authorities would find out about their immigration status and deport them. As a result, undocumented Mexican parents, children, Latinos and activists came together to create and enact a theater skit aimed at educating the community of their rights as parents, their children’s rights to attend school, and immigrant rights in general. The final example illustrates how the Latino community reacted when the Reagan administration enacted “Operation Jobs” in

1982 with the purpose of detaining and arresting unauthorized laborers who were perceived to be taking well-paying jobs from U.S. citizens. In response to the job raids, a city-wide coalition made up of various groups and agencies put pressure on the city to not assist the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The city council agreed to their demands and ordered the police and city officials to not cooperate. All three of these examples demonstrate how the Latino community was able to define its membership to include the undocumented, and by banding together they were able to claim rights.

These examples illustrate the counter-hegemonic discourse of Latino community members, many of whom were undocumented. As a result, they helped “turn the tables” on government organizations, such as the INS, and made them the “criminals” for violating their rights as individuals. Therefore, individuals within the Latino community became active subjects who were helping to reframe membership through their actions. Flores concludes that Latino social movements connect citizens and non-citizens through their commonalities and helps define who is inside and who is outside the community, which ultimately allows for the undocumented to come out from the shadows.

Flores’ research suggests that lack of rights creates the necessity for community, and the struggle for rights brings cohesion and structure to a “new” community. This is exactly what happened in Arizona once Proposition 300 took rights away from undocumented youth. However, while these past examples show how Latinos extended their community outwards to incorporate undocumented immigrants, I argue that in Arizona the situation was somewhat different. Before 2007, when there were no anti-immigrant laws, there was no need for undocumented youth to form community. However, once those laws passed, and unauthorized immigrants were further

marginalized, the need for community became greater. Where Flores discusses how the greater Latino community extended its community to include the undocumented once their rights were taken away, I argue that this did not happen for undocumented youth. Rather undocumented youth—who were enrolled in college, had American Generational Resources and understood their rights—were able to “come out from the shadows” and create their own community without relying on the greater Latino community. They then extended that community outwards to the other Latinos including other undocumented youth, as well as, first-generation undocumented immigrants, such as their parents and family members. In summary, once they had their rights taken away and experienced increased liminality they had the necessity to form community among themselves. It is this community of Dreamers which is foundational for their fight for rights and thus integral for this dissertation.

The Beginning of the Dreamer Story in Arizona

Here starts the story of the group of Dreamers I was fortunate to meet, work alongside, and interview. This section takes firsthand accounts of undocumented youth’s experiences of liminality and explains how increased marginality sparked agency and created community.

Stuck in the Middle: Experiencing Liminality

Undocumented youth experience liminality in different ways including exclusion from everyday activities as well as having liminal identities. In interviews, I asked my informants to describe their identity. Everyone said that this was a difficult question, but

many described it as being “stuck in the middle” or trapped between two different identities. That is, they feel as though they are mostly American because they grew up here and have American values, yet they know that they cannot truly call themselves American because they do not have the legal documentation and cannot do the same things that citizens can. However, they are not necessarily Mexican either because they do not remember their country of origin very well, nor have many connections to Mexico other than family. They may or may not have been to Mexico since entering the U.S.

Marisol, who arrived in the country at the age of 15, said that she considered herself to be “Mexican-American” even though she knew that others would not consider her “American.” However, she also said, “Sometimes you feel that you don’t belong to anything, that you don’t have an identity because you’ve been denied so many things.” The statement of, “you don’t belong to anything,” exemplifies the liminal identity undocumented youth often experience, even though they may feel American. While Marisol said that she felt “Mexican-American” many of my informants did not use that term. Their identity is not an either/or proposition, but rather many see themselves as having both cultures. Alicia, who arrived when she was five years old, said that she feels American because she grew up in this county, but that also being American does not mean, “you have to leave your roots or where your ancestors came from.” She further said, “I feel like I’m stuck between both, I don’t want to just go for one like American—where I am not necessarily wanted in a way. I don’t just go to Mexican where I perhaps am wanted or not but I don’t really know entirely what that culture is as a whole. I’m like stuck in the middle.” Alicia’s discussion of her identity exemplifies the liminal state unauthorized immigrant youth feel. They are “stuck” in-between being Mexican and

American, unlike their first-generation parents who are Mexican, and unlike U.S. born second-generation immigrants who are legally considered American. Thus, they are not easily categorized.

Having liminal and ambiguous identities stems from their personal experiences of liminality that they encounter as they grow older. Like Gonzales' (2011) research showed, these undocumented youth experience "legality" while in public school, being afforded the same rights as others, but start to "transition to illegality" as they approach adulthood. This transition is characterized through the gradual inability to carry out every-day tasks that many others take for granted. Javier, who arrived in the country at age seven, explained to me that in high school he first felt liminality when his friends started getting driver's licenses and jobs and he was not able to do so. He said, "That's when it started hitting me, not having that license or to go get a part-time job, as simple as going to the movies, you have to have an ID to prove that you're at least 17 or 18. It's the little things that I think people take for granted."

Another informant also mentioned to me how it is difficult for him to go out at night without official identification. For example, he tried to go to a club for twenty-one and over and handed the doorman his Mexican consulate ID card but was refused entry. Thus, it is not only working, driving and attending school that are frustrating, but also minor things that most people would not think about twice. It is at this crucial age of pre-adulthood where they really start to experience their "outsiderness." In another example, Jaime, who was in the top three percent of his high school class, told me how he began to realize the limits placed upon him while in high school. He stated, "I think the point where I realized that I was different from anybody else was probably my sophomore year

in high school.” This was because he applied for a state-funded college preparatory program and was denied access because he did not have a social security number. He was “heartbroken” when all his friends were accepted but he, as one of the top academically excelling students in his high school, realized the obstacles preventing him from attending college. The next disappointment and realization he faced was after he received scholarship and grant offers from a variety of universities, but upon speaking with his high school guidance counselor he learned that he needed a social security number to accept the offers. He told me that it was a “harsh wakeup call” because after all his hard work he was “stuck here” and could not “go the places he wanted to go.”

Both Javier and Jaime were more recent graduates who faced the difficulties of being kept out of college because of the expensive tuition and no access to financial aid. However, Gloria, who made it to the university and subsequently graduated, experienced difficulties while in college due to her unauthorized status. While pursuing her bachelor’s degree at the university, she mentioned how she needed to have two internship experiences for her journalism program, but that many of them were paid opportunities that were precluded to her because of her legal status. Thus, even though she entered college, she was still barred from opportunities that other citizens were afforded. Of course this did not prevent her from completing her degree requirements by finding other non-paid internships. However, Gloria and those others who made it into college and successfully finished, experienced even more liminality once they graduated.

As Gonzales (2011) states, the transition to illegality happens once undocumented youth do not have the support system that high school or college teachers and administrators offer. Julieta told me about the difficulties finding a decent paying job

after receiving her degree in psychology from the university. She worked in daycare, but quit that job to do organizing for a non-profit immigrant-rights group. However, the non-profit was unable to pay her, and after three months she had to leave that position. In another instance, Gloria mentioned how she felt after graduating college with her journalism degree, “After I graduated—like I said, it was my biggest accomplishment yet—but at the same time I felt like back in high school. I reached the top, now what?” She told me how she went through a depression because “I was just kind of trying to figure out what opportunities were there for me after graduation and I found myself very limited. I had a job offer but I had to turn it down because of my status.” Both Julieta and Gloria’s stories represent the difficulties that those who graduated from college experienced. However, at the time of my interview many had “decent” jobs (either through self-employment or cash-paying work) and had hopes for the future. Many stated that they wanted to pursue advanced degrees, such as becoming lawyers or receiving a master’s degree, but were not sure how they could do it with the expense and the inability to receive financial aid.

After Proposition 300, which drastically increased tuition for undocumented youth, liminality not only increased for college students, but for those in high school as well. Marisol, who actually graduated from college and worked closely with high school students in her leadership role with ADA, told me that in high school (from 2000-2003) she did not remember hearing anything about anti-immigrant laws because people “were not even paying attention to immigrants.” She said that in high school she knew she was going to have a more difficult time than others because of her undocumented status, but that she did not know if she would have the same success as undocumented high school

students today under the current conditions. She was able to pay in-state tuition for two and one half years and then received a scholarship designated for undocumented youth – these are opportunities that no longer exist for undocumented youth graduating from high school after 2009. University tuition is now three times the in-state rate and community colleges are also charging out-of-state tuition. Gloria mentioned to me how difficult it was when she did presentations for younger undocumented high school students because she could not offer them much hope for paying for college.

In 2009, once scholarships were more difficult to obtain since they could not qualify for state-funded scholarships and the NDD scholarship fund was depleted, the possibility of going to a university in Arizona was next to impossible for undocumented youth. Ana Laura, who graduated from high school in 2010, recounted how she began to realize her limited options for college. She said that she worked very hard to receive honors for her grades in high school and make her parents proud. As a result, she was accepted into the university but did not have enough money to pay the out-of-state tuition. When she realized that she could barely afford community college she said, “It was hard. It was hard because all my friends, they all got to go to the university. I cried for a really long time. It was really devastating and discouraging.” She explained that she was, “a little disappointed and a little ashamed,” thinking that someone like her should not be going to community college when she was academically prepared to enter the university. It is examples like these that illustrate the before-and-after effects of anti-immigrant laws that increased the state of liminality for undocumented youth in regards to higher education. However, the effects also went beyond schooling and affected their employment prospects.

Before the implementation of Proposition 300 in 2007 and other laws such as SB 1070, E-verify, and HB 2008¹⁵, undocumented youth led fairly “average” lives. That is, there were no great social and political barriers preventing them from doing activities that their U.S. born counterparts enjoyed. For example, in high school there were college-bound programs available to anyone interested and there were scholarships that did not specify citizenship. Thus, the social structure before was fairly navigable. From previous research, I found that undocumented youth enrolled in college-bound programs while in high school and many received state-funded scholarships for college if they ranked high academically in their high school. Moreover, they were able to find work relatively easily as Marcia told me. She recounted that before E-verify an undocumented immigrant could just, “make up a fake social security number” and, “get a fake ID,” in order to become employed. She stated that employers were not concerned because they did not have to verify documents and at the time there were plenty of jobs. After E-verify came into effect, fake social security numbers would not withstand the verification process. Undocumented immigrants have to use a legitimate social security number of someone else for employment purposes.

Once Marcia graduated from the university, she was looking for work and was having trouble finding a position. She was able to borrow the social security number from the sister of one of her friends who happened to be living in Mexico at the time. She used it to get a job at an international telemarketing company and was making over ten dollars per hour plus commissions until her friend’s sister returned to the country and needed her

¹⁵ Refer to chapter 2 for more details on these anti-immigrant laws that took away in-state tuition, took away access to state-funded programs, and made it a requirement for employers to verify social security numbers and work eligibility before hiring someone.

social security number back. Marcia's account shows how, before E-verify, it was easier to get a job with fake papers. Once the anti-immigrant laws passed, however, it became more difficult to find work without the "loopholes" of making up a social security number.

Marisol experience as a realtor is also informative. In 2005 she earned her real estate license and was able to renew it in subsequent years until 2011. In July of that year, the state of Arizona denied her renewal application because she did not have a driver's license or a U.S. passport. Thus, she could no longer serve as a real estate agent, losing a valuable source of income. In another instance, Lupita, a young co-owner of an English-language school, described how her business suffered when SB 1070 passed. The law dissuaded her adult students from attending classes: "When SB 1070 passed, we almost went out of business. We're literally steps away from the Capitol, so no one wanted to come. Our students were so afraid." Thus, in addition to not being able to pursue education, undocumented youth have also felt more marginalized by decreasing the economic possibilities they previously had enjoyed.

While the examples in this section show how undocumented youth experienced increasing liminal statuses including personally, scholastically, and economically, this has not necessary been a completely negative process. That is, being relegated to the shadows through anti-immigrant laws triggers action from those most affected by the laws. In fact, their transition to illegality and the experience of liminality has prompted undocumented youth to become "Dreamers" with the intent to transition back into legality.

Escaping Liminality & Becoming Dreamers

One of my respondents, Abel, told me that being undocumented is like, “living the shadows because you can’t really do much, even if you have a degree. I would say I kind of agree with it, but at the same time I think you can—I guess they do say that you could step out of the shadows and you could come out.” This quote embodies the idea of liminality, structure and agency that Dreamers experience. “Living in the shadows” represents being outside of the social structure in a liminal state, and “stepping out of the shadows” signifies the personal choice, or in other words agency, to “come out” as a “Dreamer” in order to try to change the social and political structure that relegates them to the shadows. Thus, the goal is to escape their liminal status in order to re-enter and become incorporated into the social structure—transitioning back into legality.

From my search through emails, newspaper articles and internet documents, I surmise is that the term “Dreamer” became widely used around the time Congress reintroduced the DREAM Act in 2010. Since then, this term has become synonymous with undocumented immigrant youth who are fighting for their rights, and the rights of other undocumented youth, to legally become part of the country’s social, political and economic system through permanent residency and eventual citizenship. Noe, who had only been able to take a few community college classes, had a very difficult time, as many others did, with the question of identity. He first mentioned being told that he is “illegal” and undeserving by U.S. citizens, but then he feels that Mexicans reject him because of his Americanized personality. He then told me how for him “Dreamer” describes this state of being in the middle and “dreaming” for the opportunity to become a citizen. Thus, the term Dreamer represents the hope of legally becoming American. Noe

explained that even though he and other undocumented youth are, “stuck in the middle,” the term “Dreamer” signifies that they are just “hoping for everything to get better,” because, “without that social security number we do not have that other side of our identity.” This statement highlights how unauthorized immigrant youth want to get out this liminal state and transition into the “normal” social status of citizen, which really became urgent within the last few years when their liminality increased. Thus, they choose to become politically active and as a result become a “Dreamer.”

All of my informants made the conscious choice to join ADA because they wanted to fight for their rights alongside other undocumented youth. Some had experienced profound setbacks, causing depression, but this then resulted in getting involved. Julio, a 19-year-old Dreamer, recounted how he realized that he had a “problem” around the age of 15. Out of financial need, he was doing manual labor, including construction, tree removal, cement laying, and landscaping. He would take weeks out of school to work with his father and uncles because it was the only work he could find. However, he realized that he was poorly paid, and that his father was also poorly paid. He stated this manual labor brought him to really understand what his situation was and he told me that doing that work made him realize that he did not want to end up permanently employed within the same industry as his father and other undocumented immigrants.

Julio then recounted the story of how he fell into a depression after high school because he could not afford college, even though he received a scholarship. He was helping his mother out around the house and working in landscaping. One day he ran out of deodorant and did not have any money to buy more. He decided to go to the store and

told me what happened next: “I grabbed some deodorant and I think some shampoo and something else. Just sanitary products that I needed. Just put it in my backpack and I tried to walk out and I was caught by one of the people there.” In addition to the shame he felt, he had to plead guilty to a misdemeanor, take a class on shoplifting and pay a fine. However, it was one week later that he found a non-profit organization that was offering reduced-rate, transferrable college courses, and it is there where he met people from ADA. Soon after that he decided to become involved because, as he told me, “it was since junior year I’ve been wanting to get involved with them, and I had all this energy, all this pent up energy for two years not being able to get in contact with them. Now that I was in contact with them, I was excited to do everything that I could to help out.” Thus, the helplessness he felt for years actually created a desire in him to fight for his rights and to no longer be powerless.

Jessica, a newer ADA member, also had a similar experience of dejection that ignited her desire to become involved. She mentioned that after going through a couple of years of only being able to afford two classes per semester at the community college, which caused depression, she decided to get involved. Thus, like Julio, after experiencing an increased state of liminality, Jessica took action and became involved with a couple of different pro-immigrant organizations, including ADA. For many informants, transitioning into illegality and not having the ability to work, attend college, drive, and live a “normal” life was the reason to involve themselves in the alliance.

Those who joined ADA in the last few years, came because they saw other Dreamers stepping up and it encouraged them to join the fight. Lupita, who owns the English language school, told me, “I need to do something to deserve the DREAM Act,

too. I cannot just sit around in my living room and hope for all these kids to go and petition and canvas and whatever they're doing. I have to deserve it, and I have to work for it in order to be able to deserve it." At the time of this research, she had been heavily involved in ADA for a few years. Many of my informants expressed the same feelings of ownership towards earning rights. It takes agency to become involved with the alliance, but being involved in the organization actually enables more agency.

I interviewed a young and newer member of ADA, Ana Laura, and asked her about the benefits of being a member of the alliance. She said that while she still was not able to attend college, she felt "empowered" by being involved, because before joining, she used to feel being undocumented as "really crippling" and she could not do anything. She felt discouraged before, but after joining ADA, her perspective changed. She said, "Being involved, it's made me realize that I can do more. It's just I have to try harder. I felt this big sense of empowerment just being involved and doing things that actually matter, things that are going to affect my community." She told me that she wanted change and that she could not "just sit around and not do anything and expect things to change," and that her involvement was going to help her and other undocumented youth gain rights. Ana Laura's narrative shows that undocumented youth do not see themselves as permanently relegated to a liminal state. Rather their position "outside" of the social structure incites their decision to become involved in ADA.

I Know the Constitution: The Benefits of American Generational Resources

The knowledge of basic rights and the indoctrination of U.S. values that undocumented immigrant youth learn in the K-12 educational system provide them with

“power” and “agency.” Therefore, undocumented youth can possess AGR and not only use it to protect their parents just like their “legal” immigrant peers, but more importantly to protect and advocate for themselves. In addition to asking my informants how they would describe their identity, I asked them the following question: “Say you meet somebody who doesn’t know anything about undocumented youth or Dreamers or the DREAM Act and they ask you, ‘Why should you deserve the same rights as citizens?’ What would you tell this person?” The answers highlight the patriotism and knowledge of the U.S. system that Dreamers possess, perhaps more than their citizen peers.

Noe, who described himself earlier as a Dreamer, told me that he deserves to be American because he grew up and learned how to be a teenager in this county. Moreover, this following statement of Noe’s exemplifies the AGR that undocumented youth possess, he said, “I know my Bill of Rights. I know the Constitution. I studied American history. I don’t even know my own country’s history, not a lot, at least. I dress like you, with American trends. I speak English very well.” He discussed how even when he watches national soccer games, he cheers for the U.S. teams over Mexico. Noe then told how he wants to contribute to society and how he has already done so by participating in political processes such as lobbying, canvassing for a recall campaign and registering people to vote. It was clear that he felt American. I could hear the frustration in his voice that he was not seen as such. He told me of how a Washington D.C. staffer told his friends who were lobbying for the DREAM Act that they were “the most patriotic young people” she had ever seen and that they are just “missing that number.” Noe then stated how unbelievable it was that someone who was from Washington D.C. undocumented youth as equal to herself. He also said that he was fighting for the “chance to live a good

life.” Thus, his emphasis on how American he is, and his desire to have the same options as others have to create a “good life” for himself, is why he became involved with ADA and politically active.

Javier also expressed how his “Americanness” is reason for him to deserve the right to become a citizen. In addition to talking about his love for the country and his willingness to join the military, he mentioned how his knowledge of the U.S. distinguishes him as more of a citizen than actual citizens.

There's different ways that I feel like I have gotten used to being American without even noticing. I could probably pick the random person from the street and ask them who is our Secretary of State or different questions about Congress or a bill that probably passed last week. They probably couldn't say. . . I remember my law teacher saying, "Imagine if everyone who was born here had to have a citizenship test. How many would pass it?" If it was required for you to remain in the United States to pass it, that would be interesting. [*Laughter.*]

At the end of this conversation Javier referred to me, an “average” American citizen, not being able to pass the citizenship test (which I agreed could be correct). Noe and Javier’s examples highlight how some consider themselves more American than citizens because of their knowledge of the country’s social and political structure. The American rights and values citizens hold so dear—including freedom from fear and being able to provide for themselves and contribute to their family—are the same values that undocumented immigrant youth learn alongside their “legal” peers, and are the same rights they desire to earn. Again, it is the socialization process that a K-12 education provides that, “empower undocumented youth to dream big irrespective of their immigration status” (Gonzales and Gleeson 2012:10). Therefore, citizenship is not the actual resource in AGR, but rather the knowledge of what it means to be a citizen is what is important. It is these American

ideals that suggest Dreamers claim rights based upon their sameness rather than their difference from mainstream society.

In summary, undocumented youth learn the U.S. legal and political system as well as American history, such as the civil rights movement, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the right to “life, liberty and happiness.” It is these principles that can inspire undocumented youth to become involved in activism in order to fight for their rights without the fear of detainment and deportation. Moreover, feeling American and taking on American values is a powerful motivator for political change, and Dreamers are utilizing their “American-ness” (i.e. AGR) to their advantage.

Although their identity is liminal, the examples in this section illustrate how American ideals are engrained in these youth. The school system acculturated them so well that they want the same rights and freedoms as their U.S. citizen counterparts and are not taking “no” for an answer. They choose to stay and live here, striving for the ability to pursue their goals and trying to make a living in the meantime. These American ideals help empower them to make conscious and informed decisions in order to try to change their situation. Therefore, it is their liminal identities, in addition to their AGR, that give them an advantage in order to make change. If they were ordinary citizens who had rights, such as second-generation immigrants, there would be very little incentive to fight for something they already possess.

The Dreamer Community

One characteristic of liminality is *communitas*, which is a feeling of egalitarian comradeship among those who are on the margins (Turner 1969). Thus, those who are

increasingly marginalized find common ground among themselves and form community. Community creation for Arizona Dreamers did not happen instantaneously, but took years to cultivate and maintain. Before 2007 there was virtually no Dreamer community. For instance, when I conducted my original fieldwork in 2006 and 2007, I could only find one DREAM Act organization in Arizona. I had heard about it through a high school counselor. I found that it was not very active—I tried multiple times to contact the leaders, and when I showed up to scheduled meetings, there was no one there. In addition, the undocumented youth I interviewed at that time told me that they did not know any others in their situation.

My explanation for this lack of activity is that there was no need for *communitas* because at that time Dreamers who wanted to go onto college had fewer roadblocks. Once the state of Arizona took their rights away, however, a community formed fairly quickly. The key factor that allowed for the birth of this community was the implementation of Proposition 300 in 2007 eliminating in-state tuition benefits for undocumented college students, which immediately affected them by placing a higher barrier to attend college. As a result of this increased marginality, undocumented college students found each other and created a community.

When the state implemented Proposition 300, there were over 200 undocumented students enrolled in one of Arizona's state universities, but they were not connected to each other¹⁶. Many of them had state funded scholarships or were able to pay for the approximately \$5,500 of tuition per year through work and familial support. Julieta, who

¹⁶ Exact numbers of students enrolled in the university is not widely known public data in order to protect the rights and identity of undocumented youth in the university. However, a news article published on January 9th, 2008 in the Arizona Republic reported 207 students ineligible for in-state tuition. <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0108az-asustudents08-on.html>

started college two years before Proposition 300 took effect, described how, on the day of her high school graduation, she received a letter from the university that she was going to have tuition completely covered. She was able to attend the university for two years before her various scholarships were taken away. Thus, in 2007 many undocumented youth, who were enrolled in the university as in-state residents and paying in-state tuition, received the devastating news that they now had to pay over three times as much tuition and had their state-funded scholarships taken away. Fortunately, a non-profit organization set up a private donor scholarship and many of the undocumented students received the “No Dream Denied”¹⁷ (NDD) scholarship allowing them to stay in college.

The implementation of Proposition 300 and the creation of the NDD scholarship sparked the formation of this community. I argue that this one-time event is the main reason that the Dreamer community in Arizona exists today. This scholarship was created in response to Proposition 300 and provided the opportunity for undocumented college students to meet each other and eventually start a formal group that became today’s ADA. This was possible because once these students received the scholarship, they had to attend an orientation. It was there that they finally connected with other Dreamers. For many, the scholarship orientation program they attended was the first time that they had met other undocumented college students. One of ADA’s founders, Marisol, explains how she realized that her situation was not unique when she attended the required orientation.

¹⁷ The No Dream Denied scholarship was created and administered through a local, not for profit organization in 2007. It was only meant to be a stop-gap measure until congress passed the DREAM Act, but in 2009 there were not enough funds to take new applicants, as they only had enough money to support the students who were already enrolled. I accessed this information on the not for profit’s webpage on May 27th, 2013. To protect the anonymity of the organization, I am not including their name in this dissertation.

That was the first time that I realized that I wasn't the only undocumented student in the entire school. There was a room full of others—I don't remember how many of us—but I know that approximately 200 Dreamers received that scholarship at the same time that I did. I think it was an eye-opener to all of us just to be able to see other [undocumented youth] that were attending college.

Marisol then told me that other undocumented youth she knew at the time were working or married and not going to college and that, “everyone was really surprised,” that she was able to make it to the university because they had not heard of “people going to college without papers.”

Many of my informants who were present at the inception of the community had similar experiences to Marisol, describing their amazement and relief they in realizing they were “not alone.” Moreover, they started to realize that they could help each other by sharing information and decided to start meeting regularly. One of the co-founders of ADA, Julieta, told me that early on, when they would meet informally or communicate electronically via Blackboard,¹⁸ they began to share information, such as how to get a passport from the Mexican Consulate, or what states offered driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. Eventually they decided to call a formal meeting inviting all recipients of the NDD scholarship. These meetings are what connected many Dreamers together after that one-time initial scholarship orientation.

Marcia told me that she felt very alone when she first started at the university. However, once she met the other NDD scholarship receivers she said that she felt as though other Dreamers “were just like her” and she finally belonged because she found others who shared similar experiences and goals. Thus, they became the people with

¹⁸ Blackboard is an online system that colleges and universities use to communicate with a group of students in an organization or a class. The platform allows for document storage, discussion boards, and email functions. Only users who are enrolled in the Blackboard organization can access the information and communicate with each other.

whom she spent most of her time studying and socializing. These stories that Marisol, Julieta and Marcia told paint the picture of the beginning of the community and highlight the irony of anti-immigrant legislation. Moreover, these narratives show how the realization of a community happened. In fact, the group evolved and grew over the years expanding throughout the state of Arizona.

What started out as a group of college students meeting on campus turned into an association of many different groups that have different interests representing the diversity within this community. The Arizona Dreamer Alliance now serves as the main governing body over more than seven chapters. These include chapters for university college students and graduates (College Dreamers¹⁹, which is the largest group), high schools students, artists, queer/gay Dreamers, and a group of parents of Dreamers. The chapters have their own meetings and agendas and send representatives to bi-weekly ADA meetings in order to align their efforts.

While the membership consists of mainly Mexican-descended undocumented youth, they do not limit their membership to Latinos, or even the undocumented. Rather they work to include Dreamers from other ethnic origins, as well as allies within the greater immigrant and “citizen” community. However, what is the most impressive about this community is that it was created by undocumented youth themselves, not the greater Latino community as described in previous research (Flores 1997). Furthermore, the alliance maintains a fairly close-knit community of undocumented youth who are dispersed throughout a large metropolitan city and even throughout the state. Without this

¹⁹ College Dreamers is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the actual group. This is the largest chapter because it focuses on college students. Not everyone that affiliates with and attends this chapter’s meetings is currently in college. Some previously graduated while others wish to continue their education. Many Dreamers belong to more than one chapter.

community, the possibility of gaining rights from the state of Arizona and transitioning back into legality would be more difficult. Therefore, this community is foundational to the DREAM movement, as well as a key component for this dissertation.

Summary

In this chapter I wrote about four main concepts that are vital for this dissertation because they set the stage for how undocumented youth were able to become activists fighting for their rights of inclusion. First, I discussed the liminal legality that Dreamers experience. That is, they have the same rights as other youth while in the K-12 educational system, but around the age of sixteen they start to “transition into illegality” and realize their limitations because they do not have a social security number. Thus, they are sometimes “inside” and other times “outside” the social structure at various points before and during the transition to adulthood. However, in Arizona this liminality became more pronounced after 2007 because of the implementation of Proposition 300 and other anti-immigrant laws. Before that time, undocumented youth’s liminality was fairly benign and as such determined Dreamers were able to attend school and find a job relatively easily.

Second, I showed that because undocumented youth grow up in the U.S. school system they become “Americanized,” meaning that they possess American ideals and values. These include having the same rights as their peers as well as the right to attend college at an affordable price, the right to work and other basic rights like driving and living a “normal” life without fear. Even though their status means they live in a liminal state with liminal identities, Dreamers have an advantage because they can utilize

American Generational Resources that allow them to understand the social structure with the possibility of changing it. Moreover, it is these resources that allow them to enact their cultural citizenship and demand rights based upon similarities to legal citizens.

While anti-immigrant laws were adopted to deter undocumented immigrants from remaining in the state, they had the opposite effect on many Dreamers who chose to challenge those laws. Thus, the third argument of this chapter is that increased liminal status (i.e. being “outside” of the social structure), in tandem with understanding the social and political structure (AGR), allow marginalized people to incite change and claim rights, and to “play an active role in constructing new forms of citizenship to legitimate their rights to higher education through their achievement, hard work, drive, and desire to contribute to society” (Torres and Wicks-Asbun 2013).

The final argument of this chapter is that anti-immigrant laws, which forced undocumented youth into a more liminal state, is actually an impetus that helped create a community. That is, if undocumented youth were in the shadows before, they were there “standing alone” in these shadows because they were “getting by” with relative ease by attending school or work with fewer hurdles. However, once laws took away what little rights they had, it forced them to come out of the shadows and band together to form a community. Without this community the possibility to gain rights would not be feasible. Therefore, community is essential to the fight for rights, as well as provides much needed resources, which is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Community Creation and Social Capital: Avoiding Downward Assimilation

They [ADA] just changed my life by existence really because once I found out about them, that there was an entire community of people just like me who were going through the exact same things, who have felt what I've felt, who have seen the things I've seen, it's just—I can't describe the impact that it's had on my life. There's no words for it. I feel like they're family. They're my brothers and sisters. It's a connection that I don't think you can really find anywhere else. –Julio

Dreamers are struggling for inclusion and are trying to transition back into legality through utilizing cultural citizenship, but before they can do so they must form community. In this chapter I use material from my interviews, email archives, news articles, and Facebook to illustrate how community formation and maintenance took place over several years from its inception in 2007 through the end of my fieldwork in 2012. This community not only allows for solidarity among Dreamers so that they can demand rights, but it also provides valuable access to resources that helps prevent downward assimilation.

Gonzales' (2011) study of Dreamers is valuable in showing the downward trajectories of incorporation of undocumented youth who do not have support systems. While I only interviewed a small population of undocumented 1.5 generation youth that are members of ADA, I argue that their support system—provided by the alliance through social networks with other Dreamers and allies—is a good substitute for the network that college, mentors, teachers and role models offer. Therefore, involvement with ADA mitigates the possibility of downward assimilation for undocumented youth. The social capital that comes with being part of the alliance provides access to information and resources as well as provide emotional and social support. Most

importantly, the group provides a safety net that allows for Dreamers to come out of the shadows and exert their cultural citizenship in order to demand rights. Thus, in this chapter I explain how Arizona Dreamers created and benefit from social capital.

Social Capital and Networks

Peter Bourdieu and James Coleman laid out the foundation for social capital theory. Bourdieu defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, membership in a group” (Bourdieu 1985: 248). Stated differently, social capital is the amount of personal or institutional relationships that an actor possesses that may translate into important resources. These resources can include informational, emotional, material, and even financial assistance (Menjivar 2000). The network connections between people do not naturally occur, but they are first created, and then transformed, into valuable resources.

In other words, the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long-term. This includes transforming contingent relations—such as those of neighborhood, the workplace, or even kinship—into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, and that exercise authority in the name of the whole group) (Bourdieu 1985:249). Bourdieu (1985) concludes that the amount of social capital an agent has relies on two

things: 1) the size of the network connections that a person can mobilize; and 2) the amount of social capital (among economic, cultural and symbolic capital) that each network connection possesses.

James Coleman further develops Bourdieu's theory of social capital. He describes social capital by its function as "a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—within the structure" (Coleman 1998:S98; 1990:302). Since social capital depends upon relationships among actors, it is the least tangible of all capital (Coleman 1990). It is distinct from other forms of capital in that the relationships among and between actors affect the creation of network ties (Coleman 1988). However, Coleman (1990) argues that social capital is like other capital in that it is productive and creates outcomes that would not be possible otherwise. In fact, social capital can produce access to financial capital such as fostering access to jobs (Granovetter 1973, 1995; Lin and Dumin 1986). Coleman and Bourdieu affirm that dense and strong networks are essential to the creation of social capital, but others do not agree.

Some scholars argue that weak ties can provide more valuable resources if strong ties do not have access to those same resources. Bourdieu states that social capital is reliant upon two factors: "first, the social relationships itself that allows individuals to claim access to resources possessed by their associates, and second, the amount and quality of those resources" (Portes 1998:4). In other words, the quality of social capital depends upon the strength of the social tie and the donor's ability to donate useable resources. However, Granovetter (1973) first argued that there is too much emphasis on the strength of ties; the information those strong connections provide may not be helpful.

He defines the strength of ties as: “a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter 1973:1361). He suggests that weaker relationships can compensate for the information that is missing in strong ties. Burt (1992) agrees with this argument and points out the concept of “structural holes” which exist in closed networks. These gaps exist because closed networks often have redundant information making it necessary to rely on weaker ties—that are outside of the community—which can provide new resources (Portes 1998). Immigrants frequently use both strong and weak ties to gain access to resources in the host society.

Immigrant networks often contain a range of valuable social connections. Strong ties usually consist of a closely-knit network of people with numerous interactions and exchanges of knowledge that can include friends and family (Milardo 1988). Social networks—including churches, workmates, and extended family—often help immigrants gain knowledge about different resources (Delgado-Gaitan 1992). However, Menjívar (2000) affirms that close ties can limit access to much-needed resources because the necessary services or information may not be readily available within an immigrant group. For example, she quotes a young man who states that the people he knows could get him a job washing dishes or painting a house, but no one he knows can tell him how to apply to medical school (Menjívar 2000:150). She concludes that social networks, especially with close ties, do not provide support if there are limited resources; immigrants must rely on other resources in search of the help they need.

Weak ties, which have infrequent use, may include neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances; however, they still can provide information, goods, and services (Milardo

1988). Moreover, Hagan (1998) states that immigrants must utilize weak ties to provide valuable information to build their collection of resources. That is, weak ties provide access to broader information that a limited strong network may not provide. Therefore, the combination of weak and strong ties creates important support systems for immigrants and can not only help organize resources, but also help mobilize social movements. These ties can also be thought of as bridging and bonding social capital (Gitell and Vidal 1998). Bridging capital can be those weak ties that connect with people in different social positions that may have access to power and other resources. Bonding social capital, or strong ties, is among people of similar status and can provide access to different types of resources including emotional, social, and informational support (Gottleib and Bergen 2010). Thus, weak ties, or bridging capital and strong ties, or bonding capital, are important to immigrants and both must be fostered before they can be utilized.

The Importance of Space for Creating Social Capital

In order to create social capital, actors need a “space” to form community and reinforce group identity. Spaces, whether physical or virtual, are “places” where marginalized people can come together and share their experiences, hopes and goals of gaining rights. It is in these spaces where disenfranchised groups of people can develop a shared identity, build community and strategize how they plan to obtain those rights. And, while they are doing this, they are simultaneously building community and creating valuable social capital.

Claiming space is a natural process that occurs through every day activities, which often take place in public, but also can range to a large social display of expression such as a cultural event (Flores 1997; Flores and Benmayor 1997). In order to have community, it is important for people to have a “place” to belong and express themselves. While community can come in many forms—consisting of family, friends, co-workers, and people who share the same social or political affinities—it does not need to be confined to a physical location (Rosaldo and Flores 1997). For instance, Latino neighborhoods in large urban centers are often deterritorialized, as they are frequently separated by freeways and regularly communities are scattered throughout many cities (Rosaldo and Flores 1997). Thus, a community can be dispersed outside of one’s own immediate neighborhood, as long as there is a “space” they can utilize to create a sense of belonging. Space can either be in a physical location, or it can be in a deterritorialized “place” such as the internet.

Flores (1997) explains that Mexican Americans belong to two different worlds by being both Mexican and American. Because they are not fully accepted into both realms, they need to claim their own space in order to create a place of belonging. He further says, “When Latinos claim space they do so, not for the purpose of being different, but rather simply to create a place where they can feel a sense of belonging, comfortable, and at home” (Flores 1997). As such, Latinos have created “sacred places” where the group interacts and creates connections to each other (Rosaldo and Flores 1997). These “places” are where Latinos can express themselves and their culture by creating and maintaining community (1997). For example, creative and expressive spaces, such as *fiestas*, “get-togethers,” neighborhood meetings, etc. are also an important because they allow for

group members to develop and express their own identity. Spaces, however, do not necessarily need to be physical locations where people meet face-to-face.

In addition to meeting in physical locations such as streets and rallies, there are other non-territorially grounded “spaces” where community building can take place. For example, Anderson (1991) argues that actors can create collective identity through print and other media. One such media space is the internet, which resides in a deterritorialized space that transcends physical boundaries and opens up new options for building a “virtual” community that does not need to rely upon a physical location (Burgess et al. 2006). This allows for group members to communicate virtually and maintain ties without meeting in person.

While Staeheli et al. (2002) state that immigrants in general do not utilize the internet as a public space for political action, they conducted their study when the internet was not so readily available through work, school, home and cell phones. Moreover, their study focused on first-generation immigrants rather than immigrant youth who may tend to use the internet more than their parents. In fact, a 2010 study by Rideout et al. showed that youth, in general, have dramatically increased their media consumption since 2005. Youth spend an average of seven and one half hours per day online, of which one and half hours is strictly computer time for pleasure (not school work), and over one half hour is social media time. Access to internet in the home is now at 84% and 66% own cell phones that have internet capabilities. The average youth spends almost one hour per day on the phone utilizing various media (music, movies, social media, playing games). Moreover, this study oversampled for African American and Latino students; thus, we can assume that internet consumption for all youth has increased. Therefore, the

deterritorialized media space—including television news media, print media, the radio and the internet—is valuable for all youth including those who are undocumented. In summary, space is instrumental for building social capital that provides access to valuable resources for members of these networks.

Accounts on Building Social Capital and Creating Community

Once the large group of Dreamers who received the NDD scholarship started graduating, there were fewer Dreamers entering the university due to the lack of financial aid available. As such, respondents told me that membership within the original group dwindled over time. Thus, one of the issues the group faced was to reach Dreamers who are not at the university and who are dispersed throughout a large city and state. Over the years, the community found a way to branch out into the metro-Phoenix area and throughout the state in attempt to gain new membership. They have done so by utilizing both physical and virtual spaces in order to reach out to Dreamers in other Arizonan cities. This in turn allowed for the creation of bonding capital, as well as fostered a connection with allies and the greater Latino community, which created more bridging capital. This social capital provides Arizona Dreamers with valuable social, emotional and financial support. Therefore, the rest of this chapter takes first-hand accounts of how ADA members built their social networks and then discusses how they benefited from their participation in the community, which also helps mitigate downward assimilation.

Building Bridges and Making Weak Ties Stronger

The alliance has worked to increase actual membership by incorporating other groups of undocumented youth throughout the state. For example, they have travelled to Tucson (two hours south of Phoenix) many times to meet with a group of Dreamers who protested a policy eliminating ethnic studies in public schools; they have traveled to Flagstaff (two hours north of Phoenix) to meet with Dreamers there; and, they have actively engaged Dreamers from a neighboring city of Casa Grande, which is approximately 45 miles south of Phoenix. They have invited these Dreamers to events and meetings; they have travelled to other cities to personally meet with other undocumented youth; and, they have even provided transportation for Dreamers from Casa Grande to come into the Phoenix metro area to help canvass and protest at various events. In meetings, there were discussions about working with a border city Yuma to engage Dreamers there and to start a chapter. Moreover, they invite Dreamers from around the state to their larger events. While these attempts have not provided a great increase in active membership with the group, meaning that not many more regularly attend meetings and events held in the metro-Phoenix area, they nonetheless helps extend the community through building ties as well as creating social capital throughout the state.

In addition to extending community to Dreamers, the ADA community increases and strengthens their social capital by “building bridges” and constructing networks to the greater Latino community and to allies. This includes working with churches, lawyers, state officials, and everyday citizens. As a result of this bridging capital, ADA members have been able to access valuable resources.

Involvement with religious intuitions varies widely. Through interview data and email records, I found that ADA members have had vigils at churches for the DREAM Act and for Dreamers who experienced serious hardships. They also have had meetings and information sessions at churches for church officials and church members. Furthermore, there are some church leaders who have met with Dreamers to publicly support them. Some churches have even provided scholarship money for undocumented youth. In addition to this support, the church also has offered personal support. When I asked Julio about his comfort level with discussing his immigration status, he replied: "I'm very comfortable. It's just knowing that I have my community behind me. I have my friends in ADA and my church who all support me. I'm comfortable with coming out and saying I'm undocumented. My comfort level would be just the same as anyone else who's a citizen." On top of personal support, Julio also mentioned how churches have supported him by allowing him to do presentations for other undocumented youth who had just graduated. The church has been instrumental in helping immigrants create new networks, assisting immigrants with socioeconomic advancement and often aid with legal issues, financial assistance, as well as emotional and spiritual support to in general (Menjivar 2003), so it comes as no surprise that undocumented youth have also found similar experiences.

Besides the church connections, the ADA community has worked over the years to make networks outside of their group, especially with allies who are legal residents. The Dreamer community welcomes anyone who wants to join and help move them closer to attaining the right to become citizens, and as such the alliance has many allies in the greater Arizona community. From my observations, these allies include teachers, former

government employees, current government employees, lawyers and journalists, but I am sure there are many more that I did not see. While many of their allies in these sectors are Latinos themselves, there are others who are of Anglo decent. These connections provide valuable resources. For instance, two government officials and a lawyer have a foundation that provides college-bound youth with resources to get into college and have been especially helpful to Dreamers. They arranged for a private technical college to offer transferrable college courses for an affordable tuition rate. Many Dreamers, who could not afford to attend the university and community colleges, took advantage of these courses. These same governmental officials have also presented at ADA workshops and have publically represented themselves as strong allies to the community.

Lawyers have also been invaluable in helping with legal situations and Dreamers know that as members of ADA that they have access to them. Lupita mentioned, “There are a lot of lawyers that are willing to do pro bono things for ADA, because they believe in what we’re doing and they know that we’re not bad kids. The legal support is always really good.” Dreamers have faith in the legal support because lawyers have helped prevent Dreamers from being detained, helped get Dreamers out of detention, and provided information on legal matters, such as how to start their own business or file for non-profit status. In addition to people in positions of power, however, there are many instances of private citizens helping Dreamers.

One person worth mentioning is Luz Carillo²⁰ who is a first-generation immigrant herself but has citizenship. While I did not formally interview her, I observed that she is an integral member of ADA who uses her position to advocate on behalf of Dreamers.

²⁰ Luz Carillo is a pseudonym to protect her identity.

She is an active member and is present at most ADA-sponsored events. She has attended Maricopa County Community College District meetings advocating for the right of Dreamers to pay in-state tuition at the community colleges. She has campaigned to get Dreamers released from detention and has gone on TV and radio shows discussing ADA, Dreamers and the Dream Act. The majority of her daily Facebook²¹ posts are related to Dreamers and current events or information about the Dream Act. She is an invaluable ally and community member. In addition to Luz, there is a woman author who has written a book on undocumented migration and included Dreamer stories as well has written articles on the movement. I also spoke to another reporter who was covering a large ADA fundraiser, and I asked her where she was from. She said that she works for NPR (National Public Radio); and then, later in the discussion, she mentioned that she had attended Marisol's (one of the ADA leaders) small intimate wedding. Thus, community members have done well in making ties with every day citizens and people in power who benefit the DREAM Act movement.

In addition to building personal relationships with individuals, ADA organizes large community building events. For example, they put on a public fundraiser "Dream Dancing." ADA members completed their fourth annual event in 2013 and they have been successful bringing the Latino community together for the common purpose to support undocumented youth. Local businesses donate objects for raffles and pledge money for dancers, a local restaurant offers the space, and the community at large—including immigrants, allies, youth, adults, business owners, radio stations, and

²¹ "Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them." Accessed May 27th, 2013 at: <http://newsroom.fb.com/Key-Facts>

students—purchases tickets and everyone gets together for a big party. I attended this event in 2012 and it was well attended by youth, families and Dreamers. Members of the press, including National Public Radio (NPR), Time Magazine, Estrella Television and a local Latino radio station were all present. They raised over \$7,000 and over 700 Dreamers and allies attended. This event utilized a physical location, which helped create ties to the greater Latino community, as well as news stations that promoted their event and stories to a wider audience. It also helped make the ADA bonding ties stronger as many members participated in the planning and execution of the event.

In addition to formal gatherings, I witnessed informal social events that happen between community members. In fact, after the first meeting I attended for College Dreamers, a few members invited me to go out for dinner right afterwards. After that, I had asked if I could meet with Marisol, the leader of the group, to discuss my research, and she invited me to her house for a barbeque. What I thought was going to be her and her husband, ended up being a dinner where she invited multiple ADA members. There were a total of six of people and, even though I was a clear outsider, I was welcomed openly and put to work cutting vegetables for the hamburgers. We discussed various everyday topics, matters to do with the group, and then me, my background and my research. I felt very comfortable and everyone was very open and approachable.

I observed the same openness to other newcomers when they entered the group for the first time, regardless of age, ethnicity or immigration status. At meetings, they would be sure to personally introduce themselves to new faces. Elizabeth, who was one of the first people I met in ADA, was very open and receptive to me and my research and enthusiastically encouraged me to attend subsequent meetings and events. When I later

thanked her for originally welcoming me to the group, she told me that she tries to be nice to everyone since she never knows who she is going to meet and what they may be able to do for her in the future or vice versa. Thus, she was very aware of how social networks could be beneficial.

Members also often discussed in meetings how they needed to branch out and recruit Dreamers from other nationalities, like Asian immigrants, as well as allies from the greater community. But these efforts were not always successful in recruiting active members. As such, the core group of members who attended the meetings remained fairly homogenous, with Dreamers from mostly Mexican heritage, although there were a few active allies (also from Mexican descent). Nonetheless, their intention was to create more social ties, further extending their community to other Dreamers. However, they also have sought to create more bridging capital through workshops and events open to the public, some of which were on the university's campus.

The ADA chapter College Dreamers, which is dedicated to college students, took the lead on campus-based initiatives. For example, they partnered with a fraternity for an informational event titled "What the Greek is the DREAM Act?!" that was well attended by members of Greek life. A campus fraternity invited ADA members to come and share their stories and discuss what passing the DREAM Act would mean for them. Reports on the event were that it was highly successful as their stories were well received. In addition, ADA members participated in a forum hosted by the Honors College on campus. Dreamers told their stories and sat on a panel answering questions. Alliance members stated that there was a great diversity in students that attended the event,

including students from across the country and a lawyer from New York. Therefore, they were able to educate a wide audience about their situation.

One of the largest community events I attended on campus was a collaborative forum among a variety of academic units across campus. This event took place in April 2012 within a large ballroom in the Memorial Union, which is centrally located on campus. Collaborators included faculty from the Emeritus College, Graduate & Professional Student Association, Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff Association, Students United for Fair Rights and Greater Equality, School of Social Transformation, Asian Pacific American Studies, Justice & Social Inquiry, Center of Jewish Studies, School of Transborder Studies, and the School of Social and Family Dynamics. The goal of the event was three-fold: 1) tell the “real” stories of Dreamers; 2) discuss the impacts of immigration laws on education and Dreamers; and 3) discuss what others could do to support Dreamers in their efforts towards higher education and eventual citizenship²². The Senior Vice President of Educational Outreach and Student Services for the University gave the keynote address, while Dreamers presented talks on the demographics of undocumented students and information about the DREAM Act. Three other Dreamers told their own personal immigration story and a Project Coordinator for UCLA’s Dream Resource Center spoke. The event ended with a panel and group discussion about what the university community could do next.

The forum was very successful with over one hundred attendees. I recognized many influential faculty, some members of the upper administration, and a variety of staff and students. The questions that came from the audience were thoughtful and the

²² Information taken from event flyer that was handed out at the forum in April of 2012.

attendees were presented with a list of resources for advising undocumented students in the state of Arizona. These included websites for career counseling, scholarship sources, legal information and a guide for life after Dreamers graduate college. Examples like these campus-based initiatives show how ADA was able to not only use physical space to tell their stories, but these events also increased their bridging capital by involving members of the academic community.

Lastly, while not a large focus of this research project, the national community of Dreamers is also an important connection. ADA affiliates itself with a national organization called Dreamers United²³. This organization unites Dreamer groups from across the nation providing scholarships, organizing a national conference, lobbying congress, providing leadership training and internships, and helping advocate for detained Dreamers and family to remain in the country. Connecting ADA members to Dreamers United often happens by the ADA leadership mentioning their opportunities at meetings, as well as through Facebook an email list. By attending their trainings and conferences some ADA members extend their national network, as Javier told me.

The good thing travelling to different cities is that I always—I made good bonds with friends from other states. I have friends from Texas, Massachusetts, California, Colorado, New York, Florida. Those are the ones that I can remember. Washington, too. I feel like I could almost land in any part of the country and I would have a place to stay.

In addition to personal networks, being part of Dreamers United creates important national ties on top of their local ties.

²³ Dreamers United is a pseudonym for a national organization that aims to connect various groups of undocumented immigrant youth throughout the country. They lobby congress at the national level and provide trainings and retreats for Dreamers throughout the nation. More is discussed below.

The examples in this section not only show how ADA members creating both bridging and bonding social capital, but they also highlight how Dreamers utilized physical space in order to “come out” to the public and inform citizens about their situations. By claiming this space, undocumented youth were simultaneously creating and extending their community through building both bonding and bridging capital. However, the next section illustrates how they preserved and strengthened their new and existing ties amidst the obstacles of having fewer undocumented youth enrolled at the university.

While the group on campus grew smaller as Dreamers started to graduate, the organization grew outside of the university. Although ADA became more politically focused, regular meetings, social activities, political actions and fundraisers helped sustain and propel the community forward. One of the main ways that the community maintains their social ties is through regular meetings and the activities they have at these meetings. The overarching board of ADA has bi-weekly gatherings where representatives for each chapter attend to discuss key items, but the meetings are open to all community members. The ADA meetings originally were held on campus or in borrowed office space in downtown Phoenix. In 2012, however, the alliance secured office space in downtown Phoenix where they now hold their open-to-the-public meetings, trainings and special events.

Space, Community and Identity

As the previous chapters showed, undocumented youth initially created community after Proposition 300 passed in 2006 taking away their rights to in-state tuition. They met at the No Dream Denied scholarship orientation, which was the first

place that they came into physical contact with other undocumented college students. After this initial assembly, these students chose to continue to meet regularly on campus by utilizing classroom space at the university. It was these two “places” of face-to-face meetings that allowed for the eventual formation of the Arizona Dreamer Alliance, which is foundational for their community creation. Having a physical location on campus was a place that newcomers could come to meet the group while also maintaining the established community. In addition, it allowed for ADA members to plan their political actions. However, once the Dreamers who received the No Dreamed Denied scholarship began to graduate, the population of undocumented college students dwindled.

Not only was meeting on campus becoming more difficult as there were fewer Dreamers still attending the university, but the organization had new chapters forming across the metropolitan city. Moreover, they needed to try to reach out to other undocumented youth, because many of them were no longer at the university due to the price of tuition. I asked Marisol, the president of ADA, about recruitment of other Dreamers. She responded that there were some difficulties reaching out and said: “I think having an office space is so essential because when you need groceries you go to a grocery store. If you need gas you go to the gas station. Right now, if you need DREAM Act, there’s no physical place to go to.” Shortly after our interview, ADA opened an office in a central downtown location. Even though Dreamers live dispersed throughout the city, having meetings on campus and in an ADA office space helps maintain community and reinforce social bonds.

The central office space has been crucial to the Arizona Dreamer Alliance. It provides a place of belonging and membership for undocumented youth seeking a

pathway to legalization. The office is utilized for a variety of activities, both social and political, further solidifying their community and social capital. They have regular meetings where each chapter updates the alliance on their current plans and business; they organize and discuss their yearly events and fundraisers; they strategize political actions; and, they get to know each other and any newcomers.

The ADA regular meetings always start with a fun, team-building activity such as a game or answering interesting questions to get to know each other. Then, in addition to the alliance's bi-weekly meetings, its largest chapter College Dreamers, also meets twice per month on the university's campus. Their meetings begin with everyone introducing themselves to the group and there is a "Dreamer Story" where a member tells her migration story and aspirations. Then, the meetings cover updates from officers, updates about the greater ADA community, and upcoming events, among other things. All the meetings I attended had anywhere from ten to thirty participants and the meetings usually took two hours. Thus, these regular meetings and the activities within them are designed to welcome newcomers and get to know each other better, further strengthen their ties within the group. This not only creates more bonding social capital with new members, but it also reinforces the bonding capital among veterans.

The office is also utilized for different activities, which help to create a space for belonging and reinforce that important bonding social capital among members. Examples of these activities include Halloween parties with costume contests, poker nights with karaoke, food and drinks, among others. They have also used this space for tutoring on math. While the office is used for a variety of activities that invoke and reinforce bonding

social capital, there are other ways in which Dreamers utilize public spaces to foster community building.

The alliance also organizes an annual retreat for current and new members. It started in 2011 after the DREAM Act failed to pass the year before. They invite Dreamers to attend a 3-day retreat, which is normally at a campsite in the state of Arizona. The purpose of these retreats is to build stronger ties and envision what they want to accomplish in the year to come. At a meeting for the 2012 retreat, they stated that the “Retreat is important so that members can bond with each other, work better to create the change we are striving for, encourage civic engagement” (Meeting notes from Feb 20th, 2012). Between 50 and 80 Dreamers attend each year. This event is essential to bringing new members into the community, as well as strengthening the bonds of current members and reinforcing identities.

Members of the alliance have used space, physical and virtual, to both solidify their identity as Dreamers and to communicate that identity to the public. At the beginning of my fieldwork I was looking at the ADA website and calendar of events and noticed an announcement for a photo exhibition at a local art gallery called WeDream²⁴. The opening was part of the city’s “First Friday” monthly event where many local art galleries, cultural venues and exhibitors invite the public to visit them for free. Corina, a young artist and Dreamer, took photos of a variety of people including undocumented youth, immigrant children, people from mix-status families and allies. They all had the American flag painted somewhere on their body and were photographed in serious poses displaying their painted-on flags. She chose twenty pictures to display in the gallery

²⁴ WeDream is a pseudonym for the actual campaign.

exhibit. Each picture then has a “WeDream” written on it and most had different quotes such as: “The DREAM Act is a moral law that needs to be passed” and “Dreaming should not be illegal. We must all work together to ensure we all live the impossible dream.” Below is an example of a picture that was featured on the cover of a popular news magazine in Arizona.



Figure 1: Cover of New Times Magazine with Photo taken from the WeDream exhibit.

When I asked Corina about why she decided to do the project, she told me that she created the WeDream exhibit in order to “contribute to the fight for rights.” She further said:

I wanted to find those faces of the Dream Movement and unify them. And that thing that unifies them is that they had that ultimate goal to be part of the United States. I had that flag painted on them signifying it's in your skin to be an American and be accepted in the society...because they look like everybody else.

She wanted to use this creative space to “unify” undocumented youth thus, creating a shared identity of Dreamers. This photo with the American flag, and the quote from

Corina, show how these youth are fighting for rights based upon similarities to Americans.

Her first showing was widely successful. She raised over eight thousand dollars by auctioning the photos and was able to create a scholarship for other Dreamers who wanted to pursue art degrees. She was also invited to exhibit her photographs at local community colleges and a Latina-based convention in the Phoenix Convention Center as well as events in New York, Texas and California. Additionally, she has her own webpage displaying the images and she appeared on television promoting her exhibit as well as receiving attention from several online blogs and newspapers. Thus, Corina took her artistic expression and used both physical and virtual spaces to convey those powerful images and messages to the greater public. This in turn helped to express the identity of Dreamers in the public sphere as well as reinforce membership for other undocumented youth, essentially creating more bonding and bridging capital.

Deterritorialized Spaces and Community Building

With technology becoming more ubiquitous in daily life, the use of “virtual” space is also an important to discuss when talking about Dreamer’s developing community and creating valuable social capital. For instance, the news media, which broadcast through television, radio, and the internet along with social media, webpages and email, transcend physical boundaries and are vital to the Dreamer community. This form of space is especially essential, since Dreamers in Arizona (and beyond) are dispersed and not necessarily living next door to each other in close-knit communities.

Thus, virtual space, in the form of the media is a valuable tool for the Dreamer community to foster and build social capital.

The news media is the first way in which Dreamers started to “come out” as undocumented, despite the possibility of deportation. In fact, it was the only way you would hear about undocumented youth before the implementation of Proposition 300 in 2007. Starting in 2010, once Dreamers began coming out and putting pressure on Congress to reintroduce the DREAM Act, news stories started to become more common. In various web searches for stories on undocumented youth, I found a total of 107 articles concerning Arizona Dreamers from various sources before January 2012. Out of these articles, only 22 (20%) were from before 2009. Before 2007, there were only a few stories about high-achieving high school students and one on the DREAM Act, discussed below. Between 2007 and the end of 2009, stories involved the passage of Proposition 300 and a few highlighted the effects of the Proposition on undocumented students. But again, most of these stories do not specifically highlight individual Dreamers. Then, in 2010, once Dreamers started coming out of the shadows and putting pressure on governmental officials, more articles started to appear about the DREAM Act that included personal undocumented youth’s stories.

Ruben, a community college graduate and an aspiring chef, recounted to me how he was part of a team of four undocumented high school students who competed in a robotic competition against college engineering teams. In 2003, Ruben was in high school and joined the robotics club. The next summer, their robotics teacher encouraged them to enter their under-water robot in a national competition held in California. These young high school students competed against college students from prestigious

universities like MIT and won. Ruben told me that they sent their story to all the popular news stations and then all the popular print newspapers in the state and no one showed interest in it. It was not until one year later, in 2005 that a technology magazine, not even based in Arizona, picked up the story.

Three years later in 2008, after Proposition 300 passed, their success story was used as examples in many other news stories. There is even a movie currently in production about their trials and triumphs as undocumented students with the robotics competition. This movie is rumored to debut in 2014, nearly ten years after the actual competition, and has actors Marisa Tomei and Jamie Lee Curtis listed in the credits. This example highlights how undocumented students were almost completely in the shadows, hidden and “uninteresting” until the anti-immigrant laws put a focus on them thus, creating a “space” for them to come together, build community and fight for their rights.

The only other major story before 2007 was about the “Wilson Four” (who I did not interview). In 2002, these undocumented high school students travelled to Buffalo, New York for a solar competition and were detained at the U.S.-Canada border while visiting. They were then placed in deportation proceedings, but in 2005, their case was thrown out by a judge. It was only at this time, in 2005, that a couple of news stories came out about the Wilson Four’s plight. This story of high-excelling high school students has been cited in several publications throughout the past several years. However, again there were not many stories before 2007 because at the time undocumented students were not widely being persecuted and had similar rights as citizens. As a result, they did not have a community or space, and the larger public did not pay much attention to the fact that they were in school winning awards and excelling

academically. Once Proposition 300 passed in Arizona, the issue came to the forefront of the public sphere. The news media, however, is not the only deterritorialized space that Dreamer utilize for building community.

From the beginning, email and social media have been crucial in creating and maintaining community. While this is not a physical location, emails can be accessed virtually anywhere in the world, and outlets like Facebook and Twitter²⁵ reaches around the globe. Thus, the internet provides a contiguous space that transcends physical boundaries and can be very powerful for political movements. Since Dreamers in Arizona are spread out widely over a large metropolitan area, the use of technology and online media is essential to the community. When the alliance first started in 2007, they often met in person, but they also communicated via email.

In November 2008, one of the first things the leaders of the group did was to create a Google group²⁶ to be able to share and communicate with each other privately. One member told me that even though they communicated through a Blackboard site that the university provided, they decided it would be best to communicate outside the university for privacy concerns: “People wouldn’t want to be talking because we thought that this information was going to go viral or for some reason somebody was going to come and grab everybody that was part of this Blackboard.” Thus, they thought that at non-university sponsored way to communicate would be “safer,” so they stopped using Blackboard.

²⁵ Twitter is a Social networking and microblogging service utilizing instant messaging, SMS or a web interface located at: <https://twitter.com/>.

²⁶ A Google group is a forum where members of a group can send emails and communicate. For the ADA Google group people must be invited to join the group in order to post or read messages. Moreover, it stores an archive of all messages sent that members, new or old, can view at any point in time.

The original description of the ADA Google group reads “This website allows us to communicate between each other while still keeping ourselves relatively anonymous” (ADA Group Info, viewed May 27th, 2013). This exclusivity was important at the height of the anti-immigrant laws and is still useful to this day, even though the concern for privacy is now secondary since frequently coming out publically. Currently there are 270 members of the Google group, and since 2008, there have been over 5 thousand messages sent to members discussing various topics (ADA Google group Info, viewed May 27th, 2013). The Google group is private space where members, and allies like myself, are able to discuss and share information. The thousands of emails in the archive include invites to parties and events, meeting announcements, meeting minutes, pleas for volunteers to lobby government officials ,and entities in hopes of freeing someone from deportation proceedings, et cetera. In this next snapshot of the ADA Google group archive, you can see the number of emails sent by month since its creation.

Archive												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2008											67	50
2009	58	531	266	149	119	122	77	79	75	143	148	77
2010	79	99	112	137	83	119	236	158	197	101	180	154
2011	103	66	94	93	93	62	54	84	75	96	67	30
2012	63	72	39	69	58	41	36	42	27	34	29	22
2013	21	23	16	18	4							

Figure 2: Snapshot of number of emails sent through the ADA’s private Google group.

As the chart shows, there are some months that have more emails than others. For example, from June – December 2010, there were an average of 163 emails per month. This is during a time that the DREAM Act was up for a vote in Congress. Within the following year, the number of emails dipped below 100 per month, but then after May 2012, they decrease dramatically. This correlates with President Obama passing Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals in June 2012. Therefore, when immigrant issues affecting undocumented youth were at their height and at the forefront of the public’s eye, email communication also peaked.

However, ADA also has additional means of reaching other members and the public at large. Facebook has been instrumental in maintaining community. ADA has one Facebook private group with over 1500 members (checked May 29, 2013) and one public Facebook page with over 2400 “likes”²⁷ (checked May 29, 2013) and many of the group members are also “friends” with each other. In another example of how ADA members extended their networks, many of my participants “friended”²⁸ me on Facebook, and I was able to view when Dreamers organized pool parties, barbeques or volleyball games at a local park and invited others by posting an invitation. I was then able to see comments of other Dreamers stating that they would be there. These individuals also posted Dreamer-related information on their personal Facebook “walls,” such as opportunities for scholarships and tuition reduced classes. It is through these media

²⁷ A Facebook page is different than a Facebook group. A page is open to the public, where a group may or may not be open. A “like” on Facebook is where an individual signals that they support a page. Individuals can become members of a group. Whenever the owner of a page or a group posts something on their virtual “wall” it will appear in all the members news feed as well as anyone who has liked the page.

²⁸ “Friending” someone of Facebook means that they allow each other to see their personal page including photos and “wall posts” or any public activity that an individual does through Facebook.

pathways, among others, that help grow the community, extend it to others, and share valuable information.

In addition to discussing personal stories and the DREAM Act in general, the mass media has played a key role in increasing membership and building community. Many of my informants who were not part of the initial group of Dreamers, who received the NDD scholarship found out about ADA through the internet, radio or television. In some instances, ADA members found other Dreamers, and in other instances, Dreamers found ADA members. Some had seen news stories; some had come across their Facebook page or website; others had heard interviews on Spanish-radio; and, some met them at protests. For example, Corina, the artist with the WeDream exhibit, did not know there was the Arizona Dreamer Alliance when she started her project. She advertised her campaign on Facebook in order to recruit volunteers for photo shoots. Shortly after doing that, close to fifty ADA members saw her postings and added her as a friend. A couple of the leaders, including Marisol, contacted her to set up a meeting and after that she became an integral member of the group.

In another similar example, Alicia, who was able to attend a community college part-time through scholarships, told me how she became involved because a friend saw her online postings about being undocumented. In this instance, she was posting about her status and looking for scholarships to help pay for the out-of-state tuition. Her friend was attending the university and a member of ADA and he invited her to a fundraiser where she met a couple of Dreamers, who then invited her to a meeting. She told me that after that first meeting, she just stayed with the group and has been active ever since. These two examples show how the internet was used as a virtual space for people to

connect and create community because of their differences from mainstream society. However, considering the total estimated population of undocumented youth in Arizona, there are still a majority who are not connected to the group.

These fairly inexpensive and instantaneous virtual methods of building social capital are valuable to Dreamers. They allow for them to reach various goals. First, they help to create and maintain community, which is important because members do not necessarily see each other on a daily, or even weekly, basis. Second, these methods allow for important information to be shared to other Dreamers and any allies, further fostering more valuable social capital. For example, the alliance uses the Google group email, Facebook, and now text messaging, to transmit information about their biweekly meetings, invitations to protests and actions, request to call the Department of Homeland Security to petition the release of a Dreamer or another undocumented immigrant, invitations to events, among others. While these deterritorialized ways of reaching undocumented youth are valuable, Dreamers cannot take advantage of social capital if they are not actually connected to the alliance.

Reaping the Rewards of Community

In the beginning, the group of Dreamers who received the NDD scholarship gathered in a largely social capacity, but over the years they began to benefit from their connections to each other. Having a community of Dreamers creates valuable social capital that has many benefits for its members, including emotional support, various personal and economic opportunities, as well as a safety net. Thus, the remainder of this chapter will discuss the emotional and social support, the legal support, and the sharing of

valuable information and resources. All of these resources, I argue, are what mitigates the downward assimilation that Gonzales (2011) states Dreamers experience after leaving a supportive educational environment.

Descansa en Paz Joaquin: Emotional and Social Support

In the fall of 2011, Dreamers received news that an 18-year-old Texas Dreamer named Joaquin Luna had committed suicide. A New York Times article stated that one of his farewell letters stated ““Jesus, I’ve realized that I have no chance in becoming a civil engineer the way I’ve always dreamed of here ... so I’m planning on going to you and helping you construct the new temple in heaven.””²⁹ While the article also states that he never mentioned his undocumented status as a reason for taking his own life, family members stated that it did play a role and that he was upset that he could not go to college. Across Facebook many Dreamers, including those from Arizona, changed their profile picture in support and remembrance to the one photo seen in Figure 3 saying “*descansa en paz Joaquin*” or “rest in peace Joaquin.”

²⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/us/joaquin-luna-jrs-suicide-touches-off-immigration-debate.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed June 7, 2013)



Figure 3: Photo taken from New York Times Article³⁰

Joaquin’s passing was brought up in one of the bi-weekly meetings and members discussed what they could do to prevent this happening to another Dreamer. The immediate answer was to hold a vigil in solidarity and honor of him at the end of that week, which they did—but they also discussed what else could be done in the long term. While they recognized that they should not be the ones trying to assist in complicated emotional situations, they said that their organization could serve as a resource to connect others to the proper mental health services and put this information on their website. Moreover, they acknowledged that they are “the lucky ones” because they had the support of the group, but that they needed to reach out to more to unconnected youth in order to provide them with assistance.

³⁰ Photo on the left is from Facebook, the public page. The photo on the right is taken from a New York Times Article accessed on June 24, 2013 at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/11/us/joaquin-luna-jrs-suicide-touches-off-immigration-debate.html?pagewanted=all>

The conversation turned to how the meetings should include time to discuss personal issues and this opened up the dialogue for others to share their experiences. Many discussed how they felt depressed at times, especially before joining the alliance. They also expressed anxiety about not knowing about the future and not having a supportive environment that helped them push forward despite the obstacles. I found the same experience in a separate conversation months later when I interviewed Julio, who talked about the difficult time he had after high school before he joined the group.

Julio, who was one of ADA's newest and youngest members, told me that after he graduated high school he went into a "really, really, deep depression" from helplessness and lack of control over his future. For five months he was not able to do anything, and then once everyone started to go back to school and enter college it was even more difficult. He had a partial scholarship offer from a private Christian university, but he could not accept it and could not afford community college. Julio told me that it was the "darkest time of his life" because he had to do manual labor in order to help out his family who was struggling financially. This frustrated him because he knew that he should be in the air-conditioned classroom getting an education instead of out in the Arizona heat working hard for little money. However, shortly after this period of his life, he joined the alliance and talked about how his life changed because he found people who truly understood him.

Julio expressed how the people in ADA "changed his life" because he had found an entire community of people who were similar to him and felt the same feelings he felt from being excluded from college. These connections to others had a "huge impact" on his life. Thus, for Julio, the group provided a social and emotional safety net that has

helped him immensely. In addition, Gloria stated that the top benefit of her involvement was the access to much-needed support: “Number one would be a support system. We started off as just being very social with each other and talking about experiences. For me that really helped me to create a support system.” Although I did not witness the implementation of a time to talk about personal issues in subsequent meetings, I assume that these types of conversations may have taken place outside of group gatherings. To have people who understand what they are feeling and have their support is a powerful resource in itself.

Close personal relationships have many benefits. Friends can offer support that family members cannot (Richey and Richey 1980), such as advice, encouragement, feedback, reassurance, or simply a companion (Tokuno 1986; Weiss 1974). Friendships, especially close friendships, possibly mitigate stressful situations, such as ones that coincide with stressful life transitions because they provide valuable social support (Tokuno, 1986). Furthermore, friends who share comparable experiences with shared types of problems find that they feel more normal when they can share those feelings with someone who understands (Buote et al. 2007). We can see how important these relationships are from Lupita, the owner of the English language school, who discusses how her friends from ADA benefit her.

Benefits? The main one is moral support, because you know that there are a lot of other students out there, and real friendships. I thought I had friends in high school. They don't come close to the type of friendships that I have created within ADA. They're real friends. They're there for you. They understand you completely. They understand you to a level that you thought you would never be understood because they have gone through very similar things that you have and they know what it means to be undocumented. That's the number one thing that I do consider a benefit.

Therefore, Dreamers who are friends with other Dreamers can share their same experiences and feel that they are not alone. Additionally, friends also provide for a healthy psychosocial well-being and can help increase feelings of self-respect and a healthy self-esteem (Hartup and Stevens, 1997). As Marcia mentioned, her involvement with ADA made her “mature so much.” She was able to create friendships that fostered her ability to share her personal stories, feelings and emotions—something she was not able to do before. She mentioned that the retreats and the trainings that ADA provides “help the members expand and open up in different ways, and learn so much about themselves and their community.” Thus, having opportunities to connect with other Dreamers provides social and emotional support, as well as access to information.

Creating new friendships also allows for the possibility of meeting new people and making more friendships, further increasing social networks (Buote et al., 2007). These friendships are important for Dreamers because they provide social support, as well as valuable resources. For instance, Alicia stated that by spending a lot of time with people from ADA, she was able to build relationships that provided valuable information, such as what scholarships to apply for, in addition to just be able to normal-every day topics that affect her social and emotional well-being.

There are many members who spend time with each other outside of meetings and events. I observed pictures posted on Facebook of members out for dinner or coffee, messages about hanging out, and even words of encouragement for Dreamers who post something about difficulties. For example, I witnessed Dreamers post on Facebook about their bad days, or difficulty with school and work, or frustrations with current anti-immigrant legislation and lack of progress, to name a few. Therefore, the emotional and

social support system that ADA provides for its members is a critical benefit, especially for those strongly experiencing liminality and having difficulties “surviving.”

Close friendships, not only provide social support among people with similar situations, but they also help create trust. I asked Julio, who recently had joined the organization, to tell me what in his life has changed since meeting ADA, and he mentioned that his perspective of Arizona and his sense of community were different. He said, “I used to think that I couldn't trust anyone. I used to feel that if my friends knew exactly what my situation was, they wouldn't be my friends anymore.” Being surrounded by others who are comfortable with their undocumented status and living as “normal” of a life as possible helps others come out.

The trust that comes from being involved with ADA has helped many lead less secluded and isolated lives and become more social and adventurous, both Javier and Gloria explained. Javier told me that his involvement has given him “freedom” to do many things: “I wouldn't be sitting here with you [talking about my story]—I wouldn't even tell you my name if I hadn't gotten involved. I probably wouldn't have been driving. I don't know, I probably would still be hiding at home, scared. I liberated myself with ADA. It's helped me a lot.” Gloria echoed the same sentiments when she mentioned that ADA helped her come out of her “comfort zone” in regards to travelling other places without being afraid. She had not travel anywhere outside of Arizona before she joined the alliance. However, since becoming a member, she visited Washington D.C. and Texas and was planning a return trip to the nation's capital. These two examples highlight how many of my informants mentioned becoming more comfortable with their situations and becoming more at ease being in public settings and identifying themselves

as Dreamers. Therefore, having community support from people who share similar experiences gave them the confidence and courage to “step out of the shadows” and be more assertive about their undocumented status. While this may be because of their ability to share similar experiences and create friendships that make them more comfortable with their liminal status, their self-confidence in identifying as undocumented can also be attributed to other factors.

Undocumented and Unafraid

One of the benefits Dreamers experience as part of this community is being “undocumented and unafraid.” At meetings and public events, where the media was sometimes present, I witnessed many Dreamers disclosing their legal status and even wearing t-shirts that said “undocumented.” Granted, these gatherings usually involved the immigrant community as a whole, but even so, they were in very public spaces with citizens and non-citizens, and still very at ease with stating that they were undocumented. While some of my respondents were more comfortable than others discussing their status in public, everyone I interviewed said that they were not afraid to disclose it. This was not always the case, however, especially at the time the state implemented Prop 300 in 2007.

Gloria, a founding ADA member, explained to me that when they first started meeting in university rooms, they were scared that the sheriff (Joe Arpaio) was going to come and find them. For instance, they put up a sign outside the meeting room door that said “NDD scholarship reunion.” But then they thought that someone was going to figure out that that was the scholarship for undocumented students, so they took the sign down.

However, Gloria then reflected and said: “I mean going back to that and how we’ve grown, it’s just incredible. We come out and telling people about our status like it’s nothing.” She then told me how she used to be very scared in high school and that only a few friends and some teachers knew of her status. Her mother used to always tell her to not tell anyone that she was undocumented. Gloria told me that she carried this fear onto college until she met other undocumented youth.

When I got to [the university] I kind of felt the same way. I felt like it was still something I couldn’t talk about. Then when I met the other Dreamers through the No Dream Denied scholarship and I felt like, man, I’m not the only one in this situation. There’s more people like me. That really created a support system for me and it was a way of me being able to come out and not be afraid of “What if I say I’m undocumented? What’s going to happen to me?” I got over that fear when I met them.

As Gloria points out, that fear subsided over the years because Dreamers had gradually started coming out of the shadows through little protests and newspaper articles and saw that nothing detrimental happened to others. Thus, this network of support and creation of social capital builds a safety net for them to come out and fight for their rights without fear. However, there are many youth who are still fearful about disclosing that they are undocumented. One of my respondents pointed out why he believes this is so: “Some people are still afraid. It's funny how they are, because I think, ‘well, these are people that don't have this alliance or they're not part of our community’” (Noe). Thus, members see the support of the community as a reason why they are comfortable about talking of their status.

Undocumented youth who are involved with ADA are unafraid for various reasons. First, they have role models who are vocal and comfortable talking about their

status and who do not have many negative repercussions, such as being arrested or threatened by others. For example, many have enrolled in and finished college, driven without getting pulled over, been arrested and released, been on TV, and started their own businesses. Secondly, through the group, they have been taught what their rights are and how to speak with law enforcement if they should get pulled over. While these two factors are important, I believe one of the main reasons that people who belong to the ADA community are unafraid is because they know that if they are detained and placed in detention, the community would fight to release them. That is, they have built up social capital with others, creating a relationship of trust that allows them to come out of the shadows, something that other undocumented youth who do not have this support system are unwilling to do.

As Lupita explained, the alliance creates a safety net that allows Dreamers to feel unafraid of disclosing their status in a variety of situations. She said, “You feel a sense of safety within the movement, because you know that if you were to get pulled over, with one single phone call that you do the whole nation will find out. Whereas, there’s a Dreamer that is not involved, no one knows about them. No one ever hears about them because he didn’t know what to do, he didn’t know who to call, so he gets deported.” Lupita told me that she has a “big sense of relief” from being involved because they of the “thousand calls to DHS³¹” that will happen if a member is taken by authorities.

The Arizona Dreamer Alliance implemented an “emergency response system” in 2011. ADA participates in the “Education, Not Deportation” (END) campaign. This is a system that is set up to help members if they are detained by law enforcement. In an

³¹ DHS stands for Department of Homeland Security

email that was sent on March 24th, 2011, one of ADA's members wrote that they must be proactive and prepare in case they are pulled over. This is how it works: 1) a detained Dreamer sends a text message to an emergency cell phone number with his or her name and location; 2) if, after 30 minutes, the Dreamer does not send a second text confirming that authorities have released him or her, the "legal team" sets into action making appropriate calls to track down the Dreamer and contact family members if necessary; and 3) in addition to the emergency response system, ADA connects with a national END program set up by Dreamers United if the situation becomes serious and a Dreamer is at risk of extended detention or possible deportation proceedings. If this is the case, the national coordinator sends out mass emails through their various national networks and posts information on Facebook and Twitter. Finally, if a Dreamer is close to deportation, the network will solicit petition signatures and start calling campaigns to the Department of Homeland Security and to the offices of U.S. senators who support Dreamers.

Over the time that I conducted fieldwork, I witnessed approximately one or two END campaigns per month. Emails come over the Google group and there are posts on Facebook. There are messages to call or write to Janet Napolitano (secretary of Homeland Security), John Morton (director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement), state senators and detention center field officers. There are online petitions and even protests in some instances. Most times, shortly after the END campaign started, there are follow up emails or Facebook postings sharing the happy news that their efforts worked and authorities released the Dreamer from detention, or gave an extension to stay in the country. The community not only comes to the aid of members, but also to other undocumented youth who are not active members.

The government has deported undocumented youth, but they are often unaffiliated with ADA. The group discussed those stories in meetings and stressed the importance of reaching out more to those youth. Yet, I witnessed the ADA community come together to prevent a young man's deportation who was not an active member. This undocumented youth, who did not have a strong network ties to the alliance, still was able to utilize his social capital simply by being a "Dreamer." While he did know some of the Dreamers involved with ADA, he did not have close connections with the group and was not a member. Nevertheless, once ADA heard of his detainment, the community took action by making phone calls to officials and he was quickly released by authorities. Afterwards, at a bi-weekly meeting, they discussed how their efforts were a success, but they also felt that the Dreamer should "owe" something to the group in the form of volunteer time and active membership. Although, I never saw that young man at any ADA events after his release, and even though members were slightly disgruntled because they expected some reciprocity, they still continued to come to the aid of others in detention who were not formal community members. For example, they participated in release campaigns for detained Dreamers in Tucson and even youth in other states. Thus, the community extends itself to undocumented youth in need regardless of affiliation.

Sharing Valuable Information

Another main benefit of the social capital that ADA provides to its members is the access to information that helps with day-to-day activities that many take for granted. In the early days of the alliance members were able to share information about "little things," such as getting a passport or traveling within the country, as many did not know

that they could obtain legal identification or travel by airplane. Other types of information they shared included scholarships, internships, and work opportunities, but it was not formal or systematic in the beginning. However, once the group became more official and organized, they started to systematically identify key information and create forums, such as email blasts and information sessions to transmit that information.

It is important to note that ADA serves as a resource to its members in addition to providing a place to fight for social change. For instance, the group has given many informational workshops for Dreamers, but some are also open to the public. For example, they have three popular presentations that they often give: *Tell your Dreamer Story*, *Know Your Rights*, and *Educational Opportunities*. *Tell your Dreamer Story* is a workshop that aims at motivating Dreamers to become active in the community. Alliance members tell their stories about being undocumented and their path to attaining higher education as well as teach others how to successfully share their own stories.

Know Your Rights is a presentation about how Dreamers can document themselves and what to do in case they come in contact with legal officials or state employees. For example, in the case of documentation, they advise Dreamers to get official identification in the forms of “matricula consular” (consulate identification from Mexico), a Mexican passport, establish a bank account, apply for an ITIN# (individual taxpayer identification number) and pay taxes on income. They also have resources and connections with people in the local Mexican consulate who can help Dreamers through these processes. Then, they teach that if you are pulled over by police you should do and know the following:

- You have the right to: keep silent, refuse to be searched, and a right to a lawyer
 - State you don't give permission to search the car
 - Do not lie
 - Do not give false documents
 - Do not have documents from other countries on your person or in your car
 - Only give your name and date of birth
 - Obey traffic laws
- (Taken from fieldnotes, May 28th, 2011)

This workshop has proven valuable to many Dreamers, as Gloria pointed out when she was in an accident and police asked for her license and registration.

Gloria, the aspiring journalist, had a run in with police a year earlier when she was heading home from a party for her sister's first communion and was only three blocks from her house. She was driving when another car hit her car. Although it was not her fault, once she pulled over she thought "I have to run" because she feared that the police were going to arrest her. She then said, "I just tried to remember everything that I learned from the Know Your Rights sessions that we've had. I said, 'Okay. I just need to tell them my name and give them my school ID and that's it.'" She was shaking when the policeman came to her, but tried not to look nervous and he told her to get her license and registration together. She handed him the insurance and registration but not a license. Gloria told me that the officer came back and said, "'Well where is your license?' I gave him my school ID and I said, 'I'm sorry officer; this is the only thing I have on me.'" A little later, with the help from a lawyer that she met through ADA, Gloria was allowed to return home from the scene of the accident. Gloria is not the only Dreamer who spoke about encounters with law enforcement and followed the steps in the Know Your Rights sessions and were subsequently released with a warning, or sometimes possibly just a

ticket depending on the situation. Without following these steps, they could have put themselves in jeopardy of detainment.

The third popular workshop they give is on *Educational Opportunities*. The workshop that I attended had over 50 people present. In this presentation, they handed out a “Higher Education Resource Guide” (obtained May 2011) that is a 22-page document with various information about applying and paying for college. The guide starts out explaining the laws affecting immigrant youth such as Plyler v. Doe, Proposition 300, HB 2008 and the DREAM Act³². Next it discusses researching different colleges, applying early, getting good grades, being a leader and connecting with college officials such as faculty and admissions staff. Then, there are college application tips, including how to write essays, short answers and get letters of recommendation in addition to SAT and ACT scores. After that, the guide discusses paying for college by looking for resources such as private scholarships, or how to do community fundraising, or by saving any earnings. The last part of the guide goes into more detail about writing a resume, requesting letters of recommendations, building a portfolio, creating a budget, and finally, it mentions opportunities in “immigrant-friendly” states where education may be more affordable. This is one of the more popular and well-attended workshops they have. Thus, those attending the workshop received valuable information that was only possible by showing up in person.

In addition to these main workshops, there are also other opportunities for Dreamers to learn information. At the first ADA bi-weekly meeting that I attended, there was a bank representative talking to the group about how the different chapters could

³² See chapter 2 for more information on these laws.

open bank accounts and how individual Dreamers could open personal accounts. At the time, many of the members did not have a bank account, nor knew how to get one. Additionally, they have had resume presentations and workshops to help Dreamers write, update or create a resume. They even have had math tutoring available throughout different times of the year. Another one of their workshops that was open to non-members (for a fee), was how to create your own business through a Limited Liability Corporations (LLC's). Presenting at this workshop were a lawyer and an accountant who were familiar with LLC's. They discussed how Dreamers can work legally by being an owner of their own company. The lawyer even had grant money to help with start-up funds for low income clients creating new businesses in Phoenix. There were about 28 people in attendance; over half of them were Dreamers, and the rest in attendance appeared to be members of the immigrant community.

Another one of the main benefits that I observed, and that some of my interviewees commented on, is the creation of human capital (i.e. knowledge and skills) from being involved with ADA. The alliance offers Dreamers personal and professional development. For example, Lupita told me that one of the main benefits of involvement with ADA is “the knowledge that comes with it, because ADA opens so many opportunities to receive trainings or to learn more about anything that’s going on within politics and everything here in the US.”

Not only does the alliance sponsor workshops such as “how to speak publically,” but they also train others how to give and run workshops. The group provides leadership opportunities by encouraging members to take the lead on trainings whether it is at a community workshop, retreat, or special conferences. By simply being involved in the

group's activities and events they develop many interpersonal skills, which in turn allows them to build their resumes. For example, the leadership skills that they learn include organizing and advertising events, fundraising, community outreach and organizing, public speaking, networking, and working with, and even managing teams of people—all highly valued skills in the workplace. With these skills Dreamers can start their own businesses as one long-time ADA member, Gloria, explains.

I've also learned leadership skills. Right now we're actually creating a lobbying firm to go lobby for the DREAM Act. The lobbying firm is called [omitted]. Throughout my involvement with the ADA I've just kind of learned those leadership skills that I need and now that I'm with the lobbying firm I kind of been able to implement those. –Gloria

Thus, on top of providing professional development, some of these opportunities actually end up providing financial support, which is yet another benefit of having ties to the community.

Making Ends Meet: Access to Financial Resources

There are many different ways in which ADA provides access to financial resources, such as through work, internships or scholarships. In addition to the scholarship resources provided in the “Higher Education Resource Guide,” often times, there are emails about new scholarships for which Dreamers are eligible to apply. While Dreamer-eligible scholarship opportunities are not abundant, if a new one becomes available, the ADA community is sure to know about it and share that information. The alliance is also able to provide pathways to paid “work.” In addition to providing information about how to start their own businesses, ADA has also (legally) provided

paid internships and paid leadership roles for Dreamers. Examples of these “jobs” include organizing voter registration campaigns, leading a recall campaign, doing community outreach, recruiting and fundraising. In addition, the networks that Dreamers build provide opportunities to find steady employment.

At the time of my fieldwork, many of my informants have paying jobs, whether it is through their own business or through “formal” jobs that may or may not pay cash “under the table.” Among my informants there are a variety of business owners and entrepreneurs. One member who caters events has been referred out for many jobs and has catered ADA sponsored events and even personal events of members, such as a wedding. Others Dreamer-owned businesses include professional photography, marketing and website design, artistic design, and a lobbying firm to name a few. In addition to owning businesses, other members find work through other community members. One of the original members, Marcia, told me how she found work over the years by being a part of the alliance. First, while in college, through emails from ADA members she found work through a professor on campus helping her to organize her office as well as working a local Native American pow-wow event. However, more recently she had found a job through another ADA member, Jessica, who was working for an insurance company. This new job paid well, although the hours were very long, the “boss” paid in cash so she did not need a social security number.

While legitimate jobs were impossible to come by because Dreamers could not work without a social security number, cash-paying temporary opportunities or “consultant” jobs like the ones above can be found by being part of the community. Ana

Laura, one of the newest members I interviewed discussed how her sister was able to find work through ADA.

My sister was able to find a new job opportunity just by going to that one ADA meeting that we went to the first time. That's incredible because she's been wanting to get out of the restaurant that we've been working at. She's just tired of same old, same old. It's not really doing anything to benefit our future, so being involved with this new business, it's going to help us out a lot.

Thus, many members of ADA have been able to find access to financial resources through the social capital that the group offers. The alliance is not able to provide everyone with jobs, internships, or scholarships, but nonetheless being part of the community has the possibility of finding more opportunities than an isolated Dreamer.

Summary

This chapter shows how various forms of social capital were first created and then utilized from being part of the ADA community. Members are able to make close friendships and share their struggles with other Dreamers by providing social and emotional support. They are able to take advantage of training, learning important information on how to protect themselves and how to build a future for themselves whether through school or work. Moreover, the connections that the group makes to allies outside of the community provide various means of support in the form of protection, advocacy and resources. Thus, for those who are involved with the alliance, access to social capital helps mitigate downward assimilation as evidenced by the many active ADA members who are not working in low-wage, service jobs.

It is important to point out that there are an estimated 40,000 undocumented youth in Arizona and 1.5 million undocumented youth under the age of 18 in the country. Thus, while there is a community, it is a very small community in comparison to the actual population. Nonetheless, now if there is an undocumented immigrant youth that is in need of resources and support, he or she can easily find the group through the internet, and attend events in physical 'spaces,' which has not always been the case. While the community provides many benefits, we must remember that it must be utilized to fight for rights in order for cultural citizenship to be successful. Thus, the next chapter talks about the political incorporation and successes Dreamers experienced as a result of forming their community.

Chapter 5: Out of the Shadows and into the Fight: Dreamer's Cultural Citizenship in Action

I definitely have seen the changes over the years, because I've seen some of the videos of older news coverage of some of the protests. One of the things that really surprises me is how shocked people were that young students were coming out of the shadows, protesting, and doing rallies. Now it's just kind of the norm. We're not ashamed of who we are. –Julio

Up unto this point I have discussed how undocumented youth's increased liminality and understanding of the social structure allowed them to create a supportive community. However, the community that undocumented youth were able to build after the implementation of strict anti-immigrant laws is the foundation of the Dreamer political movement. The group of undocumented college students who were originally scared that the sheriff was going to find and arrest them, became a group of youth who were unafraid to “come out of the shadows” in order to claim rights. This is how they are able to enact their cultural citizenship.

In order to exercise cultural citizenship, Arizona Dreamer Alliance members have incorporated themselves politically in numerous activities at the federal, state and local levels. As result, they are gaining some important rights and slowly transitioning back into legality. In this chapter I take first-hand accounts from interviews as well as Facebook posts, news articles and email correspondence to tell the story of how ADA members were able to fight for their rights between the period of 2010 to 2012. Through narratives and photos, I demonstrate how Dreamers expressed their “American-ness” and claim rights based on the country's ideals. There are pictures of Dreamers in caps and gowns, protests signs written in English (not Spanish) with the colors red, white and blue,

and mock military demonstrations—all of which signify a connectedness to the country. However, one key issue here is “coming out from the shadows,” or in other words, bringing themselves into the public sphere to create awareness amongst the American citizenry that Dreamers exist and are just like other citizen youth.

Utilizing space is not only important for building community and social capital, but also for fighting for rights. Therefore, it is important to examine the role the public sphere plays in the quest for, and success of, gaining rights through building and exerting cultural citizenship. In the last chapter I showed how space was important for creating community. However, both public and private and physical and deterritorialized spaces are also important for the purpose of claiming rights for two reasons. First, it is a place for group members to come together to discuss strategies. For instance, Latinos have used public meeting spaces such as community health clinics, churches and schools to meet, and strategize how they would publically communicate their demand for rights (Flores 1997). Second, it is important to note that claiming space does not stop at the planning stage, but it is also crucial for actualizing their plans. That is, group members have to come out in public spaces in order to have the opportunity to be successful in demanding those rights. This “coming out” is a process of refusal to be relegated to the margins of society and thus a process of claiming space and rights simultaneously.

The Public Sphere and Cultural Citizenship

In addition to having space for community creation and a place of belonging, space is also important for claiming rights. The question of “where” political action occurs is a key concern when looking at civil rights issues, especially when we look at

the undocumented who are relegated to the margins of society. The public sphere can be both located in physical locales or deterritorialized spaces such as the media. Political theory positions politics in the “public sphere” which is a place where people can gather, discuss, and deliberate political views (Staeheli et al. 2002). According to Habermas, the public sphere can take a variety of forms, but again, it does not necessarily have to be located in a physical space.

. . . the public sphere is differentiated into levels according to the density of communication, organizational complexity, and range—from the episodic publics found in taverns, coffee houses, or on the streets; through the occasional or “arranged” publics of particular presentations and events, such as theater performances, rock concerts, party assemblies, or church congresses; up to the abstract public sphere of isolated readers, listeners, and viewers scattered across large geographic areas, or even around the globe, and brought together only through the mass media (Habermas 1996:374).

Furthermore, Habermas argues that actors within civil society cannot directly change laws, but that they can only use their communicative power to influence public opinion, which in turn influences the government to act in one way or the other.

Notwithstanding this discursive rationalization, only the political system itself can “act.” It is a subsystem specialized for collectively binding decisions, whereas the communicative structures of the public sphere comprise a far-flung network of sensors that respond to the pressure of society-wide problems and stimulate influential opinions. The public opinion which is worked up via democratic procedures into communicative power cannot itself “rule” but can only channel the use of administrative power in specific directions (Habermas 1998: 420).

Thus, even though the state retains control over its citizens, the public can influence its actions. The idea of the public sphere is useful when looking at cultural citizenship and immigrant social movements.

If we take Flores’ (1997) three examples of the Latino community collectively fighting for rights as discussed in chapter three, we can see how Latinos were able to

influence public officials through public acts. In the free clinic example, the Latino community banded together and the clinic publicly stated that they existed to give healthcare to the poor immigrants as a basic human right, regardless of legal status. The theater skit that educated parents on their children's educational rights is also another illustration of how undocumented immigrants used public and creative space in order to express and claim their rights. In another example, there were mass protests in 2006 across the nation against H.R. 4437, which is another display of resistance where the greater immigrant community influenced federal and state governments to act in a specific way. Hence, in order to gain rights it is helpful for the undocumented to make themselves visible. In regards to the 2006 protests, Chavez writes,

America also learned a bit more about the immigrants in their midst, those faceless folds who do much of the work cast aside by the educated and well-off among the citizenry. Suddenly those who lived shadowed lives were demonstrating in the open, in reckless disregard of the practices of surveillance and laws of deportation governing their lives. The least powerful in society, regarded as subalterns, were speaking by the millions in a unified voice against the policies the lawmakers were proposing. At the same time, the marchers were asserting their right to be treated with respect and dignity, as economic, social, and cultural citizens (Chavez 2008:174).

However, simply coming into the public's eye is not the only thing that is needed to be able to gain rights. Chavez uses the term "unified voice" of millions of people to signify solidarity, and Habermas also acknowledges that coordinated efforts and communicative actions are driven by interpersonal networks and relationships (Habermas 1996:354). Hence, social capital is also an important part of successful social movements. However, just like forming community, these networks can be fostered by using both physical and virtual spaces.

Social Capital, Solidarity and Immigrant Activism

The ability to create, maintain, and employ social capital is not only essential when building community, but also in social movements. In his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert D. Putnam (2000) states that social networks are essential for civic participation.

Social movements and social capital are so closely connected that it is sometimes hard to see which is [the] chicken and which is [the] egg. Social networks are the quintessential resource of movement organizers. Reading groups become sinews of the suffrage movements. Friendship networks, not environmental sympathies, accounted for which Pennsylvanians became involved in grassroots protest[s] after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident. . . Social movements also *create* social capital, by fostering new identities and extending social networks (152-53).

He further argues that there are positive aspects of social capital, such as trust, cooperation, and support that promote both “bridging” (inclusive) and “bonding” (exclusive) ties. Bridging social capital, such as “civil rights movement[s], many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations,” incorporate people across a spectrum of organizations and creates solidarity (Putman 2000:22). Whereas bonding social capital looks inwards and reinforces group identity (Putnam 2000). Hence, social capital helps build solidarity within and between groups.

Solidarity is an important concept when investigating what makes claiming rights successful. Ethnic solidarity “assumes that individuals have multiple identities that may be salient in varied contexts” (Barreto et al. 2009: 738). Neilson argues that there are two elements to ethnic solidarity: 1) the formulation of specific goals or claims defined on the membership of the ethnic group as opposed to, or in contradistinction with, other groups in the society; and 2) a degree of ideological and organizational mobilization of group membership for the implementation of these claims (Nielson 1985:137). Thus, ethnic

solidarity originates from social conditions that ignite ethnic consciousness across a variety of identities (Barreto et al. 2009).

Researchers find that anti-immigrant laws create the opportunity for mass mobilization across groups (Barreto et al. 2009; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). For example, the 2006 immigrant marches in protest against a proposed strict federal anti-immigrant law (H.R. 4437) highlight this group's cohesiveness because the assembly of "Latinos" consisted of citizens and noncitizens from different ethnic backgrounds, who marched side-by-side and made it difficult to distinguish who was undocumented (Beltran 2009). It is also important to point out, however, that this solidarity does not necessarily last a life-time, but rather it depends upon the political climate at the time (Barreto et al. 2009). Nonetheless, solidarity is an important aspect of cultural citizenship as it helps build community with a common purpose. Therefore, while cultural citizenship allows for claiming rights, it would not be possible without other factors. As shown in the previous chapters, the increased liminality from anti-immigrant laws, and the creation of social capital, resulted in community formation (i.e. solidarity) which is the foundation for cultural citizenship and the ability to participate politically and fight for rights.

Out of the Shadows and into Political Participation

Undocumented immigrants may confront a variety of governmental responses and policies once in the receiving society. These contexts of reception affect how an immigrant can incorporate into the host country (Portes and Böröcz 1989). According to Portes and Rumbaut governments can practice one of the following three contexts of

reception: “exclusion, passive acceptance, or active encouragement” (2001:46). Currently the United States engages in all three, but at very different levels. For instance, the country excludes undocumented immigrants from society and forces them to live clandestinely. Second, the country also practices passive acceptance by which some immigrants are granted residency, but are provided little support services for adapting to the culture. Finally, the U.S. government actively encourages high-skilled laborers to emigrate and also provides a pathway for refugees to resettle. Out of all the contexts of reception, exclusionary practices most affect undocumented immigrants by excluding them from the social structure.

In Chavez’s (1992) research on immigrants’ incorporation into U.S. society, he finds that even though many immigrants feel as though they are part of the community, there are a large number who do not express these same feelings. Reasons for this include having family back in their home country, difficulties overcoming cultural differences such as beliefs and language, and feeling isolated from the greater society. However, the biggest issue preventing undocumented immigrants from considering themselves part of the local community is their legal status. Therefore, political and legal acceptance is a key factor to immigrant incorporation and, until recently, there has not been much focus on the *undocumented* immigrants’ political integration.

Much of the research on political incorporation focuses on traditional political practices such as the process of naturalization and voter participation across immigrant generations. For instance, Ramakrishnan and Espenshade substantiate “findings from previous studies that age, education, marital status and residential stability all have a significant effect on voting participation that is consistent across immigrant generations”

(2001:884). Moreover, their research shows that voting participation increases among the first and second-generation immigrants when there is an occurrence of anti-immigration legislation. Others have found that Mexicans, who are the largest growing immigrant population, are entering the United States without legal papers, but then pursuing naturalization as the most important factor of civic engagement (Bean et al. 2006). Thus, in spite of generational status, legal status is the key factor in many studies when investigating political integration. However, it is necessary to look beyond the voting process and investigate how undocumented immigrants participate politically outside the electoral system.

Nontraditional political participation can take many forms. Hardy-Fanta (1993) finds that Latina women have participated in various political arenas including “promoting voter registration, acting as links between city officials and the community, providing political education” and have “led meetings, rallied protesters, marched, acted as community spokes-persons, and mobilized Latino community residents” (2). Moreover, Latina political activists engage in grassroots efforts to mobilize their neighbors in order to fight for local-level issues that would benefit their communities (Pardo 1998). Latinos in general also participate in informal community activities such as involvement in neighborhood and school associations, as well as belonging to various organizations involving health, social services, education and workers unions (Garcia 2003). Historically, examples of political participation include civil rights reform such as farm workers strikes and garment workers fight for gender equity and better working conditions (Torres and Katsiaficas 1999). Most of these examples do not specifically highlight the political incorporation of unauthorized immigrants themselves, but rather

immigrants in general. However, more recently Varsanyi (2005) found that undocumented immigrants participated in labor unions, supported political candidates, attended campaign rallies, and contributed to “get out the vote” strategies. Thus, there are many ways that undocumented immigrants are engaging politically, especially now that they are systematically having rights taken away from them. However, political participation is only one component of cultural citizenship. That is, not all political participation by Latinos equals cultural citizenship.

In summary, cultural citizenship happens when a group of people who have been excluded from the social structure, based upon their perceived cultural differences from mainstream society, collectively claim space and demand to have the same rights as other citizens. It is important to reiterate that first a group of people becomes disenfranchised because of their differences from mainstream society. In the case of Arizona Dreamers, the state took away their right to an affordable education and eliminated any state-funded scholarships. Second, a community is created based upon this marginalization. In Arizona, a community formed once Dreamers received the No Dream Denied scholarship and met each other at the orientation meeting. This group eventually turned into the Arizona Dreamer Alliance (ADA). Third, cultural citizenship is realized and enacted once the community takes action to fight for rights and does so based upon similarities and not their differences. For ADA members, this happened once there was a possibility that Congress would pass legislation granting them a pathway to citizenship.

The Fight Begins: Cultural Citizenship in Action

The community of undocumented youth that formed in Arizona after the implementation of Proposition 300 in 2007 was primarily a private and social group at first. As time passed, they started to realize that not only could they share information and resources, but they also could band together to fight for their rights. While the community formation was made possible do to the state's anti-immigrant laws taking away their rights, it was the possibility of legalization that brought their political engagement to fruition. That is, once the possibility of Congress passing a federal law that would grant them a pathway to citizenship happened, Dreamers began to engage politically. Thus began the process of undocumented youth exercising their cultural citizenship.

In 2009, Congress was discussing the possibility of reintroducing the DREAM Act. To recap, under this legislation, undocumented youth would have a pathway to legal residency, with the conditions that they must have graduated from a U.S. high school, have lived in the U.S. for more than five years, have entered the U.S. before the age of fifteen, have good moral character, not be deportable, and attend a minimum of two years of college or military services. Moreover, undocumented students would be granted conditional legal residency and be allowed to participate in student loan and work study programs (Olivas 2004). Therefore, once Congress started discussions about the DREAM Act, Arizona undocumented youth began to put their cultural citizenship into action in order to fight for its passage.

ADA members' attempts to try get the DREAM Act approved started them on a long road of political participation, which turned into other forms of civic engagement.

Since then, the group's official mission is "to promote the educational success of immigrant youth, to increase civic engagement and advocate for the passage of the DREAM Act."³³ Civic engagement activities include protests, marches, sit-ins, lobbying Congressmen, calling campaigns, petitions and voter registration among others. However, the beginning of their journey into activism started in 2010 when the DREAM Act came to the U.S. Congress for a vote. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter will focus how Arizona Dreamer's began to utilize their social capital and solidarity in order to exert their cultural citizenship that resulted in both setbacks and victories.

"I wanted to be Arrested": The Beginning of a Movement

In 2009, Dreamers found out that the DREAM Act was brought up in Congress with the possibility of being reintroduced for a vote. One of ADA's leaders brought the subject up at a regular meeting. It was at that moment that a small group of undocumented students decided to take action and fight for the DREAM Act. This was a turning point for the group which shifted from a social organization into a political one as Julieta, one of the co-founders, explained to me. For instance, she said they began by organizing at the university, which included regularly staffing a table on campus and handing out information to raise awareness. Additionally, they put up signs about the DREAM Act around campus and had publically open information sessions. However, they eventually became more active and started calling their state representatives and even visiting their Congressmen.

³³ This quote is taken from the ADA website, accessed on June 18, 2013. For confidentiality purposes I cannot include the web address here.

Gloria, another founding member, stated that after about three visits to legislative officials they started to get more political to the point that they were “camping” outside of Senator McCain’s office and even visiting Washington D.C. to lobby there. She said, “Starting from a grassroots movement, we started off really young and inexperienced, just informing people, but then we got really political. It was to the point where we grew a movement.” Thus, ADA members went from a fairly passive form of civic engagement of informing the public to a more active strategy of engaging government officials. Julieta and Gloria’s accounts show how over two years—from the implementation of Prop 300 to the reintroduction of the DREAM Act in Congress—the group of undocumented college students, who came together because of the No Dream Denied scholarship, transformed into a political advocacy group. It was at this point that they began to exert their cultural citizenship.

Julieta, one of the most active ADA members and co-founder, recounted to me how the process of active civic engagement evolved. In May of 2010, a few of out-of-state Dreamers came to Arizona to organize a civil disobedience outside of Senator McCain’s office in Tucson with the intention of being arrested. Julieta helped them with the logistics of setting up the day-long protest. Four of the Dreamers were eventually detained by law enforcement, but ended up released rather than placed in deportation proceedings. This was the first time Julieta and other Arizona Dreamers saw a civil disobedience action performed by undocumented youth. According to Julieta, they were inspired by their bravery and this was when they realized that the involvement of politicians protected Dreamers from deportation because government officials “don’t want to look bad.” Thus, this sparked the idea to collectively conduct a political

demonstration in Washington, D.C. Their goal was to be arrested in order to bring attention to their plight in hopes of persuading politicians to pass the DREAM Act.

In late July of 2010 the game changed in the fight for the DREAM Act as many Dreamers from different parts of the nation descended on Washington, D.C. in order to force a vote on the legislation. At the time the DREAM Act had been reintroduced in 2009 but there was no movement on it in the Senate, despite the lobbying efforts of Dreamers. Undocumented immigrants in general from across the country were also feeling more liminal because this was the year SB 1070 passed in Arizona, which initiated other states to also try to pass similar laws. As such, anti-immigrant sentiment was increasing throughout the nation.

Due to the lack of movement in the Senate on the DREAM Act, Arizona Dreamers decided to participate in an “action” in the nation’s capitol. According to Marisol, a founding member of ADA and one of the participants in the D.C. demonstration, they decided that they had to take matters into their own hands because no one else was helping to pass the DREAM Act.

Democrats and Republicans were not doing anything for the DREAM Act. We didn’t really have any allies. The people that said to be our allies gave turned their backs on us. We didn’t have support from anyone. We didn’t have the power of money, but we did have the power of people. We said let’s go to Washington, D.C. and be strategic about it. Also, we talked to lawyers, we talked to people that are experienced with this type of non-violent civil disobedience. –Marisol

This political participation example highlights how Dreamers utilized both bonding and bridging social capital. They used bonding capital by working together with other Dreamers across the country to conduct the demonstration. They also used their knowledge of the social structure in order to consult legal representatives in planning the

civil disobedience, an example of bridging capital, which utilized ties outside of their organization/community.

As a result of their planning, twenty-one Dreamers from across the nation “stormed” the Hart Senate Office Building refusing to leave until they spoke with Senators McCain and Reid with the intention of being arrested. They chose McCain (Republican from Arizona) because he once supported the DREAM Act, but after his presidential bid in 2008 he changed his stance on immigration. And they selected Senator Harry Reid (Democrat) because he was the Senate leader and the main supporter of the 2010 DREAM Act legislation. Therefore, a majority of the Dreamers protested in the main lobby while nine others split up between the two senators’ offices. Julieta and Marisol were amongst these protesters and each told me the story of what happened. While the Dreamers in the lobby were arrested within the first hour of the disturbance, the others sat for over four hours in the senators’ offices until around 7:30 p.m. when the Senate adjourned the session for the day. At that point the police knew what they were doing and came to ask them to leave. They just sat peacefully and responded “No, we’re not going to get out unless Senator McCain pushes for the DREAM Act as soon as possible.” Their refusal to leave ended up in all the Dreamers from each senators’ offices being arrested.

At the same time that Marisol and Julieta were demonstrating, there were other Arizona Dreamers participating in solidarity. Some were in Washington D.C. waiting outside of the Hart Building, and others who could not afford the trip were back in Arizona waiting for updates via text message or email. Lupita, who was in Washington,

said that she was running from each side of the Hart building waiting for the arrested Dreamers to come out. She recounted what happened:

We got to the door that Julieta came out of. She came out, and I just started crying because she was in handcuffs. It still gets me really emotional, because I never thought that we had to go to such extremes to try to be part of the United States. If there were a process for us to apply, we would have done it so long ago. You have to go through anything and everything. You want it so badly that you're willing to get arrested for it, willing to spend nights in jail, maybe even years in jail, maybe even getting deported to a country you don't know, and [Julieta's] waving and she's happy, because she knows she's doing something that is not wrong.

Those back in Arizona were supporting the protests in other ways. Once they learned that Julieta and Marisol had been arrested an email announcement went out to members of the alliance encouraging support for them. It stated:

These two students from Arizona, and various states have risked everything they have, they risk being deported and losing their home. They have taken the most extreme action a Dreamer can take. And now more than ever we have to do whatever we can to fight this battle, and we can't take their action in vein...Call, flood the phone lines, Facebook status and [instant message] your friends, post it on other organizations walls, text and forward the number to call! We must call the President/Congress, demand the senators to pass the DREAM Act." –ADA Email communication, July 20th, 2010

Marisol and Julieta ended up spending the night in jail along with a few others while the other Dreamers were released. As a result, they went to trial because they chose to plead not guilty to their charges.

Not only did the Dreamers refusal to remove themselves from Senator McCain's office claim space through asserting their right to be there, but their decision to go to trial was another way in which they brought their circumstances into a public and political arena. Julieta told me that she had to return Washington D.C. multiple times for court: "They asked us if we wanted to drop the charges or if we wanted to go to trial. Because we were still in that mode of 'we want to make a statement,' we decided to actually go to

trial.” This “statement” was an act to further bring their situation into the public sphere to receive recognition and spark discussions. Their lawyer told them that it would be difficult for them to “win” and so they decided to represent themselves and “have fun with it.”

Eight Dreamers in total represented themselves, cross-examining witnesses and pleading their case. Marisol, who was also on trial, said, “We explained why we shouldn’t be convicted of the nonviolent civil disobedience because we were talking with our representatives after we were ignored for so long.” Furthermore, Julieta stated “. . . the message was really awesome, just to see undocumented people representing themselves in court without fear.” They ended up with a misdemeanor on their record and a year’s probation, but both Julieta and Marisol told me that it “was worth it” and that they “would do it again.” Their court appearance and their transcripts are now a part of the public record. These Dreamers defiance of remaining silent and intentional self-representation is yet another example how they have utilized the public sphere to discuss their claim to rights.

The alliance’s first strategically planned civil disobedience in Washington D.C., in addition to other lobbying techniques, were a success. In September of that same year (2010) Senator Harry Reid reintroduced the DREAM Act as part of the Department of Defense bill and in early December the Democratically controlled House of Representatives³⁴ passed it with 216 votes in favor. For the first time, Dreamers saw the power they had in numbers and the fact that their political participation could cause

³⁴ Information about House of Representatives party divisions taken from the following website, accessed on December 18, 2013: <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Party-Divisions/Party-Divisions/>

change. Marisol, one of the Dreamers who demonstrated and was arrested in Washington D.C., described what she felt once the DREAM Act was reintroduced.

I think it was one of the best feelings of my life. After you've been putting all your efforts, you're frustrated, you see your peers with so many emotions and so many dreams and so many things that they want to do, and things that you want to do yourself, you see how you're being betrayed and played from organizations, politicians, and how everybody is using you, sometimes you feel so hopeless or helpless that it was a way of making our statement and saying to everybody "back off, this is what we want," Comprehensive Immigration Reform. We need the DREAM Act as the first step for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. It was just very fulfilling to be able to tell everybody, and everybody stopped and listened at that time. It worked. The DREAM Act was put on the Senate calendar shortly after our civil disobedience.

While Dreamers had a small victory and were encouraged that the DREAM Act moved forward, the Senate still had to pass it before going to the President for his signature.

Thus, five months after the largest civil disobedience that Dreamers had conducted, they were half way to the DREAM Act becoming law. In preparation for the Senate vote, Dreamers took the next steps in their fight and further exhibited their cultural citizenship.

December 2010: The DREAM Act is Up For a Vote in the Senate

The end of 2010 was a roller coaster for Dreamers across the nation. It was the first time in years that the DREAM Act was on the Senate floor for a vote with an actual chance of passing. This gave hope to many Dreamers across the country, especially in Arizona, who had been "beat down" by the strict laws from the previous three years. Until this time only a few brave Dreamers, like the ones mentioned above, had taken the stand and "come out of the shadows" to fight for their rights. However, in preparation for the December vote, many Dreamers came out to protest, further utilizing public space to

claim their rights based upon their American identity. They spent almost the entire month before the vote in front of Senator John McCain’s Phoenix office.



Figure 4: Protest sign in front of Senator McCain’s Phoenix office in December 2010 in support of the DREAM Act

In addition to literally camping out on the sidewalk in front of the Senator’s office building, there were different types of demonstrations. Javier, one of the many Dreamers who participated in the demonstrations, told me that there were about ten Dreamers present at any given time of the day or night and they had tents and sleeping bags and practically lived there. Javier was there almost non-stop for three weeks. During one of these three weeks, he, alongside others, decided to forgo eating as part of the “Fasting for the Dream” demonstration. Dreamers rallied around their protest and many turned out to have a vigil supporting their decision to fast. In this picture you see three fasters holding signs and candles the night of the vigil.



Figure 5: Dreamers “Fasting for the Dream” during the 2010 Senate vote on the DREAM Act.

In addition to those fasting for over one week, they also created the “DREAM Army” signifying that it was not just the right to attend college that they were seeking, but also the option to join the military in order to gain legal residency. Thus, they also had actions outside of government officials’ offices imitating military formation and salutations as seen in this picture.



Figure 6: Dreamers posing as the “Dream Army” as part of the demonstrations outside of Senator McCain’s office before the 2010 Senate vote on the DREAM Act.

Furthermore, there was one Dreamer, Steven, who wished to serve in the military and there were signs that read “Let Steven Serve and Protect.” One of my respondents told

me he even tried to talk to Senator McCain about the DREAM Act. Steven approached the Senator while he was on his way somewhere and McCain “just ran away” and did not engage in a conversation with him. This was not the only instance where McCain refused to discuss the issue with Dreamers. In a December 2010 news story in the Huffington post, a Dreamer recounted how McCain dismissed her when she approached him in an elevator stating that he would call the building security.³⁵ Nonetheless, even with these types of setbacks, Dreamers were persistent and continued demonstrating until the day of the vote.

These acts of civil disobedience, including the three-week protest on a city street outside of McCain’s office, demonstrations by the Dream Army, and “Fasting for the DREAM” all used public space to communicate their demands of undocumented youth to have a pathway to legal citizenship. Dreamers claimed this space in order to express their demands for rights. Again, the use of physical space is crucial to not only building community amongst undocumented youth, but also in the democratic sense of discussing issues openly with citizens and law makers and showing them that they want to be considered an American, i.e. creating and then exerting their cultural citizenship.

In another example of utilizing space, Elizabeth, long-time ADA member and self-proclaimed conservative, has been vocal about her status and took a very daring action at the time. In addition to participating in rallies, protests and sit-ins supporting Dreamers, she claimed space very publically and semi-permanently. In 2010, right before the DREAM Act went to the Senate for the vote, she posed alongside two other Dreamers

³⁵ Huffington Post article from December 6th, 2010 titled “McCain Dismisses DREAM Act Supporter” accessed on November 15, 2013: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/06/mccain-shoots-down-dream-n_792809.html

for the billboard seen below. It sardonically stated: “Yes, deport them ALL, that makes sense . . . ?” and “Time for REAL talk” “DREAM Act NOW.” In the picture there is a male in a military uniform, a female in a cap and gown and another female dressed in a doctor’s coat signifying their desire to attend college or the military, similar to their citizen-peers. Moreover, the website address had “Conservatives For The Dream” listed trying to demonstrate that it was a bi-partisan issue. This billboard was placed near the university at the intersection of two major freeways.



Figure 7: Billboard supporting a dialogue about and passage of the DREAM Act by “conservative” undocumented youth.

This very public and quasi-permanent signage claims space in two ways. First, drivers, who are citizens and non-citizens, from all over the city had a chance to see this sign during a time where the DREAM Act had a possibility of passing. Second, it directs viewers to visit their website, which was also semi-permanent because it no longer is in service. Nonetheless, in addition to viewing the billboard in the public, there was a place for interested people to go learn more, whether they supported the issue or not. Thus, this was another attempt to influence public opinion by using both physical and deterritorialized spaces.

On December 18th, 2010, the Senate voted on the Dream Act; however, there was no clear certainty whether it would pass or not. While I had not started my fieldwork at this time, the photographs taken of that day by ADA members and posted to their Facebook page paint a descriptive picture. These photos convey solidarity and show the bridging and bonding social capital that they had created. It appears that there was a group of at least fifty people outside of McCain's office consisting of Dreamers and their allies who were U.S. citizens. Many of them were in their winter coats, with blankets or sleeping bags huddled around a small portable TV as they waited to hear the results. They had a megaphone, giving words of encouragement and still continuing to rally for its passage up until the results were announced. In order to pass, 60 Senators needed to vote in favor. At the time, there were 57 Democrats, who are historically more sympathetic to immigrant issues, 41 Republicans, and two Independents³⁶. Unfortunately, the Senate was unable to secure enough support and the DREAM Act was short five votes that it needed in order to pass. Incidentally, McCain voted against the legislation even though he was a target of the month-long protest and had previously supported the measure.

The legislation stopped there and has not been reintroduced since. Instead of elated faces for which they had been hoping, Dreamers turned to each other for comfort and support as tears ran down their eyes once they heard the results.

³⁶ Information about Senate party divisions taken from the following website, accessed on December 18, 2013: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/one_item_and_teasers/partydiv.htm



Figure 8: Dreamer's consoling each other once they heard the news that the DREAM Act failed to pass the Senate in 2010.

Despite the DREAM Act not passing, in just a little over one half year the alliance of Dreamers had gone from being invisible to being highly seen in the public's eye.

Through their campaigns on campus, demonstrations at McCain's offices, their arrests in Washington D.C., as well as their persistent attempts to persuade McCain to support the measure, Dreamer's solidified their community and their cultural citizenship. In an email sent out from ADA's president right after the vote failed, he wrote:

Fellow Dreamers,

First of all I want to thank each and every one of you for your tremendous work and great efforts to pass the DREAM Act this year and bring our community one step closer to justice. Even though we did not get the DREAM Act this year, we are still standing strong and willing to keep fighting for what is just and right. Our community needs us now more than ever, and we cannot show signs of weakness. You can rest assure that the Arizona Dreamer Alliance will keep pushing for the DREAM, for education, and for the well-being of immigrant youth. I hope you will stay in the fight. Remember that that A.D.A. stands for so much more than the DREAM Act. Many people come up to me dazed and confused and say "Now what do we do?", and I tell them: We do what we would have done if DREAM Act did pass, and that is, we keep fighting for justice. Let's keep our heads up and our eyes on the prize. Remember there is much to do. –Email Communication, December 21st, 2010

The mere fact that their efforts resulted in the reintroduction of the DREAM Act in Congress, which almost passed, was a powerful message to Dreamers. It showed them how their community could claim space and demand rights. Although they had not gained a victory, they had learned the power they possessed in order to cause change. This in turn propelled the community forward in their quest to fight for rights. The entire experience from July to December 2010 not only created bridging capital through work with Dreamers from other states, lawyers and allies, but also fostered bonding capital amongst themselves as evident from their determination to keep fighting together. Thus, they continued their fight further claiming space and exerting their cultural citizenship.

Continuing the Fight

It was five months after the December vote when I started my fieldwork in May 2011. At that time ADA was beginning to get more organized and become even more politically involved. Over the course of the year, I took part in and witnessed civic participation at various levels. While undocumented immigrants cannot vote in elections, they can exercise other civic rights. This is true of the Dreamers with whom I conducted my participant observation. As highlighted in the earlier literature review, mass participation in political activities depends upon the climate at the time. As such, volunteerism in ADA diminished after the great disappointment of the DREAM Act failing. One member told me that at the peak of the campaign there were up to one-hundred Dreamers volunteering for demonstrations, but afterwards many discouraged Dreamers became disengaged and went about their lives. However, there were a core group of twenty to thirty Dreamers who remained actively involved in some form or

another while others remained passive members. Towards the beginning of my fieldwork in August 2011, one member told me that they were “just really starting to get organized” and he was correct. By the end of 2011 and all throughout 2012 Dreamers took many actions at the local, state and national levels in attempts to utilize their cultural citizenship.

Uses of Deterritorialized Spaces for Political Gains

As argued in the previous chapters, it was not until after undocumented youth’s rights were taken away that they created community and slowly started coming out of the shadows. They did so through the media, thus claiming public space. Arizona citizens voted on Proposition 300 because it was publically endorsed. Thus, it was registered voters who first brought this discussion into the public debate. However, once passed it did not disappear from the public eye, rather it created a space for undocumented youth to take the issue further. This would not have been possible without the media sharing their stories in a very public way engaging both undocumented immigrants and citizens alike.

The process of claiming space started out slowly and progressed over a few years. Once the Dreamers started meeting behind closed doors (as discussed in chapter three), but eventually they started to gradually “come out of the shadows” making their presence known. For example, Gloria, a journalism major and ADA founding member, recounted how she wrote one of the first stories about Dreamers shortly before they started coming out in mass to support the DREAM Act in 2010. She decided to write a story about the No Dream Denied scholarship running out of funds. Her hope in writing this story was to bring awareness to their situation and raise more money for the scholarship fund. She

received mixed messages from other undocumented college students. Some encouraged her to write the story, while others, who were afraid, told her that she would jeopardize their future. Gloria told me that she just “went with her gut and published the story” because they “had been in the shadows for far too long and people needed to know about undocumented students.” While they had a lot of negative comments on the story from “citizens” who did not think they deserved the right to attend college, she told me that it served its purpose and brought their story into the light. She then commented that those Dreamers who were skeptical at first eventually told her that she made the right choice. Gloria’s comment about being in the shadows and then coming into the light highlights the Dreamers’ decision to initially claim “space” and they did so through the media, which was distributed both in a physical newspaper and posted online.

Julieta, one of ADA’s founders and a well-recognized Dreamer across the nation, has done many news stories and interviews. She started doing so once she graduated college in 2010, which was also the same year that she was arrested in Washington D.C. for the sit-in at Senator McCain’s office. In July of that summer, a well-renowned television journalist, Diane Sawyer, interviewed Julieta on national television. In the interview she talked about her experiences of arriving to the United States, the effects of SB 1070 on the immigrant community, her academic success as a high school and college student, how she graduated from college with a degree in psychology but is unable to use it, and how leaving the country would affect her. In the interview, Sawyer asked what Julieta would say to people who possess anti-immigrant sentiments and claim that the country must enforce its laws. In addition to stating how laws should be followed, Julieta responded that in history there have been other laws that have hurt people and that

undocumented immigrants “are human and we are able to change things if they are not working for us.”³⁷ This story was then picked up by local television news and local newspapers. This was one of the first major news stories about Dreamers and the first story Julieta did, but after this she was invited to the MSNBC studios for multiple television appearances, spoke on CSPAN and was also interviewed by Spanish language news stations, among many others. While these high profile news appearances are not common occurrence for all Dreamers, others have also taken their stories to various media outlets.

Another member of ADA has also been vocal at the national level and has engaged with politicians to lobby support for the DREAM Act. Jessica’s “coming out” story began to heighten the year she graduated as valedictorian with a degree in mechanical engineering in May 2011. She was one of the Dreamers who received the NDD scholarship and was also graduating alongside other fellow Dreamers. Here in this picture you see five graduating Dreamers spelling out the word D-R-E-A-M as they sat together during that 2011 graduation ceremony.

³⁷ Quote taken from ABCnews.com footage. Accessed via Youtube on December 12th, 2013.



Figure 9: Photo of Dreamers at their graduation ceremony in May 2011 with the word “DREAM” spelled out signifying their undocumented status and the fact that they cannot use their degrees.

A local news station completed a story about Jessica and used this footage of the D-R-E-A-M graduation caps in the story. The story aired on television and the video was published online. Many news outlets picked up her story and wrote their own. Just one short month later, Jessica was asked to Washington D.C. to attend a Senate hearing on the DREAM Act. In a crowded room, Senator Dick Durbin (a Democrat and main supporter of the DREAM Act) asked Jessica to stand up while he recognized her accomplishments as part of his argument for passage of the DREAM Act. One year later, Senator Durbin posted a video of himself on his own website addressing the Senate and highlighting Jessica again.



Figure 10: A picture taken from a video of Senator Dick Durbin speaking to his peers about the Dream Act and highlighting Dreamer stories. Pictured here is one of Arizona's top students Jessica. Posted on his webpage on June 25th, June 2012.

The Senator's webpage has numerous Dreamer stories, of which at least five come from the state of Arizona. Jessica's appearance in front of the Senate was also highlighted by a popular state newspaper, the Arizona Republic. The paper quoted her saying, "We're not afraid anymore. I think that coming out publicly is something that needs to be done. I've seen how effective it has been for people to stand up and put a real face to this issue. I think it is a risk, but I think it's a risk worth taking."³⁸ This quote highlights the fact that coming out publically is a conscious decision and part of the process of fighting for rights with the goal of engaging the greater public. Jessica is not the only Arizona Dreamer who has who has made such bold statements and risked deportation by publically stating she is undocumented.

³⁸ Quote taken from article published on June 29, 2011 from www.azcentral.com, accessed December 12, 2013.

In another exemplar case, one of the alliance’s leaders³⁹ took center stage when Time Magazine nominated her as one of 2012’s top 100 influential people.



Figure 11: Cover of 2012 Time Magazine where one of ADA’s leaders was identified as one of their top 100 Most Influential People in the World.

In her short magazine profile, the article states how she graduated college with a degree in engineering (despite her undocumented status) and how she is fighting for a pathway to citizenship for undocumented youth. While not all Arizona Dreamers participated in such high-profile media occurrences, this is just another example of how the media helps inform the public about undocumented youth. This in turn helps expand the space they have created for themselves after anti-immigrant laws went into effect just a few years earlier. These highly publicized stories create a dialogue that is necessary for the democratic process to happen and for constituents to be able to put pressure on law makers to change federal legislation. These strategies take time and the “problem” is not

³⁹ In order to protect the identity of my informants, I am not naming the person here.

easily fixed. Nonetheless, Dreamers employ different types of strategies to come into the public sphere.

Dreamers have claimed both expressive and physical spaces in order to bring their issues to the public. Dreamers claim expressive space by wearing and displaying many items stating their status or promoting the DREAM Act as a way to “come out” openly as undocumented. Here are some of the items that I witnessed ADA members wearing in public.



Figure 12: Example of t-shirt designs, buttons and bracelets and a button that I witnessed Arizona ADA members wear out in public.

Corina, the WeDream creator discussed in the previous chapter, designed and sold the “I DREAM, do you?” t-shirt on the top-left using Uncle Sam, a very patriotic symbol. The black one is an official ADA t-shirt that they sold to fundraise money. In addition to

stating “Support the DREAM Act,” it also listed their website on the t-shirt (but I redacted that information to ensure the privacy of the group). And finally there are t-shirts boldly stating “I Am Un•doc•u•ment•ed”⁴⁰ across the front. This one also has a red, white and blue pin supporting the DREAM Act. This blue t-shirt also shows a popular button promoting the Dream Act that some wore on their shirts, backpack or handbags. Finally, Alicia, an undocumented member of ADA, made and sold “Dream” bracelets which she advertised at meetings and online through the her own Facebook page as well as the ADA’s Facebook pages. Many times Dreamers would wear these types of items during civil actions, but I also witnessed them wearing these on “ordinary” days before their regular bi-weekly meetings.

Members sold and wore these t-shirts and buttons to other Dreamers and allies at their events in order to publically promote their cause to the general public whenever possible. This is yet another way they claimed space and asserted their presence in the United States even though they historically had been hidden in the shadows. In fact, in Figure 13 you see members of ADA wearing all three t-shirts (and most likely Dream bracelets) as they were sitting in at Governor Jan Brewer’s office (a very public space) protesting her anti-immigrant policies and actions.

⁴⁰ Photo taken by Leslie Berenstein Rojas in December 2010. Taken from website: <http://www.scpr.org/blogs/multiamerican/2012/03/14/8223/coming-out-undocumented-how-much-of-a-political-ef/>



Figure 13: Members of ADA “sitting-in” at Arizona’s Governor Jan Brewer’s office in August 2012. They were protesting her anti-immigrant support of laws and policies.

Thus, Dreamers use these tools as a way of “coming out of the shadows” and proclaiming who they are very publically in order to foster support for the DREAM Act. In this example, they are using physical, expressive spaces as well as virtual spaces since this photo and story was posted online.

Individual Dreamers have also used different forms of media to get stories into the public sphere. For example, many post information on their personal Facebook pages or Twitter accounts. Alicia told me, “There’s a lot of articles that are online and that come up. I post them just so other people can read them. I feel like I have to post it because otherwise people wouldn’t be informed.” In another instance, Ana Laura mentioned that she uses Twitter to discuss her undocumented status and issues that are important to her. Other members have their own blogs, some post videos to YouTube⁴¹ of themselves, telling their story, promoting passage of the DREAM Act or even trying to

⁴¹ YouTube is a website that allows for individuals to post videos of themselves.

raise funds for college or a trip to Washington D.C. to lobby for the DREAM Act. These are all forms of media that, once posted, exist in perpetuity in a virtual form that can transcend time and space. Furthermore, they can reach a multitude of people including other Dreamers, allies, fence-sitters and non-supporters of immigrants. Thus, the internet is a powerful tool that utilizes space in a way that a one-time, in-person, protest in physical space cannot accomplish. But, the actual protest itself is important, because without it there would not be any story to post on the internet. Thus, both physical and virtual spaces have been essential in the Dream Act movement for disseminating information, as well as fighting for rights.

Lastly, I would like to discuss how ADA's physical office is an essential space for their movement. The ADA office location is not private, but rather ADA claims the space by posting its address on their official webpage and their public Facebook page. They have also invited the media to attend press conferences there. For example, in 2012 when President Obama announced he was granting administrative relief to Dreamers, ADA leaders invited local news media to attend a press conference. At this press conference many were wearing their t-shirts and bracelets. I witnessed reporters from over five major news outlets with video and digital recorders interviewing Dreamers about the announcement, which was aired that day. Thus, claiming this physical location in a central place that is open to the public is part of Dreamer's cultural citizenship and asserting their right to belong to the greater American citizenry.

In summary, the process of cultural citizenship that allows for the creation of a collective identity and shared community as well as claiming rights relies upon having space, whether it is physical or deterritorialized. Dreamers have made themselves highly

visible through using space in a multiplicity of strategies that both help create community and enhance their ability to fight for their rights. This section highlights public displays of defiance and disobedience that bring the Dreamers' predicament out of the shadows and into the forefront of the community. It not only attracts the attention of the people they are protesting and trying to influence—such as Senators, Arizona's Governor, and the President—but also the media that disseminates the information to a wider voting audience.

While citizens who support anti-immigrant laws may not necessarily receive these stories positively, they nonetheless bring the topic into the households and coffee shops of every-day citizens. An immediate resolution is not the result, but rather as Habermas argues, this conversation can sway public opinion and that can influence law-making officials to act. Moreover, these public acts reach a greater audience once the media help disseminate the information. They were successful bringing more attention to themselves as more news stories about Dreamers appeared since 2010, but they simply did not gain rights as a result of coming out as undocumented. It also took active civic engagement in order to affect outcomes of various local, state and national issues.

Pounding the Streets: Civic Participation

Staying Local: Elections of 2011

The November 2011 elections in Arizona gave Dreamers a chance to exercise the civic rights they actually had. During the summer of 2011 there were important mayoral and city councilman elections in the city of Phoenix. Thus, the alliance decided to focus their energy on supporting pro-immigrant candidates by teaming up with a local civic

engagement organization, again utilizing their bridging capital. Over the summer, many of the ADA members participated in civic engagement training and spent the hot summer canvassing and registering voters in support of the Democratic mayoral candidate Greg Stanton and city councilman candidate Michael Nawakowski. In fact, on August 27th 2011, I participated in my first civic engagement event at a local park celebrating all of their hard work. It was a hot summer afternoon and the event was located next to a public library that was also a polling location. There was music, food, a bouncy house for children, and ADA members staffed a booth alongside other community organizations. Their collaborative efforts increased voter registration in one district by 30% and 20% in another district. As a result of their contributions both Stanton and Nawakowski won their elections. However, those were not the only victories in which Dreamers took part.

In September 2011, Arizona voters received enough signatures to have a recall election for state Senator Russell Pearce. At the time he was the President of the Arizona Senate and had been the primary sponsor of SB 1070, which made him one of Arizona's most outspoken anti-immigrant public officials. The collection of signatures meant that there would be a special election before his term officially ended and voters in his district would have to confirm they wanted Pearce to continue to serve as their representative in the State Senate by re-voting for him. Thus, the ADA Dreamers focused most of their efforts over the next two months towards successfully expelling him from office.

In another effort to utilize their bridging social capital, a group of members from the Arizona Dreamer Alliance partnered with a different non-profit, pro-immigrant, politically active organization to rent office space in a strip mall and run their "headquarters" from there. Dreamers and allies dedicated evenings and weekends to

canvassing neighborhoods in his district in a two prong strategy. Phase I, from the end of September to October 11th, was door-to-door canvassing in order to register voters, or to sign up registered voters for the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL), which has a much higher voter turnout. This was done by going to houses within the district and also by staffing tables at the local community college, a popular Latino grocery store, visiting churches and even speaking at a high school. As a result, in three short weeks, Dreamers registered 211 new voters and signed up 70 new PEVLs. Phase II, was GOTV (get out the vote) because it was a very close race between the incumbent Russell Pearce and his challenger Jerry Lewis. The total goal was to get 15,000 votes for Lewis and the members of the alliance were in charge of six precincts in the district. Thus, they dedicated their time and energy to this territory and tried to “touch”⁴² voters three times to make sure that they cast that ballot.

I spent many afternoons and most weekends from late September until the election on November 8th contributing to these efforts. I first started out helping with voter registration at the grocery store and community college. During the time we registered voters we were prohibited for taking a stance on one candidate or the other, but we did take the chance to let voters know about the recall election and why it was happening. I also went door to door, sometimes with another Dreamer as a partner and other times by myself in order to reach more citizens. We asked if people were registered to vote or if they wanted to sign up for the PEVL, and we also informed them about the date of the election. For the second phase, we revisited the same neighborhoods getting out the word about the election and handing out flyers supporting Jerry Lewis. This

⁴² The term “touch” means to either speak with a voter in person or phone about the election.

grueling work was not very rewarding, but yet there were 10-15 Dreamers regularly volunteering each weekend as well as supporting Lewis online through social media. Lewis ended up winning by 2691⁴³ votes, which was almost 50% of the total votes. Russell Pearce was the first state senator in Arizona to be recalled and this was a large victory for the greater immigrant community. The ability to strike down Russell Pearce, the sponsor of SB 1070, highlights the power of Dreamer's cultural citizenship. Of course it was not just their effort, however, they used their solidarity and joined with each other as well as built more bridging social capital with yet another immigrant organization. Thus, again, they experienced how their community of Dreamers had the potential for making change.

Going National: The 2012 Presidential Campaign

During the year of 2012 there were many important elections, especially the presidential campaign. In meetings, Dreamers often discussed how Obama publically supported immigrants, but had deported more undocumented immigrants than any other President. At the time, the Republican Party as a whole was strongly against illegal immigration and challenger Mitt Romney was no exception. Thus, when Obama was up for reelection in 2012, members of ADA knew they were not going to support Romney, but they asked themselves whether or not they would support Obama. Dreamers decided to protest against Romney who came out as clearly anti-immigrant and support Obama who was more pro-immigrant. While this goal was not specifically related to efforts to get the DREAM Act passed, it was a broader goal of exerting their cultural citizenship in

⁴³ Official election numbers taken from the Arizona Department of State's Office of the Secretary of State: <http://www.azsos.gov/election/2011/Recall/Canvass2011Recall.pdf> accessed on November 12, 2013.

anticipation of eventual comprehensive immigration reform. That is, they saw that the Democrats were more sympathetic to their struggles whereas most Republicans were clearly against granting Dreamers a pathway to citizenship. Therefore, their main strategy was to register eligible Latino and low-income voters in hopes that they would support Obama.

In addition to supporting Obama publically, Arizona Dreamers simultaneously protested Romney in various ways. For example, during the primary race before he was chosen as the Republican candidate, Romney came to Arizona for a debate with other Republican presidential nominees in February 2012. Previous to this debate, Romney had taken an anti-immigrant and anti-DREAM Act position. Again Dreamers used bridging social capital and created more solidarity by partnering with Dolores Huerta—famous civil rights activist and labor leader who fought alongside Cesar Chavez—to protest outside of the building where the debate was taking place. They had a large sign that said “DREAM Act Now” and carried large posters like the one pictured below.



Figure 14: Anti-Mitt Romney poster used in protest outside of Republican primary debates in February 2012

Reports from Dreamers who attended the action with Dolores Huerta were positive overall. They had a good turnout of protesters, the signs (pictured above) looked good, they appeared organized and professional and their protest was broadcasted on CNN. But they did not stop their fight there.

In addition to Dreamers participating in other anti-Romney protests, they also sent him an official letter on behalf of ADA. This “open letter” stated that although he came out publically against the DREAM Act, his record has been often pro-immigrant. They highlighted which laws he supported in the past that were favorable to the immigrant community. Moreover, they discussed facts about the DREAM Act and the positive contributions Dreamers make as part of the country. However, they affirmed their cultural citizenship and exerted their power by ending the letter as follows:

Indeed, your current stance will not give you the support from our immigrant community and Latino voters, who will be a determining factor in the 2012 presidential race. According to a Pew Hispanic Center poll released in December, 88 percent of Latino registered voters nationwide support the DREAM Act. Over the past 10 years, since the DREAM Act was first introduced, Republicans and Democrats have used us to score cheap political points, and we will no longer stand for that. Even though we are still not allowed to drive, work, and use our college degrees, we have not given up. We will continue to mobilize our communities until we're given the opportunity to give back to this country we love and call home. –ADA Email Communication of Letter sent to Mitt Romney, January 3rd, 2012

There are a few important issues to highlight at this point. First, the Dreamer community used their social capital to band together with Dolores Huerta, who is not only from a different state and also not part of the Dreamer community, but rather a member of the greater Latino community. This solidarity amongst themselves, but also with the greater Latino community is a key factor when exerting cultural citizenship and activism. Next, the last two sentences in the passage above stating “we have not given up” and “we will continue to mobilize” signify the solidarity and the cultural citizenship that Dreamers have. That is, while they realize that they still do not have rights, they also recognize and demand that they be incorporated into mainstream society based upon calling the U.S. “home.” However, even though they came out as anti-Romney and supportive of Obama, they were also putting pressure on Obama to support the DREAM Act and immigration reform.

During the 2012 Presidential re-election campaign, the alliance received word that President Obama would be visiting the local Intel Company on January 25th to give a “stump” speech. Within two short days of the announcement, members of ADA were using their social capital to contact people they knew inside Intel to see if they could get tickets. While they supported Obama to win the election, Dreamers were still very upset

over increased deportations and the fact that he had not given administrative relief to undocumented youth. Therefore, the strategy was to let Obama know that the Latino community still supported him, but that they were unhappy with his inability to move towards comprehensive immigration reform.

Upon Obama's arrival to the Intel complex, there was a group of Dreamers protesting Obama outside with signs like "DREAM Act Now." Moreover, there was a handful of Dreamers who were able to attend the event and even get close enough to the stage to speak with President Obama. In fact, one Dreamer used her connections to get in the VIP area next to the stage and below is a picture of her shaking the president's hand.



Figure 15: One of ADA's leaders speaking with President Obama when he visited Intel in Chandler, Arizona as part of his reelection campaign in January 2012.

She said that she spoke with him for almost three minutes, not letting go of his hand and explaining that she was a Dreamer with a degree in electrical engineering who could not

work. He responded that he was doing everything he could to move towards immigration reform but that he was limited without the support of Congress. However, Dreamers and allies, from across the nation were putting pressure on the President to give them administrative relief which would not require a formal law be passed by Congress. In fact, twenty-two U.S. senators wrote a letter to Obama requesting that he grant “deferred action” giving undocumented youth some protection from the law.

As a result of various campaigns on many fronts, in May of 2011 President Obama, in the middle of his reelection campaign, made a bold move and declared Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This was announced on June 15th, 2012 and offered “a two-year, renewable reprieve from deportation to unauthorized immigrants who are under the age of 31; entered the United States before age 16; have lived continuously in the country for at least five years; have not been convicted of a felony, a “significant” misdemeanor, or three other misdemeanors; and are currently in school, graduated from high school, earned a GED, or served in the military.”⁴⁴ Thus, Dreamers would be granted temporary legal status and issued social security cards allowing them to work.

⁴⁴ This information is directly quoted from the Immigration Policies webpage accessed on November 13, 2013: <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/who-and-where-dreamers-are>. Official information about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals can be found on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigrations Services webpage at: <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-process>.



Figure 16: The front cover of the Arizona Republic on July 16th, the day after Obama announced deferred action for Dreamers. Pictured here are members of Arizona Dreamer Alliance rejoicing after the announcement.

While we can assume this was a political maneuver to try to help secure the Latino vote, Obama only stated the following in his public television address:

Over the next few months, eligible individuals who do not present a risk to national security or public safety will be able to request temporary relief from deportation proceedings and apply for work authorization.

Now, let's be clear -- this is not amnesty, this is not immunity. This is not a path to citizenship. It's not a permanent fix. This is a temporary stopgap measure that let's us focus our resources wisely while giving a degree of relief and hope to talented, driven, patriotic young people.⁴⁵

The last sentence in the excerpt refers specifically to Dreamers. While I do not have evidence to show what effect Dreamers had on this decision versus other political reasons, this decision nonetheless shows how cultural citizenship works. Undocumented youth, who five years earlier had been without community and hidden in the shadows,

⁴⁵ Quote taken from Whitehouse webpage, accessed on December 18, 2013: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/06/15/president-obama-delivers-remarks-immigration>

had formed community and made their presence in the United States known. They fought for their rights by demanding to be heard through protests and lobbying efforts all the meanwhile showing their patriotism. In fact, the President stated that they were patriotic as justification for granting them a reprieve. Thus, Dreamers, who were largely unseen and unheard from had taken their community, formed cultural citizenship, and used their solidarity to gain an even bigger victory than the recall of Russell Pearce.

While Dreamers gained some federal rights from deferred action, such as the right to live in the country and apply for a temporary social security card that allows them to work legally, they are still denied certain state rights in Arizona. Shortly after Obama's announcement granting deferred action, Arizona's Governor Jan Brewer issued her own executive order to state agencies ordering them to deny public benefits to undocumented youth (Arellano 2012). While the ability to work by obtaining a valid social security card is governed by the federal domain, driver's licenses and in-state tuition remain under control of the state. Thus, in Arizona, Dreamers currently cannot receive driver's licenses and tuition for the state universities still remains at the out-of-state rate. However, the issue of attending college affordably was not just confined to the universities. Even before deferred action, the county's non-federally funded community college district took action to exclude Dreamers from attending the (usually) more affordable two-year college. Therefore, while their fight for local and national election campaigns took place, they were also focusing their attention on the educational system.

Fight Against the Community Colleges, Another Victory

After the implementation of Proposition 300 in 2007 Arizona universities and community colleges were forced to charge out-of-state tuition to undocumented students. However, for those living in the Phoenix metropolitan area there was a glimmer of hope to continue attending college. At the time the Maricopa Community College District (MCCD), which has ten different colleges throughout the metro region, only charged out of state tuition to non-residents taking seven or more credit hours. Thus, undocumented youth, along with other non-Arizona residents, could still take six credits each semester and pay in-state tuition rates. However, in 2009 the state passed HB 2008 making it a requirement that any government employee report undocumented immigrants who were trying to receive a state or federal public benefit. The MCCD chose to support HB 2008 by actively enforcing it. In fact, they produced a document⁴⁶ outlining their employees' responsibility to enforce this legislation. Thus, as anti-immigrant sentiment was increasing in the state, the Maricopa Community College District was also escalating their policies towards undocumented students and publically promoting it. In fact, in March 2011 the Maricopa Community College District's⁴⁷ governing board members voted to change their out-of-state tuition policies to eliminate the in-state tuition benefit for six or fewer credits, of which so many Dreamers were taking advantage. After this decision, various Dreamers protested and spoke out at subsequent board meetings trying to reverse the policy. In addition, as seen in the next picture, Dreamers protested outside

⁴⁶ This 2010 document can be accessed online by going to:

<http://www.mesacc.edu/sites/default/files/pages/section/students/financial-aid/hb2008-faqs.pdf>

⁴⁷ MCCD Governing Board meeting minutes from March 22, 2011 accessed November 13, 2013 at:

<http://www.maricopa.edu/gvbd/minutes/2011mins/A1%203.22.11%20Regular%20Board%20Meeting%20Minutes.pdf>.

of board meetings as well as attended these gatherings to speak about how their decision to raise tuition hurts the greater Latino community as those students are the ones who were targeted.



Figure 17: Members of ADA protesting the Maricopa Community College District for raising tuition rates.

Rufus Glasper, chancellor of the Maricopa Community College District and a board member, was specifically targeted due to his lack of leadership on the subject. Toward the end of October 2011, Glasper received the “Torch of Liberty Award” from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which is geared towards someone who exemplifies “diversity, civil harmony, social justice, and respect for human dignity.”⁴⁸ Once ADA members found out he was being honored they wrote a letter to the ADL asking that they withdraw the award based upon the following.

Chancellor Glasper has forced MCCD’s financial and enrollment departments to report students’ immigration status to legal counsel, which ultimately would report to DHS and ICE. Chancellor Glasper has created an Orwellian atmosphere at MCCD, where faculty will be charged with a misdemeanor if found to have

⁴⁸ Quote accessed from ADL website on November 13, 2013: <http://arizona.adl.org/event/2013-adl-arizona-torch-of-liberty-awards-dinner/>

violated the statute that requires the reporting to authorities the immigration status of students.

Although the move was directed to undocumented students, minority students are the ones scrutinized to provide documentation. MCCD's personnel have suffered a climate of tremendous pressure due to the mandate to report the status of the students and the threats of jail time.

We believe Chancellor Glasper's does not deserve such a prestigious award given by The Anti-Defamation League since under his leadership MCCD is failing its own mission of bringing accessible education to all. We exhort you to preserve the integrity of your institution by withdrawing your award to Mr. Glasper. –ADA Email Communication of Letter Sent to ADL, October 26th, 2011

While the ADL did not take the award away from the chancellor, members of the alliance found out where the unpublicized awards reception was and protested outside of it.

These actions did not have immediate results, but just one year after the community colleges raised tuition President Obama issued the deferred action. As a result, the community colleges updated their policies to allow for the social security card, along with other proof or Arizona residency, to qualify for in-state tuition. Towards the end of September 2012, the MCCD issued an updated “Handbook for HB 2008, SB 1070 and Prop 300”⁴⁹ that essentially states anyone with proper documentation of state residency can receive in-state tuition. This includes proof of graduating from an Arizona high school, evidence that most Dreamers possess. This goes directly against Governor Brewer's executive order to deny state benefits to undocumented youth. As a result, Arizona's Attorney General, Tom Horn, filed a lawsuit against the district in order to prevent them from offering in-state tuition. Although the community colleges has not taken a stance on Dreamer's themselves, their representative, Tom Gariepy, said in a newspaper interview that the district believed that they were following the law.

⁴⁹ To access the handbook go to: <http://www.maricopa.edu/publicstewardship/resources/LegCompHB.pdf>

“We’re accepting federal work permits as a proof of lawful presence because that’s what the set of documents said we should do,” Gariepy said on Wednesday. “A new category of people is eligible because of the president’s action, but we haven’t changed anything.” –Arizona Republic Article, June 26th, 2013⁵⁰

At the time of this dissertation the lawsuit against the community college district is still pending. However, in the meantime, Dreamers are able to once again return to community college at an affordable rate and even work legally to help pay for the expense. Thus, again, exercising cultural citizenship through protests, attending meetings, and writing letters in the aims to gain rights resulted in another victory.

Summary

In this last ethnographic chapter I attempt to show how Dreamers use their community to claim space and fight for rights, a process known as cultural citizenship. Rather than gaining their cultural citizenship from the greater Latino community, they created it themselves by forming their own community. The spaces where community building and political action occur can be in a physical location or a place detached from time a place. Although Dreamers can meet in person in a classroom, library, office space or street corner, they can also meet in virtual space and communicate online through email and social media. Moreover, the news media, which is physically printed on paper or virtually available, further serves to both extend the community and to bring the issue of legal status up for democratic discussion. That is, cultural citizenship cannot take place in the shadows, but rather has to be in the open for the public to see. According to

⁵⁰ “Maricopa Community Colleges Sued Over In-state Tuition for Migrants,” accessed online on November 13, 2013 at: <http://www.azcentral.com/community/scottsdale/articles/20130626maricopa-community-colleges-sued-in-state-tuition-migrants.html>

Habermas, this is where democracy happens and Dreamers have realized that in order for them to gain rights, they must continue to make themselves known to the public.

The examples of political participation in this chapter highlight how Dreamers use their cultural citizenship and are active at the local, state and national levels in attempts to transition back into legality. Without the ability to vote in elections, Dreamers have chosen to impact the political process in various ways. They do so because they understand how the political system works and exercise their rights within the system. This includes demonstrations, sit-ins, voter registration, protests, letters and calling campaigns, and lobbying.

In addition to the main acts of civic participation here, Dreamers have also engaged in many other civic-related activities. They have continually lobbied their state representatives and senators for support of the DREAM Act through calling campaigns, office visits and emails. ADA members have also protested outside of Governor Jan Brewer's office, marched on the state capitol and conducted press conferences and demonstrations. For instance, demonstrations at the capitol have had Dreamers dressed in caps and gowns telling their stories and explaining their difficulties attaining their dreams of a college education. In another instance, a group of Dreamers filmed themselves delivering over 8,000 signatures in support of the DREAM Act and Immigration Reform to the Republican Party office in attempts to convince them that this is what the American voting population favors. They can do so because they are "undocumented and unafraid" as part of a larger Dreamer community who supports them. They are able to take this community and funnel that into cultural citizenship, demanding the rights of

inclusion. That is, they have come out of the shadows and used their shared identity as Dreamers to band together and to fight for the right to transition back into legality.

As a result of claiming space, Dreamers have also claimed rights. Although they do not have a pathway to citizenship yet, they earned the right to be in this country and work legally through President Obama declaring Deferred Action. Thus, Arizona Dreamers have used their cultural citizenship successfully. That is, they have built a community with a shared identity and fought for rights, and have done both by utilizing and claiming space. However, it is important to note that they have yet to gain full rights, and especially in the state of Arizona, they are still experiencing liminal legality. Until they can drive, attend college as in-state residents, vote, and receive state and federal benefits, they still have a fight ahead of them. What remains to be seen is whether or not the Dreamer movement will continue to utilize this cultural citizenship until it results in passage of the DREAM Act or similar legislation granting them a pathway to citizenship.

Chapter 6: From Undocumented to DACAmented: What's Next?

In this dissertation I attempted to show how undocumented immigrant youth in Arizona transitioned their way from illegality into legality through building community and fighting for their rights, a process known as cultural citizenship. Before the strict anti-immigrant laws in Arizona targeted undocumented youth, there was no Dreamer community and unauthorized youth were not connected to each other. Those who had been able to enroll in a community college or the university did not know each other and remained in the shadows. However, as a result of Arizona's Proposition 300, these students were singled out, forcing them to pay out-of-state tuition that they could not afford. In reaction to this, a scholarship fund was created for these students and for the first time they met each other at an orientation meeting. Thus, instead of forcing these students further into the shadows, the further marginalization of undocumented immigrant youth, who were familiar with the U.S. system, actually caused them to come together and form a community.

Over time, this community, with their shared identity and desire to gain citizenship, stepped out of the shadows in order to claim rights. They were able to do so for two reasons. First, they built a strong network and support systems within and outside of their community that provided them protection to feel safe enough to come out publically. Second, they exerted their American-ness as a basis for deserving the same rights as legal citizens. As a result of years of lobbying, protesting, and fighting, from not only Dreamers in Arizona, but also across the country, they earned a notable victory when President Obama granted them Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Yet, this

is not a permanent solution as it still leaves Dreamers in an ambiguous state and are still aspiring citizens.

Those Still in the Shadows

Dreamers' liminality changed once President Obama issued Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), because those who receive deferred action technically transition back into temporary legality. Dreamers have used the term "DACAdmented" instead of "documented" to describe those Dreamers who have their temporary social security number through deferred action. ADA members were first in line to fill out the paperwork in August 2012 when United States Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS) opened applications. Shortly after they turned in their paperwork, they received their social security numbers in the mail and many found legal work. Others have gone back to school—via community colleges since they have access to in-state tuition there—while others have gotten jobs, or are doing both. However, there are still many undocumented youth in Arizona, and in the country, who have yet to apply for DACA.

A recent report shows that there are an estimated 936,000 eligible immigrant youth who can apply for Deferred Action and actually over half a million people had applied for DACA between August 2012 and June 2013 (Singer and Svajlenka 2013). This means that there are still nearly 400,000 eligible Dreamers who still are in the shadows and have not come forward to apply. Of the applications received, 72% have been approved and only 1% have been denied. Moreover, 74.9% were from Mexico, but there were a total of 192 countries represented in the applications. Of these other countries, Central America had 10%, South America was 7%, Asians made up 4%, the

Caribbean 2% and the last 2% was from Africa and European countries. However, this report notes they expected 6% of the applications to be from Asian nations, but that only 4% was represented. Arizona was in the top 10 states with the highest number of applications and 97% of applications were from immigrants born in Mexico.

In Arizona, the number of applicants in August 2013 was at 19,000 of an estimated 33,000 eligible youth, which is 58% of the undocumented youth population in the state (Batalova et al. 2013) and mirrors the national average. Thus, there are still many other Dreamers in the shadows in Arizona as well as the country. Singer and Svajlenka (2013) note that some may be discouraged to apply for many reasons. This includes not understanding the rules and whether or not they qualify for DACA, the inability to provide documentation of continuous enrollment, lack of means to pay the application fee, lack of completed education or current enrollment, and lack of information about the program and/or they do not understand the application process. In Arizona, there are not only those who are still in the shadows, but other legal barriers preventing Dreamers from accessing full legal rights.

The Continuation of Liminal Legality

Deferred Action is just a temporary resolution, as Dreamers still do not have a pathway to citizenship and cannot vote, nor do they have other rights granted to legal immigrants. Moreover, DACA certified immigrants have to renew their work permits every two years. They also cannot freely travel outside of the country, but must apply and pay an application fee for “advanced parole” through the USCIS, which may give them the opportunity to travel internationally. However, there is no guarantee that their

advanced parole would be granted. Thus, all undocumented youth still remain in a state of liminal legality until comprehensive immigration reform passes and are granted permanent residency and/or a pathway to citizenship. Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in Arizona Dreamers are still not allowed in-state tuition at the state-funded universities, nor can they receive driver's licenses. Governor Jan Brewer has vowed to not let them have these rights, but yet as of August 2013, 19 states had granted in-state tuition rights and 45 states had given permission for DACA recipients to receive driver's licenses (Singer and Svajlenka 2013). Therefore, this liminal legality is more pronounced in the state of Arizona.

Of course, Governor Brewer's action to deny state rights to DACAmented youth has not stopped members of ADA from fighting for their rights. In fact, ADA has joined together with the ACLU, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC), and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) to bring a lawsuit against the governor because her denial of these benefits "violates the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution by interfering with federal immigration law, and also violates the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause by discriminating against certain non-citizens (ACLU 2013)⁵¹. Moreover, they have engaged in protests outside the state capitol demanding the same rights as other Arizona residents. Additionally, some of the most vocal and active ADA members are currently in Washington D.C. For example, Elizabeth recently spent months in Washington lobbying for immigration reform, and Julieta took a job with a state representative as a congressional staffer.

⁵¹ Information taken from ACLU's webpage at: <https://www.aclu.org>

As illustrated in chapter four, emails within the Google group decreased dramatically once Deferred Action passed. What remains to be seen is whether or not cultural citizenship for Dreamers will continue into the future, or whether or not it will abate until other anti-immigrant legislation sparks it again. For example, I asked the president of the alliance, Marisol, about outreach to Dreamers and whether or not recruitment was difficult. She responded that when the media coverage was high, like in 2010 when the DREAM Act was up for a vote, that it was easy to find new alliance members, but when there was decreased media attention, there were fewer Dreamers signing up to join. Thus, the public sphere is not the only important method of continuing to build community. Media attention provides a direct line to increasing membership and strengthening their cultural citizenship.

I am optimistic that ADA will continue to foster cultural citizenship until, and possibly after, Dreamers gain the right to become citizens. While many of my informants have found formal work as a result of DACA, they are still continuing to extend their community and fight for immigration reform. From my review of Facebook posts and statuses over the past year, many of my informants are still fairly active fighting for rights and reaching out to the community. In addition to continued bi-weekly meetings, ADA has also reached out to other undocumented youth in the shadows in order to help them file their DACA application. For example, they have had numerous DACA workshops helping undocumented youth understand and fill out the forms, as well as counseling them on how to provide documentation of continuous residence. Furthermore, many members have to renew their DACA soon and are starting renewal workshops. These workshops are advertised online through Facebook and through email.

While the detainment and deportation proceedings of undocumented immigrant youth have seemed to wane drastically, there are still frequent postings about non-DACA eligible undocumented immigrants being detained. For example, two ADA members have fought for their family members to be released from Immigration Customs and Enforcement. Elizabeth's father was detained in Florida for nine months were he was working, and Julieta's mother and family were also detained and placed in deportation proceedings. Facebook, email, and petition signing campaigns ensued and their family members were released, but are still pending deportation hearings. In another example, a recent post requested help of ADA Facebook members to assist a DACAmented Dreamer who was detained in a routine traffic stop, showing that DACA does not provide equal protection. Thus, until comprehensive immigration reform passes providing a pathway for all 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country, I suspect ADA will continue to be active. In fact, ADA Dreamers also post information about immigration reform, although recently not as much as focusing on state-level issues such as upcoming elections and obtaining driver's licenses. However, Arizona Dreamers are not the only ones fighting for reform, as there are Dreamers from across the nation who are also actively fighting.

Future Directions

As I write this conclusion, President Obama recently started his sixth year in office and gave his State of the Union speech urging Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform. He said,

Finally, if we are serious about economic growth, it is time to heed the call of business leaders, labor leaders, faith leaders, and law enforcement – and fix our broken immigration system. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate have acted. I know that members of both parties in the House want to do the same. Independent economists say immigration reform will grow our economy and shrink our deficits by almost \$1 trillion in the next two decades. And for good reason: when people come here to fulfill their dreams – to study, invent, and contribute to our culture – they make our country a more attractive place for businesses to locate and create jobs for everyone. So let's get immigration reform done this year (President Obama State of Union Speech, 2014).⁵²

However, Congress must be the ones who enact reform, which needs bipartisan support.

At the moment I am writing this conclusion, comprehensive immigration reform does not seem likely to pass. In 2013, the Democratically-controlled Senate passed a bipartisan immigration reform bill, but it stalled in the House of Representatives. Moreover, 2014 is a year of mid-term elections and Republicans are hesitant to take a stand on immigration when they can focus on the unpopular Obama healthcare plan in hopes of gaining more Republican seats in Congress⁵³. Nonetheless, there are still national forces advocating for reform.

This research serves as a platform for future research and there are many possible avenues of inquiry. This dissertation focuses on the state-level organization of undocumented immigrant youth, but there is also a national movement that is very influential. I briefly mentioned how the national organization, Dreamers United, has provided support to ADA and its members. However, they have been successful in unifying Dreamers from across the country and using this united front to lobby for the

⁵² Transcript of 2014 State of the Union address accessed on February 16, 2014 at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/28/president-barack-obamas-state-union-address>

⁵³ Information take from USA Today news article accessed on March 19, 2014 at: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/02/12/immigration-reform-activists-threaten-gop-payback/5414269>

DREAM Act on a national level. Thus, while Arizona Dreamers were advocating for this legislation, they were not the only ones. As Olivas (2011) notes, the reason why the DREAM Act was reintroduced in 2011 was because Dreamers from all parts of the country came out publically as undocumented in addition to Congressmen advocating for the bill. I only looked at cultural citizenship among Dreamers in Arizona, but more research could be done to investigate how it has been cultivated and utilized at the national level.

In addition, I was only able to conduct interviews with a very small subset of the population of Dreamers in Arizona. The fact that Arizona is a border state with Mexico, and has developed into one of the most notorious anti-immigrant states with its specific laws targeting unauthorized immigrants, make the context of daily living much different than perhaps living in another state. For example, some states like California do not currently have such restrictive laws and in fact allow unauthorized immigrant youth to apply for state aid to pay for college. Thus, experiences of Dreamers from metropolitan Phoenix may be very different than other youth in other states and even cities in Arizona. Further research is needed to see if and how cultural citizenship is happening in other states and cities, with larger and smaller populations, and in both urban and rural locations.

Besides only interviewing a very small percentage of the population of Dreamers, the unauthorized youth with whom I conducted this project are specifically interested in justice and gaining rights so that they could attend college and pursue their dreams. This is not to say that those not involved do not wish to gain their citizenship, but not everyone who is disenfranchised desires to become actively involved in gaining rights, effectively

staying in the shadows. As Gonzales and Chavez (2012) point out, increased marginalization of undocumented youth causes both an increased sense of fear and can either render them immobilized or inspire them to become politically active. Moreover, I argued that the community that ADA created mitigates the possibility of downward assimilation that Gonzales (2011) says can happen after undocumented students leave school.

However, with DACA now in place, the context after high school is much different as Dreamers can now legally find work if they have their “DACAmendment.” Thus, more research is needed to interview a larger percentage of the population and figure out what is happening to DACA recipients after high school or college and beyond. How has becoming DACAmended affected their lives after living in “illegality” for several years? Are they now, as Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argued, assimilating similarly to the second-generation and attaining higher socioeconomic statuses? However, there are also DACA eligible immigrants who are between the ages 18-30 who may not have support systems and may or may not know about DACA. What are those Dreamers doing if they have not applied for DACA and why have not they applied? If they know about the program, how do they find out?

Another possible avenue for further investigation is to interview younger undocumented youth. I only interviewed Dreamers who had graduated from high school because the Institutional Review Board deems undocumented immigrant youth under the age of 18 a highly vulnerable population. In order to interview children, I would have had to get parental consent from immigrants who are also unauthorized and may or may not speak English. Thus, it would be difficult to get at this population, but it would also be

important to interview undocumented youth who are under the age of 18 before they graduate high school in order to see what characteristics determine whether or not they become involved in political activities or an organization like ADA. That is, are there predictors of what makes someone participate in activism versus those who are not involved and disengaged with what is happening with immigration policies? Are they finding out about DACA and applying for it? Are they receiving help from organizations like ADA before applying for DACA? Further inquiry could address these questions and examine how support systems in school affect these trajectories. Moreover, are undocumented children under the age of 15 coming out of the shadows more frequently now that there is DACA in their future and they are provided some protection?

While I focused my research with Mexican immigrant youth because of the undocumented population's ethnic composition in Arizona, there are other populations of Dreamers living in the country. These include Dreamers from other Latin American countries as well as Asian countries. I only encountered three non-Mexican origin Dreamers in my research, but what about those other ethnic groups in Arizona? Where are they and what support systems do they have, if any? Furthermore, are Dreamers in other states coming together like ADA? If yes, what is their ethnic composition and do these groups provide the same access to resources that I have found ADA provides to its members? There is also the question of whether or not all Dreamers band together to fight for rights regardless of ethnic background. For example, ADA members consistently talked about recruiting other Dreamers from different ethnic backgrounds, but still remained fairly homogenous. Is this because the population in Arizona is mainly from Mexican-descent, or are there other factors? Do states that have higher populations

of other ethnic groups have similar organizations with different ethnic compositions? That is, is activism ethnically segregated, such as Asians and Latinos mobilizing separately?

Lastly, more investigation is needed on how virtual space is intersecting with all of these questions posed here. How useful is the internet in connecting Dreamers from across the country? Do Facebook and Twitter allow undocumented youth from around the nation to connect and build community virtually? Do those in the shadows, or in locations with smaller populations of Dreamers, connect with groups like ADA and Dreamers United through social networking? Do non-Mexican Dreamers connect with these networks virtually, or have their own deterritorialized communities? Therefore, there are many research questions that need to be addressed before we can fully understand the complex and diverse lives of undocumented youth in the country.

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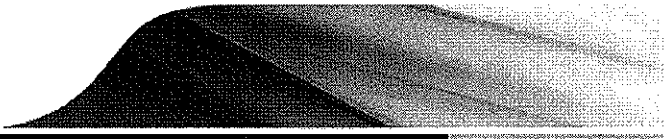
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Takeyuki Tsuda
MC

fr **From:** Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 06/06/2011

Committee Action: Expedited Approval

Approval Date: 06/06/2011

Review Type: Expedited F7

IRB Protocol #: 1105006427

Study Title: Undocumented Youth: Claiming Community, Identity and Rights

Expiration Date: 06/05/2012

The above-referenced protocol was approved following expedited review by the Institutional Review Board.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.