

Using the Master's Tools to Dismantle the Master's House:
White Women's Gendered and Racialized Citizenship, Pro-Immigrants' Rights
Advocacy, and White Privilege in the Borderlands

by

Samantha L. Vandermeade

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

Approved July 2020 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Mary Margaret Fonow, Chair
Heather Switzer
Charles Lee

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

August 2020

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines pro-immigrants' rights activism and advocacy among middle-class White women in and around Phoenix, Arizona, in order to analyze these activists' understandings and enactments of their racialized and gendered citizenship. This project contributes a wealth of qualitative data regarding the operation of race, gender, class, (dis)ability, sexuality, age, education, and community in the daily lives and activism of White women pro-immigrants' rights advocates, collected largely through formal and informal interviewing in conjunction with in-depth participant observation. Using a feminist, intersectional analytical lens and drawing upon critical race studies, Whiteness studies, and citizenship theory, this dissertation ultimately finds that White women face thornily difficult ethical questions about how to wield the rights entailed in their citizenship and their White privilege on behalf of marginalized Latinx non-citizens. This project ultimately argues that the material realities and racial consequences of being a White woman participating in (im)migrants' rights work in the borderlands means living with the contradiction that one's specific and intersectionally mediated status as a White woman citizen contributes to and further reifies the gendered system of White supremacy that functions to the direct detriment of the (im)migrants one seeks to assist, while simultaneously endowing one with the advantages and privileges of Whiteness, which together furnish the social capital necessary to challenge that same system of their behalf. The dissertation contends that White women committed to pro-(im)migrants' rights advocacy and antiracism writ large must reckon with the source of their gendered

and racialized citizenship and interrogate to what complicated and unforeseen ends they wield the Master's tools against the Master's house. In doing so, the project makes the case that White women's lives, as well as their experiences of citizenship and activism, are inherently and fundamentally intersectional and should be analyzed as such by scholars in Women's and Gender Studies.

DEDICATION

To the women of color feminists whose radical imaginations and strength of will paved the way for the contemporary feminist and antiracist struggle to which I hope to contribute with this work, and to Audre Lorde, first among them. Without her and visionary feminists of color like her, the title, contents, and theoretical contributions of this dissertation would not, and could not, be possible.

It is upon the shoulders of giants which I stand.

&

To the many thousands of Central American migrants who have passed through the city of Phoenix seeking a new life for themselves and their children. May we honor your courage by remaining unwavering in our resistance to the systems of power that elevate our voices over your own.

You deserve no less from us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. First and foremost, I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Mary Margaret Fonow. Without her steady guidance, commitment to mentorship, and unflappable confidence in my ability to cross the finish line, I would surely have flagged. She has my deepest gratitude and my highest regard.

Next, I must surely thank my co-participants: for inviting me into their homes, for welcoming me into their organizations, and for their commitment to the cause of pro-(im)migrants' rights and White antiracism. In service of the latter they have accomplished enormous, if often imperfect, feats of humanitarian service. I am humbled and grateful that they chose to embrace vulnerability, discuss difficult subjects, and explore with me that which too often “remains invisible” to us as White women. This dissertation would be far poorer without their contributions, and I am a better activist for having met and worked beside each of them.

I must also extend heartfelt thanks my committee members, Drs. Heather Switzer and Charles Lee, whose thoughtful and thought-provoking feedback has made this dissertation stronger and more theoretically rich. I am also grateful for the many advocates, mentors, and leaders within Women's and Gender Studies who have lent helping hands during this process, including Dr. Michelle McGibbney Vlahoulis, Dr. Karen Leong, and Dr. Sally Kitch. It takes a village to raise a child—and a dissertation—

and I am better for the role each of you has played as a member of my intellectual community.

Outside of academia, I have been extraordinarily lucky to be cared for and supported by my chosen family. If those people listed above kept me on the path to this accomplishment, these named below did everything possible to ensure that I stayed healthy, supported, and loved while I walked it. My extraordinary wife, Trista Vandermeade, has held my hand through every discouraging moment, held me upright during every crisis of confidence, and held space for this endeavor in our home and in our life for as long as she has known me. For this, she has my eternal gratitude. Finally, I would like to thank my best friend, fellow feminist, and constant cheerleader, Melanie Vigil, who has gifted me with many unexpected insights and provided innumerable sounding-board sessions throughout this process. More importantly though, she has been my compass, always pulling my attention back to the reason we do this feminist and antiracist work: to transform the possibilities of our world—one small step at a time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 INTRODUCTION: “HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DESCRIBE WHAT IS INVISIBLE TO ME?”: INTERROGATING WHITE WOMANHOOD, CITIZENSHIP, AND ANTIRACIST ACTIVISM AS A WHITE WOMAN.....	1
The Humanitarian Crisis in the Borderlands and White Women’s Advocacy, Activism, and Aid.....	12
White Women Pro-(Im)migrants’ Rights Activists in Phoenix, Arizona.....	23
Methods and Methodology.....	32
Outline of Dissertation.....	40
Conclusion.....	45
2 THE SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE BORDERLANDS AND THE INTERSE CONTEXT OF THE BORDERLANDS AND THE INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF WHITE WOMEN’S PRO-(IM)MIGRANTS’ RIGHTS WORK.....	46
The Grand ‘Chasm’ State: Race, Politics, and Immigration in Arizona...	47
Citizenship and the ‘Immigration Regime’: Labor, Land, and a Racialized National Culture.....	55

CHAPTER	Page
The Conquest of the Borderlands: Why Space and Place Matter to a Multipartite Racial System.....	63
Whiteness, White Womanhood, and Citizenship.....	68
3 “I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING”: HOW WHITE WOMEN NAVIGATE THEIR (ANTI)RACISM AND BECOME ORGANIZERS AND ACTIVISTS FOR (IM)MIGRANTS RIGHTS.....	85
4 “AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER? YES. AND HE’S MINE”: WHITE WOMANHOOD AS ‘KEY’ TO THE INTERSECTIONAL ENACTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP.....	142
Citizenship-as-Belonging and the Intersectional Analysis of White Womanhood.....	146
The Uneven Effects of Intersectional White Womanhood: An Example.....	154
The White Woman Citizen and the Invisible Inescapability of Gender.....	158
Gendered Genealogy and Personality in White Women’s Social Advocacy Work.....	165
White Women’s Antiracism, Intersectional Experiences, and their Enactments of Citizenship.....	168

CHAPTER	Page
“We won the birth lottery—Now what?”: Citizen-cum-White Privilege and (the Lack of) White Antiracist Community.....	183
A New Vision: Community-oriented Citizenship Through Collective Responsibility.....	198
Conclusion.....	203
5 WIELDING THE MASTER’S TOOLS AGAINST THE MASTER’S HOUSE: THE COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF ENACTING RACIALIZED CITIZENSHIP ON BEHALF OF (AN)OTHER.....	205
The Rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School in South-Central Phoenix.....	215
The Costs and Consequences of Enacting Racialized Citizenship on Behalf of an(Other).....	226
6 CONCLUSION: WHEN WHITE WOMEN ARE REALLY DOWN: (RE)ENVISIONING CITIZENSHIP AND IMAGINING AN ANTIRACIST FUTURE FOR WHITE PRO-(IM)MIGRANTS’ RIGHTS ACTIVISTS.....	235
Theoretical Contributions and Future Avenues for Research.....	238
So What Now?.....	249
Conclusion.....	264
REFERENCES	266

CHAPTER	Page
APPENDIX	
A. TABLES AND FIGURES	276
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	283

**Introduction: “How am I supposed to describe what is invisible to me?”:
Interrogating White Womanhood, Citizenship, and Antiracist Activism as a White
Woman**

“Hola! Me llamo Sam. Soy una voluntaria con una iglesia local. Ustedes son en Phoenix, Arizona. Te ayudo a llamar sus familias. Juntos, su familia y yo compramos boletos para un bus o avión. Vamos allá, por favor!” *Even though it is only March, the sun is unusually harsh and the temperature unusually high as I stand in the center of the Greyhound Station parking lot and shout instructions in grammatically incorrect Spanish to a group of approximately a hundred asylum-seeking Central American migrants. Most of the migrants, who had just been dropped off by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), are still blinking and shading their eyes from the white glare of the sun against the sidewalk and the surrounding desert landscape.*

Along with my name, why I am there, and what city they are in, I tell them that I am there to help them contact their families and arrange transportation by bus or airplane to their families’ locations within the United States. As soon as I finish speaking, the migrants nod and fall in line behind me as I walk to the east side of the retaining wall that marks the boundary between Greyhound private property and 24th Street. There, I ask them to line up along the wall, in what paltry shade they can find under two wispy palo verde trees, and wait.

No one questions me, though every face is curious. I feel surprised at how easily they had complied with my instructions—me, a random stranger who had walked up to them seconds before in a pair of denim shorts and a T-shirt, with nothing more than my

car keys and a bottle of water in hand. All I can guess is that by this point in their journey, they are unfortunately accustomed to Americans ferrying, herding, or directing them with little explanation. However, this time, it is not because ICE or CBP (Customs and Border Patrol) agents purposely withheld information from them; this time, it is because I am the only volunteer available, and I simply do not know how to reassure them, or explain myself, with the limited Spanish at my disposal. So I smile in what I hope is a reassuring manner, and I try to figure out what to do.

Thirty minutes earlier, I had been sitting at my desk at home, grading papers for my women's studies course, when one of my research co-participants¹ called me, frantic, because she had received word that there would be an unexpected drop at the station. She was out of town, and no one else was answering their phone on a Monday afternoon. "Only go if you want to, Sam," Diana² said, but I heard the concern in her voice for the migrants, who would be effectively stranded in a strange city with no money, food, or phones—unless I could drop what I was doing and go down to the station. I immediately agreed.

"I'm going to try and call in some backup for you, ok? I'm not going to leave you in the Ditch alone," she said, "If you can just get down there, I will try to get you some help."

¹ I chose to refer to my research participants as 'co-participants' for specific, methodological reasons. I discuss this term, and why I chose to use it, in the methods and methodology section below.

² All co-participants' names have been changed to pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

I had worked “the Ditch” before with Diana—just the previous week, the two of us had processed sixty-five migrants, all of whom had been suddenly and unexpectedly dropped off at the Phoenix Greyhound Station by ICE. That day, we asked migrants to line up along the retaining wall and wait while we collected their information, called the phone number listed on each migrants’ immigration release form next to ‘sponsor name,’ and waited for those sponsor family members, who were already settled here in the U.S., to purchase a one-way ticket from Phoenix to their city. It had taken us nine hours to process sixty-five migrants and then arrange volunteer transportation for each family to either the airport or to a church or a volunteer’s home to wait for their confirmation numbers there—and Diana spoke Spanish fluently. As I look around, I feel panic rising in my chest. I have no idea what to do.

I stand there in the sun for a long moment, thinking, before making a short announcement to the migrants, asking them to wait one moment while I make some calls. I place calls back to back, over a dozen of them—first to volunteers I know who are also activists in this movement and then to friends, family, and colleagues, anyone who might be able to help. I call my cousin, who teaches high school Spanish in Schaumburg, Illinois, hoping perhaps she might be willing to translate for me. I call a fellow graduate student, whose first language is Spanish. I call a woman I had met in the Ditch six weeks earlier, who was listed in my phone simply as “Yolanda, Bus Station.” After I call in all the help I can think of, and get more than a few voicemails, I begin working my way down the line of families, one after another. I do my best to communicate with the migrants and

their sponsor family members, speaking a broken mix of Spanish and English with those who are even a little bilingual and trying my hardest with the ones who are not.

Within thirty minutes, the exhausting effort of willing my brain to process as much of the Spanish I am hearing as humanly possible, in conjunction with the blindingly bright sunlight, gives me a glaring headache. As time passes, I feel more and more anxious. This is going so much slower than I thought—glacially slow. At this rate, it will take me well into the night just to make initial contact with every sponsor family on my own. I understand too little, and there are too many of them. And now that I'm here, I can't leave them; my conscience won't allow it. I consider wild ideas—can I ferry them, five or six at a time in my car, to house, to wait in my backyard? There we would at least have shade, water, and safety. Then I discard the idea; my dogs, my landlord, my neighbor who lives in the casita and shares the yard with me—these are all obstacles. I feel the stress in my chest, and I try to ignore it—and my headache. And I hope for help to arrive.

Blessedly, within two hours, that help begins to pull into the parking lot. First, a Mexican American friend and then Yolanda, a Guatemalan immigrant herself, with her sixteen-year-old daughter, Silvia, in tow. Yolanda springs out of her huge, shiny, black SUV, and hits the ground in a trim pair of heels that makes her, all told, approximately 4 feet, 11 inches tall. Despite her petite stature, and in spite of working in an overwhelmingly male field (or perhaps because of it), Yolanda immediately owns every space she enters. I enjoy Yolanda's outsized personality immensely, so I am always

genuinely happy to see her. But today, as the sun mercifully begins to set over the I-10 overpass, I feel an intense wave of gratitude and relief wash over me. Now I don't have to be solely responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the hundred migrants currently sitting in the trash- and glass-littered dirt of the Ditch. Not only that, but I trust Yolanda to take over this situation, which I am laughably ill-equipped to manage. I hadn't acknowledged the weight of that responsibility until I felt it lift and felt my breath trip over the emotions rising in my throat.

Yolanda and I greet one another with the quick, hard hug of two people used to seeing one another in the worst of circumstances. She and Silvia begin speaking to the migrants in rapid-fire Spanish while I give Marco, my Mexican American friend, a crash course on how to participate in a Ditch drop. Everything begins to go a lot more smoothly, until maybe an hour later, when I hear Silvia call my name.

"These two need to use the bathroom," she gestures to a young mother and her toddler son. She lowers her voice and takes a step closer. "I tried to take them into the station. The security guard told us that, with the new policy, we aren't allowed inside."

"Right," I hesitate, thinking. The previous week, in an insidiously roundabout attempt to literally push the 'problem' of large groups of migrants being dropped at their bus stations out into the street, Greyhound's corporate office had instituted a new policy, mandating only ticket-holding customers were allowed inside the stations. The reason we are processing the migrants behind a retaining wall, in a ditch, is because we are not legally allowed to 'loiter' on private property.

“Ok, I’m going to try to take them then,” I say, finally.

“What are you going to say to the guard?,” Silvia asks.

“Nothing,” I say. “I’m just going to do it. If we’re lucky, the guard won’t stop me. If that doesn’t work, then we will regroup.” I turn to the young mother, “Vamos, señora, por favor.”

I usher them toward the station entrance, and when we approach, I lift a hand, “Hiya, Lyle!” I smile broadly at the security guard standing outside the front entrance, a White man in his forties who has gotten used to seeing me around. “Nice to see you!” Lyle smiles back and begins to open his mouth, but I don’t give him the opportunity to speak. “Hey, listen, I know we aren’t supposed to be on Greyhound property, but this young mama needs a quick trip to the bathroom. Surely it’s alright if I just take them back there, and then we hop right back over to the other side of the wall, right?” I had never actually stopped moving, so by the time I finished asking the question that I had deliberately framed in such a way that ‘yes’ was the only reasonable answer, I am already halfway through the door behind the migrant mother. “Thanks!,” I shout cheerily over my shoulder, the door swinging shut behind me.

A few minutes later, on the way out, I am careful to raise a hand and offer a smile again, “Thank you, Lyle, I appreciate you!,” I intentionally add. He nods casually and returns to scanning the parking lot.

Fifteen minutes after that, I am striding back up to the front entrance of the station, two migrant fathers and their two teenage sons behind me this time. Once again, I smile and wave, but this time I don't ask permission at all.

Twelve trips in and out, and no one stops me or the migrants in my wake.

It is nearly ten-thirty by the time Yolanda, Silvia, and I pack the very last migrant family into a car—mine. With no other churches, volunteers, or organizations available, this family of four—a father, mother, and twin 12-year-old daughters from El Salvador—are going home with me. In the morning, I will enlist Diana's help to call their sponsors again, get a confirmation number, and send them on their way to their family in Baltimore. Right now, the only thing any of us want or need is a little bit of hot water, so we can rinse off the desert dust and the grime of the Ditch, and some sleep—both of which I am happy to provide.

As a cisgender, straight passing, assumably middle-class White³ woman, the way I move through the world is fundamentally different than either my White male or women of color counterparts. My experiences, (inter)actions, options, and decisions have been fundamentally, indelibly, emphatically defined by my intersectionally attenuated White womanhood. This fact held true for the ten months I spent conducting formal fieldwork for this dissertation and, indeed, has held true for the duration of my life thus

³ In recognition of the salience of racial identity, and to disrupt the notion that 'Black,' 'Brown,' or 'of color' modifies an existence that is normatively White, I choose to capitalize White, alongside Black, Brown, and Latinx/Chicanx to signify race's relevance in the lives and experiences of White people.

far. That day at the Greyhound bus station, my White womanhood allowed me to escort dozens of migrants in and out of the station without interference. As a pro-(im)migrants' rights advocate and activist, my White womanhood has granted me access to spaces both my fellow undocumented activists and the migrants we serve cannot, or dare not, go. It has allowed me to openly challenge systems of White supremacist authority on behalf of those migrants, and it has guaranteed that when I raise my voice in this way, it is far more likely to be heard simply because it emerges from my mouth. My very access to, and efficacy within, the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement stems directly from my White womanhood.

As a doctoral student of Gender and Women's studies, a scholar of feminist and critical race theories, and a committed pro-(im)migrants' rights advocate and activist, I have had to continuously acknowledge, and then try to come to terms with, the ways in which my White womanhood empowers me to challenge social injustice at the same time that that empowerment relies upon a system of gendered heteropatriarchy and White supremacy. It was in the process of struggling with this contradiction that the seeds of this dissertation germinated. If the genesis of the privilege and authority vested in the middle-class White womanhood—upon which White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists depend to enact change on behalf of Latinx migrants—draws its power directly from the dual systems of gendered and racialized citizenship and institutionalized White supremacy, then how can White woman enact their citizenship and exercise their sociopolitical clout in service of social justice in ways that are ethical, feminist, and

antiracist? Where is the way forward for antiracist White women who are committed to resisting the racism, xenophobia, and injustice that animates the privilege they rely on to advance the cause of social and racial justice for (im)migrants?

While I chewed on these thornily difficult questions—the answers to which carried highly personal implications for me and the social justice work I have chosen for myself—my research questions began to form alongside them:

- How do differently socially situated White women understand citizenship, and how do they conceptualize their rights, responsibilities, and relationships within that citizenship?
- How do these White women enact that citizenship, and to what end?
- What does an intersectional analysis of these understandings and enactments tell us about the relationship(s) between gender, race, citizenship, and antiracist activism?

To fully understand these questions requires that I provide two definitions: the first of citizenship and the second of antiracism. In my understanding, citizenship is comprised of three central elements: the rights, responsibilities, and relationships entailed in belonging; the frameworks of meaning we come to attach to that belonging; and the practices we engage in to create, define, and police that belonging. Thus, citizenship is simultaneously a way of relating to the world, a way of making meaning out of that experience, and a mechanism for either circumscribing or expanding the possibilities

within it. To understand citizenship as such necessarily requires an intersectional analytical lens; as numerous feminist scholars have demonstrated, ways of knowing, ways of meaning-making, and the experience of citizenship are all inflected, shaped, and in some ways determined by one's location within intersectional structures of domination—race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, and ability.⁴ Let me proffer two examples: In their article, “Brothers, Fathers, Terrorists,” Roberta Chevrette and Lisa C. Braverman illustrate that the performance and maintenance of hegemonic White, male citizenship in the post-9/11 United States relies on “emotion-laden narratives of terror and emergency” that configure the United States and its White, male citizens as “benevolent paternalistic figure[s]” ready to protect the women and children of the nation; within this frame, citizenship is highly protectionist, and protectionism is highly gendered. Under this protectionist framework, White men will have fundamentally different experiences of citizenship and belonging than White women, people of color, or children. This is because hegemonic White masculinity and hegemonic meanings of citizenship are constructed “through affective alignments” grounded in race, gender,

⁴ For more on how race, gender, and class shape experiences of citizenship, see: Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance,” *American Sociological Review* 76:1 (2011); Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Macmillan, 1998); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). For more on how sexuality shapes experiences of citizenship, see: Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); and Martín F. Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). And for more on how (dis)ability affects experiences of citizenship, see Alison Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); and Richard Devlin and Dianne Pothier, “Introduction: Toward a Critical Theory of Dis-Citizenship,” in *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy, and Law* (Vancouver; Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

class, sexuality, and, as my next illustration shows, (dis)ability.⁵ Secondly, in *Feminist Queer Crip*, Alison Kafer reminds us that our bodies—the primary mechanism through which race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and more are read onto us—and their (dis)ability to fit into hegemonic conceptions of the ‘fit’ subject determine access to, and the experience of, citizenship. Kafer offers the example of the bathroom and quotes Judith Plaskow: “Access to toilets is a prerequisite for full public participation and citizenship...almost all the social justice movements of the last century in the United States have included struggles for adequate toilet facilities.”⁶ Women moving into male-dominated fields, disabled people fighting for full lives and careers outside the home, the struggle against racial segregation in public facilities, and contemporary fights over transgender citizens’ right to use the bathroom of their identifying gender—each fight had to be waged because of how nonbelonging was read onto the body through gender difference, racialization, ablebodiedness, and transphobia. Disability, much like race and gender, “is a system of representation that marks bodies as subordinate.”⁷ The meaning of citizenship is created, defined, and policed along lines of gender, race, class, sexuality, (dis)ability, and more.

Antiracism understands how citizenship and (non)belonging are co-constructed, and the practice of antiracism is itself an act of citizenship. Antiracism actively seeks to dismantle, disrupt, and ultimately destroy the institutional, biopolitical, and socipolitical

⁵ Roberta Chevrette and Lisa C. Braverman, 2013, “Brothers, Fathers, Terrorists: Masculine Assemblages in Glenn Beck’s Rhetoric of US-Israel Unity Post-9/11,” *Feminist Formations* 25(2): 82-83.

⁶ Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip*, 154.

⁷ Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, 2005, “Feminist Disability Studies,” *Signs* 30(2): 1558.

mechanisms which reproduce and reify White supremacy, structure racial inequity, and exclude racialized subjects from belonging. White antiracism requires a recognition of one's *responsibility*, as a member of the White community, to resist the exclusion of some racialized subjects from the rights of citizenship that you enjoy. To be antiracist is to accept a mandate to resist racist policies, racist actions, and racist ideas.⁸ White antiracism requires White people to actively critique and resist those institutions and ideologies that perpetuate racial inequity, *even and especially*, when the weakening of those institutions and ideologies may lead to a loss of privilege for White people.

In search of answers to the research questions above, I chose to investigate how middle-class White women in the larger Phoenix area engage in, and contribute to, the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement *as* White women and how their participation in this movement reshapes both their understanding and their enactments of their citizenship. I drew upon feminist theories of intersectionality, as well as critical race and critical Whiteness studies, in order to conduct a feminist ethnographic study that relied on formal and informal interviewing, participant observation, and extensive fieldnotes.

In what remains of this introductory chapter, I will give a contextual overview of my fieldwork: the humanitarian crisis following the surge of Central American migrants seeking asylum in the United States from October 2018 through late-spring 2019 and the community movement to ameliorate the effects of the crisis on asylum-seeking migrants. Secondly, I will briefly introduce my co-participants—all middle- and upper-middle class

⁸ Ibram X. Kendi, *How to be Antiracist* (New York: One World, 2019).

White women—as an aggregate. Next, I will discuss methods, methodology, and the ethical challenges I faced as a White woman conducting research on her fellow White activists while actively advocating for, and attempting to serve, highly marginalized Latinx migrants. Finally, I will provide an outline of the chapters to follow.

The Humanitarian Crisis in the Borderlands and White Women's Advocacy, Activism, and Aid

Between mid-October of 2018 and mid-March of 2019, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) dumped over 30,000 primarily Central American asylum-seeking migrants into the city of Phoenix.⁹ Under then-current U.S. immigration law, non-citizens presenting themselves to U.S. border authorities could claim asylum, initiating a process under which the immigration legal system determines whether a migrant's individual claim adequately meets one of the five criteria for asylum in the United States: persecution resulting from race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group. As such, these migrants (meaning, at its most bare level, people who migrate) are often referred to in pro-(im)migrant rights circles as asylum seekers or

⁹ Two notes should be made here: First, this data comes from informal knowledge produced at the community level. Because ICE intentionally obscures its processes and internal workings, no one person can be entirely sure how many migrants, precisely, have been dropped in Phoenix. Instead, at the time, local groups and organizations traded partial information in order to construct a picture of the political situation in Phoenix regarding ICE and migrant drops. Second, this should not imply that the release of migrants into Phoenix ceased in March 2019, though they dropped substantially in the summer of 2019, as I will discuss later.

refugees—though the latter term is politically, and racially, loaded.¹⁰ Many, if not most, of these migrants are fleeing either some form of violence (military, gang, domestic, etc.), extreme poverty, the effects of climate change in their home country, or some combination of the above. Because of this, the courts will almost certainly determine that the majority of these asylum-seekers do not have legitimate *legal* asylum claims and will deny them any legal or protected basis on which to stay in the United States.

I quite purposefully use the term ‘dumped’ because of the manner in which ICE released these asylum-seeking migrants. During the previously mentioned five-month period, upwards of 200 individuals a day were transported by ICE or Border Patrol bus to the Phoenix Greyhound Station or—if volunteers could mobilize quickly enough—to church parking lots across the Valley. When these primarily Guatemalan, Honduran, and El Salvadoran migrants were released from ICE custody, they had no travel arrangements. They usually had only the clothes on their backs, and occasionally small plastic bags or backpacks of precious belongings, including their ICE paperwork. These papers were most often migrants’ only form of identification considered valid in the U.S.

¹⁰ In this project, I do not use the terms *migrant*, *immigrant*, and *(im)migrant* interchangeably. Rather, when I use the term *migrant(s)*, I am referring to the broadest, and least politically inflected, group of people possible; I simply mean *people who migrate/have migrated*. Migrants have any number of reasons for crossing nation-state borders, including labor, education, and social or economic displacement. When migrants have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in order to seek political asylum, they may be referred to as *asylum-seeking migrants*. In contrast, I use *immigrant* is the more traditional sense of a person, or group of people, who have migrated from their country of origin into another, in order to purposefully and permanently relocate themselves and/or their family *or* when talking about discourses regarding (im)migration, which are almost always framed as ‘immigration issues’. When I mean to signal that I may be talking about migrants, immigrants, or both, I use the term *(im)migrant*, such as when discussing pro-(im)migrants’ rights. Finally, when discussing anti-immigrant groups or persons, I use the term *anti-immigrant*, both for the sake of simplicity and clarity, and because these actors would most likely characterize themselves in this way.

They usually had less than a day's worth of food, no cell phone, and little to no money. Central American asylum-seeking migrants rarely speak English, and many have limited Spanish skills, instead speaking a variety of indigenous languages. When they arrived, many of them did not know that they were in Phoenix, or even in the state of Arizona, because ICE often chose not to give them this information. They were almost exclusively family units and were being released because the state of Arizona did not currently have any enough facilities in which federal agencies could legally detain families with children for extended periods.¹¹ Most family units consisted of a single parent—either a mother or a father—and children under the age of fifteen. In previous years, ICE would arrange travel for the migrants, dropping them off at the Greyhound station with a ticket purchased by family members. However, due to the humanitarian crisis at the border, and the high volume of asylum-seeking migrants, during the 2018-2019 surge, ICE claimed they could no longer provide these services.

The resultant breakdown in state and federal procedure, widespread confusion among both migrants and their advocates, and deteriorating conditions at the U.S.-Mexico border and throughout the borderlands was quickly dubbed a 'humanitarian crisis'; however, it is worth briefly discussing and unpacking the origin and meaning of this political and *politicized* term. Pro-(im)migrants' rights activists had been using the language of human rights and humanitarianism for years to advance their cause,

¹¹ Richard Gonzalez, "Immigrant Advocates Ask Court to Release Unaccompanied Minors Detained in Florida," *NPR*, 31 May 2019, accessed 2 June 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/31/728822381/immigrant-advocates-ask-court-to-release-unaccompanied-minors-detained-in-florid>.

particularly those groups and individuals who worked to prevent, or at the very least honor, the untold deaths that occur every year as Latinx migrants attempt to cross remote parts of the Sonoran desert into the United States. However, in the mid-2010s when caravans of Central American migrants, primarily in family units, began arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, both pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and the news media quickly latched onto the term 'humanitarian crisis' to describe the horrific conditions migrants faced on their journey to the border—and later, their treatment once they reached it. Under the Trump administration, Republican officials co-opted that language, using the language of 'humanitarian crisis' to shift blame for the appalling conditions migrants faced in border camps, Border Patrol processing stations, and detention centers from entrenched institutional White supremacy to migrants themselves. According to the Trump administration, the 'crisis' was the caravans themselves, the migrants' very presence in or near the United States, and the disease, filth, and crime that migrants allegedly brought with them. Under this framework, the squalid and dehumanizing conditions migrants faced while in government custody was no one's fault but their own, and the humanitarian crisis was what we, as White Americans, face when migrants 'invade.' Thus, to use the language of 'humanitarian crisis', or to attempt to address it as such, is to wade into muddy political waters.

Caught between the federal government, local political pressures, and the unease of everyday constituents on both sides of the political spectrum, state and local governments in Phoenix were lethargic in their response. In contrast, the mobilization of

grassroots volunteers was incredibly impressive in its scope.¹² Churches of all denominations across the Valley took in migrants every single day. Congregants volunteered as host families when the churches overflowed. Unaffiliated volunteers of all classes, ethnicities, religious beliefs, and political affiliations stepped up to get migrants off the street in front of the bus depot and instead to safety and shelter. However, churches took in the vast majority of migrants. It was not uncommon to see hundreds of migrants sleeping in fellowship halls, sanctuaries, and other church-owned facilities while a small army of volunteers provided cell phones, laptops, and translation services to get migrants booked on either buses or airplanes to their family members in other parts of the U.S. A highly committed, diffuse network of primarily Latina and White women responded flexibly and on a moment's notice to every new bus of arrivals at the Greyhound or to a church parking lot. These volunteers passed out food and water, used their varying levels of Spanish-speaking skills to identify need, volunteered their cell phones, and transported migrants from the station to either a church, an individual host family, or to Sky Harbor airport.¹³ Should the churches, local non-profits, and bus depot volunteers have failed to find these migrant families safe places to stay until they could get to their families, the migrants would have had no choice but to sleep in what volunteers rather baldly called the Ditch, a culvert on the east side of a retaining wall

¹² James E. García, "Amid refugee crisis, volunteers show what truly makes America great," *Arizona Mirror*, 2 May 2019, accessed 2 June 2019, <https://www.azmirror.com/2019/05/02/amid-refugee-crisis-volunteers-show-what-truly-makes-america-great/>.

¹³ International Rescue Committee, "Inside the IRC's center for families seeking asylum in the U.S.," YouTube video, 1:00, 19 April 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vtAAYZOSpE>.

marking the boundary line between Greyhound private property and public right of way. Furthermore, if pro-(im)migrants rights groups had not taken on the logistical labor of arranging travel for, and in some cases physically transporting, migrants from the Phoenix greyhound station to their families all across the nation, within a matter of weeks, there would have been thousands of homeless migrants dispersed throughout the city. If this had come to pass, city leaders would have faced a humanitarian and public health crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Despite this astounding community mobilization, for my co-participants the winter months of 2018-2019 were largely an exercise in ironing out the largest wrinkles in the chaos that still largely ruled the most immediate relief work. As community organizers scrambled to find enough resources and volunteers for each group of migrants, both migrants and volunteers were often outside of the bus depot for hours. Throughout the spring, volunteers developed systems amongst one another to reduce the time between the ICE drop and transferring migrants out of the Ditch, to expedite the process of working with the migrants' sponsor (usually a family member already in the U.S.) to make travel arrangements, to create a network of housing options staffed by volunteers with a basic shared knowledge of the migrant hospitality process, and to move vast numbers of people and resources back and forth across the Valley to meet the extremely mobile needs of migrants flowing in and out of the city's bus depot and churches every day.

In addition to scrambling to provide housing, food, and travel arrangements for migrants, once migrants received their travel tickets volunteers had to drum up others to help with transportation. One organization created what they called their “Driving Angels” text alert system, which sent texts out to untold numbers of volunteers that detailed the organization’s transportation needs for that day. Responsive volunteers then transported migrants from the churches to Sky Harbor Airport or back to the Greyhound, now that they were ticket-holding customers. Ideally, if migrants were headed to the airport, these drivers would accompany migrants through TSA security and to their gate. Many migrants do not have picture IDs, complicating the TSA process. While individual TSA agents are sometimes kind and accommodating, the far more extensive security process migrants are required to undergo is demeaning, frightening, and unintelligible to someone who has most likely never navigated a major airport or flown on a plane before. Trauma, shock, and exhaustion often took their toll on migrants, affecting their comprehension and responsiveness during long explanations by volunteers. The airport reoriented a process that was arduous and incomprehensible into one that was frighteningly alien.

Each of these moving parts remained spinning day in and day out, as the flow of migrants continued through the late spring of 2019, when I first began drafting this dissertation. The circumstances described above were a daily reality in the lives of those affected by, or volunteering to help, the humanitarian crisis facing incoming migrants. Throughout their engagement with this work, White women volunteers contended with

all of the challenges and kinks of inter-organizational cooperation and reckoned with the effects of exhaustion, burnout, and first- and second-hand trauma among migrants and volunteers.

Furthermore, neither the safety of the migrants nor the volunteers was guaranteed during this time. Right-wing extremist groups, including the Patriot Movement Arizona, sometimes showed up at churches hosting migrants and at the Greyhound station.¹⁴ Patriots followed volunteers to their homes and to the churches, and volunteers received death threats and were threatened in person by Patriots openly carrying loaded weapons. The regularity with which Patriots and other protestors knew which churches were taking in migrants on any given day led activists to believe the group may have a contact within ICE who shared this kind of information with them. An unconfirmed rumor circulating in the community in mid-spring indicated that at least two groups of migrants had been effectively kidnapped when protestors/agitators showed up to events posing as well-meaning volunteers and left with migrant families. Reports varied, but tales of a migrant family being locked in a room for over 24 hours were, and continue to be, widely circulated enough to carry some credence. Even more outlandish was an (unconfirmed) story of disguised Patriots taking in a family and purchasing them airline tickets—to Juárez, Mexico, rather than to their sponsoring family members in the United States. In

¹⁴ Bree Burkitt and Daniel Gonzalez, “Patriot Movement protesting at Phoenix churches housing asylum seekers,” *AZ Central*, 6 Jan 2019, accessed 4 June 2019, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/immigration/2019/01/06/patriot-movement-protesting-phoenix-churches-housing-asylum-seekers/2496373002/>; Steven Hsieh, “Churches Helping Migrants Sue ‘Patriot’ Group for Intimidating Volunteers,” *Phoenix New Times*, 4 June 2019, accessed 5 June 2019, <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/churches-sue-patriot-groups-11307229>.

response, volunteers implemented an on-the-spot, rigorous vetting system in which no one was given any information without express personal endorsement by another, already-trusted volunteer.

Contributing to both the chaos and the danger of this situation, in the early spring, Greyhound's corporate office instituted a policy in which only ticket-holding passengers were allowed on its property.¹⁵ Previously allowed to work in the station and the parking lot, volunteers were now exclusively required to work out of The Ditch. This policy, which remained in place in practice through the summer of 2019 and which now remains in name only, put both migrants and volunteers in more danger from extremist groups and anti-immigrant protesters, who cannot be banned from public property. Thus, for the first time, such groups and individuals were allowed to be in close physical proximity to both migrants and volunteers. Also as a result of this policy, migrants were not allowed to enter the station unaccompanied to use the bathroom facilities. For a time, White women volunteers like myself were regularly trading on our familiarity with certain Greyhound employees to negotiate for the right to quietly and unobtrusively escort handfuls of migrants back and forth to the bathrooms. When we didn't recognize the security guards, we relied on their White privilege to prevent us from being stopped and asked for our or the migrants' tickets.

¹⁵ Associated Press, "Greyhound won't let US drop migrants in depots," *ABC*, 15 March 2019, accessed 2 June 2019, <https://www.abc15.com/news/region-phoenix-metro/central-phoenix/greyhound-wont-let-us-drop-migrants-in-depots>.

Despite repeated pleas from volunteers to get plainclothes officers stationed 24/7 at the Greyhound, the Phoenix PD was slow to react. However, even this was not as simple as it seems. Some factions within the diffuse network of volunteers, primarily older White women, wanted Phoenix PD to take responsibility for making their work at the station safe. Other activists and volunteers, more likely to be younger White women or members of the Latinx community, were extremely loath to invite, or trust, police to provide safety for the undocumented and the vulnerable. These were populations that in any other context, officers are more likely to police and intimidate than to protect. Another valid concern was that certain factions of the police force, much like certain individuals within ICE, may have sympathies with the Patriots and other protestors that could weaken their resolve to serve and protect this particular population.

This is the context in which many of my co-participants and I worked during the months I was completing my fieldwork. Even those White women who worked in other avenues of immigration rights work were affected by the influx of Central American asylum-seeking migrants into the state. I have interviewed several church staff members, a freelance immigration lawyer, an Arizona elected official, a U.S. Congressman's aide, and a legislative policy advisor. Each of them was acutely aware that the unabating influx of migrants into Phoenix's churches, shelters, and bus station during 2018 and 2019 was a humanitarian and public health crisis, as well as a political one. Activists, advocates, and volunteers waited with dreadful anticipation for the first significant injury, or even death, to occur as a result of the ICE drops—thankfully, one never did. Every co-

participant I interviewed recognized the almost inevitable likelihood at the time that one of the many tensions woven into the politics of immigration in Phoenix would boil over and indeed in the time since I first drafted this many have. Activists and volunteers—particularly those who were working ‘in the ditch’ of this problem, as it were—suffered compassion fatigue, helpless frustration, and protracted anxiety and fear. On-the-ground volunteers and advocacy professionals were working together to both meet the migrants’ immediate needs and to change policy at a much broader level, but the work was slow, difficult, and exhausting. The work also continued long after I completed fieldwork and continues still.¹⁶

I would be remiss to not speak to the relationship my White women co-participants have with the Latinx community in Phoenix. The Latinx community rallied in extraordinary ways and did the lion’s share of the labor to which my co-participants and their peers contributed; Latinx churches hosted migrants at a rate *far* surpassing

¹⁶ Since summer 2019, numbers of asylum-seeking migrants have decreased substantially, and asylum-seeking migrants from the Northern Triangle countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala have slowed to an intermittent trickle. This is, in part, due to sustained effort on the part of the Trump administration to institute policies, on both domestic and international scale, to actively discourage migration and, ideally for them, prevent migrants from ever reaching the U.S.-Mexico border. This included substantial negotiations with Mexico, aimed at getting our southern neighbor to take on the responsibility of policing *its* southern border, thereby preventing Central American migrants from making it through Mexico at all. Through the winter of 2019, asylum-seeking migrants passing through the Phoenix area were as likely to be Ukrainian, Indian, and West African as they were to be Latinx. When early 2020 brought the coronavirus to the United States—which sparked an ensuing domino effect of economic collapse, border closings, and severe restrictions on travel—migration slowed further. A recent *Washington Post* editorial indicated that during the period between March 21 and May 13, 2020, under Trump administration guidance, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services granted only *two migrants* asylum in the United States. Meanwhile, organizers in the Phoenix area are planning for the possible eventuality that CBP and ICE will begin what they’re calling ‘humanitarian release’ of at-risk detainees in the detention centers in Arizona to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through its detainee and staff populations. However, if and when that does happen, the movement will likely fall far short of the volunteer capacity needed to successfully serve large numbers of released detainees.

White congregations in both number and frequency. They almost always did so with much higher sociopolitical and financial risk. Furthermore, I am aware of the debt my co-participants and myself owe to activists and volunteers of color; interactions with women of color are often the anvil upon which White women's racial awareness and sense of racial justice is forged or altered, which raises questions regarding the racialized politics of knowledge, the reciprocal responsibilities of antiracist White womanhood, and White women's reliance upon—and appropriation of—women of color's social and emotional labor. Latinx activists, organizers, and volunteers taught me as much about Whiteness, class, and privilege in (im)migrants' rights work as my co-participants did, and their presence continuously denaturalized the role and presence of Whiteness in humanitarian relief efforts, thus providing a crucial reminder that Whiteness is always dialectically defined by its Others.¹⁷ Furthermore, while the subjects of my study are White women, I understand Whiteness as a system whose effects are felt by all and as a way-of-being that can be enacted by non-White people. Necessarily, then, the Latinx community is an integral part of the story of Whiteness in Phoenix and in the borderlands.

¹⁷ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995; 2009); Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Joe Feagin, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Lee Bebout, *Whiteness at the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

White Women Pro-(Im)migrants' Rights Activists in Phoenix, Arizona

As my co-participants introduced me to the humanitarian crisis I described above, I also got to know the networks of advocates and activists working on and around the issue of (im)migrants' rights. While folks from all walks of life participate in (im)migrants' rights issues, formal leadership in this diffuse network of volunteers and advocates is dominated by White women.

Broadly speaking, there are three different levels of involvement in (im)migrants' rights work among White women in Phoenix. First, there are what could be best described as volunteers. These women are usually introduced to (im)migrants' rights work either through a friend, family member, or their church. These women are most often non-traditional workers, meaning they are stay-at-home partners and/or mothers, they work part-time, or they are retired. These volunteers are overwhelmingly women; when men do join their ranks, they are most commonly retired husbands of female volunteers. These volunteers conduct a wide breadth of tasks with varying degrees of involvement, including tasks such as preparing and serving meals, cleaning facilities used to house migrants after their departure, hosting migrant families in their homes, driving migrants to and from transportation hubs, and sorting and packaging donations. Volunteers are the foot soldiers in a grassroots movement that would not be possible without their collective womanpower. However, they usually do not serve in leadership roles, do not contribute to discussions about long-term goals, and are not particularly

politically active or vocal, in my experience. Based on fieldwork, these women often conceptualize their contributions less as political activism and more in the spirit of community service and humanitarian aid.

Second, I refer to a middle tier of women, all of whom contribute far more time and energy to the cause than volunteers, but who still serve the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement outside of formal paid employment. These women often host migrants in their home on a regular basis, participate in community or coalition meetings, and act from an explicit political awareness that is absent from volunteers' work. These women often take a more direct, formal advocacy route than volunteers, meaning they may engage in activities such as lobbying lawmakers, speaking out publicly at community events or gatherings, taking initiative to organize migrant aid on their own or with a small group. I refer to them alternatively as advocates and/or activists, depending on the context of their work. I do not place any value judgements on this differentiation, and many co-participants act as both. It is within this middle-tier of advocates/activists that I would locate myself and my own pro-(im)migrants' rights work. When not possible, or useful, to differentiate between advocacy and activism, I may use the term 'advocate-activist.' This in part signals the complex and myriad ways that White women engage with pro-(im)migrants' rights work. I also use the term to respect my co-participants' sense of self and their role in the movement; many would reject the label 'activist' but would readily agree that their primary goal is to advocate for the rights of (im)migrants.

The third group consists of what I term professional advocates. These women are employed, elected, or appointed by either the state, non-profits, church communities, or grassroots organizations. For example, co-participants in this category work as staff in an Arizona state elected official's office, run a denominational charity overseen by the Catholic Church, and serve as leading members of the steering committee for a local grassroots community organization that has been addressing (im)migrant rights issues for months. These women work full-time in roles where they are addressing the migrant crisis every day when they go to work. Many are also advocates/activists in their spare time as well, participating in or contributing to grassroots organizations outside of the office. It was primarily from these last two groups of White women—advocates/activists and professional advocates—that I recruited my co-participants. Each of my co-participants is a self-identified White woman, in or adjacent to the middle class, who considers herself politically liberal, progressive, and/or radical and who is active in (im)migrants' rights volunteer, activist, or advocacy work in Phoenix, Arizona.

What initially interested me about this population was how ubiquitously (albeit unevenly) these particular volunteers and advocates elude conventional expectations about White women.¹⁸ The age range of my co-participants provides a perfect example of

¹⁸ As issues of race, racial discrimination, and systemic White supremacy have become increasingly part of the public conversation in the United States during the last five to ten years broadly and throughout the spring and summer of 2020 specifically, the role of White women in upholding racial inequity, in implicitly supporting racial violence, and in policing the lives of people of color is increasingly under scrutiny. Black femme activists, organizers, and educators are contributing to feminist and antiracist conversations about White womanhood in the public arena, and the explosion of 'Karen' memes, jokes, and videos contribute to a growing perception of White women—particularly older, socioeconomically privileged White women—as bigoted and entitled at worst and willfully and selfishly ignorant at best. For insight on the worst of these

this. Seventeen co-participants range in age from 28 years to 80 years; however, the average age is 59. A comfortable majority of twelve co-participants were over the age of 50. Individually and collectively, they often support quite radical activist groups and causes, defying stereotypes about middle class to upper-middle class White women of a certain age living in a city widely known for its conservative snowbirds.¹⁹

Other specificities of space and place influenced this study; eight co-participants were originally from the Midwest (five from Illinois alone), reflecting Phoenix's close ties with communities in the Midwest generally and with Chicago specifically. Notably, while the rest of the co-participants were born in places scattered around the West, Northwest, Northeast, and Atlantic seaboard, none (except myself) are from the South. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of participants have lived in a broad variety of places beyond their birthplace or Phoenix. Most have traveled extensively, both domestically and internationally.

impulses and how White women 'use themselves as instruments of terror,' see Charles M. Blow, "How White Women Use Themselves as Instruments of Terror," *New York Times*, 27 May 2020, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/27/opinion/racism-white-women.html>. For insight on the damage even well-meaning White feminists can do to communities of color when practicing un-reflective allyship, see Rachel Cargle's TED Talk, <http://tedxbend.com/presenters/rachel-elizabeth-cargle/>.

¹⁹ A quick Google search on "Arizona snowbirds" turns up a wealth of information and commentary, much of it meant to be humorous, about the supposedly uniformly old, White, Republican, Midwestern/Canadian snowbirds that come to town to wait out the winter in Arizona's notoriously warm climate. In one of Phoenix's local newspapers, the columnist pokes fun at the so-called snowbirds for eating dinner early and moving slowly, being oblivious to (or uncaring toward) social niceties or common courtesy, and prone to driving terribly in RVs. The collective stereotypical picture of a snowbird is an out-of-towner who is old, rude, intolerant, entitled (often to public space), and out-of-touch. See Matthew Hendley, "10 Things Arizonans Hate About Snowbirds," *Phoenix New Times*, 30 November 2015, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/arizona-sheriff-wouldnt-enforce-lockdown-has-covid-19-mark-lamb-pinal-county-11476330>.

Sixteen of the seventeen co-participants self-identified as either working class (5), middle class (6), or upper middle class (5), and one declined to answer. However, a more holistic understanding of both the indicators and meanings of class presages the nuanced and unexpected ways that class shapes my co-participants' worldviews and relationships to privilege. Co-participants have a wide swath of class-based experiences, influenced by differences among them in their class status during childhood and adolescence, their current income bracket, and their varying levels of education. Current income bracket alone provides an apt picture of the disparity among co-participants. Reported single incomes varied from \$15,000 to \$130,000 annually. Education reflected similar patterns; two co-participants indicated that "some community college" best reflected their education experience, while two others had earned doctoral degrees in their respective fields. Yet, it is important to remember that education and income are not necessarily causally related. For example, one of the PhD holders earns less than one of the co-participants who did not complete a community college degree. Furthermore, income brackets do not necessarily track with self-identifications as 'working class,' 'middle class,' or 'upper middle class;' both the lowest earner (\$15,000-\$20,000 annually) and an earner making \$85,000 on a single income consider themselves 'middle class.' Indeed, combinations of income level, career track, and education would almost certainly place nearly all co-participants in the middle class to upper middle class; yet five of them continue to self-identify as working class.

This is unsurprising if one considers that we can take ‘class’ to mean two different things: an *objective* status, calculated by accounting for income, wealth, education, and occupation, or as a *subjective* form of categorization.²⁰ Objective class status is itself hard enough to measure: it requires rigorous qualitative analysis to determine the potentially conflicting and confusing interactions of numerical income with material wealth, type of occupation, level of education, etc. By considering class as a subjective form of social categorization, however, I am recognizing that considering social class a matter of how people put themselves into categories is more germane here. Another important note to be made is that Americans overwhelmingly consider themselves to be ‘middle class’—43% consider themselves so.²¹ As such, when my co-participants pinpoint and discuss their own class location, they are operating from a subjective definition of class and really talking about how they categorize themselves. Likewise, when I discuss class, I consider it to be a way in which people categorize themselves, and have categories read upon them, rather than a particular person’s objective or quantifiable place in an income or education bracket.

Co-participants occupy a range of professions that evade easy categorization, yet nearly every co-participant is (or was, before retirement) a white-collar professional—another factor that complicates easy summation of class identity or experience. Co-participants include public health administrators, government officials, teachers and

²⁰ Robert Bird and Frank Newport, “What Determines How Americans Perceive Their Social Class?,” *Gallup*, 27 February 2017, accessed 24 June 2020, <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/204497/determines-americans-perceive-social-class.aspx>.

²¹ *Ibid.*

community educators, business owners, a lawyer, a state politician, a social worker, a medical professional, a university professor, a community planner, a corporate finance manager, and a computer programmer. Many serve in leadership roles in their respective communities, either professional or personal. Most have largely achieved a certain level of respectability and success within both her chosen field and her community, and thus most already have access to a reservoir of social (and economic) capital that is then augmented and enhanced by their White womanhood.

Perhaps not surprising given their education and income, as well as their status as largely professionals or retired professionals, the women in my study are less commonly married and less commonly the mothers of multiple children than average American women.²² While six co-participants were married and four were either divorced or widowed, seven are single. Several have never married and do not intend to. Ten participants either had only one child or had never become a mother, while only seven were mothers of two or more. Also reflective of their levels of education—which tend to predict lower levels of religious belief—only five identified as Christian, and a majority of ten identified either as atheist, agnostic, some version of “humanist” (either pan-

²² According to the Pew Research Center, right at half of American adults are married (see Kim Parker and Renee Stepler, “As U.S. Marriage Rate Hovers at 50%, Education Gap in Marital Status Widens,” *Pew Research Center*, 14 September 2017, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/14/as-u-s-marriage-rate-hovers-at-50-education-gap-in-marital-status-widens/>). However, only 6 out of 17 co-participants (around 35%) are married. And according to a study referenced in the *New York Times*, in 2017, the average number of children per woman in the United States was 1.77 (see Lyman Stone, “American Women Are Having Fewer Children Than They’d Like,” *New York Times*, 13 February 2018, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/13/upshot/american-fertility-is-falling-short-of-what-women-want.html>). However, my co-participants average only 1.2 children. Furthermore, I suspect that if you compared my co-participants average number of children with their age/generation, that gap would be wider still.

religious or secular), or simply answered ‘none.’ One woman who identified as ‘interfaith,’ and one who identified as “culturally Jewish but religiously atheist,” were the sole outliers in a group of largely practicing or lapsed Christians. Despite this seemingly lackluster enthusiasm for religion, many (including several of the self-identified atheists) still attend religious services regularly or consider themselves part of a faith community. Of the nine participants who indicated a denomination affiliation, all but one were Unitarian Universalists (UU) or members of the United Church of Christ (UCC)—though denomination and doctrine took a backseat to individual churches’ spirit of justice and activism in most co-participants’ choice to attend, especially for the espoused atheists and agnostics.

This overrepresentation of the UU and UCC denominations—two of the most liberal and socially tolerant churches in the United States²³—reflects an overwhelming left-ward tilt in political affiliation and beliefs among co-participants. This results in part from bias in my research design, as my selection criteria included left-leaning political beliefs. However, the high rates of left-wing political beliefs among pro-(im)migrants rights advocates is already a process of self-selection; politically conservative White women are almost entirely absent from (im)migrant relief work (though, interestingly, politically conservative Latinx women abound). This was reflected in my co-participants’

²³ For more of the specificities and differences between UU and UCC churches as well as more information of their role as the “progressive American religions” and as the “strong liberal religious voice(s)” among the Christian denominations, see Michelle Bates Deakin, “UUA, United Church of Christ ‘just friends,’ say leaders,” *UU World*, 3 November 2006, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uua-ucc-just-friends>.

responses on the demographic form. Of the co-participants who were registered with a political party in the state of Arizona, fourteen are Democrats, one is independent, and one is registered ‘unaffiliated’ but considers herself a political progressive.

Beneath this near-uniform party loyalty lies a range of political sensibilities. Three participants identified as ‘slightly liberal,’ while another identified first only as ‘liberal,’ but then made a point to say she was “not an Elizabeth Warren kind of liberal”—rather, she is a Pantsuit Nation Democrat, a capital-L liberal. Meanwhile, eleven participants identified as either ‘extremely liberal’ or ‘far left, radical’, and one rejected the continuum from conservative to liberal entirely and instead declared herself a “socialist!” This broad diversity of political stances directly informs my co-participants’ activism and has significant bearing on how they approach (im)migrant relief work. For example, one co-participant proudly reminded her audience during a community meeting that our goal should always be, first and foremost, to fight the state and the effects of its necropolitical and predatory capitalist agenda. Another immediately retorted that *she* “wasn’t fighting the state”; she is asking the state, an entity she believes at its core has the potential to be good and just, to equip her to care for migrants as she exercises her rights as a subject-citizen to do so. She sees the state as the guarantor of those rights, rights she wants (im)migrants to have an equal opportunity to claim and exercise. In addition to the ideological incompatibility of these two co-participants’ political worldviews, were I to classify all of these women’s political beliefs—based on my interviews, fieldwork, and observations—on a scale from ‘slightly liberal’ to ‘far left, radical’/‘socialist’, my

categorization would vary widely from their own. Thus, even what beliefs go where on the leftward continuum is subject to debate among liberal and progressive White women in Phoenix, Arizona.

Methods and Methodology

Given my commitment to an intersectional, feminist methodology that remains attendant to dynamics of power, it seems prudent to first discuss my social situatedness and my role as a co-participant in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement during the time I conducted research for this project. I am a cisgender, largely straight passing, White lesbian who was raised in an evangelical, working class family in a unremittingly White town in an overwhelmingly White region. I have since left the church, left my hometown, and entered the middle class by virtue of my status as a first-generation college student and a (soon-to-be) PhD holder. I consider myself an antiracist feminist and a scholar of feminism, race, and Whiteness. Both before and since my fieldwork spanning the months between October 2018 and July 2019, I have been a member of, and participant in, the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement in Phoenix, Arizona.

For this project, I conducted a feminist ethnographic study of pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and activists in Phoenix using formal and informal interviews in conjunction with regular and sustained participant observation within the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement in Phoenix, Arizona, for ten months. During this time, I attended immigration task force meetings on a biweekly basis at a local church, visited

(im)migrant detainees in detention centers in nearby towns of Eloy and Florence, attended community and coalition meetings among multiple organizations, transported migrants as a member of the “Driving Angels” team mentioned above, participated in and supervised ‘Ditch drops’ at the Greyhound station, and volunteered at several local churches, including one with primarily White congregants and one with exclusively Latinx congregants and staff. In crafting my analysis, I draw on documents, text messages, and emails collected during my time as an active participant in community discussions, along with recordings of formal interviews and extensive field notes. While my formal interviews provide the bulk of my first-hand data, much of my contextual knowledge of the movement and its larger body of participants come from innumerable conversations, observations, and interactions with fellow volunteers, activists, and advocates who were not formal co-participants in this study; leaders, formal and informal, in the White and Latinx communities with stakes in this movement; and officials from offices such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the offices of Senators Martha McSally and Krysten Sinema, and the office of Mayor Kate Gallego of Phoenix. Thus, my field notes documenting these conversations, observations, and interactions play an enormous role in this study, and much of the evidence I utilize in my qualitative analysis is drawn from my journal entries, collected documents, and recollections of my participant observation during this time.

While participant observation was a method I applied to the research context at hand, it is critical to note that I did all of these activities *as* a pro-(im)migrants’ rights

advocate and antiracist activist; my primary role in those spaces was never that of researcher. Rather, I was, and continue to be, a member of this community and activist movement. I take extremely seriously the power dynamics embedded in the researcher's relationship to the research site and to her interlocutors, precisely because the my embeddedness in the research site prior to beginning research further occludes the a/symmetries of power that define what it means to be a researcher sharing a social location with her co-participants. It is in part because of this dedication to acknowledging and grappling with how power is at play in my relationship to the research that I ultimately chose to refer to my interlocutors as 'co-participants.' Recognizing my lateral relationship to the women in my study, my own relationship to the movement in which we are all active, and of the fact that I cannot remove myself from either my role as a pro-(im)migrants' rights activist *or* as a White woman requires transparency. As such, I chose to signal both my co-participants' unusually powerful position as research participants in a study about White women, by a White woman, *and* my own lateral and entangled relationship to them. Just as importantly, I also want to underscore that my co-participants are creators of knowledge in the personal and collective struggle, as White women, to find a way to move forward with our antiracist commitments in ways that cause the least amount of harm and which create meaningful change in our communities. I also want to foreground the ways in which they are partners in my exploration of White womanhood, gendered and racialized citizenship, and antiracist activism; this dissertation would be far poorer without our conversations and the meaning that was made there.

My own entanglement with the epistemological framework provided by middle-class White womanhood and my proximity to the social location(s) on my co-participants demand that I draw upon feminist practices of reflexivity to interrogate, and then make clear, my own location within this research. A/symmetries of power embedded in the research setting are always inflected with race, gender, and class to begin with; however, to study neither up nor down, but rather laterally, so to speak, presents its own unique challenges of proximity and bias. I face a series of specific challenges and dilemmas as a White woman interviewing other White women about their race and gender, while working alongside them in service of racial justice for marginalized Latinx (im)migrants. Drawing upon the feminist, methodological model of critical skepticism and radical reflexivity, I am constantly reminded to subject co-participants' responses, narratives, and behaviors to rigorous, intellectual scrutiny in order to make visible White women's (positive) racialization, interrogate racialization's "implications for how these women gain, administer, and negotiate power," and uncover how the social, political, and historical "facts of whiteness" are at play in the researcher/participant relationship.²⁴ Such a model also requires me to subject my own responses, narratives, and behaviors to similarly rigorous examination, as well. In addition to highlighting how the political,

²⁴ Katerina Deliovsky, 2017, "Whiteness in the Qualitative Research Setting: Critical Skepticism, Radical Reflexivity, and Anti-racist Feminism," *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 4(1): 15, 4, 5; J. Pierce, *Racing for Innocence: Whiteness, Gender, and the Backlash Against Affirmative Action* (Stanford University Press, 2012), 157; I also draw upon the methodological theories in: Hesse-Biber, et al., "Feminist Approaches to Research as Process: Reconceptualizing Epistemology, Methodology, and Method," in *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Michelle L. Yaiser. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Adele E. Clarke, 2003, "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn." *Symbolic Interaction* 26(4).

social, cultural, and historical realities of Whiteness shape the researcher/researched relationship, critical skepticism and radical reflexivity also help me address the problematics of the insider/outsider dualism that I occupy as a White woman researching White women.

Where I practice radical reflexivity, specifically, my work occasionally takes on an autoethnographical tone. Autoethnography “seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience,” does so while treating the research process itself as a “political, socially-just and socially-conscious act,” and fully acknowledges the researcher’s “influence on the research,”²⁵ which is all true of my work here. However, while some sections of this project, especially my first-person narratives of my participant observation, may draw upon autoethnographical influences, they fall short of a fully-fledged autoethnography. Effective, and methodologically sound, autoethnographies describe patterns in cultural experience “using storytelling (e.g. character and plot development), showing and telling, and alterations in authorial voice” in order to make meaning in innovative and often non-linear ways. Where I veer into first-person narrative, I am instead providing snippets of narrative ethnography in which I “partly attend to encounters between the narrator (myself) and members of the group being studied” and weave my narrative into “intersect[ing] analyses of patterns and processes.”²⁶

²⁵ Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, 2011, “Autoethnography: Any Overview,” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12(1): 1, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

In addition to relying upon radical reflexivity and critical skepticism to guide my research, I have consciously chosen to ground this study in the principles of standpoint theory and intersectionality. Standpoint theory functions as a lens of analysis that takes into account the structural and experienced positionality of marginalized subjects; values the embodied and culturally produced knowledge of such subjects; and provides scholars with the tools necessary to create knowledge of political relationships and movement of power.²⁷ The Black women theorists who conceptualized standpoint theory weren't claiming their theory could incorporate all aspects of a group's beliefs and experiences at all times; rather standpoint theory contends that marginalized subjects' shared relationship to oppression and power imbues that group's way(s) of knowing with epistemic privilege. Germinal works of women of color feminist methodology, including Patricia Hill Collins's essays and monographs on the subject, fundamentally redefined who can be a knower, privilege bottom-up theorizing, and recognize that different groups have disparate levels of power in relation to each other because of their different positionalities within structures of power. Collins' extensive work establishes Black women as legitimate producers of knowledge and demonstrates how those women have "created an independent, viable, yet subjugated knowledge" about their own subordination through their everyday experience.²⁸

²⁷ See Nancy Hartsock, *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998); see also Sandra Harding, *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

²⁸ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 13.

While standpoint's roots are in Black feminism, many feminist theorists have proven that standpoint theory can, and should, be used to theorize other groups' shared experiences.²⁹ Standpoint theory as a broadly applicable theoretical and methodological lens relies on three assumptions: that how one thinks and views the world is inseparable from the sociopolitical, historical, and material realities of one's life; that commonalities, such as race and gender, produce similar (or similarly situated) perspectives shared by a group; and that the commonalities in these similarly situated perspectives are attenuated by differences of class, sexuality, region, education, age, etc.³⁰ Germane to my discussion of one co-participant in particular in this dissertation, feminist scholars of disability have also challenged and expanded the notion of 'standpoint' itself. Rosemarie Garland Thomson coined the term "sitpoint theory" as a way of interrogating "the ableist assumptions underlying the notion of standpoint."³¹ Standpoint, then, is an intersectional, as well as methodological, tool.

Black women feminists, abolitionists, activists, and theorists have been thinking intersectionally for well over a hundred years.³² Since Kimberlé Crenshaw first pushed feminists to stop thinking about subordination and oppression "as disadvantage occurring

²⁹ Scholars like Audre Lorde, Maylei Blackwell, Linda Martín Alcoff, Gloria Anzaldúa, Chela Sandoval, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and other have taken the premises of standpoint theory and theorized the epistemological standpoints of marginalized Chicanx/Latinxs, Native peoples, and LGBTQ+ folks.

³⁰ Collins, Patricia Hill, "Black Feminist Epistemology," in Jaggar, Alison M. *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 1986; 2008).

³¹ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 2002, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14(3): 21.

³² The work of many Black women of historical note, such as Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and Anna Julia Cooper provide excellent examples of this kind of intersectional theorizing long before Kimberlé Crenshaw first coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989.

along a single categorical axis,” to acknowledge that “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum” of two or more oppressions, and to destabilize the idea of marginalization as additive bias, other scholars have developed and honed her metaphor.³³ Other scholars have theorized intersectionality using a matrix approach, examined lived identities at their interstices, and expanded the concept to have “explanatory power, analytical capacity, and a normative political component.”³⁴ Nearly thirty years after Crenshaw first proposed intersectionality, the concept remains the strongest and best analytical framework for understanding how systemic oppression functions, for excavating the complexities of lived experience, and for fostering the knowledge required to sustain social justice. To say that standpoint is an intersectional tool is to recognize that the central tenets of standpoint—that the sociopolitical and material realities on one’s life, how one views and understands those realities, and the perspective this lends—are all determined by one’s intersectional relationship to power. Thus, standpoint theory and intersectionality are the dual pillars supporting the foundation upon which this dissertation is built.

Furthermore, both intersectionality standpoint theory are at their cores concerned with relationships of power. As such, we must apply both to the “other side” of power

³³ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 139: 139-140; for an intellectual genealogy of intersectionality and an overview of its theoretical contributions, see Vivian May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

³⁴ May, *Pursuing Intersectionality*, 5.

relations—to Whiteness and middleclassness.³⁵ Doing so excavates the inequities between groups, acknowledges the ways in which oppression coexists (and is constituted) alongside domination, and emphasizes the relationality of identity. Cynthia Levine-Rasky’s observation that “continuing neglect of domination as intersectionality reproduces inequality” reminds me to consistently and continuously denaturalize White femininity in order to both lay bare its working and to dismantle the essentialism that aggregates White women into a singular, anti-intersectional standpoint.³⁶

Finally, I find Mary Hawkesworth’s concept of standpoint-as-analytical tool particularly useful. Standpoint-as-analytical-tool shifts the focus toward feminist politics by investigating “multiple interpretations of the same phenomenon,” which “may help to illuminate the theoretical assumptions that frame and accredit the constitution of facticity within each explanatory account.” Standpoint-as-analytic-tool pushes my analysis to account for how “different theoretical frameworks structure perception, accredit evidence, and provide the rhetorical force for particular arguments”—both in my own work and in the ideologies and worldviews of my co-participants. Furthermore, it helps me “assess the comparative merits of competing claims” among co-participants *and myself*. Thus, standpoint-as-analytic-tool encourages “heightened interrogation of precisely that which is taken as unproblematic” in my co-participants’ narratives.³⁷

³⁵ Cynthia Levine-Rasky, 2011, “Intersectionality Theory Applied to Whiteness and Middleclassness.” *Social Identities* 17(2).

³⁶ *Ibid*, 250.

³⁷ Hawkesworth, Mary, 1999, “Analyzing Backlash: Feminist Standpoint Theory as Analytical Tool,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 22(2): 150, 151, 153.

Outline of Dissertation

In chapter 1, “The Sociohistorical Context of the Borderlands and the Intersectional Analysis of White Women’s Pro-(Im)migrants’ Rights Work,” I first present the sociopolitically, historically, and regionally specific context in which I conducted my fieldwork. Race, gender, class, (im)migration, land ownership, labor, and (anti)racism have a unique tenor in the Southwest, and as such, an investigation of the region’s sociohistorical past, its sociopolitical discourses, and its singular political economy proves necessary. I discuss the recent sociopolitical and sociolegal history of race and citizenship in the state of Arizona in order to set the stage, and provide a history, for the pro-(im)migrants’ rights advocacy and activism in which my research is grounded, before exploring the nature of the “immigration regime” that governs racial politics in Arizona and circumscribes the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement.³⁸ The history of Latinxs in the U.S. has been one of labor and citizenship, both of which are always-already gendered and racialized in the U.S. context.³⁹ From the moment the United States seized the land we now call the U.S. Southwest, Latinx people’s citizenship

³⁸ The term “immigration regime” appears in Natalia Molina’s 2014 book, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press). See also Gilberto Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and ‘Immigrant’ Social Struggles during the ‘War on Terror’,” *Cultural Dynamics* 18:3 (2006).

³⁹ Foley, *The White Scourge*; Lisa Marie Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering: The Ideology of White Injury in Discourses of Immigration,” *Cultural Values* 4(4) (2000): 389-418; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

here has been governed by their conflicting relationships to Whiteness and indigeneity and their contradictory “exclusionary inclusion,” which I discuss at more length in the chapter.⁴⁰ As such, an intersectional analysis of the construction of race, citizenship, and belonging in the borderlands requires a triangulated framework that acknowledges the Black-White dialectic while also acknowledging where racialization exceeds it. Finally, I unpack the critical race, feminist, and intersectional theories of Whiteness, and of White women’s citizenship, that I draw upon to inform my analysis in the rest of the dissertation. There I unpack my understanding of Whiteness and the critical race theories I draw upon to advance this understanding. I also make clear the ways in which Whiteness functions as an epistemic, sociopolitical, and economic system and how intersectional specificities along lines of gender, class, sexuality, and (dis)ability can either fracture or refract hegemonic Whiteness.

In chapter 2, “‘I have a responsibility to do something’: How White Women Navigate Their (Anti)racism and Become Organizers and Activists for (Im)migrants’ Rights,” I explore the narratives of several co-participants in order to uncover and discuss recurring themes in White women’s personal journeys to becoming pro-(im)migrants’ rights advocates, activists, and organizers. Co-participants share a number of privileges based on their Whiteness, their White womanhood specifically, and their (relative) class and educational privilege. Yet diverse experiences shaped by nuances with class,

⁴⁰ For more on Rocco’s term, “exclusionary inclusion,” see Raymond A. Rocco, *Transforming Citizenship: Democracy, Membership, and Belonging in Latino Communities* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2014). Also see, Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*.

sexuality, ethnicity, religion, region, ability, education, and community supply complicated and divergent frameworks from within which co-participants interpret the world, commit to their work, understand their Whiteness, and ultimately enact their citizenship. It is only by exploring and accounting for these intersectional specificities that we can begin to understand White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates' relationship to their Whiteness, their White womanhood, and the antiracist work to which they have so fervently committed themselves.

In chapter 3, “‘Am I my brother’s keeper? Yes. And he’s mine’: White Womanhood as ‘Key’ to the Intersectional Enactment of Citizenship,” I take the argument in chapter 2 one step further, contending that White women activists and advocates understand and enact their citizenship from within the parameters of their White womanhood, which is *always* intersectionally attenuated. How co-participants understand and enact their citizenship is fundamentally defined by both their intersectional identities *and* their shared social positionality *as* White women. By demonstrating the ways in which personal choice and individual agency cannot be disentangled from social positionality or one’s place in social genealogies, by examining how co-participants understand their citizenship in relationship to their White privilege and the ethical problems that accompany framing citizenship as a matter of privilege, and by analyzing some participants’ relational and communitarian frameworks for understanding citizenship and racial responsibility, I gesture toward the role of power and privilege in enactments of racialized citizenship. This chapter is ultimately concerned

with how White women in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement ultimately enact and remake their citizenship with mixed results.

In chapter 4, "Wielding the Master's Tools Against the Master's House: The Costs and Consequences of Enacting Racialized Citizenship on Behalf of (an)Other," I recount and analyze a specific event in July 2019, one pivotal to determining the future of the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement in Phoenix. Through this analysis, I argue that the material realities and racial consequences of being a White woman participating in migrant relief work in the borderlands means living with the contradiction that your specific and intersectionally mediated status as a White woman citizen contributes to, and further reifies, the gendered system of institutionalized White supremacy that functions to the direct detriment of the migrants you seek to assist, while simultaneously endowing you with the advantages and privileges of Whiteness, all of which together furnish you with the social and political capital necessary to challenge that same system of their behalf. This chapter asks the reader, and all White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists at large, to reckon with the very real dangers and unforeseen consequences of wielding the Master's tools against the Master's house.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, "When White Women are Really Down: (Re)envisioning Citizenship and Imagining an Antiracist Future for White Pro-(Im)migrants' Rights Activists," I first lay out the theoretical contributions of this project and look forward to new directions for research. Then, on a more personal level and as an activist myself, I ask the question, so *what now?* For those of us who are committed to

resisting the racism, xenophobia, and injustice that animates that very privilege we rely upon to make meaningful change on behalf of migrants, how do we make ethical sense of using the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's house when we know those tools will be toxic to, and ultimately delay the realization of, the long-term project of meaningful social justice? Rather than pretend to be able to answer these questions in full, I offer five critical takeaways that can positively challenge White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activist-advocates and antiracists to envision a better, more ethical, and more antiracist future for the movement they built.

Conclusion

When I asked one co-participant what it meant to be a White woman in America, she responded, "Part of the definition of being White, and a White woman, is that you're completely unaware of so much. So, in a way, you're asking me to describe what is invisible to me, by definition." In pursuit of answers to the research questions I laid out above, this dissertation is meant to begin pulling back the veil, to reveal at least part of what is invisible to us, as White women, about our White womanhood, our exercise of our gendered and racialized citizenship, and our (anti)racist commitments.

It is critically important that myself, and other White women like me who are committed to antiracist and pro-(im)migrants' rights activism, understand the ways in

which our intersectionally attenuated White womanhood impacts the social justice work that we do in ways that are always complex, seldom without unforeseen cost, and never wholly within our control. It is only by reckoning with these costs, consequences, complications, and contradictions that White women committed to antiracist activism can begin to envision a new way of *being* White women in the world.

Chapter 1: The Sociohistorical Context of the Borderlands and the Intersectional Analysis of White Women's Pro-(Im)migrants' Rights Work

As an interdisciplinary study of White women's exercise of gendered and racialized citizenship, as well as their commitments to antiracist and/or pro-(im)migrants' rights activism and advocacy, this dissertation draws heavily on feminist (auto)ethnographic practices, feminist and critical race theories of citizenship, and a theory of racialization that accounts for how race is triangulated in the U.S. borderlands. In this chapter, I present both the sociopolitically and regionally specific context, as well as the theoretical framework, from within which I conducted my research.

The story of race and citizenship in the borderlands is not one that began in the recent past; to fully understand the ways in which race, gender, class, (im)migration, land ownership, labor, and (anti)racism operate in the Southwest borderlands—which encompass Phoenix and the surrounding areas—it is necessary to delve into its sociohistorical past. To understand the current state of immigration and race in Arizona, one must have a broad grasp of the state's current political economy and recent sociolegal past. In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the recent sociopolitical and sociolegal history of race and citizenship in the state of Arizona in order to set the stage, and provide a genealogy, for the pro-(im)migrants' rights advocacy and activism that I will discuss in later chapters. Secondly, I will explicate how land, labor, and a racialized national culture structure citizenship in the U.S. Southwest and create the 'immigration regime' from within which my co-participants mobilize and act and which structures

White supremacy, White privilege, *and* White antiracism here in Arizona.⁴¹ Arizona's genesis as a colonized territory with its own concomitant multipartite racial system means that one also needs a sense of the historical scope and implementation of race in the Southwest. I contend that the triangulated racial system of the borderlands both works in tandem with, and functions differently from, the Black-White binary that governs U.S. race relations writ large, and that any analysis concerned with citizenship in the Southwest must recognize the multipartite racial system that governs life here. The tangled sociopolitical consequences of this racial system traverse the imaginary boundary between the Southwest United States and northern Mexico and grant Arizona a particular and specific place in the U.S. racial system. Finally, I unpack and discuss the feminist and critical race theories I use to make sense of Whiteness, analyze the intersectional specificities of White womanhood, and interrogate White women's exercise of their citizenship.

The Grand 'Chasm' State: Race, Politics, and Immigration in Arizona

True to the frontier imaginary the state's name conjures, Arizona has always been a testing ground for the immigration debate. Immigration is at the heart of the current political moment in the U.S.; the issue is a major front in the larger political, and deeply ideological struggle to determine the United States' racial identity. In Arizona, every

⁴¹ Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

aspect and effect of this racial conflict is first magnified and then amplified; as such, the state is often the subject of national scrutiny. For example, the immigration debate in the U.S. over the past two decades has been unquestionably shaped by nationwide demographic shifts. In 2000, there were approximately 28.4 million ‘Hispanics’⁴² in the United States, or approximately 10% of the total U.S. population. By 2018, those numbers had doubled to 58.9 million and jumped to approximately 18%. Even more troubling to many White Americans invested in the racial status quo, the U.S. Latinx population is expected to climb to 111 million, or nearly 30% of the projected total population by 2060.⁴³ The demographic consequences of this rapid growth have already arrived in Arizona. With over 2.2 million ‘Hispanics’ in the state as of 2018, Latinx people *already* make up over 31.6% of the state’s overall population.⁴⁴ Arizona, then, is a bellwether for the racial future of the nation.

However, if we dig a little bit further back into Arizona’s demographic history, another rapid shift in racial demographics occurred and dramatically changed the nature of the state. During the Sunbelt Reformation of the 1950s and 1960s, White conservatives

⁴² It is important to note that these figures are based on U.S. Census data, which aggregates subjects in specific and particular ways that are often at odds with the material racial politics in the United States. In this case, the Census understands Latinx/Chicanx identity not as a race (though surely Latinxs are racialized in the U.S.), but as a binary ethnicity, either Hispanic or non-Hispanic. These figures are based on the number of individuals who indicated they were ethnically ‘Hispanic.’ All census figures for 2018 were gathered from the U.S. Census QuickFacts feature at www.census.gov/quickfacts.

⁴³ Antonio Flores, 2017, “How the U.S. Hispanic Population is Changing,” Pew Research Center, accessed 28 May 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/>; Sandra L. Colby and Jennifer M. Ortman, 2015, “Projections of the Size and Composition of the US Population: 2014-2060,” U.S. Census Bureau, accessed 28 May 2019, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Pew Research Center, 2014, “Demographic profile of Hispanics in Arizona, 2014,” Pew Research Center, accessed 28 May 2019, <https://www.pewhispanic.org/states/state/az/>.

and evangelicals fled rising racial turmoil in the South en masse and resettled in southern California and across the Southwest. These transplanted Southern Whites sought postwar economic prosperity, and they brought with them to California, Arizona, and other parts of the West their Southern evangelicalism, political conservatism, and a hefty share of ugly racial baggage.⁴⁵ This demographic shift, however, as large numbers of Whites flooded into the area, sparked no such discourse of cultural contamination or loss of social cohesion among communities already living in those areas, illustrating how anxiety about racial groups' migration often flow unidirectionally.

When demographic shifts involve Black and Brown *immigration* into certain parts of the United States, these shifts often spark discourses of immigration that purport to be primarily concerned with reform and improvement, but which function affectively as release valves for (White) anger and fear as racial power dynamics shift. These discourses target anyone who looks, acts, or speaks differently, or un-Americanly.⁴⁶ When the lines between citizen and undocumented are blurred—when “citizens and aliens look alike”—members of both groups are presumed foreign and marked for non-belonging.⁴⁷ This “elaborate ritual of purification [is] designed...to ease internal

⁴⁵ Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001).

⁴⁶ Juan Perea, eds., *Immigrants Out! The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States* (New York: New York University, 1997).

⁴⁷ Perea, eds., *Immigrants Out!*, 61-62; Gilberto Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and ‘Immigrant’ Social Struggles during the ‘War on Terror’,” *Cultural Dynamics* 18:3 (2006), 340.

insecurities by creating enemies, internal and external, to whom we assign blame” for whatever ills trouble the nation.⁴⁸

This racialized ritual is also not new; (im)migrants have long been discursively (and materially) scapegoated for “problems of our own making.”⁴⁹ In the years following World War II, and all the seismic global shifts that accompanied it, *braceros*—Mexican migrants allowed into the U.S. on short-term agricultural work visas—became effigies against which to launch nativist, nationalist, and xenophobic attacks. First admitted into the U.S. in 1942, the *braceros* were meant to ameliorate labor shortages expected during the war. Despite being dogged by controversy from the beginning, the program did not officially end until 1964. Over the course of those twenty-two years, the *braceros* program transformed the U.S.-Mexico border and the Southwest in the national imagination, and it remade our understanding of immigration, citizenship, labor, and Latinx migrants.⁵⁰

Even more specific to Arizona, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Phoenix’s “gang problem” became the focus of extensive media coverage and signaled the role

⁴⁸ Perea, *Immigrants Out!*, 4.

⁴⁹ Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands,” 4; see also Lisa Marie Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering: The Ideology of White Injury in Discourses of Immigration,” *Cultural Values* 4:4 (2000); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Robin Dale Jacobson, *The New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America*.

⁵⁰ “About,” Bracero History Archive, accessed 19 July 2019, <http://braceroarchive.org/about>; Cohen, *Braceros*.

Southwestern cities like Phoenix, Houston, and Los Angeles would increasingly play in national discourses of racialized crime and social disorder. Tropes of Latinx/Chicanx gangs as violent and dangerous and Latinx people generally as foreign, different, and invasive began to have immediate, measurable, and material effects on the Latinx community when the Phoenix PD acquired federal funding to combat this supposed gang problem. Racial profiling and oversurveillance terrorized Phoenix's Latinx communities, while the protracted media attention "escalate[d] the perceived threat from marginalized groups."⁵¹

However, perhaps there can be no better example of Arizona's (im)famous place at the front lines of the national immigration conflict than Joe Arpaio. Sheriff of Maricopa County for twenty-four years, from 1993 to 2017, Arpaio's contempt for, and unapologetically racist treatment of, Latinx and undocumented Arizonans is shocking, and it would have been difficult to find a more polarizing and reviled public figure prior to Donald Trump's 2016 electoral victory. Because of this, and because of Arpaio's established penchant for outrageous statements and even more outrageous acts, "Cotton-Eyed Joe" has been in and out of the national spotlight for decades.⁵² Ousted as sheriff by Paul Penzone in 2016, and convicted of criminal contempt in 2017, Arpaio was launched back into the national spotlight and into the center of a bitter controversy when President

⁵¹ Marjorie S. Zatz, "Chicano Youth Gangs and Crime: The Creation of a Moral Panic," *Contemporary Crises* 11 (1989): 129-158.

⁵² Stephen Lemons, "Joe Arpaio: Tent City a 'Concentration Camp'," *Phoenix New Times*, 2 August 2010, accessed 16 July 2019, <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/news/joe-arpaio-tent-city-a-concentration-camp-6500984>.

Trump pardoned him a month later. Depending who you ask, Arpaio's Maricopa County is either a model of the kind of iron-fisted attrition the most virulent anti-immigrant advocates support or the institutionalization of the worst kind of racist bigotry pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates scorn. Either way, Arpaio—and Arizona—have remained center stage.

As we have seen above, for those seeking to stoke nativist sentiment, the racial and political specificities of Arizona provide a ready-made weapon with which to bludgeon opposition to the stringently restrictive measures they propose. The state has the dubious distinction of birthing several high-profile nativist and White supremacist groups over the last fifteen or so years. These groups have modeled anti-immigrant action and hate to the rest of the country. Groups like the Arizona Patriots and Arizona Minutemen gained traction in the mid-2000s and rode anti-Obama sentiment to new popularity in the 2010s. These groups are a bigoted response to these national demographic shifts. They are also a symptom of a larger xenophobic, misogynist, and White supremacist backlash against the gains of women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ people in recent years. Most hopefully, however, they are also harbingers of the grassroots anti-racist resistance and counter-organizing that has swelled since the mid-2010s and has joined the increasingly heated and polarized political debate here in the state, which I discuss below.

What *is* new about this racialized ritual in recent years is the collision of this already well-established American racialized nativism with a twenty-first-century system

of late-neoliberal governance and predatory capitalist globalization that renders (im)migrants as ‘costs’ to society, a vulnerability that must be resolved if the nation and its citizens are to thrive, and subjects them to state violence sanctioned by the state of exceptionality that the border inspires.⁵³ According to Gilberto Rosas’s reading of Giorgio Agamben, at the heart of the democratic state is “an emergency provision that empowers the state to act outside the constraints of the law, permitting it to adopt extreme measures in its defense, including violence against its own citizens.”⁵⁴ In this state of exceptionality, the borderlands is rendered in “a permanent stage of racial emergency” where there is a “permanent, legal, racial exception.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, that state of exceptionality, as anyone working in or around (im)migrants’ rights in the state of Arizona can attest, extends miles beyond the border, far into the interior of Arizona. It arguably reaches, and covers, Phoenix itself.⁵⁶ This border “thickening” is more than simply Border Patrol and ICE’s expansion into the interior of the U.S. and the troubling militarization of immigration procedures.⁵⁷ The neoliberal production and movement of migrant labor has not only created huge demographic transformation in the United States;

⁵³ Giorgio Agamben, *Homosacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998; 2005); Perea eds., *Immigrants Out!*, 4; Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands;” Ratna Kapur, “The Citizen and the Migrant: Postcolonial Anxieties, Law, and the Politics of Exclusion/Inclusion,” *Theoretical Inquiry* 8 (2007); Michelle Téllez, “Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the US/Mexico Border,” *Gender & Society* 22:5 (2008): 545-567.

⁵⁴ Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands,” 337.

⁵⁵ Scott Michaelson, “Between Japanese American Internment and the USA PATRIOT Act: The Borderlands and the Permanent State of Exception,” *Aztlan* 30 (2005): 87-11.

⁵⁶ I currently live less than a mile from the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in downtown Phoenix, Arizona. A substantial number of Central American asylum-seeking migrants taken into ICE custody are processed through these offices. Here they are fitted with ankle monitors before being released to a church, a non-profit, or at the Greyhound bus station.

⁵⁷ Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands.”

it has informed new and “potent political imaginaries no longer fixed to the geographic specificity” of the U.S. Southwest and coupled these imaginaries to this borderlands state of exceptionality.⁵⁸ Arizonans, Whites and Latinxs alike, live in the jagged interstices of this collision.

This ideological collision has material effects. Beginning in the early 2000s, widespread anti-immigrant sentiment invigorated recent legislation and political leadership in the state.⁵⁹ In 2004, Proposition 200 passed, requiring anyone seeking government services or attempting to vote to produce citizenship documents. Two years later, the state passed an English-only law, and that same year, in-state tuition was denied to non-U.S. citizen/non-permanent resident university students. Yet another 2006 proposition (later overturned by the courts) would have denied bail to those in the country ‘illegally.’ Then, in May 2010, Arizona passed an omnibus bill called the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act, widely and infamously known as SB 1070. The bill authorized local law enforcement officers (LEOs) to check the citizenship papers of anyone they suspected was ‘illegal,’ essentially deputizing local LEOs as immigration police. SB 1070 received national media attention, sparked nationwide pro-(im)migrants’ rights protests, and precipitated a protracted legal battle. Though some of the most restrictive and invasive of SB 1070’s provisions have been blocked in court, others remain in effect, and the alarming culture of surveillance and attrition that defined

⁵⁸ Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands,” 342.

⁵⁹ For more on the Arizona Minutemen, see Katie Oliviero, “Sensational Nation and the Minutemen: Gendered Citizenship and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts,” *Signs* 36:3 (2011): 679-706.

the bill continues to inform political decision-making and immigration enforcement in Arizona.⁶⁰

Despite—or perhaps because of—such concerted attacks by its elected officials on its Latinx residents, Arizona is home to a thriving activist community. Even though Arizona has long been dominated by conservative and libertarian politicians and leaders, a more progressive politics is gaining a foothold in the state. This community is dedicated to the “ingenuity, creativity, and courage” of an “emerging social movement comprised of...[the] national and international coalitions...and forms of solidarity” that it needs to mount a “frontlines movement” against institutionally-sanctioned racial injustice.⁶¹ These pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists and racial justice advocates combat the hyper-policing of communities of color, the silencing of (im)migrant voices, and the exclusion of Latinxs in Arizona from resources, services, and dignified treatment at the hands of the state.⁶² Thus, in addition to being a state of exceptionality, state violence, and necropolitical repression, Arizona—as a place indivisible from the borderlands in which it is situated—is a space of transformative politics, even as it remains a place where “transnational and neoliberal politics, capitalism, patriarchy, and racialization” coalesce to create particular, and peculiar, conditions.⁶³

⁶⁰Michelle Téllez, “Arizona: A Reflection and Conversation on the Migrant Rights Movement, 2015,” *Social Justice* 42: 3-4 (2015); Lisa Magana and Erik Lee, *Latino Politics and Arizona’s Immigration Law SB 1070* (Springer, 2012).

⁶¹ Téllez, “Arizona.”

⁶² Michelle Téllez, “Immigration and the State of Labor: Building a Movement in the Valley of the Sun,” *Latino Studies* 9 (2011): 145-154.

⁶³ Téllez, “Immigration and the State of Labor”; Téllez, “Community of Struggle,” 562.

Citizenship and the 'Immigration Regime': Labor, Land, and a Racialized National Culture

Even as the borderlands condition, as Gilberto Rosas terms it, leaches into the interior, there is still a significant regional and sociohistorical specificity to the history of immigration and citizenship, the discourses of Whiteness and Brownness, and the treatment of Latinx people in the U.S. Southwest that requires our attention, as it plays a defining role in this project's research context.⁶⁴ As I will discuss below, the conquest of the land that comprises the contemporary U.S. Southwest preordained the relationship that Latinx/Chicanx folks would have to U.S. citizenship and their broader claim to American identity and belonging.

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo made more than 115,000 Mexicans into U.S. citizens. However, the text of the Treaty itself excludes "Indians" from this agreement, already setting the racialized terms for what would become the debate over citizenship and (im)migration across the U.S.-Mexico border. While the U.S. didn't begin "seriously regulat[ing]" Mexican immigration until the early to mid-twentieth century, the "promise of full and inclusive citizenship" that the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo offered to its newly minted citizens (at least those who could prove they were sufficiently *not-Indian*) never materialized. Nor was "the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens" ever

⁶⁴ Rosas, "The Thickening Borderlands."

realized for the vast majority of Mexican Americans and Latinx Americans since.⁶⁵ Instead, at best, Latinxs experience a kind of “exclusionary inclusion.”⁶⁶ Exclusionary inclusion, a “type of belonging that regulates and restricts the degree and nature of participation in the primary institutions of society,” nonetheless grants Latinx citizens some provisional protection from state violence, which their undocumented fellow U.S. residents will inevitably experience.⁶⁷ Concerns about labor, landownership, and cultural contamination have prevented Latinxs from ever being “deemed fully American” and have strengthened the specter of illegality that looms over them, regardless of actual citizenship status. The sociohistorical construction of the meaning of labor and its relation to citizenship, the power of landownership and its impact on racial belonging, and Whites’ affective attachment to a specific American racial and cultural character inform an “immigration regime.”⁶⁸ This regime shapes how race operates in the Southwest, constraining how its Anglo citizens conceptualize their brown neighbors (citizens and non-citizens alike) and directly affecting the material lives of Latinx folks living in the borderlands—and increasingly—beyond.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 146.

⁶⁶ Raymond A. Rocco, *Transforming Citizenship: Democracy, Membership, and Belonging in Latino Communities* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2014).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, xxx.

⁶⁸ Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 1.

⁶⁹ Molina, *How Race is Made in America*.

The history of Latinxs in the U.S. has been a history of labor and citizenship, both of which have always been gendered and racialized in the U.S. context.⁷⁰ Labor assumes an almost “spiritual dimension” in the construction of White American identity, for men and women alike. White men constructed their identity as citizens around “the concept of themselves as free, productive, [and] independent workers” without acknowledging that this sense of independence relied on the subordination of women and people of color.⁷¹ Meanwhile, the non-White or non-citizen have long served as “the foil for the lofty self-image that white men accord themselves.”⁷² White women access citizenship not through physical labor or the mastery of a skill but rather through their *reproductive* labor. As mothers of future (White) citizens, White women literally *labored* on behalf of the nation.⁷³ On the other side of the equation, however, women of color are caught in the dangerous intersection of race and gender, cast as “unfree, unproductive, and dependent.”⁷⁴ Racism, misogyny, and xenophobia produce (im)migrant women as “sexually deviant and threatening ‘alien’ subject[s]”—not “producers of future citizen-subjects” like their White peers but rather contaminants in the social body and a danger to

⁷⁰ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering”; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Cohen, *Braceros*.

⁷¹ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 29.

⁷² Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 22.

⁷³ For a thorough discussion of how women’s participation in the nation has long been cast through the lens of womanhood/motherhood, see Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

⁷⁴ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 29.

the entitlements due to (White, male) citizens.⁷⁵ Plainly, not all reproductive labor is equally valued. Furthermore, Andrea Smith reminds us that gendered and sexual violence has long been a tool of racism and colonialism, which mark certain bodies as violable, and that this violence not only rips away sovereignty, bodily or otherwise, from the inherently “rapeable;” it also supports a citizenship system based in gendered and racial exclusivity.⁷⁶ The violence and exclusion embedded in the operation of citizenship in the United States belies the apolitical, multicultural notions of the American melting pot and national myth of America, the ‘nation of immigrants.’ These tropes derive their power in large part from the labor they perform “on behalf of American exceptionalism.”⁷⁷ Yet, although the U.S. economy has relied on Mexican, Mexican American, and Latin American labor to sustain itself since at least the early twentieth century, and although the laboring bodies of brown, migratory people populate the ‘huddled masses’ that symbolize American benevolence and receptivity in our collective national imagination, the Latinx (im)migrant remains a perpetually foreign Other.⁷⁸ They can, at best, hope to become an ‘alien citizen’, those with formal citizenship but who remain “alien in the eyes of the nation.”⁷⁹ Mexicans and Mexican Americans specifically have become “inimically associated” with indolence, criminality, and unassimilability, and Whites tend to make

⁷⁵ Natalie Cisneros, “Alien Sexuality: Race, Maternity, and Citizenship,” *Hypatia* 28(2): 290, 292.

⁷⁶ Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005; 2015), 184.

⁷⁷ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 5.

⁷⁸ Lee Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

⁷⁹ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

racial judgements about who is and who is not ‘Mexican’ based on language, class, and appearance.⁸⁰ Thus, these associations prove only provisionally bound to nationally Mexican bodies in a nation where the murky interdependence of racial and class identity, Brownness, and the Spanish language mark you as an (im)migrant Other regardless of national origin or citizenship status. Racial scripts are, after all, mobile mechanisms through which racism “builds on past racial acts.”⁸¹ Brown and/or Spanish-speaking bodies are ensnared in an ideological and epistemological constellation that is juxtaposed to, and in many ways justifies, a hegemonic, White, American identity.⁸²

Indeed, the process of racialization that Tomás Almaguer argues took place in the nineteenth-century Southwest, and that other scholars contend continues to shape the contested meanings of race and Brownness in the U.S., should be understood as a struggle “over privileged access to either productive property...or positions in a highly stratified labor market”—in other words, *land* and *labor*.⁸³ Historically, anxieties over racial purity, cultural contamination, and miscegenation may have fueled the public debate over immigration, but they almost always took a backseat to governmental and/or capitalist concerns of land and labor—largely because in order to fulfill its Manifest Destiny, as well as later delusions of American global exceptionalism, the United States *needed* (im)migrant laborers and laborers of color that it could incorporate into its

⁸⁰ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 15; Molina, *How Race is Made in America*.

⁸¹ Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 23.

⁸² Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border*.

⁸³ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 19; see also Foley, *The White Scourge*.

capitalist labor force.⁸⁴ Beyond labor, the integration of the economy of the Southwest into the larger U.S. economy during the latter half of the nineteenth century required a transformation in land ownership as well.⁸⁵ Not only did the pastoral economy need to be overhauled into commercial industries to support the industrializing economy, this transformation required the “immediate dispossession of Mexicans and Indians” from the land needed for these new means of production.⁸⁶ Changes in land laws, as well as one-sided intermarriage between White men and *mexicanas*, displaced Mexicans and Mexican Americans and dispossessed them of their land. These changes also had the political effect of reducing Mexicans’ and Mexican Americans’ political clout, muffling their collective voice, and altering the terms of their citizenship and thus their belonging in the United States.⁸⁷

As this transformation in the land system consigned most Mexican laborers to unskilled wage labor, the economic doctrine of free-labor ideology let slip its usually carefully obscured White supremacist underpinnings; the supposedly egalitarian principles of a so-called free market failed to contradict or prevent racial subordination in the name of (White) American economic success because free-labor ideology “squarely affirms” the alleged superiority of European-American/Anglo men.⁸⁸ Free-market principles sometimes openly sustain racial exploitation, as they did when early twentieth-

⁸⁴ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 22.

⁸⁵ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 148-149.

⁸⁶ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 41.

⁸⁷ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*.

⁸⁸ Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 13.

century employers in the Southwest diversified their workforce, therefore allegedly giving more opportunities to workers of other races, when in reality this diversification incited division and competition among groups and foreclosed coalitional possibilities.⁸⁹ “Racial anxieties limit our understandings of exploitative capitalist relations,” and consequently, complex and unforeseen links between racial lines and class divisions emerge.⁹⁰

In the contemporary moment much like as in the past, racial concerns unquestionably linked to the American labor system, and now to late-capitalist globalization writ large, are often expressed and disseminated through narratives of cultural contamination, degradation of a (White) national culture, and hyperbolic claims of (reproductive) invasion.⁹¹ Leo Chavez describes this assemblage of racial scripts as the Latino Threat narrative.⁹² Within this constellation of stories lies the construction of the undocumented Latinx as lazy or criminal, sinister tales of the *reconquistadora* of the United States, a supposedly intractable refusal among Latinxs to speak English and assimilate, rampant fertility among Latinas who are portrayed as either (at best) exotic *mexicanas*, or (at worst) fecund “rats,” and an amorphous but omnipresent threat to national security.⁹³ No single discourse better illustrates the Latino Threat narrative, or

⁸⁹ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 152.

⁹⁰ Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering,” 389; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 13.

⁹¹ Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering”; Cisneros, “Alien Sexuality”; Molina, *How Race is Made in America*; Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border*.

⁹² Chavez, *The Latino Threat*.

⁹³ Chavez, *The Latino Threat*, 23; Cisneros, “Alien Sexuality”; Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border*.

the gendered underpinnings of White supremacy and White citizenship, than the threat of the ‘anchor baby’. The public identity of the ‘anchor baby,’ similar to that of the ‘welfare queen,’ saddles an entire minoritized community with a gendered and racial script that reinforces their unequal citizenship.⁹⁴ White vitriol aimed at the ‘anchor baby’ specifically and at undocumented immigration generally is rooted in fear that immigrants of color will either arrive or reproduce in numbers large enough to forcibly take what they believe rightfully belongs to citizens, to White people—in other words, to them.⁹⁵ As the ‘anchor baby’ establishes both itself and its mother as perverse and threatening “anticitizen aliens,” it contributes to a process Natalie Cisneros calls “backwards uncitizenizing” of Latinx citizens.⁹⁶ The nation’s ultimate defense is its “absolute right to determine its own membership”; unauthorized border-crossings—even those who cross in the bellies of their mothers—threaten the nation’s legal and cultural sovereignty and justify both discursive and material retaliation.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Ange-Marie Hancock, *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen* (New York: New York University Press, 2004); Molina, *How Race is Made in America*.

⁹⁵ Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering,” 396.

⁹⁶ Cisneros, “Alien Sexuality,” 303-304.

⁹⁷ Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 11; Cisneros, “Alien Sexuality.”

The Conquest of the Borderlands: Why Space and Place Matter to a Multipartite Racial System

Feminist scholars and scholars of race have long held that space, place, and region matter to the construction, maintenance, and (re)production of race.⁹⁸ Wendy Cheng reminds us that a spatially and regionally aware analysis brings into focus the quotidian actions and movements that “shift more quickly and subtly” than those on a larger, more national, scale *and* allows for analyzing the “dynamic and dialectic” between macroprocesses and micropolitics.⁹⁹ This attention to multiscalar and relational analysis is critical to a study such as this because its very subject—pro-(im)migrants rights work in Phoenix—transcends and defies any artificial, scalar partition of ‘local,’ ‘regional,’ ‘national,’ and ‘transnational’. The activist genealogy and embodied experience of pro-(im)migrants rights advocacy, the particularities of both supremacist *and* antiracist expressions of Whiteness, and the material politics of race and immigration that inform both my co-participants’ standpoint *and* my analysis are inextricable from the borderlands as place or from the Southwest regionally. Furthermore, Gilberto Rosas posits the borderlands condition as “a coupling of exceptionality...and potent political

⁹⁸ Almauger, *Racial Fault Lines*; Foley, *The White Scourge*; Cacho, “The People of California are Suffering”; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands.”; Matthew Wray, *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Jane H. Hill, “Language, Race, and White Public Space,” *American Anthropologist* 100:3 (1999): 680-89; Gilberto Rosas, “Policing Life and Thickening Delinquency at the New Frontier,” *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 16:1 (2011): 24-40; Wendy Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Bebout, *Whiteness at the Border*; Arlie Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

⁹⁹ Cheng, *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes*, 11.

imaginaries.”¹⁰⁰ Because of Phoenix’s place within that state of exceptionality, the construction, reproduction, and regulation of race often looks strikingly different here; not because Phoenix exists in a racial system fundamentally different from the rest of the country but rather because the borderlands condition lays bare the mechanisms of race, racialization, and Whiteness in unprecedented ways. Take the following example.

In June 2019, Department of Justice lawyer Sarah B. Fabian—a White woman—appeared before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco and testified in a case disputing the limits of the legal obligation the federal government has to ensure the “safe and sanitary” treatment of Central American migrant children in its custody. Ms. Fabian garnered national attention when she argued that, even though children as young as infants were not provided with basic hygiene products like soap nor were they provided with blankets or bedding, the federal government was in compliance with the Flores Agreement.¹⁰¹ While the circuit judges all but audibly scoffed at Ms. Fabian’s seemingly callous disregard for migrant children’s legal right to the “safe and sanitary conditions” mandated in the 1997 Agreement, this moment is indicative.¹⁰² Certainly some of the unrepentant cruelty required to fuel such an argument can and must be laid at the feet of the Trump administration’s culture of aggressive xenophobia and

¹⁰⁰ Rosas, “The Thickening Borderlands,” 344

¹⁰¹ The Flores Agreement sets the standards for the minimum care the federal government is required to give the (im)migrants it detains and specifically set standards for the ethical treatment of families and children; Manny Fernandez, “Lawyer Draws Outrage for Defending Lack of Toothbrushes in Border Detention,” *The New York Times*, 25 June 2019. Accessed July 1, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/25/us/sarah-fabian-migrant-lawyer-doj.html>.

¹⁰² Guardian News, “Soap and beds are not essential for detained migrant children says Trump lawyer,” YouTube video, 1:05, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRjUyr_36MY

indifference to the needs and rights of vulnerable populations at home and abroad. Yet, the creation of a political moment in which broad swaths of left-leaning Americans support and believe a Democratic lawmaker's statement that migrant detention centers are "concentration camps," while the administration holds hundreds of migrants in conditions so squalid they're likened to "human dog pounds," cannot, and should not, be laid solely at the feet of one president, no matter how extra-ordinary his presidency.¹⁰³ The tripartite and fateful collision of the election of Donald J. Trump, the exponential increase of Central American migrants making their way toward the U.S. border, and a growing and pervasive anxiety among White Americans about race in the twenty-first century has remade the state of exception on the southern border to the point that a Department of Justice representative could so thoroughly, if implicitly, deny the humanity of exclusively Brown migrant children as to say they do not require toothbrushes or blankets.

While many scholars might argue that the social and political positions of Latinx people and other (im)migrant populations in the U.S. have always been about their (flexible and fluctuating) relationship to the White/Black dichotomy, I doubt the analytical and theoretical utility of continuing to conceptualize the state of race in the U.S. as a binary system with two poles, Whiteness and Blackness, that provide the

¹⁰³ Caroline Kelly, "Ocasio-Cortez on calling detention centers 'concentration camps': We have to 'learn from our history'," *CNN*, 27 June 2019, accessed 9 July 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/27/politics/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-concentration-camps-the-lead-cnntv/index.html>; Caroline Linton, "Migrants being held outdoors near bridge in El Paso, officials say," *CBS News*, 12 June 2019, accessed 8 July 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/paso-del-norte-bridge-el-paso-texas-migrants-being-held-outdoors-customs-and-border-patrol-official-says-2019-06-11/>.

overriding structure for all racial formation and relations.¹⁰⁴ While certainly and unquestionably the relationship between Whiteness and Blackness has fundamentally defined race in the United States, there is strong evidence to suggest that the racial system operating in the twenty-first century U.S. is not a binary one, but rather is multiply constituted and relational.¹⁰⁵ Laura E. Gómez posits that it is more accurate to view Mexican Americans as a racial group than as an ethnic minority within Whiteness.¹⁰⁶ The move from understanding Latinx people, *especially* those Latinxs in the borderlands, as an ethnic group that will ultimately assimilate into (American) Whiteness to instead considering them as a racial group is critical to understanding the structure of an American racial order which exceeds the Black/White binary. This theoretical reframing reveals exactly how central Latinx people are to racial construction in the borderlands, particularly in New Mexico and Arizona. In New Mexico, African Americans comprise only 2.6% of the state population, while Hispanics comprise 49%. In Arizona, 5.1% of the population is African American, while 32% is Hispanic. Compare these to the national averages—13.4% African American and 18.3% Hispanic—and one can see that understanding race in the Southwest requires a dramatically different calculus.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Aihwa Ong, “Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States,” *Cultural Anthropology* 37:5 (1996).

¹⁰⁵ Foley, *The White Scourge*; Molina, *How Race is Made in America*; Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border*; Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*.

¹⁰⁶ Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*.

¹⁰⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, “Hispanic Heritage Month 2018.” United States Census Bureau, accessed 28 May 2019, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2018/hispanic-heritage-month.html>.

Furthermore, framing race in the U.S. as a Black/White binary invisibilizes the critical role indigeneity played in racial formations through U.S. history broadly and in the racial construction of Mexican Americans, Chicanos/as, and Latinxs specifically. First, Aileen Moreton-Robinson powerfully posits that “the question of how anyone came to be white or black in the United States is inextricably tied to the dispossession of the original owners and the assumption of white possession.” The removal of indigenous peoples from the New World was the “quintessential act of colonization” and is linked to the transition to modernity.¹⁰⁸ As such, the dispossession of indigenous peoples has indelibly configured White national identity, the modern U.S. state, and the American racial system. Secondly, Latinxs have always entered the U.S. under the competing racial scripts of indigeneity and Whiteness.¹⁰⁹ In fact, as Leti Volpp contends, indigeneity is integrally tied to immigration policy in the U.S. Volpp suggests that U.S. immigration policy rests on the little-recognized foundation of settler colonialism, and because of this, immigration law “imagines away” preexisting indigenous peoples and their claims to the land upon which artificial, and often temporary, borders are drawn.¹¹⁰

For these reasons, I do not understand the racial system in the U.S., nor the regionally specific racial system operating in Phoenix, as a binary one. Rather, I understand the U.S. racial system as a multipartite one, supported and bolstered by the

¹⁰⁸ Aileen Moreton-Robinson, *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015) 51, 48-49.

¹⁰⁹ Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 24.

¹¹⁰ Leti Volpp, “The Indigenous as Alien,” *UC Irvine Law Review* 5 (2015), 289.

racialization of not just Whites and Blacks, but also of Latinxs and Native peoples. Because of the specificities and particularities of Phoenix, Arizona, and the borderlands most broadly, Blackness is often *not* the most salient Other here. As such, this study pays singular attention to space, place, and region while employing a racial analytical framework that is multipartite rather than dichotomous.

Whiteness, White Womanhood, and Citizenship

The story of Whiteness is a relational one.¹¹¹ Because racial difference is constructed, and what it means to be ‘White’ cannot be defined without (an)Other against which to juxtapose itself, racial formation is an inherently relational and hierarchizing process. Within this system of racialized power, people of color experience varying levels of subordination and oppression commensurate to their relative (lack of) proximity to Whiteness. This foundational understanding of Whiteness as a relational process was embedded in the earliest critical race theory scholarship. Whiteness studies also inherited from this progenitor its challenge to the invisibilization of Whiteness as a racial category, as a hegemonic organizing system, and as an interpersonal identity, as well as its fundamental rejection of colorblindness as a way of understanding or framing race in the

¹¹¹ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Joe R. Feagin, *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1986; 2005).

United States.¹¹² By disrupting the normalization of Whiteness and denaturalizing the mechanisms of colorblind racism, scholars of critical race theory and of Whiteness studies not only illustrate how race and Whiteness are relational, they reveal their precarity.¹¹³

Whiteness is precarious in part because it is processual as well as relational; that which is being constantly (re)made is consequently never complete or stable. Numerous works of race and Whiteness have demonstrated the historical and contingent nature of racial meaning-making and racialization.¹¹⁴ Built into the very meaning of Whiteness is its vulnerability to being undermined, polluted, or de-valued by the non-White Other.¹¹⁵ In fact, its sustained hegemony cannot exist without the constant threat of danger.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, Whiteness is constructed through myriad quotidian mechanisms on

¹¹² See Kimberlé Crenshaw, eds. *Critical Race Theory*, (New York: The New Press, 1995), specifically Crenshaw's essay, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law" (originally published in 1988) and Cheryl Harris's "Whiteness as Property," originally published in 1993; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, 3rd. Ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2010).

¹¹³ Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Foley, *The White Scourge*; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; Gómez, *Manifest Destinies*; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David Dietrich, "The Sweet Enchantment of Color-Blind Racism in Obamerica," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634:1 (2011); Molina, *How Race is Made in America*; Edward S. Casey, "Walling Racialized Bodies Out: Border Versus Boundary at La Frontera," in *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014); Linda Martín Alcoff, "The Future of Whiteness," in *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014); Linda Martín Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015); Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* (New York: Viking, 2016).

¹¹⁴ Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; Ong, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making"; Foley, *The White Scourge*; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance," *American Sociological Review* 76:1 (2011).

¹¹⁵ Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017).

¹¹⁶ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 206.

individual and communal, as well as national, levels, and through this construction process it becomes both embodied and phenomenologically felt.¹¹⁷

The individually felt, affective entrenchment of race in the body forecloses easy explanations of the character or nature of Whiteness. Even comfortably established as constructed, historically contingent, and mythopoetic, Whiteness (and Blackness as well) still retains its power over the embodied and material circumstances of its possessors.¹¹⁸ Thus, the slipperiness of Whiteness provides as significant a challenge as its instability, its paranoid defensiveness, and its hyper-emotionality.¹¹⁹ In their attempts to nail down the most precise definition of Whiteness and its functions, scholars have argued that Whiteness is a socioracial contract, a political system, an ideology, a social and historical construct, an imaginary, an epistemological framework, a possessive investment, a form of property or socioeconomic capital, the foundation of American democracy, an economic alliance, a set of locations within relations of domination, a socioeconomic matrix, a potential antiracist identity, “an attachment and a trajectory,” and “a discursive and ideological constellation.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Glenn, “Constructing Citizenship”; Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land*; George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2008); Emily S. Lee, *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014).

¹¹⁸ Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes*.

¹¹⁹ Cheryl E. Matias, *Feeling White: Whiteness, Emotionality, and Education* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016).

¹²⁰ Mills, *The Racial Contract*; Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness*; Paula Ioanide, “The Alchemy of Race and Affect: ‘White Innocence’ and Public Secrets in the Post-Civil Rights Era,” *Kalfou* 1:1 (2014); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Harris, “Whiteness as Property”; Joel Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became*

In its totality, Whiteness can function in each of these ways. However, I primarily understand Whiteness as an epistemic, sociopolitical, and economic system. First, Whiteness constitutes a way of knowing and a way of being in the world on individual, communal, and social levels.¹²¹ Whiteness qua way-of-being is so compelling, and so pervasive, in the lives of White folks that, troublingly, the principles of White racism and antiracism in many cases prove to be “insidiously related, knotted, and crocheted” together.¹²² Even so, some scholars lobby for an even closer, more intimate relationship between antiracist Whites and their White identities, claiming that although White antiracism and White supremacy grow “from the same tree of White domination,” Whites can and should adopt a more critical and reflexive White identity and refuse to cede the definition of that White identity to ‘bad’ White people.¹²³ It is in this critical and fraught space, between repurposing (but not destabilizing or neutralizing) a hegemonic White ideal, on the one hand, and forging an entirely new way to be White in the world, on the other, that my co-participants navigate the murky waters of race, gender, class, and citizenship.

White; Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Foley, *The White Scourge*; Shannon Sullivan, *Good White People: The Problem with Middle-Class White Anti-Racism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014); Matthew Hughey, *White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 15; Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border*, 2.

¹²¹ Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness*.

¹²² Hughey, *White Bound*, 185.

¹²³ Sullivan, *Good White People*, 4; Becky W. Thompson, *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

Second, Whiteness administers the political economy of the United States. The American racial system distributes social, political, and economic power according to racial logics and justifies exhaustive bio- and necro-political measures on the part of the state in order to ensure the continued material prosperity and hegemony of Whiteness and its possessors to varying degrees.¹²⁴ An intersectional analysis of Whiteness as sociopolitical system reveals that Whiteness is not a singular location, but rather “a set of locations,” the experience of which varies along lines of gender, class, sexuality, politics, region, religion, and culture, while still remaining “intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination” and continuing to grant normative and invisibilized racial privilege.¹²⁵ Specifically, class divisions have destabilized Whiteness, which first began to crack in the twentieth century and continued to fissure into the twenty-first.¹²⁶ As wealth continues to concentrate at the top, and more and more White Americans fall into economic precarity, Whiteness may increasingly be “all that some of us have got”—proving that Whiteness is still currency in the American political economy.¹²⁷

Third, Whiteness mediates the material economic realities of both its possessors and its Others by determining, in the baldest sense, who gets what. Charles Mills argues that not only is White supremacy a political system that can be theorized as a racial

¹²⁴ Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Chandan Reddy, *Freedom With Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy*.

¹²⁵ Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*.

¹²⁶ Foley, *The White Scourge*; Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land*.

¹²⁷ Shannon Sullivan, *Good White People*.

contract between Whites, it is also primarily designed to economically exploit the Black and Brown bodies against whom this “transnational White polity” has constituted themselves.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Whites are incentivized to blindly invest in the economic system of Whiteness; after all, “Whiteness has a cash value” and all its attendant advantages, privileges, and benefits the dividends of that lump sum.¹²⁹ And yet, racial power and privilege have historically been disbursed unevenly among those claiming a White racial identity, the “wages of Whiteness” garnished for those Whites who occupied the lowest classes, those deemed sexually or socially ‘deviant,’ and others of their ilk.¹³⁰ The very right to invest in Whiteness, it seems, must be earned.¹³¹

One’s class status does not present the only demerit that can be issued against the value of Whiteness for certain subjects. Womanhood’s gendered disadvantages modify the racial privilege of Whiteness in unique and significant ways. Jocelyn Boryczka argues that “a set of gendered moral beliefs embedded in the American political script,” a script written for and by Whiteness, resigns women to a position of ‘suspect citizenship.’ As suspect citizens, women are credited with critically contributing to the future of American democracy, while being denied the political power it requires to “participate fully in the processes that actually chart the nation’s course.”¹³² Yet, although Boryczka

¹²⁸ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 9, 29.

¹²⁹ Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, vii, viii; Harris, “Whiteness as Property.”

¹³⁰ David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); Foley, *The White Scourge*.

¹³¹ Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*.

¹³² Jocelyn Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens: Women, Virtue, and Vice in Backlash Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 5, 2.

argues convincingly that American women's civic identities, and political possibilities, are suspended between a politically-neutered "virtuous moral guardianship" on the one hand and a disenfranchised "vice-ridden suspect citizenship" on the other, Boryczka fails to give a full account of how American women's relative proximity to virtue or vice is racially decided. The degree to which "the nation entrusts women as moral guardians with the common good while mistrusting their ability to make decisions about their bodies and intimate relationships" is commensurate to a woman's ability to claim a normative White feminine identity.¹³³

As a hegemonic ideal, White femininity, like Whiteness, is relational and Other-dependent. Yet White womanhood is not only reliant on the racial Other but also on the intra-group Other: White women who do not conform to the disciplinary regimes that govern proper Whiteness and femininity. Furthermore, Katerina Deliovsky also points out that hegemonic White femininity is constructed in relation not only to its White and non-White Others alike but also to White masculinity: White womanhood is contingent on White women standing in racial solidarity with White men. Codified through the material exploitation and psychological violence of slavery, practiced as a fundamental part of the larger political system of Whiteness, and constrained by compulsory heterosexuality, hegemonic White femininity is steeped in White capitalist heteropatriarchy.¹³⁴ As such, hegemonic White womanhood plays a critical role in the

¹³³ Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*, 20-21.

¹³⁴ Katerina Deliovsky, *White Femininity: Race, Gender, and Power* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2010), 121-22, 30, 4.

maintenance and ongoing cultivation of systemic Whiteness.¹³⁵ This fact alone demands that feminist scholars explore White femininity intersectionally in order to understand how White womanhood operates in tandem with class, sexuality, nation, religion, etc. *and* to better grasp White womanhood’s possibilities, as well as its vulnerabilities.

White womanhood is also a *habitus*, enacted through everyday practice.

Deliofsky reminds us, rather darkly, that analysis of this habitus reveals that while “the system may be experienced as oppressive...it is people who do its work.”¹³⁶ The ‘work’ of White women has often, unfortunately, been in the service of White racial superiority. Racism “took center stage” in feminist theory for decades. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, White women laboring in service of both conservative *and* progressive causes relied on “deeply racialized and imperial understandings of White womanhood and sexual difference.”¹³⁷ The long women’s suffrage movement had racial consequences for others—consequences at which many White suffragists and feminists did not blink.¹³⁸ In the Jim Crow-era U.S., White women toiled behind the scenes, in

¹³⁵ Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (New York: Verso, 1992); Frankenburg, *White Women, Race Matters*; Louise Michele Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Kathleen M. Blee, *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Kitch, *The Specter of Sex*; Sullivan, *Good White People*; Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*; Jane Junn, “The Trump Majority: White Womanhood and the Making of Female Voters in the U.S.,” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5:2 (2017): 343-352; Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Mass Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz, *Homeland Maternity: U.S. Security Culture and the New Reproductive Regime* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019).

¹³⁶ Deliofsky, *White Femininity*, 3, 11.

¹³⁷ Newman, *White Women’s Rights*, 183.

¹³⁸ Kitch, *The Specter of Sex*, 180.

massive numbers and with prolonged ferocity, to racially discipline their communities, inundate the lives of their neighbors with racial animus through campaigns as diverse as textbook campaigns and congressional rallies, and mount an all-out attack against the possibility of racial equality.¹³⁹ Beyond these historical examples, the racism of White women in America has never come as a shock to populations of color, nor are they unaware of the particularities of White women's gendered exercise of racism. The explosion of 'BBQ Becky' memes on social media in 2018 illustrates some of the cultural subtext attached to White women's racial performances, as does the proliferation of 'Karen' memes in 2019 and 2020.¹⁴⁰ The extensive, and highly public, discussions surrounding Amy Cooper's gendered and racialized attack on a Black birdwatcher in Central Park in the spring of 2020 testifies to the historical, social, and political attachments of White womanhood to White supremacy.¹⁴¹

Despite this ugly legacy—and against calls to abolish, destroy, or otherwise betray the very idea of White identity¹⁴²—some antiracist and feminist scholars like Becky Thompson and Shannon Sullivan refuse to concede that some kind of positive White identity can exist, and that it remains necessary if we are to change the terms of

¹³⁹ McRae, *Mothers of Mass Resistance*.

¹⁴⁰ 'BBQ Becky' became a meme in 2018 after Jennifer Schulte of Oakland, California, called the police to report a group of black men having a barbeque in a public park. 'BBQ Becky' became shorthand for White women exercising their privilege to police--figuratively or literally--Black people or people of color more broadly.

¹⁴¹ Sarah Maslin Nir, "How Two Lives Collided in Central Park, Rattling the Nation," *New York Times*, 14 June 2020, accessed 23 June 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/14/nyregion/central-park-amy-cooper-christian-racism.html>.

¹⁴² Ian F. Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Whiteness* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy*.

race relations in the United States.¹⁴³ The desire for moral redemption from racial sins tends to be particularly strong amongst White women.¹⁴⁴ While an ideological gulf still separates the notion that antiracist work may not be *possible* without the active choice to see ourselves as White, on the one hand, and advocating for a spiritual form of White self-love, on the other, scholars committed to a positive White identity make a strong case that the ‘race traitor’ model operates within, and reifies, class and race hierarchies.¹⁴⁵ After all, “encouraging White people to feel ashamed of their Whiteness as a response to racial injustice implicitly caters to the hegemonic and narcissistic interests of middle-class White people” while affording none of the same social capital that accompanies White guilt and shame expressed by middle class people to working-class or poor White folks.¹⁴⁶ Thus, if White women, as inheritors and agents of Whiteness and White femininity, wish to fulfill their responsibility to weaken and reject Whiteness as a political system, a mythos of superiority, and an invisible mechanism of oppression and silencing, then we must come to terms with their own Whiteness in a way that neither immobilizes us nor trades one hierarchy for another.

The roles Whiteness and White femininity play in the American political system become particularly salient and singularly visible when theorizing citizenship.¹⁴⁷ In its broadest sense, citizenship is full membership in one’s community. T.H. Marshall

¹⁴³ Sullivan, *Good White People*; Thompson, *A Promise and a Way of Life*.

¹⁴⁴ Sullivan, *Good White People*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Thompson, *A Promise and a Way of Life*, xx; Sullivan, *Good White People*, 149, 141.

¹⁴⁶ Sullivan, *Good White People*, 138.

¹⁴⁷ Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*.

distinguished between civil, political, and social forms of citizenship. The first encompasses all the rights inhered in person freedom: personal liberty, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, the right to own property, the right to justice, etc. Political citizenship—the form that most readily comes to mind for most people when asked to define ‘citizenship,’ guarantees one the right to participate in all levels of the political process; this includes the right to vote and the obligation to serve on a jury, for example. Finally, social citizenship comprises “the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.”¹⁴⁸ Let’s return for a moment to U.S. Department of Justice lawyer Sarah Fabian’s argument in front of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. By arguing that “safe and sanitary” conditions do not include access to basic hygiene products such as soap and toothbrushes, the U.S. government, as represented by Fabian, not only clearly sought to break the law by violating the Flores Agreement, it also denied that migrant children enjoy the right to “*live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society.*” In other words, it denied them their social citizenship.

There is no discontinuity in a White woman making this argument against migrant children’s social citizenship when one accounts for how traditional White womanhood has always upheld practices of supremacy and function to deny citizenship to people of

¹⁴⁸ In this paragraph, I draw primarily on Evelyn Nakano Glenn’s discussion of citizenship and Marshall’s theory in *Unequal Freedom*, 19. However, for Marshall’s original thesis, see T.H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York: Doubleday, 1964).

color.¹⁴⁹ For Sarah Fabian, and the government she represented, citizenship is defined by who it excludes, and the rule of law in the borderlands surrounding citizenship is governed by a state of racial exception. The hearing before the Ninth Circuit functioned as a racialized ritual. In this state of exception, a woman acting within the habitus of traditional White womanhood—which usually favors expressions of maternalism, feminine care, and compassion from its practitioners—easily suspended the principles that would regularly govern her and defended her government’s callous denial of care to migrant children for the purpose of racialized exclusion. This racialized ritual was *allowed* by the same state of exceptionality which covers Phoenix and infuses United States immigration proceedings. The denial of social and substantive citizenship to Latinx people, citizens and non-citizens alike, in the borderlands is part and parcel of that state of exceptionality.

Without social citizenship, the third, and most vital, form of citizenship, formal rights cannot be fully realized or accessed; individuals can only exercise civil and political rights when they have adequate economic and social resources, part of social citizenship. However, Evelyn Nakano Glenn argues that social citizenship is *necessary but not sufficient* for people to enjoy *substantive* citizenship, which she defines as the ability to actually practice those formal rights. Local practices that either “recognize or deny standing to certain groups and individuals irrespective of their formal standing under constitutional provisions or statutory law” also either attenuate or augment access

¹⁴⁹ Newman, *White Women’s Rights*.

to substantive citizenship.¹⁵⁰ These kinds of epistemic, discursive, and social (non)recognition determines who does and does not belong just as powerfully as legal rulings or citizenship documents.¹⁵¹

Feminist scholars have expanded the boundaries of citizenship even further to consider the meaning of that (non)belonging, to ask what constitutes a liveable life and the pursuit of social wellbeing, as well as the relationship of citizenship to the sexual, the intimate, and the reproductive. Feminist scholarship has also demonstrated that gendered, racialized, and affective citizenship exists in a complex and dialogical relationship with nation-building and belonging.¹⁵² Thus, drawing broadly on the theoretical and methodological contributions of scholars like T.H. Marshall, Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Mae M. Ngai, and Katie Oliviero, I recognize citizenship as historically contingent, immanently changeable, socially constructed, and deeply affective. Primarily, I understand citizenship to be the rights, responsibilities, and relationships entailed in belonging; the frameworks of meaning we come to attach to that belonging; and the practices we engage in on interpersonal, communal, and national to define and police that

¹⁵⁰ Glenn, "Constructing Citizenship."

¹⁵¹ Katie Oliviero, "The Immigration State of Emergency: Racializing and Gendering National Vulnerability in Twenty-First Century Citizenship and Deportation Regimes," *Feminist Formations* 25:2 (2013): 1-29.

¹⁵² Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); López, *White by Law*; Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); ; Mills, *The Racial Contract*; Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21:2 (1998); Newman, *White Women's Rights*; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Kitch, *The Specter of Sex*; Oliviero, "Sensational Nation and the Minutemen"; Hughey, *White Bound*; McRae, *Mothers of Mass Resistance*; Fixmer-Oraiz, *Homeland Maternity*.

belonging. I consider citizenship to be multiscalar, just like belonging: we can ‘belong’ to a family, a neighborhood, an organization, a community, a city, a state, a nation, a global community. Likewise, we are citizens of various, and overlapping, groups. Each my of co-participants is a citizen of a White, antiracist community (of some kind); a citizen in a broader, and more racially diverse, community here in the Valley; and a (White) citizen of Arizona and of the United States, in the eyes of the law. In each case, their citizenship in those spaces is collective and relational. Their citizenship is also *substantive*, a fact that is largely dependent on their Whiteness, because citizenship is racially defined.

Furthermore, I understand citizenship as intersectional: one’s access to, perception of, and ability to enact one’s citizenship always-already relies on one’s intersectional location(s), and thus, relationship(s) to power.

However, citizenship is not simply something one possesses or a habitus which informs how one exists; rather, it is also something one enacts. According to Engin Isin, enactments of citizenship, as objects of investigation, are both distinct from and related to citizenship-as-status or citizenship-as-habitus. Isin primarily uses this framework to investigate “practices of becoming claim-making subjects,” or the moments in which “subjects constitute themselves as citizens...or, those to whom the right to have rights is due.”¹⁵³ This act, this break from habitus, fundamentally alters the subjects, creating a “rupture in the given.”¹⁵⁴ Because White woman activists are *not* subjects transforming

¹⁵³ Engin F. Isin, “Theorizing Acts of Citizenship,” in *Acts of Citizenship*. Eds. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson (New York: Zed Books, 2008): 18.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

themselves into claims-making citizens, but rather it is *their* citizenship that is largely taken as a “given,” I must necessarily repurpose Isin’s concept of enactments of citizen, while keeping its critical analytical utility.

In my conceptualization, I accept Isin’s theory that an act of citizenship is distinct from citizenship as a status or as a habitus. I also concur that “the enactment of citizenship is paradoxical because it is dialogical. The moment of the enactment of citizenship, which instantiates constituents, also instantiates other subjects from whom the subject of the claim is differentiated. So an enactment inevitably creates a scene where there are selves and others defined in relation to each other.”¹⁵⁵ I consider an enactment of citizenship as that which occurs when a subject or citizen makes a claim on any entity in power—whether that be a racial majority, a local government, a cultural institution, or the state itself—which demands acknowledgement based on that subject or citizen’s claim to citizenship and/or belonging. I also recognize that in substantiating one’s self and one’s claim through an enactment of citizenship, one always necessarily reifies the construction of the Other to whom that right to act is not due. Thus, Isin’s theory of enactments must be the jumping off point for new theorizing about what it means to enact one’s citizenship on behalf of an(Other).

For example, in Chapter 4, I will discuss at length a re-zoning hearing in which White women pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists exercised their civic and political right to be heard in a public proceeding and demanded authorities within the City of Phoenix

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 18.

consider their hopes, plans, and desires for the future of a unused school building. This action was legitimized and made urgent to the state by virtue of those women's claim to citizenship, their claim to belonging here in their community, in the city, and in that day's proceedings. Not all enactments of citizenship are so cut-and-dry, nor are they all carried out through, and legitimized by, those channels deemed appropriate by the state. Many non-citizens engage in ingenious and insurgent acts of citizenship.¹⁵⁶ However, when White women enact their citizenship, they are also enacting their White womanhood and thus activating the privilege and power that accompanies it and *resubstantiating* themselves, through the mechanisms of hegemonic citizenship, as those "to whom rights are due." Yet, in claiming their rights and in doing so insisting on the right for an(O)ther to be heard through them, White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates may be able to break with the habitus of White womanhood, and White women's citizenship, and create real change on behalf of those who have no such formal, legal, or socioracial clout with which to demand the state hear them.

Yet, the fact remains that in the instant any enactment of citizenship happens, that act also instantiates an Other against which the citizen then defines her belonging,¹⁵⁷ and to speak 'for' racial Others risks speaking 'over.' It is in this impossible interstice, between White women enacting antiracist change by wielding their citizenship on behalf of (im)migrants' rights and thus racial justice and, in doing so, reifying the gendered and

¹⁵⁶ Charles T. Lee, *Ingenious Citizenship: Recrafting Democracy for Social Change* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

racialized boundaries of citizenship and belonging that I hope to find answers to deeper questions: What are the radical possibilities and potential pitfalls of White women's enactments of gendered and racialized citizenship, particularly when those enactments are in the service of racial justice? Given that their power resides in the sociopolitical and racial system that governs the United States, I consider the tools of White womanhood—the respectability and authority accorded middle-class White women, their connections to (White) networks of power as educated and professional women, the sociopolitical springboard that accompanies hegemonic White womanhood in the U.S.—to be the Master's tools that Audre Lorde warned us would never take down the Master's house.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, I argue that these tools are not simply available to White women because of their proximity to the (male) Master; rather, when they buy into, or profit from, their place near the apex of a gendered and racialized hierarchy, White women themselves can act as the Master. Accepting all this, then, what are the limits of White women turning the Master's tools—their tools—and *their social and substantive citizenship*, against the current racial system in service of racial justice?

By consciously choosing the *enactment* of citizenship as my analytical lens, I can better attend to the localized and specific social processes, mechanisms, and actions that either grant or deny certain individuals and groups substantive citizenship, as well as demonstrate the ways in which intersectional, social location either augments or

¹⁵⁸ Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (New York: Penguin Books, 2018), reprint.

attenuates substantive citizenship. As I will discuss in the next chapter, one participant remarked that she feels it is her job as a citizen to “use my privilege as a wedge, to help other people through the door, rather than to act as a roadblock.” That same participant also said that her role in pro-(im)migrant rights work had required her to learn how to be “a diplomat, and not a hammer.” These paired statements gesture toward White women’s singular social positionality and the complexities that interest me most about this subject. White women are capable of consciously deploying their citizenship and White privilege to purposefully act as wedges impeding the diffuse and deleterious consequences of Whiteness. They are simultaneously capable of serving as diplomats equipped and empowered to negotiate with White masculinity and concordant systems of power that circumscribe substantive citizenship and perpetuate injustice. However, interpreting the ambiguous results of wielding the Master’s tools requires an analytic sensitive to the complexities of Whiteness, White womanhood, and enacting one’s citizenship.

Chapter 2: “I have a responsibility to do something”: How White Women Navigate Their (Anti)racism and Become Organizers and Activists for (Im)migrants' Rights

The first time I asked a co-participant what it means to be a White woman in America, she responded at length.

Being a White woman is certainly privilege, right?...I also think that White women are in a very unique position in this particular moment in time...I think that it's incumbent upon me to recognize both sides of my privilege so that—privilege doesn't have to be a bad thing if you use it to further others, you know? If you use it as your landing pad to pull other people up. “I'm sitting here, c'mon, here we go.” But it's also a great way of keeping others down. So, as a White woman, I feel a really strong responsibility to make sure that I use my privilege as a wedge to help other people through the door, rather than as a roadblock in their path. And I hope I can do that.

The intersectional complexities that govern her life and her advocacy work do not escape Fannie. Following an unexpected and traumatic spinal injury, Fannie became a visibly disabled person. She now relies on a wheelchair for her mobility and experiences chronic pain and health complications from her injury. After the injury, she had to learn to cope with her new disability at the same time that she faced a jarring and remarkable

loss of privilege. She became suddenly and singularly aware of the laws and policies that would directly impact her survival in a way they never had before.

This galvanized Fannie. Following her recovery, she began consciously enacting her citizenship on local, state, and federal levels in order to advocate for herself, and others who were similarly, if not synonymously, marginalized. In the years since her injury, Fannie has participated in and chaired councils and commissions on intersecting issues of disability, gun violence, (im)migrants' rights, and healthcare; sat on innumerable public education panels; worked for, and with, community non-profits on issues of social justice; and ran for elected office. Fannie told me that following the aftermath of the 2016 election of Donald Trump, she got tired of repeating “somebody oughta, somebody oughta” to herself and instead “one day, I said to myself, well, you happen to be somebody.” Fannie has chosen to understand her responsibility to her community as an obligation to enact her citizenship, and she knows her White privilege empowers her to do so.

As a corollary to this worldview, Fannie considers it her responsibility as a White woman to wield her privilege on behalf of others. Fannie has largely moved past the White guilt that I found immobilized some co-participants. Instead she had, quite pragmatically, decided that if she could do nothing to divest herself of this privilege, the least she could do was pick it up and use it on behalf of those more marginalized than herself. As she described this perspective, I found myself nodding along; such an approach made sense, and it often achieved tangible results, something I had witnessed

often in the course of my fieldwork. However, later I found myself wondering: Given that the genesis of that privilege draws its power and authority from a system of racialized and gendered citizenship that functions in tandem with a sociopolitical system of White supremacy in the United States, where does the wedge stop and the roadblock begin? And to what extent do White women have agency to choose between the two? These questions would become part of the guiding research questions of this dissertation.

However, in several important ways—one of which is critical to our discussion here—Fannie is unlike her fellow pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists and advocates. That is, unlike most of my other co-participants, Fannie’s first lesson in the stark realities of power and privilege came not when confronted with the structural powerlessness of others but rather when suddenly faced with her own. In her words, disability is a “misery magnifier,” and it is those issues that it magnifies the most that she now cares about most deeply. This commitment is born of the unrelenting and daily reminders that her disability defines her. “My disability puts me much further down on the food chain in terms of...in terms of my humanity.” In addition to the psychological violence Fannie experiences, there are material consequences to physical inaccessibility; she regularly encounters obstacles that prevent her from fully engaging in political, community, and professional events. Yet, even at her most frustrated, what “sits in her brain” is the worry that if she relaxes, if she arrives late or unprepared, if she gives in to her emotions—if she allows herself to be angry, or tired, or frustrated—that all anyone will remember is, “Well, we tried cripples once. It didn’t work.” Thus, her able-bodied White women peers

cannot know the pressure Fannie feels to represent the community with which she most closely identifies—the disabled community. Additionally, her disability renders her physically vulnerable in a way that her able-bodied White women peers are not. Fannie can recite the details of death threats made against her without flinching, but her days are filled with far more, and less dramatic, threats to her health and safety. Near misses with moving vehicles that leave her sore and shaken, blisters that are the cost of independent mobility, and frequent hours-long strandings due to inaccessible travel options all degrade Fannie’s physical wellbeing, just as invisibility and tokenism degrade her quality of social and political life.¹⁵⁹ In fact, Fannie’s disability reveals a “system of deep structural economic, social, political, legal, and cultural inequality in which persons with disabilities experience unequal citizenship, a regime of dis-citizenship” wherein a “system of representation” imbues in certain bodies an inherent inferiority.¹⁶⁰ Disability, then, is a social category of analysis and an effect of power relations—thus, rendering it of primary concern to feminists and theorists of citizenship alike.¹⁶¹ Because of this, Fannie is acutely aware of her own intersectional positionality. She *knows* that her disability renders her an Other, and she sees the structures that make it so.

¹⁵⁹ A rich body of literature exists in which scholars, feminists among them, examine (dis)ability as an invisible vector of power deeply affecting the lives, citizenship, and political possibilities for people who are not traditionally able-bodied. See Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 2005, “Feminist Disability Studies,” *Signs* 30(2); Dan Goodley, *Dis/Ability Studies: Theorizing Disablism and Ableism* (New York: Routledge, 2014). Richard Devlin and Dianne Pothier, “Introduction: Toward a Critical Theory of Dis-Citizenship,” in *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy, and Law* (Vancouver; Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006).

¹⁶⁰ Devlin and Pothier, “Introduction,” 1; Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies,” 1557-58.

¹⁶¹ Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies,” 1557-58.

This cannot be said of most of my co-participants, who see the structures that govern their lives with varying degrees of clarity. However, like Fannie, each lives her life embedded in a set of power relations defined by intersectional specificity. As relatively privileged White women, each of my co-participants experiences gendered disadvantage at the same time that they enjoy *significant* racial privilege; this contradiction defines the habitus of White womanhood.¹⁶² These White women describe themselves as deeply privileged: they've "had an easy life" and often "slept well not knowing what we don't know, but should." Yet, simultaneously, diverse experiences shaped by class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, region, (dis)ability, education, and community supply complicated and divergent frameworks with which my co-participants interpret the world, commit to their work, understand their Whiteness, and ultimately enact their citizenship.

These diverse experiences, gathered through their lifetimes of living as a White woman in the United States, defy easy categorization. Yet they are what ultimately led each of these women to pro-(im)migrants' rights work. Most of my co-participants were called into this work through their relationship to someone else. For some, the scales fell from their eyes when they recognized the oppression of someone they loved. Thanks to a vulnerable student, a gay son, an adoptive brother, a foster child, or a friend in need, some of these White women experienced a cataclysmic shift in their racial

¹⁶² Katerina Deliovsky, *White Femininity: Race, Gender, and Power* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2010).

understandings. For others, their activism sprang from a lifetime spent among a community (most often religious) dedicated to activism. There was no seismic event because one wasn't needed; rather, antiracism and social justice activism is embedded in their sense of where they came from and who they are, both individually and as a part of their community. For a few, witnessing the antiracist development of another White person close to them inspired them to higher levels of introspection and activist involvement. Among these, some co-participants struggled to overcome feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and White guilt. One participant never found a way past the idea that she "couldn't live with herself" if she didn't do something—even if she had no idea what that "something" should be. For others still, it wasn't connection or community with others, White or non-White, that precipitated their antiracist activism; rather, for these women, personal trauma and feelings of non-belonging sent them on a search for meaning in unexpected places where hegemonic Whiteness held less saliency.

Before we can theorize White women's enactments of citizenship on behalf of non-White, non-citizen migrants, we must interrogate why, and how, White women got involved in this movement in the first place. Examining the history of my co-participants' involvement in this work reveals their own (un)awareness of their intersectional location; sheds light on their varied relationships to Whiteness, womanhood, and Americanness; and sets the stage for examining how they understand and enact their citizenship in unexpected and intersectional ways.

Like Fannie, Annette's antiracist sensibilities developed in the wake of a very personal tragedy. However, for Annette, this loss wasn't of her health or mobility, but rather of her adoptive brother. Growing up in Montana, Annette described her life as "a completely White existence," until her parents chose to adopt a young Crow boy when she was five years old. Only two weeks younger than he, she "loved him more than anything on this earth." Annette seems to feel as if she failed to help him heal, during the short time he was with her and her family, from the years of physical and sexual abuse he had previously endured. For this, she carries enormous and unresolved feelings about her adoptive brother. Tears of grief filled her eyes nearly fifty-eight years later as Annette struggled to tell me,

He was really damaged...After a year, while we were in the adoption process, he decided he wanted to go back to the orphanage. And I've never seen him again. I can't find him, I can't—and that is—that's a really horrible, but wonderful, really defining thing about who I am. And so, now I know, as an adult, because I was closer to him than anyone—I mean, it was like we were twins...It just broke my heart.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ I've spent significant time wondering about this part of Annette's narrative: it doesn't seem likely that a 5-year-old Native boy would have (or have been given) the agency to decide for himself whether he wanted to "return to the orphanage." Given Annette's extremely young age at the time as well, it's likely this narrative was passed along to her from other, older individuals, rather than formed from her own 5-year-old memories. I suspect something else precipitated her adoptive brother's removal from the home, but ultimately, the 'truth' of this account hardly matters; Annette's narrative of events matters because it defines her feelings about her brother, herself, and her Whiteness--her adoptive brother chose to leave her for reasons she has never been able to work out. That perceived abandonment remains unresolved.

She went on to describe the racialized and sexualized abuse he regularly experienced in rural 1960s Montana. When the two of them would walk to town, White residents would yell things like, “What are you with that black bastard for?,” leveling Blackness as a weapon against the Native boy, reminding him that his social place was not at the side of a young, White girl. Even during her earliest years, Annette found herself at the painful interstices of a multiply constituted racial system which punishes the non-White according to their proximity to both indigeneity and Blackness. This first step, witnessing her adoptive brother—her self-described “first love”—treated in this way, molded Annette. It made her into a person who always wants to be “in the trenches,” amongst those who need the most immediate help and comfort. Annette will always be, she said, “the one on the dirty floor, just holding a baby who needs to be held. I’ll never be an organizer.”

Experiencing her adoptive brother’s trauma secondhand, and then a year later suffering his complete and irrevocable loss, affected Annette so deeply that it fundamentally changed her identity. Before we began our interview, Annette had told me an off-handed, half-finished story about her and her sister hating to be called ‘White’ when they were children, during the years the family spent living in Guadalajara, Mexico, long after the loss of her adoptive brother. When I asked her later what it meant to her to disidentify with Whiteness in that way, she answered,

Can I be transcolor? I mean, seriously...I don't—I don't mean that really as a joke. Maybe it's more that I don't identify as White...What I don't identify with—I don't identify with supremacy. I don't identify as being better than. I remember sitting in the 6th grade in Stevensville, Montana, town of 800, and my teacher, Mrs. Hill, walking around. She stopped at my best friend Lillian's desk—we were studying social studies and about Indians—and she stopped and said, “You know, Indians all smell like smoke, even if they haven't been on the reservation, so let's all go sniff Lillian.” This was—this is *why* I don't *fuckin*g want to be White. You don't understand where I came from. [long pause] Here is this, *brilliant, beautiful*—my *best* friend...And walking up and having people lean over her and smell her [voice breaks]. Who the *fuck* would want to be White in this? You know?

To many feminists, Annette's words will conjure the pop-cultural specter of Rachel Dolezal and all the racial baggage that accompanies her; for some, they will hear nothing more in the word 'transcolor' than the most egregious form of appropriative violence. However, Annette isn't *claiming* Blackness (or indigeneity); she is trying to make space for a racial identity for herself outside of the current categories and, most importantly, outside of Whiteness. While this strategy is not viable for a host of reasons,

it would be incorrect and incomplete to categorize it as simply appropriative.¹⁶⁴ Annette understands that she is perceived as White and that she receives all of the attendant privileges of that Whiteness. But what she is most concerned with is her own, interior sense of identity. Annette's experiences growing up as a White girl, in an extremely rural and conservative space, and (briefly) alongside a young Native boy whom she loved deeply, imbued in her a sense of antiracism so thoroughly embedded in her sense of self that she never found a way to hold it in tension with her Whiteness. And so, she chose to repudiate the latter.

While loving and losing her adoptive brother indelibly altered Annette's life, it is not the only driving motivation or significant factor in her pro-(im)migrants' rights activism. Like many other co-participants, Annette is widely traveled. In a single interview, she mentioned visiting Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium, and France. She has lived intermittently in New York City, Tucson, Sante Fe, and Phoenix, as well as in several cities in Mexico. Perhaps this is why, in part, Annette is nearly as reluctant to claim her Americanness as she is her Whiteness. "I have never really identified as American. So I have to take that out of the picture, because I'm anti-flag, anti-border. This is a *world*." Though she may not articulate her "anti-flag, anti-border" philosophy in these terms, Annette perceives the immigration regime which

¹⁶⁴ For a Black Feminist perspective on Rachel Dolezal and the White privilege and supremacy embedded in cultural appropriation and 'transracial' identity, see Ijeoma Oluo, "The Heart of Whiteness: Ijeoma Oluo Interviews Rachel Dolezal, the White Woman Who Identifies as Black," *The Stranger*, 19 April 2017. Accessed 25 November 2019, <https://www.thestranger.com/features/2017/04/19/25082450/the-heart-of-whiteness-ijeoma-oluo-interviews-rachel-dolezal-the-white-woman-who-identifies-as-black>.

governs the lives of Latinx people in her chosen home and resists it. She recognizes that to see herself as American or as the possessor of the land on which she lives requires the exclusion and/or displacement of others. With this declaration, she is also rejecting any part of the racialized rituals of exclusion that accompanies patriotic and nationalistic pride in the United States.

Annette also described a childhood that sounded largely itinerant after those early years in Montana, and this history of nomadism reflects a larger sense of being untethered from everyone and everything that pervades Annette's adult life. Sitting amongst ornate red velvet sofas, a baby grand piano, and a life-size bronze statue of a magnificent crested lizard-like woman¹⁶⁵ that Annette had painstakingly created herself, I felt a certain sense of disorientation listening to Annette say that she's never really felt like she had a true home, or belonged, anywhere. The space I was sitting in felt undeniably *hers*. I had to listen a little harder to hear what I should have already perceived: that Annette feels unable to connect with other (White) *people* and that this is the source of her deep sense of non-belonging. This also helps to explain her rejection of both Whiteness and Americanness. Annette explained,

¹⁶⁵ Annette's home is an astounding work of art, and Annette herself created many of the treasures hidden behind the lovely, but unassuming, exterior of the house. In her living room, huge branches of driftwood, sanded smooth by the sea, spring from ornate vases, reaching upward across her ceiling, creating the feeling that one is sitting in a forest bower. In one corner of the room stands a bronze statue that Annette will tell me she made out of thousands and thousands of shaped and filed pennies, meticulously laid over and soldered onto a department store mannequin. A single bent penny creates a belly button; an ornate crest flows back like a mohawk from her forehead, a beautiful, seemingly organic crown rising from her bronze-plated head. She must have weighed hundreds of pounds. Annette was enormously proud of her, and rightfully so.

I am not—I do not think like other people do. I have been so abused...I have had so much abuse in the workplace from men. And from women, too, but mostly the physical stuff from men. I have been—I have been the odd person, and not in a good way, for so long, so I—I just have always been the weirdo...it's just always been me. It's *always* been me. And my parents thought I was weird. They loved me. But they really tried to change me, you know? I have a sibling who is still trying to change me. Because I'm—I'm weird!

It is this sense of non-belonging, of “weirdness,” that motivates Annette’s pro-(im)migrants’ rights activism. She went on to say,

If you are an underdog, that’s me too—and I don’t mean that, like, in a sad way, it is just my experience. And so, I don’t ever want anybody to hurt like I did. And I didn’t hurt in other ways, you know. It’s different. I know it’s a totally different thing. But that’s just basically where I come from is, you can get through anything. I know that personally. And so, I want everybody to get through it. Because it can be so *nice* on the other side.

Annette fully recognizes that her positionality is dramatically different than the migrants with whom she works. She is under no illusion that their struggles are

synonymous. However, what Annette *can* fully understand is what it feels like to be an outsider. When I was asking her to explain to me why the term ‘transcolor’ resonates with her, Annette said that if she identified “as anything,” she would identify as “redheaded.” She described how, in rural America during her generation’s childhood and adolescence, superstitions around red hair persisted and earned one undue attention, suspicion, and mockery. Annette struggles to make sense of her lifelong social exclusion and non-belonging by taking pride in her differences, in the collective oddities that set her outside of normative White femininity, and by embracing her “weirdness,” which she feels that she embodies in her redheadedness. Even now, at age sixty-three, Annette keeps her hair colored a deep and defiant shade of red. Her own deep sense of exclusion, which she has so unapologetically embraced, means that she cannot help but see the pain of that exclusion reflected in the eyes of every marginalized community for whom she has advocated—whether that be indigenous people, Central American migrants, or HIV-positive drag queens. Yet, even when finding this camaraderie, this sharedness, among the marginalized, Annette doesn’t seem to feel empowered by it. Instead, it is a source of more pain:

When I was 18, nobody really wanted to hang out with me. So I went to my first gay bar. That community embraced me like I was the most fun, valuable, smart—and then, you know, then the AIDS crisis came in. I lost 30 friends in one year. Several of them died in my arms. And so, for me, that was—I pulled away from

the pain. Because all my friends died. And they *made* me. They made me who I was. Because they loved me.

Annette also cannot—or will not—conform to any of the disciplinary regimes that define White women’s acceptable conduct. From an early age, she adamantly refused to engage in what Katerina Deliovsky calls “rituals of (white) exclusion,”¹⁶⁶ themselves part of larger racial rituals, such as participating in the racist gesture of sniffing her Native friend or socially distancing herself from the few Brown children in her town. In nearly every personal choice she has made—from her clothing choices to how she decorated her house, from the communities she’s been a part of to her romantic relationships—she has failed to conform to traditionally feminine, heterosexual, normative, White femininity.¹⁶⁷ And while I did not ask whether or not Annette identified as heterosexual, her activism among HIV-positive gay men during the 1980s, her sense that her personality is “pretty split” between feminine and masculine, and the affective connection she feels to the LGBTQ community leads me to believe she is either a member of the community herself or she is uncommonly empathetic and open to the issues its members face.

Perhaps it should be unsurprising then that Annette cannot see a place for herself in hegemonic White womanhood and thus continues searching for an identity with which she can be at ease. Unlike so many of her peers, pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists who

¹⁶⁶ Deliovsky, *White Femininity*.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

chose more normative paths, Annette did not arrive to pro-(im)migrants' rights activism through a faith organization, a social network, or a professional opportunity. Instead, in her own personal search for meaning and belonging, Annette found compassion and non-judgement among Latinx people. First, she was “welcomed with open arms” by the Mexican community during her intermittent years living in Guadalajara, and then she found that same connection in the “beautiful brown eyes” of the Central American women and children she so desperately wants to help. Unlike Fannie, who understands her Whiteness as a tool—something that can be put to both just and unjust uses—Annette sees Whiteness solely as a kind of violent normativity that has damaged or excluded the people she loves most, and thus she has no use for it. She recognizes that her Whiteness sets her apart and renders her struggles fundamentally different from those of Latinx migrants. Yet, she sees it only as something outside of herself; Whiteness sets her apart, Whiteness may be read onto her, but it is not *her* Whiteness. With this, she cannot identify. She can only repudiate. The great tragedy of this is that Annette's refusal to see herself in any way as a *part* of Whiteness limits the antiracist impact she can have as a White person. Annette can sympathize, even empathize, with the oppression and marginalization of the non-White people she loves and values; however, turning her energy inward simultaneously disallows her from clearly seeing, and thus resisting, the socioeconomic, biopolitical, and systemic mechanisms that create the deeply personal pain among communities of color that she feels so acutely. This also prevents her from seeing the role she plays, willing or not, witting or not, in the everyday enactment—and

thus the social reproduction of—White womanhood, as well as the ways in which the epistemological frameworks of White womanhood might skew her own perceptions of the world.

Annette’s way of making sense of Whiteness could not be more different from Margo’s way of understanding it. The 45-year-old daughter of a social worker and herself an activist child of the Catholic worker movement, Margo speaks of fellow, antiracist, White activists as close friends and compatriots. “Oh, these are my people,” she said when she first found one of the more progressive United Church of Christ (UCC) congregations in the Valley. “It felt so much like the Catholic worker days...It was like, White people being kind. Like *really, really* kind in all the ways that matter—you know?” In other words, her kind of people are progressive, antiracist, social justice-minded, and dedicated to living their politics through activism and to enacting their citizenship through service. They are the people who feel the conviction, as she does, that “people have had children *die* in ICE custody. And all of this, to get something that I just *happened* to be born into. And part of me feels like somehow I struck the lottery for *nooothering* I did on my own. So yeah, I have a responsibility to do something.”

In truth, Margo’s career is a testament to this impulse toward the daily living of one’s politics. After growing up thoroughly immersed in the Catholic community in Illinois, she attended a Jesuit college in a neighboring state. Following in her father’s footsteps, she became a social worker, looking for a way, in her words, “to be helpful in the chaos of the world and help instead of harm.” Despite losing her religion in college

“during a particularly good philosophy class,” Catholicism offered Margo familiarity and community, if not doctrine or dogma. She joined a religious organization founded by the first immigrant woman to become a Catholic saint and which served the immigrant population through a Catholic worker house in Chicago. Working primarily with homeless Latinx women and families, for the first time in her life, Margo found herself immersed in a primarily Spanish-speaking, Brown community—not just as an observer, like when she studied abroad, but as a member of the community herself. This experience moved her, but as social work jobs are wont to do, it also exhausted her. She moved between jobs for a bit, always in positions that allowed her to assist or advocate for racially marginalized communities. She also stayed active in the immigrants’ rights activist movement and, increasingly, became just as active in the antiwar movement in the months following September 11th and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. It was in this moment of confluence, when her advocacy work with the Latinx community collided with her antiwar activism amidst the tide of anti-immigrant sentiment flooding the nation in the wake of 9/11, that Margo experienced a critical shift in her understanding of her antiracist activism:

I was realizing that these folks didn’t need individual assistance—I mean, who doesn’t need individual assistance—but what they really needed was an overhaul of policies that would allow them to access good-paying jobs, and stability, and English classes, and healthcare, and childcare subsidies, and just all that kind of

stuff... So I just felt like I was bumping up against the limitations of direct practice. I wanted to learn more about community *organizing*.

Margo was beginning to understand that the wall of racism and injustice she had been banging her head against as an individual social worker was a *structural* problem. And a structural problem would require different tools, different training. So Margo went straight to the birthplace of the community she cared about and wanted to help most at that time: Mexican (im)migrants. Margo worked for non-profit and community development organizations in Chiapas, Mexico, writing grants, teaching English, and offering translations for her fellow volunteers and activists working on issues of Mexican migration, advocating for women's rights, and organizing for peace. Then, when she had learned enough about community organizing to feel like she could now be useful, she returned to the United States and moved to Phoenix to be near her sister and to be on the frontlines of "the issues that were happening in *my* lands." This impulse to take personal ownership (if not always personal responsibility) for what has happened in *her* nation, for the actions of *her* community of White Americans, motivates nearly every part of Margo's work and how she articulates her investment in it. "We have done some evil shit," she said bluntly. "If you're a White American, it means having a lot of blood on your hands." Acknowledging that she is familiar with the ubiquitous critique proffered by some White people that she summarized as the "but we didn't live in the South during Jim Crow" argument, she continued, "what I mean is, it means knowing that you did

nothing to earn your Whiteness, but you also did nothing—can do nothing—to give it away, if that makes sense.” The following anecdote demonstrates Margo’s rare and unflinching impulse to take ownership of her Whiteness.

In addition to advocating for pro-(im)migrants’ rights issues, Margo worked full-time for a community organization in Phoenix. However, when the parent organization fell apart on the national level, the local affiliate, financially starved, followed. Margo saw the void this left among Phoenix’s most vulnerable populations and immediately set about co-founding what would become one of the Valley’s largest grassroots organizations supporting working families of color and one of the strongest advocates for racial and economic justice in the city. However, three years after its founding, once the group was transformed from a living room cabal into a well-known organization with a million-dollar budget, Margo stepped back, advocating for one of the organization’s Latinx leaders to take over. Circumstances in her own life had changed, but “it was also the right time for someone Latino to actually lead the conversation,” she said. Yet Margo doesn’t applaud herself for her decision; instead, she subjects herself to critical self-reflection:

You know, one thing that I just want to say is that I think because I did immigrants’ rights work for so long, I think that I thought because I was so close to folks in it, because I was hearing the stories, because my friends were immigrants, because I was working in an organization like [omitted], that *I* could

be a spokesperson. And I was, a lot of the time. And I do think it's valuable to have allies as spokespeople. I do think there's a place for White women in the immigrants' rights movement. However, I don't think I did a good enough job at elevating the voices of immigrants and the children of immigrants. And I think that I took up too much space. So I think you can *really* be down and still be fucking up. And I think that's actually the truth more often than not, right? And so, it wasn't until I got out of that, and then started learning, like really intentionally listening, to more folks about White privilege—largely Black folks, honestly—that I realized [pause] ...I think I've done a lot of great things, and I also think that I've done them in flawed ways.

Margo goes on to describe the pain that inevitably accompanies such self-reflection, linking it to the pain she knows most acutely: abuse.

Sometimes, recognizing that so much of the stuff that you were taught in grade school was just *lies*—or like, one small percentage of the truth—and sometimes, I think of that as being similar to growing up in an abusive family where the external image is not *that*. All the lies that everyone tells about themselves...There's some similarities there. And that's painful. That disconnect is painful...I mean, not that I think you should measure trauma, but if you're measuring trauma, White people have the least of it. So I don't want to overstate

that. But especially someone who has been abused, recognizing that you belong to the abusing class is *very* hard. And then trying to figure out how to undo that, you know? Again, spending your life trying to do better, the ‘help not harm’ stuff. And then recognizing that no matter how much you do personally, and how much you do professionally, it’s just not enough. And it can never be enough. Because you’re one person. And you can’t undo centuries of violence and hatred and discrimination and brutality. And it’s—yeah, it’s hard. It’s heavy.

In this, Annette and Margo are similar; both are in this work because they feel the weight of the violence and trauma caused by Whiteness, though they express it differently—Annette through her declaration that she would “*never fucking*” want to be White, spat like a thrown gauntlet, and Margo through the way her already-gentle voice softened under the weight, the enormity, of the difficult topics she was discussing. And yet, in large part due to their intersectional experiences, one feels isolated in her activism, alone “in the trenches,” without a community of like-minded people to which to turn, while the other draws both emotional strength and organizing strategies from a broad network of faith, pro-(im)migrants’, and economic justice activists, many of whom are White.

There are multiple differences between Annette and Margo: Nearly twenty years separate them—a generation. Margo completed a Bachelor’s degree with a double major, while Annette tried community college, but it didn’t stick. Margo grew up in a working-

class Catholic family in the suburbs of Chicago, attending parochial school, a few years of public high school, and then a Jesuit university. Annette spent her formative years in an isolated, rural Montana town of 800 people before moving to Guadalajara in 1968, when she was in her early teens. Margo is happily married with a child, and Annette has never had children or been married, and she does not intend to do so. Margo's upbringing and career path put her in the way of multiple friends and mentors, relationships that afforded her the space to grow as a feminist and an activist. Annette, however, has spent most of her journey as an activist learning and working alone; on the last occasion she thought she had found community among a group of other (im)migrants' rights activists, she ultimately left the organization feeling unappreciated, unsupported, and unwanted. Although Margo and Annette stopped believing in the core tenets of Christianity behind long ago, both still hold tight to the values of care and community that religion promotes. But while Annette left the church wholesale, Margo chose to look for, and found, community in the larger infrastructure of the church, among its most dedicated activists and social workers, and among a larger network of social justice-oriented communities and organizations.

It is this difference that I found to be the most impactful factor when both discussed their activism: Margo has found community, and Annette has not. In part, this may be a tragedy of circumstance for Annette; born into a kind of community of which she could never feel a part, abandoned in one way or another by the few people with whom she found belonging, and rejected by those who found her too weird, too

emotional, or too something, Annette no longer seeks community. She has made her peace with the life she leads, though it still, and will always, hurt. Margo, on the other hand, in some ways had an easier row to hoe; she always found people to welcome and support her in each of the communities through which she has passed. This is both personal and intersectional; Margo and Annette are vastly different people with contrasting personalities, and yet both women, and their relationships to community, are a product of their circumstances.

This is not unrelated to Whiteness; in fact, Margo's and Annette's vastly different experiences seeking community were definitively impactful on their vastly different relationships to that Whiteness. Margo deeply values the "tradition of activism" in which she was raised and has spent her life immersed. Although she no longer ascribes to Christian beliefs, the spirit of care, community, and camaraderie that she finds among religious and religious-affiliated communities not only feels like "home;" it feels as natural as breathing:

It's not religious for me now, but I was raised Catholic, and that—I *believed* all that stuff. I believed the Beatitudes. I believed it all. And I think it's definitely *in* me, whether I currently practice it or not. So, am I my brother's keeper? Yes. The answer is yes. And he's mine.

Margo believes in the radical, antiracist possibility of White people coming together in community with one another and, more importantly, with people of color, in order to create systemic, lasting, progressive change, even as she recognizes that more often than not, even the White people who are “really down...still fuck it up.” At a different point in the interview, when I asked Margo why it was important to her to have people of color in her communities, she responded, “because how else will you know when you’re being a racist ass?” She clarified that “it’s not the job of people of color to tell us, because they shouldn’t have to work that fucking hard.” Rather, her point was that it is impossible to break down racism without being in community with racial Others. Furthermore, both racism and antiracism are inherently collaborative and collective processes and thus the latter should be undertaken primarily by White people in community with one another.

In fact, exposure to another White person’s own antiracist development and/or activism offered some co-participants their introduction to pro-(im)migrants’ rights activism. Ruth is just such a co-participant. Raised in Arizona, the eldest child of one of the few Jewish families in her neighborhood, Ruth pursued a doctorate in biochemistry before deciding that her preference for problem-solving over research made her unsuited for academia. Instead, she became a computer programmer, married, and had two children, the latter of whom identifies as gay. A well-known activist in his own right, Ruth’s son co-founded a grassroots organization in Arizona dedicated to supporting LGBTQ individuals in U.S. immigration detention. When her son first became interested in social justice issues, he shared those interests with his mother. This “made things more

personal” for Ruth, more than “just what you read in newspaper articles.” Her son began asking her to write letters of support for LGBTQ people in detention. Then, *she* began asking *him* what his organization needed done. Ruth describes herself as highly analytical, theoretical, academic, and as a problem-solver, and she takes great pride in using those skills on behalf of (im)migrants and side-by-side with her son, whom she obviously loves dearly. However, this wasn’t Ruth’s primary motivation for helping her son’s organization, and in doing so, advocating on behalf of (im)migrants. His sexuality was.

I’m really interested in the nexus of immigration and LGBT issues. Our son’s gay. And he, over the years, has shared really sad, sad stories about friends and the lack of support from their families. And pain in people’s lives. So when he started this group to be, sort of, like a chosen family—I’ve learned that a lot of people in immigration detention really need support from the outside, and if your family’s not talking to you, or they’ve disowned you, to have people who want to help you as though they’re family is—I just think—I just think that, you know, that could be my son.

The only way that Ruth could gain affective purchase on this issue was through her son and the personal and structural implications of the sexuality he shares with the (im)migrants’ they aid and assist together. She could intellectually understand the

injustice of the U.S. immigration system when her son first began protesting SB 1070 and sending her articles about deportations and Sheriff Joe Arpaio terrorizing the undocumented residents of Maricopa County,¹⁶⁸ but it was not until her son created his organization, and she grappled with the intersection of queerness and immigration, that she experienced a catalyst. This opened doors to other questions:

As I've become more aware of the world, you know, I ask things like, *why do we even have borders?* I'm sympathetic...And I ask, *why do* people do things like this? What would make *me* leave somewhere and do something so unsafe and bring my children? The betterment of the children. Your family. So I put myself in other people's shoes now. I don't think I would have gotten involved personally in helping people in the immigration system except for my introduction through my son. The LGBT aspect of this is very personally important to me.

Ruth also admits to knowing “a little bit about being the Other” after spending a lifetime as a Jewish woman in Arizona. Even so, her identity as the mother of an LGBTQ child has fundamentally shaped her journey toward becoming an antiracist (im)migrants' rights advocate and influenced how she understands her responsibilities as a citizen.

¹⁶⁸ Joan Biskupic, “Why Joe Arpaio Was Found Guilty,” *CNN*, 24 August 2017. Accessed 25 November 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/24/politics/why-joe-arpaio-was-found-guilty/index.html>.

Ruth isn't the only co-participant whose conceptual horizons were broadened by a queer family member, nor was Margo the only co-participant to access social justice through a religious community. Meg has experienced both, and like Margo and Ruth, she has forged a new way of enacting her White womanhood in a way that resists the immigration regime that governs her chosen home and rejects racialized rituals of exclusion. The sixty-eight year old mother of a lesbian daughter and genderqueer "adult kid," Meg describes her social politics as "an evolution" and her trajectory on LGBTQ rights as "a linear path from intolerance to tolerance to acceptance to celebration." She charts the beginning of this evolution by the Carter presidency and considers the years "between 1980 and late 2005" as a gradual "political and social transformation," one that was accelerated both by her children's respective comings out and by her experience living in the borderlands, at the epicenter of the increasingly bitter conflict over immigration in the United States. However, it was not until Arizona politics began to "heat up" in 2006 to 2007 that Meg became a pro-(im)migrants' rights activist. Already in a transitional period of her life, Meg became more and more involved with her congregation, a progressive Unitarian Universalist (UU) church, located in an affluent and majority-White Phoenix suburb, already especially interested in aiding refugees and migrants even before tensions mounted in the mid-2000s. Much like Margo, Meg found among her fellow (largely White) UU congregants fellowship, support, and inspiration: "I was both learning from and running elbows with the people who were already leading the ally movement back then." Being in community with them, sharing their outrage and

concern over racial and xenophobic injustice, “lit a fire under” Meg. Joe Arpaio, former sheriff of Maricopa County and the infamous Tent City jail, particularly incensed Meg:

So, he took any of the people who’d been accused of crimes—not necessarily convicted yet—any of them who were undocumented, and he moved them to Tent City, and he—I watched a TV news program where he walked them out the couple of blocks or so within that complex, and they had helicopters above and they had police dogs, and some of the parents who hadn’t seen their errant child in a couple of weeks because they’d, you know, gotten picked up on a minor drug charge or something, those parents just wanted to see them, and it was a little easier to come there, out on the street, and they had heard they were going to be moved. So it was like this grotesque parade where families are standing there, crying along the street, and people are being marched by. My starkest memory was of Arpaio himself. This was his show. It didn’t much matter who he was moving where, as long as *he* was shown to have the power, and the authority, and that *he* could do this to these people. As if that was going to—hurray, hurray, that was going to make Phoenix great again. And I just—I couldn’t live with that. I was haunted by that.

Meg immediately took to the internet, reading everything she could about human rights and international law. Next, she and some of the UU congregants teamed up with a

Latinx playwright to produce a play about the DREAM Act, acted by undocumented student actors. After that, she worked with more community members to produce curricula on the current state of immigration in the United States and Arizona, to take to churches across the Valley in a faith community-based education and awareness campaign.

As a geographer and cartographer, Meg spent a portion of her career working extensively with the Navajo Nation, an opportunity that accustomed her to being in spaces where she was in the racial minority. In fact, Meg considers it an “opportunity to be the only White lady, or the only White person, or non-member of a religious community, or something, in the room.” As such, she is undeterred by racial difference amongst her organizing networks. As she sees it, everyone has their role to play; hers, as a wealthy, educated, upper middle class White woman, is to give her money, resources, and time in order to fill in the gaps for more marginalized social justice activists of color. This material support makes it possible for those activists to claim the space Meg knows White people like her need to make for voices of color. For Meg, interracial cooperation and coalition is the way forward.

Meg also knows that truly coalitional work has no room for White hubris. She recognizes that certain danger lies in universalizing too much, in falling into what she calls “the light in me recognizes the light in you” trap. She then recounted a story of a time when she attended a rally and felt that many of the speakers prioritized telling their own stories of disadvantage and decrying the sins of Donald Trump over the needs of the

marginalized people for whom they claimed to be advocating. Meg sees in this story a truth about White women and herself in particular:

Women have had the most basic reason to be more involved in human rights, and that is that we've been oppressed as women! My immigrant friends say that oppressed people can recognize oppression...But, [after the 2016 election] a common thread was, 'oh, now I can see myself in this other oppressed person.' Women seeing ourselves, even if we're White women, as oppressed people. And I've been someone who, you know—as I think back on it, a lot of my evolution has been to just kind of become less and less patronizing and, I hope, more and more humble. Because I think that people who have become activists after suddenly starting to recognize themselves as the oppressed [pause] kind of tend to want to, for a while anyway, want to—essentially want to talk about themselves and their oppression first and then, as an afterthought, talk about some other issue.

Meg doesn't have much use for this kind of self-aggrandizement, gently poking fun at the organizers: "we're the allies, the mighty, mighty allies." To avoid falling back into that same trap, of recentering herself or her Whiteness, Meg focuses on relationality: "My duty is very much grounded in this world and in reciprocity in this world." She focuses on gratitude: "I've had a pretty easy life. So I have gratitude for abundance. And I want to share that abundance." And she focuses on privilege: Meg knows that she has

“experienced very, very little powerlessness and very much privilege,” and that this stems directly from her positionality as an educated, middle-class White woman. As far as she is concerned,

White women can look at ourselves and how we’ve been in this country, and we can choose to either feel shame, blame ourselves and others, or we can say, ‘what can motivate me to want to do stuff better and to center the person that I say I care about, who is in another group?’ I want to have a perspective that can let me go ahead and feel good about myself, and not get all caught up in being ashamed, but that centers on someone other than White women. Other than other White women and myself.

Meg has managed to do this beautifully, and she feels fulfilled, knowing that she will likely be putting the knowledge and expertise she has gained over years of doing immigration advocacy work to use for the rest of her days.

However, for some White women, simply making this decision is not the easy task it is for Meg—either because they do not share her experiences, her personality, or both. The daughter of a visual artist and a “failed academic” turned amateur philosopher, Elena grew up believing she “had to do something good and important” with her life. Both Elena and her sister took this to heart; her sister is currently a spiritual life coach, and Elena balances her volunteer work as an (im)migrants’ rights advocate with her

career as a researcher and instructor at a local university. By the time I interviewed her, Elena had experienced “all of the stages of burnout” and stepped back from her activist work. At that time, Elena had been involved in issues surrounding (im)migration and poverty for over fifteen years, since she was in her early twenties. After studying abroad in Nepal, Elena was, in her words, “very dissatisfied with America.” She knew only that she didn’t “fit in,” she wanted to get away from the U.S., and she was interested in poverty. After working for a bit in Juárez and spending time working on an organic farm in New England with her sister, Elena finally went to grad school and ultimately wrote a dissertation about transnational migration. Somewhere between meeting migrant farm workers on her sister’s farm and publishing her manuscript, Elena began working her way through her “earlier mentality of White saviorism.” However, this was not an easy or linear task nor was it one with clear ethical boundaries:

I struggled throughout my dissertation and the book with feelings of guilt for taking these interviews and not knowing if I could ever repay them. It being an indigenous community as well, there were some things they didn’t want to share in that much, and there was a guardedness. So when I moved [to Phoenix] I really felt that sense of wanting to repay, you know? So I started going to the Pentecostal church here where some of the members of that town went—it was just easy to connect, because they had transplanted directly to the church in Phoenix. So when I first moved here, I didn’t know anyone, and I was terrified,

because I was thirty, and I had just started [at my job] and still felt like a graduate student to my bones, you know? No one [at my job] was my age. So going to that church, I got sucked in. It became my sustenance. I didn't believe their beliefs, but I split my brain. I'd be like, 'I'm just being the anthropologist, and I'm just going to help with the immigration cases, and I'll learn, and maybe I'll write about it.' But it's very strict boundaries for them, you're either of God or of the world. I had started going to all the services and really became part of that social life. But eventually, I just had to like—I just couldn't do it anymore.

Shortly after, Elena leapt into (im)migrant hospitality with the same zeal and commitment with which she joined the Pentecostal church, even going so far as to rent an AirBNB during one of the migrant surges so that her house could be temporarily converted into a makeshift halfway house. However, just as she one day pulled back from the church, she also eventually began to be “really critical of those narratives of helping the stranger and receiving the foreigner, because it still puts you in the position of power.” Whereas before, Elena found it easy to feel like she could change things because her positionality as a middle-class, educated, White woman made her feel “powerful,” after doing the work for several years she realized, “I don't know what the hell I'm doing, I'm just one person.” That realization knocked Elena “very off-center.”

Reckoning with her racial privilege and guilt has been a deeply personal, and often painful, journey for Elena; in fact, it has shaped the course of her life. A few years

ago, Elena decided that she wanted to become a mother. However, after completing only half of the process to adopt a young Haitian child, Elena cancelled her application. She felt “conflicted from the start,” and the more she joined transnational adoption groups and talked to adult adoptees of color, she thought, “I can’t do this.” She decided that no matter how much she wanted to adopt this child, she couldn’t responsibly raise a Black child as a White woman when she had no significant, close relationships with Black people. I didn’t ask Elena where she currently was on her journey to become a mother, nor why she chose to apply to adopt a Haitian child instead of a White child; the topic seemed painful for her, and I wanted to respect that.

In these anecdotes, the first about the Pentecostal church she joined and the second about her ultimately unsuccessful adoption attempt, it becomes clear that guilt and shame play clear and powerful roles in Elena’s relationship to race and her own identity. For her, the experience and enactment of her White womanhood feels like navigating a field full of landmines where every step is a potential misstep wherein she risks reifying domination rather than rejecting it. The prospect of this immobilizes Elena. She felt guilty at the idea of failing to ‘repay’ her dissertation participants. She felt shame for her desire to adopt and then mother a Black child when she had no Black friends. When I asked her why it was important to her to have people of color in her community, she responded, “I struggle with it, and I have a lot of shame about that question. Yeah, I have a lot of fear and shame about that question.” When I asked why, she responded:

Um, because [pauses, laughs]. You know, I struggled with this thing too, with the adoption, and that's part of why I cancelled it, because everything I was hearing was like, "dude, you need Black friends if you're going to adopt from Haiti." And I wasn't going to make friends with someone just so they can become my kid's mentor, so it was just like, yeah, no, I don't think I can—I mean, just so we can stay honest with ourselves, I guess. Be more grounded, stay honest. But I guess—Ok, so I've gravitated toward Coalition for Immigration Justice [the largely White organization through which she does hospitality work] out of a sense of comfort, and out of a sense of—I don't know. In other spaces, like *Fronteras* [a primarily POC-led organization], um [pause] not really knowing if those are spaces where—not that my presence isn't welcome, but [pause]. Am I burdening the group by—like, by wanting to include them so I can have people of color in my life?

These questions triggered enormous anxiety in Elena; a few minutes later, she said, "I think I have some stupid feelings of unworthiness I need to work through, because I'm even thinking about my coworkers of color—do I ask White people to do things more? Am I subconsciously avoiding them? Because I feel less than?" Unlike Margo, who sees the presence of people of color in her communities as an invaluable and singular impetus for antiracist action, or Meg, who sees being the only White person in a room as a learning opportunity or a chance for service, Elena projects her own gendered

feelings of (racial) inadequacy onto her relationships with people of color—even, in the case of her cancelled adoption, onto the future, hypothetical relationship she would have with her adoptive child. For Elena, finding a way to “feel good about herself” without getting “caught up in being ashamed” is not as simple as it is for Meg.

Much like Elena, Stephanie also wandered around the world, trying to figure out both who she was and where she belonged. The only child in a “dysfunctional household” that split its time between school years in upstate New York and summers in rural Maine, Stephanie grew up in “very upper middle class areas” that were “White, period.” After earning a Bachelor’s degree, Stephanie began a graduate program, studying Latin American literature and, increasingly, critical race theory. But one day, Stephanie woke up and suddenly felt differently about the trajectory she had chosen for her life:

I was doing all of this academic work on these issues, and I realized one day that it really wasn’t—I felt like academia was so hermetic and irrelevant and that there were greater things—there were more things in heaven and earth than I had dreamt of. And I realized one day that I just didn’t want to be there anymore. I thought, ‘Why am I reading about this? Why don’t I go and have a look at this world that seems so intriguing to me?’ So I quit, I left graduate school.

Stephanie worked for a few years, until she had saved up enough money to go to South America. After a few years of kicking around the continent, Stephanie came back to the U.S., only to find she “didn’t fit in anywhere well,” and bounced back and forth between Central America, Mexico, and the U.S. for a time. What had begun in graduate school as an “intellectual interest” in Latin American literature had turned into an interest in working directly with Latinx people. Years before Margo would move to Chiapas to learn more about community organizing, Stephanie found her way there. In 1966, she spent three months living among a Zapatista community at their request. Together with “a bunch of crazy Italian communists and people from Mexico City,” Stephanie acted as a neutral observer, doing what she could to make sure the Mexican government was held accountable by the international community. This experience fundamentally changed Stephanie’s understanding of both the West and the “rest.” As she watched the Mexican army destroy crops, kill farm animals, and drive people into hiding in the mountains, she found the seeds of her activism: “Just seeing, you know—[pause] what a ridiculous life we have here. Like, what an incredibly ridiculous life. While most people live in dirt. That just didn’t seem right to me.” Like many other co-participants, Stephanie credits her personal sense of justice for guiding the ethical direction of her activism.

After she moved back to the States for the final time, she applied to law school. Years later, when moving from Massachusetts to Arizona, Stephanie found the application essay she had written for law school. In it, she had essentially described the job she ultimately got at an immigrant legal advocacy project—the job that precipitated

her move to Arizona. As a lawyer working for an organization dedicated to ensuring the legal and human rights of (im)migrants moving through the U.S. immigration system in the Southwest, Stephanie got to fight against the injustice that had long been, in her words, pissing her off:

I don't like bullies. And I feel like the United States government can be a real bully. And particularly in immigration proceedings, where people don't speak the language, where people aren't given an attorney, where people are just locked up, I mean—it's such an *incredibly* unfair fight, and bullies just *piss, piss, piss* me off.

These days, Stephanie runs her own practice, making between \$35,000 and \$40,000 a year—a pittance for a J.D.—assisting (im)migrants navigating the U.S. immigration system. At least twice in the last year that I am aware of, Stephanie has traveled south to border towns, crossed into Mexico, and set up a pro bono legal aid clinic in which she tries to help the primarily Central American migrants, who are trapped on the southern side of the border by Trump administration policies like metering and Remain in Mexico,¹⁶⁹ to understand the few, bad choices available to them. After her last visit, Stephanie returned to report on conditions to an immigration task force run by a local UCC church. Stephanie looked wan and exhausted, having just returned the night

¹⁶⁹ Known as the Migrant Protection Protocol, or MPP. See U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “Migrant Protection Protocols.” Accessed 25 November 2019, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2019/01/24/migrant-protection-protocols>.

before, and as she described conditions in Juárez, her voice broke. The strain of managing and trying to assuage the confusion and trauma of the hundreds of migrants she had advised on the trip was carved into her face. We watched her struggle to maintain her composure while she woodenly recounted a litany of dangers facing the migrants: sex traffickers from Hong Kong who prey on young women in the notorious border town, filthy encampments downwind of the exhaust fumes from the queues of cars waiting to pass through the port of entry, and callous U.S. officials who make no efforts to explain complicated and constantly changing policies to desperate migrants.

However, most days, that weary, emotionally vulnerable woman is nowhere to be found. Most of the time, Stephanie moves through the world with a sort of sarcastic, brash, good humor that borders on the shocking. During our interview, we were interrupted multiple times by landscapers using leaf-blowers to clear the courtyard of Stephanie's apartment building. As one started up beneath her open window, she sighed,

This too shall pass. Although, I have to say, in terms of immigrants, these fucking Guatemalans with the leaf-blowers! [laughs] I'd send them back to Guatemala City in a second if I could! [laughs] This just seems so cruel. Like, you hire a bunch of Guatemalans to do leaf-blowing. Like immigrants don't have enough hatred directed at them to begin with! Why do you make them do the leaf-blowing? I don't think it's safe for them! I mean, if *I* want to send them back, right?

A generous analysis would acknowledge that Stephanie has spent decades now working at the forefront of the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement, fighting an immigration system with too few tools and too little help. Her bald and unapologetic jokes may provide her with the coping mechanism she needs to continue doing things like providing week-long, free, legal clinics south of the border. Stephanie continued, "I don't know, there's something about the leaf-blowers, though, it's almost like deportations, right? You blow them from point A to point B, and it's useless. There's some impacted metaphor there."

A more complete analysis, however, would also acknowledge that Stephanie holds significant disdain for many progressive narratives; she sees in it a sort of rose-colored positivity that doesn't reflect the facts, as she understands them:

I feel like we've created these [pause] really fictionalized positions from which we battle. Like, look, we're painting with these enormous broad strokes. Either everybody is a criminal or everybody's an asylum seeker fleeing blah blah blah. That just isn't true, you know? And the common narrative on the progressive, pro-immigrant side—because it has had to fight back against this demonization that started with September 11th and the criminalization and the demonization and the making into terrorists of immigrants...So, you know, the progressive side has created this myth. It may not be pernicious, but it's false. The fact of the matter is,

there's a tremendous amount of fraud in asylum applications. The fact of the matter is, asylum is not meant to remedy Third World poverty. That doesn't mean that you're not compassionate, and that doesn't mean that it doesn't suck to grow up in a fucking—you know what, Honduras is a shithole. Also, we can't say that. It's a fucking shithole. But you don't get to say any of that. You have to participate in this narrative of the noble Third World poor. And you have to listen to all these White people talk about how ennobling it is to work with the Third World poor fleeing for their lives. And that's a bunch of horseshit, you know? And it's frustrating. It's frustrating that we've gotten ourselves into these—that both sides are working on their own mythologies.

According to Stephanie, neither the Right nor the Left have gotten it correct. In her view, both groups access the issue of immigration emotionally, affectively. She understands her view of the immigration system as one informed by truth and accuracy—which is laid out, for her, in the United States' founding documents: “At the core of this democracy and at the core of our Constitution is the principle of due process and equal protection, and what I do is nothing if not that. I can use the term ‘bullying,’ but bullying is just what the Fourteenth Amendment protects against, right?,” Stephanie explains.

Stephanie's lawyer's ethic, and her commitment to things like due process and equality under the law, can blind her to the structural racism, xenophobia, and inequality embedded in that same democracy. She remains committed to these ideals, *even as* she

sees the structural barriers in front of her clients and works to ameliorate them. She remains resolute in them, *even as* she acknowledges that most Central American migrants—including those who are ineligible for asylum status simply because they are economic and climate refugees rather than religious or political ones—migrate from countries made into “shitholes” because of U.S. imperialism and interference in their governments. However, her commitment to those ideals, her belief in the U.S. constitution and its precepts, lead her to believe that there are limits to what she, or anyone, can do to change the circumstances under which these migrants seek permanent entry into the United States; after all, asylum isn’t meant to remedy these other driving causes of migration. “I’m sorry,” she recalls saying to a client, “The law has no remedy for you.” This lack of legal remedy marks a starting point for many of my co-participants; for Stephanie, it both fuels and circumscribes the limits of her activism.

A few weeks after I interviewed Stephanie, I met Rebecca, a well-known and well-respected leader of the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement in Phoenix. Shortly after graduating college and getting her first job at a local high school, Rebecca met a Guatemalan student who introduced her to what would become her overriding passion for over a decade: the conditions of Mexican and Central American (im)migration across the U.S.-Mexico border. Rebecca would cut her teeth working with Life and Justice Now (LJN), a primarily White, grassroots organization in Arizona whose singular goal is to end the deaths of undocumented migrants crossing into the United States through the remote stretches of desert that line the Sonora-Arizona section of the border. For nearly

fourteen years, Rebecca dedicated every moment she wasn't working as a high school teacher to LJNI. At first, she would drive from Phoenix to Tucson every Thursday night for the weekly meeting and spend her summers in the southern Arizona desert coordinating and training volunteers to make grueling desert patrols through remote stretches of the desert in order to leave water and supplies along known migrant routes. Later, she would remain highly active in the group's Phoenix chapter, which coordinated with volunteers and advocacy networks in the city and further north in the state, marshalling manpower, donations, and resources on behalf of their compatriots working closer to the border. However, Rebecca said that she ultimately left LJNI because of sexism and misogyny she experienced at the hands of some (though not all) of her fellow members.

Now, she turns that same sexism and misogyny to her advantage in her new role as a co-leader of the grassroots Phoenix group, Coalition for Immigration Justice. In that role, she serves as a point of contact for Immigration and Customs Enforcement: "I find myself being kinder to ICE, more than I *need* to be. I honestly don't think about this stuff, like I don't have conscious thought about it. But I do find myself less like 'Hi Samantha' [monotone voice] and more like 'Hi Robert!' [girly voice]." In the next breath, however, she denied that she's "pulling off femininity stuff":

You know, I don't know. I don't think I'm different—I don't put on *makeup* to go see these people. Like, I don't *act* on it. One of the ICE officers who I had been

having a lot of texting back and forth with, he ended up on one of the buses at a drop off, because he wanted to meet me. And I think he was like—I think he wanted to see who I was—and it was just weird. Like, he was like, “Which one of you is Rebecca?” And I was like, “Um, me. Who are you?” He told me that he wanted— “I wanted to see who you were.” I think he wanted to, like, check me *out*, you know, like, kind of get a visual. It was weird. Would he have done that if I was a guy? Who knows. I’m *aware* of that stuff—but I don’t do anything differently.

This distinction between being ‘aware’ and ‘acting upon’ gendered difference seems very important to Rebecca. During this part of our discussion, she compared herself to another White woman leader in the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement, saying:

She’s *very* fancy. Like she’s like—ah! She looks so nice! Like, oh, maybe that’s something I should wear. Maybe I should have a fancy purse, too...But I’m not going to do that. But she has that—like, appearance, about her. I’m sure *she* would be taken more seriously than me, just because of how she presents herself, you know? But I’m sure she also has to play that card, as well. I’m sure she does a good job of having to navigate those people by coming across as very *professional*.

Rebecca recognizes the ‘game’ women have to ‘play’ to be taken seriously; she also recognizes that “femininity stuff” is at work here. However, I heard a note of condemnation in Rebecca’s voice, perhaps indicating she thought that this other advocate’s (allegedly) conscious decision to play up her femininity in exchange for improved efficacy was somehow inauthentic or reprehensible.

Even so, when asked about how she conceptualizes both her citizenship and her advocacy work, Rebecca finds her gender less salient than her ethnicity. Although she is a first generation American born to Sicilian immigrant parents in 1971, long after Italians had been assimilated into Whiteness,¹⁷⁰ Rebecca nevertheless told me that, for most of her life, she “never considered herself White”:

Because, like, English wasn’t my first language, and I was never allowed to do things my American friends could do. You know, I couldn’t do anything. It was a totally super strict Italian Catholic family. And so I always thought of myself as like—well, I’m not White, you know, I’m Italian. It just seemed like a different thing. And then I realized, of course as I’m doing my work, I’m like, ‘oh, so I’m totally White.’ But growing up, I never felt that. I never felt included.

¹⁷⁰ See Peter G. Vellon, *A Great Conspiracy Against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early 20th Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

Yet later, Rebecca returns to the subject of her upbringing, saying her parents “wanted me to be as American as possible—except I couldn’t go out with anybody, and I couldn’t date, and I couldn’t have sleepovers—I mean, a lot of stuff. They wanted me to be American as possible, and they tried to erase a lot of their own history.” It’s unclear, then, where the lines between Whiteness and Americanness lie for Rebecca. She felt culturally different from her American friends, different to the point of feeling “not White.” And yet, she simultaneously feels as if her parents had erased her family’s Italian heritage in a conservative and misguided attempt to assimilate to (White) Americanness.

Rebecca’s Italian identity not only complicates her relationship to her own Whiteness, it also motivates her activism:

I feel as though the story of the families I help are similar to my family’s story. In the sense of this coming to—you know, leaving *from* a homeland that you were born in, and feeling like you had to leave, for whatever reason. My family’s reasons are very different than somebody from Guatemala who is fleeing, say, domestic violence. But that desire, that need to leave, and then that unknown. That big unknown. And like, coming to this country completely vulnerable. And vulnerable to the whims of who is going to receive them. And then growing up as that. Then, like, my experiences of being a child of immigrants just—I felt like there’s that connection in our stories...I mean, my parents *struggled*. And they had their way of assimilating.

In some ways, Rebecca has cut ties with a past life as well; she no longer has any contact with her father, and she does not maintain close ties with any members of her immediate family. “They have maintained their status as good Christians,” she explained, “and I have not.” Yet, though she no longer practices Catholicism, she knows she can “talk a good God story,” and she doesn’t hide that it influences who she is and why she does her work:

I remember as a kid, I used to *love*, I mean *love*, Jesus. [laughs] I don’t know, I just loved him. I think that’s why I still love men with beards, because I just have this vision of Jesus with this beard and long, beautiful hair. Like, the stories you hear when you’re a kid, and he’s this person who goes out and, you know, tells people that they’re like—the whole coinchanger story, or whatever—this person who like *fixed*—helped people, and saw the things that were wrong, and said, ‘you can’t do that.’ I just loved that part of the story of who He was. And so that’s the part of this whole religious piece that I still take away is His—like, the *work* that He, during his short life, talked about. That’s my foundation for so much of this stuff, like, that’s *just not right*. You know, it’s always like, that’s just not right. You can’t—that’s not how we treat people. So that’s the *base* of it. We just don’t treat people that way.

Rebecca also uses religious language to articulate her affective and ethical investment in pro-(im)migrants' rights work: "I have a good friend who is a nun, and she would call me—what's the word—oh, I can't remember, but it basically meant a lay nun. A kind of person who isn't a nun but who is nonetheless called to the work." She went on to say, "It's a calling, I don't have a choice. And I don't really feel like I can get out of it. It really is out of my hands." She concluded that this term, and thus her own understanding of her advocacy work, is best encapsulated by the idea of giving oneself to others instead of to God.

Though she may continue to share a religio-ethical framework with her Sicilian parents, their politics could not be more different. For Rebecca, her America is not her parents' America. "I think my parents had this illusion, like most people do, that America was going to be this great land of opportunity, this great land of hope, this great space where they can make their way through the world...And honestly, my parents have done it. But they had to sacrifice *so* much. And sacrifice meaning that they had to give up so much of their own soul and spirit. Everything." On the subject of what it means to be an American, Rebecca is uncertain. She acknowledges the potential and possibility of the supposed ideals of Americanness, should they be actualized; she also recognizes the undeniable and ongoing colonization and oppression of people across the world at the hands of the United States.

On the subject of White womanhood, however, she is more sure:

I never found that I connected with White women. White women to me—I mean, I *am* White, so you know, it is me. But because culturally I haven't connected to them, my experience seems really different. And I can't relate to their—to this sense of—it's probably a stereotype, but this sense of entitlement, this sense that 'I can close my eyes to this.' That's the big piece is feeling as—I feel like they can close their eyes. They! White women can close *our* eyes because nothing impacts—we don't have the same impact.

Just as she didn't feel fully 'American' because she was a first-generation Italian American, so Rebecca doesn't fully feel 'like a White woman' because she is able to see injustice. Because she *can* see that injustice, Rebecca feels as if she doesn't wholly live within the habitus of White womanhood. Instead, Rebecca takes comfort and pride in *not* being like other Americans and other White women:

“For me, it's just making sure that shit gets done. Like, I don't have to be like [affects a mockingly sweet tone] 'oh, I need to see them, I need them to be in my house.' I don't need *any* of that. It's just knowing that they're ok.”

This seemed an illustrative comment to me, given that the Coalition for Immigrant Justice, which Rebecca co-leads, takes as its primary mission the hospitality and housing

of Central American migrants passing through Phoenix. While Rebecca relies on women who “need” migrants in their house, she differentiates herself from them.

As I listened to Rebecca speak with the sweetly unshakable conviction and steely, smiling certitude that has made her a formidable, if unassuming, leader in Phoenix’s pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement, I wondered what she might accomplish were she able to see the operation of Whiteness in her life with the same clarity with which she sees it operating in the lives of migrants. Rebecca perceives and acknowledges structural Whiteness in many cases. I have heard Rebecca denounce White privilege, speak passionately on the challenges her daughter will face living as a Brown girl (and later woman) in America, and insists that Life and Justice Now and Coalition for Immigration Justice *must* “engage the Hispanic community in a way that they own and have power in this work and are able to have a voice in it.” Rebecca knows that when she speaks of White women, or White people, it is appropriate to use ‘us’ or ‘we.’ However, in the *framing* of her critiques of Whiteness, Rebecca seldom includes herself among those White people she is critiquing, inserting the distance of an implicit ‘they’ where a ‘we’ should be. For example, Rebecca said to me,

One of the questions I was always asked when I did interviews with the Spanish press was, “Why are you doing this for our people? You’re White, why are you doing this for us?” And I always felt really, like, uncomfortable, because I felt like, “Well, am I not supposed to?” Like, shoot, is this not—like—how awful that

somebody—that the Hispanic community would not assume that I *would* do this kind of thing.

At first pass, I understood this statement as a genuine, if perhaps naive, expression of sadness at the fact that Latinx peoples have been so abused and mistreated by White people that they would mistrust any helping hand attached to a White person. Yet simultaneously, Rebecca is perplexed by their curiosity regarding her motives; if Rebecca understands that to be White is to be “these awful colonizers,” why should she be surprised that she would be mistrusted as a White woman? I would argue that is because Rebecca sees herself as outside of, or apart from, Whiteness in a way that she believes makes her unlike other White people. This is not an uncommon urge; many White people, at various points in their antiracist development, may believe they have ‘arrived’ in a way their White peers have not.¹⁷¹ But for Rebecca, it is more complicated than that. Her preoccupation with the “Sicilian lifestyle” in which she was raised, and her certainty that it made her fundamentally different than her White (women) peers, allows her to distance herself from the aspects of Whiteness embedded in that same upbringing that she disliked and repudiated. So does the life that she’s made for herself; after cutting ties with her biological family, Rebecca formed her own family, one that is more racially and

¹⁷¹ Robin DiAngelo discusses this urge to understand antiracism as a destination, rather than as an everyday practice, in her book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018). Shannon Sullivan also discusses similar tendencies, specifically among White women, in *Good White People: The Problem with Middle-Class White Antiracism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014).

ethnically diverse. She married a Latinx man, and her daughter is “dark-skinned.” She lives in an eclectic, racially diverse neighborhood in the urban center of Phoenix. These decisions, conscious ones, were made “because it’s representative of who *I* am, who my community is, who my people are.”

This impulse toward a kind of intentional multiculturalism in community and family formation is not unique to Rebecca. Claire’s story also exemplifies this. An eighty-year-old widow, the younger sister of a venerable lesbian novelist and activist, and an active member of Meg’s Unitarian Universalist congregation, Claire is a straight-backed, six-foot-tall force of nature. When she and her husband first moved to Arizona, the political climate in the state made them both feel like they had to “keep [their] mouths shut,” and so, Claire said, “we turned ourselves in at the Unitarian Church, and that’s what set me on the path of being a serious human rights advocate.”

Shortly after joining the UU church—almost twenty years before I interviewed her—Claire met an Eritrean woman named Faven. Faven had come to the United States to get an education, but she longed to go back to Eritrea to be with her family and to put her degree to use helping her country, which was suffering after decades of political turmoil. However, shortly after Faven arrived in Phoenix the then-president of Eritrea declared himself dictator, and her husband, an ex-freedom fighter, was arrested. Although she had been granted asylum by the U.S. government, and although Claire had helped Faven secure the support of Arizona Senator John McCain in obtaining visas for her children, Faven felt strongly that the Eritrean dictator would not permit her children to

leave his country. She agonized over the decision before her; should she stay in the U.S., where she would be safe, or return to Eritrea to be with her children and risk political reprisal herself? She even wrote to the dictator herself, asking him what to do to ensure the safety of her family. He advised her to return to Eritrea. At this point, Claire had become fast friends with Faven and had, in fact, invited Faven to live with her and her husband while she finished her education—an offer Faven had accepted. Claire begged Faven not to return to Eritrea, but to her dismay, Faven insisted that she had to return to her children. She was arrested as she stepped off the plane. To this day, Faven and her husband remain in prison in Eritrea.

In the eighteen years since Faven's arrest, Claire has dedicated herself to the service of Faven's family and other Eritreans. In the immediate aftermath of the arrest, Claire worked closely with Amnesty International, pulling out all the stops in her efforts to, if not secure Faven's release, at least to ensure international attention remained on her friend's plight. Two years later, she got a call from Faven's brother asking for help. His brother, another of Faven's siblings, had been arrested trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border in Laredo, Texas. This call would begin a nearly two decade long relationship between Claire's and Faven's families. With Claire's help, all of Faven's children have been resettled in the U.S. So has Faven's mother, who now cares for her daughter's children from her own home across the street from theirs in Cleveland, Ohio. Claire has met seven of Faven's eight siblings, visiting several of them in Canada and the U.K.

during her own travels. She also worked with a team of local artists and scholars to create a mobile art installation creating awareness around the brutal Eritrean prison system.

Around that same time, Claire discovered that one of Faven's nephews, Tesfay, was living in Sweden, struggling to find a way to continue his post-secondary education after the dictator of Eritrea had forcibly closed the university where all of Tesfay's academic records were held. Without documentation, he had no way to apply to graduate programs. Luckily for Tesfay, he already had a reputation as a human rights advocate, and Claire knew how to mobilize that reputation. Claire also understood the sociopolitical and socioeconomic weight her and her husband carried in the community of educated White liberals in Phoenix and how to mobilize the connections embedded in that classed and racialized privilege:

So I went to Robert Anderson, who had just started a Master's degree in [name omitted] at ASU, and said, "I think we ought to bring Tesfay Senai over," and he said, "you're darn right, I'd kill to have him." So long story short, my husband and I and Robert all went down to ASU, to the dean of admissions for the graduate school, and said, "it shouldn't matter to you that he doesn't have any paperwork. You should take him." And he did.

Tesfay moved to Phoenix and lived with Claire and her husband while he completed his Master's degree. Claire said that advocating for Tesfay was exciting as

well as rewarding. It reminded Claire of the years she spent advocating for her second daughter, whose dyslexia presented enormous challenges in the 1970s, before parent-advocates like Claire changed the narrative around children with special needs. Claire also sees Faven's family as her own; "I think that this involvement that I've had with Faven and her family—Faven is a year older than my oldest daughter. They're like my kids."

While comments like these may be easy to interpret as racial maternalism, Claire's relationship to the Eritrean community runs deeper than that. "Even when my husband was diagnosed with terminal cancer, we always had people in the house," Claire laughed. "So he—it brought the world to him. We didn't ever have a son, and I think Tesfay being with us for those three years was such a gift. For both of them. He adored him. He adored them all. Tesfay was with us that last time they came and took him to the hospital." I asked Claire where she finds the energy for the sustained advocacy work she's maintained over nearly two decades, especially in the face of her husband's death and as her own age advances. She replied, "I credit it to the fact that I went to girls' school. And then I had the example of my sister and other members of my family. I'm not afraid to speak up for what I know is right," she said. "It also helps that I'm six feet tall," she adds, smiling cheekily, "I don't have to cower in front of authority."

Because of their relationship with Faven, the Unitarian Universalist church to which Claire belongs has sponsored and supported dozens of Eritrean immigrants in recent years. Fellow congregants offer free ESL tutoring, assist Eritrean immigrants with

transportation (to doctors' appointments across town, e.g.), coordinate with Refugee Resettlement International (RRI) to help Eritrean immigrants access services, and have lunch once a month to strategize how they can best support whichever immigrant is most in need at the time. They have created an interwoven community that closely resembles an extended family. Claire, and a few other retired women who attend the UU, are currently trying to get Jemal, a thirteen-year-old Eritrean boy, into Brophy—an all-male, prestigious, private, Jesuit high school—on scholarship. One woman was able to recite the results of Jemal's most recent progress report from memory, and another knew what sports he wanted to play and what got him in trouble with his mother. They spoke of Jemal in the same pride-filled tones with which they talk about their biological grandchildren. This extended family also celebrates holidays together; I met several of the Eritrean immigrants whom Claire and the UU have assisted at the UU's informal 'Friendsgiving' meal, where Eritreans of all ages and their children shared a holiday meal with a dozen or so UU congregants, all White, all elderly. There was a familiarity and an ease amongst everyone that I have seldom seen in such cross-racial, cross-cultural gatherings. This isn't to say that cultural, racial, and classed power dynamics are not still very much at play in these interactions, as they surely are; however, the legacy Claire has built over the past two decades has left a lasting impression on dozens of White congregants who have become accidental activists and advocates as a result of Claire's dedication and insistence that this was an issue worth her church's time and attention. Both Claire and her fellow congregants have figured out how to use their White privilege

as a wedge, rather than a roadblock, in service of an Eritrean immigrant community they have come to value and love.

When I asked Claire what she hoped her legacy would be, she responded:

I hope that in my life, I have created a web of people who all know each other now, who likely wouldn't have before. I hope that for the refugees, that I've made it possible for them to adjust to their new lives and make their way more easily in our society. So I hope—[pause] A bridge. A bridge between people. A bridge between cultures. To get stuff done. And most of all, to accomplish really good, meaningful things. And to have fun doing it. I've said to Sesuna [Jemal's mother], 'oh, I'm so glad your English is getting better because now we can make jokes together!' We always have fun. Life is too short not to...Joyful change, yes. That's what I want my legacy to be.

This joy defines Claire's personality, and it shines out of her in an uncommon way. After losing a dear friend to a brutal and unjust prison system halfway around the world, after losing a husband who had been her best friend and partner for decades, and in defiance of the notion that entering her ninth decade could slow her, Claire remains abundantly joyful.

These participants work in very different corners of the broad coalition of pro-(im)migrants' rights individuals and organizations, and they have each arrived to this work from vastly different sociopolitical circumstances. Each brings her own intersectionally inflected experiences, beliefs, and biases. I shared their stories here because together they create a snapshot of the complex and overlapping reasons that middle- and upper middle-class White women become involved in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement.

Excepting Fannie, whose disability fundamentally alters both her perception of her White womanhood and her framework for interpreting the world around her through its "sitpoint" epistemology, every co-participant came to pro-(im)migrants' rights work through one (or more) of five broad paths.¹⁷² Some, like Annette and Elena, came to the work through their own search for meaning, community, and belonging. Others, like Margo, were raised in religious communities in which progressive and/or antiracist activism was considered natural, even expected. Many were drawn into social justice work more broadly by someone close to them; both Ruth and Meg came to immigration-related activism after the comings out of their LGBTQ+ children and Claire was first exposed to the idea of structural social (in)justice by her lesbian activist sister. More than half were motivated, at least in part, by the disbelief, discomfort, and inevitable outrage that accompanied seeing someone close to them experience structural oppression. And a

¹⁷² For more on "sitpoint," see Rosemarie Garland Thomson, 2002, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14(3): 1-32.

few found no other way to alleviate or assuage their White guilt and shame than by ‘giving back’ in the ways they know or are comfortable with.

The nine stories above may illustrate common themes, but they do not, and cannot, encapsulate the complexity and specificity of each co-participants’ story. I have worked side-by-side with Nancy, a 70 year old retired high school teacher who became passionate about (im)migrants’ rights early in her teaching career but whose activism was catalyzed when one of her underage and undocumented students died in Mexico, seeking treatment for leukemia after a U.S. hospital transferred him south of the border. I interviewed Glinda, a 28 year old county government worker who found her way to pro-(im)migrants’ rights activism through a primarily White antiracist student group on campus during her sophomore year—a group that she would later advocate disbanding because it couldn’t escape a “White savior” loop and wasn’t doing the work to organize working-class White people that Glinda felt it should. I have served in a pro-(im)migrants’ rights community coalition with, and interviewed, Jeannie, a queer 45 year old ordained mother of a biracial adult son who comes to pro-(im)migrant activism where it intersects with her work as a prison abolitionist; Madit, an eccentric 69 year old health worker who travels to remote corners of the globe for more than half the year with Doctors Without Borders and who chose her pseudonym because it means “wise old woman” in Dinka, a dialect native to South Sudan; and Rosa, an imposing and capable 61 year old physical therapist who has spent her life dedicated to serving the United Church of Christ. I marshalled resources alongside Murph, a stout 64 year old retiree whose

gruff, no-nonsense exterior belies a tendency to cry early and often when discussing her advocacy work and her foster children (all Latinx, all touched by the (im)migration system in one way or another). I have handed out food next to Tamara, a 62 year old woman who describes her life as a “quest for [her] own personal religion” and continues to do pro-(im)migrants’ rights activism simply because “in order for me, personally, to feel like I’m a decent person, I have to do something.” So she collects clothes, hands out food, and moves resources, hoping, it seems, that each act will be added to a cosmic tally. Finally, I cut my own pro-(im)migrant activist teeth working beside (and learning from) Diana, without whom I wouldn’t have met many of the women whose stories I described above. Diana works exhaustively to realize her vision of a future where not a single (im)migrant passes through the Phoenix Greyhound Station without at least a small gesture of support. Far too often, this support is just a bottle of water and a kind word in a language that sounds like home, offered unexpectedly by one, small, wiry, elderly, White woman in men’s jeans and an old T-shirt.

Each of these women has an imperfect and uncomfortable relationship to their own Whiteness and White womanhood, and each has struggled to forge a new way of enacting her White womanhood. Each of them has chosen to mobilize that White womanhood, and its attendant privileges, in individual and concerted ways, in order to resist racial rituals of exclusion and an immigration regime built on the exploitation of Black, Brown, and indigenous peoples. In the following chapters, I turn to how my co-participants understand, enact, and ultimately remake their citizenship with mixed results.

Chapter 3, “Am I my brother’s keeper? Yes. And he’s mine”: White Womanhood as ‘Key’ to the Intersectional Enactment of Citizenship

Although my co-participants’ social positionalities and experiences vary along lines of class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, and more, each understands and exercises her citizenship from within the parameters of her White womanhood, which is *always* intersectionally attenuated. Race and gender are sociopolitical constructions with material effects that govern how privilege, power, and (dis)advantage get distributed, and they operate very much in tandem.¹⁷³ Yet, they manifest in different fashions in different contexts, their meaning and weight calibrated in relation to other vectors of subjectivity, such as class, sexuality, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, etc.¹⁷⁴ Thus, while my co-participants each experience their citizenship *as* White women, other, sometimes conflicting, relationships to power mean that their individual understandings, expressions, and enactments of that citizenship will vary, often significantly.

Imagine for a moment that each co-participant’s experience of citizenship is a piece of music, a song. White womanhood would be the ‘key’ in which the song is played. It is the scale in which the song can move, the parameters within which

¹⁷³Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991); Vivian M. May, *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁷⁴ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

innumerable combinations of individual notes may be struck. The key both constrains the song and gives it coherency. Though free to dance along that scale, notes played within it are bound to it.

Even within the key, these ‘notes’—the individual choices and actions of each White woman—contain infinite possibilities. After all, Michael Jackson’s “Man in the Mirror” and Lynyrd Skynyrd’s “Sweet Home Alabama” are played in the same key: G major. What makes these songs *sound* so different are the arrangements and the movements of each song’s *chords*. Groupings of multiple, individual notes, chords lend emotion, character, individuality. Paired with lyrics, the chords played in G major can produce an anthem whose light, tripping melody mirrors its singer’s hopefulness and desire to spark positive change. Or they can render a song of different kind, with heavier intonations, an anthem always performed in the metaphorical—if not literal—shadow of the Confederate flag.¹⁷⁵ The ‘chords’ of each co-participant’s song vary because each woman’s relationship to (and her experiences within) class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, and place varies and so too then must the combinations to which she puts her experiences, expressions, feelings, and actions. Those identities and experiences inform the individual ways in which my co-participants enact

¹⁷⁵ Smooth Radio, “The Story of ‘Man in the Mirror’ by Michael Jackson,” *Smooth Radio*, 7 March 2018. Accessed 10 January 2020, <https://www.smoothradio.com/features/michael-jackson-man-in-the-mirror-meaning-lyrics/>; Felix Contreras, “Unfurling ‘Sweet Home Alabama,’ a Tapestry of Southern Discomfort,” 17 December 2018. Accessed 10 January 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2018/12/17/676863591/sweet-home-alabama-lynyrd-skynyrd-southern-discomfort-american-anthem>.

their citizenship and thus resonate within each woman's song, changing its texture and tone.

To comprehend White women's understandings and enactments of citizenship as influenced only by their race and gender is to only know the key in which they play their songs. In order to make sense of the 'notes,' 'chords,' and 'arrangements' in those songs—their individual choices, the actions they take as a result, and the consequences thereafter—we must employ intersectionality as an analytic and bring it to bear on White women's citizenship. In the previous chapter, I examined how White women became pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and argued that my co-participants' life experiences—shaped by class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, and community, as well as by their White womanhood—proffer complex, divergent, and highly intersectional frameworks with which they understand themselves and their activism. That chapter unpacked how varied relationships to Whiteness, womanhood, and Americanness determine the manner in which co-participants understand their White womanhood and, thus, engage with their pro-(im)migrant activism and advocacy work. This analysis also gestured toward how White womanhood is constructed and enacted as a habitus, and how some White women's antiracism leads them to reject racial rituals of exclusion, resist the immigration regime that governs their community, and forge a new way of leveraging and enacting their White womanhood. In this chapter, I argue that the pro-(im)migrants' rights activists with whom I worked, and those who I interviewed,

understand and enact their *citizenship* in ways fundamentally defined by both their intersectional identity and their social positionality *as* White women.

To illustrate this argument, I will first provide the theoretical framework that guides my understanding of the relationship between White womanhood, intersectional specificity and social location, and the enactment of citizenship. In doing so, I will both illustrate the long overdue need for feminist, scholarly attention to intersectional White womanhood and provide an example of how one co-participant's enactments of citizenship are facilitated by her White womanhood even as they are complicated by other vectors of subjectivity. Next, I examine how gender and (White) womanhood specifically have great bearing on co-participants' everyday interactions as activists and their enactments of citizenship. In this section, I underscore the ways in which personal choice and individual agency cannot be disentangled from one's social positionality or one's place in social genealogies, but rather work together to define a woman's life and experiences. Thirdly, I will examine how co-participants understand their citizenship in relation to their White privilege and explore some of the theoretical and ethical problems co-participants wrestle with as they try to mobilize that same privilege on behalf of non-White, non-citizen Others. Specifically, I address the ways in which White women often understand their citizenship as an accident of birth and their racial responsibilities as ultimately individualistic, which in turn precludes anti-racist community-building *and* cross-racial coalitional politics while simultaneously speeding activist burnout. Finally, I explore how some co-participants have adopted more communitarian, relational, and

holistic understandings of citizenship and racial responsibility, which has allowed them to decenter themselves and their Whiteness, thus creating community, connection, and change within and beyond themselves and their close-knit, predominantly White, activist networks. In conclusion, I will reflect on what an intersectional analysis of White women's citizenship has to offer the scholarly community and gesture toward the role of power and privilege in enactments of citizenship and how White women in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement ultimately remake their citizenship with mixed results.

Citizenship-as-Belonging and the Intersectional Analysis of White Womanhood

Boiled down to its purest form, citizenship is a matter of belonging. Citizenship “refers to full membership in the community within which one lives.” That membership, in turn, confers both rights within the community and “reciprocal obligations” toward it.¹⁷⁶ Belonging in the United States has primarily turned on questions of race, gender, and class (among others). Because it relies on the relationships between gender, race, class, and other vectors of domination and oppression—and those are socially constructed and thus temporally contingent—citizenship remains historically and contextually changeable. While citizenship has held many meanings over the course of U.S. history, formal legal status the most obvious among them, this stripped down definition of the rights and responsibilities of belonging must be our starting place. A theoretical

¹⁷⁶ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance,” *American Sociological Review* 76:1 (2011), 3.

framework that understands citizenship as such provides a guide to understanding how it is (re)produced, reified, and refashioned through social, political, legal, economic, *and* cultural mechanisms on interpersonal, communal, and national scales. Citizenship-as-belonging signals the operative relationship at the heart of the concept itself: to belong requires recognition by other members in the community. And, in the context of the United States, recognition primarily turns on the axes of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Thus, citizenship should be of primary concern to feminist scholars and theorists. To consider citizenship as inseparable from belonging reveals its nature: communal, reciprocal, and relational. It is also, in Evelyn Nakano Glenn's words, omnirelevant. Citizenship structures public life through its impact on political participation, the development of public and state policy, and economic opportunity; likewise, it deeply affects private life through its interventions in household formation, legal family ties and rights, and its tendency to "interact with and magnif(y) other social inequalities."¹⁷⁷

As such, it is critical to identify the specificities of citizenship and its functions. T.H. Marshall first differentiated between civil, political, and social citizenship. Civil citizenship grants the rights vested in individual freedom, such as freedom of speech and of faith. Political citizenship gives the right to participate in political decision-making, such as the right to vote. And finally, social citizenship allows for "the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the

¹⁷⁷ Glenn, "Constructing Citizenship," 2-3.

standards prevailing in society.”¹⁷⁸ While there are some obviously drawbacks and imperfections to comparing Marshall’s communitarian framework for understanding citizenship with the more Lockean notion of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” bringing the two in conversation momentarily helps demonstrate a point. Many co-participants invoke this phrase, or reference the document in which it appears, when discussing their frameworks for understanding citizenship and their aspirations for American citizenship in particular. Using this well-known, lay framework of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” co-participants express what they see as the rights and responsibilities entailed in their citizenship with grounded specificity. For example, citizenship has civil aspects: participating in the day-to-day mechanisms of the governance of their community, described as everything from serving on jury duty to picking up after one’s dog in the neighborhood. These actions preserve and perpetuate the conditions under which they have the right to *live*. Citizenship also entails attending to their political duties and the maintenance of their *liberties*: voting, attending public rallies, supporting democratic principles (for instance, one co-participant mentioned donating, and paying attention, to the ACLU). And finally, they saw citizenship as the framework of belonging which governs where, how, with whom, and to what degree they, and the people in their communities, can expect to build a life of happiness—for

¹⁷⁸ T.H. Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class,” in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York: Doubleday, 1964).

some co-participants, this meant engaging with issues like same-sex marriage, police brutality, and deportation.

Framed as such, the differentiation between civil, political, and social citizenship and its connections to how citizenship has long been conceptualized in the United States helps us lay bare some of the hypocrisies embedded in one of the very founding documents upon which we base this conceptualization. After all, one need hardly look further than the streets of Ferguson, Missouri, or the immigration detention cells of McAllen, Texas, to find degradation of life, liberty in tatters, and the pursuit of happiness precluded by the conditions of oppression. Nor is this betrayal solely a contemporary issue; the promises of citizenship made in the Declaration have never held wholly (or in some cases, even partially) true for the vast majority of Americans across time and place. The gap between formal/legal citizenship and *substantive* citizenship, the actual ability to exercise the rights of citizenship, has often been vast in the United States.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). For more on how that gap between formal and substantive citizenship is established, maintained, and reproduced, see: Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012); Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Katie E. Oliviero, "The Immigration State of Emergency: Racializing and Gendering National Vulnerability in Twenty-First Century Citizenship and Deportation Regimes," *Feminist Formations* 25:2 (2013); Aihwa Ong, "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States," *Current Anthropology* 37:5 (1996). For more on how Latinx people, specifically, have occupied the interstices between formal and substantive citizenship and how they have experienced the policing of citizenship, see: Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; 2008); Lee Bebout, *Whiteness on the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White* (New York: New York University Press, 2016); Leo Chavez, *Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2013, 2nd. ed.);

Glenn acknowledges this, and she amends Marshall's theory. She argues that it is only when one's social rights are realized that one can then access political and civil rights as well, and that in the United States various groups of people have been excluded, oppressed, and/or exploited through the control of their social rights, their labor, and their *citizenship*. One's race, gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and more have always, as Glenn explains, attenuated one's access to social rights. Furthermore, citizenship practices from the local to the national level have functioned to exclude and exploit certain citizens and non-citizens alike.¹⁸⁰ If we understand citizenship as belonging, rather than solely legal status, this seeming contradiction rights itself; legal status is not always recognition *enough* to belong. Phoenix provides an apt illustration of the difference between formal and substantive citizenship; here, racial (non)recognition often carries more weight than documentation.¹⁸¹

Natalie Cisneros, "'Alien Sexuality: Race, Maternity, and Citizenship,'" *Hypatia* 28:2 (2013); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz, *Homeland Maternity: U.S. Security Culture and the New Reproductive Regime* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019); R. Jacobson, *New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Anna Sampaio, *Terrorizing Latina/o Immigrants: Race, Gender, and Immigration Policy Post-9/11* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015). For more on how access to substantive citizenship varies by region, ethnicity, and temporality, see: Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril became the Model Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹⁸⁰ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Glenn, "Constructing Citizenship."

¹⁸¹ Annette D. Beresford, "Homeland Security as an American Ideology: Implications for US Policy and Action," *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 1:3 (2004); M. Zatz, "Chicano Youth Gangs and Crime: The Creation of a Moral Panic," *Contemporary Crises* 11:2 (1987); Michelle Téllez, "Arizona: A Reflection and Conversation on the Migrant Rights Movements, 2015," *Social Justice* 42:3-4 (2015); Michelle Téllez, "Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the US/Mexico Border," *Gender & Society* 22:5 (2008).

While Glenn and others like her have successfully employed an intersectional framework to theoretically flesh out how citizenship administers (dis)advantage along intersecting lines of race, class, and ethnicity,

other feminist theorists have amply addressed the ways in which women's access, rights, and obligations of citizenship fundamentally differ from men's.¹⁸² Women navigate their relationship to citizenship both as an aggregate and as individuals. To truly understand women's citizenship in the US, one must grasp the unequal burdens and expectations placed on men and women and their expressions of citizenship.¹⁸³ While women may lack the political power to fully participate in "the processes that actually chart the nation's course," they still play a critical role in discourses of American democracy. This is, in no small part, because hegemonic (White) femininity's virtues (piety, chastity, modesty) and vices (promiscuity, infidelity, capriciousness) are embedded in "the moral dynamics" that shape American citizenship.¹⁸⁴

However, too many of these feminist scholars of citizenship neglect the intersectional specificities of *White* women's citizenship, either because they focus

¹⁸² Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Carole Pateman, "Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship," in *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Perspectives, and Female Subjectivity*, eds. Gisela Bock and Susan James (New York: Routledge, 1992); Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (Hill & Wang, 1999); Patrice DiQuinzio, "Love and Reason in the Public Sphere: Maternalist Civic Engagement and the Dilemma of Difference," In *Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy, Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy* (SUNY Press, 2005); Katerina Deliovky, *White Femininity: Race, Gender, and Power* (Fernwood Publishers, 2010); Jocelyn Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens: Women, Virtue, and Vice in Backlash Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).

¹⁸³ Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*.

¹⁸⁴ Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*, 2.

intently on the citizenship of racially marginalized women or they offer a universal, and thus anti-intersectional, theory of women's citizenship. While it would consume far too much space to individually address all of the scholarship on women's citizenship, one example of the latter stands out in particular. In her monograph, *Suspect Citizens: Women, Virtue, and Vice in Backlash Politics*, Jocelyn Boryczka makes a strong case for the importance of feminine virtue and vice to the construction of American identity, citizenship, and democracy; however, her analysis is weakened by her failure to acknowledge the ways in which virtue and vice move differently among White women than among women of color—who in turn experience virtue and vice in relation to their Blackness, Brownness, and/or indigeneity—and how the differential construction of *both* White and non-White women's citizenship together critically shapes American citizenship.¹⁸⁵ In doing so, she elides the differences between how vice and virtue create a far different warp and weft in the fabric of womanhood(s) of color than it does in the fabric of White womanhood. This unfortunately demonstrates the pitfalls of universalizing one's analysis of women's citizenship and the theoretical blind spots it creates. These blind spots lead scholars like Boryczka to correctly identify the ways in which the very practices of citizenship in the U.S. are always already gendered without fully recognizing or engaging with the fact that White women have always accessed and enacted those practices differently than either White men or women of color.¹⁸⁶ Unlike

¹⁸⁵ Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*.

¹⁸⁶ For more on how practices of U.S. nationalism and citizenship are already gendered (and sexualized), see Joane Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," *Ethnic*

their counterparts of color, men and women alike, (respectable) White women have always been able to lay claim to a degree of power, able to exercise their citizenship broadly, if still within certain bounds.

Without applying an intersectional analytic to White womanhood, specifically, we cannot begin to understand how the simultaneous experience of racial privilege and gendered subordination renders White womanhood fundamentally different from either masculine Whiteness or womanhood(s) of color. Given that citizenship and belonging in the United States are mediated by gender, race, class, and sexuality (most prominently, at least), it should come as no surprise that to understand individual citizens' enactments of their citizenship requires an intersectional analysis of those citizens' social location(s).

Such an examination reveals both the ways in which White women are disciplined and the ways in which they are rewarded vis-à-vis their proximity to proper White womanhood. Simultaneously privileged and subordinated by their gender and race, White women's behavior is further constrained by "disciplinary regimes," through which women are coerced into—and rewarded for performing—hegemonic White womanhood. The pillars of this hegemonic White womanhood are compulsory White heterosexuality, the reproduction of Whiteness through rituals of White unity and/or exclusion, and conformity to a normative White femininity.¹⁸⁷

and *Racial Studies* 21:2 (1998). While Nagel's article acknowledges the role race plays in hegemonic masculinity and femininity--as well as the construction of 'enemy' men and women--the article doesn't fully engage with how (non-)Whiteness predetermines those enactments of gendered subjectivity--which then have bearing on the making of nations.

¹⁸⁷ Deliofsky, *White Femininity*.

Compliance yields significant rewards; White women who abide by these restrictions are entrusted with the moral guardianship of the republic and its citizens and are endowed with the special protected status reserved for hegemonic White femininity.¹⁸⁸ Too often the return on this investment in White heteropatriarchy proves too alluring to resist, and White women sign up to serve as the foot soldiers of gendered White supremacy all too willingly.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps not as often, but just as impactfully, some White women have consciously committed themselves to racial justice and contributed to a rich culture of White antiracism.¹⁹⁰ For both kinds of White women—those invested in White heteropatriarchy and those who resist it—the exercise of their substantive citizenship is defined by their White womanhood.

The Uneven Effects of Intersectional White Womanhood: An Example

¹⁸⁸ Linda Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment, An American Perspective,” *American Quarterly* 28:2 (1976). See also Allison Berg, *Mothering the Race: Women’s Narratives on Reproduction 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2002); Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*; Nagel, “Masculinity and Nationalism”; Melody Rose and Mark O. Hatfield, “Republican Motherhood Redux: Women as Contingent Citizens in 21st Century America,” *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy* 29:1 (2007).

¹⁸⁹ See Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Jane Junn, “The Trump Majority: White Womanhood and the Making of Female Voters in the U.S.,” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5:2 (2017).

¹⁹⁰ Becky Thompson, *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Kim A. Case, “Discovering the Privilege of Whiteness: White Women’s Reflections on Anti-racist Identity and Ally Behavior,” *Journal of Social Issues* 68:1 (2012). See also Shannon Sullivan, *Good White People: The Problem with Middle-class White Anti-racism* (SUNY Press, 2014).

Nowhere is the tangled role of power and privilege in citizenship more knotted, or more productive, than among White women; my discussion in chapter two of Fannie's activism testifies to this. By 2016, Fannie was tired of saying that "somebody oughta do something." So, in spite of the obstacles presented by her disability, she ran for public office, figuring she was "somebody." She won. Now, Fannie's Whiteness may not have been the voice telling her that "she was somebody," but it legitimized that conviction and amplified its possibilities. Meanwhile, her gender, in conjunction with her class and her Whiteness, rendered her perfectly socially suited to (and socially *acceptable* in) the community advocacy role that helped launch her bid for office when she did finally decide to run. As a White woman, Fannie has inherited the legacies of republican motherhood, municipal housekeeping, and moral guardianship. Under these social and ideological constructions, the children, welfare, and moral health of a community (or a nation) fall solidly under the providence of White women.¹⁹¹ Thus, Fannie's White womanhood justified and legitimized her as an authority on each of the councils, panels, and commissions upon which she has sat—a fact she well knows. It has served as a wedge, propping open the door for her to enter rooms where her voice matters to those making decisions for her community and her city.

¹⁹¹ For more on Republican Motherhood, see Kerber, "The Republican Mother." For more on municipal housekeeping, see Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1790-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (1984); Juliann Sivulka, "From Domestic to Municipal Housekeeper: The influence of the sanitary reform movement on changing women's roles in America, 1860-1920," *Journal of American Culture* 22(4) (1999). For more on how women have been considered moral guardians of the republic, see Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*.

However, Fannie also recognizes when being a woman, especially a woman doing the kind of public progressive advocacy to which she is committed, presents very real challenges and threats. “I get death threats a lot,” she told me. When asked how often this occurs, she shrugged. “More than one and less than a million, depending on where I am in my work,” she answered baldly. Her point was either way, there are too many. She continued, “With women...our threats aren’t *I’m going to beat you up*, or *we’re going to settle this like men*. It’s, *you need to be gang raped*. You know? *You need to die choking on a you know what*.” Although White women experience enormous privilege, endowed with “unique moral and political roles” under the “dominant religious, scientific, and cultural ideologies” of White racial superiority, their gender simultaneously leaves them exposed, vulnerable to misogyny and (threat of) sexual violence.¹⁹²

These are quotidian dangers for any woman working in progressive politics, advocacy, and/or activism and ones with which many of my co-participants are intimately familiar. However, Fannie’s subjectivity is also fundamentally shaped by her disability. During our interview, Fannie recounted a story that illustrates her liminal social status as a disabled White woman. Fannie relies on home health aides and personal assistants for a number of tasks. At the time, she had been employing an undocumented Latinx woman and during a trip to Costco, Fannie observed the following:

¹⁹² Newman, *White Women’s Rights*, 7.

And when we left—you've been to Costco, right? So I handed her my receipt, and my cart full of stuff, and she pushes it up, and I tell her, "you know, you're going to give the receipt to this guy, he's going to check our cart." She's prepared for that, they're going to check our cart. She's Brown. And as we get up closer, I just get this vibe off of him, watching him deal with people, and I realize that he doesn't like people of color. He's like, really—if you're Black or you're Brown, he's really checking out your cart. If you're White, you can just—it's pretty obvious. And he—the way he talked to people was different. So, I'm like [sighs], I've got to—I was going to move into place to protect her. So, I come around her, to be White, right? And he glances at me, and then takes the receipt from her. And interacts with her. And won't look at me, won't talk to me. And [after,] she goes, "what just happened?" And I'm like, "well, he, you know—I have a disability, you know, people tend not to be very comfortable with that." And as we're walking out, she saw some other folks do some similar things where, like, they came around a corner, got close, and then just physically recoiled and then moved. And as we're putting our groceries into the car, she finally said to me, she goes, "but you're White."

Fannie's Latinx healthcare worker did not understand how the privilege granted by Fannie's Whiteness was temporarily subsumed by her disability; as an undocumented Latinx woman working in Phoenix, Arizona, the home healthcare worker lives a life defined both by her Brownness *and* by her ablebodiedness. In fact, it is the very

intersection of that Brownness and ablebodiedness that enables the routine exploitation of her labor as an undocumented immigrant worker caught in the immigration regime governing Latinx people in the U.S. that Fannie sought to ameliorate by hiring her (and paying her fairly). Yet, drawing upon knowledge gained from her own embodied experience, Fannie saw something the home healthcare worker didn't: the deep discomfort that visible disability can evoke in the able-bodied and the mitigating effects that can have on one's privilege. Fannie saw that, regardless of the racist disdain with which he treated the Black and Brown people in his line that day, the Costco employee still felt more comfortable interacting with them than he did with a White woman in a wheelchair.

I asked Fannie whether she believed that her disability *qualified* her White womanhood or if disability painted her with such a large brush that her White womanhood became obscured or even invisible. She replied, "I think the disability is all people see. I think that as kids, we're taught not to stare, and that translates to 'don't look.' And then, we don't even see people with disabilities. We don't want to interact with them." As Fannie understood it, her White, cisfemale privilege *should* have allowed her to shield her home healthcare worker from a racist microaggression; had she not been in her wheelchair, the employee would have almost certainly interacted with her just as he had the other White customers before her. Instead, her disability rendered her invisible and divested her of enough of her racial privilege that her home healthcare worker was left to face the microaggressive Costco employee alone, unshielded. And yet, Fannie is

the first to admit that, even within the disabled community, that “a lot of [her] experience is colored by [her] Whiteness” and that her own life would have been much harder if “we had been Black, if our last name had been García instead of something so Anglo.”

These anecdotes illustrate a critical point: Fannie’s Whiteness, her womanhood, and her disability *together* shape, constrain, and define Fannie’s citizenship and how she can enact it. Her Whiteness and her class facilitate her entrée into the halls of power, while her womanhood makes her citizenship, and thus her place in those halls, provisional and, at times, dangerous.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, her disability often literally bars her entry and consigns her to what she calls “a subset of humanity.” She says, “I’m not fully a woman, I’m not fully White—I mean, clearly I am. But I’m seen outside of those communities, an Other.” It is clear from the interaction in Costco that Fannie’s disability can mitigate her White womanhood to the point where she no longer has full social citizenship; the disdain with which the visibly disabled are regularly treated obviously precludes “the ability to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society.”¹⁹⁴ *And yet*, when Fannie realized that state laws and policies that were never made with people like her in mind needed to be changed, she felt empowered to run for office. Furthermore, the innumerable benefits that accompany her White womanhood unquestionably abetted her campaign. And so, Fannie’s specific intersectional location has uneven, and at times, contradictory effects on her access to and

¹⁹³ Boryczka, *Suspect Citizens*.

¹⁹⁴ Marshall, “Citizenship and Social Class.”

exercise of civil, political, social—and thus substantive—citizenship. Her White womanhood radically shapes her citizenship, even as it is mitigated and modified by other intersections of (dis)advantage.

The White Woman Citizen and the Invisible Inescapability of Gender

While many co-participants immediately made the connection between their Whiteness and their citizenship, few saw where their womanhood had bearing on their citizenship. Stephanie told me, “part of the definition of being White and being a White woman is that you’re completely unaware of so much. So in a way, you are asking me to describe what is invisible to me by definition.” She went on to muse, “is it linked to my being a woman? No, I don’t—I mean, I guess it obviously is [pause]. My god, I’m so unexamined!” Tamara also didn’t see an immediate connection between her (White) womanhood and her citizenship. Even when I reframed the question to ask if her gender affected her work in the community, Tamara responded, “I don’t really think of it that way, although yes, probably, it does. But I mean, to the question, I’d say yes. But do I ever think about it?” A resounding no.

Glinda was also at a loss when asked to link her (White) womanhood to her citizenship in our interview. However, in an unrecorded conversation, Glinda recounted to me a story about an interaction she’d had with a man of color in a racial justice organization of which she was a part. She noted that much of her life, and her conception of herself as a woman, had been shaped by the unwanted sexual attention she had received from men. However, in the aftermath a sexually uncomfortable encounter with

this man of color, she also felt that what she felt, thought, and said carried more weight within the organization—not only because her gender but because of her racialized gender *in relation* to his masculinity of color. In this case, her White womanhood, imbued as it is with fraught racial histories of White women’s sexual relationships to men of color, in conjunction with her privileged status within the organization (which is itself a function of her Whiteness/White womanhood), became a weapon of which she had to be wary; it would be too easy to do sexualized and racialized harm without meaning to. Thus, although Glinda couldn’t connect the two in theory, her membership with this racial justice organization—an organization which mobilized its mostly White participants’ *citizenship* on behalf of racial justice—was highly gendered as well as highly racialized, and she knew it. White women’s role in the biopolitical and necropolitical control of Black (and Brown) men via accusations of sexual abuse or assault haunted Glinda’s sense of her own White womanhood, even as its linkages to citizenship remained obscured to her.

At twenty-eight Glinda is at least a generation younger than many of my other co-participants (for example, Stephanie and Tamara are fifty-nine and sixty-two, respectively) and has spent more time reflecting on the impact her gendered and racial subjectivity has had on her life than some of her peers, thanks in part to a minor in Women’s Studies and several other social justice-oriented undergraduate courses. In our interview, she went so far as to call White womanhood “dangerous” in relation to both citizenship broadly and her advocacy work in particular. She sees the sociopolitical

weight that White womanhood can bring to bear; as I demonstrated above, she is also aware of what (hegemonic) White womanhood has allowed and what has been done in its name.¹⁹⁵ Ultimately, the question troubled her, and she found it “difficult to talk about, I guess.” She is not alone in struggling to make sense of the links between her White womanhood and her citizenship.

Yet, when asked if their identity as women made their respective tasks as a pro-(im)migrants rights’ advocate and/or activist easier, harder, or just plain different from those of male advocates and activists, co-participants were far, far more likely to see gendered specificities. Diana provides an apt example of exactly how gendered her day-to-day work as an activist is—and how aware she is of that gendering:

It’s immensely helpful to me, that I’m a woman. Particularly when dealing with moms and kids. Listen, if I’m trying to get people to a host family, and if it’s not a church, then I need to do two things, right? Instill confidence and build relationships. So I meet the host at the door, and I say, ‘Listen, here’s the deal. This mom is feeling a little concerned, so you’re my best friend, ok?’ We’re going to hug. We’re going to talk like we’ve known each other for ten years, even if we haven’t—Now, remember, this isn’t just some random person off the street I’ve asked to host, this is someone who has been referred to me by someone I trust. I

¹⁹⁵ For more on the potential racist, imperialist, and/or oppressive power of White womanhood, see for example, Newman, *White Women’s Rights* and McRae, *Mothers of Mass Resistance*.

don't do strangers. But I may not know them that well. I'm building rapport. That's what I need to do. For the host as much as for the migrant. So I'll say, 'Listen, this is my friend!', and I'll put my arm around the host, 'and listen, she's got this great house, but she does have a dog. Yes, I know, but it's a very nice dog!' You know, yadda yadda. By that point, I've usually been there for hours. And after that time, people, for the most part, trust me. And I don't think most moms would trust me in that role if I were a man, no.

Reflecting on a career spent doing (im)migrant advocacy through her work as an ESL teacher, Nancy also believes that her role as a woman positively impacts her work: "My relationships with immigrant families—I think that clearly the fact that I'm a woman, and they know that I care deeply about them on some kind of maternal level, that makes all the difference." Despite the essentialist maternalism embedded in such a statement, it is still worth taking seriously that Nancy full-heartedly believes that her womanhood brings something singular and necessary to her advocacy work. She also believes that the migrant families with whom she worked appreciated the fact that she was a woman and that her advocacy for their children came from that place of feminine, maternal care. Even Stephanie, who doesn't see her gender as particularly related to her citizenship, *does* see the ways in which her individual interactions with her migrant clients are shaped by her gender: "Communicating with all of my clients probably goes smoother because I'm a woman, because there's less of a power inequity than with a

male attorney. I think it makes it easier for my female clients to work with me, for sure.” Stephanie also quickly noted that immigration lawyers are overwhelmingly female. Why?, I asked. “Because the pay sucks!” Stephanie laughed it off, saying she’s not entirely sure why so many immigration attorneys are women, but she suspects immigration law may offer a more flexible schedule (which working moms need) than a subspecialty like corporate law would allow. Or perhaps it was because of some other reason of which she wasn’t aware; she didn’t want to speculate and thus fall prey to “pesky stereotypes.” In a separate interview with another co-participant, Jeannie offered another explanation: “I think that women bring a certain amount of wisdom and compassion. Just because of those past oppressions that we were put in, or are still continually put in.”

This is a common theme in interviews: While co-participants struggle to see where their womanhood has bearing on their citizenship, they often see their activism through the lens of their own gendered oppression and often believe it gives them greater insight and impact than their male counterparts doing the same work. Such arguments usually (though not always) rely on gender essentialism, and though they occur across the narratives of many co-participants, they are far more common among older advocates and activists. Annette, age 63, believes that “as a woman, you *still*—in some place in your head, there are those times that you’ve been put down. And probably, if you don’t know it, you’re put down even more. So I think that when you are working with communities that are downtrodden, you see yourself in them.” Nearing seventy, Madit laughed

throatically and unabashedly when she proclaimed, “I just think women have more guts than men. I just think we do! We aren’t afraid to get our hands dirty, to make a mistake. Men are more—I think they are more tentative.” Ruth told me that “I think that, if you’ve ever been treated unfairly—any treatment like that can wake you up, make it easier for you to shift viewpoints. Some people cannot do that at all. I don’t know if it’s just because they’ve never had a problem in their life or what, you know, but some people are just not fluid thinkers. A lot of men can, but maybe not as *many* men can. In my experience.”

Even co-participants who do not use gender essentialism as a framework for understanding their work still engage with their work from their gendered subjectivities, *as* White women. As I noted in Chapter 2, Meg (notably also in her late sixties) rejects what she calls “the light in me recognizes the light in you” discourse and notes that White women are at risk of re-centering themselves and their Whiteness if they fail to see the key differences between their experience and the experiences of women of color (or Central American asylum-seeking migrants of any gender, for that matter). Yet she still believes that:

Women, because we’ve been within patriarchal societies for so long, we have had the most basic reason to be more involved in human rights, and that is that we’ve been oppressed as women! But out of that comes something positive—my immigrant friends say, ‘oppressed people can recognize oppression.’ Let’s say that you put two groups, who are oppressed in different ways, in the same room.

Let's say transgender people and differently abled people. Now, they don't know each other, and they've never really worked for each other's rights. But as soon as they get to talking about the *lack* of rights in their own group, the other group can start to see it that much faster, and vice versa. So that's—and it's not that women are better. It's because women have known the oppression.

Thus, while co-participants may not see the gendered specificities of their *citizenship*, writ large, they absolutely recognize when their womanhood inflects their interactions with migrants and their children and influences their perception of others' oppression. They understand intimately how that same womanhood has contributed to *their* devaluation and oppression *as* women. Even so, they have identified specific, gendered value and potential in their (White) womanhood that they ultimately hope to mobilize.

Gendered Genealogy and Personality in White Women's Social Advocacy Work

How, why, and on behalf of whom my co-participants' have mobilized the social clout invested in them vis-à-vis their White womanhood reveals much about the complex interactions between co-participants' individual preferences, experiences, and choices; their intersectional, structural, and power-laden social locations; and genealogies of social advocacy and uplift among White women, which together guide, and in some ways predetermine, their enactments of citizenship.

For example, significant numbers of co-participants describe themselves, in one way or another, as champions of the “underdogs” of life. Jeannie linked her perception of herself as just such a champion to a past desire to work with autistic and nonverbal children and her own experience as the shunned, teenaged mother of a biracial child. Annette sees herself as an underdog and so feels a sort of kindred spirit with any group that is oppressed, from Central American migrant families to HIV-positive gay men. Rosa, who is the backbone of her UCC church’s social outreach program, also self-identified in this way: “I have forever been a champion of what would be called the underdog. People that are not treated equally. I mean, it all just aligns—how I became a physical therapist, the church, it all just aligns, it just clicks.”

Now, this can be personally true; some people do have personalities better equipped for—or more passionately oriented toward—social justice and service work. However, personality or individual preference is not, and cannot be, divorced from the situational context(s) in which White women live their lives and the habitus in which those lives are thoroughly embedded. Rosa was raised in a family that prioritized church attendance, that encouraged a faith life oriented toward service, and that introduced her to the progressive and community-focused denominational home from which she would continue her community service for the next half century. Furthermore, Rosa’s personality, sense of ethics, and social identity were always-already going to be formed within the parameters of her White womanhood. Thus, while her personality and her choices are her own, the epistemological framework with which she makes those choices

is intersectionally defined, as are the sociopolitical and biopolitical frameworks which prescribe the conditions of possibility which she can access as a middle-class White woman.

Rosa's narrative also indicates how White women may come to continue the genealogy of social uplift and advocacy work among middle-class and educated White women in the United States.¹⁹⁶ When looking for a spiritual home—a place where her “center could resonate” and where she could feel at peace with the work she felt her god wanted her to do—Rosa did not choose to become ordained herself and take up theological leadership alongside male peers. Nor did she break away and start her own organization with her own guiding vision (both things other White women activists *have* done, it is worth noting). Rather, she chose to ground her spiritual responsibility to the world, as she sees it, in service and social outreach through the UCC church. This is both a role that is legible to her after a lifetime spent serving various UCC churches, and it is, in turn, a role in which she is conventionally legible to others. It is a role she has freely chosen and one toward which she is passionately oriented and believes herself to be uniquely temperamentally suited to. Yet, the legibility she enjoys in that role exists because of the generations of White women who came before her, as well as because of her own intersectional positionality as an educated, middle-class, White woman. In other words, the degree of sociopolitical clout that Rosa can wield on behalf of those she feels both personally driven and divinely mandated to aid depends entirely on the racial

¹⁹⁶ Newman, *White Women's Rights*.

privilege and gendered recognition of being a White woman doing social justice and service work. Furthermore, by choosing to engage through institutions so thoroughly undergirding respectable, middle class, White womanhood (such as a church-based social outreach program), Rosa is herself reproducing, through the enactment of everyday practice, the traditional habitus of White womanhood as respectably reformist maternal guardianship and remaking it by introducing her own radical penchant for racial and (im)migrant justice.

The point is, personal preference and choice are influenced by structural, intersectional mechanisms and informed by historical and social precedent. I'd like to offer two co-participant's stories to further reinforce this point that personality and individual choice are in constant, dynamic tension and interaction with intersectional social location and genealogies of White womanhood when determining their enactments of citizenship.

White Women's Antiracism, Intersectional Experiences, and their Enactments of Citizenship

In the mid 1970s, during a summer break in college, Diana did what any young person might do following a messy breakup the previous semester: she went home to her parents. However, this meant flying to Lagos, Nigeria. Following the civil war there, the Ford Foundation financed the relocation of scholars, engineers, and academics from all over the world to the capital of the country in order to rebuild the university, and her

father had been chosen. Diana spent three months traveling the country, witnessing firsthand the intense poverty, violence, and destruction wrought on the people and the land as the result of colonization and, later, civil war. “I walked down the street, and there were people lying on the edges of that street, *dying*. Right there! Just dying. And there were children coming up in *droves*, begging...I haven’t been the same since,” she told me. The experience went so far as to rock the foundations of her faith:

We were still Catholic then, so we went to mass, and I went into this beautiful church on Sundays, and I saw all these people, women with babies tied to their backs, just dozens of them. None of them had any money, but they were all jammed into this beautiful, ornate structure. And I had also been out in the villages, and I had seen the medicine man in his juju¹⁹⁷ hut doing the same thing. What had I seen there, and what was I seeing here in mass? I saw the genuflection. I saw them doing all these same dances. And I said to myself, so this is the same thing that’s going on out there in that hut. A larger scale with a fancier hut. And that was pretty much where I lost my faith. I became an atheist at that point.

¹⁹⁷ Juju is a spiritual belief system practiced primarily by West Africans and the West African diaspora. Sometimes likened to witchcraft, voodoo, or *brujeria*, the term has become a catch-all for West African tribal religions and/or spiritual practices, especially those that utilize amulets, spells, or potions.

The reverberations of that experience in Nigeria echoed through Diana's life; approximately a decade later, she chose to adopt two children, both orphans from India, as a single woman. She explained her motivations for doing so:

I remember being in high school and thinking, the world is full of *so* many people that don't have the basic stuff they need in the world. Of course, I didn't know any specifics at this time, but I knew it was true. And I couldn't understand why people kept having more children when they could—look, there's a lot of kids that need parents. And they could just adopt them. And if everyone adopted two or three—and remember, this is a high schooler's mind—then we could, you know, take down the surplus and then people could start having more kids again. Which sounds silly, but that thought stayed with me forever...As for your question, why India, that's because it was a Third World country. Everyone wanted babies in the United States, but no one wanted kids from Third World countries.¹⁹⁸ Those American babies, they'll be taken care of. That was my thinking.

¹⁹⁸ While transnational adoptions are frequently the subject of media attention and visibly higher levels of interests in the practice are common within White, evangelical communities, in reality, the prevalence of transnational adoption is quite low and intercountry adoption rates fluctuate substantially over time. According to the U.S. State Department, in the past nineteen years (1999-2018), there have been only 6,248 adoptions of underage Indian nationals by U.S. parents (see "Adoption Statistics" on travel.state.gov); this amounts to only 0.02% of all transnational adoptions in the U.S. and averages to roughly 310 children per year. In the 1980s, this number was *significantly* lower. I could not find statistics for India-to-United States adoptions in 1987, and one report said simply "0" adoptions occurred from a group of Southeast Asian countries that included India in 1988. However, beginning in the late 1980s and continuing (if unevenly) into the 2000s, more U.S. parents began adopting children of Indian origin. In 2003, between 1,000-1,100 children were adopted out of India, though it's unclear what percentage of those went to countries besides

Now, much of Diana’s story could be explained as individual preference, driven by personality and circumstance: she was simply in the right place, at the right time, to take an interest in the Nigerian people; she had always been personally drawn to the idea of adoption; she happened to be in a position to adopt alone because of her life and career choices; global political turmoil and war had left record numbers of children orphaned or living in poverty in Southeast Asia, and adopted Korean and Vietnamese children had been flooding into the U.S. since the mid-70s. Already adoption-minded, Diana found herself yearning to be a mother just as international laws relaxed and adoptions from India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Cambodia to the U.S. surged, beginning in the late 1980s and continuing through the 1990s.

However, there’s more to the story: Diana’s personality and preferences are, and always have been, shaped by her intersectional social location and her choices influenced by her experiences of the world—sometimes experiences that occurred years earlier and not only as a White woman, but as a young, educated, newly middle-class, American one in specific circumstances. As the educated daughter of an educated man who reached financial security relatively late in his life, at the time of her visit to Nigeria, Diana had just recently entered the portion of her life where she might reasonably expect to be able

the U.S. The U.S. State Department lists only 473 India-to-U.S. adoptions that year. It’s also worth noting that India shows up on the United Nations’ list of countries with dramatic gender disparities in their adoption rates. Of all Indian children adopted both in-country and out, consistently near or around 60% of them are girls. For more on this subject, see United Nations, “Child Adoption: Trends and Policies,” 2009, accessed 10 Feb 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/child-adoption.pdf>

to travel internationally. As that young White woman, Diana was exposed to an entirely different world than the one in which she was raised; it was less than a decade earlier, when she was around the age of twelve, that Diana had first seen a Black person anywhere but on television: “I was living in Lincoln, Nebraska. I saw one Black person before I moved to inner-city Detroit as a teenager. At the public swimming pool, there in Lincoln. I was awestruck.” Comparatively speaking, if Detroit was foreign in a hundred ways to teenaged Diana, Nigeria was foreign in a thousand ways to her slightly older self. Moreover, it may have been civil war that created the poverty Diana witnessed, but it was colonization that brought her there to witness it. Her father, the Catholic Church where she lost her faith, and the turmoil and suffering she saw were all in Nigeria because the British had been there first.¹⁹⁹ The experience fundamentally altered her perspective on racism and reoriented her toward humanitarian service in a way that would come to fruition nearly 40 years later, when she would become a cornerstone of the pro-(im)migrants’ rights grassroots movement in Phoenix.

The trip to Nigeria also partially inspired, and certainly inflected, her decision to become a mother, which in turn was informed by her social positionality: in the late 1980s, as a White, educated, and heterosexual(-passing)²⁰⁰ professional, making decent money “working in corporate America,” Diana was able to adopt as a single woman

¹⁹⁹ For more on the ties between colonization, violence, race, religion, and democracy see the following: Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

²⁰⁰ Diana chose not to reveal her sexual orientation to me, nor was it immediately clear from her life history. As such, I prefer to avoid assumptions and instead indicate that (to the best of my knowledge) she was assumed, in her workplace and social life, to be straight during this time.

during a time when a single woman of a different class, race, or sexual orientation would have been denied the right to adopt *or* not had access to the financial means necessary to do so. Diana's Whiteness, as part of a sociopolitical and socioeconomic system, boosted not only her prospects, but those of her children: as an interesting aside, Diana named her adopted, Southeast Asian daughters Catherine and Amy—a choice, Diana reported, for which Catherine later thanked her. “I mean, can you get any Whiter than Catherine and Amy Sullivan? Catherine helps a lot of her friends with resumes, and she told me, ‘Mom, I tell them, if your name is Fatima or Aiyeesha, then come up with some other name that people happen to also call you by. Because it’s going to help you immensely.’ It’s going to keep your resume out of the trash, is what she meant.” Thus, Diana's Whiteness not only impacts her life; it impacts her *daughter's* lives, how they move through the world, and the opportunities they have enjoyed, in part, as a result of being adopted (and named) by a middle-class, White, American woman.

Diana's actions, choices, and trajectory as an activist could be chalked up to White saviorism: first, as a young, White, American woman, she gawked at the so-called Third World and the suffering of non-White people abroad for the first time; later, as a well-to-do professional looking to ‘rescue’ two Indian orphans, she removed those girls from their culture and their home and Whitewashed their names; now, as a retired woman, Diana is just following the same impulse to the Greyhound bus depot and Central American migrants, looking for non-White, non-citizens to ‘save.’

However, this renders both an incorrect, and incomplete, analysis. How Diana frames her relationship to the migrants and the work belies White saviorism as an adequate explanation for her unrelenting motivation to advocate for, and serve, migrants:

It is an—what is the word I’m looking for? It is an *honor*. To serve these people. To be able to be of service. These people are amazing, complicated, *human* beings, just like us, and all of them are just trying to make their lives a little bit better, just like us. Whatever small part I can do to help them in that, I want to do. And if they trust me, and choose to let me, well, then I’m honored.

While Diana does compare her work with migrants to her decision to transnationally adopt, she does so in an unexpected way: “I knew the American babies would be taken care of, right? So my girls, the migrants—and it’s the same thing as with my donations. I do not give to the policemen or the firemen when they call me. Because everyone else out there will do it, everyone will give to the firemen’s pension or whatever. But just like there were very few people who would want sick, orphaned babies from India, there are only a very few who are willing to share their country with asylum-seekers, with migrants, or to help them out.”

Furthermore, Diana understands her assistance to migrants not as a gift she gives them, something for which she should be thanked, but rather something more akin to providing a leg up or sharing a tool. She wants to *enable* migrants to advocate for a better

life for themselves, not simply *save* them. This is why, when Diana isn't at the Greyhound Bus Station, or actively working to advocate for pro-(im)migrants' rights in some other forum, she is providing English language lessons to migrants, free of charge. She understands that English is a critical tool Latinx migrants will need as they go on to navigate the immigration regime that will govern their lives while in the United States. While my analysis here is concerned primarily with the actions (and enactments) of White women, there are a whole host of insurgent acts of resistance by asylum-seeking migrants against the system that oppresses them that are *made possible* by the initial advocacy and aid provided to migrants by White women like Diana.

Diana also rejects and repudiates the attention and accolades that often accompany acts of White saviorism—and indeed, are its primary reward for many White people. She assiduously avoids the media and refuses to give on-the-record quotations out of respect for the migrants: “It isn't about me. It isn't about us at all,” she explains. In fact, she experienced a significant rift in her friendship with another White activist, after the woman chose to give an in-depth profile of her own work as a pro-(im)migrants' rights activist to a prominent local newspaper; Diana felt that the article was ultimately an act of self-aggrandizement, which she saw not only a betrayal of all the other activists and volunteers who remain unrecognized for their contributions, but also of the migrants they were together trying to serve. Diana prefers to work unofficially, behind the scenes, rather than as a recognized member of any organization, so that, as she understands it, she never has to owe allegiance to anyone or anything except the migrants and their

wellbeing. This is a core pillar of her antiracist sensibility; the migrant should be centered in any and every pro-(im)migrants' rights discussion or action, not her, not any other White activists, and not the politics.

She is also quick to ignite with anger whenever she feels other volunteers, advocates, or activists are not treating migrants with the dignity or humanity they deserve. The same day that I chose to turn a blind eye to a processing envelope on which a White volunteer had written, "I do not speak English. Please help me!" at All Souls,²⁰¹ Diana had fought tenaciously with organizational volunteers about their decision to separate migrants from their immigration paperwork—often the migrants' only identification and proof of their legal presence in the US—during the intake process. "Can you fucking imagine?!", she raged to me later:

These are people who have just gotten out of what essentially amounts to a prison cell, *una hielera*²⁰², where they were cold, and sick, and underfed, and you bring them to a church, and the first thing you do is take their paperwork from them? And then call their families without them present? They aren't children! What kind of bullshit is this?! Those papers are theirs, and they are important to them.

²⁰¹ See Chapter 4.

²⁰² It is common practice, upon taking migrants into their custody, for the U.S. Border Patrol to detain them in small, concrete holding cells that are kept notoriously cold--supposedly to limit the spread of germs, but temperatures are so cold it's difficult for Border Patrol to legitimately deny that they exist in part to punish migrants for their perceived transgressions. Word of this practice has spread through the migrant community and many refer to the ice-cold holding cells as "iceboxes," or *hieleras*. This practice is not new to the surges of Central American, asylum-seeking migrant families. However, they are all the more difficult to endure when you are a child, rather than an unaccompanied, adult man.

What does it cost you to let them sit there with you while you call? Nothing! Let them talk to their families, just for a minute? It would cost them *nothing*. Can you imagine how that must make them feel? They don't know us from Adam or Eve. And we take their shit away from them. They are human beings, we should be treating them with dignity and respect. How *dare* they do that?

Diana's sense of justice, equity, and human dignity drives how she advocates for migrants and where she directs her attention. She is a consistent, vocal, and unrelenting advocate for migrant empowerment, and she is regularly the lone voice of resistance against widespread practices that grant organizations expediency at the cost of migrant agency and dignity. She prefers to work at the Greyhound bus depot, or in the 'Ditch,' as opposed to housing migrants, sorting donations, or any of a hundred other tasks she could contribute to within the movement. This is partially because she knows that those migrants at the bus depot are, for the time they are there, the most vulnerable individuals amongst an already vulnerable group. And it is partially because she fervently avoids politics and publicity, both within the activist community and outside it; the less people who know who she is, and how she operates, the better. This strategy allows her to assist migrants with less interference, less bureaucracy, and "less bullshit"—one of Diana's least favorite things. Unfortunately, between meeting with local elected officials' offices and conference calls with the local coalition's various committees, the amount of bullshit in Diana's life is currently higher than she would prefer. She presses on, though; she

would never claim so, but she likely has a better, fuller grasp on the state of immigration and pro-(im)migration advocacy in the Valley than any other individual person active in the movement and so her expertise makes her participation incredibly valuable. It is also her curse that she is so familiar with the scene; it means she is always hyper-aware of what has yet to be done, who has yet to be served, and the barrier that stands between the current reality and getting those people the aid they need. These unserved migrants keep Diana's "eyes on the prize," as she sees it; if hers aren't on it, then whose are? In addition to serving on committees, networking with other activists, and information-gathering, Diana is also often the only activist, advocate, or volunteer working the Greyhound Bus station.

The point of this extended example is that every personal choice and individual experience that has led Diana to her current enactment of citizenship through her advocacy and activist work with asylum-seeking migrants is inflected by her intersectional White womanhood and the role of systemic Whiteness in her life. Diana herself recognizes this, and she framed her narrative of her visit to Nigeria as instrumental to her development into an antiracist White person and pro-(im)migrants' rights activist. She also connected that trip to the later adoption of her daughters. What Diana's story indicated to me is that each of the events in her life that I described—the trip to Nigeria, her transnational adoptions, her continued involvement in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement, and even her consistent and unrelenting outrage at the unfair treatment of migrants—each, in some way, depended upon Diana's subjectivity as

a middle-class, heterosexual(-passing), well-educated, White woman living in the West to even happen as they did in the first place. Furthermore, it was through the epistemological framework provided by this intersectional subjectivity that Diana interpreted each context or event, acted accordingly, and ultimately developed her antiracist sensibility as an activist and advocate for racial and (im)migrant justice.

Diana's background and intersectional social location could not be more different than Jeannie's, another White woman pro-(im)migrants' rights activist. While Diana was raised largely in the rural Midwest and spent childhood summers in the 1960s helping her father fix up their old '53 Ford on the side of the highway while they drove all around the Western United States, Jeannie grew up in the 1980s, raised by a solidly working class family firmly rooted in rural coal country. She became the teenage mother of a biracial son in a town "with little ridges in the roads from the Amish buggies and where there were KKK rallies down the street from the house where I grew up." Although her father told her she was selfish for seeking an education with a small child at home, Jeannie ultimately moved across the country, came out as queer, went to university and then Lutheran seminary, and became a prison abolitionist who spends most of her days working for incremental reform—both in terms of state policy and within the liberal, religious community in which she is now active.

Despite their divergent experiences of class, education, region, and religion, as well as their difference in age, Jeannie and Diana share some similar personality traits: namely, a strong streak of contrariness and a heavy dose of anti-misogynist spunk. When

Diana entered university in the late 1960s, she was told that it didn't matter that she was first in her class; she ought to leave business and finance, choose another major, as it wasn't a woman's field. "This, of course, made me want to stay in business even more," she recalled. She defied the expectations of each of her professors, even the one who held "ladies' days" several times a term, wherein for the entire period only the handful of women in the class were allowed to provide answers to the professor's rapid-fire litany of increasingly difficult questions in front of upwards of several hundred male classmates. In a similar experience nearly four decades later, when Jeannie first returned to school as an adult student, she pursued a degree in sports broadcasting only to find that the relentless sexism and harassment of her male peers dominated her work life—she was receiving sex toys in her work mailbox and being looked at and touched in ways she did not like or want. The toxic masculinity and misogyny enmeshed in the profession ultimately drove her out of it, but she left with a renewed sense of who she was, how the world saw her as a woman, and the often stark discrepancy between the two. When asked what she thought it meant to be a White woman, Jeannie answered, "It's a very sexualized thing. It's like, you should know your role, White woman. Your place. I've looked at a lot of my experiences and can chalk them up to, I refused to know my place." This, at least, Jeannie and Diana have in common.

Jeannie may have arrived to pro-(im)migrants' rights work via a very different path than Diana—special needs education, liberation theology, and prison abolition rather than postcolonial travel and transnational adoption—but she navigates the work in

similarly, consciously gendered ways: “It’s everything from the tone of our voice to the way we sit behind the table across from someone,” she told me. Moreover, the resources she has at her disposal also originate, in part, from the privilege of her White womanhood:

The last organization I worked with was run by a Yale-educated Black woman. At least half of her trouble in that role was because she was an educated Black woman in the nonprofit world. I used to ask her, ‘you know, aren’t there people of color who would be better at my position?’ And she would say, ‘No, Jeannie, you do great work, and besides, no people of color are applying for this job anyway.’ And I feel like it’s the same at the church. The people who are of color are the janitorial staff and/or the musicians. So you’re either cleaning or you’re entertaining us. But if nobody’s *applying* for these positions—if nobody’s being empowered or feeling empowered to—I mean, what is it that the church can do—Is it about making your church more multicultural? Is that what will empower people to then step up to these leadership roles? That might be the first step. But just because—if you have people of color—like, we don’t have anybody homeless coming in to help with the homeless task force stuff.

It’s easy to see from Jeannie’s halting words that this is a difficult subject for her to discuss. On the one hand, she feels compelled to do social justice work in the world.

Yet, she knows that, as a White woman, it is her job to “discern when it’s time to step back” and let marginalized communities speak for themselves. She recognizes that her positionality as a (relatively) privileged White woman, employed in a community outreach position at a politically progressive but predominantly White church, is what affords her the mic from which she should step back, yet feels at a loss when both communal and structural barriers preclude a person of color from stepping forward in her place. In response, she strives to make progress against those barriers on a structural level: “Until you have a group of folks who are ready to step up and make some real policy change happen, or at least make some effective policy suggestions, then all we’re doing is Band-Aid work, and we’re doing it at exhausting rates.” Jeannie is currently looking into how other churches, border cities, and state governments handled the (im)migration crisis of 2018-2019 and what can be done to improve advocacy and create change at the state level. Even before the Central American migrant surge waned over the summer of 2019, she had largely abandoned direct service in favor of advocacy on organizational and legislative levels.

Meanwhile, Jeannie harbors mixed feelings toward her advocacy work on this front. On the one hand, she sees it as her duty as a White woman to marshal her privilege in these ways, in largely White spaces, where she knows her voice will count. On the other hand, she knows that it’s critical that her work be “informed and guided by people who are directly impacted” in order for it to be ethical and just. It is difficult for me to imagine how striking this already delicate balance is always possible when Jeannie’s pro-

(im)migrant rights' activism largely occurs within a religious community where, as she herself explained, all the people of color are either "cleaning or entertaining." When I asked her about what that looked like in a predominantly White church, Jeannie smiled wryly before saying only, "you have to start somewhere. So we're starting somewhere." Though Jeannie's church received groups of migrants only a handful of times during the surge, and ceased receiving completely early in the spring of 2019, its leaders continue to have an outsized voice in the coalition of pro-(im)migrants' rights organizations in Phoenix.

Jeannie also continues to have an ambivalent relationship to her advocacy work and her Whiteness: "The things I care about, the things I'm passionate about, people of color are getting hired for. And that's great! That's the way it *should* be! But shit, I need to eat too. I need to know I'll have a job when my contract is up too, and that I won't be looking for work for another thirteen months." She feels her racial privilege at the same time she feels the burden of her (relative) socioeconomic precarity as a single, lower middle class, woman and it leaves her unsure of where she stands in relation to her own privilege. She also recognizes the unintended consequences of White advocacy on behalf of non-White people from the so-called Third World: "You know, we can offer to build a well in one of these rural communities in South America or Africa, or wherever. But if a woman has to walk forty miles to get there, and gets raped on the way, then building that well, was it really the right thing? Was that really what they wanted?" It is exactly these kinds of unintended consequences to which I will turn in chapter 4.

Jeannie believes that her subjectivity as a woman gives her insight into such unforeseeable complexities: “So I notice things, little things, and they perturb me a little bit more, because I’m a woman.” However, her intersectional experiences of her White womanhood position her differently from many of her White women peers and provide an epistemological framework through which she analyzes her work and enacts her citizenship. For example, in addition to being a White woman, Jeannie is the mother of a dark-skinned (though biracial) Black son, something which she openly admits reshaped her politics and guides how she understands the biopolitical role of the state in her life and the life of her loved ones. She discovered Black feminist thought, Black feminism, and liberation theology in her journey from insecure, teenaged mother to proudly queer, highly educated, prison abolitionist-turned-community organizer—developments unlikely to have come to pass if she had stayed in coal country, married a White man, or done anything else that was expected of her because of her race and gender. These theories to which she was exposed in part because she was the mother of a Black son and in part because she was exploring her own queerness and identity continue to inform how she does her justice work and how she understands the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement writ large. As such, Jeannie ascribes to a political philosophy far more explicitly feminist and radical than most of her peers.

While co-participants often struggled to articulate the relationship between their citizenship and their womanhood, they had no such problem when linking their citizenship to their race, specifically to White privilege, as I will discuss below.

“We won the birth lottery—Now what?”: Citizenship-cum-White privilege and (the Lack of) White Antiracist Community

When asked, the vast majority of my co-participants understand their citizenship as unearned, a set of rights, advantages, and opportunities defined first and foremost by their White privilege. Co-participants most often defined or identified their citizenship status as something granted to them through a circumstance of birth: “the luck of the draw,” a result of “absolutely *nothing* I did for myself or by myself,” a “birth lottery.” Most also believe that, as such, this accident of birth obliges them to, as Diana puts it, “try to equalize the world.” Stephanie, an immigration lawyer and community advocate, summarized this attitude baldly:

The rest of the world is really hard. But *you*, you won the birth lottery. So you don’t get to pat yourself on the back for that and pretend that—we believe this *myth* of America, which is that we have what we have worked for. Baloney. You won the birth lottery, and so you have to recognize that other people have lost it, and that’s unfair. And your job on this earth is to try to help the people that didn’t win the birth lottery.

Elena would be inclined to agree, and said, “my rights and responsibilities as a citizen are the same as my rights and responsibilities as a person of privilege.” She does

not delineate any difference between her responsibilities as a citizen and her responsibilities as an ethical person *of privilege*, which begs the question, what room is there in that conceptualization of citizenship for marginalized people? Rebecca similarly understands her citizenship as a collection of tools provided to her by her privilege: “I think that, because I have the privilege of citizenship and the privileges that—look, I have a Master’s degree, and I have the skills I learned in college, and I have all of these tools.” What Rebecca is saying is that without the innumerable benefits, opportunities, and possibilities that accompanied her citizenship, her status as a White American woman, she would have been far less likely to attend college, attain a Master’s degree, and become a successful professional in her field. She continues, “Because of that, it’s absolutely my responsibility to use them, you know? To at least make an impact of some kind.” She believes that she has a duty to use those skills on behalf of those who were not provided those same benefits, opportunities, and possibilities. In some ways, understanding one’s citizenship in this way is similar to imagining that belonging requires a finite, quantifiable, number of choices that are then added to a cosmic tally. This framework handily removes mutual belonging, care, and responsibility from the equation and frames citizenship instead as an obligation of one’s privilege.

Furthermore, to rely too completely on a framework that understands one’s privilege within a system of citizenship as an “accident of birth” presents several theoretical and ethical problems. First, if citizenship is allotted according to a “birth lottery,” and citizenship :: (White) privilege, then the individual possessors of that

citizenship-privilege-cum-White-privilege bear little to no responsibility for the system or its consequences, beyond that which they freely choose to shoulder in response to the prodding of their individual conscience. Such an understanding alleviates in-group responsibility for structural oppression and obviates the need for collective (re)action, because understanding White privilege as a birth lottery occludes the ways in which White people *collectively* benefit from White privilege, whether or not they agree with the system of White supremacy that provides it. The birth lottery framework renders White privilege the luck of the draw, and similarly provides a framework for relieving oneself of the guilt that accompanies that good fortune by simply sharing it with others: for example, giving money to someone in need because you have money, and they do not. The ‘luck’ has been passed on. In reality, the birth lottery is an illusion; there can be no lottery when the system is rigged. As White women, our ‘good fortune’ isn’t an accident; it is the result of centuries of concentrated work by our ancestors and other White people to build a system in which we, their descendants, would enjoy incredibly inequitable privilege, wealth, and opportunity in comparison to our contemporaries of color. Such a collective construction of supremacy requires recognition of collective responsibility and necessitates a collective reaction to it. By collective reaction, I mean a sustained, widespread, and collective effort on the part of antiracist White people to dismantle the systems which give them privilege rather than trying to share that privilege—grounded as it is in White supremacy and gendered and racialized citizenship—with those more marginalized than ourselves.

Second, this framework occludes the ways in which White women benefit from the very inequality which they believe requires their intervention—intervention only animated and enabled by virtue of their gendered and racialized role in their community as White women in the first place! This not only blinds even the most well-intentioned White women to their culpability and complicity in racial injustice, it also reifies an individualistic conception of citizenship in which their responsibility is met by engaging in singular, individualistic acts. This approach ignoring how citizenship functions collectively and relationally; we do not *belong* as individuals, rather we belong as members of a group, and in the United States, those groups are racialized. Moreover, such an individualistic framework can preclude White women pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists from successfully forming community among their antiracist, activist peers. Together, these problems present a significant stumbling block to the coalitional politics necessary to achieve antiracist change. When White women understand their responsibility as individualistic, it becomes easy to walk away from challenging discussions, in-group tensions, and/or clashes between White and non-White organizations, because an individualistic conceptualization of citizenship only requires one to meet a personal standard of responsibility: one only has to ‘do *something*’ on one’s own. Furthermore, this also ultimately elides the role citizenship plays in (anti)racism writ large. It is only by recognizing our relational role in domination and our reciprocal responsibility to justice that we can begin to engage meaningfully in antiracism; that is,

the meaningful dismantling of structures of oppression that benefit us as White people at the detriment of people of color.

Let's return to Nancy for another example. A career spent as a public school teacher has given the retiree turned fulltime social justice advocate a thorough understanding of the systemic mechanisms of racism and discrimination at work in public institutions. As an ESL teacher in Colorado, then Texas, and finally Arizona, Nancy saw that "the inequities, the discrimination, were just horrific." She began to confront not only the inequities her students faced in the U.S. education system but also those their parents faced in housing, employment, and when interacting with the immigration system. After an unsuccessful run for office years ago, Nancy became an active part of the Arizona Democratic Party. She is fully committed to making policy change at the state level that will benefit the students and families with whom she worked as a high school teacher. Yet inexplicably, Nancy says that "citizenship is not something that I think about very often. The fact that I'm a human being is more important." She goes on to say that she does not envision her work in support of asylum-seeking migrants as a duty or a responsibility she owes; rather, it is something she chooses because it is "just who I am."

Nancy is hardly alone in this; most of my co-participants either couldn't easily articulate what being a citizen meant to them or rejected the notion that their citizenship was anything more than nominal: "I'm a citizen of the *world*," another co-participant said. However, it seemed strange to me that a woman so committed to helping Latinx people overcome the structural barriers placed before them in large part because they lack

the formal (*and substantive*) citizenship that she enjoys would describe her own citizenship as so meaningless to both who she is and the work that she does.

This tendency to understand one's commitment to pro-(im)migrants' rights advocacy as part of, or resulting from, one's personal *identity*, rather than as part of one's *responsibility* as a citizen (i.e., a member of the community) appears in multiple interviews. Several co-participants actively pushed back against the terms 'responsibility,' 'duty,' and/or 'obligation.' Nancy clarified why she objected to such language by saying, "What I do, it's just common decency. It's who I am, I don't know how else to explain it." She went on to say:

I've been very privileged to have a peek into people's lives. That's a privilege that a lot of people haven't had the opportunity to experience. I will never deal with—I will never walk in the shoes that others walk in. But I've had the privilege to get to know people who have had a much harder life than I've had. And I think that it changes you. I think that is the moment when you are changed. Then you have no choice but to go forward from that new mindset.

Like so many other co-participants, Nancy understands her work as something she has no choice but to do. However, this inevitability stems not from a sense of racial responsibility in a collective sense but rather because she had a personal encounter that she believes fundamentally changed her. Her personal, inner conscience leaves her no

choice; as she sees it, she is compelled to act. Yet these actions are largely taken in individualistic ways. Nancy often donates money, speaks to politicians about issues of racism and (im)migrant justice, and writes op-eds in newspapers about her experiences teaching undocumented students. I am not passing judgement on these actions; in some ways, they are highly admirable. Nor can I say with absolutely certainty that they haven't made a material, concrete difference to someone, somewhere. What I *can* say is that they are not consciously conducted in concert with an antiracist organizing effort.

This deeply personal connection to the work pervades how Nancy understands her work, strategizes her goals, and forecasts what pro-(im)migrants' rights activism can do. Nancy is particularly passionate about using her voice and her platform to lift up the stories of those students and families who opened her eyes: "I think that if I am able to share stories, which I can do from time to time through my writing and my political involvement, then that can kind of change people's perspective, one person at a time." Because the catalyst for her own transformation resulted from her deeply personal encounters with her students and their families, Nancy believes full-heartedly that bringing that opportunity for personal connection to others is the answer to curing societal racial and xenophobic animus.

This individual commitment is admirable, and it fuels the ceaseless advocacy work with which 70-year-old Nancy fills her retirement. However, it does little to question the underlying, foundational hierarchy of White, gendered citizenship that furnishes Nancy with the platform from which she advocates for non-White, non-citizen

members of the community. Nor will change on the individual level of personal opinion do much to halt or overturn the mechanisms of systemic injustice that currently plague Latinx (im)migrants. Nancy could put her efforts to far more productive, and far more impactful, use should she conduct them in concert with other, collective, and POC-led antiracist efforts. Even more impactfully, Nancy could begin to question, subvert, and dismantle the systems of privilege, wealth, and Whiteness that make *hers* the voice of authority on issues of Latinx (im)migration in her largely White social circles.

This is not to say that Nancy doesn't *see* systemic injustice or that she doesn't care about that injustice deeply. Almost as soon as she became an ESL teacher, Nancy began to see the institutional and legal barriers to her students' success—even, in some cases, to their survival. She “became more and more committed to the fact that we need change at the state level, at the legal level.” She has spent the last several years working ceaselessly in service of such institutional change. However, Nancy believes that squaring legislation, policy, and state protocols with what she sees as the American values of equality, opportunity, and meritocracy alone will alleviate racism and inequality. She considers laws like SB 1070 as inhumane, un-American, and out of the national character rather than as institutional manifestations of a deeply American, systemic, White supremacy that permeates every aspect of her life and the lives of her former students. The trouble with this is that it casts racism as aberrant, antithetical to the

ideals of American citizenship, rather than as encoded in it.²⁰³ In this framework, Nancy's job is to alleviate the conditions that prevent equal access to the rights of citizenship and to contribute to the elevation of everyone else's experience of citizenship to match her own. This misses entirely the ways in which her experience of citizenship, as a privileged White woman, *depends* upon the subordination of people of color's relationship to citizenship. So long as Nancy seeks only to create space for people of color within existing frameworks of belonging, she will fail to see how those existing frameworks of belonging rely on precisely those exclusions she seeks to undo.²⁰⁴

Like other co-participants, Tamara, a 62-year-old retired small business owner, understands her citizenship as nearly synonymous with her White privilege, and like Nancy, she understands the impact its weight can have when thrown behind pro-(im)migrants' rights causes: "When I think of immigrants, what I have to offer is that I'm in a position of privilege. So maybe I can do what they can't, or wouldn't be able to. So I

²⁰³ For the historical and contemporary construction of race and citizenship in the U.S., see Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Chavez, *The Latino Threat*; Molina, *How Race is Made in America*; Hsu, *The Good Immigrants*; Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016); Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishers, 2017); Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (2nd ed., New York: New York University Press, 2018); McRae, *Mothers of Mass Resistance*. For more on how racism is enforced through systemic and structural mechanisms, including citizenship, see Omi, Michael and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (3rd ed., New York: Routledge, 1986; 2015); Joel Olson, *The Abolition of White Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006). For more on how race and racial citizenship functions in relation to sexuality and neoliberalism, see Roderick A. Ferguson and Grace Kyungwong Hong, "The Sexual and Racial Contradictions of Neoliberalism." *Journal of Homosexuality* 59:1057-1064 (2012).

²⁰⁴ Engin Isin, *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

have that to offer.” However, Tamara often feels isolated in her pro-(im)migrants’ rights work, and she conducts most of her advocacy and assistance work alone, rather than acting in concert with an activist organization or as a formal member of an advocacy group. For the most part, this has unfortunately limited the impact of her antiracist commitment to those asylum-seeking migrants with whom she comes into personal contact. Still, that personal impact on the asylum-seeking migrant community should not be underestimated; Tamara has collected clothes, delivered supplies to border towns, handed out food to migrants passing through the depot, and joined the loose network of individual volunteers and activists who took turns showing up to the Greyhound bus depot in small groups during the difficult months of 2019, in order to assist and process the huge numbers of migrants ICE was dropping in a ditch outside the station at the time. However, when I asked her *why* she chose to do that work, she replied, “because even if I can’t help directly, even if I can’t change the circumstances that they are in, I want them to see me and go, ‘oh, here’s this *White* woman who gives a shit!’ Even that, I figure—well, that’s something. There’s somebody that that matters to.” Citing her love of Mexican culture and her time spent in the Southwest as an impetus for her involvement in this particular cause, Tamara ultimately concluded that she does what she does simply “so I can feel better about myself.”

At first, this statement surprised me with its bald honesty. As a feminist scholar of critical race studies and critical Whiteness studies, I am trained to de-center Whiteness and to always question when White activists (like myself and Tamara) ‘make it about

ourselves,' as both Glinda and Meg suggested we often do. As such, my second reaction was to find this justification for Tamara's work as self-serving and distasteful. That one's primary motivation for providing humanitarian aid and social advocacy to a marginalized population could be so seemingly unabashedly self-absorbed disturbed me.

However, upon further reflection, I think two critical points should be made: First, what might be hiding behind Tamara's few, curt words is a deeply personal struggle between taking racial responsibility and being overwhelmed with racial guilt. Many co-participants described their own interior battles, fought as they tried to find a mentally and emotionally healthy place between taking responsibility, as a White person, for their White privilege without being overcome with despair, guilt, shame and thus ultimately becoming immobilized by those feelings. This tension is deeply felt and intimately personal. Yet, it can produce collective results; in many ways, the pro-(im)migrants' rights activists in this dissertation, and dozens more of their peers in Phoenix, have all decided, in one way or another, that they could not live with themselves unless they challenged the racism and xenophobia in their community. As a result, they have created a city-wide movement with significant sociopolitical clout.

Secondly and just as germane to our discussion here, it is worth mentioning that at the time of our interview, Tamara was experiencing the emotional lows of activist burnout. On the sidelines of the uphill battle migrants' rights activists faced against the Department of Homeland Security, Border Patrol, ICE, and Republican lawmakers, trust and camaraderie between key organizations was eroding, and volunteers were flagging:

People in Coalition for Immigrant Justice, people in *leadership*, were saying, “bring it on! We can handle it!” And I’m thinking, “Well, *I* can’t handle it. You think you can handle it? Then you should be down at the bus depot, in the Ditch. These are people who have never been down there, to the depot. They’re—I’m *sure* they’re busy with other things, but go down to the Ditch before you tell me you can handle it.

Facing intra- and inter-organizational breakdown while reckoning with the secondhand trauma that inevitably accompanies this work on her own, exhausted by long hours and frustrated with her compatriots, Tamara was feeling powerless and run down and would not say much more beyond this: that she feels better when she’s doing the work than when she’s not. I believe that Tamara is only able to make sense of her obligation to the asylum-seeking migrant community, and perhaps set aside the perceived betrayal of her fellow volunteers and activists, by defining it as an individual responsibility. Though she may feel powerless to stop interpersonal wrangling, to speed negotiations with federal authorities, or to budge the structural racism that defines (im)migrants’ rights in the United States, what she *can* do is welcome migrants and, if she’s lucky, be able to offer them a clean change of clothes and a square meal. She feels obligated to do no more, and no less, than show up, to be “the *one* person they may encounter in the U.S. who wants them here.”

In doing so, by choosing to delimit and contain her responsibility to her community in this way, Tamara continues to do much good for the migrants she serves; however, this approach allows her to do less in service of antiracism or to resist structural oppression. Rather than continuing to participate in a movement where communication and community with her fellow activists leaves her feeling more emotionally drained than sustained, Tamara has struck out on her own, doing what she can, where she can. I cannot blame her for this decision, and in some ways it is admirable; she pushes on, even when it feels like her versus the world. However, doing so seriously hamstrings her ability to do more than provide individual support to individual migrants, which does little to nothing to change the conditions that created their need for her support in the first place.

Furthermore, the position of privilege from which Tamara and Nancy operate—vested in them vis-à-vis their relationship to racial, gendered, and class power—rests upon the conditions of inequality that they then feel responsible to ameliorate *because* they occupy, and benefit from, that position of privilege. It is no small wonder that both of them, and many of their peers, often feel as if they are spinning their wheels, struggling in two distinct, if simultaneous, battles: the immediate fight to ensure the material wellbeing and safety of asylum-seeking migrants in the city of Phoenix and the long-term pitched battle over who race, citizenship, and who gets to *belong* in America. Their successes in the first fight partially rely upon the status quo remaining unchanged in the second.

Speeding the burnout that inevitably follows the feeling of spinning one's wheels is the fact that understanding one's social justice activism as a part of one's intrinsic identity—rather than as one's racial responsibility, as part of a community of antiracist White people, to ameliorate the conditions of privilege and oppression—can preclude antiracist community-building and leave activists feeling as if the burden to help is theirs and theirs alone. Sometimes White women advocate-activists are predisposed to want to work alone; many believe their approach is the best one, and anyone who cannot see that is better left behind. For many others, they feel stymied by any number of factors— intraorganizational strife, inter-organizational wrangling, unwieldy and slow-acting committees, to name a few—and so strike out on their own out of frustration, disgust, or both. Annette and Diana, in particular, feel the absence of community among White women-dominated pro-(im)migrants' rights organizations. Diana said:

To be quite honest, one of my biggest difficulties and frustrations in doing this work is that there really is no community that's a real community. What I think of as a real community is people who are pretty much on the same page, doing the work, with the same goal in mind. Keep your eye on the prize, and that is the asylum-seeker, the migrant. Not me. Not you. It's got nothing to do with us. Now, that's the overall goal. But I would like a *community*, and I don't think that exists. Look at my partner-in-crime, Annette. Her thing was, you can't sustain this unless you have a community that works together, and you get together and you talk

about all this stuff, unload, decompress, whatever, but you have to do it together. So maybe I'm just a little too Pollyanna, but I hope we can become a community that does that.

Glinda, who works as a public servant and has several years' experience participating in racial advocacy work and direct action with White antiracist and antifascist groups, perceived the same lack of community amongst pro-(im)migrants' rights and racial justice activists in the Valley:

In all these [primarily White] groups, people get hyper-focused on the tactics, the processes. And leave out relationship-building. That's what I saw over and over again. White people get so hyper-focused on one thing, usually themselves, so much so that they will miss the bigger picture.

These two anecdotes reiterate a common narrative in my interviews, a narrative with at least some truth to it, which I saw bore out during my fieldwork: White women pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and activists are bad at community-building. I would contend that this is, in part, because White women activists often do not see their work as part of the responsibility as a citizen, as a *member of a larger community*, but rather as an intrinsic part of their identity. Thus, when they turn their gaze to White privilege, racial oppression, and systemic injustice, it is through a lens already turned partially inward.

This speeds burnout, limits antiracist impact, and inhibits the mutual support, coalition building, and collective learning that an activist community provides.

A New Vision: Community-oriented Citizenship through Collective Responsibility

However, some co-participants have adopted a more relational, and holistic, understanding of citizenship that transcends individual responsibility and thus allows for community building around White antiracism. For example, Meg immediately identified her responsibilities as part and parcel of her identity as a White American citizen—in other words, as a member of a community. Moreover, she explained that she owed those responsibilities to *communities* of color, because of the inequities embedded in the system of citizenship itself: “As an American citizen, I would say my advocacy for the rights of African Americans is mandated.” She also names the genocide of Native Americans, the exploitation of Latinx labor, and the exclusion of Asian immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries as issues to which she has a responsibility as a White citizen. For Meg, citizenship is not just transactional, responsibilities to a community traded for rights granted by the state. Rather, she understands citizenship as “reciprocal, as consensual, it’s all of these things. So a citizen—well, once we’ve arrived—citizens and Americans are going to care about relating to one another, and we are going to care about opportunities being as much for one as for another. Citizenship is assuming we are all in this together. No,” she interrupted herself to say decisively, “It’s saying and doing things that *let* us all be in this together.”

A career social justice advocate, Margo would be inclined to agree. For Margo, as it was for Fannie, the practical acceptance of that which one cannot change—the privilege embedded in one’s own middle-class White womanhood—provided a necessary prerequisite to, and catalyst for, actions aimed at what they felt they *did* have the power to change. When working in St. Louis as a social worker, Margo experienced her “first real awakening to the concept of White privilege.” She went to a mentor, a Black woman sociology professor, who told her, “Ok, so you have guilt. You need to use it. You have all this extra power, what are you going to do with it?” Margo took this advice to heart, and it has guided her advocacy and activism in the years since. Now a legislative aide and a respected leader in the community, Margo told me, with a thread of steel in her voice:

You know, people call it legislating morality. ‘You can’t legislate morality,’ they say. Well, the *fuck* you can’t. Because there are very few people born after Jim Crow laws were abolished who would think that that made any kind of moral sense.

Like Tamara, Margo consciously tries to enact her citizenship in ways that she knows non-White Americans cannot: “I struck the lottery for no—absolutely nothing I did on my own. So I have a responsibility. Citizenship is the holy grail for so many people. And I just *have* it. I also have the right to exercise it. I can go protest, I can go get arrested— It doesn’t mean to me what it does to others, you know? It doesn’t have the

same cost.” Margo understands that she has *substantive* citizenship, and with it comes the luxury—and responsibility—of exercising it. Yet, like Meg, she understands her role as a pro-(im)migrants rights activist and as a citizen as a *relational* one, defined as much by what is withheld from others as it is by what is granted to her. She also recognizes her antiracist commitment as part of a collective effort, a responsibility she and her fellow White antiracists owe to their neighbors of color.

Meg explains this more holistic, relational, and communitarian understanding of citizenship, social justice, and racial allyship with a specific example:

There’re some people who see a fundamental difference between justice work and religious-style service work. They assume that if what you do is collect socks, and take them to the people who need the socks, then that means you’re doing old-fashioned charity work. That you’re just saying, “I have stuff. I can feel better about myself if I give some of my stuff to other people.” But *I* believe that if you’re working for, and admiring, people who are fighting for their rights, then you have to recognize that those rights are dependent on them having a job, having income, having access to education, and those things all cost money. And, if that’s the case, then you can be giving them *more* political support by also giving money.

Meg knows that the substantive citizenship that she enjoys is due to the privileges she enjoys as an upper middle-class, highly educated, White woman and that her activism is enabled by the free time, extra resources, and social clout those privileges grant. She also knows that it would be easy to assess her work with her Unitarian Universalist church and dismiss it as self-absorbed, maternalist, charity work. She has reckoned with this charge and ultimately dismissed it. She continues to donate money and resources to her allies of color in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement, because Meg understands that their struggle is an intersectional one. She knows that immigration justice, gender justice, and economic justice are thoroughly intertwined. She knows that to achieve justice for Latinx (im)migrants in the state of Arizona, far more than the state's immigration system must change; raging wealth inequality, inadequate educational resources, unfair labor practices, discriminatory policing practices, and more preclude Latinx (im)migrants from exercising substantive citizenship in the state. Against these collected structural barriers, Meg levels her heaviest weapons: her respectability as an upper-middle class White woman and her checkbook.

Defraying costs for financially strapped organizers of color is a large part of Meg's advocacy work, and it is a conscious choice in line with the social and political support she offers along with those funds. She believes her monetary support is appropriately in line with her larger goal of empowering the Latinx (im)migrant community to engage in direct-action and liberatory actions on their own behalf:

So, for example, if you look at the White allies of *Fronteras* [POC-led organization in Phoenix], if you don't scratch the surface, you might think we were doing old-fashioned charity work. But, among other things, what we were actually doing was handling the childcare so that parents could attend the weekly meetings. *Fronteras* operates as a collective, so the children are welcome. But little kids get disruptive sometimes, so the members were thrilled whenever there were people who could be the childcare providers right there on the campus to allow parents to concentrate. Well, you know, you can say, "so you took care of some kids for free? People do that all the time around churches around here and everywhere else." Well, yeah, they do. But they don't do it because the group is planning the next demonstration, because the group is planning the next visit to Eloy Detention Center, because the group is planning the next hunger strike. That's something different. That's allyship. And so, I think that service work and other kinds of justice work can be very much intertwined.

Meg takes this role as racial ally very seriously and she tries to ground all of her activism in the principle of reciprocity. She also centers a critique of capitalism in both her understanding of pro-(im)migrants' rights and in her conception of citizenship—this, she says, is the source of her radicalism. It also seems to be the source of her communitarian understanding of citizenship: "I have such respect for the grassroots leaders who helped me see that it's the people who are oppressed who understand their

oppression the best. And that they are the only people who can *lead* in eliminating those oppressions. And tied into that, and of particular concern, for me at least, is capitalism.”

For both Meg and Margo, these more communitarian frameworks for understanding citizenship originated from their introduction to consciously intersectional activism among people of color. Both now see their responsibilities to their community as relational, communal, and *larger than themselves*. They comprehend a greater responsibility to the current racial system than that which they freely choose. This framework also allows them to see the ways in which the very White privilege which they wield on behalf of non-White, non-citizen (im)migrants relies on the system of racial inequality that ensures those (im)migrants need their assistance. And finally, a more intersectional, communitarian framework for understanding White privilege, citizenship, and belonging affords new possibilities for community-building around White, antiracist activism.

Conclusion

Because they are White women, my co-participants have a singular relationship to citizenship; they have always accessed and enacted the always-already racialized and gendered practices of citizenship in ways that are absolutely different than either White men or women of color. However, I have argued in this chapter that to consider White women’s expressions and enactments of citizenship without fully accounting for the intersectional specificity which governs their experience of that White womanhood is to

try to understand the full complexity of a song while knowing nothing about it but the key in which it is played. Should one choose to make that error—to fail to account for the specificities and nuances of class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, and more that come to bear on White womanhood—one’s comprehension of that song will remain incomplete. My fellow pro-(im)migrants rights’ activists and advocates, who are also my co-participants in this study, understand, express, and enact their citizenship in ways fundamentally inseparable from how they enact their White womanhood and their intersectional subjectivities. Yet, their relationships to structural (dis)advantage via class, sexuality, education, ethnicity, region, religion, (dis)ability, and other vectors of power mitigate and modify both their White womanhood and their experience and enactments of citizenship through it. Furthermore, their intersectional White womanhood furnishes my co-participants with the ethical, epistemological, and antiracist frameworks with which they make sense of (in)justice, understand the possibilities and limitations of their citizenship, and ultimately act.

To understand and analyze White women’s citizenship as fully intersectional provides theoretical and ethical clarity to feminist scholars and others interested in critical race and critical Whiteness studies and in social justice writ large. What I mean by this is that intersectionality gives us a means to analyze the multiplicitous nature of domination, resistance, and intersubjective experience; applying it to White women’s citizenship allows us to grapple with the thorny contradictions embedded in the synchronous experience and embodiment of racial privilege and gendered disadvantage. Such a

framework also foregrounds the intersectional positionality of citizenship's possessors and requires us to acknowledge and attend to the role of power and privilege in expressions and enactments of citizenship and belonging. It is to the role of power and privilege, and its unforeseen consequences, that I will turn in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Wielding the Master's Tools Against the Master's House: The Costs and Consequences of Enacting Racialized Citizenship on Behalf of (an)Other

Although it's not quite 9 a.m., the hot, Sonoran sun is already beating down on the cobblestones paving the courtyard at All Souls United Methodist Church.²⁰⁵ One of a dozen volunteers pushes past me, carrying two aluminum trays containing what smells like empanadas. The Department of Homeland Security bus is expected to arrive at All Souls' downtown Phoenix campus any moment; however, ICE is hardly known for their punctuality, so volunteers don't stop to look at their watches.

A soccer ball flies past my shins, and I see a boy of about twelve being scolded by his mother, the White woman pastor of All Souls, for being in the way. Just then, someone yells, "It's here!" The pastor and I both turn. Newly electrified, the few volunteers with empty hands stream through the side gate to the curb. Within five minutes, ICE-contracted officers have unloaded the asylum-seeking migrants' scarce belongings, tossed a 30-gallon garbage bag full of bologna sandwiches in plastic snack bags on the hot ground, and traded paperwork for a signature from the pastor.

Eight women volunteers hurry to form a line. Their uniformly silvery white hair, sensible shoes, and bright smiles stretch from the open door of the bus to the courtyard gate like a string of paper dolls. As the first migrants climb down from the bus, blinking in the sun as they take in their new surroundings, the elderly White women eagerly reach

²⁰⁵ While the anecdotes in this epigraph come directly from my personal experiences, memories, and footnotes, for the sake of anonymity, the names of all individuals, organizations, and churches have been replaced with pseudonyms, and in some cases, identifying details have been altered.

forward, the hard V in their earnestly repeated ¡Bienvenidos! telling me that “welcome” is one of the few Spanish words they know. I stand to one side as each woman takes either the hand or the face of each migrant, greeting them each personally, emotionally, as they make their way from the bus through the courtyard gate and into All Souls’ sanctuary. The first thing each Central American mother receives from All Souls’ is eight kisses on either side of her face and each father eight tightly clasped hands and pats on the shoulder. As we follow the last of the migrants inside, one of the women comments that the migrants looked surprised by the warmth of their welcome. I miss her next words, but then, I hear her say, “I just want to show them that not everyone in America wants them to go back to their country.”

“Un momento, señor, por favor. Lo siento.” I turn, for at least the fifth time today, to go find someone who was fluent enough in both English and Spanish to help me assist the Salvadoran man in front of me. He is insistently holding up his immigration paperwork and repeating sentences that exceed my basic Spanish, no matter how many times I ask, “despacio, por favor, muy despacio,” and he repeats his words, slower and slower. I step into the fellowship hall, looking for Callie, the pastor. She doesn’t speak any Spanish, but I’m hoping she can direct me to someone who does. Instead, the first person I see is another White woman, about 60 years old, whom I have never met. She is holding her iPhone to her face. “Do you want me to brush your hair?” She says loudly, enunciating each English word. She taps the screen with one elegantly manicured nail. Siri repeats the phrase in

grammatically incorrect Spanish, as the woman suspends the phone between herself and a young Central American girl so that the child can hear the electronic voice. Nodding slowly but without fear, the girl turns around, and the woman pulls an elastic tie out of her dusty, matted hair. Two other women rush forward to do the same, and soon a bevy of older White women each have a small, quiet migrant girl standing in front of them, or sitting between their legs, as they comb their hair with small plastic dollar-store combs someone found in a donation barrel. "They just love having their hair combed out," one of them declares, obviously pleased. Another replies, "Just think, all that long, dark hair, and who knows when the last time they had a chance to wash." The girls sit quietly, politely, wincing every now and again as the cheap combs catch a knot. Parents look around the room with vacant stares, relieved to have their young children occupied for a moment, though I see more than one mother cast a watchful eye in the direction of their daughters.

"Sam!" I turn to see Callie. She wants me to help her book a flight. While I had been collecting basic information—birthdays, number of family members, their ultimate destination—and recording it on All Souls' intake forms, Callie's travel team had been calling the migrants' sponsor families. This particular family had a credit card but no internet access with which to purchase the ticket—a common problem—so Callie needs someone to book the ticket online using the sponsor family's card number. She ushers me over to a white folding table where volunteers are lined up in front of laptops and where paperwork is constantly being shuffled about with little discernible rhyme or reason. "Remember to book it so it says they need special assistance. That way, someone from the

airline will meet them when they land,” Callie tells me. “Click here.” In order to qualify for special assistance from the airline, you must choose a disability from a paltry list that includes “I am deaf,” “I cannot walk,” and “I have an intellectual or developmental disability.”

“There,” Callie says. “Just click that one,” pointing to the last option. “They don’t speak English, so it’s the closest one.” I turn to look at her “I—I’m not going to do that.” I pause, then I continue. “I’m not going to put that on their tickets, Callie. That’s setting them up to be treated worse than they already will be, and it’s infantilizing to indicate they have an intellectual disability because they don’t speak English.” Callie looks taken aback, whether at the idea that her instructions were problematic or at my direct refusal to follow her instructions, I wasn’t sure. Hoping to avoid a confrontation, I quickly continue, “I’ll just check ‘other’, how’s that?” I turn back to the laptop without waiting for her response, but a moment later I glance over at her. Without a word, she has gone back to work. She is busy writing the same message on each of the manila envelopes All Souls sends with the migrants to their final destination, a makeshift sign on the back of a safe place to keep their documents. It reads, “I don’t speak English, please help me.” I look away again. Choose your battles.

It’s the next day. I close my eyes in gratitude at the cold blast of air-conditioning that hits my face as I walk into Terminal 2 of Sky Harbor Airport, a Guatemalan father and teenage son following close behind me. This pair had not been as lucky as the migrants

dropped at All Souls yesterday. They had been dropped at the Phoenix Greyhound Station this morning and had sat in the sparse shade behind a concrete retaining wall while volunteers like me proceeded through a stripped-down version of the intake process All Souls uses. Except this time, instead of in a church, we were in a ditch, with a card table and two camp chairs. No clean clothes, no showers, and no place to offer the migrants to rest comfortably. Unable to enter the station or its parking lot without a ticket, they can't even go to the bathroom unaccompanied. So migrants sat in the dirt and the sparse shade, and they waited while we worked as fast as we could to get them transportation tickets (either bus or plane), a safe place to sleep, or both.

However, this father and son are luckier than some of their drop-mates, who are still in the Ditch, equal parts grateful that the sun was setting, because it offers relief from the heat, and scared of what the night might bring. Ditch volunteers worked quickly with these migrants' sponsor family, though, and they now have a flight to Virginia. They are my last drop after a ten-hour day in the Ditch, and I hurry to check them in on the kiosk. Red light. See agent. "Next!"

"Yes, ma'am!" I say brightly, smiling. I tell her their confirmation number, which I had scribbled on a dusty Post-It earlier that day, and I show her their immigration paperwork. "You can't check them in this early," she says, "FAA regulation. You can't arrive before the four-hour window before a flight." It is 7 p.m. Their flight is at 6 a.m. There is no way I can bring them back at 2 a.m.; I have an early morning interview. There is no way I can find anyone else to take them at 2 a.m.; drumming up drivers can be hard

enough during reasonable hours. There is no way I can bring them back to my house; I have three big dogs that live inside (house pets, especially large dogs, are a huge cultural difference between Americans and Central Americans) and besides, given that I live alone, I doubt any of us would be comfortable with that. I sigh with regret. "I'm so sorry," I say, meaning it. "I'm going to need to speak with your supervisor."

The agent, an imposing middle-aged Black woman, does not look impressed. "I am the supervisor. I'm the floor lead. Now, do you want me to call my boss?" Her eyes bore into me. I swallow, evaluate quickly, and make a decision. "Yes, ma'am, I'm afraid I do," I say as apologetically as I can. Minutes later, her supervisor arrives. I breathe a sigh of relief, and then immediately feel my belly tighten with guilt. I am relieved, because he is a White man, and this means my odds just went up. "Evening, ma'am, my name is Bill, what can I help you with?"

Ten minutes later, I'm waiting again. This time for Bill's supervisor. As it turns out, Bill is sympathetic, but he doesn't have the clearance to complete the override necessary to force the computer system to accept a check-in before the FAA-mandated four hours.

This time, when the next supervisor arrives, I square my shoulders, smile brightly again, and thrust my hand out, "Evening, sir, my name is Samantha," I announce. He looks a bit caught off-guard by my firm handshake, and I continue. "Listen," I glance at his nametag, "I'm really hoping you can help a girl out tonight. What do you say, Charles?" He replies, smiling. At ease. "Well, I think we can probably figure something out. How about you tell me what I can do for you." My voice is thick with charm, and my Southern

accent is a touch heavier than usual. I mention working at a church the previous day. I assure him that they have no checked luggage, that I will escort them to their gate and explain everything to them. They won't be any trouble at all, I reassure him. It works. I can see him evaluating me and deciding that I can be trusted. A charming, chatty, churchgoing White lady? What's the harm in bending the rules for her?

When he hands me the migrants' boarding passes, I shake his hand again, enthusiastically. I make eye contact and smile widely as I thank him by name again. I want to make sure that the next time I am in Terminal 2, asking for something for a migrant family, this terminal supervisor remembers me. And, for the very little it is worth, I smile and wave my thanks at the stone-faced Black woman agent before I usher the migrant family toward the TSA security checkpoint.

In mid-spring of 2019, days like the ones I described above ran together in a blur of frenetic activity for volunteers, activists, and advocates who were desperately struggling to keep their heads above water amidst the massive wave of asylum-seeking migrants flooding into the city of Phoenix, Arizona. This influx was part of a surge of migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, most leaving their homes in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to seek asylum in the United States. Once at the U.S.-Mexico border, migrants presented themselves to Border Patrol agents for processing as legal asylum seekers. Overwhelmed, understaffed, and—by all accounts—uninterested, ICE and Border Patrol were quickly processing asylum seekers

and then unceremoniously dropping them off at transportation hubs in the state's largest cities. Escalating in both scale and political visibility since 2014, this mass migration has increasingly become known as the Central American migrant crisis or simply "the humanitarian crisis at the border."²⁰⁶

One volunteer proclaimed, months later, that if you "put a gun to her head," she couldn't tell you a single detail from the entire month of March 2019; every day was a new and different disaster, all of which eventually ran together. "Every day began with a text—a hundred dropped here, fifty dropped here. They're already at the bus stop, can you get down here?" she said. "I couldn't breathe." Later, over a cup of green tea gone cold while we talked, she said, "Even now, I still feel the weight of it. I got back into town last night, and I felt all of that weight just...Settle on me." I came to understand that weight well over the course of my research for this project.

Decisions carry weight, and in the spring of 2019, volunteers were forced by circumstance to make critical, spur-of-the-moment decisions with (sometimes momentous) consequences to the safety, wellbeing, and dignity of migrants. These decisions can, and should, weigh heavily enough. However, beyond this, the weight of their own Whiteness seemed to rest uneasily on the shoulders of many of the White women volunteers I met and worked with, and in truth, it was what rested most uneasily on mine during my months of fieldwork. I felt the weight of my Whiteness in my silence

²⁰⁶ Center for Disaster Philanthropy, "Southern Border Humanitarian Crisis," last edited 26 March 2020, accessed on 18 May 2020, <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disaster/southern-border-humanitarian-crisis/>.

when I chose to look away from an infantilizing and paternalistic message written on a manila envelope instead of pointing out what it costs a migrant in dignity and autonomy to beg for help in an airport, holding up a sign that says “I can’t speak English. Please help me.” I felt the weight of my White womanhood in my request for the terminal manager at Sky Harbor Airport that day, and I felt it in the Black woman agent’s gaze; we both knew what it meant that the supervisor was White and male, and we both knew what it meant that a White woman was asking for him. I still feel it every time I wield the respectability and authority vested in my educated, middle class, White womanhood in service of migrants’ rights and racial justice, because I know the ways in which my gendered Whiteness is epistemological, and it shapes what I can know about this racialized crisis and how I can know it. My gendered Whiteness provides me sociopolitical clout commensurate to my standing as a respectable White citizen and shields me from the kind of biopolitical control the state exercises over Latinx citizens, undocumented Latinxs, and asylum-seeking migrants (though to different degrees and via different mechanisms). And my gendered Whiteness endows me with a level of socioeconomic standing and a level of material comfort and safety *far* beyond that of the asylum-seeking migrants I seek to aid.

The material realities and racial consequences of being a White woman participating in migrant relief work in the borderlands means living with the contradiction that your specific and intersectionally mediated status as a White woman citizen contributes to and further reifies the gendered system of institutionalized White

supremacy that functions to the direct detriment of the migrants you seek to assist, while simultaneously endowing you with the advantages and privileges of Whiteness—which together furnish the social capital necessary to challenge that same system on their behalf. As feminists, as pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists, and as antiracist White women, my co-participants and I must reckon with the very real dangers and unforeseen consequences of wielding the Master’s tools against the Master’s house.²⁰⁷ A heavy weight, indeed.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will provide a narrative explanation and an intersectional analysis of a crucial development in July of 2019 that fundamentally altered how the (largely White) pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement and its members would serve incoming asylum-seeking migrants: the rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School in south-central Phoenix. This event ultimately prompted the creation of a migrant welcome center, which—in conjunction with rising temperatures that inevitably suppress migration each summer—largely halted the immediate crisis of migrants spilling into the city of Phoenix that began in the fall of 2018 and lasted through the late spring of 2019. This was a significant victory for the coalition of pro-(im)migrants’ rights organizations and individuals who had spent the first half of 2019 intent on finding a solution to the massive numbers of migrants being dumped in their city, without aid, supplies, resources, or shelter. The creation of the migrant welcome

²⁰⁷ Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider* (Crossing Press, 1984).

center and the end of the worst of the humanitarian crisis coincided with the (formal) end of my fieldwork. Thus, discussing the rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School and the creation of 24-hour migrant welcome center provides a natural end to the arc of this dissertation, as well—even though the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement in Phoenix has, of course, continued onward, as has my participation in it, since last July.

I chose to highlight the zoning hearing in such detail because on that afternoon, a group of largely White women volunteers, advocates, and activists consciously and collectively wielded their racialized, gendered, and class privilege on behalf of (im)migrants who were neither equipped nor empowered to do so on their own, thus exercising their substantive citizenship on behalf of those more marginalized than themselves. Yet, as we will see, the event ultimately illustrates the unforeseen costs and consequences of wielding racial (and, to a great extent, gendered) privilege on behalf of non-White, non-citizen Others. In this way, this event functions as a discrete case study of what happens when the Master’s tools are leveled against the Master’s house. Ultimately, I conclude the chapter by arguing that so long as White women pro-(im)migrants’ rights advocates continue to wield those tools (granted to them vis-à-vis their middle-class White womanhood) against the Master’s house without reckoning with the source of those privileges and advantages, not only will they risk failing to meaningfully challenge the mechanisms of power that ensure those migrants will remain marginalized and thus in need of their advocacy and aid, but additionally their exercise of

racialized and gendered power will continue to bring unintended harm to communities of color.

The Rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School in South-Central Phoenix

On July 2nd, 2019, over 60 people converged on Room 10E of the Maricopa County Courthouse. Each of these visitors had arrived at 251 W. Washington Street for a routine civil procedure that rarely garners an audience of this size: a zoning hearing. I attended the zoning hearing both as a part of my fieldwork and as a show of solidarity with the activist community to which I belong. When I entered Room 10E, it was immediately clear that the vast majority of people present were there to hear the zoning officer's decision on the last agenda item of the day: the rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School in south-central Phoenix. While many folks were present in professional capacities, representing their various NGOs, faith organizations, or their elected employers at the hearing, even more were unpaid volunteers who had come to the courthouse simply to cast their support behind the rezoning petition.

As was my experience at these types of interorganizational gatherings, especially those that take place in the middle of a weekday when Latinx volunteers and working-class community organizers are far less likely to be free to attend, a disproportionate number of these non-professional volunteers were middle-class and upper middle-class White women, many retired. While there are certainly exceptions, like Rebecca, a full-time social worker who also serves in a leadership capacity at a prominent (im)migrants'

rights group in the Valley, most of the highly active volunteers and advocates I have interviewed or met are either retired or they have non-traditional jobs/careers that allow them to make their own hours to some extent. For example, Rosa works in the medical field part-time and at her church part-time, and Annette owns her own business. To some extent, then, most of my co-participants enjoy a level of socioeconomic security and class status that endows them with a valuable resource, which is absolutely necessary to the enactment of their substantive citizenship: time. Without it, they could not have participated in a civil proceeding and exercise their political voice, and it is a resource they have in greater abundance than their fellow Latinx organizers for myriad reasons, most of which are gendered, racialized, and classed.

However, time (and thus money) are not the only factors potentially barring other populations from attending a hearing. Latinx organizers, particularly undocumented ones, have good reason to distrust the authorities, fear making themselves visible to civil or legal authorities, or avoid places with high concentrations of law enforcement officials. The policing, violence, and biopolitical and necropolitical harm that inevitably accompanies contact between undocumented and marginalized Latinxs and government agents, particularly the Phoenix Police Department, should not be underestimated.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ For more information on the deadly record of the Phoenix PD, see Brett Burkett and Uriel J. Garcia, “Phoenix Police shot at more people than the NYPD in 2018. Will that change?,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 2020, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://www.azcentral.com/in-depth/news/local/arizona-investigations/2019/06/20/phoenix-police-shootings-outpace-other-major-us-cities/3651151002/>; and Nohelano Graf, “Are Phoenix police officers the most violent in the country?,” *ABC15*, 25 September 2018, accessed 25 June 2020, <https://www.abc15.com/news/region-phoenix-metro/central-phoenix/are-phoenix-police-officers-the-most-violent-in-country>, which indicates that the Phoenix PD is “the deadliest police force in the country.” For more specific information about the biopolitical measures law enforcement

Thus, while I cannot say for certainty whether any Latinx volunteer or organizer felt barred from the hearing, I *can* say that the ease with which White women moved through the courthouse and participated in the zoning hearing was due, in part, to their gendered and racialized citizenship, which allows them to interact with government and the law without fear or discomfort.

Before the zoning officer's arrival, the room emitted a low thrum of activity and conversation. Many of the White women present had never been to a zoning hearing, and as I moved around the room I heard more than one woman wonder aloud what it would be like, how long it would take, if the officer would be amenable to their cause. For many, it was their first time exercising their political citizenship in such an obvious and active way. Every time a new person entered 10E, someone exclaimed and welcomed them; this is a small community, and the room was abuzz with cautious excitement.

Volunteers and advocates wore T-shirts advertising their politics in English and in Spanish, and thus their investment in the rezoning on Anne Ott: '*Ningun ser humano es ilegal.*' 'Refugees Welcome.' Mine said 'Humanitarian Aid is Never a Crime.'

Representatives from the Arizona Office of Refugee Resettlement International (AZRRI), the organization spearheading the effort to rezone the school, passed buttons to every new arrival. They read, 'We Stand by Migrants.'

and government agencies have taken against Latinx communities in Phoenix, see Marjorie S. Zatz, "Chicano Youth Gangs and Crime: The Creation of a Moral Panic," *Contemporary Crises* 11 (1989): 129-158.

The zoning hearing was a tangible manifestation of that sentiment; volunteers, community organizers and leaders, local activists, and professional advocates had spent the spring and early summer searching for a space in central Phoenix that could be converted into a temporary shelter for the asylum-seeking Central American migrants being released into their city by ICE. Their vision was a shelter designed, built, and run by community partners dedicated to welcoming migrants in a way that could ameliorate (at least partially) the harsh treatment of migrants at the hands of the U.S. government, restore human dignity to the process of entering the United States in order to seek asylum, and keep migrants safe from the mounting threats to their safety and wellbeing in Phoenix until transportation to their immigration sponsors could be arranged. Untold hours spent negotiating with the City of Phoenix and the school board, lobbying local elected officials for support, and developing a donor base that could support a sustained effort as ambitious as a 24/7 300-guest migrant ‘welcome center,’ as it is officially called, had led to this first official step: getting the Anne Ott School rezoned to allow a ‘boarding house’-style shelter at the site.

It took nearly two hours for the zoning official to slowly and deliberately make his way through a dozen or so petitions to raise retaining walls or allow alcohol permits, and during this time, supporters of the migrant welcome center fidgeted, scrolled on their phones, and whispered quietly to one another. No one left, however. When the zoning officer finally turned to the Anne Ott rezoning petition, an elderly White man lawyer rose to speak on behalf of the migrant welcome center. Unlike the various contractors and

business owners who had preceded him, he brought with him a packet of information, which he ceremoniously presented to the zoning officer, as well as two tripods displaying posterboard-sized maps and charts supporting his nearly 30-minute argument for the rezoning of the school.

It was clear from the expensive cut of his suit and the formal language he used to make his case (lofty and legalistic to the point of being better suited to a judge and jury than to a zoning hearing), that someone important had pulled a string or called in a favor. One particularly prominent leader in migrant relief work in Phoenix, an elderly White woman named Vivian, is a partner at a high-powered corporate law office in downtown Phoenix, and I suspected our spokesman is a friend of hers, though I still don't know—I didn't catch the lawyer's name that day nor have I seen him since in my fieldwork or my own advocacy work. The lawyer's presence (and presentation) was a testament to the social, and socioeconomic, clout many of the White women volunteers and advocates bring to the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement.

The zoning officer listened carefully and then raised a stack of green cards in his hand. Each attendee had filled out a small green notecard before the hearing began, indicating what petition they were present for, whether they supported or opposed the petition, and whether they would like to speak before the zoning officer. Dozens had filled out cards in support of the Anne Ott rezoning petition, and nearly half of those had indicated they wished to speak. The zoning officer announced that while he held thirty-nine cards in support of the rezoning on his hands, there were also seven opposing it.

Immediately, supporters began looking around, a soft murmuring rising from amongst them, drowning out the frustratingly soft-spoken officer's next words. *Who is here?* I heard one woman ask. *Is it protestors? Is it the Patriots?* Everyone straightened in their seat, bracing themselves for the worst. Instead, when the officer called the first name in the stack of seven, a middle-aged Latina woman stood up and said that she would like to cede her time to a community spokesperson. The officer agreed, and a stocky Latinx man in his forties with salt-and-pepper hair stood up and made his way to the small podium. He had a kindly face and looked like someone's dad (which we found out he was). His cell phone was clipped in a holster on his hip, his polo shirt was neatly pressed, and he hitched up the belt of his khaki slacks nervously as he approached the front of the room. The room quieted, but the confusion and suspicion were palpable. *Who is this guy?*

As we soon found out, Guillermo is the leader of a local coalition of Latinx neighborhood organizations and was present at the hearing to represent the interests of the largely working- and lower-middle class Latinx residents who live in the neighborhood surrounding the Anne Ott School. In his presentation, the lawyer had assured the zoning officer that AZRRI had reached out to the local neighborhood—he even had a map with color-coded dots indicating whether or not AZRRI representatives had “achieved contact” with the residents in any given home near the school and whether those residents were “favorable” to the shelter. However, Guillermo's version of events differed in spirit, if not much in detail; yes, he claimed, they did reach out to residents—

but only to those residents whose properties directly abutted the school, which was all the zoning petition required. *We just want a little transparency*, Guillermo said to the audience in Room 10E. This future of this neighborhood does not belong only to the community members whose land abuts the school property; the neighborhood belongs to everyone who lives there. Furthermore, he contended, AZRRI hadn't reached out to even those few residents until less than ten days before the hearing. *What could we have done in that time?* he asked. *These are working people, working families. It takes time for them to connect with their organizations, with us. It takes time to make arrangements to come to a zoning hearing on a Tuesday afternoon. And, he continued, so you stop by, you knock on a door, you ask a few questions—of course members of this community want to help immigrants. We are a community of immigrants. But we need time to think, and to talk to our community, and to do our own research. A sticker on a map means nothing. What about everyone you didn't talk to? This is their neighborhood too.* He continued, a hint of desperation creeping into his voice, *our neighborhood had plans for this school. It was going to be what we are calling a spark site. We have been negotiating with the school board, we want to revitalize our neighborhood, and the school is the center of it all.*

As Guillermo soon told us, corporate and state land deals prioritized over disenfranchised and disempowered Latinx communities had left the neighborhood around Anne Ott decimated. Over half the homes currently stand empty, first bought out from under the community, one by one, mostly in voluntary land reclamation projects and then left to fall into dilapidation when the city failed to demolish them in a timely manner after

a development project fell by the wayside—and with it, the wellbeing of the community surrounding Anne Ott. Guillermo grew up there; his mother still lives there. The community has dreams of revitalization, a spark site that will draw business and tourism—and with them prosperity, opportunity, and a brighter chance for social and substantive citizenship, as they saw it—back to their small neighborhood in the shadow on the freeway to the south and Sky Harbor International Airport to the east. The school board had seemed amenable; now this.

We are not against you, Guillermo said, the pride in his voice when speaking about his community disguising the distasteful fact that he was having to plead on their behalf, both with the White zoning officer and with us, the largely White audience. *We support you and your work. Many of us have been immigrants; we know. But why should our community shoulder the burden of supporting these immigrants?* Left unspoken, caught just behind his teeth, was a harsher indictment: *We have never seen any of you, not until you needed something from us; then, you do too little, too late. You clearly don't care about our community and what we need. Why should our community care about you, and what you now need?*

As Guillermo spoke, I looked around. A few people shifted in their seats. A few more murmured things like, *He's not wrong*, or *this isn't good*. A few looked guilty, and I could feel their discomfort taking up space in the room. I felt that same discomfort in my gut, and we were likely all thinking the same things: *What have we done here? Why had no one thought of this? What do we do about this?*

Just then, when he had nearly finished making his case, Guillermo paused. And then he said, *And besides all of that, what are your plans for medical personnel and resources?* A few ears perked up, including mine. *What?* Then he said, *We don't know where these people are coming from, or where they have been. What if they bring something airborne?*

The room fell apart, a house of cards falling in on itself just as the last card was about to be placed. Sharp exhales of disgust bounced off discordant groans. Just like that, Guillermo had lost them. *Ugh, fearmongering. That's exactly why we need this shelter. So much ignorance.* What was left unsaid, caught just behind *their* teeth was: *That's so racist. You, of all people, should know better. For shame. We do not fall prey to such nonsense. We know better.* To my co-participants, this whiff of xenophobic fear of disease conjured for them the specter of racialized rituals of exclusion, which they, as antiracist White people, have consciously chosen to reject and repudiate.

This particular house of cards had been more precarious than most, but it was still painful to watch it collapse; he had very nearly convinced them, if not to withdraw the rezoning petition, at least to consider what it meant for a group of largely White organizers to co-opt a public space in a struggling neighborhood of color and funnel money into its renovation without any plans to contribute to that community's well-being and prosperity. As I looked around the room, I thought I saw a few faces whose brows had not fully unwrinkled either. Even as they shook their heads at the idea of migrants bringing airborne disease, the effects of Guillermo's words lingered on their faces. But to

most of the room, just like that, he was an opponent again, both to the progress of the Anne Ott welcome center and to meaningful change to the current political climate of anti-immigrant prejudice and xenophobic fear. *That's exactly the kind of talk we don't need.*

In a kind of painful irony, my co-participants' and the rest of the White audience's wholesale rejection of Guillermo's case following his questions about disease, which they saw as an outrageous expression of xenophobia, was itself a racialized ritual. Except rather than scapegoating the immigrant, or otherwise wielding citizenship as a weapon to dominate a non-White Other, co-participants attempted to instead enact a progressive, resistant form of White antiracism through their racialized rejection, *as* antiracist White people, of Guillermo, his perceived xenophobia, and ultimately the case of the neighborhood and its residents.

The other Latinx community residents who had attended the zoning hearing with Guillermo—the six other notecards submitted in opposition to the petition—had all yielded their time to their spokesman as well. They wanted Guillermo to speak on behalf of the whole neighborhood. However, once Guillermo had finished and stepped aside, his words were (White)washed away by the wave of largely White women volunteers and professional advocates speaking on behalf of the rezoning—none of whom ceded their time. One after another after another, they stood and spoke. They talked about the will in *their* community to solve this problem. They spoke of the inspiration they feel every time they work with the migrants, all of whom, they argued, have come so far for the prospect

of a better life for themselves and their children. They mentioned every precaution and extra step they will take to ensure this welcome center provides a safe, inconspicuous, and respectable solution to the ‘problem’ of Central American migrants in Phoenix, including hiring private security and securing the perimeter of the campus. Some statements were calm, brief, and articulate; others were passionate, meandering, and long-winded. The zoning officer listened to each of them, patiently nodding mild thanks after each statement. As I listened, I found myself wondering if he would have extended the same courtesy to each of the Latinx neighborhood residents who opposed the rezoning; however, given that they ceded their time, there’s no way to know. I also wondered if they regretted ceding their time once they saw the number of advocates lining up for their turn at the mic.

Quite a bit after close of business at 5pm, the zoning officer announced that he would approve the rezoning of the Anne Ott Elementary School. Volunteers and advocates turned to one another with wide smiles and words of congratulations. People shook hands, clapped each other on the back, hugged one another. *Yes! This is what we’ve worked for!* This particular racial ritual had left its White participants feeling good about their advocacy on behalf of non-White, non-citizen Others. In their eyes, they had achieved an ethnically worthy and racially just goal. They felt united as a community. And in this way, the pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists and advocates’ victory at the zoning hearing was a White racial ritual, in which White people felt reprieve from

feelings of shame or guilt, felt elation at wielding their privilege for ‘good,’ and felt a sense of solidarity with the migrants they sought to help.

Meanwhile, Guillermo and the residents of the Anne Ott neighborhood filed out of 10E, leaving without a word. Their faces said enough; they were disappointed. But not surprised. Once more, a system of gendered, racialized, and classed citizenship weighed the rights, responsibilities, and needs of his community against those of a White community on a rigged scale.

The Costs and Consequences of Enacting Racialized Citizenship of Behalf of (an)Other

On that July afternoon in room 10 E of the Maricopa County Courthouse, volunteers and advocates, the majority of whom were White women, enacted their citizenship. In the moment of that enactment, they wielded the racialized, gendered, and class privileges attendant to that citizenship on behalf of non-White non-citizens to great success. However, in doing so, they simultaneously drowned out the voices of socioeconomically impoverished and structurally disadvantaged citizens of color in their city. This enactment, and many others like it that I witnessed during the course of my fieldwork, reveals much about the roles White women play, sometimes contentious and sometimes complicit, in a system of power and citizenship governed by the interests of hegemonic Whiteness. It also raises critical questions about the viability of wielding privilege in service of social justice.

After much reflection on the event described above, it seems imperative to address two aspects of the zoning hearing. First, the enormous constituency of supporters and the presence of the expensive lawyer representing the efforts of the AZRRI and the pro-(im)migrants' rights coalition is indicative of the enormous social weight that middle-class, White women can bring to bear in service of their cause(s) and of the racism, classism, and gendered power embedded in the exercise of their citizenship when throwing that weight around. Not only were White women activists and advocates more likely to be able to attend at all than their fellow activists of color, they also brought with them significant social clout invested in them vis-à-vis their status as respectable, middle-class, White women. Furthermore, the wealth, education, and connections of White activists and advocates yielded the assistance of a highly credentialed lawyer from an elite local firm—something neither Latinx pro-(im)migrants' rights organizers nor Guillermo's neighborhood organization would likely have been able to produce at all and certainly not so quickly. At this point in time, the Republican-controlled legislative and executive branches of the state of Arizona had refused to step up and offer support to local churches and organizations on the frontlines of the humanitarian crisis, the City of Phoenix was similarly dragging its feet for unknown reasons, and no one even suggested looking to federal aid from the Trump administration. As such, organizers had taken things into their own hands, spending months marshalling extra-governmental resources from every corner of the city, and leveled their heaviest weapons at the problem. By the time we all gathered for the rezoning hearing, every chart, map, poster board, and

handout that had been prepared was a blunt object with which the movement meant to bludgeon resistance to their rezoning application and, thus, their cause.

So, on the one hand, their sociopolitical connections allowed them to obtain a lawyer who would cover every base and exhaust every eventuality on the behalf of the migrants in need and to mobilize an enormous group of supporters to initiate significant change with outcomes that seemed overwhelmingly positive; they created a migrant welcome center out of an old, abandoned school. They felt that they ensured no migrant family would ever have to face a sweltering afternoon or unsafe night in the Greyhound Station Ditch and, thus, changed the course of a crisis. However, on the other hand, in doing so, they used those resources (of wealth, education, time, and connection) to steamroll a community who could not have produced such a legal defender of their own, or such a large crowd of supporters, *for some of the same racialized and socioeconomic reasons* that asylum-seeking Central American migrants require aid and advocacy: institutional racism, environmental racism, labor devaluation and exploitation, and economic hardship. By co-opting the ‘spark site’ on which Guillermo’s neighborhood had staked so many of their hopes, White pro-(im)migrants rights advocates and activists used their gendered, racialized, and class privilege to ensure the social needs *they* were most interested in meeting were prioritized over the needs of the community surrounding the Anne Ott School.

My point is not that the White women pro-(im)migrants’ rights advocates and activists were *wrong* to marshal their sociopolitical resources on behalf of asylum-

seeking migrants; rather, before we, as White women, exercise our privilege on behalf of someone more marginalized than ourselves, we must account for, and reckon with, how the privilege one wields on behalf of another is only enabled by the disadvantage of an(Other). Access to resources—both material and social—is power-laden, and power is always racialized, gendered, and classed. Thus, it is crucial for antiracist White women to recognize that we often exercise our power on a zero-sum scale; in this case, in their haste to marshal their resources on behalf of Central American asylum-seeking migrants, White pro-(im)migrant rights organizations and individual activists threw all of their attention, energy, and support behind a strategy that ultimately pitted the interests of marginalized, non-White non-citizens against the interests of marginalized, non-White citizens.

White pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and activists, by all accounts, never considered the impact on the Latinx community where the welcome center would come to be. Rather, they assumed their vision for the future health and wellbeing of Central American asylum-seeking migrants was the best way to proceed and, in conjunction with city leaders, chose a viable site that suited their purposes without consulting leaders or elders in the community around that site. In fact, their only contact with the community at all was through a lawyer they contracted, a wealthy White man with no discernible ties to either the community or to the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement, to gauge community interest only up to the point required by the zoning application. Ultimately, and

unfortunately, those purposes would come at the direct detriment of the community around Anne Ott School.

Several months after the zoning hearing, shortly after the migrant welcome center got up and running, I asked the center's newly hired White woman manager about the conflict with the community and its ultimate resolution. According to her, the welcome center and the RRI²⁰⁹ have come to a peaceable understanding with the community, which now understands the need for the shelter and is very interested in utilizing space at the welcome center to expand their neighborhood programming. However, in a separate conversation with Guillermo shortly before speaking to her, he offered a sharply different narrative. Guillermo told me that the zoning hearing left a sour taste in the collective mouth of the community, and I can understand why that might be the case. Guillermo indicated that most residents remain bitter about the welcome center's presence in their neighborhood, and that all they had ever asked for was consideration, transparency, and a recognition that while the little neighborhood under the freeway may seem beneath notice for pro-(im)migrants' rights organizations and organizers, it is *home* to its residents. He conceded that the welcome center had in fact offered the community a space in the school building to hold community meetings or events. However, he also said that most residents have no desire to step foot in Anne Ott Elementary School, so long as it is run by the RRI. This entire process was, for many of them, just more confirmation that their

²⁰⁹ While many different Valley-based organizations have space in the welcome center, or utilize it in some way, the AZRRI technically runs the center, and all full-time staff are employed through their organization.

city's leaders have forgotten about them and that they should not look north to City Hall for assistance in revitalizing the neighborhood that the City itself disrupted and effectively dismantled when it first began buying up houses for development. And after the RRI offered the community that unused space in the school for its use, there has been no indication that they will be contributing in any way to the revitalization or rejuvenation of the community in which their welcome center is located.

Second, and more briefly, I think it is important to address White pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and activists' reaction to Guillermo's concern about potential disease among asylum-seeking Central American migrants. From the first moment they realized there was significant opposition to the rezoning of the school, White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists at the zoning hearing were poised for xenophobic attack; many present first assumed the Patriots were in attendance. There was a moment, right before Guillermo mentioned disease, that many present began to look uncomfortable, as if they were, for the first time, realizing the potential consequences of their actions on behalf of migrants. However, as soon as Guillermo mentioned potential risk to the community from airborne contagion, there was a palpable release of tension in the room, as if suddenly there was a collective sigh: *We weren't wrong after all*. The racism and xenophobia White activists perceived in Guillermo's comment helped justify their dismissal of his larger case before the zoning hearing that day. The brief window in which White advocates and activists seemed willing to reckon with the consequences of the rezoning on the Latinx community around Anne Ott was slammed shut as soon as the

words left his mouth. Reflection was replaced with disgust, dismissal, and self-righteousness.

My purpose here is to neither condone nor condemn Guillermo's comments, nor the reactions of the White activists around him. Rather, my point is that well-intentioned White women of a certain social class can be so blinded to the effects of White privilege, institutional racism, and systemic disadvantage that they misunderstand entirely the dynamics of power at play in their advocacy work. Their reaction to Guillermo was without nuance; by their calculation, assuming migrants carry disease is racist and xenophobic, and therefore anyone who would say such a thing is oppressing migrants by perpetuating racist stereotypes.

An intersectional analysis might arrive at a fuller, more complete, explanation. First, poor and working-class Latinx communities, and Black and Brown communities more largely, are long accustomed to officials and lawmakers dumping problems in their backyards because they know those communities do not have the resources to argue or resist. Highways crosscutting non-White neighborhoods, coal slurry and fracking waste flowing down river into communities of color, and social programs slashed to pieces continually remind Black and Brown Americans that their communities are dumping grounds. Is it so unexpected that this community would be primed to expect it would happen again? This community, specifically, felt that they had been done dirty by the City of Phoenix once already, when its development project decimated the community. Second, Latinx communities have reason to know better than most the difficult journey

from the Northern Triangle to the U.S. border and the unhealthy and unsanitary conditions in immigrant detention centers and *las hieleras* that migrants will face before arriving in Phoenix. While it is true that assuming all Latinx, Brown, or migrant people are sick or dirty is xenophobic, intimate knowledge of the risks and dangers of migration does not necessarily make one xenophobic. Finally, in a forgotten, working-class neighborhood with high percentages of undocumented people, it is not unreasonable for residents to fear illness, both on its own merit and because of the barriers they will face to acquire adequate medical care.

Likewise, it would be similarly unnuanced to condemn and dismiss White women advocates and activists as simply racist for condemning Guillermo's comments and pressing forward with the rezoning of the Anne Ott School. An intersectional analysis of *their* actions would reveal that as educated, middle-class, White women committed to antiracism, and using the epistemological frameworks provided to them by virtue of their intersectional social locations, they leapt to the defense of migrants—a group without the privilege or the opportunity to defend or advocate for themselves in this forum. In doing so, they felt that they were repudiating wrong-headed and xenophobic fears about 'foreign' migrants carrying disease and ensuring migrants got a fair shake at the zoning hearing. However, in doing so uncritically, they *still* brought harm to a community of color with more privilege than asylum-seeking migrants but *far* less than White women advocates and activists. The same tools that brought benefit to one group brought direct harm to another.

When White women enact their citizenship, and thus their White privilege, they are at serious risk of reifying and bolstering systems of domination that rely on that same privilege to maintain oppression. They also risk actively oppressing people of color themselves, as the zoning hearing ultimately demonstrates—it's still hard to say where the good done by acting as a wedge, propping a door open for one group of Latinxs, stopped and where the roadblock, erected at the detriment of a second and somewhat less marginalized group of Latinxs began. So the question becomes, how do antiracist White women wield their racial privilege in service of social justice under the current system of White supremacy *without* ultimately oppressing people of color? Is such a thing possible? I turn to these questions in my concluding chapter.

Conclusion: When White Women are Really Down: (Re)envisioning Citizenship and Imagining an Antiracist Future for White Pro-(Im)migrants' Rights Activists

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued and demonstrated that White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists face thornily difficult ethical questions about how to wield their White, and gendered, privilege on behalf of marginalized Latinx non-citizens when the genesis of that privilege and authority draws its power from a system of racialized and gendered citizenship functioning in tandem with a sociopolitical system of White supremacy in the United States. In fact, it is these very systems operating together that ensure the migrants White women activists seek to help remain marginalized and in need of their aid, and it is in their respectable, middle-class, White womanhood that this power imbalance is partially vested. From within their White womanhood, co-participants bring to the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement diverse life experiences shaped by class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, region, ability, education, and community, which fundamentally shape their understandings and enactments of citizenship. Yet the fact remains that none can escape the indelible impact their White womanhood has on their activism; in fact, it is their White womanhood *itself* which legitimizes and amplifies their voices on the matter of (im)migrants' rights.

The entanglement of White supremacy and racialized citizenship is a problem neither new nor novel; rather, the story of race, citizenship, and Whiteness in the borderlands has a long sociohistorical past. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the investment of White Arizonans, men and women alike, in these dual systems continue to pay

significant dividends, paid out through the state's sociopolitical order and political economy, the historical and contemporary management of land and labor in the U.S. Southwest, and a multipartite racial system which continues to govern the state's racial politics. White women pro-(im)migrant rights activists and advocates living and working within this immigration regime do their activist and advocacy work from within their Whiteness, which functions as an epistemic, sociopolitical, and economic system that administers the political economy of both Arizona and the U.S. broadly. Their Whiteness has profound and material effects on the direction and circumstances of their lives *and* the lives of the migrants they seek to serve. Their White womanhood is a *habitus* that they enact through everyday practice and which they can never escape nor ever fully operate outside of. Their White womanhood defines their sense of self and their activism alike.

Even so, diverse experiences shaped by class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, region, ability, education, and community supply complicated and divergent frameworks with which my co-participants interpret the world, commit to their work, understand their Whiteness, and ultimately enact their citizenship. As I discussed in Chapter 2, each of my co-participants ultimately arrived to pro-(im)migrants' rights work through several, highly divergent pathways. Experiences of class, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, region, ability, education, and community set them on different paths; some came to racial and immigrant justice work when they saw the oppression of someone they loved. Others were raised in communities, often religious, that prioritized community service, mutual

aid, and social activism. Some were guided to the cause by another White person in their life, drawn in by the passion and dedication they witnessed in this other, antiracist, White person. And for others still, personal trauma and feelings of unbelonging or unworthiness sent them on a quest for personal meaning in unexpected places. Each woman brought her own, intersectionally inflected, set of experiences, beliefs, and biases. Viewing co-participants' stories in this way, and subjecting them to intersectional scrutiny, belies any attempt to render White womanhood monolithic or anti-intersectional.

In Chapter 3, I argued and demonstrated that each co-participant I interviewed understands and exercises her citizenship *both* from within the parameters of her White womanhood *and* from her own distinct, intersectional, social positionality. I provided an analogy with which to imagine this relationship: I considered White womanhood to be the 'key' in which a piece of music is played. Notes played within this key—each woman's actions, choices, and enactments, all of which result from the individual, and *intersectional*, specificities of her life and her personality—are still guided, constrained, and governed by the key in which they are played. I contend that the pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates with whom I worked, and those who I interviewed, understand and enact their citizenship in ways fundamentally defined by both their intersectional identity and their social positionality *as* White women. Gender and White womanhood have an enormous bearing on co-participants' everyday interactions and experiences as activists, and personal choice and individual agency cannot be disentangled from social positionality and social genealogies. Yet when pro-

(im)migrants' rights activists try to frame their racial responsibility in terms of White privilege—and only White privilege—several ethical problems emerge which ultimately make them less effective antiracists and pro-(im)migrants' rights activists. It is only when co-participants adopt more communitarian, relational, and holistic frameworks for understanding their citizenship and their accompanying racial responsibility that they create coalitional, justice-centered, antiracist efforts with lasting potential.

However, challenges and pitfalls arise when White women advocates and activists wield the privilege and clout granted to them vis-à-vis their middle-class White womanhood on behalf of marginalized migrants of color without acknowledging the source of that power. In Chapter 4, I recounted and analyzed the events of the Anne Ott Elementary School rezoning hearing to demonstrate the potential costs and consequences of enacting racialized citizenship on behalf of an(Other). So long as White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists continue to wield the Master's tools against the Master's house without interrogating those tools, and what their use might mean for the people of color around them, they will not only fail to meaningfully challenge or change the mechanisms of power that ensure those migrants remain marginalized, they will also continue to bring harm (unintentional or not) to communities of color.

Theoretical Contributions and Future Avenues for Research

Beyond the analytical findings discussed above, this dissertation also sought to make several critical interventions and theoretical contributions to citizenship studies,

feminist intersectional theory, and White antiracism. First, this project's findings illustrate the absolute necessity of an intersectional analytical lens, even and especially when investigating White womanhood. This lens is even more useful, and critically necessary, when investigating citizenship and belonging. Second, self-reflexivity is key to ethical White antiracism; however, self-reflexivity practiced in a vacuum runs the risk of becoming White solipsism and derailing meaningful antiracist change. This second point leads naturally to the third: White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists, and White antiracists more broadly, need to get better at forming antiracist communities, and these communities need to employ less ego and more empathy. Furthermore, this project begs further research into the role of religion in White antiracism and the theoretical and liberatory possibilities of 'queering' racial rituals and (the enactment of) antiracism.

While it might initially seem surprising that very little work has been done in the field of Gender and Women's Studies or in Whiteness studies on White womanhood specifically, the fact remains that very few scholars critically and thoroughly investigate the intersectional experiences and expressions of White womanhood. This is part due to the fact that "the overwhelming majority of intersectionality scholarship has centered on the particular positions of multiply marginalized subjects."²¹⁰ This fact has left an "unresolved theoretical dispute" that "makes it unclear whether intersectionality is a

²¹⁰ Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 9-10. Nash references A. Ferguson's 2000 article, "Resisting the veil of privilege: Building bridge identities as an ethic-politics of global feminisms," in Narayan U. and Harding S., eds. *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

theory of marginalized identity or a generalized theory of identity.”²¹¹ Some scholars, like Peter Kwan, argue that intersectionality should oppose making non-marginalized subjects central to its project because the theory itself was always meant to recover “marginalized subjects’ voices and experiences.”²¹² Others, however, have contended that women are, by nature of their womanhood alone, “already [in] a socially disadvantaged position,” which “will intersect with other social positionalities that will multiply disadvantage them, such as age, (dis)ability, sexuality, and class.”²¹³

In this study, one co-participant demonstrates this fact more than any other: Fannie. As a White woman who simultaneously experiences racialized privilege alongside her (racially mitigated) gendered disadvantage and significant ableist disadvantage and disenfranchisement, Fannie is an undeniably intersectional subject. As Fannie’s Costco anecdote and the conversation between her and her home health aide testified, Fannie’s disability mitigates her social and substantive citizenship in myriad ways and fundamentally impacts her experience and expression of (White) womanhood. Fannie’s account of the sexually charged threats she receives for her activism, the difficult and dangerous ways she must navigate Phoenix (much less inter-state travel), and her generalized vulnerability as a disabled woman illustrate how gender and (dis)ability intersect to cause significant disadvantage in Fannie’s life. Fannie’s

²¹¹ Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” 10.

²¹² See Peter Kwan, “Jeffrey Dahmer and the Cosynthesis of Categories,” *Hastings Law Journal* 48. Quote originates in Nash, “Rethinking Intersectionality,” 10.

²¹³ Naomi Zack, *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women’s Commonality* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

Whiteness and class privilege are material and meaningful sources of advantage, do not mistake me; however, her experience of both is undeniably shaped by the intersection of her gender and her disability.

Yet, Fannie is not the only person whose White womanhood is altered or remade where it intersects with another vector of subjectivity. Jeannie’s queerness, and her motherhood of a biracial son, reshapes how she understands who she is and her relationship to Whiteness and citizenship. Rosa and Stephanie both described how age unquestionably inflects their activism. For Rebecca, her nationality, her Italianness—which, to her, feels like her ethnicity and used to feel like a non-White racial identity—fundamentally informs how she sees, feels about, and advocates for (im)migrants and the affective meaning she makes of citizenship and belonging. Each of these women understands the rights, responsibilities, and relationships entailed in her citizenship and enacts her citizenship from within a “habitus,” and using an epistemological framework, endemic to White womanhood.

For those critics who would argue that this is not intersectionality, but rather simply the study of identity, I would respond that intersectionality is meant to “capture the ways in which subjects experience subjectivity” *and* “strategically deploy identity.”²¹⁴ Intersectionality has yet to reckon with or theorize “the processes and mechanisms by which subjects mobilize (or choose not to mobilize) particular aspects of their identities in particular circumstances.” This project is a critical, intersectional, and feminist analysis

²¹⁴ Nash, “Rethinking Intersectionality,” 10-11.

of how White woman mobilize their White womanhood, and the citizenship entailed in it, in particular circumstances—namely, on behalf of (im)migrants’ rights.

This is where I make my intervention. I agree with Jennifer Nash when she writes that “simple identifying particular intersections as undertheorized or unacknowledged is only the first step in a larger theoretical and political project”—a project wherein the future of intersectional analysis lies. As intersectional and feminist theorists, we must explore and describe the ways in which “privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level” and how the two intersect to inform each subject’s experiences of identity and subjectivity, of citizenship, and of the world at large.²¹⁵

This dissertation means to push the intersectional investigation of White women’s subjectivity, their distinctive intersectional positionalities, and the differences these specificities makes in their experiences and expressions of White womanhood in new directions. By doing so, and by “conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multi-valent, and simultaneous,” I hope to offer an intersectional framework that offers a “robust conception of both identity and oppression.”²¹⁶

Furthermore, just as my co-participants’ experiences of White womanhood are intersectional, so too are their enactments of citizenship. If citizenship consisted of the rights, responsibilities, and relationships entailed in belonging; the frameworks of meaning attached to that belonging; and the measures taken to participate in, reproduce,

²¹⁵ Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” 11-12.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

and police, that belonging, then the study of citizenship demands an intersectional lens. Race, gender, class, sexuality, (dis)ability, and other vectors of power have *always* defined subjects' relationships to citizenship and belonging in the United States. As I demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, White womanhood is a habitus, a 'key,' that shapes and constrains the possibilities of White women's expressions, enactments, and actions. This habitus is itself intersectionally constructed and provides an epistemological standpoint from within which my co-participants analyze the world, engage in their activism, and enact their citizenship. Yet, specificities of class, (dis)ability, sexuality, religion, education, and community nuance individual women's experiences of that White womanhood and change their relationship to it. These specificities also have the potential to dramatically remake my co-participants' understanding and enactment of their citizenship and their personal responsibility to racial justice.

These intersectional differences impact how my co-participants ultimately choose to enact the rights entailed in their gendered and racialized citizenship. Thus, to analyze White women's enactments of citizenship while remaining attendant *only* to race and/or gender is to comprehend only the 'key' in which their songs are played and to miss all of the nuance, complexity, and divergence within those songs' notes. It is also to leave untheorized how other vectors of subjectivity and identity shape how citizenship operates.

Intersectionality's theoretical and methodological power offers a ready and robust framework for critically analyzing and interpreting citizenship. Specifically,

intersectionality can help us determine what it means when “privilege and oppression [are] co-constituted on the subjective level” and together inform “each subject’s experiences” and enactments of citizenship.²¹⁷ An intersectional analysis of subjects attempting to wield the citizenship to which they already have uncontested access, on behalf of subjects who are marginalized and/or do not have the same uncontested access, promises to offer a far more robust picture of the interaction of privilege and oppression in citizenship than any other analysis could. Much of citizenship studies has concerned itself with the mechanisms by which subjects make claims to citizenship; what I am interested in asking, and in pushing citizenship studies to ask is this: What new insights might be gained from investigating the mechanisms by which subjects who already have rights use them in the service of social justice for (O)thers? What comes of intentionally (re)purposing a Master’s tool—hegemonic citizenship, to which my middle-class White co-participants have uncontested access—to tear down the Master’s house? Feminist and intersectional inquiries into White women’s citizenship, and citizenship more broadly, may yield answers to these questions.

While this may not be a novel contribution, it is a critical one: scholars of citizenship must be attendant to the intersectional specificities of both the lives of those claiming citizenship *and* to the intersectional relationships of power that create the habitus and epistemology form within which those claimants ultimately act. Feminist disability studies has aptly described, and gone far to fill, the gaps in knowledge created

²¹⁷ Nash, “Re-thinking Intersectionality,” 11.

with disability is left out of the analysis of citizenship and belonging.²¹⁸ This study theorizes, and models, the kind of rich and novel contributions that can come from applying an intersectional analysis to the study of citizenship. Specifically, by applying intersectional analysis to the exercise of citizenship by advantaged populations on behalf of disadvantaged ones we may begin to envision turning hegemonic citizenship—a Master’s tool—to more just purposes. At minimum, our attention to intersectionality in the practice, enactment, and policing of citizenship promises to reveal previously unremarked upon relationships of power and privilege.

In addition to making the case for the intersectional analysis of White womanhood and intersectionality’s applicability to citizenship studies, I also hope to contribute new theoretical knowledge regarding the role of self-reflexivity in White antiracism. White advocates and activists who demonstrated significant self-reflexivity in their interviews and in their activism more broadly had a richer, sounder, and more organized understanding of structural Whiteness, their (anti)racism and its attendant racial responsibilities, and their role as White women involved in pro-(im)migrants’ rights activism. The concept of White self-reflexivity in antiracist work is not new; the concept is pervasive and appears in the earliest theoretical explorations of White antiracism. However, White self-reflexivity about one’s place in racial (in)justice conducted in isolation, or as an individual act, is bound to fall into White solipsism—too much “remains invisible to us,” as White people, and as White women specifically. It is

²¹⁸ Thomson, “Feminist Disability Studies.”

only through forming community, both with other antiracist White people and with people of color, that our self-reflexivity can be informed, meaningful, and productive. Forming this kind of community is also the only way to resist, and avoid, derailing antiracist change through the recentering of the White self.

Despite conducting research among a network of White woman activists and advocates, I was surprised to find that White woman are, by and large, bad at creating this type of community. Too often, I witnessed White women derail, coopt, or foreclose possibilities for collective organizing and partnered efforts between White-led organizations because of their attachment to their own ideas, frameworks, and egos. Petty arguments and differences in leadership style rent organizations in two and positioned organization leaders as opponents rather than partners in antiracist efforts. Just as often, White woman were perplexed when cross-racial coalitional activist networks didn't coalesce on their own or worse, didn't think those cross-racial coalitions were necessary. White activists' collective lack of familiarity with the work currently happening in primarily POC-led organizations meant White woman stepped up to meet needs without first asking the communities who were already doing this work what those needs might be. Meanwhile, I attended more than one event, sponsored by White-led organizations, in which a person of color—often framed as the deserving poor/Other—was displayed, asked to speak, or otherwise highlighted as an example of the transformational possibilities of this work. Yet these same people of color—largely migrants, ex-

(im)migrants, or Latinx pastors hosting (im)migrants—remained the only person/people of color in attendance at the event.

There was much that was problematic in my co-participants' organizational and individual efforts to serve (im)migrants. Yet for every 'cringeworthy' moment like the one(s) described above, I encountered a co-participant who sparked unexpected empathy in me. For example, I spent much of the day after my interview with Annette, who loved and then lost her Native adopted brother during her earliest years of childhood, troubled by our encounter. On the one hand, my gut reaction was to find mentions of 'transcolor' identity and her exoticization of Latinx life (e.g. when Annette told me that she first found belonging in "the big, beautiful brown eyes" of Latinx migrants) repugnant and inflected with unacknowledged racial power. And, in fact, they are. However, seeing the tears in Annette's eyes as she recounted shielding a young Central American mother and her child from callously aggressive photojournalists at the Greyhound Bus station made me revisit what Annette's empathy and compassion in that situation meant and how it related to her Whiteness *and* reconsider the role of empathy in my own participant observation and (auto)ethnographical framework.

Upon reflection, empathy is an important part of this research context and this study. While empathy for migrants abounds in primarily White pro-(im)migrants' rights circles, empathy for one another seldom does. Practicing empathy with one another would carry antiracist White woman a long way toward the goal of a healthier and more robust antiracist community. Furthermore, empathy is gendered and racially inflected.

My empathy for my co-participants cannot be divorced from how I see in them a reflection of who I am. My co-participants' empathy for (im)migrants cannot be untangled from the genealogies of social uplift, community service, and humanitarian work that I discussed in chapter 3, and which are embedded in middle-class White womanhood. Yet empathy is key to both antiracism and the formation of antiracist community. As I consider new directions for this work and imagine future avenues of research that may take this study as their starting point, further investigation of the role of empathy in White antiracism and social justice activism more broadly proves necessary.

Two other avenues of future research seem germane here as well. First, religion, spirituality, and denominational faith communities played an unexpectedly outsized role in my co-participants' understandings and enactments of citizenship. While it lay outside of the scope of this study, further research regarding the role of religion and spirituality play in both White antiracism and White women's understandings and enactments of citizenship is needed. Specifically, I would be interested in examining how progressive religious practices and communities foster meaningful antiracist activism, offer safe space for self-reflection, and provide new possibilities for antiracist community.

Second, while sexuality fundamentally alters my experience and expression of my White womanhood and my White citizenship, and while sexuality appears are an important area for investigation within multiple co-participants' interview, I do not explicitly investigate here how sexuality impacts intersectional White womanhood, White antiracism, or the enactment of citizenship. However, as I conclude this project and look

forward to new research, it seems to me that this project gestures toward the theoretical and transformative possibilities of asking what it could mean to ‘queer’ racial rituals. If racial rituals are designed with exclusion, boundary demarcation, and policing in mind, queering racial rituals could signal a transformation in how White people understand and enact their Whiteness. One might argue that in exploring and (re)creating how they enact their citizenship through their activism, my co-participants are trying to queer what it means to be White in their own lives and communities. Perhaps when Annette declared she identifies with the word ‘transcolor’ first and foremost because she does not identify with White oppression, she was struggling to queer what it means to be White, even while lacking the language to articulate it as such and lacking the knowledge to know why ‘transcolor’ isn’t the ethical answer she’s looking for.

These are both questions for future publications and for other scholars of citizenship studies, feminist intersectional theory, and the study and practice of White antiracism. It is my hope that by posing these as future avenues of research, and providing this dissertation as a stepping stone to the beginning of that journey, our critical understanding of White women, White womanhood, and the intersectional enactment of their citizenship is expanded.

So what now?

Thus far in this concluding chapter, I have summarized and presented my arguments and findings in Chapters 1 through 4. I have outlined what I hope are the

theoretical contributions and novel interventions that this dissertation makes to the overlapping and interdisciplinary fields of gender and women's studies, citizenship theory, and Whiteness studies. Now, the question left, both for myself and for all the antiracist White women in the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement is this: Where is the way forward?

For those of us who are committed to resisting the racism, xenophobia, and injustice that animates that very privilege we rely upon to make meaningful change on behalf of migrants, how do we make ethical sense of using the Master's tools to dismantle the Master's house when we know those tools will be toxic to, and ultimately delay the realization of, the long-term project of meaningful social justice?

I cannot pretend to have a full answer to that question. However, in this dissertation, I have answered and explicated how differently socially situated White women understand their citizenship and how they conceptualize the rights and responsibilities that accompany that citizenship. I have examined how these White women enact their gendered and racialized citizenship and to what ends. And I hope the project itself demonstrates what an intersectional analysis of these White women's actions can tell us about the relationship(s) between gender, race, citizenship, and antiracist activism. And while I cannot lay out the path forward for antiracist White women, what I can do is offer five important takeaways from this research for those White women who are seeking to wield their privilege on behalf of Latinx (im)migrants or other marginalized peoples. By offering these take-aways—which the realization of

has ultimately helped me to be a better antiracist, White, pro-(im)migrants' rights activist and advocate—I am looking forward, toward the future of White, women-led, anti-racist activism in my community. Should other antiracist, White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates take these points to heart, I believe we, as a community, can begin to move toward a future in which we do less damage to the people of color in our lives, become more effective and ethical antiracist activists, and ultimately manifest a more ethical, just, and equitable future ourselves and for the Latinx (im)migrants' we seek to support.

1: Our investments in systems of power grants us the very power to act that we then level against those same systems.

As White women, our antiracism and our pro-(im)migrants' rights work is inseparable from, and enacted from within, our White womanhood. Even if we wanted to, we cannot remove our White womanhood from this equation of power. In fact, our very access to, and efficacy within, pro-(im)migrants' rights activism is informed by the social and political privilege that accompanies our Whiteness and the gendered privilege attendant to the long genealogy of White women's activism on issues related to social wellbeing, public health, and racial uplift. Thus, our activism, no matter how well-intentioned, is already only made possible through our relationship to systems of domination. Even when leveled against injustice, like at the rezoning hearing, when White women choose to pick up the Master's tools—the legacy of respectable middle-

class White womanhood and our gendered White privilege—we deploy our power on a zero-sum playing field. This is because our ownership of that privilege relies on someone else not having it.

Because of this, as antiracist White women, we are responsible for anticipating and mitigating, as much as we can, the effects of our exercise of power. What might that look like? After the Anne Ott Elementary School rezoning hearing in July 2019, it *could have* looked like White pro-(im)migrants' rights organizers doing whatever possible to make right with Guillermo and the community what they had done. The Welcome Center and its staff could have attempted to *listen* to the community—not in order to respond, but in order to understand where they had gone wrong and what the community needed to feel empowered again. They could have made clear to the community that they regretted railroading the community as they had (even if they had been well-intentioned) and taken responsibility for their actions. They could have communicated that they wanted to be in community with the families living around Anne Ott and that they wanted to be partners in the community's struggle to revitalize their neighborhood. Most importantly, they could have showed good faith to the community by consciously and unreservedly recognizing their gendered and racial privilege, making their resources available to the community, and throwing their sociopolitical clout behind the community in its future endeavors. That is what White women pro-(im)migrants' rights activists' response to the zoning hearing *could have* looked like.

But what it in fact *should have* looked like was White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates considering the impact on the marginalized and largely Latinx immigrant community around the Anne Ott School *before* the zoning hearing ever came to pass. This could have happened if pro-(im)migrants' rights organizers had done what Guillermo pointed out they should have done: made contact with *every* member of the community (to the extent possible) around the school, not only those who by law had to be contacted, and then listened to community leaders when they did contact them. Had organizers done this, perhaps Anne Ott wouldn't have been chosen at all as the site for the future center, and efforts would have had to begin anew, which would have been a devastating setback for the movement. Or perhaps, the welcome center could have been established at Anne Ott *in partnership* with a community that knows intimately the trauma, costs, and consequences of migration better than any White organizer possibly could and who might have been willing to welcome and assist a migrant welcome center in their community under different, more equitable, circumstances.

Do not mistake me: there is no easy answer here. If organizers and activists *had* discovered the community's resistance to the welcome center, subsequently lost those months of negotiating with the City of Phoenix, and had to begin searching for a new potential site for asylum-seeking migrants, it is a very real possibility that (eventually) a migrant would have been seriously injured or even killed because of a lack of a guaranteed shelter in Phoenix. There is an argument to be made that the welcome center deserved priority—that the lives of asylum-seeking migrants are more important than a

spark site in a Latinx neighborhood desperately in need of revitalization. *However*, when largely middle-class, White women assume that such a momentous decision as that is theirs, and theirs alone, to make, they are both complicit in and actively contributing to the system of White supremacy and racialized citizenship and belonging that oppresses Latinx citizens and non-citizens alike. In that moment—the moment in which White women fail to listen to the most marginalized and the most impacted in their community and instead decide that they know best how to resist oppression and achieve justice—they are no longer wielding the Master’s tools against the Master’s house in any meaningful way; they are simply renovating the existing structure.

As an antiracist White woman, I have had to come to terms with, and get used to being uncomfortable within, the knowledge that our hard-won and duly-prized female empowerment as respectable, middle-class, White women is built on the backs of those who are denied power. Furthermore, any effort to use our privilege or gendered authority *as* White women in order to aid those more marginalized than ourselves will inevitably be tainted, because the gendered authority animating that effort springs directly from the same source as the oppression it opposes. It is a difficult paradox, but one from which we cannot remove ourselves and thus one which we have no choice but to operate within if we are to remain committed to antiracism and pro-(im)migrants’ rights. Which brings me to my next point:

2. *It is our responsibility, as White women, to find a way to work toward social and racial justice in ethical ways—even while recognizing that to do so, we must wield inherently dangerous and flawed tools.*

White women committed to antiracism find ourselves in an impossible bind. To resist injustice and to make their voices heard, we must rely upon the platform of our respectable White womanhood and our White privilege; however, exercising that power reifies the unjust system from whence it comes. There is no easy answer, but here is the answer I have found for myself:

As a White woman committed to antiracism, I am responsible for doing everything in my power to undermine, resist, dismantle, and delegitimize the mechanisms of power oppressing those more marginalized than myself. I am responsible for using the tools available to me to resist oppression, even as I am equally responsible for anticipating and mitigating the effects of my actions on the people of color around me.

Neither task is easy nor comes with a blueprint. As Margo so pointedly and succinctly reminds us, “you can be *really* down with the cause, and still be fucking up.” Even so, she believes it is our *responsibility*, as the “winners of the birth lottery” of privilege, as so many other co-participants phrased it, to *try*. Just as importantly to Margo, after we ‘fuck it up,’ she believes we also have the responsibility to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again. And in beginning again, we are responsible for learning from that mistake and forging a new way forward. To do otherwise is to prioritize our comfort over our antiracism.

We, as White woman, must learn to live in the uncomfortable and uncertain space of knowing that as antiracists, we must continue to do our best with the flawed tools available to us, certain in the knowledge that we will, eventually, fuck it up. And when that time inevitably comes, it is our responsibility to listen to the other antiracists and people of color around us and realize that, sometimes, there is much that “remains invisible to us, as White women.” These inevitable failures and myriad hidden truths cannot, and should not, immobilize us or prevent us from continuing to do antiracist work. They should, instead, serve as reminders that we have much to learn, and much to account for. Antiracism is not a place to which we arrive, it is a responsibility that we must shoulder if we are to live ethical lives as White people.

3. White women need a collective and communitarian framework for making sense of, and meeting, our racial responsibility.

To assume that we can individually find a way to live such an ethical life, as an anti-racist White person, *on our own* is to fall prey to one of the many pitfalls of Whiteness: self-centeredness and self-absorption. Nothing about racial responsibility is, can be, or should be an individual process. To make one’s racial responsibility into one that only you can shoulder is to make it an obligation so overwhelmingly heavy it will always feel impossible and immobilizing. The very nature of our racial advantage is group-based and so too must be our response to it. Additionally, *because* of all that remains invisible to us, by the very nature of our gendered White privilege, we cannot

know everything we need to know about race and (anti)racism, either as individuals or as an aggregate group of White people. Furthermore, the very intersectional specificities that differentiate White women's experiences, frameworks, and enactments of citizenship are themselves a strength; each co-participant that I interviewed brought with her a unique perspective on White privilege, racial justice, and social transformation. It is from within this aggregate standpoint, made richer by intersectional difference and specificity, that we can, collectively, begin to theorize together a new and better way to meet our racial responsibilities as White women.

For activists and advocates like Elena, whose relationship to her activism is defined by her White guilt, and Tamara, who suffered from the emotional lows of activist burnout after feeling as if it was her against the world for too long, there should be comfort to be found here. No one individual White woman can, or should, be responsible for ameliorating centuries of brutal, racist, xenophobic, and anti-indigenous trauma. More importantly, to internalize this guilt and/or responsibility does nothing except *recenter ourselves and recenter Whiteness*. When acts of antiracism become about the White activist self, instead of about dismantling institutional systems of oppression, this ceases to truly be antiracism and instead becomes White solipsism. Thus, the collective effort of White antiracism is weakened when individuals committed to it prioritize or recenter their experiences, their guilt, or their sense of self.

The only way to avoid that kind of White solipsism is to build White antiracist community amongst ourselves and choosing to be in community and in solidarity with

each other and with the people of color around us. As many of my co-participants pointedly acknowledged, White women are not always good at building community. It's time we begin changing that. We *have* to be in community—not only with one another, in order to create that collective antiracist effort I discussed above, but also with the people of color around us! How else will we, as Margo said, be able to see “when we are being a racist ass?” Again, neither Margo's nor my point is not that it is the job of people of color to educate White people. Rather, without being in community with people of color, how can we hope to even see and understand the injustices that we, as White pro-(im)migrants' rights activists, claim to want to resist? Without actively choosing to be in community with other White antiracists and people of color, White women seeking to do pro-(im)migrants' rights work, or racial justice work more broadly, are destined to reify, reenact, and reproduce the mechanisms of White privilege and White supremacy.

More broadly, organized activism always requires some kind of an effacement of self and self-interest; grassroots organizing, like the kind my co-participants built and participated in, is nothing if not the prioritization of the many over the few. And yet this notion clashes with the learned self-importance of middle-class White womanhood. I witnessed, time and time again, White women pro-(im)migrants' rights advocates and activists fall prey to the temptations of White saviorism, demonstrate a kind of extreme hubris only allowed by middle-class Whiteness, and prioritize their egos and reputations over the migrants they claimed to want to serve. Only by letting go of the ugly legacy of White womanhood that tells White women they are special, important, and that their

voice matters more than anyone else's can we begin to effect lasting, antiracist change. So long as we cling to ego, we will make for bad allies, bad antiracist activists, and bad members of our communities.

If we learn to be in better community with *one another*, as White women, we may in turn become better racial allies. At the very least, it will help us become better listeners—to one another and to the people of color in our life. If we listened to the latter, we would have learned by now that:

4. When White women support strategies meant to pull up marginalized people “with us,” they remain ineffective antiracists; to prioritize a strategy of ‘uplift’ is to fail to challenge the systems that necessitate White women activists’ intervention in the first place.

For many of my co-participants, the end goal of their activism, as they saw it, was for the Latinx migrants they aided and served to have equal access to the opportunities, rights, and privileges that they currently enjoy. However, such an understanding ignores the gendered and racialized injustice embedded in citizenship itself; belonging has always been granted or denied on the basis of a combination of gender, race, class, and varied other manifestations of Otherness in this country. The rights and privileges that White women enjoy exist for them because to someone else they do not. Under such a framework, the Latinx Other can never, and will never, truly belong. Thus, as a strategy, ‘uplift’ is colossally irrelevant. To commit to this strategy is to be, at worst, ineffective

and to be, at best, complicit. Furthermore, to depoliticize the pro-(im)migrants' rights movement in this way is to ultimately neuter the struggle for racial and (im)migrant justice.

This is *not* to say that White women shouldn't work to expand the material resources, social power, and political clout available to Latinx (im)migrants and citizens alike. In Chapter 4, I discussed Meg's unusually intersectional approach to her activism: Meg knows that for Latinx (im)migrants to achieve justice in the state of Arizona, it will require far more than a reform of the state's immigration system. She recognizes that her enemies are not ICE, Border Patrol, or the Trump administration (at least not entirely); her enemies are the raging wealth inequality, inadequate educational resources, unfair labor practices, discriminatory policing practices, and more, which plague Latinx (im)migrants and preclude them from exercising substantive citizenship in the United States. In order to combat the socioeconomic hardship and political disadvantage facing (im)migrants, Meg levels her wealth against these material inequalities. She engages in both 'charity work,' such as collecting donations and raising funds, *and* direct service work, such as providing free childcare to Latinx (im)migrant organizers. Yet, while doing so, Meg recognizes that providing (im)migrants with donations, services, and resources is not her end goal—social transformation is.

This is not the framework with which most co-participants, or most pro-(im)migrants' rights activists, understand their activism and advocacy work; Meg has a particularly crystalline understanding of how race, gender, class, and immigration status

converge to disadvantage (im)migrants and the responsibility she and other White people owe to ameliorating that disadvantage. As a result of this insight, Meg contributes to the collective efforts for justice that people of color in her community are leading. Her actions may be individual—writing a check or babysitting a child—but they are part and parcel of a larger, collective, communal struggle for justice. Her efforts are grounded in the conviction that she must commit herself to a movement for change to make the world a better and safer place for everyone in her community, and beyond.

For others, like Nancy, the elusive promise of American democracy and equality guides their enactments of citizenship on behalf of (im)migrants. For them, the mirage of racial harmony and social healing on the horizon seems a distant, but attainable, future. Like Meg, Nancy also engages in individual acts—for example, she organized, and donated to, an event benefitting the RRI’s migrant welcome center, and she has written many editorials in local newspapers about the strength, character, and resiliency of her undocumented students. However, Nancy does these individual things because “it’s just who she is” and because it is a part and parcel of her individual commitment to a nation which she believes offers the greatest of gifts: the American Dream. She believes this Dream should be equally accessible to all, and that her individual efforts, alongside the individual efforts of other people of privilege (read, middle class White people), to make it so are enough to enact real change and turn back the forces of xenophobia and hate that has dishonored her America and its ideals.

There is a subtle, but fundamental, difference in how Meg and Nancy understand their racial responsibility and their allyship—and how they understand the nature of the system against which they are struggling for racial justice. I would caution co-participants against seeing xenophobia, racism, and hate as aberrant interlopers in twenty-first century American politics; refusing to see the gendered and racialized inequities embedded in the past and present of American citizenship does not change that they are there. The horrors of the Trump administration—the separated children, the filthy border camps, the legally sanctioned cruelty—are not a misguided detour on the path of American citizenship; they are its legacy. Until White women in the pro-(im)migrants’ rights movement reject American exceptionalism, recognize that the notion of American citizenship and belonging as an indelibly racialized one, and understand the ways in which the U.S. state reifies and reproduces that racialized belonging through the mechanisms of the immigration system itself, we cannot be effective antiracists *or* pro-(im)migrants’ rights activists.

It is not enough to want Latinx citizens and non-citizens to share the same privileges, advantages, and rights that we do, as White women. Antiracism requires more of us; it requires that we actively acknowledge, decry, and resist the system of gendered White supremacy that governs social life in the United States. This will mean, in part, acknowledging, decrying, and resisting *our own privilege*. Accepting that power operates on a zero-sum scale means accepting that for others to have more, we may indeed need to have less. For example, White women pro-(im)migrants’ rights leaders may need to

accept that there is no place for their White-run and White-led organizations in this movement. Between the initial media coverage of asylum-seeking migrant surges in the early 2010s and the height of the crisis at the border in winter of 2018-2019, White women founded and took leadership roles in no less than five different pro-(im)migrants' rights organizations. At least three undocumented and (im)migrant Latinx organizations had been doing similar work for years. When White-led pro-(im)migrants' rights groups successfully opened the Migrant Welcome Center, its leadership team was staffed with White people, and its community partnerships were, and continue to be, primarily with White-led organizations.

Rather than form organizations, task forces, and donation networks primarily among, by, and ultimately *for* White people and their racialized rituals, antiracist White women interested in doing pro-(im)migrants' rights work may need to step outside of their White communities and thus give up a measure of the social standing which amplifies our voices and tells us what we have to say matters most. We may need to step into majority non-White activist and organizing spaces, where we are not presumed leaders, and begin prioritizing the needs, goals, and strategies of people of color—*as they are told to us by those people of color*. This will require a literal, physical decentering of White women. We should not be the first to our feet in community meetings, nor should it be our stories that are told in local media coverage of the migrant crisis. And certainly, it should not be our professional and sociopolitical reputations as 'good,' White people that get burnished when we raise our voice for (im)migrants' rights.

This is not to say that we should not bring our resources and our clout with us; rather, we should be conscious and reflective about where, and why, we deploy our White privilege and its attendant material and sociopolitical resources. We must also recognize that the gendered and racialized privilege which we grapple with as antiracist White women is not a gift we want to share with marginalized communities; it is the problem itself.

5. Effective White antiracism and effective pro-(im)migrants' rights activism depends on a reformulation of how we understand what it means to belong, our understanding of citizenship itself.

Together, the first four takeaways demonstrate the need for my final, and most important point: White women, and White antiracists writ large, need a better framework for understanding what it means to belong and the responsibilities entailed in that citizenship. If the only way we can make our voices heard and enact change in our communities is by wielding our gendered and racialized privilege as White women, if the tools we have at our disposal are flawed and dangerous, if we need a collective understanding of racial responsibility in order to be able to shoulder it, and if strategies designed to uplift marginalized people to the same level of privilege we currently enjoy are destined to fail, then we need a better way to wield the Master's tools against the Master's house. We need a better way to understand the rights, responsibilities, and relationships that accompany our citizenship.

White women committed to antiracist advocacy and activism on behalf of (im)migrants in Arizona have already begun to think in novel ways about their citizenship and about their racial responsibility. As Margo noted, whether we admit it or not, we all live lives deeply intertwined with, and accountable to, those around us—just as their lives are intertwined with, and are accountable to, us as well. We are each other’s keepers. Our sense of citizenship should be relational and reciprocal. Even as she flirted with the discomfort of saying it aloud, Glinda was firm when she told me that we are responsible, as antiracist and ethical White people, for engaging in the conscious, collective self-reflection necessary to recognize and uncover that which our Whiteness hides from us. Our sense of citizenship should be reflexive, yet oriented toward those around us rather than inward. And in learning how to be a pro-(im)migrants’ rights organizer, I realized that it is our racial responsibility to set aside the ego and self-importance that our Whiteness and privilege vests in us and act for the collective good of the larger community—in this case, asylum-seeking migrants. Our sense of citizenship needs to be collective and inclusive.

Conclusion

We have much work ahead of us, as antiracist White women. The work described in this dissertation is by no means done, and the movement continues. More broadly, the larger project of racial and (im)migrant justice lies before us. If we hope to make meaningful progress on these fronts, the changes with which we should begin lie with us,

our Whiteness, and our White womanhood. We owe this to our friends, family, allies, and community members of color, all of whom have borne the cost of our ignorance at some point or another. In the meantime, antiracist, White women, pro-(im)migrants' rights activists and advocates must do what we can to wield the tools we have at our disposal against the Master's house in the most just and ethical way possible and live with the knowledge that even when we are "really down," we are probably still going to fuck it up.

That fact does not absolve us of the responsibility to try.

REFERENCES

Books

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homor Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998; 2005.

Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Alcoff, Linda Martín. *The Future of Whiteness*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015.

Almaguer, Tomás. *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Bebout, Lee. *Whiteness at the Border: Mapping the U.S. Racial Imagination in Brown and White*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.

Berlant, Lauren. *The Queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

Berg, Allison. *Mothering the Race: Women's Narratives on Reproduction 1890-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2002.

Blee, Kathleen. *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, 3rd. Ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.

Boryczka, Jocelyn. *Suspect Citizens: Women, Virtue, and Vice in Backlash Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012.

Cacho, Lisa Marie. *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

- Canaday, Margot. *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- Chavez, Leo. *The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008.
- Cheng, Wendy. *The Changs Next Door to the Diazes: Remapping Race in Suburban California*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Cohen, Deborah. *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé, eds. *Critical Race Theory*. New York: The New Press, 1995.
- Deliovsky, Katerina. *White Femininity: Race, Gender, and Power*. Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2010.
- DiAngelo, Robin. *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018.
- Dochuk, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.
- Feagin, Joe. *The White Racial Frame: Centuries of Racial Framing and Counter-Framing*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Fixmer-Oraiz, Natalie. *Homeland Maternity: U.S. Security Culture and the New Reproductive Regime*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019.
- Foley, Neil. *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

- Frakenberg, Ruth. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Gómez, Laura E. *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race*, 2nd ed. New York: New York University Press, 2018.
- Dan, Goodley. *Dis-Ability Studies: Theorizing Disablism and Ableism*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Gordon, Linda. *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition*. New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017.
- Hancock, Ange-Marie. *The Politics of Disgust: The Public Identity of the Welfare Queen*. New York: New York University Press, 2004.
- Harding, Sandra. *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Hartsock, Nancy. *The Feminist Standpoint Revisited and Other Essays*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.
- Hochschild, Arlie. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- Hsu, Madeline Y. *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril became the Model Minority*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Hughey, Matthew. *White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge, 1995; 2009.
- Isenberg, Nancy. *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*. New York: Viking, 2016.

Isin, Engin. *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Jacobson, Robin Dale. *The New Nativism: Proposition 187 and the Debate over Immigration*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Kafer, Alison. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to be Antiracist*. New York: One World, 2019.

Kerber, Linda K. *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.

Kitch, Sally L. *The Specter of Sex: Gendered Foundations of Racial Formation in the United States*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2009.

Lee, Charles T. *Ingenious Citizenship: Recrafting Democracy for Social Change*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.

Lister, Ruth. *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.

Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006.

López, Ian F. Haney. *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Whiteness* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

Manalansan, Martín F. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Matias, Cheryl E. *Feeling White: Whiteness, Emotionality, and Education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2016.

- May, Vivian. *Pursuing Intersectionality, Unsettling Dominant Imaginaries*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- McRae, Elizabeth Gillespie. *Mothers of Mass Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Molina, Natalia. *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
- Moreton-Robinson, Aileen. *The White Possessive: Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015.
- Newman, Louise Michele. *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004.
- Olson, Joel. *The Abolition of White Democracy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 1986; 2005.
- Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Perea, Juan F., eds. *Immigrants Out! The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States*. New York: New York University, 1997.
- Pierce, J. *Racing for Innocence: Whiteness, Gender, and the Backlash Against Affirmative Action*. Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Puar, Jasbir. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

- Reddy, Chandan. *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Rocco, Raymond. *Transforming Citizenship: Democracy, Membership, and Belonging in Latino Communities*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, 2014.
- Roediger, David R. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Sampaio, Anna. *Terrorizing Latina/o Immigrants: Race, Gender, and Immigration Policy Post-9/11*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015.
- Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005; 2015.
- Sullivan, Shannon. *Good White People: The Problem with Middle-Class White Anti-Racism*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014.
- Thompson, Becky. *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Vellon, Peter G. *A Great Conspiracy Against Our Race: Italian Immigrant Newspapers and the Construction of Whiteness in the Early 20th Century*. New York: New York University Press, 2014.
- Ware, Vron. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History*. New York: Verso, 1992.
- Wray, Matthew. *Not Quite White: White Trash and the Boundaries of Whiteness*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Yancy, George. *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008.

Zack, Naomi. *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

Journal Articles & Book Chapters

Alcoff, Linda Martín. "The Future of Whiteness." In *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014.

Baker, Paula. "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1790-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (1984).

Beresford, Annette D. "Homeland Security as an American Ideology: Implications for US Policy and Action," *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management* 1:3 (2004): 1-22.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and David Dietrich. "The Sweet Enchantment of Color-Blind Racism in Obamerica." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 634:1 (2011): 190-206.

Cacho, Lisa Marie. "The People of California are Suffering: The Ideology of White Injury in Discourses of Immigration." *Cultural Values* 4:4 (2000): 389-418.

Case, Kim A. "Discovering the Privilege of Whiteness: White Women's Reflections on Anti-racist Identity and Ally Behavior," *Journal of Social Issues* 68:1 (2012).

Casey, Edward S. "Walling Racialized Bodies Out: Border Versus Boundary at La Frontera." In *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014.

Cisneros, Natalie. "Alien Sexuality: Race, Maternity, and Citizenship." *Hypatia* 28:2 (2013): 290-306.

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Black Feminist Epistemology." In Jaggar, Alison M. *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 1986; 2008.

Chevrette, Roberta and Lisa C. Braverman. "Brothers, Fathers, Terrorists: Masculine Assemblages in Glenn Beck's Rhetoric of US-Israel Unity Post-9/11," *Feminist Formations* 25:2 (2013): 81-106.

Clarke, Adele E. "Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn." *Symbolic Interaction* 26:4 (2003): 553-576.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 139 (1989).

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991).

Deliovsky, Katerina. "Whiteness in the Qualitative Research Setting: Critical Skepticism, Radical Reflexivity, and Anti-racist Feminism." *Journal of Critical Race Inquiry* 4:1 (2017): 1-24.

Devlin, Richard and Dianne Pothier. "Introduction: Toward a Critical Theory of Dis-Citizenship." In *Critical Disability Theory: Essays in Philosophy, Politics, Policy, and Law*. Vancouver; Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006.

DiQuiznio, Patrice. "Love and Reason in the Public Sphere: Maternalist Civic Engagement and the Dilemma of Difference." In *Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy*, *Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005.

Ellis, Carolyn, et al. "Autoethnography: Any Overview." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 12:1 (2011).

Ferguson, Roderick A. and Grace K. Hong. "The Sexual and Racial Contradictions of Neoliberalism." *Journal of Homosexuality* 59 (2012): 1057-1064.

Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Constructing Citizenship: Exclusion, Subordination, and Resistance." *American Sociological Review* 76:1 (2011): 1-24.

Hill, Jane E. "Language, Race, and White Public Space." *American Anthropologist* 100:3 (1999): 680-89.

Hawkesworth, Mary. "Analyzing Backlash: Feminist Standpoint Theory as Analytical Tool." *Women's Studies International Forum* 22:2 (1999): 135-155.

Ioanide, Paula. "The Alchemy of Race and Affect: 'White Innocence' and Public Secrets in the Post-Civil Rights Era." *Kalfou* 1:1 (2014).

Isin, Engin F. "Theorizing Acts of Citizenship." In *Acts of Citizenship*, eds. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielson. New York: Zed Books, 2008.

Junn, Jane. "The Trump Majority: White Womanhood and the Making of Female Voters in the U.S." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5:2 (2017): 343-352.

Kapur, Ratna. "The Citizen and the Migrant: Postcolonial Anxieties, Law, and the Politics of Exclusion/Inclusion." *Theoretical Inquiry* 8 (2007): 537-69.

Kerber, Linda. "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment, An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28:2 (1976).

Levine-Rasky, Cynthia. "Intersectionality Theory Applied to Whiteness and Middleclassness." *Social Identities* 17:2 (2011): 239-253.

Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." New York: Penguin Books, 2018, reprint.

Magana, Lisa and Erik Lee. *Latino Politics and Arizona's Immigration Law SB 1070*. New York: Springer, 2012.

Marshall, T.H. "Citizenship and Social Class," in *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development*. New York: Doubleday, 1964.

Michaelson, Scott. "Between Japanese American Internment and the USA PATRIOT Act: The Borderlands and the Permanent State of Exception," *Aztlan* 30 (2005): 87-110.

Nagel, Joane. "Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21:2 (1998): 242-269.

Nash, Jennifer C. "Re-thinking Intersectionality." *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1-15.

Oliviero, Katie. "Sensational Nation and the Minutemen: Gendered Citizenship and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts." *Signs* 36:3 (2011): 679-706.

Oliviero, Katie. "The Immigration State of Emergency: Racializing and Gendering National Vulnerability in Twenty-First Century Citizenship and Deportation Regimes." *Feminist Formations* 25:2 (2013): 1-29.

Ong, Aihwa. "Cultural Citizenship as Subject-Making: Immigrants Negotiate Racial and Cultural Boundaries in the United States." *Cultural Anthropology* 37:5 (1996): 737-762.

Pateman, Carole. "Equality, Difference, Subordination: The Politics of Motherhood and Women's Citizenship." In *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Perspectives, and Female Subjectivity*, eds. Gisela Bock and Susan James. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Rosas, Gilberto. "The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and 'Immigrant' Social Struggles during the 'War on Terror'." *Cultural Dynamics* 18:3 (2006): 335-349.

Rosas, Gilberto. "Policing Life and Thickening Delinquency at the New Frontier." *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 16:1 (2011): 24-40.

Rose, Melody and Mark O. Hatfield. "Republican Motherhood Redux: Women as Contingent Citizens in 21st Century America," *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy* 29:1 (2007): 5-30.

Sivulka, Juliann. "From Domestic to Municipal Housekeeper: The influence of the sanitary reform movement on changing women's roles in America, 1860-1920," *Journal of American Culture* 22:4 (1999).

Télez, Michelle. "Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the US/Mexico Border." *Gender & Society* 22:5 (2008): 545-567.

Téllez, Michelle. "Immigration and the State of Labor: Building a Movement in the Valley of the Sun." *Latino Studies* 9 (2011): 145-154.

Téllez, Michelle. "Arizona: A Reflection and Conversation on the Migrant Rights Movement, 2015." *Social Justice* 42: 3-4 (2015): 200-221.

Thomson, Rosemarie Garland. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory." *NWSA Journal* 14(3) (2002): 1-32.

Thomson, Rosemarie Garland. "Feminist Disability Studies." *Signs* 30(2) (2005): 1557-1587.

Volpp, Leti. "The Indigenous as Alien." *UC Irvine Law Review* 5 (2015): 289-326.

Zatz, Marjorie. "Chicano Youth Gangs and Crime: The Creation of a Moral Panic," *Contemporary Crises* 11 (1989): 129-158.

APPENDIX A: TABLES AND FIGURES

CO-PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTED OCTOBER 2018 – JULY

2019

Figure 1. Co-participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Education	Class	Income	Birthplace
Glinda	28	Public health program manager	BA/BS	Working class	\$50,000 - \$55,000 (single income)	Arizona (<i>Southwest</i>)
Elena	39	Researcher and instructor	PhD	Middle class	\$80,000 - \$85,000 (single income)	Illinois (<i>Midwest</i>)
Margo	45	Congressional aide	BA/BS	Middle class	\$100,000 - \$110,000 (double income)	Illinois (<i>Midwest</i>)
Jeannie	45	Community organizer/educator	MA/MS	Working class	\$50,000 - \$55,000 (single income)	Pennsylvania (<i>Eastern Seaboard</i>)
Rebecca	47	Social worker	MA/MS	Working class	\$55,000 - \$60,000 (double income)	Illinois (<i>Midwest</i>)
Stephanie	59	Immigration lawyer	JD	Middle class	\$35,000 - \$40,000 (single income)	District of Columbia (<i>Eastern Seaboard</i>)
Fannie	59	Elected official	Some community college	Working class	\$40,000 - \$45,000 (single income)	Ohio (<i>Midwest</i>)
Rosa	61	Physical therapist	PhD	Middle class	\$60,000 - \$65,000 (single income)	Illinois (<i>Midwest</i>)
Tamara	62	Retired business owner	MA/MS	Upper middle class	\$85,000 - \$90,000 (single income)	Minnesota (<i>Midwest</i>)
Annette	63	Hairdresser, salon owner	Some community college	Upper middle class	\$65,000 - \$70,000	Montana (<i>West</i>)

					(single income)	
Murphy	64	Retired	MBA	Middle class	\$15,000 - \$20,000 (single income)	Oregon (<i>West</i>)
Meg	68	Retired community planner	MA/MS	Upper middle class	\$120,000 - \$130,000 (double income)	New York (<i>Eastern Seaboard</i>)
Madit	69	Emergency medical relief worker	MA/MS	Working class	\$25,000 - \$30,000 (single income)	Arizona (<i>Southwest</i>)
Nancy	70	Retired high school teacher	BA/BS	Upper middle class	\$120,000 - \$130,000 (single income)	Illinois (<i>Midwest</i>)
Ruth	70	Retired computer programmer	MA/MS	Middle class	—*	Arizona (<i>Southwest</i>)
Diana	71	Retired corporate finance manager; ESL teacher	BA/BS	Middle class	—	Nebraska (<i>Midwest</i>)
Claire	80	Retired kindergarten teacher	BA/BS	Upper middle class	\$120,000 - \$130,000 (single income)	California (<i>West</i>)

*In some cases, co-participants returned incomplete demographics forms to me. I indicate this with a double dash.

Figure 2. Family Formation among Co-participants

Pseudonym	Current Marital Status	Number of Marriages	Number of Children
Glinda	Single	0	0
Elena	Single	0	0
Margo	Married	1	1
Jeannie	Divorced	1	1

Rebecca	Married	1	1
Stephanie	Divorced	1	0
Fannie	Divorced	1	1
Rosa	Single	0	0
Tamara	Married	3	2
Annette	Single	0	0
Murphy	Widowed	1	2
Meg	Married	1	2
Madit	Divorced	1	1
Nancy	Married	1	3
Ruth	Married	1	2
Diana	Single	—*	2
Claire	Widowed	1	3

Figure 3. Religious Belief, Religious Denomination, Political Party, and Political Beliefs Among Co-participants

Pseudonym	Religious Beliefs	Denomination	Political Party	Political Beliefs
Glinda	None	None	Registered “unaffiliated”	Far leftwing, radical*
Elena	“Christian”**	“UCC although I am also agnostic”	Democratic Party	Extremely liberal
Margo	None	None	Democratic Party	Extremely liberal
Jeannie	“Interfaith”	None	Democratic Party/Working Families Party	Slightly liberal
Rebecca	“Christian”	United Church of Christ	Democratic Party	Far leftwing, radical
Stephanie	None	None	Democratic Party	Slightly liberal
Fannie	“Atheist”	None	Democratic Party	Slightly liberal
Rosa	“Christian”	United Church of Christ	Democratic Party	Extremely liberal
Tamara	“Agnostic”	Unitarian Universalist	Democratic Party	Extremely liberal

Annette	“Atheist”	None	Democratic Party	Far leftwing, radical
Murphy	“Christian”	“Catholic, but not Roman”	“Dem, normally libertarian, but wanted to vote in the primary”	Extremely liberal
Meg	“Non-creedal religious humanist”	Unitarian Universalist	Democratic Party/Working Families Party	Far leftwing, radical
Madit	“Christian, second to Judaism + Islam = a little Zen”	Catholic/United Church of Christ	Democratic Party	“Socialist”
Nancy	“Christian”	United Church of Christ	Democratic Party	“Liberal—not an Elizabeth Warren type, a practical liberal”
Ruth	—	—	Democratic Party	—
Diana	“Eclectic/agnostic”	None	“Independent”	Far leftwing, radical
Claire	“Humanist atheist”	Unitarian Universalist		Extremely liberal

*In terms of political belief, co-participants were asked to rate their political beliefs on a scale that included “extremely conservative, slightly conservative, moderate, slightly liberal, extremely liberal, and far leftwing/radical.” However, in some cases, co-participants chose to write in their answers. Quotation marks indicate direct quotes from demographics forms.

**Co-participants were asked to either describe their religious beliefs in a few words or check a box reading “None.” Where quotations are used here, they indicate direct quotes pulled from demographics forms.

Figure 4. Interviews

I conducted one, in-person, semi-structured interview with each formal co-participant; however, I additionally conducted *at least* one (and sometimes as many as a dozen or more) additional, informal interviews/conversation(s) with each co-participant, in addition to the formal, recorded interviews detailed below.

Interviewee	Duration of Interview
Glinda	1:51:12
Elena	1:01:32
Margo	1:30:59
Jeannie	1:37:02
Rebecca	1:19:46
Stephanie	1:21:08
Fannie	1:04:49
Rosa	1:37:29
Tamara	0:29:17
Annette	1:24:51
Murphy	0:53:28
Meg	2:16:36
Madit	0:54:44
Nancy	1:16:13
Ruth	1:52:49
Diana	3:56:36
Claire	1:33:55
Total	26 hours, 2 minutes, and 26 seconds

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Samantha L. Vandermeade earned her Bachelor of Arts in 2009 from Appalachian State University, where she studied English and history. After working as a teacher, a nanny, and an office manager, she returned to complete her Master of Arts degree in Public History at North Carolina State University. Following her graduation in 2015, Samantha moved from North Carolina to Phoenix, Arizona, to complete a doctorate in Women's and Gender Studies. In 2018, she won the Arizona State University Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) Teaching Excellence Award, and she is currently working on several articles on subjects including LGBTQ labor activism, feminist methodology, and pedagogy as it relates to teaching Whiteness in the feminist classroom.