Finding the Path:
A Comparison of Approaches to Philadelphia's Immigration Reform Movement

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Abstract:

The United States is currently in the midst of a debate over changing immigration policy. After providing some small historical examples of civil disobedience from other movements (the Woman's Suffrage Movement, the Black Civil Rights Movement, and the Gay Rights Movement) for comparative purposes, this thesis examines efforts of immigration reform activists in the Philadelphia, PA area to organize for support of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, and to increase social acceptance of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in spite of a largely anti-immigrant bias found in most of the country's mainstream media coverage. The aim of this work is to identify and contextualize within a broader history of activism the differing strategies of engagement in use by current immigration reform activists.

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Introduction

"Rights are not won on paper. They are won only by those who make their voices heard."

~Harvey Milk

"Education not deportation! Undocumented, unafraid!"

Amid a flurry of major news network TV cameras, police officers wearing bulletproof vests, and cheering supporters crowding the surrounding sidewalks, a young woman wearing ripped jeans and a baggy t-shirt is handcuffed and forced into the back of a police van as she blocks traffic in the middle of the street near downtown Philadelphia.

It is March 14th, 2012, and pressure to pass the Pennsylvania version of the federally-proposed Dream Act has gained enough momentum that students from all over the state have organized this event: a public "coming out of the shadows", in which a small number of college and high school students from local institutions have decided to "out" themselves as undocumented immigrants living illegally in the United States.

Their actions, among having other goals, are meant to jolt the public into paying closer attention to the ongoing immigration debate within the country. The students know that one of their greatest assets, in this case, is the presence of the news cameras—without these, they would be just another faceless number of anonymous "illegals" to be added to the almost 3 million people who have been deported from the country since 2000.1 Because of the spotlight, however, they will be spared the agony of being kicked out of a country they have come to call their own.

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1 This is a rough estimate based on information provided by the Department of Homeland Security's 2010 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2010, and compiled by the PEW Research Hispanic Trends Project
Immigration into the United States has become a major domestic policy issue particularly in the last decade, with the introduction of the Dream Act in 2001, and a bill for immigration reform awaiting final decision in the House of Representatives (as of this writing). As more and more people are deported from the country each day, pressure for the passing of an immigration reform bill (the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013) that would offer amnesty to the roughly 11,000,000 currently undocumented immigrants already within the country is mounting.\(^2\)

Given the relevancy and timeliness of the issue, it is important that the US public have a comprehensive understanding of all sides of the debate.

Latino immigrants in particular make up the largest percentage of incoming immigrants to the country.\(^3\) Between 2000 and 2010, nine out of the twenty top immigrant-sending countries were Spanish-speaking, with the greatest number of immigrants coming overwhelmingly from Mexico.\(^4\) For this reason, it is impossible to talk about immigration without also acknowledging the deep relevance of the Latino population to the subject. While immigration reform would not solely benefit Latino immigrants, because this group makes up such a large portion of the immigrant community in the US, many immigration advocacy and activist groups tend to be run by members of, or cater to, the Latino population. In my research on immigration activism, I

\(^2\) The PEW Research Hispanic Trends Project estimates that there were about 11.9 million undocumented immigrants residing in the United States as of 2008. Since then, the population has stabilized (i.e., that figure has not increased or decreased dramatically).

\(^3\) I use the term "Latino" in this project (rather than any other, such as "Hispanic") because it is the self-describing term I found most often used by the activists I have encountered.

\(^4\) See the table on the next page, from the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), published in August 2012. Sources used by the CIS included the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses and the 2012 American Community Survey
have of course encountered the work of both Latino and non-Latino activists. The fact remains, however, that the Latino immigrant population is the largest of its kind in the US, and for this reason, Latinos are often the stereotypical representatives of all immigrants in the immigration debate.

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(Source: Center for Immigration Studies, August 2012)

Scholarship has shown that the mainstream news media's depiction of Latino immigrants on major US news outlets is characterized by a disproportionately high amount of negative coverage; scholars argue that this negative depiction of Latino immigrants in the mainstream media has helped form what has been termed "the Latino Threat" narrative—that is, a direct correlation between Latino immigrants and the economic and social degradation of United States society.\(^5\) Naturally, this association in

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the mainstream media between Latino immigration and national deterioration poses an
obstacle to the passage of a bill that would offer citizenship to the very people allegedly
"threatening" the wellbeing of the country.

Acknowledging this bias in mainstream coverage as a given, I am interested in
moving beyond the debate over its legitimacy. Instead, I plan to focus on the way the
activist immigrant community responds to the media's establishment of a public that has
been made largely indifferent or even unsympathetic to the immigrant cause. The term
"activist" has many different uses, and can be confusing when used without a clear
definition. For the purposes of this research project, I am defining "activist" as anyone
who engages in some sort of deliberate action or campaign meant to bring about social or
political change; in this case (related to immigrant activists) one important element of
that change is the passage of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and
Immigration Modernization Act of 2013.

The Immigration Reform Movement is not, however, aiming to create a change
only in legislation. Although the passage of a bill that would provide a pathway to
citizenship for 11,000,000 undocumented people is certainly a major objective of this
movement, it is not the only one. The implications of the Immigration Reform Movement
are not only political, but also ethical; those arguing for immigration reform are seeking
not only to change the laws relating to immigrants, but also the relationships held
between undocumented people and the legal citizens. The arguments invoked by
immigration reform advocates call for a re-evaluation of the way membership in a
community is earned. Obtaining citizenship, for an undocumented person, requires a
change in the interaction, a change in the character of the relationship, with one's citizen peers; it is a question not only of legal acceptance, but social acceptance.

Given the disadvantage that Latino immigrant activists must deal with in their quest to garner both the public's and the legislators' support for the bill, I am interested in how these groups counter the "Latino Threat" narrative. Essentially, my literature review is a preliminary attempt to understand some of the different concerns being expressed by people on all sides of the immigration debate. The findings from my fieldwork research will aim to understand how, given the anti-immigrant bias in the mainstream media, immigrant activists themselves are asserting that they have the right to a pathway towards citizenship in the US.

Before I delve into any review of this debate, however, or report any findings from my fieldwork research, I will first take a step back to examine some key examples of effective political dissent realized by different social reformers throughout the history of the United States. Studying these other activists (woman's suffrage campaigners, black civil rights organizers, and gay rights advocates) will enable us to locate the Immigration Reform Movement that is central to my research within a broader history of civil disobedience.

Comparing and contrasting different perspectives and arguments both for and against granting citizenship to undocumented immigrants can be beneficial in identifying their relative strengths or weaknesses. I give full disclosure that I am pro-immigration reform, and believe that undocumented immigrants in the US should be granted citizenship. I view this thesis project—the studying and synthesizing of the work of activists who share an objective of mine—as a small embodiment of my commitment to
justice. The fundamental core of this project, it should be noted, is not about assessing which side of the immigration debate, either pro- or anti-reform, is correct. Rather, it is about how the pro-reform side, particularly in light of the anti-reform media bias, and following the influence of past activists, works to counter the existing anti-reform arguments and efforts.

In this thesis, my fieldwork has centered primarily around two different events organized by immigration activists in the Philadelphia area. Both actions began in the same general space (in the popular "Love Park" near City Hall), and took place within 19 months of one another. The first event took place in 2012, and though I was unable to personally attend, I was able to find extensive material documenting and describing the actions that took place, and the experiences of the leading participants. The second event occurred in late 2013, and I was able to attend and use my own observations as a primary source of information. I have made a close reading of the actions and activists I encountered in both situations, and there is an interesting comparison to be made with them.

In the final section of this thesis, I will aim to analyze the work of the Philadelphia-based immigration reform activists I have studied, comparing some of their work with that of past activists in other movements. Ultimately, my work seeks to begin to answer such questions as: How does the Immigration Reform Movement fit into a greater history and context of civil disobedience and activism in the United States? Why are activists choosing to protest in the ways that they do? What entitles a person to citizenship, according to immigration activists? Essentially, this thesis is an attempt to examine the ways in which activists are redefining citizenship in the United States.
Chapter One: Relevant Historical Examples of Civil Disobedience

So, how does the Immigration Reform Movement fit into a greater history and context of civil disobedience and activism in the United States? The work that immigration and human rights activists have been doing in Philadelphia between 2012 and 2014 (which is the major focal point of my fieldwork) is reminiscent of work done by activists working for other movements in earlier times. While all of these activists have demonstrated some form of civil disobedience in an effort to change what they see as unjust government or legislation, there are some important distinctions to be made among movements that can shed light on the important questions raised in the introduction to this work. Later on I will analyze these differences, but for now simply recounting the stories of how the actions of other activists unfolded will be helpful.

In these instances, it is important to distinguish between use of the word "movement" versus that of the word "campaign". Here I have decided to use whichever word the activists whose work I am recounting used to describe their own actions, but I think the major differences still bear mentioning. While a "campaign" may refer to an organized effort with a specific end goal in mind (e.g., getting a certain individual elected into office), a "movement" generally has a more long-term perspective. A "movement" extends beyond the reaches of a single-objective campaign; it is generally understood as a cultural shift that can only take place with the successful completion of several smaller, shorter-term campaigns, among other efforts.6

This section is divided into three parts, dedicated to three different examples of organized dissent, each one with a distinct goal. The first example investigates the work of woman's suffrage campaigners in the early 1900's who were trying to pass the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which would provide all US citizens, regardless of sex, the right to vote. The second example reviews a campaign on the part of black student activists at Swarthmore College during the late 1960's to increase representation of African Americans in both the student body and the faculty; this campaign was a part of the larger civil rights movement that was taking place at the time. The final example of organized social change looked into here comes from the gay rights movement of the 1970's, particularly at the "coming out of the closet" campaign that homosexual leaders and activists promoted in an effort to de-stigmatize homosexuality in the United States. In recounting the work of past activists, I hope to shed light on how current activists in the immigration rights movement are in some ways reproducing these established methods of engagement, and in other ways, creating entirely new ones.

**A Persistent Campaign for Woman's Suffrage**

Between 1914 and 1920, there was an increased level of activity, largely on the part of the U.S. National Woman's Party, to campaign for women's right to vote. The primary goal of the party's campaign was to pass the 19th amendment, which would grant female citizens of the country the right to vote. In the long term, the activists saw themselves as involved in a movement that would lead to full equality between men and women, regardless of sex.
Influenced by women activists fighting for similar representation in Britain, American women (and especially Alice Paul, who rose to a prominent role in the campaign) decided to change their strategy of engagement. Previously, activists had been politely "pleading over a cup of tea with political leaders and legislators" to change the law. But after seeing the kinds of demonstrations happening in Britain, American women began to see this original strategy as ineffectual and degrading; having to request "basic human rights" implied that they were not, in fact, inherent.

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns were the two leaders of the Congressional Union committee, the NAWSA (National American Woman's Suffrage Association) faction in charge of lobbying Congress for federal legislation change. In 1913, they organized a march of what has been reported as anywhere from 8,000 to 10,000 women protestors in Washington, D.C. The march was in the format of a parade, and participants dressed in costumes that were meant to reflect the strength, nobility, beauty, and intelligence of women. The parade (which was purposely scheduled to take place on March 3rd, the day before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency) was met with aggressive, derogatory remarks shouted by opponents, and violence nearly broke out.

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Not long afterwards, the Congressional Union split from the rest of NAWSA to create a new organization, called the National Women's Party. The two organizations had disagreed over where they needed to target their pressure—while NAWSA focused primarily on a state-legislation level, the NWP wanted to bring the issue to the federal level. They employed a number of other tactics to get the topic of women's suffrage back into the national political dialogue. These of course included the use of lobbying groups in DC, but they also included mass petitions, large-scale demonstrations, public burnings of the president's (Wilson's) speeches, and street speaking (wherein speakers would stand in the street and attempt to rally other women to their cause).

To increase pressure for legislation change, protestors began picketing outside the White House on a daily basis, from January of 1917 to April of 1918. The United States
entered World War I in April of 1917, and politicians generally assumed that the picketers would stop. The decision on the part of the protestors not to stop only drew further attention to the issue, and revealed to onlookers precisely that this was a cause worthy of prioritizing even in a time of war.

Looking for a way to get rid of the instigating demonstrators, police arrested them on charges of "obstructing traffic", and put them in custody for longer and longer prison terms. Alice Paul, while under arrest, led a hunger strike, during which many prisoners were treated horribly. Women were subjected to physical violence, rotten food, and inhumane force-feedings.

When the media became aware of this treatment, public sympathy and support for the women's cause skyrocketed, and many prisoners were released from custody. Under pressure from the public eye, Wilson also began to support the women's campaign for suffrage, framing it as "a wartime measure" (e.g., with the diminished male population out at combat, granting the right to vote to women was a necessary step in maintaining the sovereignty of the civilian population). At his urging, the 19th amendment was passed on June 4th, 1920.11

A Manifestation of the Civil Rights Movement at Swarthmore College

I will turn now to an interesting and relevant example of civil disobedience from the Civil Rights Movement. Black students were not accepted at Swarthmore College until the 1960s, and even then, made up only a very small portion of the student body. In 1968, there was a significant drop in the amount of black student enrollment; while in

1965 there were nineteen African American students enrolled in the first-year class, this number had fallen to only eight by the fall of 1968.\textsuperscript{12}

Responding to what he had identified as a need for a strong community foundation for the black students on campus, Sam Shepherd founded the Swarthmore African-American Student Society (SASS) in 1965. In spite of this, by 1969 SASS was still thought of by many members of the administration (and of the community at large) as a "militant separatist organization" that was therefore not to be considered a legitimate student group. Its members were particularly aware of the intense decrease in admissions of black students on campus, and on October 1st, 1968, they wrote a letter questioning the veracity of Dean of Admissions Fred Hargadon's commitment to diversifying the Swarthmore student body.

When the administration failed repeatedly to calm SASS' concerns, the students, echoing a popular strategy used by other Civil Rights student activists at the time, to release a set of demands. These included: (1) The acceptance and enrollment of 10-20 "risk" black students, and the provision of support services for them; (2) The enrollment of 100 black students at the college within three years, and of 150 within six; (3) The hiring of a black Assistant Dean of Admissions and of a black counselor, both subject to review by SASS; (4) The firing and subsequent replacement of Dean Hargadon by September 1st, 1969, unless admissions policies were changed. SASS concluded their list of demands by stating that if they were not agreed to by Tuesday, January 7th, 1969, they would be forced to do "whatever was necessary" to ensure their implementation.

When the college president Courtney Smith did eventually meet with the students, he explained that he could not agree to their demands because the very act of demanding compliance was in and of itself entirely contradictory to what he saw as the "Quakerly behavior of mutual respect and careful deliberation" that characterized Swarthmore.\(^{13}\) That said, he did hope that they could sort through the issues they had raised, and reach a peaceful resolution.\(^{14}\)

SASS took the president's response as an indicator of the need for more "direct action". On January 9th, SASS chairman Clinton Etheridge led 20 African-American students to the admissions office. They were initially denied entry, but after Dean Hargadon requested that the entirety of the admissions staff be first allowed to leave the premises, the students entered the offices. The students padlocked the doors and covered the windows with black paper and chains. Over the course of the takeover, which lasted about a week, the protestors were joined by another 20 African-American students.

In light of the takeover, Asmaron Legesse, the only black faculty member at the time, was appointed as the faculty liaison between SASS and the administration. After more faculty members began to show support for SASS' demands, President Smith agreed to begin talking with the Board to really consider them.

On January 10th, 500 other students on campus boycotted classes in solidarity with the students inside the admissions office. The next day, 900 students gathered and voted in support of SASS' list of demands. For the following week, President Smith met


repeatedly with faculty and administrators to come up with several policy adjustment proposals that were meant to bring the college closer to the goals specified by SASS in their demands.

On the morning of January 16th, President Smith suffered a massive heart attack and died. The students inside the admissions office immediately put an end to their occupation, and vacated the building "in deference to the tragedy". They released a statement that "we sincerely believe that the death of any human being, whether he be the good President of a college or a black person trapped in our country's ghettos, is a tragedy."¹⁵

The college administration and the students involved in the admissions takeover immediately began to receive threats of physical violence and hate mail from both on and off campus. SASS students were evacuated to nearby black churches, where they continued to hold serious discussions about the issues they had originally set out to bring justice to.

Smith's death brought the entire series of events into the national media spotlight. Pennsylvania newspapers described the members of SASS as "militants"¹⁶. A reporter at the New York Times wrote, "the death of Dr. Courtney C. Smith, in the face of disruptive action by a small group clamoring for more black power, appallingly underscores the price extorted by these policies of excess."¹⁷ In general, there was a sense that the

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students of SASS had somehow contributed to the President's death. Truthfully, however, he had been suffering from serious heart disease for several years, of which his heart attack was a consequence.

Eventually, after tensions had somewhat subsided, the African-American students of SASS returned to campus and classes began again. A liaison committee was formed with administrators and SASS members to talk about the tensions between black students and faculty members. Over the next few years, a number of changes took place within the college. A concentration in Black Studies was developed, the Black Cultural Center was established, two all black a capella groups as well as the gospel choir were founded, and there was a notable increase in the diversity of both the faculty and the student bodies. The Fall of 1969 saw 31 African-American students enrolled at Swarthmore.

Guidance from Gay Rights Leaders

While I will not be going into depth on any particular campaign completed by gay rights advocates, I do think there is an interesting parallel to be drawn between the general work of these activists, and those of the immigrant rights movement.

Harvey Milk became the first openly gay elected official in California when he entered office as a San Francisco City Supervisor in 1977; he was assassinated one year later by a fellow supervisor, Dan White. Milk is famous for his leadership of the gay community in San Francisco, and for encouraging a worldwide campaign of "coming out of the closet". He urged all gay people to share their sexual identity with everyone they

know, claiming that by doing so, they may put an end to the social stigma associated with homosexuality. In a speech delivered to a crowd of his supporters, Milk said:

We must continue to speak out. And most importantly, every gay person must come out. As difficult as it is, you must tell your immediate family, you must tell your relatives, you must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell the people you work with, you must tell the people at the stores you shop in. Once they realize that we are indeed their children, that we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo, will be destroyed once and for all. And once you do, you will feel so much better.¹⁹

Particularly in the 1970's, there was a flourish of activism on the part of the gay community in the United States to demand civil rights, and to expose the injustices of homophobic legislation.²⁰

In 1979, shortly after Milk's assassination, the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights was held. The march certainly energized and boosted the morale of its participants (many of whom had never realized they were part of such a large and geographically diverse group). However, similarly to the woman suffrage procession of 1913, the March for Lesbian and Gay Rights of 1979 was also not received by the public in the most favorable way. A historian commentator for the Pacifica Radio Archives explains of the march:

Those who imagined that the march's success would advance the lesbian and gay liberation movement to a position of real power were surprised to discover that the impact of any event is determined by the significance granted it by the mass media. Thus is history reported, and

recorded. If a tree falls in the forest, with no one to hear it, does it make a sound? 21

This question relates to an important theme in this thesis: the role of the media in the Immigration Reform Movement. There is truth in the claim that without media attention, and positive media attention at that, no change can come for those who seek it.

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After delving into an important review of literature related more closely to the immigration reform debate, and then expounding on the two different protests that were the subject of my fieldwork research, I will eventually return to the above examples of civil disobedience. They are meant to serve as an introduction to the concept of civil disobedience, and also work to frame the actions that will be discussed later on within a historical context. As stated earlier, many of the strategies employed by the woman's suffrage advocates, the SASS civil rights activists, or the gay rights proponents all mentioned in this section were used in some way by immigration reform protestors several years later.

Chapter Two: Laying the Foundation

Part I
All Things Immigration: A Literature Review

In the following pages, I will give an overview of the debate over immigration reform, which touches upon a variety of different areas—media studies, cultural theory, human rights, and economics. My research project (of which this literature review is only a small part) will attempt to explore more specifically the ways in which immigrant activists assert their rights to legal citizenship given the anti-immigrant bias in the mainstream media. For that reason, this literature review will draw more heavily on the scholarship related to the themes of media and citizenship. The primary goal of this literature review, however, is to provide a general overview of some of the themes related to immigration (particularly on the part of Latinos) into the United States. While some thinkers might view immigration reform as a primarily economic issue, for example, others may consider it from a more human rights-oriented perspective. Obviously in order to formulate a powerful argument for immigration reform (i.e., the passing of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013), one must understand the arguments being made against it in addition to those being made in its favor.

The Role of the Media in the Immigration Debate

Guy Debord, a 20th century Marxist theorist, wrote about the way in which representation of life, rather than life itself, has replaced the human experience. Calling this representation "an immense accumulation of spectacles", he goes on to explain that "The spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of
unification...Being isolated, [the spectacle] is the locus of illusion and false consciousness; the unity it imposes is merely the official language of generalized separation.\textsuperscript{22} One can immediately imagine the isolated experience of so many millions of Americans watching the nightly news from their living room couches, receiving, but not responding, to a series of constructed, representative (but not \textit{real}, not \textit{lived}) narratives that someone else has decided are worthy of broadcasting. In this act, these constructions are \textit{imposed} upon the viewers. Theoretically, in an electoral democracy (a government that is directed by the will of its citizens), the imposition of a particular skewed, objectifying manner of thinking or understanding an issue (or an entire people, as in this case, those people are Latino immigrants) can have tremendously powerful legislative (that is, political) and social consequences.

In his book \textit{The Latino Threat}, Leo Chavez describes the way in which different concepts of citizenship, as presented by the media, go on to directly inform the public consciousness, and the formation of immigration policy.\textsuperscript{23} Referencing Debord's concept of the society of the spectacle, Chavez writes, "media spectacles are productive acts that construct knowledge about subjects in our world." He asserts that the mainstream media frequently objectifies Latinos and Latino immigrants, and in so doing, makes it "easier to lack empathy for [them] and to pass policies and laws to govern their behavior, limit their social integration, and obstruct their economic mobility". Essentially, the "Latino Threat narrative" (which Chavez identifies as coming from mainstream media pundits in the US,


such as CNS News, Time Magazine, or BusinessWeek) depicts Latinos as inherently
criminal "illegal aliens" who have no intention of culturally integrating into the US, and
whose "illegality" makes them undeserving of social or economic aid from the
government.

In the book Juan in a Hundred, sociolinguist Otto Santa Ana discusses the
representation of Latinos on the four major US network news channels (ABC, CBS,
NBC, and CNN).\textsuperscript{24} Using a variety of methodologies, notably media discourse analysis,
semiotics, and statistical review, Santa Ana compares the tone and type of news stories
that do cover Latinos to those that do not, seeking to draw attention to the existence of a
bias in reporting. He finds that there is a disproportionately small amount of coverage on
Latino issues, given the large size of the Latino population in the US, and that of the
stories that do cover Latinos, the vast majority convey a negative representation of this
population. Santa Ana even makes a point to describe how sometimes, reporting that
appears verbally unbiased can be presented in a visually stigmatizing way, therefore
passing under the radar of deliberate prejudice to instead provoke an implicit prejudice
from its audience.

Similarly along this vein, the book Brown Tide Rising, also by Otto Santa Ana,
explores the power of the media's language to create political change.\textsuperscript{25} He draws upon
hundreds of articles featured in leading California newspapers, whose wordings work to
subtly depict Latinos as negative, inhuman, threatening, and invasive burdens on US

\textsuperscript{24} Santa, Ana Otto. Juan in a Hundred: The Representation of Latinos on Network News.

\textsuperscript{25} Santa Ana, Otto. Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American
society. But he doesn't stop there; instead, he goes on to show how this bad press directly led to the passing of the anti-immigrant state legislation of Proposition 187 (a state law that banned undocumented families from receiving a number of important public goods), in addition to several other anti-immigrant laws. Careful to expose how the manipulative speech of major media pundits has pathologized immigrant children struggling in inadequately resourced schools, Santa Ana ends his book by calling for a new kind of activism—one that will change the very words with which we talk about the immigration debate. Shifts in power occur most effectively when they go almost unnoticed by those they depend on; minutely changing the way we structure our language around the immigration debate could have vastly positive results.

Adding to the literature on the topic of the media's effect on the immigration debate is television critic and journalist Eric Deggans' book Race-baiter: How the Media Wields Dangerous Words to Divide a Nation. Although Deggans does not focus entirely on the specific topic of immigration reform, his major idea can certainly be applied to it. Essentially, Deggans claims that the integrity of the mainstream media is at stake because of the tendency on the part of political pundits to base the information they share with their audiences off of a desire for higher viewership. Deggans claims that these "performers" actually end up catering to the fears and misconceptions of their audiences, and that therefore well-informed political dialogue is nearly impossible to foster through major media sources. This "capitalization" of the mainstream media is dangerous news for Latino immigrant activists, who are at a distinct disadvantage because they already play a highly stereotyped and misrepresented role in American mainstream media.

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Central to the debate over immigration reform is the question of what entitles a person to citizenship, and what "citizenship" really means. Citizenship is actually much more complicated than the simple question of an individual's superficial legal status (wherein a person is either legally or illegally within the country). "Cultural citizenship" is a term first used by cultural anthropologists Renato Rosaldo, William V. Flores, and Rina Benmayor in their work studying Latinos in the United States. Essentially, "cultural citizenship names a range of social practices which, taken together, claim and establish a distinct social space for Latinos in this country." In their book, Flores and Benmayor cite a historical tendency in the US to dichotomize the conversation about race and its relationship to resource allotment as one that solely recognizes two groups: blacks and whites. Cultural citizenship, then, is the phenomenon through which peoples falling outside of the black-white binary claim the right to participate in these decisions. It is through a long and challenging process of cultural citizenship creation that "Latino groups are claiming membership in this society as they struggle to build communities, claim social rights, and become recognized as active agents in society." 27

In a brief historical explanation of US immigration policy from the late 20th century onwards, anthropologist Aihwa Ong explains in her book *Buddha is Hiding* how a "financial utility" argument for immigration came to exist. 28 She points out that in the


wake of growing immigration to the US in the 1970's and 80's (as a result of an increased refugee population from multiple bloody wars that were occurring all over the world), an increase in American nationalism occurred, along with a decrease in support for the welfare state. This contradictory situation led to a change in immigration policy that favored the curtailment of welfare benefits for both undocumented ("illegal") and documented ("legal"), recently-arrived immigrants. Suddenly, there was a shift in the way lawmakers conceptualized and outlined citizenship in the US: the most important qualification for a person seeking to enter and join the United States was their ability to improve the economy. Ong goes on, however, to explain that this definition of citizenship is entirely too narrow, writing, "citizenship for the disenfranchised American...or newcomer has always been about more than the possession of legal rights...belonging in the United States has from the beginning been defined in part by unofficial social meanings and criteria." She argues that these social meanings and criteria effect not just how and which people are selected to legally join the national community, but also how people (once legally admitted) within the country are granted access to prestige and power. Cultural citizenship, then, is a group's ability to access this power. Central to Ong's argument is the idea that it is actually the "Anglo Saxon hegemony that projects white race and class interest as universal for the nation", and that immigrant groups that do not subscribe to these values suffer a lack of social mobility because of it.

29 For further information, see the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, a piece of legislation that, among other things, made it illegal to knowingly hire or recruit undocumented immigrants, and required employers to attest to their employees' immigration statuses.
The concept of cultural citizenship is central to my research, which is at some level an attempt to further explore the ways in which immigrant activists, and often particularly Latino immigrant activists, are establishing their cultural citizenship in the United States. One way in which this cultural citizenship gets established is through political participation and engagement; by working as activists to change the legislation surrounding immigration, the activist groups I study are claiming a right not only to argue for a path to legal citizenship for undocumented immigrants, but also for the right to influence the national conversation at all. "Political participation", it should be noted, is certainly not limited to voting. Indeed, a particularly important subtlety of the pro-immigration argument is that it is often being argued by non-citizens. While certainly not all immigrant activists are undocumented, their cause is also the cause of the undocumented; and that means that many of the people who are entering into this political conversation are actually not legally granted the right to vote, among many other things. In other words, the Immigration Reform Movement is itself a form of cultural citizenship building: it offers a space where people otherwise not granted political voice in this country can carve out a right to participate in the debate, specifically in spite of their legal status.

In her book *Latino Spin*, Arlene Dávila, another anthropologist, also offers an important critique of the way in which rights are conferred to groups within the US.30 In her case, the group in particular is Latinos. She examines the political consequences of the way in which Latino cultural identity is manipulated by mainstream media and

advertizing forces in response to the common "Latino Threat narrative". Noting that this response, aimed at directly challenging the negative effects of the Latino Threat narrative, often involves a depiction of Latinos as "hard working" and with strong "family values", Dávila claims that, as these depictions actually position Latinos as "more American than 'the Americans'", they actually work to further white privilege, because they "[help] to consolidate polarities between Latinos and other minorities". In other words, the only way Latinos are becoming less "threatening" is by showing themselves to have adopted "classic American traits" (read: WASP [White Anglo-Saxon Protestant] values), i.e., whitewashing them. These counter-narratives further white privilege because they position Latino "acceptability" only within a racialized, polarized context, wherein the less like other minorities (non-whites, especially blacks) they are, the more white, and therefore less threatening, they become. It is these [white] "American values", Dávila claims, that have "long been used to frame the trajectory by which minority groups can claim to belong to the nation, turning some groups into living proof of the ideals of individualism and meritocracy at the core of the US national ideology." Dávila is pointing to the irony of this "trajectory": groups may only become "successful" or upwardly mobile by adopting white values—there is no "merit" involved, only cultural assimilation to an ideology that blames the poor and working class for their own problems instead of helping them.

Dávila later explains that "by fetishizing citizenship as a guarantor of privileges, the immigration debate veils the civil liberties that are increasingly denied to all." This is true—in some very tangible ways, some Latino immigration reform activists ironically enable their own further oppression by invoking a discourse that idealizes citizenship as
the end-all, be-all cure for injustice. Deeply tied to this concept of citizenship as the final
goal, the "Elysian fields" of American "acceptance", is that of the American meritocracy:
the idea that personal success is entirely dependant on the individual, and therefore that
structural inequality does not exist. At an immigration reform rally I attended in
Philadelphia in October of 2013, one woman began a chant: "¡No vine a robar! ¡Solo
quiero trabajar!" (I didn't come to steal! I just came to work!). She was countering one
aspect of the Latino Threat narrative that assumes that Latino immigrants pose an
economic threat to the US job market, and that Latino immigrants frequently "steal" jobs
from "real Americans". Ironically, this chant (in addition to being a call for sympathy for
the classic "hardworking American" who, if left to their own devices and allowed to
work, will supposedly be able to reach their highest and fullest potential) frames the
Latino immigrant as a purely economic entity: there is only room for immigrants here as
workers—as people who will add to the overall profit of American businesses. This of
course brings us back to the problematic reasoning behind immigration policy that Ong
identified as having led to a need for cultural citizenship claiming in the first place.

In her earlier book, Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People, Dávila
claims that the increasing visibility of Latinos in mainstream culture has ironically not
brought with it an increase in economic or political empowerment, but instead an
exotification and ignorance of the many differences among Latino subpopulations and
nationalities.31 She goes on to question the process by which the Hispanic marketing
industry has represented and shaped the identity of Latinos in the US, calling attention to

31 Dávila, Arlene M. Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People. Berkeley,
the way in which this vastly differing, heterogeneous group of the population has been homogenized, and suggesting that the way in which Latinos are "marketed" has a large influence on the way they can identify themselves and their social standing within the US. In this way, we see how the mainstream media can engage cultural identity in a way that stereotypes and homogenizes this group, and therefore negatively affects the process by which Latinos can lay claim to cultural citizenship.

Here it is important to explain why I am interested in research on Latino cultural citizenship, when obviously not all Latinos are immigrant activists, and therefore ostensibly tangential to the subject of my research. These books by Dávila are remarking upon an important phenomenon that informs the study of how Latino immigrant activists can lay claim to citizenship: the objectification of Latinos as one solid, homogenous group of people. It is this objectification that marginalizes Latinos as a whole (whether immigrants or not!) and enables further negative stereotyping. This only works to "other" all Latinos within the US, and in so doing, depicts the undocumented members of this group as undeserving of US citizenship.

One key example of this kind of thinking can be found in political scientist Samuel Huntington's well-known paper, "The Hispanic Challenge". Huntington voices his concern that the newest wave of immigrants entering the United States ("Hispanics") pose a problem to the Anglo-Protestant culture, because (allegedly) unlike other waves of immigrants from past eras, "Hispanics" are unable to assimilate. He claims that if the United States does not recognize this, it risks transforming into a country of "two peoples with two cultures (Anglo and Hispanic) and two languages (English and Spanish)."

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argument follows a kind of logic reminiscent of those comprising the Latino Threat Narrative that Leo Chavez has articulated.

Anthropologist Alyshia Gálvez explores the question of how immigrant activists may claim rights in *Guadalupe in New York: Devotion and the Struggle for Citizenship Rights among Mexican Immigrants.* She writes about the way in which New York-based Mexican immigrants' devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe (*la Virgen de Guadalupe*), the patron saint of Mexico, helps them to organize and develop a will and a voice to demand rights, immigration reform, and respect from the community at large. It is precisely through the use of a cultural icon specific to their native community and identity that these immigrant activists are able to vocalize their desire for reform—in my fieldwork research, I too have encountered ways in which other Latino immigrant activists benefit from using elements of their native culture to further their political agenda of immigration reform.

*Guadalupe in New York* is only one example of how a strong connection to a home country can ultimately help to further empower the group separated from it. One of the central theses of the book *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation,* by sociologists Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, is the idea that immigrant communities met with resistance or aggression will often end up fortifying a sense of unified identity as a natural response. The book uses the example of Mexican youths living in Los Angeles during the time that Proposition 187 was passed, who felt a newfound sense of pride in their Mexican identity after banding together to participate in

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anti-Proposition 187 protests. The knowledge that cultural or ethnic identity is often felt strongest (and therefore is at its most unifying and empowering potential) in the face of direct opposition is helpful in framing the Immigration Reform Movement; ironically, the anti-immigrant discourse so common in the mainstream media, while it is a source of injustice, may also actually be helping to strengthen the immigrant activist community.

The Human Rights Argument for Immigration Reform

According to political theorist Iris Marion Young, oppression can take the shape of five different forms: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Applying what Chavez and Santa Ana have written about the objectification of Latinos in the popular media to Young's theories of oppression, we can see the way in which this objectification is a form of cultural imperialism. Young explains that cultural imperialism is the practice (on the part of a society's hegemonic, dominant cultural group) of rendering the particular perspective of another group (in this case Latinos, and by extension, Latino immigrants) "invisible" while also stereotyping and "othering" it. Because the dominant group (aka, Anglo-Saxon) has access to the major means of communication and interpretation within American society, its culture becomes the imperialistic norm.

35 California Proposition 187 was a state law proposed by Republican assemblyman Dick Mountjoy and approved by a state-wide vote in 1994. It aimed to prohibit undocumented immigrants from using health care, public education, and other social services in California.
On a less theoretical note, legal scholar José Luis Morín's book *Latino/a Rights and Justice in the United States: Perspectives and Approaches* does an excellent job of providing context for the influx of Latino immigration into the US in more recent years. The book mentions the role that the US has played in stimulating violent conflicts in Latin America that have led to increasing immigration from the region since the 1980's and onward. In addition to identifying ways in which Latino/as in the US have experienced discrimination, Morín offers some policy recommendations (namely reforms that involve making the border *more* instead of *less* open to new immigrants) that might counteract these unjust tendencies.

Activist Teresa Hayter echoes these thoughts in her book *No Borders: The Case against Immigration Controls.* Citing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994, she points out the irony in the fact that nation states have begun to give up control of the movement of goods and capital, but *not* the movement of people. Furthermore, she claims that in the face of these "opening" borders, the attempts to control immigration are becoming more and more futile. Additionally, she examines the ways in which major corporations and international agencies based in First World countries are responsible for *pulling* immigrants in at the same time as they *push* emigrants from the poorer countries. Just like Morín, Hayter also points to the incitement (on the part of organizations and powers from the richest countries) of violent wars in poorer areas of the globe as a major reason behind the increase in immigration. Central to

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Hayter's article is her point that the suffering imposed on refugees and immigrants attempting to escape these violent and unjust conflicts is unbearably harsh, and undoubtedly a violation of what she sees as inherent human rights.

Other common human-rights based arguments in favor of immigration reform tend to site the practice of separating families as a major violation of human rights. The immigrant advocacy organization Las Americas, based in El Paso, Texas, states that its mission involves "keeping families together, safe, and self-sustaining". Because of the threat that deportation poses to the maintenance of a family unit, many human rights organizations have come out in favor of the immigration reform bill, which would put a halt to the threat of further deportations of undocumented immigrants (and therefore to further family separations) if passed.

**The Economic Effects of Immigration**

It is important to understand some of the basic economic arguments being made both for and against immigration reform. Just as anxiety has been expressed about the "capitalization" of the mainstream media, there is also a concern that the capitalistic nature of American society is precisely what makes it so inviting for undocumented immigrants.

In addition to offering an economic argument against immigration, Roy Beck's work, *The Case Against Immigration: The moral, economic, social, and environmental reasons for reducing US immigration back to traditional levels*, could also be classified

as having some human rights-related themes. Beck is not specifically anti-undocumented immigration (as many tend to assume of those who offer arguments against the immigration reform bill), but instead completely against any kind of immigration, whether legal or illegal. His primary concerns are the overpopulation and depletion of resources that inevitably come, he claims, with an increase in immigrants. The incoming Latino immigrants, Beck points out, end up stealing both jobs and Affirmative Action opportunities from poor blacks, and in this way their arrival leads to an unjust inequality between races that would otherwise correct itself if given the chance. The logic is this: due to the capitalist objective of most employers to find the cheapest work available in order to maximize profits, it makes sense that they would be more attracted to hiring undocumented [Latino] workers over [documented] blacks, because the former are not protected by minimum wage laws, or the ability to unionize. Beck's polarizing racialization of "traditional" American society into whites, blacks, and "those who wrongfully take up Affirmative Action spots" reminds one of the discussion brought up in Arlene Dávila's work, *Latino Spin*, already discussed above. Essentially, Beck's argument showcases a kind of exclusive thought process that forces Latino immigrants somewhere outside the stubborn black-white racial division of this "traditional" American society, undeserving of participation.

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Sociologist Ruth Milkman explores the history and future prospects of immigrant laborers in the US in her article *Immigrant Workers and the Future of American Labor*.41 She explains that immigrants played a large part in helping to organize unions in the late 1900's, and that the immigrant rights movement "is both a civil rights movement and a labor movement". Despite the recent economic recession, Milkman speculates that unauthorized workers are still likely to be an important part of the labor force—she estimates that there are roughly 11 million undocumented people in the US, and that since the recession, there has been a decrease in illegal immigration and an increase in legal immigration. To demonstrate the economy's heavy dependency on undocumented labor, Milkman provides a detailed description of how trade unionism has gradually converted from a largely anti-immigrant field to now be more pro-immigrant. She concludes that the undocumented immigrant workforce is vital to our economy now, and deserves further legislation that will protect its rights to collective bargaining.

Another assessment of undocumented immigration, this time headed by policy researchers Robert Rector and Jason Richwine for the conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation, concluded that "unlawful immigration and amnesty for current unlawful immigrants can pose large fiscal costs for US taxpayers." The study, titled *The Fiscal Cost of Unlawful Immigrants and Amnesty to the U.S. Taxpayer*, named four different types of government-provided benefits that it claims undocumented immigrants enjoy: direct benefits (like Social Security, Medicare, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation), means-tested welfare benefits (like Medicaid or food stamps),

public education, and population-based services (like police and fire department services, highways, and public parks).  

Factcheck.org, a nonpartisan organization that monitors "the factual accuracy of major U.S. political players" and is based out of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, came out with a response to the Heritage Foundation study about two months later, criticizing its numbers as inaccurate, even citing the study's own authors as having contradicted their published conclusions after their release. Factcheck questioned the timeframe of the study (50 years), calling it decidedly long in comparison to most other economist's criticisms, and emphasized that the total cost of the bill concluded by the researchers ($6.3 trillion) was in fact much lower.

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In the first section of this literature review, I substantiated the claim that the mainstream media is often tainted with a negative representation of Latino immigrants, and that this depiction of the issue is capable of causing great injustices for undocumented Latino immigrants in particular, who find their entire lives in the balance of a congressional decision about the immigration reform bill. Not only is the mainstream media negatively biased, but it also can have a huge influence over American political decisions. Taking this influence into account, it may behoove Latino immigrant activists,


in the quest to garner further support for the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, to do everything in their power to counter the generally anti-immigrant messages circulated by major news networks, or to find a way to get these political powerhouses onto their side.

In the second section of this literature review, I explored the concept of cultural citizenship, and tried to identify some of the ways it has either negatively or positively played a role in the granting of rights to immigrants. While some scholars have identified ways in which immigrant groups have felt empowered by their sense of cultural citizenship, gained in the process of demanding rights and connecting to their homeland, other scholars have focused on the ways in which immigrants have been left out of the hegemonic culture of American society—that of white anglo-saxon protestants—and in finding themselves in such a situation (without access to a network or community of other immigrants with whom to claim a sense of belonging here), have felt a lack of cultural citizenship. Cultural citizenship is therefore an important concept for immigrant activists, who, in their very struggle to gain legal recognition in this country, are in the process of forming their own cultural citizenship.

In the third section of this literature review, I examined the ways that some scholars have formed human rights-based arguments to justify immigration reform. These arguments largely stress the historical context of the globalization of the marketplace, and the subsequent duty of the Global North to provide for those it has allegedly been responsible for the downfall of. While human rights oriented arguments in favor of immigration reform can often be effective in winning over the sympathy of the general public, they are not as compelling to more pragmatic audiences. For this reason, Latino
immigrant activists certainly benefit from the inclusion of human-rights arguments in a list of reasons for immigration reform, but they cannot stand by themselves.

It is for this reason that I included the fourth section, which included economic arguments both for and against the immigration reform bill. In the same way that Latino immigrant activists may not benefit from spouting human rights-based arguments for immigration reform alone, neither will they appeal to a general public with a solely economic argument for the bill passage. While it's important to identify ways in which an undocumented immigrant may benefit the US economy, using these sorts of findings as the sole or even major reason to grant these people citizenship is arbitrary and counterproductive, because it fails to recognize the inherent value of human beings, and their [human] right to be treated fairly and humanely, regardless of their economic utility to any one or thing.

I have focused most on the first two themes listed because they relate most directly to my research study, which aims to better understand the ways in which Latino immigrant activists assert their right to citizenship, particularly given the anti-immigrant bias in the mainstream media. I will turn next to the background of this project, in order to contextualize my fieldwork: an in-depth description of two events that were organized by different immigration reform activists based in the Philadelphia area.
Part II  
The Origins of This Project

It will be helpful to explain the background of this thesis project and the reasoning behind my decision to explore this topic further in order to better contextualize and understand it. The seeds for this project were first planted when I worked the summer after my first year of college with a grass-roots community development organization based in northeast Rochester, New York, in an area with a very large Latino population. Most of the people living in the region that the organization covers are from working and low-income classes, and the neighborhood struggles with a high level of drug sales and crime. The organization I worked with aims to empower its residents by listening to their concerns about their community and identifying them in a concise way in an effort to encourage residents to take action themselves on issues that they care about. Throughout the summer, the staff and I conducted a number of door-to-door surveys of the community to collect information on what specific concerns community members had (i.e., their level of perceived security walking through their neighborhood at night, their access to fresh fruits and vegetables, how long they expected or hoped to live in their current homes, etc.), and how these might be addressed. Despite the positive efforts being made by community members to alleviate these problems, the local Rochester media generally fails to cover these attempts, instead drawing outsiders' attentions to the high crime rate. The area continues to struggle with crime and drug-related issues, but slowly, a stronger sense of community is taking shape.

This experience provoked my interest in understanding how grass-roots social changes take place within communities of marginalized groups. I am very interested in
the process of "community empowerment," which is quite a broad term. Power is something contingent on the existence of an enforcer (the one who "holds" the power) and an enabler (one who allows the person with the power to continue "holding" it). What does it mean to "empower" a people then? If one entity "empowers," or "gives power to" another (as the organization I worked with claims to do), isn't it the true holder of power? How does a group (such as the residents of the Rochester neighborhood) go from being given power by others, to holding it independently? In order for successful grassroots change and community empowerment to take place, there must first be awareness of how those seeking empowerment understand their current level of power. A community that is self-motivated and confident enough to improve itself will have a much better chance of remaining improved than a community that is simply conforming to externally imposed standards. Self-motivation and confidence, in this case, are the stepping-stones to increasing levels of power.

So where do self-motivation and confidence come from? What strengthens a community's sense of agency and capacity for self-improvement? One of the first forces I thought of as a response to these questions was the media. If negative media coverage of the neighborhood in northeast Rochester was playing a role in the stagnation of community development there, could this same causal relationship be observed in other places or ways outside of Rochester? What about the debate over immigration reform taking place all over the United States? How might the mainstream media's descriptions and portrayals of immigrants (in particular, Latino immigrants) be effecting policy changes?
Wondering about the relationship between media coverage and empowerment, I began to research the effects of mainstream media on policy-making and public opinion. Not surprisingly, I found that often, when particular groups (such as, in this case, Latino immigrants) are given disproportional and negative news coverage, public opinion and public discourse tends to frown upon them. Terms like "illegal alien" work to dehumanize Latino immigrants, and frame them as threats to US society. In turn, immigration policies become more exclusive, and spur on the emergence of negative stereotypes about Latino immigrants.

Considering this relationship between negative media coverage and empowerment, I began to wonder about what efforts were being made by the group of people being disempowered by this negative media attention: Latino immigrants in the US. Part of my reason for focusing on this group's efforts to empower itself comes out of a desire to counter what I see as the unjust media coverage that has produced negative and unfair consequences for Latino immigrants. That is to say that the act of drawing attention to these groups and the way in which they work to achieve their goals of immigration policy reform and social acceptance is itself an attempt on my part to further their cause.

There is a tendency in the mainstream discourse to "pathologize" groups of people who are under resourced, be it politically, economically, or socially. Narratives

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44 The term "pathologize" has a certain bio-medical connotation (i.e., to treat a person or behavior as psychologically abnormal or unhealthy) that should be taken only figuratively in this instance. With this term, I am referring to a common process by which under-resourced people are blamed for their own lack of resources, rather than aided. When impoverished people are "pathologized", for example, their poverty becomes a self-inflicted "ailment", rather than the result of a series of
like the American Dream, which claim that upward mobility is possible and available for anyone who works hard enough to achieve it, perpetuate the idea that "success" is based on merit. In so doing, they imply that those who do not achieve upward mobility are simply undeserving of it. In this way, the American Dream (the idea that the United States is a meritocracy) ignores the role that structural oppression plays in preventing some groups from becoming upwardly mobile.

In the face of this truth, often times sociologists are torn between the desire to identify structural injustices, and the desire to identify examples of agency in the individuals affected by those structural injustices. For it is one thing for a sociologist to claim that an individual is entirely victim to an oppressive social structure, and another to claim that an individual can act with their own agency to counter that oppression (whether successful or not). In the first case, there is no recognition of the key, ugly truth of the complexity of social oppression: that an individual can both take part in and work against their own oppression. It is important to recognize how this kind of participation or opposition to oppression takes place; one cannot simply paint a picture in such black and white terms as "structural oppression=perpetrator", "individual=victim".

Keeping this thought process in mind, I am attempting to apply it to the issue of immigration reform in the United States. It is important to identify structural oppression as it occurs (such as the mass use of negative stereotyping in media coverage of Latino immigrants in mainstream US news outlets). But it is also important to identify how individuals or organizations are working against that oppression. Furthermore, it is vital to not simply identify agency in the "victims" of this oppression, but to think critically complex structural inequalities and injustices; they are the source of their own "affliction".
about (and in so doing, perhaps allow for improvements of) their methods of opposition and attack. How are the organizations or individuals that are seeking immigration reform for Latino immigrants attempting to achieve their goals? Are they successful?

One of the ways I begin to answer this question is by first bringing into focus the arguments with which these groups are attempting to change the status quo. These different "methods of challenge" include: claiming cultural citizenship in the US, framing the immigration debate as an issue of human rights, invoking religious mantras, and appealing to family values, among others. While attending an immigration reform rally held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (a region of the US with a very large Latino immigrant population\textsuperscript{45}) on October 5th, 2013, I saw several of these methods at work.

\textsuperscript{45} In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that about 13.0% of the population of the city of Philadelphia was Hispanic or Latino, the third largest racial category after Blacks (44.3%) and Whites (36.6%).
Chapter Three: Activists in Action

The two sections that follow are in depth descriptions of two different events, both of which were a part of the ongoing movement for immigration reform in Philadelphia. Examining the two events, which were very different in scope and style, provides us with an opportunity to explore alternative answers to the primary question of this thesis: How are immigrant activists responding to anti-immigrant sentiment in the American public?

Both of these events, and both groups of activists involved in their design, have the same multi-faceted goal: they wish to build both legal and social acceptance of undocumented immigrants in the United States. Nevertheless, they are trying to reach that goal in vastly different ways.

Part I
October 5th, 2013: A Public Rally for Immigration Reform

The public rally for immigration reform was held in John F. Kennedy Plaza (also known as "Love Park") in Center City, Philadelphia. Love Park is a popular destination for tourists and locals, and serves as a gathering space in the heart of the city. Literally a two minute walk down the street from the city hall and one minute from a major transit station (Suburban Station), the park is an ideal location to hold an event aimed at capturing the public's attention.

The rally was organized by an interfaith activist group that focuses on issues of immigration reform, called New Sanctuary Movement (hereinafter NSM). October 5th was the national day of Immigrant Dignity and Respect, and rallies were held in more
than 60 cities all over the country to demand immigration reform "that keeps families
unified". The rally was supported by the Pennsylvania United for Immigration Reform
(PUIR) coalition (a conglomeration of organizations committed to immigration reform
efforts), which is in turn coordinated by the Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship
Coalition (PICC). It was part of a national movement to put pressure on elected
legislators to stop the high level of deportations that have been occurring in recent years.
As of November 2013, both local Pennsylvania and federal deportation programs have
depor ted up to 2,000,000 people. 46

At 12 noon on October 5th, upwards of 300 people gathered in Love Park, at the
corner of 16th and JFK Blvd. in downtown Philadelphia. There was a stage and sound
system set up, with large speakers and a number of microphones. A representative of
NSM officiated as the master of ceremonies for a series of guest speakers who addressed
the crowd.

While there was already a sizable number of people in the park by noon, the
number continued to grow well into the next hour. Most of the protestors were women
and children from Latino families, although plenty of men joined them. Although they
certainly had a presence, a minority of participants were Anglo or non-Latino. Some
participants passed out ready-made signs to newcomers: red, white, and blue, with the
slogans "Es tiempo" ("It's time"), "Dignidad" ("Dignity"), and "Respeto" (Respect"
written across them. The bilingualism of the crowd was very evident; virtually every sign
had a duplicate in both Spanish and English, and every speaker who addressed the crowd
was translated (line by line, by an interpreter) into either Spanish or English, depending

46 Figure from an invitation to the rally, distributed by New Sanctuary Movement.
on the language they were speaking. Although some speakers spoke in English (one was the reverend of a local black church, and the other was an undocumented immigrant from Jamaica), the majority were native Spanish speakers.

The event began officially at noon, when the master of ceremonies from NSM, a young Latino woman who spoke primarily in Spanish but sometimes switched to English, began to address the crowd. She spoke about the injustice of deportation and the painful effects it has on families, as well as the value of immigrant workers in the Pennsylvanian economy. Behind her, draped across the background of the stage platform, was a sign that read "Immigrants Strengthen Pennsylvania. Keep Our Families Together."

The Godly American Dream

A young Latino man in what looked to be about his mid to late twenties took the stage after being introduced by the organizers of the event. Speaking in Spanish that was translated into English by an interpreter (also on stage) after every line he delivered, the young man spoke with conviction to the assembled crowd. (His original speech is found in the column to the left, with the interpreter's words in Italics in the column to the right.)

47 Please note that unless otherwise specified, all translations hereinafter have been completed by this author (Pendle Marshall-Hallmark).
Hoy, mi nombre es 'Latino'.

Quiero saber, el día de hoy, quienes estan convencidos que todos somos iguales.

(The crowd cheers enthusiastically.)

Todos somos hijos de Dios.

Todos tenemos la misma oportunidad.

Todos tenemos los mismos derechos

Y ésta lucha la hacemos porque estamos concientes de la necesidad de hacer valer nuestra dignidad

Muy bien. Así que, vamos todos con las manos arriba, diciendo: '¡Sí, se puede, si se puede!'

Gracias a nuestros hermanos americanos también por acompañarnos.

Today, my name is 'Hispanic'.

I want to know who here today thinks that we are all born equal.

We're all children of God.

We all should have the same opportunity.

We all should have the same rights.

And this is a fight that we take on because we are conscious that we need to have our dignity respected by all.

Also, thank you to our Americans for being here and supporting us. Thank you.

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48 Note that the interpreter added "should" although that is technically not accurate.

49 Note that the interpreter again added "should" although that is technically not accurate

50 Direct translation: And we are making this fight because we are aware of the need to validate our dignity

51 Direct translation: Very good. So let's all put our hands up and shout "yes, we can! yes, we can!" Also, thank you to our American brothers for accompanying us.
In this text we can see the way the protestors invoke religious language ("children of God") in their attempts to claim access to civil rights. They also claim, ironically, that "we all have the same opportunity"—a classic example of the "American Dream Myth". Paradoxically, the activist's use of this myth (the myth that, in a nutshell, the United States is a meritocracy where anyone who works hard enough to achieve what they want can get it) works to perpetuate its injustice. Here's the speaker links the ideas that all human beings are equal, children of god, have equal opportunity, and equal rights.

This practice of linking legal rights with godly or divine rights is by no means new. In fact, in spite of the emphasis placed on the separation between Church and State within the Constitution, American political agendas have long employed religious rhetoric to further themselves. Even in the Pledge of Allegiance, we can see a similar blending of religion and government:

I pledge allegiance, to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The obvious statement that needs to be made here is that if we all did have the same opportunities and the same rights, there would be no need for protest in the first place! Paradoxically, the very myth that immigrant activists purport to achieve their goals is exactly the part of the social structure that is keeping them from reaching those goals. When people claim that all have access to the same opportunities, they inherently blame those who do not achieve upward social mobility for their own lack of achievement.

One argument that was repeatedly brought up was the claim that immigrant workers in the US deserve to be treated with dignity and respect for the work that they do. At one point, a representative of an organization of unified farm workers spoke:
Los trabajadores migrantes, especialmente los trabajadores agrícolas, contribuyen mucho a la economía y el sistema alimentario. Sin el trabajo duro que ellos hacen, no tendríamos quien trabajara en el campo, pescando y repartiendo la comida por todo el país. Es tiempo de reconocer los esfuerzos de todos los trabajadores agrícolas y trabajadoras migrantes, dándoles los derechos que merecemos. Merecemos todos los derechos que tienen un trabajador ciudadano. Merecemos el poder estar aquí en el país sin miedo. Merecemos que dejen las deportaciones y podemos mantener unidas nuestras familias. Merecemos un camino hacia la ciudadanía. Merecemos que el país reconozca sin el trabajo de nosotros, no podía sobrevivir. La comunidad migrante debe poder trabajar en condiciones justa, y no sentirse vulnerable. Aunque contribuimos con dinero al impuesto y los gastos para vivir, se los mantienen en el congreso y no recibimos una calidad de vida igual a los demás. No tenemos un bienestar en esta sociedad y nos mantenemos bajo la sombra. Afirmanos que nuestra lucha es más el reconocimiento de nuestros derechos humanos básicos, como migrantes y trabajadores, sino que nuestra lucha es un reto para la sociedad que no sea guiada por el miedo y la intolerancia, sino por el reconocimiento del valor y la dignidad inherente de la vida humana. Queremos una reforma migratoria; exigimos una reforma migratoria. Merecemos una reforma migratoria ahora mismo. Merecemos ser tratado con dignidad y respeto. ¡Sí se puede!  

52 Direct translation: Migrant workers, especially agricultural workers, contribute greatly to the food economy and system. Without the hard work that they do, we wouldn't have anyone to work in the field, harvesting and distributing food throughout the entire country. It's time to recognize the efforts of all agricultural and migrant workers, giving them the rights [we] deserve. We deserve all the rights that a citizen worker has. We deserve the ability to be in this country without fear. We deserve a stop to deportations and the ability to keep our families together. We deserve a pathway to citizenship. We deserve a country that recognizes that without our work, it would not survive. The migrant community should be able to work in just conditions, and not feel vulnerable. Although we contribute our own money to taxes and pay living expenses, Congress keeps them, and we do not receive a quality of life equal to that of others. We do not have wellbeing in this country, and instead are kept in the shadows. The fight for migrant justice goes beyond asking that our basic human rights be respected by society. Rather, it is a challenge to organize life without the influence of fear and intolerance, but instead to organize life guided by courage, and by a respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings. We want immigration reform; we demand immigration reform. We deserve immigration reform right now. We deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Yes we can!
This speaker makes several claims to appeal to the American ethos: the need to keep families united, the right to inherent human dignity, the goodness of a working person as demonstrated by their tax paying and support of their local economy, the importance of tolerance and courage. Other undocumented immigrants spoke later, echoing his concerns and emphasizing the stress of living in constant fear of being deported. One man described his frustration at not being granted citizenship despite his contributions to the United States, even quoting a past president:

John Kennedy once said: 'Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country'. As a professional dry-waller, I have helped to build 1,000 American homes... in my civic duties, I'm a local leader... but what have I received this year from the US? Police harassment [for] my Mexican looks...in the ten years I have been driving, I have paid a total of—just for driving to my job, dropping my wife at her job, driving my children to school...— twenty thousand dollars [in tickets]...I'm always afraid of seeing the police in my rearview mirror, and thinking...’is this the time they will put me in jail? When I'm going to work? When I'm going to earn my daily bread?'

Religious metaphors also played a large role in the protestors' reasoning for citizenship. One man, a reverend at a local Philadelphia church, as well as an activist, used a biblical reference to further the group's interests:

As citizens of this city, and citizens of this nation, we stand with you to press for a pathway to citizenship and human rights and dignity for all. We call on our congress members to put forth legislation that will create a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants that live in this country who daily add to the culture and richness of this nation. I'm reminded of the Bible, in the second chapter of Matthew, that an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in the middle of the night, and told Joseph to get Jesus out of Israel, and take him to Egypt. They didn't ask for a visa, they didn't ask for a green card, they just got up and went. Human rights should know no boundaries. Each and every one of us has been created with intrinsic value in the sight of god. Just like Jesus had to go to Egypt, there were folks that came to America for
opportunity for a better life for their families. Allow me to say you are welcome here and we stand with you right now. [Grant a] pathway to citizenship, stop deportation, and recognize the humanity of all.

After several speeches from both undocumented immigrants and citizen allies, the speakers began blasting upbeat American pop music, and the master of ceremonies announced the beginning of the march to ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) headquarters, about a 15 minute walk from the square and located at 16th and Callowhill. Leaving the northwest corner of the square and passing by throngs of midday pedestrians, the protesters went north up 16th street until they reached the outside facade of the headquarters, on the corner of Callowhill and 16th. The march route was clearly marked with cordoned off traffic barriers. City police and traffic directors guided the participants to the final destination, some of them even joining in and directing group chants. The day's whether was very clear and the temperature warm enough that plenty of people were outside to see the marchers go by.

In addition to the types of signs already described, protestors carried messages in both English and Spanish that read:

"Keep Families Together"/"Mantengan las familias unidas";
"America: The Land of Immigrants"
"Stop Deportations"/"Halto a las deportaciones";
"Love your neighbor as yourself"
"The Time is NOW for Immigration Reform"
"Todos somos migrantes" (We are all immigrants);
"No más niños huérfanos" (No more child orphans);
"The borders should be illegal instead of the people/They were here before the bible and all of it's sequels";
"Todos unidos por una reforma migratoria justa" (United for a just immigration reform);
"Undocumented Unafraid";
"Obama & Congress—END: Detention, Deportation, Family Separation";
"1.7 Million Broken Families"
"The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance"

Children carried signs with the messages: "Free my Daddy!" or "I want my parents together—don't deport them!" Churches, college student groups, and community organizations displayed identifying posters and banners as their members marched. The vast majority of people carried a miniature American flag in addition to their signage. One person brought their dachshund, which barked loudly along with the protestor's chants. Over the course of the 10 to 15 minutes that it took to walk to ICE headquarters, the crowd went through several different chants, including "The people, united, will never be defeated!", and "¡No vine a robar! ¡Vine a trabajar!" (I didn't come to steal, I came to work!).

**Nationalist and Religious Symbolism**

At this same rally hundreds of people carried signs cut out in the shapes of butterflies or hearts, decorated with the names of people recently deported, or with short messages calling for immigration reform. The major group organizing the event, called
New Sanctuary Movement, is an interfaith activist organization based in Philadelphia that describes itself as composed of "immigrant and ally congregations engaged in an authentic and passionate faith-rooted response to current immigration injustices".53

One sign, reminiscent of popular images of Christ gesturing upwards, pictures two hands, chained together and reaching upwards, with the slogan "Alto a las deportaciones" (End to deportations) written beneath it. The chains, and the placement of the hands, seem to work to remind the viewer at once of both slavery and Christian piety, both of which typically inspire sympathy and moral outrage from viewers.

Another popular symbol seen at the rally is that of the monarch butterfly. Philadelphia and the surrounding areas are particularly known for having a high Mexican immigrant population. The monarch butterfly is not only a nationalist symbol of Mexico (the nesting grounds for thousands of monarch butterflies can be found in Michoacán, Mexico), but it is also representative of the freedom in the act of migration itself—specifically, North American, Mexican-American migration. Each year, hundreds of thousands of monarch butterflies migrate from Mexico to the US and back again. In this way, the symbol of a monarch butterfly in immigration reform rallies aims to remind its audience of the link between the United States and Mexico, and of the natural migration flow between the two countries.

In addition to monarch butterflies, a long line of protestors also carried a chain of cardboard hearts connected with string. On each of the hearts was written the name of an individual, and a brief story describing the process by which they were either put into deportation proceedings, or deported outright. Switching between English and Spanish

liberally, the woman who had been officiating over the event announced to a crowd gathered outside of the ICE building on Callowhill Street:

Butterflies are free. We want to be free. Las mariposas muestran la señal de libertad. La señal de migración. La señal de la libertad de lograr lo que nosotros queramos. Los corazones representan... familiares que fueron deportados. Familias que fueron destruidas mediante la deportación, gracias a este edificio [gestures to the building behind her], donde están ayudando para que destruyan nuestras familias. The names on the hearts that are in the front [gesturing to a line of protestors carrying a long string of connected cardboard hearts with writing on them] are family members who were deported or are in deportation proceedings right now. Our hearts represent our broken hearts... Pero también representan nuestra esperanza, nuestros sueños. El amor a nuestros familiares. No queremos más deportaciones. No queremos más corazones rotos. No queremos más nombres en estos corazones... No estamos solos. Tenemos gente que está con nosotros... y no nos van a callar más.54

To close the rally, participants (particularly children) approached the front doors of the headquarters building for ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the primary government office responsible for handling deportations of undocumented immigrants). They covered the doors and windows of the building with cardboard cutouts of butterflies, writing their personal reasons and pleas to ICE for ending all deportations. The combination of children and butterflies, both associated with innocence and freedom, were an attempt to garner more sympathy and support for the rally’s agenda. After announcing the official end to the rally, the crowd began to slowly disperse, leaving the

54 The butterflies are a sign of freedom. The sign of immigration. The sign of the freedom to achieve whatever it is that we want. The hearts represent... family members who were deported. Families that were destroyed by deportation, thanks to this building where they are helping to destroy our families... But they also represent our hope, our dreams. The love we have for our families. We don't want any more deportations. We don't want any more broken hearts. We don't want any more names on these hearts... We are not alone. We have people here who are with us... and we will not be silenced any more.
butterflies and hearts on the building’s glass facade. Several people who had come in
groups from towns outside of Philadelphia (many of which have large migrant worker
populations) reconnected with their groups in order to be bussed back home.

Part II
March 14th, 2012: Coming Out of the Shadows

"If you're watching this video, I've been arrested." Undocumented Bryn Mawr student Jessica Hyejin Lee's first sentence in the YouTube video she created for DREAMActivist Pennsylvania is attention grabbing. Her statement was accurate. On March 14th, 2012, Jessica and another undocumented student from the nearby University of Pennsylvania, Tania Chairez, staged a public protest at the same location as the October 5th, 2013 rally for immigration rights: the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters building at the corner of 16th and Callowhill Streets in downtown Philadelphia. There, accompanied by several supporters, they blocked traffic and publicly announced their undocumented status. When they refused to move, they were both taken into custody and placed in jail over night.55

DREAMActivist Pennsylvania is a state-wide network of student activists seeking to pass the Pennsylvania DREAM Act, a piece of state legislation based off of (but not identical to) the federal DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors)

55 Here I would like to point out that my knowledge of the events of March 14th, 2012 is entirely based off of second-hand sources, unlike my account of the October 5th, 2013 rally, which I was personally able to attend.
Act that was first proposed in the US Senate in August of 2001. The federal act, which has been under contention since then, would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students who have entered the country before the age of 16. Provided that these students are between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time the bill is enacted, can prove their consistent residency in the US for at least five consecutive years since their arrival, have graduated from a US high school, obtained a GED or been admitted to an institute of higher education, and are of "good moral character", they can qualify for legal permanent residency, which would eventually enable them to petition for full citizenship.

Before marching to the site of 16th and Callowhill Streets, Lee, Chairez, and about 75 other demonstrators had assembled at LOVE Park (the exact same site of the October 5th, 2013 protest) around 2pm. Most of the participants in the action were from the city's Latino and Asian youth organizations. One of the most well known of these groups is Fuerza, a Latino immigrant youth activism group that is a branch of the larger South-Philadelphia immigrant activism organization Juntos. Other participants were members of the state-wide DREAM Activist Pennsylvania network. During the assembly in LOVE Park, three high school students publicly revealed their undocumented status for the first time, and several young people (in particular, Lee and Chairez) spoke about the experience of being undocumented.

Life as an undocumented immigrant comes with a number of difficult challenges. For Chairez, it included having to constantly fear that her family's status would be revealed to the police if they were ever caught driving without a license (undocumented

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56 The Pennsylvania DREAM Act is a tuition equity bill that, if passed, would allow all youth in Pennsylvania, regardless of immigration status, to pay in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education.
immigrants cannot apply for driver's licenses in Chairez' home state of Arizona). Not having a social security number also prevented Chairez from obtaining any part time jobs, and she often had to lie to her friends that her parents were just "over-protective" and didn't want her spending much time out of the house. Having come to the US as a five-year-old, Chairez was able to learn English more easily than her parents, and could understand the insult that the word "wetback" (sometimes directed towards her father by his own employers) carried with it. In a short article she wrote for the Daily Pennsylvanian (the independent student run newspaper of the University of Pennsylvania) in October of 2011, Chairez states "I am undocumented and will continue to fight for my rights as a human being and as an unrecognized American who is redefining what it means to be a 'citizen'." 57

Many (although certainly not all) colleges and universities do not accept undocumented applicants, regardless of their impressive records of achievement. Lee also spoke about the fear she had as an undocumented young person, when upon graduating high school as a top student, she had still not been accepted into any of the elite schools she was qualified for. She and her family moved to the US when she was 12 years old from South Korea. In the Asian American community, Lee explained, people tend to keep silent about their undocumented status; as a result, the issues faced by undocumented people tend to go unaddressed. 58 "It's important for undocumented youth to feel part of the community and not feel stigmatized by their status," Lee has stated. She

encourages undocumented youth in particular to do as she has done, claiming that it is acceptable for them to "come out" and "fight for civil rights and human rights in this country".

Lee and Chairez's action had a variety of goals. They hoped that announcing their status publicly would help to de-stigmatize undocumented immigrants. David Bennion, a leader of the DREAM Activist Pennsylvania network and an immigration lawyer, has explained that the undocumented youth destigmatization movement is trying "to show [that undocumented youth] are just normal people. We're going to college. We all know English. We grew up in this country." By highlighting their own undocumented status, these young women were attempting to, in a sense, normalize it. They were trying to push back against the often negative stereotyping and portrayal of "illegal immigrants" found in the mainstream media and elsewhere. By identifying themselves—high-achieving students at elite universities in the United States—as undocumented, Lee and Chairez were challenging the assumption that undocumented people are undeserving of respect, and, by association, the right to a path to citizenship.

More specifically, however, the students were calling for the release of one of their fellow DREAM Activist Pennsylvania members, Miguel Orellana, a 25 year old El Salvadoran immigrant who had been placed in York County Prison over seven months prior.59 (David Bennion is also Orellana's lawyer.) Orellana would have been eligible for the conditional immigration status that the DREAM Act offers, were the bill passed. He came to the United States at the age of nine with his parents, who were legal immigrants.

In 2006 he was charged with an underage DUI; he has also had two arrests for possession of small amounts of marijuana. With this history of misdemeanors, Orellana's legal status was revoked, and he was placed in deportation proceedings. His fiancé is an American citizen, as are their two children. He was imprisoned after the notice of his revoked status failed to reach him at his proper address and he subsequently did not respond to Immigration and Customs Enforcement in a timely way. His fiancé, who was pregnant at the time with their second child, was then made to work on her own to support the family, and had to be hospitalized when she became unwell. Lee has stated in a radio interview with bigwowo.com, an online blog devoted to "Asian American intellectualism, activism, and literature" that the protest "was a community act to escalate and demand the release of an undocumented American."

After several speakers had addressed the crowd, participants in the action began to march from LOVE Park to the corner of 16th and Callowhill Streets. Once they had arrived in front of the ICE building, the crowd stopped walking north, and gathered along the sidewalks surrounding the entrance. Lee and Chairez then walked into the ICE office and submitted letters addressed to Thomas Decker, the ICE field officer in charge of Miguel Orellana's case, that called for his release. When the two women announced their own undocumented statuses, the people in the office didn't believe them, claiming that they "didn't have accents, didn't look like drug dealers, and just looked like normal college students". Lee tried to explain to the ICE employees the privileged position their assumptions had revealed that they occupied, and again listed some of the challenges that she had already mentioned while speaking at LOVE Park earlier that day.
At 3:15pm, Lee (20 years old) and Chairez (19 years old) sat down cross-legged across a banner they had splayed over the street that read "UNDOCUMENTED, UNAFRAID, COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS". They wore black t-shirts that bore the message "Undocumented, Unafraid, and Unapologetic" in white and red lettering. Accompanied by a crowd of what was then about 100 people, the young women repeatedly chanted "Education, not deportation!", "Immigrant rights are human rights", "No justice, no peace", and "Undocumented, unafraid!" They also voiced their support for the Pennsylvania Dream Act, and encouraged other undocumented immigrants at large to reveal their statuses.

According to news reports at the time, this "act of civil disobedience was meant to embolden undocumented people 'to come out of the shadows' and demand universal human rights."60 The Immigration and Customs Enforcement branch of the larger Department of Homeland Security is a perpetrator of the violation of human rights, Lee and Chairez have claimed, because it separates families by deporting individuals from the country, and often forbids them from ever returning.

The two college students blocked traffic and were repeatedly asked to clear the street by police on the scene. They purposely stalled in submitting to the police officers' requests, attempting to gain as much public interest and media attention as possible before their arrest. When they refused, they were arrested around 4:15pm on charges of disorderly conduct and obstruction of highways, and taken to the city jail. There, although they had repeatedly offered their true identification and full names to the media

that had attended the protest, both women refused to provide their real names to the jail.

Going under the name "Jane Doe", Jessica Hyejin Lee repeatedly called on police officers to get ICE involved, asking them where the ICE officers were, and demanding that they be brought to see her.

When Tania Chairez' name was accidentally revealed to the ICE officers, they became aware that the two students were the same protestors who had just received a huge amount of media attention, and that several hundred people were following their actions. Although Lee had been taken for an initial interview with ICE agents (who at the time were under the impression that she was simply undocumented, and were unaware of her identity as a student activist), as soon as it became clear that she had community attention and support for her case, the ICE officers interviewing her simply stopped the interview and exited the room.

Lee stated in a radio interview only four days later,

Before doing the civil disobedience, my perspective was that I'm going to risk arrest and deportation to encourage undocumented Americans to come out of the shadows. But once I was in jail, I really realized what lack of freedom really meant, what being in detention really meant. And in a way, I was privileged, because this was all political activism, and I was trying to stay there longer, I was trying to get the ICE officers called. But other people who are there are scared. They don't want to say they're undocumented. They don't want to stay there long. They don't want ice officers involved... it was a really eye-opening experience for me as well... Through the action we have proven that if you're undocumented, you can still come out and still be all right because there's a community to support you, because they recognize that you're a human being regardless of your immigration status.61

Having already planned out their action, the two women had preemptively asked their supporters to help provide money to pay their bail, and were released the next afternoon around 2pm. "We had been planning this for a while," Lee stated in the same radio interview, "it was a very intentional act. We knew that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement would be too scared to deport anybody who's come out publicly and has the support of the community."
Chapter Four: Analyzing Dissent In All its Forms

This chapter will provide a critical analysis of the activism that has been described throughout this work. I will discuss some of the major strategies of each example of civil disobedience that we have studied here, beginning with an analysis of the October 5th, 2013 rally for immigration reform organized by New Sanctuary Movement and the March 14th, 2012 arrests of student activists Jessica Hyejin Lee and Tania Chairez. I will then return to the first three historical examples of civil disobedience offered at the very beginning of this thesis, and compare some relevant aspects of their design with the work of both NSM and DREAMActivist Pennsylvania.

Part I
October 5th, 2013 versus March 14th, 2012

To be undocumented in the United States is to inherently participate in civil disobedience.62 This is true, regardless of whether or not the undocumented individual has made public their status. That is, they may be participating in a kind of invisible civil disobedience: one that goes undetected by the general public. The question that an undocumented immigration reform activist seeking to affect social and legal acceptance in this country must ask, then, is not one of whether or not to participate in civil disobedience, but rather how to participate in it. How do activists make visible their agenda? The two examples of dissent that have been explored in this thesis involve forms

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62 Being undocumented is inherently civilly disobedient because it is a form of nonviolent noncompliance with U.S. law, which requires all immigrants to enter the country with proper documentation or permission.
of "visibilization" enacted, on the one hand, by a group, and on the other, by [two] individuals.

The strength or power to become visible—that is, to make publicly known one's commitment and interest in advancing the cause of undocumented immigrants in the US—can come from very different sources.\(^63\) In the case of the October 5th, 2013 protest, participants never *individually* "outed" themselves as undocumented. While these activists may or may not have had the social capital that Jessica Hyejin Lee and Tania Chairez possessed (which would have enabled them to risk sharing their undocumented status in public), they *did* draw the strength and power to publicly declare their allegiance to the undocumented immigrant cause by protesting *en masse*. Participating as members of a larger group enabled marchers to declare their controversial support for a change in legislation and culture while still maintaining relative anonymity (and therefore protection from deportation, if it were a possible risk in the first place). In fact, no one at the protest ever deliberately came out as undocumented, although it is probably safe to assume that such was the status of some percentage of the crowd, and certainly of some of those who spoke.

The participants at the October 5th, 2013 rally for immigration reform also differed from the DREAMActivists of March 14th, 2012 in the way in which they articulated their argument for a right to citizenship. Unlike Lee and Chairez, the October 5th protesters took special care to invoke particular religious and nationalist symbolism

\(^{63}\) It should be noted here that "becoming visible" in this context does not necessarily mean "revealing one's undocumented status". Instead, it is simply a declaration of support for the cause of undocumented immigrants—the right to gain a pathway to citizenship in the United States—regardless of the fact that such a position challenges current legislation.
and language during their action. This has a specific goal of reaching a particular audience: people of faith (and especially, Christians). Appealing to a kind of Christian ethic, the speakers at this rally may have been able to get the attention of (if not convince) members of the public for whom a religious argument for social and legal acceptance of undocumented immigrants was most compelling. This was certainly another element of the event that strengthened the ability of its participants to "visibilize" their civil disobedience; couching their work in an appealing and broad-reaching argument helped to further their cause. In fact, the entire mission of New Sanctuary Movement is to connect and mobilize people of varying faiths (and therefore, indirectly, of varying cultural groups) over the issue of immigration reform.

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For the leading participants of the March 14th, 2012 action, the sources of the strength and power to make visible their civil disobedience were very different. For Lee and Chairez, the ability to "visibilize" their commitment to the undocumented immigrant cause, and to "come out of the shadows", can be credited to three major factors. Firstly, both activists had a strong base of supporters from their respective universities, the University of Pennsylvania and Bryn Mawr College (in fact, one alum even offered to adopt Lee if necessary to keep her from being deported!) 64 Secondly, DREAMActivist Pennsylvania, with which the students were working at the time of their action, is a well-organized and extensive network of students and their allies. Having a connection to DREAMActivist Pennsylvania meant having access to advice from lawyers and

advocates from all across the state (and beyond), and, perhaps most importantly, having contacts in the media (which brings us to the third element of success). As stated earlier, the attention of the media (both local and national) provided a kind of safety net for Lee and Chairez; as long as their cases were in the spotlight, they would be able to garner the kind of support they might need in case a deportation order were to be executed.

So what was the significance of Lee and Chairez' protest? Is it true that their successful encounter with ICE is proof that all undocumented immigrants are equally safe to reveal their status the way these two students did?

Lee's radio quote in the previous chapter hints at a deeper truth: it was the "privileged" status of these two young women, as well-connected students at elite east coast colleges, that enabled them to carry out their action. Unlike other undocumented immigrants, Lee and Chairez had the social capital they needed that allowed them to create a mechanism to hold the ICE authorities publicly accountable for their actions. High profile arrests involving "undocumented Americans" who have seemingly earned their right to citizenship by achieving a certain level of success or prestige can discourage government involvement and subsequent deportation of those individuals in a way that lesser-known arrests of less "prestigious" individuals cannot.

At a meeting on Bryn Mawr's campus after the action on March 15th, 2014, Jessica Hyejin Lee and her colleagues explained the importance of placing a personal, human face on the practice of deportation. The more undocumented people "come out of the shadows", the more normalized, and the less disgraceful and shameful, such a status
becomes. After being asked about her family's reaction to her decision to "out" herself, Lee explained, "More than being scared, they feel that this was the right thing for me to do. There's no longer that stigma attached that was there before."

As students at elite schools, Lee and Chairez had a particular appeal to the general public that non-students may not have had. Although neither of these two activists couched their logic in terms that read "because we are elite college students, we deserve the right to not be deported", the results of their actions seemed to prove exactly that reasoning. Ironically, the privilege that Lee spoke of in her radio interview is a significant, distinguishing element of her activism that separates her work from the work of other non-student, non-college-educated immigrant activists (such as, for example, many of the participants in the October 5th, 2013 rally for immigration reform, or her DREAMActivist colleague, Miguel Orellana).

The reasoning here seems to be that all undocumented immigrants, regardless of their social or educational "rank" should be granted safety from deportation. This is precisely the point that Lee and Chairez were to be trying to make when they dedicated their action to highlighting what they saw as the injustice of placing Miguel Orellana, an undocumented immigrant with a mild criminal record, into deportation proceedings. Adam Goodman, a doctoral student in history at the University of Pennsylvania and contributor to Salon.com, writes of the two activists:

They aren’t just arguing that DREAMers like themselves — college students with clean records whose parents brought them to the U.S. when

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65 We see a similar kind of reasoning guiding the gay rights campaign that encouraged all homosexual people to "come out of the closet", mentioned later in this chapter.

they were children — should be given a path to citizenship. They are helping to break down the artificial barriers... between “model” immigrants (i.e., DREAMers) and others.\footnote{Goodman, Adam. "Undocumented and Unafraid" Salon.com. Salon, 29 Mar. 2012. Web.}

The distinction Goodman raises, between "model immigrants" and "others" is an important one. There is an interesting usage of social capital taking place here; essentially, Lee and Chairez have harnessed their status as aspiring members of the middle to upper middle classes (backed by their enrollment in elite universities), to advocate for other undocumented people who lack such a resource.

\section*{Part II}

\textbf{Historical Civil Disobedience Revisited}

Returning now to the first three historical examples of civil disobedience offered at the very beginning of this thesis, I will compare some relevant elements from the design of these protests with the work of New Sanctuary Movement and DREAMActivist Pennsylvania organizers.

Unlike in the U.S. Civil Rights or Women's Rights Movements, the key stakeholders in the Immigration Reform Movement (undocumented immigrants) are not immediately visually apparent. During the civil rights era, the visually apparent identifier of key stakeholders was race. During the women's rights era, the visually apparent identifier of key stakeholders was gender.\footnote{Here I am aware that gender, unlike sex, is socially constructed and performed. I mean to say that the women's rights movement sought to give rights to cis-gendered} While race certainly plays a large part in the
public discourse surrounding the immigration debate, an immigrant is not immediately identifiable in the same way that a cis-gendered woman or a person of color is. A woman who goes to a voting booth and attempts to vote while women's suffrage is illegal is visibly breaking the law, whether she intends for others to know so or not. An undocumented person walking down the street in downtown Philadelphia can do so, but the fact that they are breaking the law (in the very act of being in the United States) is not instantly apparent in the same way.

An undocumented immigrant is not instantly identified based off of their appearance, and therefore their tactics of dissent or civil disobedience must change to fit this circumstance. Similarly, a person's sexual orientation is not always immediately visible. While there might be certain traits that are stereotypically or commonly associated with undocumented immigrants or homosexual people (i.e., race or physical mannerisms), the existence or lack thereof of these traits is obviously not an accurate indication of an individual's immigration status or sexual orientation. In other words, where this is a correlation, there is not always causation. Unlike the black Americans who protested for their rights during the Civil Rights Movement, or the (mostly white) women who protested for their rights during the Woman's Suffrage Movement, undocumented immigrant activists must publicly out themselves in order to be understood as dissenting from the law; their dissent is not instantly apparent. Taking these differences into account, let's see what comparisons can be made between the Civil Rights, Woman's Suffrage, Gay Rights, and Immigration Reform Movements.

women—women whose individual experiences of their own gender match the sex they were born with. See the works of Judith Butler for further information.
What We Can Learn From the Woman's Suffrage Movement

There was much debate over the benefits that suffrage ostensibly promised. Activists debated over which women in particular would gain the most from the right to vote. In an address made to NAWSA, a Mrs. Elsie Cole Phillips (representing "the so-called working classes") is quoted as stating the following:

There is a practical wisdom that comes out of the pressure of life and an educational force in life itself which very often is more efficient than that which comes through textbooks of college... The ignorant vote that is going to come in when women are enfranchised is that of the leisure-class woman, who has no responsibilities and knows nothing of what life means to the rest of the world, who has absolutely no civic or social intelligence. But, fortunately for us [the women of the working classes], she is a small percentage of the women of this land, and fortunately for the land there is no such rapid means of education for her as to give her the ballot and let her for the first time feel responsibilities. 69

Mrs. Phillips' words call to mind the dilemma faced by activists of the immigration rights movement today, who find themselves confronted by very clear divisions of class. One is immediately reminded of Jessica Hyejin Lee's words when she realized her own privilege while awaiting processing in a downtown Philadelphia jail one hundred years after the suffragettes' Washington march. Her status as an elite college student is what enabled her to carry out her protest with an expectation of release. Having the backing of a community with rich social capital and media attention is a privilege that Hyejin Lee and Chairez took advantage of in order to make a deeper point: that all undocumented people, regardless of education level, should be allowed to live without fear of being deported and separated from their families.

Similarly, Mrs. Phillips makes the point that the elite women voters, who will be the most likely to actually benefit from and directly participate in woman suffrage once granted, stand in as some sort of representing force for all womankind in the US. Phillips intimates that while ideally, suffrage would be most accessible to the working women most affected by labor legislation, granting suffrage to even the most privileged among women is a step in the right direction, as it will make those women more responsible (and eventually, presumably, lead to a greater representation of and concern for general women's issues within Congress).

Another similarity between the activism of the women campaigning for woman suffrage in 1913 and that of student activists campaigning for immigration reform a century later is the style of engagement. As was previously noted, the use of intense "militancy" in English protests over woman suffrage was a primary inspiration for Alice Paul and Lucy Burns. It was precisely this "zeal" that commanded a heightened level of attention towards the campaign, on the part of the American public, that previously had not existed. Youth activists campaigning for immigration reform are also aware of this truth; the more rebellious and resolute they are, the greater their likelihood of completing their end goal.

In both instances (Lee and Chairez' 2012 protest, and the suffrage activists' 1917 picketing), the participants were purposely arrested. In other cases of dissent, where protesters have not wished to be arrested, they have gone en masse; one key example of this, as stated earlier, is the October 5th rally held in Philadelphia—because protestors did not want to risk being arrested (many were undocumented), they participated as a group, and therefore no particular individual could be singled out by the authorities as
breaking any rule that others were not also breaking. By carrying out actions as a group, activists are able to draw strength in their number—even if they are arrested (as was the case for the 1917 picketers), having a large group of comrades who are either arrested along with them, or who are at least aware of their whereabouts and the circumstances of their arrest, is a helpful safety precaution.

We have seen how in some cases being arrested can actually lead to further progress, rather than delay, of an activist agenda. This is because it is often a catalyst for increasing outsider and media attention to a cause. "Any press is good press"—the saying goes; often times, the more disturbing an act, the more intense the reaction to it becomes.

That said, it is important for people who cannot afford to be arrested to also be included in the struggle to make their voices heard. This is where mass, lawful, organized, and peaceful protest can be helpful. Obtaining permission from local authorities to march in a large procession (as was done for both the October 5th protest and the "Procession for Woman Suffrage" of 1913) helps activists to avoid arrest by remaining relatively anonymous—there is less attention on an individual, and more attention given to the group as a whole. Additionally, because there has been no law-breaking (as long as a permit to march has been obtained), protesters are safe to participate without fear of incurring legal repercussions.

Public acts of dissent (whether en masse or less so) do not just bring greater attention to an issue. They also provide an opportunity to boost the morale and confidence levels of their participants. The Procession of 1913 was, to a certain extent, a theatrical publicity stunt—women dressed as important and noble historical figures, intent on showing their self-worth and dignity to their audience. Similarly, speakers were
vigorously applauded at the October 5th march in 2013, which was full of positive, pro-immigrant, pro-undocumented messages. Through the process of claiming rights, there was a sense, at both events, of building and strengthening communal and individual confidence, and of taking ownership of the group in question's own destiny.

Protestors at a rally for immigration reform in Philadelphia, PA hold up a sign that reads "UNDOCUMENTED, UNAFRAID" on October 5th, 2013.

What We Can Learn From "The Crisis of 1969"

The story of the actions surrounding the sit-in carried out by the Swarthmore African-American Student Society is a particularly interesting example of action from the Civil Rights Movement, because it involves actors very similar to the student activists involved in the March 14th, 2012 protest related to the Dream Act. In both cases, the principal activists were minority students of color at elite Philadelphia-based universities.

70 Photo by author.
attempting to alter what they saw as unjust affronts to their personal identities. For SASS students, that affront was the clear lack of interest on the part of the Swarthmore College administration to diversify its campus; for Dream activists Jessica Hyejin Lee and Tania Chairez, that affront was the continued deportation and exclusion of other undocumented immigrant students from the United States.

Though SASS' original demands were not met, their activist work clearly had an effect on the admissions policies as they related to black students in the years following the sit in. In their book on the life of President Courtney Smith, Darwin Stapleton and Donna Heckman Stapleton make the point that the aggressive style in which these students expressed their concern and desire for change—a list of written demands—was in fact a reflection of the times in which they lived, and the result of feeling overwhelmingly misunderstood and ignored on a campus dominated by white people. ("The Crisis of 1969"#, as this entire series of events came to be called, took place around the height of the Civil Rights Movement, in which sit-ins and written demands were a popular form of activism.) As activists at an elite American college in 1969, one of the final years of the Civil Rights Era, the black students of SASS felt a desperate need to respond to what was undoubtedly an inability on the part of their white counterparts "to understand the point of view of those whose American-ness always had been shaped by the continuous experiences of racism."71

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The immigration activists of 2012 and 2013 also find themselves organizing in the face of a public that is largely unsympathetic. For this reason, they too have employed strategies of engagement that are aggressive, arguably even more so than those used by SASS students in 1969. Both the Swarthmore student activists in 1969 and the Bryn Mawr and University of Pennsylvania student activists of 2012 used their own bodies to physically disrupt a space that held significance for the issue they sought to change. For the SASS students, that was the admissions office at Swarthmore College. For the DREAM Activist students, that was ICE headquarters in downtown Philadelphia. In both cases, each group refused to move in an effort to draw attention to their cause. While Jessica Hyejin Lee and Tania Chairez placed themselves in the middle of the road specifically in order to be arrested and gain media attention, the members of SASS that occupied the admissions office continued to do so regardless of the fact that President Courtney Smith had insisted that the Swarthmore Police Department not get involved. In other words, the Dream Act activists acted specifically in order to be arrested (in fact, the strength of their entire action was predicated on their being arrested and therefore gaining the kind of media attention they wanted), while the SASS sit-in participants acted regardless of being arrested; their campaign was not as strongly dependant on outside media or law-enforcement involvement.

Also noteworthy is the fact that SASS seized the opportunity to emphasize the gravity of their cause during a time of unrest: the death of President Smith. In the midst of an internal crisis, SASS activists maintained their commitment to civil equality. Their statement, released only a few hours after the president's death, drew a powerful parallel between the tragedy of the death of a well-to-do white man, and the tragedy of the death
of any black resident of the ghetto. Their thoughtful emphasis on such an external tragedy highlighted the tendency on the part of the college community to prioritize the white experience over that of a person of color: the very same unjust tendency they sought to diminish in their activism.

We see a similar element of persistence in the picketing of suffrage campaigners in 1917, deliberately continued in a time of great war (literally—the United States' involvement in the Great War began that year). It is precisely because these activists insisted that their objectives be prioritized in a time of duress that their campaign not only continued, but thrived. Currently in the midst of a national campaign to pass the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, immigrant activists continue to push their agenda to (thus far) no avail. Perhaps only a national crisis of epic proportions will set the stage for the desired reform.

A Brief Note on Gay Rights

"Coming out of the closet", a phrase used to describe the process of revealing one's homosexuality to others, is similar to the process of "coming out of the shadows", a phrase used to describe the process of revealing one's illegal status as an undocumented immigrant to others. The natural invisibility of sexual orientation or legal status forces activists from both causes to purposefully make visible what was not before. In revealing this identity, these activists force the world around them to come to terms with the humanity of those they have previously excluded in some way. This was certainly a major objective of the "Coming Out of the Shadows"-themed event that Jessica Hyejin Lee and Tania Chairez participated in.
Just as the 1979 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights suffered from negative media attention, the Immigration Reform Movement also stands to do the same. Most of the sources I have used in my research of the events that were the subject of my fieldwork were from relatively independent, student-run, or local media sources. The real challenge, as highlighted by the historian commentator for the Pacifica Radio Archives podcast (quoted in the first chapter), is to get major, mainstream news networks to report in a favorable way on the work that (in this case) immigration reform activists have been doing.
Conclusion

The fate of undocumented immigrants in this country is an important policy issue that requires one to really understand the arguments being made both for and against providing a pathway to citizenship for 11,000,000 people. In spite of the anti-immigrant bias in the mainstream media, Immigration Reform Movement activists are continuing to push for passage of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013. More than that, however, these activists are attempting to put a human face on the word "illegal"; they hope to foster not only legal acceptance, but also social acceptance, of undocumented people in the United States.

"As anthropologists," Leo Chavez writes in his book *Shadowed Lives, Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*, "we must not lose sight of the people caught up in sweeping changes and global economic trends."72 In the United States, undocumented immigrants are a primary example of such people. By studying the ways in which pro-immigration reform activists attempt to reach their goals, we can identify the variety of different mechanisms of support with which they are sustained.

While in some cases, the style of argument articulated by dissenters may be a key element to their success or failure at appealing to their desired audience, in other cases, that may not be the case. Instead of the *argument* made by activists, the aspect of their work that will be most salient and effective in appealing to the desired audience might be, for example, the way in which they *use a physical space*. Delivering a speech to a large crowd, as was done during the October 5th, 2013 protests, may have been a more

effective way of using the time and efforts of everyone involved in that day's events than, say, blocking traffic in order to get arrested, an action that was effective at another time, which activists Lee and Chairez carried out during the March 14th, 2012 event. The way in which different immigration reform activists choose to make their civil disobedience visible can illuminate the important distinctions to be made among them. Both protests examined in my fieldwork were designed in ways that reflected these different ways of "visibilizing" the reformist agenda of those involved in them.

This thesis has by no means been an attempt to criticize the work of activists in the Immigration Reform Movement. Rather, it has simply been an exploration of the differing ways in which these advocates attempt to carry out their shared goal of promoting the social and legal acceptance of undocumented immigrants into the United States, particularly in light of the generally anti-immigrant bias found in the country's mainstream media. The strength of these activists to dedicate themselves to the cause of immigration reform comes from a variety of different places. I hope that my work has, in some way, illuminated some of the sources of this strength.
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