

Intersectional subaltern counterpublics: UndocuQueer online activism and *testimonios*

by

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B.A., San Jose State University, 2012
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Abstract

In this study, I investigate UndocuQueer activists and their use of social media as one type of subaltern counterpublic. Subaltern counterpublics are spaces marginalized communities forge to center their voices and experiences. These counterpublics represent aggregations of emancipatory agency and stand as responses to their exclusion or marginalization by the dominant public sphere. UndocuQueer activists strategically engage in the public sphere using social media because it grants them momentum and brings national attention to their agenda. In this research, I use an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to understand the UndocuQueer social movement. The guiding research questions were: 1) How do UndocuQueer activists create subaltern counterpublics? 2) How do UndocuQueer activists present their multiple and complex identities on Twitter? Using critical discourse analysis of Twitter, I coded and analyzed over 600 tweets. To further this analysis, I used critical Xicana feminist standpoint to gather three *testimonios* of UndocuQueer activists.

The major findings are of this project are: 1) the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic formed through the state's anti-immigrant policies and the public sphere's marginalizations and misrepresentations. 2) the UndocuQueer community forged an intersectional subaltern counterpublic online through their lived experiences as undocumented and queer. 3) the undocu-movements: UndocuQueer, UndocuTrans, UndocuBlack, UndocuAPI, and UndocuSolidarity operate coalitionally; thus, I call this a coalitional intersectional subaltern counterpublic. 4) the UndocuQueer activists use social media for community, expression and support of art, and organizing. 5) Lastly, UndocuQueer activists engage in multiple forms of activism via social media, such as participating in marches and civil disobedience and sharing events, workshops, petitions, and donation pages.

Overall, this study provides a rich description of how marginalized communities, especially those of the UndocuQueer community, have great agency despite their precarious situation: a counter narrative that is usually unexposed. This project finds how the UndocuQueer community face multiple marginalizations and exclusions from the state through its anti-immigrant policies, the public sphere through its misrepresentations in the media, from LGBTQ communities and organizations, and from Latinx and immigrant communities. I show how the UndocuQueer's intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublic forged online as a safe haven for themselves and to engage with the public sphere. With this information, we have find better ways to be their allies, support them, and listen to their calls to action.

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Approved by:

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Table of Contents

List of Figures	xi
Acknowledgments.....	xiii
Dedication	xiv
Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
Historical Background	1
History of the UndocuQueer Movement	11
Research Purpose and Questions	14
Definitions	16
Rationale	19
Significance of Study	20
Theoretical Framework.....	21
Methodology	24
Methods	26
Subjectivity Statement	28
Chapter Overview	30
Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	32
Democratic Media Spaces	32
Immigration Studies.....	37
Undocumented Activism.....	43
Queer Migration.....	53
UndocuQueer	60
Chapter Overview	68
Chapter 3 - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES.....	69
Intersectionality	69
Xicana Feminism	76
Social Movements.....	82
Framing	84
Public Sphere and the Subaltern Counterpublics	86
Chapter Overview	92

Chapter 4 - METHODOLOGY	94
Methodological Framework.....	94
<i>Testimonios</i> Methods	96
<i>Testimonios</i> Data Collection.....	100
<i>Testimonios</i> Data Analysis.....	101
Critical Discourse Analysis Methods	102
Critical Discourse Analysis Collection.....	103
Critical Discourse Analysis Data Analysis.....	109
Limitations	109
Chapter Overview	110
Chapter 5 - THE STATE, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND THE COUNTERPUBLIC	112
Undocumented Identities	113
Fear of ICE.....	120
UndocuQueer Subaltern Counterpublic	129
#FUCKICE	134
Chapter Review.....	140
Chapter 6 - INTERSECTIONAL/COALITIONAL SUBALTERN COUNTERPUBLIC	142
Double Coming Out.....	143
Marginalizations.....	151
UndocuQueer and PROUD	156
Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublic	160
UndocuTrans	161
UndocuBlack.....	166
UndocuAPI and UndocuSolidarity	171
Chapter Overview	175
Chapter 7 - THE MULTIPURPOSE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA	177
Social Media as Lived Community	177
Art + Activists = Artivists.....	186
<i>Testimonios</i>	186
Online Art	190
Self-Promotion	197

Organizing	201
Marches & Civil Disobedience	205
Workshops & Events	208
Petitions & Donations	214
Chapter Review.....	221
Chapter 8 - CONCLUSION.....	223
Major Findings.....	223
UndocuQueer Subaltern Counterpublic	224
The State	224
The Public Sphere	225
Intersectional Subaltern Counterpublic.....	227
Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublic.....	229
Multipurpose Uses of Social Media.....	230
Diverse Online Activism.....	231
Contributions	233
Limitations	233
Future Research	234
Implications	235
BIBLIOGRAPHY	238
Appendix A - <i>Testimonios</i> Interview Guide	255

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Testimonios</i> Word Cloud.....	102
Figure 2. Twitter Data Table.....	107
Figure 3. Table of Types of Tweets.....	107
Figure 4. Table on Year of Tweets.....	108
Figure 5. Tweets Word Cloud.....	108
Figure 6. Tweet shared by @IE_IYC	134
Figure 7. Art by @JulioSalgado83	137
Figure 8. Flyer shared by @IYC.....	138
Figure 9. Art by Julio Salgado	139
Figure 10. Facebook Image by @familiatqlm	165
Figure 11. Tweet by @BGDblog	167
Figure 12. Instagram image by @JulioSalgado83	170
Figure 13. Tweet shared by @UndocuMedia	172
Figure 14. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble.....	173
Figure 15. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble.....	173
Figure 16. Instagram post shared by @JulioSalgado83.....	174
Figure 17. Tweet shared by @MonseLGBTQ	175
Figure 18. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble.....	182
Figure 19. Tweet shared by @queerDEP.....	183
Figure 20. Tweet shared by @resilienceoc	184
Figure 21. Instagram image shared by @carlos.padilla82	185
Figure 22. Tweet shared by @les_beat_junky	188
Figure 23. Art (Tony) shared by @JulioSalgado83	191
Figure 24. Art shared by @JulioSalgado83	191
Figure 25. Art of and by Julio Salgado	192
Figure 26. "I Exist. Yo Existo" Art by Julio Salgado	192
Figure 27. Instagram Art shared by Julio Salgado.....	193
Figure 28. Instagram Art shared by Julio Salgado.....	194
Figure 29. Instagram art shared by @JulioSalgado83	196

Figure 30. Flyer Shared by @JulioSalgado83	199
Figure 31. Two Flyers shared by @JulioSalgado83	200
Figure 32. Tweet shared by @prernapral	205
Figure 33. Tweet shared by @sonandojuntosEP	206
Figure 34. Tweet shared by @TheTaskForce	207
Figure 35. Event Flyer shared by @familiatqlm.....	209
Figure 36. Tweet Shared by @DreamersAdrift	210
Figure 37. Tweet shared by @USF_MRC	211
Figure 38. Tweet shared by @TDRC_CSUF	212
Figure 39. Event Flyer	213

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all the amazing and strong women in my life. This is for my daughter, RoseMae Lorena-Lynn Galta, who is fearless and a free spirit. This is for my mother, Sandra Lorena Baca, who is the most supportive person in my life. This is for my sister, Connie Delilah Huerta, who is following in my footsteps but simultaneously paving her own way. This is for my grandmothers, Rosa Rafaela Espinoza and Rosa Angelica Carranza, who raised me. This is for all the women in my ancestry who survived colonialism and imperialism; without all of their motivation and resistance, I could not have completed this.

Sin mujeres, no hay lucha.

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

UndocuQueer is a recent social movement of young activists who combine their undocumented and queer identities into one complex, intersectional whole. Their story of identity and social movement formation is couched within a larger social history during which actors suppressed key dimensions of their UndocuQueer identity so that they could be integrated into a larger cause. As in other social movements, UndocuQueer activists encountered homophobic attitudes amid larger movement for citizenship and inclusion. Within the LGBTQ-type movements, UndocuQueer activists felt that their undocumented status was often misunderstood. Consequently, the history of UndocuQueer reveals how dimensions of complex identities are often incompatible with core organizing themes and frames forcing activists and key features of their identity to the margins of social movement organizations. The population of queer migrants ranges anywhere from 260,000 to 400,000, and these communities must be acknowledged (Cisneros 2015). Before turning to the body of this dissertation, I briefly discuss the election of President Donald Trump and its consequences for the UndocuQueer community. While much can be said about the worsening conditions for immigrants under the Trump administration, it is more accurately explained as a continuation of policies from earlier administrations. Consequently, I follow the overview of the Trump administration with a brief review of other xenophobic sanctions in both President Obama's and President Bush's immigration policies.

Historical Background

U.S. voters swept President Donald Trump into office in part based on his pronounced anti-immigration stance; this is seen throughout his campaign and how much appeal and support he received. Beginning with his first month in office, he has shown that he intends to follow

through with his campaign promise (Johnson 2016). Many of these promises consist of anti-immigration policies, such as deporting all undocumented immigrants and building a stronger, bigger wall at the U.S.-Mexico border (Johnson 2016). Most recently, his Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, implemented a zero-tolerance policy against undocumented immigrants that resulted in thousands of detainees and, most alarmingly, the separation of children from their detained families (Paul 2018). These situations and policies give precedent on understanding queer immigrants in the United States.

For this dissertation, it is important to note that UndocuQueer activists are primarily “DREAMers” – young adults who immigrated to the United States as young children. DREAMers were temporarily granted protection under President Obama’s 2012 Deferred Action for Children Act (DACA), which allowed them to study or work in the U.S. without fear of deportation. However, on September 5, 2017, President Trump ended DACA, which means 800,000 young adults have no protection and may be deported from the United States (Shear and Davis 2017). As a result, DACA recipients live in a precarious and vulnerable position. With the rise of President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, who represent a sea change in federal policy for these young people that I continue to describe in this section, it is stressful period to be undocumented and queer.

Unlike both Republican and Democratic presidential administrations of the past, the Trump administration frames undocumented immigrants exclusively as lawbreakers without regard for their humanitarian needs or economic contributions. Playing on the economic insecurity of a stagnated American working class, Donald Trump ran a populist campaign with a pronounced anti-immigrant platform. Most notably, Trump promised to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and make Mexico pay for it (Wagner 2016). His fear-based justifications

stated, “The U.S. has become a dumping ground for everybody else’s problems...They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists” (Wagner 2016). With this focus, he vowed to start mass deportations on his first day in the White house (Wagner 2016). Profiting off of people’s differences and dividing them based on those differences was the foundation of his campaign. As a result, many of his supporters became violent against anyone that opposed Trump, particularly immigrants and people of color. Throughout the campaign, many people who showed up at his events in protest were physically and verbally attacked. Moreover, his slogan of “Make America Great Again” set up an us-versus-them mentality, which portrayed people of color, immigrants, Muslims, and LGBTQ communities as not Americans. Symbolically, it seems, Trump’s great America is also a predominately white America (Baker & Rogers 2018).

Furthermore, Vice President Mike Pence has described himself as a “Christian, a conservative, and a Republican, in that order” (Drabold 2016). Throughout his political career, he has voted against several pro-LGBTQ bills, such as gay marriage, voted for the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, and against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (Drabold 2016). Pence believes that gay marriage has caused social chaos. In 2006, Pence stated, “societal collapse was always brought about following an advent of the deterioration of marriage and family” (Drabold 2016). Trump and Pence are a duo with the potential to inflict serious damage on the immigrant and LGBTQ communities, which encompasses the UndocuQueer community.

Undocumented immigrants are being deported. LGBTQ folks are also in danger. This administration continues to fight the progress of gay marriage and other LGBTQ rights, especially within the military and the workplace. For example, in August 2017, President Trump

banned trans folks from the military (Block, Strangio, and Esseks 2018). To make matters worse, Trump and Pence have folded political and military leaders into their cabinet who have very similar and frighteningly anti-inclusive rhetoric and political agendas. Overall, Trump and Pence as a team holds a political ideology place the UndocuQueer activists at risk for hate crimes, discrimination, and exploitation.

Despite the more explicit anti-immigrant climate of the Trump presidency, this sentiment is far from new. Instead, it builds on an ongoing xenophobic attitude that has characterized several past administrations. Before Trump's election, President Barak Obama had deported more immigrants than any other president (Golash-Boza 2015). Trump has yet to surpass former President Obama's record. From 2009 to 2015, he and his administration deported more than 2.5 million people. The next highest number of deportations by any president was just over two million by President George W. Bush (Marshall 2016). According to governmental data, "the Obama administration has deported more people than any other president's administration in history" (Marshall 2016). Of the 2.5 million people deported, from 2009-2015, 91 percent of the deportees were previously convicted of a crime (Marshall 2016). These deportations fall into two priorities. The first priority includes people that are "threats to national security, border security, and public safety that includes gang members, convicted felons, or charged with aggravated felony, and anyone apprehended at the border trying to enter the country illegally" (Marshall 2016). In many ways, this depiction of targets for deportation seems reasonable. The government only targeted the "bad illegals." However, this situation is more complex than that, since there is a considerable gray area in execution. For example, during Obama's administration, many undocumented people felt that deportations were not primarily targeting the most dangerous but instead were breaking up families over minor transgressions. Furthermore, nearly half of all

deportations involved people with no criminal history, and many of those were traffic offences (Golash-Boza 2015). This contradiction between the stated policy and the practice has the immigrant population living in fear and anger (Marshall 2016). The immigration system and deportation programs are supposed to lessen terrorist attacks, but deporting undocumented workers and traffic and drug violators do not do that (Golash-Boza 2015). The deportation system just tears families apart and stops immigrants from applying for citizenship (Golash-Boza 2015).

The Obama administration facilitated the deportations through Secure Communities, a program that finds undocumented immigrants through their workplaces (Marshall 2016). He also spearheaded massive Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids at workplaces and homes in the middle of the night. It was not until 2014 that former President Obama began focusing on deporting “criminals” instead of children and families (Marshall 2016). President Obama states, “Felons, not families, Criminals, not children. Gang members, not a mom who’s working hard to provide for her kids. We’ll prioritize, just like law enforcement does every day” (Marshall 2016). President Obama made a push to deport only the “bad illegals.” However, during his second term, his deportation ideology shifted; many of the immigrant organizations refer to President Obama and his legacy as the “Deporter in Chief” (Marshall 2016; Salhani 2016). Through his immigration policies and program, “every interaction with the police became an opportunity for deportation of an undocumented immigrant” (Golash-Boza 2015:258). These policies, and the state overall, have significant implications for the undocumented and immigrant communities. President Obama’s xenophobic policies are far from unique; rather, they are a part of an American tradition of anti-immigrant policies.

President George W. Bush also had a troubling list of immigration policies. At first, his administration created liberal immigration policies while expanding border security: “While the Bush administration embraced greater integration with Mexico and more liberal immigration policies, it also unleashed a massive buildup of border security and enforcement measures” (Nicholls 2013:33). According to the director of National Day Organizing Network (NDON), President Bush offered a more hopeful immigration policy than President Clinton (Nicholls 2013). However, this potential progress changed after the attacks of September 11, 2001 (Nicholls 2013). The fear of further terror attacks turned immigration into a security issue (Nicholls 2013; Golash-Boza 2015). In 2003, Bush established the Department of Homeland Security and removed 300,00 people from the United States (Golash-Boza 2015). The media expanded the idea of terrorism and immigration (Nicholls 2013). Immigrants were now categorized as “terrorists” and “criminals,” and people wanted and approved new ways of policing them (Golash-Boza 2015). Throughout President Bush’s administration, three restrictive immigration laws were passed, and Homeland Security gained six operations (Nicholls 2013). However, this anti-immigrant sentiment has an even longer history than the Obama and Bush administrations.

The two eras of the heaviest immigration to the United States were 1880-1924 and 1970-1998 (Jaret 1999). Throughout both time periods, xenophobic politicians and citizens attacked immigrants civically and physically through policies and violence (Jaret 1999). Importantly, both heightened periods of immigration contained a significant geographic shift in the source of new immigrants. For example, before 1883, most of the immigrants coming to the United States were from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. By comparison, after 1883, most of immigrants were from Austria-

Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Syria, and Turkey (Jaret 1999). The latter immigrants were seen as racially different from “native-born white (allegedly of “Nordic” racial stock),” and even inferior compared to other immigrants (Jaret 1999).

Similarly, the second large wave of immigration encompassed another geographic shift in which new immigrants came from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Jaret 1999). Many saw this rapid change as a threat to American life (Jaret 1999). Nativists and many white, working-class laborers did not like immigrants, because they argued they took their jobs. In each era of increased immigration, xenophobic sentiments escalated to physical violence. Acts of violence against Chinese, Greek, Irish, Italian, Slavic, Polish, Indian, Japanese, Latinos, and Ethiopian immigrants in the 1990s are documented across the country (Johnson 1997; Jaret 1999). As this research shows, xenophobia can be identified from the beginning of immigration history in the United States, continually demonstrating that immigration is racialized. Immigrants are viewed as racially inferior and thus un-American.

Overall, it is evident that dominant perceptions about race influence the social and legal constructions of aliens/immigrants (Johnson 1997). This culture created the 1920s purifying and nativists movements, such as eugenics and the KKK (Jaret 1999). White Americans fears come from four perceived positions against immigrants: 1) threats to political order 2) threats to the economic system 3) threats to social and cultural aspects of “the American way of life,” and 4) threats to the natural environment (Jaret 1999). Professional anti-immigration associations, such as Federation for American Immigration Reform, Americans for Immigration Control, Numbers USA, U.S. Inc., and many others, reacted and delivered on this anti-immigrant rhetoric (Nicholls 2013). These four perceived threats are still seen in present-day arguments against immigrants.

Thus, much like those of the past, twenty-first century anti-immigration communities want to enforce border protections and strip immigrants of basic rights (Nicholls 2013). Nativist and anti-immigrant communities often pushed for discriminatory immigration laws.

Before 1924, many state and local governments created laws against immigrants, which gave them fewer rights and privileges compared to U.S.-born Americans. According to Jaret (1999), “certain states had licensing laws that explicitly prevented aliens from practicing medicine, surgery, chiropractic, pharmacy, architecture, engineering, surveying, or driving buses” (17). However, it does not end there; in many places, immigrants could not own agricultural land. More importantly, there were restrictive policies set in place to reduce the number of immigrants entering the United States. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred huge portions of Chinese immigrants entering the United States for over ten years (Garcia 1995; Johnson 1997). Additionally, the Immigration Act of 1917 created a quota system based on the percentage of each nationality already in the United States (Garcia 1995). Moreover, there were other exclusionary acts limiting specific ethnicities from coming to the United States that occurred well into the second half of the twentieth century. For example, in 1954, “Operation Wetback” deported over one million people targeting Mexican immigrants (Garcia 1995).

Because of a long history with exclusionary and xenophobic policies, immigrants have long fought for their rights. While there were immigrant rights groups from the nineteenth century and onward, the immigrant rights social movement, as we now know it, began in the late 1980s and early 1990s because it was “a time of great hostility toward immigrants” (Nicholls 2013:21). In the early 1990s, another round of anti-immigration policies were introduced. For example, Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, Hold-the-Line in 1993, and Operation Safeguard in

1995 all focused on expanding border agents and enforcement (Golash-Boza 2015). In addition, Clinton's Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) increased border security. There were also the Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) from the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as 287(g) agreement, that allowed local authorities to enforce these strict immigration laws (Nicholls 2013). Another instance of immigration policy is California's 1994 Proposition 187 (known as the Save Our State [SOS] initiative). This proposition 1) expanded Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) so that police are required to contact anyone suspicious of being undocumented; 2) required that the public social services deny services to anyone who they suspected did not have documentation; and 3) excluded undocumented children from public education (Garcia 1995; Nicholls 2013). Proposition 187 won with 59 percent of the vote, but in 1997 the federal courts deemed it unconstitutional (Nicholls 2013). Because of stereotypes and prejudice regarding what it means to be a "suspected undocumented immigrant," Asian and Latinx communities were targeted whether they were documented or not (Garcia 1995). Thus, "undocumented immigrants provide a convenient scapegoat for the social problems currently confronting America, making anti-immigrant rhetoric prevalent and acceptable in politics today" (Garcia 1995:129). Although there is renewed visibility of immigration issues because of Trump's explicit and inflammatory anti-immigrant rhetoric, considering the historical context of U.S. immigration rhetoric and policy, little progress has been made on these same issues.

Despite the anti-immigrant rhetoric and high border enforcement of the 1990s, immigrants continued coming to the United States. In the 1990s there was a niche opening: Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans were legalized as asylum-seekers (Nicholls 2013). Thus, this signifies a shift in immigration demographics to Latinx immigrants. In 1997, there

were 7 million immigrants, and then in 2008, there were 11.9 million immigrants. According to Nicholls (2013), “between 1988 and 2002, border crossings shifted from traditional points around San Diego, California, to nontraditional areas in the eastern desert” (26). The increased border safety did not slow down immigration, it only made it more dangerous for immigrants traveling into the United States and tripled the death rate (Nicholls 2013). Additionally, the change increased the economic costs for immigrants, which in turn expanded the human-smuggling industry (Nicholls 2013). “Coyotes” made a serious business out of smuggling people into the country. Sadly, sometimes coyotes did not help immigrants reach their families; rather, many died on their journey. Furthermore, approximately 1.5 million immigrants were undocumented children: “These undocumented children would eventually fill the ranks of the DREAM mobilizations of the 2000s” (Nicholls 2013:27). For the immigrants that did make it into the U.S. cities, their children became the face of the future immigrants’ rights movement. In addition to facing the difficulty of immigration, the xenophobic rhetoric, and increased border patrol created the current state of the immigrants’ rights movement.

While immigrants have been attacked on many fronts and often denied rights, they do not accept this as their fate. There have been many pro-immigrant social movements: some in the 1990s, which focused on Salvadoran refugees and in the 2000s, the DREAM Act (Nicholls 2013). Consequently, modern social movements emerged, led by undocumented youth, that focused on pathways to citizenship. “Hostility and enhanced enforcement during the 1990s and early 2000s therefore closed down political opportunities for big immigration reforms and elevated the risks of public protest for undocumented immigrants” (Nicholls 2013:10). By 2004, several immigrant rights organization and associations united (Nicholls 2013). Through 2005-

2007, the immigrant rights movement focused on passing comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act (Nicholls 2013).

History of the UndocuQueer Movement

UndocuQueer is an identity, faction, and organization that grew from the youth immigrant social movements. Youth who identified as undocumented and as queer created a new identity called UndocuQueer. These activists embrace and connect their identities with race, class, sexuality, and citizenship status. UndocuQueer activists are a segment of the DREAMer movement that began in 2010 (Nicholls 2013). Thus, it is important to acknowledge the DREAMer movement before delving into the UndocuQueer social movement.

Undocumented youth became a political group by 2000, because over one million youths found themselves undocumented. This political group consisted of college students who did not have access to in-state tuition, were denied financial aid, struggled finding scholarships, and experienced difficulty in finding jobs after graduating (Nicholls 2013). On May 1, 2006, immigrant communities and immigrant rights groups organized on a national level to support immigrants, which ultimately gave undocumented youth an organizing network and platform (Nicholls 2013). In 2001, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) and Center for Community Change (CCC) founded the campaign for the DREAM Act, because they saw an opening for educated and well-integrated undocumented students, thus creating the DREAMer identity (Nicholls 2013). Activists began refer to themselves DREAMers. The DREAM Act is a policy that gives undocumented youth a path to citizenship by going to college or joining the military (Aguirre and Simmers 2012; Enriquez 2014; Galindo 2014; Negron-Gonzales 2014; Mahatmya & Gring-Pemble 2014). NILC and CCC built a policy and movement to allow “good and productive” youth to achieve the “American dream,” which showed their ability to assimilate

into U.S. culture and society. According to Nicholls (2013), “by the second half of 2000s, immigrants’ rights association had developed a complex and integrated infrastructure to produce a common message and to train activists in localities around the country” (14). Overall, while the DREAMers have not been able to pass a federal DREAM Act, they became a powerful and well-organized political group effectively trained for political action and social justice events.

UndocuQueer is a faction that rose from the DREAMers and have similar foci. Yet, UndocuQueer is a distinct entity that highlights multiple identities and experiences, using plurality as strength. This is because undocumented queer youth face unique economic, political, and cultural forces (Messer 2010). UndocuQueer embraced “intersectionality as an overarching theme result[ing] from the positioning of student activists in multiple struggles, such as union organizing, feminism, LGBTQ, and so on” (Nicholls 2013:125). While they may be separate identities, the DREAMer movement has many queer youth in leadership positions (Nicholls 2013). DREAMers and UndocuQueers overlap in many ways. For example, both activists groups protest Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids that break up families (Galindo 2014). They also have organized events, such as “Coming Out of the Shadows Day,” where they acknowledge the processes of coming out of the closet as LGBTQ folks and coming out as undocumented. UndocuQueer activists experience multiple oppressions and do not align themselves with most of the White LGBTQ population, which can hold racist attitudes against people of color and be xenophobic against immigrants (Terriquez 2015).

Similarly, queer activists have experienced exclusion resulting from heteronormative assumptions within the immigration movement itself. Some immigrants’ rights organizations even attempted to silence UndocuQueer activists, claiming they would complicate the central message of the movement (Nicholls 2013). Being queer meant that the notion of a “good

immigrant” or a possible future “good citizen” was erased in the eyes of the state; thus, UndocuQueer activists challenged the ideas of “illegality” (Nicholls 2013). The notion of earning citizenship based on assimilation to American standards perpetuates a problematic savage/civilized dichotomy. In order to gain U.S. citizenship, they would have to conform to the state’s ideals, which they rejected. According to Muñoz (1999), the U.S. fetishizes Latinx queer folks and Latinx culture. Hence, their experience of racism in the larger LGBTQ movement and the heterosexism from the DREAMer movement fused together to form a new identity of UndocuQueer. It is crucial to understand the UndocuQueer intersectional identities, because they revolutionized the movement in creating their own community within the margins of the margins.

Recently, UndocuQueer activists have become more radical by questioning the state. They do not solely believe in the traditional political avenues for social change, and, as a result, UndocuQueer activists offer a political ideology and perspective that differs from the previous DREAMers. Rather than focus on the DREAM Act and benefits for immigrant youth, UndocuQueer activists tend to center on stopping deportations, since it impacts the immigrant community as a whole. Furthermore, these researchers and activists argue that the DREAM Act also undermines immigrant families, because deportations place the children’s rights before the parents, which breaks up these families (Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble 2014). Thus, some of the UndocuQueer activists do not promote an individualistic approach to the immigration process that is limited to obtaining documentation only for themselves. They are more concerned about the rest of the undocumented community. Here is where the UndocuQueer activists separate themselves from the DREAMer movement. UndocuQueer activists came out in multiple levels of identity embodying intersectionality at its core.

With the recent attack on DACA and on DREAMers, the immigrant and UndocuQueer social movement has resurfaced. There have been actions across the country in favor of DACA. In New York City, protesters set up in front of the Trump Tower, which resulted in thirty-four protester arrests (Keneally 2017). Three congressmen were arrested while participating in the protest: Democratic Representatives Luis Gutierrez of Illinois, Raul Grijalva of Arizona, and Adriano Espaillat of New York (CNN Wire 2017). There were protests in other major cities, such as Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco (Keneally 2017). In a San Francisco protest, Democratic Congresswoman, Nancy Pelosi was confronted about her talks with President Trump over DACA. Forty protesters interrupted her press conference, shouting “All of us or none of us” (O’Keefe 2017).¹ This example shows how the immigrants rights movement continues their fight for justice and human rights.

Research Purpose and Questions

This dissertation focuses on two aspects of UndocuQueer activism: social movements and intersectionality. First, I analyze how UndocuQueer formed their counterpublics with social media to further their activist agenda. Subaltern counterpublics come from marginalized communities rejecting the oppressors’ domination of mass media and culture. By seizing and curating their own social media spaces and presence, subaltern counterpublics embrace alternative forms of public speech and political participation (Fraser 1990). These decolonial identities create counter-hegemonic spaces, also known as subaltern counterpublics, in and through which activists can fight oppressive forces. Through the analysis of one popular social media platform in which a subaltern counterpublic can be formed – Twitter – I explore how these

¹ In this section, I use several news sources because of the immediate and rapidly changing nature of these events. Academic sources on these recent events are not yet available.

communities present their activism of social engagement, cultural awareness, and/or political participation. This unique configuration of complex oppressed identities provides an excellent opportunity to explore UndocuQueer activists' social movement strategies, and their relationship with the public sphere and subaltern counterpublics.

Second, I analyze how UndocuQueer activists present their intersectional identities. UndocuQueer organizers embody multiple identities: race, class, gender, sexuality, and documentation, where all identities are embraced. I am interested in how and why their intersectional identities are presented on social media. Within this data analysis, I also consider that some identities may be more important to them than others at different socio-historical moments and/or in differing types of media. Here, I believe intersectional organizing contributes to social movement theory, because UndocuQueer activists have created intersectional mobilizations and may have forged intersectional counterpublics.

My study, thus, centers on two major perspectives – social movements and intersectionality. Overall, my research questions consist of 1) How do UndocuQueer activists create subaltern counterpublics? 2) How do UndocuQueer activists present their multiple and complex identities on Twitter?

I see social media platforms as UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublics. For that reason, my research questions focus on subaltern counterpublics and framing from the perspectives of social movements and intersectional identities. Therefore, I hypothesize that UndocuQueer activists use Twitter for creating safe spaces or networking. Here, they have built subaltern counterpublics. Furthermore, hashtags gather stories and frame UndocuQueer activism. Through hashtags, I hypothesize that UndocuQueer activists create awareness and consciousness about social justice issues important to them. Additionally, UndocuQueer activists present their

complex identities on race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status in creative ways that challenge linear ideologies in Western society. Lastly, I hypothesize that UndocuQueer activists present these intersectional identities through hashtags on Twitter.

Definitions

My research is guided by the following set of clarifications regarding my use of language and their definitions:

1. *Xicanas/os* - The contemporary Xicano, Xicana, and Xican@ refer to more recent Xicanismo ideas and ideals (Rios 2008). This identity was born from the era of globalization, which led to transnational politics (Rios 2008). For the first time, Xican@ incorporates multidimensional and intersecting identities of race, class, sex, and sexual orientation (Rios 2008). Moraga (2011) uses Xicana with an “X” to acknowledge the rise of emerging youth politics and reflect the Indigenous ancestry that was taken from Indigenous people in the process of colonialism, where she identifies as “Xicana dyke” to incite consciousness and critical thinking; her process of identity as a lesbian has been complicated within feminism and Chicanismo. Xicana feminism combines critical race theory, gender studies, and queer theory into an interdisciplinary framework, while Xicana feminists critique the feminist movement for their racism, the nationalist movement for their sexism, the gay movement for their racism, and the leftist movement for all three. It is important to note that Chicanas/Xicanas/Chican@s/Xican@s identify in various ways for various reasons. Throughout the theoretical framework, Xicanas will be used, but these names represent complex issues as do most identity formations, and different perspectives are held by different individuals.
2. *Latinx* - This refers to the Latino/a community, which includes people from Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. According to Pastrana, Battle, and

Harris (2017), “concerning race, many people and groups may prefer the term “Latino,” which while referring to all the countries in Latin America, including Brazil and Haiti, also ties certain people together through a history of colonization” (4). To remain gender neutral, the concept of “x” is being added to Spanish words. For that reason, the term Latinx will be used when I am discussing broader Latin Americans. “Latinx” signifies ethnicity rather than a political identity, as in Xican@s.

3. *Queer* - Queer refers to people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual. It is an umbrella term that has a political connotation and is “connected to a social political movement against sexual subordination (Revilla 2005:54). The Latina community also uses *lesbiana*, *jota*, two-spirited, or *tortillera* (Revilla 2005). *Lesbiana* has to do with the Spanish language and Latina culture. *Jota* was a derogatory term and now is a term of empowerment (Revilla 2005). *Tortillera* refers to tortilla factories filled with women and was a derogatory term that has been reclaimed (Revilla 2005).
4. *Undocumented* - This term refers to citizenship status. In mainstream society, people typically use “illegal” immigrants. “Racist, xenophobic political forces have been successful in gaining acceptance for the use of these terms [illegals] that most U.S. news reports frequently use them” (Chacon 2011:471). The media successfully dehumanized undocumented people and further disenfranchised them by continuing their anti-immigrant rhetoric. For that reason, there are policies increasing punishment and blaming immigrants (Chacon 2011). However, that term is dehumanizing and xenophobic: “The definition of undocumented was conceived in response to the accusation of illegality frequently produced in political and common discourses on irregular immigration: the

word ‘illegal,’ in fact resembles the idea of immigrants as criminal and lawbreakers subjects who intentionally bypass rules in order to gain citizenship” (Pieri 2016:107). In this dissertation, I use the term *undocumented*; these immigrants do not have the “proper” documents to be viewed as citizens.

5. *Subaltern counterpublics* - The public sphere is connected to the bourgeois state and the elite, who control arenas of public discourse (Habermas 1962; Fraser 1990). Thus, the public sphere is inaccessible to minorities. For example, “women’s rights advocates publicly contested both women’s exclusion from the public sphere and the privatization of gender politics” (Fraser 1990:61). Women built their own counterpublics, where they embraced alternative forms of public speech and political activism. Fraser calls these alternative spaces subaltern counterpublics, where women, people of color, LGBTQ, and worker communities find “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (67). Thus, marginalized communities forge their own spaces and discussion, where they are able to center their voices and experiences.
6. *Social justice issues* - Social justice issues consist of problems concerning race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability, and size. These ideas consist of power, privilege, discrimination, and prejudice.
7. *Inclusive politics* - Inclusive politics means using race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability, and size as identities being concerned during the political process. This includes checking each other’s power and privilege in order to be socially and politically conscious.

8. *Political activism/organizing* - Political activism, also known as organizing, means the community rallies around issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability, and size. This includes local, state, national, and university policies for any of these identities. Furthermore, it is intended to create social change and change policies or create new ones altogether. This also means challenging the mainstream media and how they perpetuate oppressive and restrictive stereotypes.
9. *Engaged* - Engagement concerns the combination of inclusive politics, social justice issues, and political activism, varying on level of involvement.

Rationale

Hate speech and anti-immigrant sentiment increased during Obama's presidency and is increasing more rapidly with the Trump administration. Undocumented queer youth have forged spaces for themselves despite living in a world that often tries to completely marginalize them. I am now analyze how the most recent aspects of these spaces have taken shape in the form of the UndocuQueer activists. This project centers their experiences with multiple and interlocking oppression that gives UndocuQueer folks a different perspective. By utilizing intersectional theory, we can analyze and understand their unique positionality in society.

Additionally, social media gives the UndocuQueer community a tangible space to communicate and organize in. According to Nicholls (2013), "Undocumented youth around the country, with the assistance of immigrant rights association, formed college campus support groups, advocacy organizations in their communities, online network through blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and so on" (5). Creating multiple spaces for networking and organizing allowed the UndocuQueer movement to spread locally and nationally. Through social media, UndocuQueer activists frame their social issues as a claim to their rights, thus sparking conversations of

legality, where some undocumented youth are seen as worthy of citizenship. On Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms, undocumented youth could successfully frame their issues to attract other activists and people interested in justice, establish networking and organizing spaces (also known as subaltern counterpublics), create national social media presences, and enact civil disobedience on national levels (Nicholls 2013).

This dissertation will study when, why, and how this social media presence emerged and how it has been and continues to be maintained. Thus, it is crucial to understand intersectional identities of activists in the social movement. This study is needed to better understand how UndocuQueer movement is using its social media presence to forward their social justice concerns. This social movement can be an example for how other organizers and communities can organize through social media for a more inclusive movement.

Significance of Study

There are several studies on the UndocuQueer social movement. These various studies have focused on intersectional social movements, decolonial identities, queerness, art, and poetry. Studies from Seif (2014), White (2014) and Pieri (2016) discuss UndocuQueer online activism; and Terriquez (2015) and Chavez-Durate (2016) explain UndocuQueer activism. Thus, there are studies on UndocuQueer activists. I further describe them in Chapter 2. My project contributes to this growing field of the UndocuQueer community. I can ascertain one of the important aspects of the UndocuQueer movement, which is social media, by analyzing Twitter. Additionally, this dissertation will contribute to social movement literature by combining two emerging factors in social movements: acknowledging the changing times and the important role that social media is now playing in political activism (and how it will shape the future) and focusing on multi-issue social movements. UndocuQueer has roots in the immigrants' rights

movements with a stronger use of social media and intersectionality. Social movement theory, specifically framing, fastens a greater understanding of their social issues from their own stories and how they create hashtags. Moreover, we can understand the importance of counterpublics as safe spaces, networking, and organizing tools. This dissertation contributes to multiple areas of study in sociology, such as intersectionality, social movement theory, and social media studies. It is essential to understand and acknowledge how marginalized populations engage in public discourse, use the public sphere, and establish counterpublics. This dissertation documents youth, the lives of queer folks of color and their social activism to undertake that work. UndocuQueer activists offer space to embrace dynamic and complex identities. More importantly, UndocuQueer activists capture deeply moving stories within their counterpublics.

Theoretical Framework

This dissertation begins with theoretical perspectives on intersectionality and social movements. Since the activists featured are undocumented queer immigrant youth, it is important to incorporate intersectional theory and perspectives because these identities are entangled. For these activists, it does not make sense to focus on one identity at a time since their lived experience reflects a more complex understanding of identity. In my intersectional analysis, I bring in Chicana feminism to fully understand and embrace the Xicanx and queer perspective. For example, Anzaldúa's concept of *nepantla* is living between worlds or beliefs (Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, & Velez 2012; Zepeda 2012). Through these dualities, Xicanas find ways to survive oppressions: "Living in *nepantla*, the overlapping space between different perceptions and belief systems, you are aware of the changeability of racial, gender, sexual, and other categories rendering the conventional labelings obsolete" (Anzaladúa 2002:541). Xicanas can gain insight from insider and outside subjectivities. Moreover, Xicanas can move between

different and multiple social worlds. According to (Zepeda 2012), “Queer of color scholars have done the work to build this knowledge by undertaking alternative and creative ways of building, re-defining archives, and queering archives” (22). Overall, Xicana feminism lives within and embraces the multiple spaces of oppressions and identities. The UndocuQueer community lives within multiple margins of race, class, gender, sexuality, borders, citizenship, religion, etc.,. Therefore, we must discuss UndocuQueer individuals by using theory made from self-determination and empowerment.

Furthermore, UndocuQueer activists created a social movement. Thus, I also must incorporate social movement theory. According to McAdam (1982), social movements develop from political environment and opportunity, where it approaches social movements from a well-rounded and complex views. Within social movement theory, framing and subaltern counterpublics are the most important theories in my study. Framing focuses on how political activists target audiences to understand their social movement or social cause (Goffman 1974). Framing is a tool and way of thinking about social justice issues (Gamson 1992). For example, UndocuQueer frames immigration issues as inclusive to all undocumented people instead of solely focusing on youth. UndocuQueer activists engage and frame their issues with hashtags, such as, #ICEOutOfLA. This hashtag serves as an example of how the UndocuQueer movement in California focuses their efforts on stopping all deportations, not just those of their fellow DREAMers. Moreover, the UndocuQueer community established a subaltern counterpublic, because they were marginalized from the dominant public sphere. Subaltern counterpublics rise from marginalized groups to make oppositional understanding of themselves, needs, and interests (Fraser 1990). They are engaging in the political sphere on social media and using

social media to get their members and allies into the streets. These are the main approaches I am using to understand UndocuQueer activism.

In the literature review, I elaborate on social media studies and immigration studies. I explain social media activism by using different social media studies to show the significance of Twitter activism. Additionally, I discuss immigration studies with an emphasis on the undocumented youth movement, queer migration, and the UndocuQueer movement. Queer migration studies offers a crucial space to connect both political and social identities and critique heteronormativity. It discusses how queer migrants experience different struggles than other immigrants. For example, LGBTQ people were historically banned from migrating to the United States (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005; Chávez 2013). Queer migration studies also describes “queer relocations,” when people are forced to migrate because of their sexuality (Fortier 2001). Mainstream queerness marginalizes queer folks of color, yet queerness itself is a space of resistance, and overtly claiming queerness, as UndocuQueer activists do, can be an act of decolonization. Queerness is a connecting factor for the activists’ intersecting identities; it is tied to their experience, and its significance is clear in the literature.

UndocuQueer activists have complex and intersecting views of the world and themselves that mirror reality more than what people think. Life is complex; it is not singular or binary but rather has multiple levels of identities and experiences. Thus, this research will help define how new intersectional mobilizations occur in the social media sphere. Additionally, this project furthers the importance of public spheres, counterpublics, and social media activism. Last, within social media studies, my project expands on the importance of social media activism by introducing intersectional and decolonial perspectives to the current literature. Overall, in this

research, I hypothesize that such activism shows how contemporary organizations and activists and also queer immigrant activists use social media within counterpublics as a political strategy.

Methodology

My theoretical framework and methodology are rooted in critical feminism. Feminists critique positivist methodologies, because they are founded in gendered, classed, racialized, and cis-heterosexist thought, which assumes male experiences as universal (Hess & Ferre 1987; Sprague 1997; Einstein 2004). Feminist methodology questions positivism, rationality, objectivity, and dichotomies. Through epistemology, the theory of knowledge and how we know what we know, feminists challenge the notion of “universal truths” (Hess-Biber & Yaiser 2004). Positivism posits that there is one truth, and it is the only source of valid knowledge (Nielsen 1990; Hess-Biber & Yaiser 2004). For that reason, feminists question the notion of one worldview and paradigm, because such a singular concept is based on limiting power and dominant social ideologies (Harding 1987). Classical sociological thought often reflects the sort of white, male privileged position that feminists challenge. Feminism shows that male dominance and androcentric reason is not natural, but instead is socially constructed (Ramazanoglu 2002). Men wrote from what they could see and what they experienced without acknowledging or even recognizing the frame and limits of their subject position and research. Their findings and prominence, then, often came at the expense of women’s experience. As a critique of male-centered science, feminists have created feminist empiricism and standpoint theory (Harding 1991; Collins 2001). In sum, feminist methodology included and often focuses on women’s experiences, calls for taking care of their participants, advocates for making social change, and demands accounting for the researcher and their social positions in the research

process and outcome. Through de-centering white male perspectives, I situate this research by understanding marginalized peoples' voices, such as the UndocuQueer community.

Feminist theory and methodology has also shown that traditional research marginalized theorists and people of color. The sociological canons have historically been dominated by white male thought, which was not inclusive of people of color (Stacey & Thorne 1985; Spelman 1988; Sprague 1997; Einstein 2004). Therefore, stories, experiences, and theories from marginalized communities were not told (hooks 1984). While feminists offered their perspectives and experiences, it reflected white middle-class women from the United States and Western Europe (Nicholson 1990). While white women have understood how male privilege erases women's history, they repeated the same mistake in perpetuating white women as a universal perspective (Spelman 1988; Nicholson 1990). Historically, accounts of women's experiences were based on educated upper-class white women (hooks 1984; Spelman 1988). Given this historical context of classical and feminist sociological thought, authors of color challenged these traditional perspectives, and women of color theorized from a different and intersectional perspective.

Moreover, women of color and third-world women experience multidimensional positions, because they are racialized, sexualized, and globally exploited (Mohanty 2003). Feminists of color are able to shift through all of these ideas as part of a differential consciousness (Sandoval 2000). Thus, I situate this project and research to question positivism and embrace equality and equity. Overall, I rely upon Xicana feminism as my theoretical and methodological framework. I use a theoretical and epistemological perspective grounded in critical feminisms that are influenced by women of color. This critical feminist theoretical framework interrogates social inequalities based upon race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other identities (Bhattacharya 2007:21). Therefore, using Xicana feminism allows for a

space to challenge and critique the oppressive social structure that Xicanas face in their lives.

Methods

To examine how UndocuQueer activists use social media platforms to expand their social movements and how they express their intersectional identities, I conduct a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of tweets informed by Chicana feminism's *testimonios* from UndocuQueer activists. First, I gather three *testimonios* from UndocuQueer activists with a social media presence. According to Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez (2012), "Testimonio in education represents an important methodological tool that inserts Chicana voices and enacts new forms of political agency, allowing 'for different possibilities and interpretations of what exists in the gaps and silences but is often not seen or heard'" (525). Overall, the *testimonio* serves a political, methodological, and pedagogical purpose with a social action toward solidarity from the readers (Zepeda 2012). In this feminist-pedagogy-driven interview, the participant guides the interview, which allows for a more flexible conversation and distributes power more evenly than traditional interviews. Throughout this interview, the participant guides me on their personal journey of family, immigration, "coming out," activism, identity, and social media. This qualitative approach allows the participant and myself to have power sharing throughout the project. This method has been mainly conducted by Chicanas, because it provides and opens ways of understanding and learning for our community (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012). Ultimately, *testimonios* become a bridge for Chicanxs' identities, communities, and educational practices (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012). These *testimonios* inform the second part of my methods.

I conduct a social media critical discourse analysis on the UndocuQueer movement on Twitter by analyzing key codes and key organizers. By using NVivo and NCapture, I

downloaded tweets from sixty-six UndocuQueer twitter accounts, sixteen hashtags, and seven twitter searches. From these sources, there were over 200,000 tweets; I then ran a text search for #UndocuQueer and #UndocuTrans that resulted in my new data set of over 600 tweets. I brought in critical discourse analysis to understand the content. According to Machin and May (2012), “Language choices are political in that they shape how people and events are represented” (18). Hence, CDA examines language systems and how they are shaped and reshaped by discourse, and it analyzes patterns in text personally, professionally, and within communities (Gott 2016). My emphasis in this critical discourse analysis is on how UndocuQueer activists use social media as democratic activism. CDA connects to how UndocuQueer folks build subaltern counterpublics, because mainstream language marginalizes them into creating their own spaces. In this newly formed space, the activists can make different political choices to influence mainstream ideas and change their representation on social media. The UndocuQueer movement can show how intersectional politics are implemented and subaltern counterpublics are formed through social media. I do this by coding and analyzing hashtags; these are key words that follow a pound sign (#). For example, #BlackLivesMatter is a popular searchable hashtag that will bring up all posts tagged with it. More importantly, hashtags are ways to gather stories and identify the frames for UndocuQueer activism.

Queer folks of color often tap into alternative spaces on social media in search of a voice (Jackson and Welles 2016). Social media promotes personal and group identity (Valenzuela 2013). Hence, there are many life and political lessons that sociologists can gain from learning about how UndocuQueer activists use social media. Through this social media analysis, I scrutinize how these activists express their identities and frame their social movements. Social media has “radical possibilities for democratic debate, based in a history of counterpublic

intervention and integration” (Jackson and Welles 2016). Twitter played an important role in the 2016 presidential campaign and election, and, for better or worse, it continues to be a crucial source of information from the Trump administration. The continued media coverage of Trump’s tweets show the significance of the platform to the current political moment. So, in a way, this platform is validated as an extension of reality in that it can replicate systems of oppression. Since social media became a stage for political action, UndocuQueer activists turned to this platform, and they have a right to be heard and understood.

Subjectivity Statement

As a Xicana, I come from a particular standpoint and must situate my position within this research. Within feminist research, standpoint theory and reflexivity are important (Collins 1986). Dorothy Smith discussed standpoint theory, which proposes that knowledge depends upon a person’s position in society. Smith argued that objectivity is not real, no one can have the same standpoint, and that standpoints cannot be taken for granted. Thus, I will be sharing my own standpoint and how it guides me through this project.

As a woman of color, I have experienced multiple levels of oppressions. However, I also have privilege in society. My parents are from Nicaragua, and I am the first generation born in the United States. Thus, I have documentation, and I do not live in fear about my own deportation. However, I have dealt with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. In 2010, under the Obama administration, two of my uncles were deported back to Nicaragua. ICE stormed into our house and scared all my family; it was traumatizing for my grandmother and parents. It was a difficult moment in our lives. Throughout this research, it made that memory in time raw and real. My family was never the same after that. I realized how common it is for many communities to live in fear from the state. While the research hits home for me, I am not worried

about my status or denied access to resources. My gender expression and sexuality also situate me as a part of the norm, since I am considered cisgender. I see sexuality as a spectrum and identify as bisexual, but I am currently in a heterosexual monogamous relationship. I do not have to worry about coming out with my relationship status and having state-sanctioned control. Hence, I walk the line of insider and outsider in multiple regards, and I acknowledge my privileges within this topic and research. Throughout this project, it is my duty to my community and research to challenge my privileges.

As I situate myself within this research, I recognize that my interest in UndocuQueer activism begins with my activist and research work within the Chicano/a movement in California. I began my activist career in high school. I remember walking out of school for immigrant and student rights. I also supported educator rights by not crossing the picket line when high school teachers went on strike. I even performed poetry at their events. In college, I joined *Movimiento Estudil Chican@ de Aztlán* (M.E.Ch.A), a Chicano/a student organization advocating for political and social justice. I researched and wrote my master's thesis on Chicanx activism. Thus, activism has been a significant part of my formation as a member of society and as a scholar.

As a researcher, focusing on UndocuQueer activists, I am both an insider and an outsider. I am an insider because I identify as Xicana/Latina and as bisexual. I am an outsider because I am a U.S. citizen. Patricia Hill Collins discusses that an “outsider within status” offers both sociological training and cultural experience, and both are valid sources of knowledge (1986:29-30). Many other scholars have agreed with this notion. As Linda Smith suggests, researchers need to be aware in order to decolonize. I was ethical, reflective, and critical as an outsider by practicing feminist methodology. Outsiders must engage critically with the quality and richness

of the data (Smith 2012). She argues that it is possible to do great research as an insider and outsider. Rosaldo (1993) agrees that critiquing objectivism enables social analysts to become social critics, shedding new light on research. Reflexive research focuses on accountability, which means it is crucial to be explicit about the political, personal, etc., and is the nature of the research itself (Plows 2008).

Chapter Overview

I began this introduction with information on the recent anti-immigrant sentiment and how it is situated within a history of xenophobia in the United States. This discriminatory speech ignited the immigrant community with courage and empowerment to fight for their rights. Ultimately, it gave rise to the UndocuQueer movement. These activists find the multiple aspects of their identities so intertwined with each other that they created their own identity, an intersectional one. The weaving of identities to create a social movement is key to why it is so important to understand and learn more about them. Undocumented queer youth are rising from the ashes of oppression to organize for their rights. They are an example of how social movements can be conducted without marginalizing others. Theoretically, I am bringing multiple theories from multiple disciplines including sociology, ethnic studies, and social media studies. My primary focus is intersectionality and a social movements approach with a focus on subaltern counterpublics. Methodologically, I am enacting feminist methods of testimonies and critical discourse analysis, where I incorporate and acknowledge my standpoint through the research. I insert my subjectivity statement, because it is important to acknowledge that research is not objective – our bias must be checked at all times. This dissertation contributes to social movement theory with intersectional mobilization and the use of online subaltern counterpublics. Lastly, I recognize the limitations of the study, including the possibility of not gathering all

relevant tweets, and the possibility of miscoding these tweets. All these aspects will be discussed in more depth in the following chapters. Overall, by focusing on UndocuQueer activism as a case study, this dissertation conducts an interdisciplinary study on how new, complex social movements build intersectionality, social change, democratic public spaces, and subaltern counterpublics.

Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews literature that relates to the UndocuQueer community. I begin with democratic media spaces, because UndocuQueer activists use social media as a part of their social movement. Thus, I discuss social media, Twitter, and case studies. Next, I explain immigration studies, because it illuminates the reasons why people migrate. In this section, I also summarize undocumented activism, queer migration, and UndocuQueer research.

Democratic Media Spaces

Social media is a major part of global contemporary activism, specifically youth participation, since it is profoundly centered on the utilization of social media (Lim 2013; Velasquez 2015). This is particularly relevant for young activists who believe in bringing change and awareness through social media (Lim 2013; Velasquez 2015). UndocuQueer activists utilize social media activism in ways that reflects their engagement in the democratic media space. According to Velasquez (2015), “social media might be an alternative form of collective activism that is contributing to the engagement of youth” (914). Social media is an alternative space for activism. Through a critical discourse analysis of tweets informed by *testimonios*, I study how UndocuQueer activists use the social platform of Twitter. This section focuses on Twitter background and Twitter activism studies.

Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in 2006, and has changed news-gathering practices. The fifty million tweets per day are organized through hashtags (#) (Small 2011; Callison and Hermida 2015). According to Small (2011), Twitter is microblogging, a shorter forms of blogs writing, because it depends on short messages, instant deliveries, and subscribed updates (Cheong and Lee 2010; Small 2011). It is different from blogging, which does not limit characters, because Twitter’s main purpose is “daily chatter,

conversations, sharing information and reporting news” (Small 2011:875). On Twitter, users can only use 280 characters, which is a new limit set in 2017. Hashtags become forms of communication that process quick events, such as natural disasters, political unrest, or deaths (Callison and Hermida 2015). It is also interactive: people can reply and retweet (Small 2011). The most influential accounts and pages have more followers and/or retweets (Pilny, Atouba, and Riles 2014; Callison and Hermida 2015).

Twitter is known as democratic media. because the average person can participate (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016). Both bloggers and microbloggers challenge mainstream media and traditional sources because “they believe it is biased, arrogant, elitist, and corrupt” (Small 2011:877). Moreover, marginalized communities search for an alternative space that “expresses goals of both legitimizing and communicating their lived realities and pushing the mainstream public sphere” (Jackson and Welles 2016:398). Overall, through these spaces, new opportunities arise for broadcast and knowledge. Social media has the potential to contribute to political conversation (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016). Hashtags become a form of political participation, which makes social media a space for counter narratives (Small 2011; Callison and Hermida 2015). Thus, social media plays a facilitator role between individual political participation and collective activism (Velasquez 2015).

Even though this area of research is still growing, there are some relevant examples of Twitter activism studies. Cheong and Lee (2010) conducted a Twitter research study in 2009 on Australia’s Earth hour, an environmental awareness campaign, who Twitter to encourage the decrease of power consumption and energy. Earth hour was an awareness campaign through local government and social media engagements; thus, Cheong and Lee focused on how social organizations and local governments used Twitter to spread the word about Earth hour (Cheong

and Lee 2010). In Chile, Valenzuela (2013) studied social media and how it was used in the demonstrations and protests for education and energy policy. She found that “social media are not so much creating new forms of protest but amplifying traditional forms of protest, such as street demonstrations” (Valenzuela 2013:936). In other words, communities are using traditional protests in the streets and adding a virtual presence. Additionally, Lim (2013) conducted a research study on Indonesian activists on Twitter and Facebook by showing how social media can influence collective action by providing organizational information and news not available through other media sources. Overall, the current studies of Twitter have shown that social media activism produces more meaningful political activism.

Social media activism and research have been undertaken on social media campaigns in Egypt, Mexico, and Canada. According to Peuchaud (2014), Egypt created social networks to prevent sexual harassment, where women can report harassers on Twitter and Facebook to protect other women (Peuchaud 2014). In this instance, social media becomes a way to create a women’s haven. Trere (2015) offers another example of Twitter activism through the #YoSoy132 movement in Mexico, which shows Mexican university students fighting against media bias, political corruption, and electoral fraud. Students rallied for improved coverage of elections, public broadcast of presidential debate, democracy, and transparency (Trere 2015). He found that the #YoSoy132 movement used Twitter to reclaim their identity, proclaim their history and pride, and maintain their social movement (Trere 2015). #YoSoy132 embraced political demonstrations and online activism (Trere 2015). Trere (2015) found that #YoSoy132 had a backstage component where activists could connect through Facebook groups and chats, and a more prominent front stage presence consisting of their public media sites. These young Mexican activists presented their collective identities and struggled with internal issues

backstage. Furthermore, Callinson and Hermida (2015) studied the Indigenous Canadian Twitter activism from #IdleNoMore, where First Nations people reacted to the conservative government's policy on environmental and treaty issues. They found that the #IdleNoMore social movement became a hybrid of mixed-media system through both traditional news centers and new social media avenues (Callison and Hermida 2015). Therefore, social media has multiple purposes: 1) it is a space for gathering news; 2) it becomes a space for political expression; and 3) it allows spaces for joining causes and mobilizing information (Valenzuela 2013).

Within the United States, feminist activism and #Occupy activists are examples of social media activism. Stache (2015) found these hashtags: #NotBuyingIt, #HeForShe, and #WhyIStayed and studied how they have engaged people in the feminist campaign for gender equality, the gender pay gap, and domestic violence. According to Stache (2015), hashtag activism is a potentially beneficial method for increasing awareness of advocacy efforts and ‘bypassing the gatekeepers,’ by giving a range of advocates, from everyday citizens to multi-million-dollar companies, an opportunity to get their messages out to others (Stache 2015: 163).

Thus, this study argues that social media activism increases awareness of social issues and gives room for alternative voices. In addition, according to Nielsen (2013) and Meulman and Boushel (2014), the Occupy movement and its related hashtag #Occupy, connected civil disobedience and political protests with digital and networking technologies. #Occupy reached top hits on Facebook (130,000 likes) and Twitter (35,000 tweets). Nielsen (2013) argued that this was not social media activism; instead, it was “internet-assisted” or “digitally enabled.” Overall, the Occupy movement is “an example of an internet-assisted activism in a fast-changing communications environment” (Nielsen 2013:176). New social movements like the #Occupy

movement contribute to political communication, activism, and organization through both in-person protests and online activism (Theocharis et al. 2015).

The multiple iterations of social media become alternative spaces and tools for organizing for minorities, such as the Black Lives Matter movement. On August 9, 2014, police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed Black eighteen-year-old. Brown was suspected as a robber and had an altercation with Wilson that led Wilson to shoot Brown several times (Jackson and Welles 2016; Lopez 2016). Eyewitnesses shared conflicting accounts about what happened, but some stated that Wilson shot Brown as he ran off with his hands up (Lopez 2016). This event renewed conversations about racism and the criminal justice system in the United States (Lopez 2016). Indeed, it was the impetus of the Black Lives Matter movement. According to Jackson and Welles (2016), Black activists and the #BlackLivesMatter movement have utilized social media as an organizing space. During the shooting and murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Twitter became an alternative space for conversation and organizing. The term “Black Twitter” was coined to name the counterpublic these activists created for themselves in response to the actions of the police and the racist sentiment espoused by many in the mainstream media. Jackson and Welles (2016) explain that Black Twitter is: “also in the tradition of the black public sphere, these crowdsourced elites immediately challenged and reframed mainstream discourses about what was happening in Ferguson” (122). During this time, social media was a main organizing tactic and Black Lives Matter activists were successful in using Black Twitter to organize political actions (Taylor 2016). For example, on December 13, 2014, two Facebook activists created an event and page that thousands of people liked and committed to going to within hours of its creation (Taylor 2016). More than fifty thousand people attended this rally (Taylor 2016). Notably, the #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM)

movement has become a large, visible organization with over twenty-six chapters all over the country (Taylor 2016). They describe themselves as “a decentralized network aiming to build the leadership and power of Black people” (Taylor 2016:176). Similar to the #Occupy movement, #BLM believe in more democratic ways of organizing. They are decentralized and construct leaderless actions. In sum, social media becomes a tool for resisting and challenging power structures.

By studying UndocuQueer activism, I find how queer folks of color use this alternative space for self-identification and social justice work. With this research, I hypothesize that, similarly to Cheong and Lee (2010), Twitter activism is a space for creating awareness. Moreover, Twitter activism does not occur in a vacuum, but like Valenzuela (2013), Nielsen (2013), and Meulman and Boushel (2014) point out, it amplifies the current physical political organizing in the streets. It also influences government and collective action like the case of Indonesian activists (Lim 2013). According to Stache (2015), social media activism increases awareness of social issues and gives room for alternative voices. Overall, I argue that UndocuQueer activists use Twitter for three things, as Valenzuela (2013) proposes: 1) it is a space for gathering news; 2) it becomes a space for political expression including their intersectional identities; and 3) it creates spaces for joining causes and mobilizing information and people. Ultimately, UndocuQueer activists create a subaltern counterpublic on Twitter.

Immigration Studies

In discussing UndocuQueer activism, it is crucial to understand immigration studies, because the undocumented community deals with these immigration policies. Immigration studies focus on understanding the determinants, processes, and outcomes of human migration. Therefore, I explain how immigration policies impact the migrant community. Recent

immigration literature centers the discussion on “new immigration,” which is the shift in immigration demographics in the United States.

As previously stated in the introduction, scientific racism, xenophobia, and conservative ideology influenced immigration policy, resulting in the Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924, which prohibited all immigration from Asia and Africa (Massey and Pren 2012). Moreover, Alicea (1997) and Williams et al. (2002) explain the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 that caused immigrants to come to the United States from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. The year 1965 is the turning point in U.S. history in terms of immigration (Massey and Pren 2012). Immigration policy intended to remove its racist legacy by replacing old race-based quota restrictions with a new immigration system that offered visas based on family reunification and labor needs (Massey and Pren 2012). This shift in the U.S. immigration policy changed immigration demographics from Europe to Latin America and Asia (Massey and Pren 2012). Thus, the 1970s witnessed the migratory wave from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America (Chacon 2011). The increase of Mexican immigrants occurred because of the Bracero Program, which was established in 1942 as a temporary wartime measure that brought 450,000 migrant workers to fulfill U.S. labor needs (Massey and Pren 2012). Ultimately, it was deemed as an exploitative labor regime that was terminated and phased out by 1968 (Massey and Pren 2012). However, this subsequent termination of the program created more unanticipated problems. Massey and Pren (2012) state, “illegal migration rose after 1965 because the temporary labor program had been terminated and the number of permanent resident visas had been capped, leaving no legal way to accommodate the long-established flows” (5). While old immigration policies were based on quotas, new policies, such as guest worker visas, encouraged more immigration and increased undocumented workers in the United States.

After this rise of immigration, a Latinx threat narrative emerged, which allowed these immigrants in when they were desperately needed but then made them political scapegoats and portrayed them negatively when labor needs and laws shifted (Massey and Pren 2012). Sanchez, Chaney, Manuel, and Remedios (2018) explore this Latino prejudice. Latinos are often perceived as foreigners and thus experience discrimination and micro-aggressions (Sanchez, Chaney, Manuel, and Remedios 2018). U.S. culture and political propaganda impacted the future of anti-immigrant rhetoric. As we have recently seen, political campaigns have made immigrants into pawns. For that reason, immigration policies, which are driven by partisan politics rather than realities, increasingly punish and blame immigrants (Chacon 2011). UndocuQueer individuals experience this type of racism as Latinx and immigrants. Therefore, this research acknowledges the Latinx threat impacts the UndocuQueer community.

It is significant to understand the economic and political relationship between the U.S. and the countries from which immigrants come from, which have a long history of U.S. military interventions (Chacon 2011; Golash-Boza 2015). According to Chacon (2011) and Golash-Boza (2015), relevant policies, such as structural economic adjustment agreements with the International Monetary Fund, ended family farming as a way of life and a form of economic sustenance in Latin America (Chacon 2011). Chacon (2011) explains, “the systematic social and economic displacement of millions of people has contributed greatly to the migration patterns of the past several decades” (467). Therefore, these policies changed the way of life in Latin America. Changes, resulting from U.S. interventions, are strong push factors in Latin America (Chacon 2011; Golash-Boza 2015). Chacon (2011) also argues that there are pull factors from the U.S., which reside within the more stable U.S. labor market that generates a demand for millions of workers in different services. It is vital to situate immigration studies within the

transnational policies that push and pull people to migrate. These transnational policies impact many families, including many of the UndocuQueer youth. These policies pushed and pulled their families to the United States in search of a better life.

There are about 11.3 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, which is 3.5 percent of the U.S. population (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012; Chavez Duarte 2016). In 2012, 6.7 million undocumented immigrants were from Mexico; 690,000 were from El Salvador; 560 from Guatemala; and 360,000 from Honduras (Chavez Duarte 2016). Many of these immigrants are stereotyped as unskilled, low-income, and crossers at the Rio Grande. This stereotype obscures the diversity among immigrants (Rivera-Batiz 2000). Furthermore, Gonzales and Ruiz (2014) show that despite the influx of immigrants, there is a political gridlock when it comes to passing any federal immigration policy (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014). Their research also indicates that immigration appears to be slowing down (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014). Even though incoming immigration is slowing down, there are still xenophobic immigration laws. UndocuQueer folks are actively resisting these laws.

Immigration policies and national politics illustrate a tension in the United States that has resulted in harsh anti-immigration policies (Steil and Vasi 2014). Both the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act attempted to control illegal immigration (Rivera-Batiz 2000). Moreover, these changes pushed state and local city government to make laws around immigration: “Immigration lawmaking at the local level has increased.” (Steil and Vasi 2014:1111). For example, California’s Proposition 187 denied public sector benefits to undocumented immigrants (Chavez Duarte 2016). UndocuQueer activists brought up this specific policy, because they were in California, and it resonated with them. Immigrants have also been labeled as criminals, as seen in

Arizona's SB 1070 law (Chavez Duarte 2016). In addition, conservative ordinances, like not renting to undocumented immigrants and restricting gatherings of day laborers, push immigrants to move (Chavez Duarte 2016). Immigrants are being criminalized for having an "unauthorized presence" in the United States, and immigrants are also excluded from public universities (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero 2017). More importantly, these anti-immigrant attitudes motivate social movements and organizations from conservative and liberal communities, such as the Minutemen Project, which is a border vigilante group, and the National Council of La Raza, the largest Latinx advocacy organization in the United States (Steil and Vasi 2014). Hence, these local and national immigration debates cause major political discussion from various political viewpoints.

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act (CIR) creates several reform proposals for the current U.S. immigration system. Ultimately, there still is no CIR (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). Increasing enforcement and extension of the border consists of increasing technology, such as E-Verify, which conducts virtual immigration raids through the Social Security Administration (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). While border agents have increased, border apprehensions have declined since 2000 (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). In addition, the 287(g) program and secure communities team up with local police departments to enforce civil immigration in their cities, where undocumented people are transferred to ICE. These bills were created by President Bush and expanded by President Obama (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). Instead, Obama implemented other restrictive policies.

Undocumented youth also experience institutional discrimination. Because of *Plyler v. Doe*, our education system must educate all children, regardless of immigration status (Seif,

Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014; Olivas 2013). Nevertheless, California's Proposition 187 challenged that, as discussed above. It ultimately failed; undocumented children still have rights within the public education system (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). Furthermore, they have to face federal restrictions and hostile local level ordinances (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero 2017). Throughout their high school years, undocumented students awaken to their political circumstance when they cannot apply for a driver's license, get a job, or apply to college (Abrego 2006; Gonzales and Ruiz 2014; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero 2017). They do not have access to health or public education in some states (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014; Abrego 2006; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero 2017). Several state universities ban undocumented students, such as Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). According to Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri (2014), "A disproportionate number of states resisting tuition equity are Southern and border slave states, including state that fought school desegregation efforts" (181). On the other hand, there are many states where undocumented youth can attend higher education, pay in-state tuition, and apply for state financial aid (Seif, Ullman, Abrego 2006; Núñez -Mchiri 2014). In sum, local and state policies have a profound effect on the undocumented community, especially youth and students.

Gonzales and Ruiz (2014) conduct research in New York City and Nebraska on undocumented students' experiences. For example, in New York City, immigrants have access to public higher education and public transportation, but these opportunities are competitive due to the limited number of seats. In Nebraska, undocumented immigrants may have in-state tuition, but they have limited transportation, because they cannot obtain a driver's license (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014). According to Gonzales and Ruiz (2014), undocumented immigrants in rural areas

face a constellation of disadvantages: they deal with enforcement activities, such as more checkpoints, and limited opportunities for education and their community. The lack of resources in rural areas leaves undocumented youth at a disadvantage (Gonzales and Ruiz 2014).

Undocumented students are valued as important societal resources, where “current policies restrict their opinions and curb the transformative potential undocumented youth have in their communities” (Abrego 2006:227). Hence, the immigrant experience cannot be generalized, because it largely depends on location. This is important to acknowledge, because these are the struggles and obstacles that UndocuQueer individuals experience.

This section brings together different aspects of immigration studies, such as immigration policies, immigration waves, push and pull factors for migrants, international economic policies, and U.S. state and local laws. This research lays the foundation to understanding UndocuQueer folks’ experiences with their families, reasons emigration, and how institutions, such as the immigration system and the criminal justice system, affect them. Some UndocuQueer individuals traveled to the United States, with their families, searching for a better life. For that reason, I situate immigration policies in how these people were pushed out of their homes and drawn to the United States. Another consideration is that when UndocuQueer people attempt to thrive in this country, they face many barriers, such as racism, micro-aggressions, and local and state policies targeted at the undocumented community. The following section further explores the immigrant rights social movements.

Undocumented Activism

Because of the hostile environment discussed in the previous section, immigrant communities organized themselves (Chacon 2011). Usually, they formed worker organizations, which are multiethnic and multiracial (Chacon 2011). Since the May 1, 2006 mass immigrant

demonstrations known as “A Day Without Immigrants,” there is growing literature on migrant mobilizations (White 2014; Pieri 2016). An estimated 3 to 5 million people participated in over 100 locations (Galindo 2010). It began in Chicago, with the slogan, “No one is illegal,” and spread to small towns and other big cities (Pieri 2016). Ultimately, this immigrants’ rights movement called a huge national strike (Pieri 2016). In 2006, older Latinos participated in protests because of disc jockeys from Latino radio stations (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). Along with older Latinos, many high schools staged walkouts by texting each other, which represents one of the first uses of modern technology in immigrants rights activism (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014). According to Galindo (2010), “The 2006 immigration rights marches can be seen as performance in which the embodied actions of undocumented immigrants as political actors made visible both their plight and their dignity through the creation of a collective presence” (39). Overall, the 2006 immigrant rights activism reminded society that immigrants are powerful and believe in the First Amendment right of free expression (Galindo 2010). This set the stage for all upcoming immigrant rights’ organization and political action.

In addition, immigrant communities have taken the lead to create their own advocacy organizations. For example, there is the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), which voices concerns over social and economic justice issues of interest to these communities (Chacon 2011). According to Chacon (2011), “Latin American and Caribbean immigrant communities create opportunities to be active participants in the struggle to strengthen democracy from the bottom and up at home in the United States and abroad in our countries of origin” (473). Therefore, establishing immigrant communities for support and to gain resources is essential. Additionally, immigrant communities mobilize themselves to fight for social change, especially with the DREAM Act. This is important to note, because

UndocuQueer activists end up creating their own advocacy organizations as well. However, UndocuQueer organizers primarily use social media as safe spaces and subaltern counterpublics, which I explore in Chapters five through seven.

A major portion of activism undertaken by undocumented youth surrounds the policy known as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which creates a pathway to U.S. citizenship for undocumented youth. Sixty-five thousand undocumented students graduate from high school every year across the nation (Abrego 2006). The policy affected them, and it was first introduced in 2001 (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). However, the DREAM Act has several qualifications: 1) immigrants must have entered in the U.S. prior to their sixteenth birthday; 2) they must have “good” moral character; 3) they cannot be deportable according to the Immigration and Nationality Act; 4) they must have a high school degree or equivalent; 5) they must be under thirty years old; and 6) they must go to college or serve in the military (Aguirre and Simmers 2012; Enriquez 2014; Galindo 2014; Negron-Gonzales 2014; Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble 2014). The DREAM Act was a beacon of hope for two million undocumented youth (Enriquez 2014). It offered a solution for comprehensive immigration reform (Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble 2014). According to Enriquez (2014), “undocumented students have fueled over ten years of political campaigns in favor of access to in-state tuition and financial aid, the DREAM Act, and other pro-immigrant policies” (15). DREAMers rallied for this policy, because it offered educational opportunities; on the other hand, others argued that it was a part of U.S. neoliberal plans for government revenue and the Department of Defense (Aguirre and Simmers 2012; Carrasco and Seif 2014). Overall, the immigrant rights movement has organized around administrative relief through a pathway to citizenship (Cisneros 2015). As previously explained in the introduction, UndocuQueer activists

possibly began as DREAMers and/or came from the DREAMer social movement, which I elaborate on the UndocuQueer section in this chapter.

By 2012, the administration stopped deporting DREAMers and announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This allowed young immigrants work authorization for two years, if they were between fifteen and thirty years old; in school or had a high school diploma; and had no criminal record (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). Most of these immigrants come from Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). While the DACA application was \$465, many were hesitant to apply because there was no assurance of legal status (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). They called themselves “DACAmented” (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). More than half a million young immigrants applied for DACA, and almost 75 percent of their applications were accepted, which created new opportunity and hope (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). Furthermore, even Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a perfect example of the DREAMers’ social movements because Obama passed this program in response to the DREAMers activism. Still, the DREAM Act has failed to pass. Yet, that does not negate how the DREAMers have transformed the immigration rights movement and mainstream society’s dialogue (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). Lastly, the recent overturning of DACA has left many undocumented youths lost and concerned about the future. DACA applicants only represent 4.4 million of all undocumented immigrants under 31 in the United States (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). There were 392,000 undocumented youth that did not apply to DACA, because they were under the age of 15 (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). Furthermore, DACA recipients still do not have a pathway to citizenship (Seif, Ullman, and Nunez-Mchiri 2014). Hence, DACA did not and probably will not fix the immigration problem in the United States.

This dialogue has led to a divide among immigrant rights activists over the ideology of those “deserving” of citizenships and those who were not (Cisneros 2015). In fact, undocumented youth activists do not all see the DREAM Act as a path to community, freedom, and citizenship. These challenges make valuable contributions to theories of legality and illegality. UndocuQueer individuals and some factions from the undocumented movement find the DREAM Act problematic because “it reproduces exclusionary dynamics based on ideas of good versus bad immigrants; productive versus useless workers; respectful versus criminal subject” (Pieri 2016:107). Negron-Gonzales (2014) offers the example of undocumented youth activists from the perspective of “illegality,” where “they are inculcated with ideas of meritocracy, free will and individuality, yet simultaneously live under the constant threat of deportation to a country many of them know only through family stories” (262). Hence, immigrant youths have a different experience with “illegality” than their parents, because of the broader social norms. Overall, these undocumented activists have an intersectional understanding, yet contradictory experiences.

Moreover, Carrasco and Seif’s (2014) research explains how immigrant youth in Chicago reject the idea of deporting people who do not fit into hegemonic models. They explain, “this emerging activism more directly included those who do not conform to the classed, gendered, and racialized ‘model citizen’” (Carrasco and Seif 2014:281). These activists offer different insights than the traditional DREAMers, because they challenge the idea of “good moral character,” which is connected to an ideology that values “White property-owning males” and removes “undesirables” or those who do not fit those hegemonic norms (Carrasco and Seif 2014:283). To resist this normative rhetoric, Chicago’s Immigrant Youth Justice League focuses on anti-deportation campaigns and actions against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

(Carrasco and Seif 2014). Carrasco and Seif (2014) offer the anti-deportation perspective of these activists, who comment: “By telling our own stories and supporting immigrants in deportation proceedings to tell theirs, we contest hegemonic citizenship definition and perform strategies to claim citizenship rights and the right to remain in the United States” (290). Thus, these undocumented youth activists offer a political ideology and perspective that is not focused on the DREAM Act; instead, they tend to center on deportation, which impacts more than just youth immigrants.

Furthermore, these researchers and activists against the DREAM Act argue that it undermines immigrant family units, because deportations place the children’s rights before the parents, which breaks up families (Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble 2014). According to Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble (2014), “the depictions of immigrant families in the DREAM Act perpetuates such themes and policy practices by determining who is and who is not worthy of the benefits” (85). Ultimately, DREAM activism pits youth migrants against their older family members (White 2014). With these critiques, undocumented youth organizations are constantly evolving and changing as the conversations and actions shift between and among those supporting DREAMers, challenging deportations, and critiquing and challenging ICE. As I explain in upcoming chapters, UndocuQueer activists believe and spread this same critical thinking and questioning about ideals and ideas of legality.

Another important example of undocumented activism that is challenging the good immigrant narrative is the project from American Friends Service Committee in San Francisco called *67 Sueños* (67 dreams). This project focused on underprivileged migrant youth; they are not criminals or 4.0 students (Chávez 2013). This is important, because fifteen thousand undocumented youths drop out of high school each year, and they will not have access to the

DREAM Act unless they attain their GED (Chávez 2013). According to Chávez (2013), “A Migration Policy Institute study has documented that as many as 62 percent of age-eligible youth will not actually qualify for the DREAM Act, and *67 Sueños* is based on the idea that as many as 67 percent of those who are age-eligible will not qualify” (104). The hope is to change the undocumented narrative and include more people for legislative change (Chávez 2013). Adding to the previous paragraph, this is another way undocumented activists challenges the “model immigrant” rhetoric and fight for inclusion, where they “create an imperative for the migrant youth movement to seek queerer coalitional moments leading to queerer coalitional politics” (Chávez 2013:111). More importantly, UndocuQueer activists and factions of the undocumented rights movement defy the idea of citizenship (Pieri 2016).

Undocumented activism research comes from various perspectives. Undocumented youth immigrants are political actors who shape the national discussion on immigration rights (Negron-Gonzales 2014). The DREAM Act gave youth a way to participate in the political process (Cisneros 2015). Enriquez (2014) studied the way undocumented and citizen students created a dialogue to empathize with one another and how they organized for the DREAM Act. For them, stories and their voices were important; thus, they were able to have a cross-status coalition (Enriquez 2014). National coalitions emerged across the country to focus on youth leadership and strategies (Cisneros 2015). These coalitions encouraged activists who could vote to do so because, in their eyes, it was a privilege. This offers an example of how important intersectional and coalitional work is important to the undocumented community. This is also revealed through my project by the spread of the undocu-movement that I further describe in Chapter 6.

Additionally, Galindo (2012) focuses on two main events from the undocumented youth movement – a national coming out day in which activists proclaimed their status to the world and

their civil disobedience actions. The latter showed a new political strategy, which exposed them to arrest and deportation. As a result, these activists adopted the slogan “Undocumented & Unafraid” (Galindo 2012). DREAMers were arrested after a sit-in in Senator McCain’s office in Tucson, Arizona, when they refused to stay politically anonymous and invisible (Galindo 2012; Negron-Gonzales 2014). Lizbeth Mateo, Mohammad Abdollahi, Yahaira Carrillo, Tania Unzueta, and Raúl Alcaraz were the first students to submit to arrest and risk deportation for the first time in history (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012).

Another example lies with the DREAM 9, organized by the National Immigrant Youth Alliance, who wore caps and gowns and left the United States as political protest (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). They were also known as the Wilshire 9, and they began their action by sitting down in front of the West Los Angeles Federal Building as direct action (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). They risked their DACA status by leaving the United States, but they wanted to draw attention to the deportation rate under President Obama and the deportation industrial complex, who profited from the detention and maltreatment of immigrants (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). The DREAM 9 came “together to confront their deepest fears of arrest and deportation [and became] highly visible and pursued transnational strategies to stop punitive U.S. policies that hurt students in both the United States and Mexico” (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014:182). Ultimately, they gained visibility through protests, street marches, civil disobedience, putting their bodies on the line, occupying offices, and more (Galindo 2012; Cisneros 2015). According to the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), on July 9, 2010, the DREAM Freedom Ride drove across the United States with twelve undocumented students, inspired by the freedom rides in 1961 by Black and White civil rights activists fighting Jim Crow laws. Additionally, on July 20, 2010,

twenty-one students went on a hunger strike outside U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein's office (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). These forms of tactics and direct actions, from the two previous examples, such as civil disobedience, are prominent in the UndocuQueer social movement. I argue that these actions, from both the DREAMer and UndocuQueer movements are interconnected.

Galindo (2012) elaborates on DREAMers' presence on the Internet: "Their advocacy in support of the DREAM Act has included the formation of advocacy groups on campuses across the country, the creation of a national virtual presence through social media and blogs and testifying before state and federal legislative bodies" (590). Thus, as their movement grew, undocumented youth activists began to use social media as a tool in their organizing, creating counterpublics that facilitated both social actions and support. According to Cisneros (2015), "Telling stories about shared struggles and movement victories through user generated videos and blogs have had the cumulative effect of increasing undocumented youth's sense of belonging, group solidarity and sense of political efficacy" (21). Ultimately, the Internet is a major source of empowerment for undocumented activists (Corrunker 2012). According to the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), "one of the most dynamic elements of the immigrant youth movement has been our ability to drive our own actions and campaigns, fueled by the power of social media" (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012:88). This research is essential to my project, because it connects the undocumented organizers and their use of social media. DREAMers gain a sense of belonging, solidarity, and political awareness through their online presence and activism. Hence, I argue that UndocuQueer activists do the same through their use of social media.

To offer just a few examples, DREAMers created a website called dreameractivist.org, where they could chat, blog, and, more importantly, where they could teach each other how to use technology and social media (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). Along with sharing their stories and connecting with others, DREAMers have used Internet petitions and e-mail blasts directed at politicians to stop deportations (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). As noted previously, by using Twitter and Tumblr, they have organized civil disobedience actions and held critical conversations about the movement (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012). Clearly social media has become a central component of activism employed by DREAMers, undocumented activists, and their allies. This research is also vital to my project on UndocuQueer activists, because, as I further explain in Chapter 7, Internet petitions and e-mail blasts are a new and effective organizing tactic.

This literature on undocumented activism pertains to this dissertation in many ways. First, according to Galindo (2012), UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), and Cisneros (2015), DREAMers have a national virtual presence through social media. I connect Galindo's (2012) research on how DREAMers use social media to gain a sense of belonging, solidarity, and political awareness to how UndocuQueer activists utilize their social media. Then, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012) reflects the new tactic of online petitions, which UndocuQueer activists implement as well. Overall, UndocuQueer activists channel those same online networks. Second, Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri (2014) analyzed one of the DREAMers movement's main protest tactic, which is civil disobedience. As I show, in Chapter 6 and 7, many UndocuQueer organizers also believe in this tactic. Third, Enriquez (2014) proposes how DREAMers value coalitional work with undocumented and citizen students. I argue that UndocuQueer activists also do this, which I show through a discussion their

hashtags. Furthermore, I claim, along with Chávez (2013), Negron-Gonzales (2014), Carrasco and Seif (2014), and Mahatmya and Gring-Pemble (2014) that UndocuQueer activists reject the notion of “model citizens” because they reject the idea of deporting people who do not fit into hegemonic models. UndocuQueer individuals also reject the “good immigrant” narrative because, as LGBTQ folks, they have not been included in that definition. I further elaborate on this in the upcoming section on queer migration.

Queer Migration

A key part of the UndocuQueer movement is a recognition that the experiences of queer migrants differ from that of nonqueer migrants. Queer migration theorists discuss the intersections of queerness, migration, its connection to home, and politics. While the concepts of queerness embrace the multiplicity of non-heterosexual identities and its fluidity (Gorman-Murray 2007), queer migration focuses on intranational migration and queer relocations (Gorman-Murray 2007). This idea has not been explored until recently, because LGBT people were legally barred from migrating to the United States, but the ones that made it hid their sexuality (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005; Chávez 2013). This was necessary because they were pathologized and identified as “constitutional psychopathic inferiors” or “persons with abnormal sexual instincts” (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). In 1990, this ban was lifted (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005; Chávez 2013). Furthermore, in 1994, queer folks were eligible for asylum if they were persecuted in their home countries for their sexuality (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). Thus, there is a history of U.S. immigration discriminating against potential LGBTQ immigrants as well as a more recent history that has at times allowed them asylum (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). However, this shift in policy does not mean that queer migrants do not experience struggles in the United States.

Fortier (2001) argues that queer relocation creates a queer diaspora, which comes from the idea of “unitary cultural-geographical space” shared by queer folks who are pushed out of their original homes (Fortier 2001:408). For example, LGBTQ folks can experience trauma from their heterosexual family’s rejection, which causes them to leave home; thus, they can experience loss and become a part of the queer diaspora. For UndocuQueer individuals, this is a common experience, because usually their Latinx families are religious and traditional. Furthermore, home becomes the destination, not the origin, where they are finally able to envision themselves beyond normative heterosexism (Fortier 2001). Queer migrants are on a quest for self-identity and self-determination (Gorman-Murray 2007). Interestingly, some UndocuQueer folks experience this journey for self-acceptance by leaving for college; I further explain this in Chapter 5. According to Fortier (2001), “the widespread narrative of migration as homecoming, within queer culture, establishes an equation between leaving and becoming and creates a distinctively queer migrant subject: one who is forced to get out in order to come out” (410). Queer migration and bodies travel through space, which is never complete and fixed in their search for home and self-identity (Gorman-Murray 2007). In the process, queer identities are “contextual and spatially contingent [and] resistance to heteronormativity and the consequent constitution of queer identities happens both in urban and regional places, in big cities and tiny villages, and everywhere in between (Gorman-Murray 2007:118). The movement away from home, in search of home, then, creates this queer migration. Overall, the UndocuQueer community experience this searching for home and thus participates in queer migration.

Queer migration studies consist of understanding transnational and heteronormative meanings and practices. Manalansan (2006) explains the history of U.S. immigration restriction laws: groups that were seen as “sexually deviant and morally corrupt” were blocked. In fact, the

Page Law of 1882 prohibited homosexuals from gaining U.S. citizenship (Manalansan 2006). Furthermore, immigrants who had HIV/AIDS faced deportation for what was termed a “humanitarian purpose” (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005; Manalansan 2006; Chávez 2013). According to Chávez (2013), “Rather than helping, the federal government chose actions like banning migration of HIV-positive people to the United States and debating the viability of quarantining those with HIV/AIDS in camps” (1). Hence, the U.S. discriminated against LGBTQ migrants as a “perceived” threat. Furthermore, according to Manalansan (2006), “the movements of migrants are not only monitored and controlled by authorities by specific racial, ethnic, and gender preferences and prohibitions, but are mediated through implicit sexualized ideas in law and immigration proceedings” (235). Hence, queer migration also encompasses queer immigrants coming to the United States and confronting issues of heteronormativity. It was not until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 when words like “permanent partners” and “permanent partnerships” were used and accepted in U.S. citizenships for same-sex bi-national couples (Chávez 2013). Additionally, Luibhéid (2008) explains queer migrations and its connection to slavery, imperialism, forced transportation of prisoners, and exile. Queer migrants of color have histories of multiple diasporas that were established through capitalism and colonialism, which allows scholars to rethink transnational issues (Luibhéid 2008). Queer immigrants’ conflict with ideas of the “ideal” citizen, which contradict their existence as people who are both queer and migrants. These heteronormative ideals of citizenship reinforce multiple systems of oppression. Luibhéid (2008) argues that “national heteronormativity is thus a regime of power that all migrants must negotiate, making them differentially vulnerable to exclusion at the border or deportation after entry while also racializing, (re)gendering, (de)nationalizing, and unequally positioning them within the symbolic economy, the public sphere, and the labor market” (174).

The intersections of sexuality and immigration status make queer migrants open to exploitation. Overall, queer migration literature focuses on the spatial movement of queer folks and the heteronormative impacts government policies have on transnational migrants. This directly ties to the UndocuQueer community, because the state continues to implement policies that impact them as transnational migrants. For example, immigrant detention centers do not protect their LGBTQ detainees, where they face assault and sexual abuse. I further describe this and the UndocuTrans movement in Chapter 6. In sum, the UndocuQueer folks experience categorization and violence from the state.

Marriage and citizenship is also complicated for LGBTQ couples. The 1996 Defense of Marriage Act defined marriage as a relationship between a man and woman for domestic and immigration purposes (Luibhéid and Cantú 2005). According to Luibhéid and Cantú (2005), “Binational lesbian/gay couples continually face the prospect of separation and are unable to plan for the future. Some break up; others move to a third country” (xiii). Therefore, LGBTQ migrant couples struggle for recognition. Lewis (2014) offers an example of queer migration studies by analyzing gay couples and their fight for gay and lesbian asylum. Couples are forced into proving their “credibility” to gain citizenship status: couples in the UK have to produce video of sexual acts to prevent their deportation (Lewis 2014). Lewis (2014) explains this problem:

The use of pornographic material evidence as sexual orientation is in danger of producing a similar Catch 22 situation for queer asylum seekers in which they are potentially damned if they fail to provide the tapes as proof of sexuality and damned if they do (the evidence can easily be dismissed as ‘fake’). (963)

Hence, queer migrants searching for asylum experience heterosexist, racist, and classist discrimination throughout the process. This has incited queer migrants of color to join the anti-deportation activism in the UK. On the other hand, according to Luibhéid and Cantú (2005),

moving to a “developed” country for “freedom” cannot be oversimplified, because it erases the struggle, suffering, and resistance of the LGBTQ community. According to Luibhéid and Cantú (2005), “Latin migrants frequently find themselves caught ‘between the racism of the dominant society and the sexist expectations of [their] communities as they struggle to negotiate identity and community” (xxvii). This literature and research reflects the urgency of understanding one of the most vulnerable populations around the world that is threatened by deportation and removal from their families while also offering a window into the necessity for a movement like UndocuQueer.

Queer migration also redefines borders. While some UndocuQueer activists live in the United States, they are not able to move freely (Pieri 2016). Thus, they suffer lack of control and agency within both symbolic and political spaces (Pieri 2016). “In fact, heteronormativity defines citizenship towards a heterosexual script, which allows, for example, the right to acquire a status through legal heterosexual marriage, but not through a lesbian or gay marriage” (Pieri 2016:109). Furthermore, UndocuQueer folks are at a higher risk for hate crimes, which in turn increases their deportation rate. Citizenship enacts and reproduces heteronormativity (Pieri 2016). According to Pieri (2016), “Visibility, citizenship, heteronormativity, borders, and conflicts between generations therefore represent the most salient issues that UndocuQueers face and challenge through activism and everyday life” (110). Overall, the UndocuQueer movement engages the specific concerns of queer migrants within the United States, where sexuality and gender identification can change the dynamics and experiences of being country-less.

Queer migration politics are also coalitional, and queer migrants need to recognize and employ intersectionality because it allows for complexity. “The presence of a dynamic identity and subjectivity starkly reveals the necessity of coalitional thinking to account for the complexity

of people's lived experiences" (Chávez 2013:9). According to Chávez (2013), "coalitional" is a space of convening for the possibility of bridging across organizations. Coalitional work is essential to understand the UndocuQueer social movement, because the movement bridges different communities together, which was also discussed in the previous section. Moreover, there has been a rise of immigration activism since 2006; as a result, there has been a rise of queer migration activism (Chávez 2013). LGBTQ and immigrant activists both accuse each other of hurting their movements: LGBTQ activists argue for rights based on U.S. citizenships that queer migrants do not have, and immigrants fight for rights based on strong family values that queer members "culturally violate" (Chávez 2013). Yet, there are groups, such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) that focus on rights and inclusion (Chávez 2013). For example, the NGLTF focused on gay and lesbian U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents' ability to sponsor foreign partners, political asylum for gay and lesbians, and migration rights for HIV/AIDS migrants (Chávez 2013). Thus, they do not try to isolate their communities in their organizing. Then, in 2011, Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ) connected queer U.S. citizens, non-queer-identified migrants, and queer migrants by stating:

Both movements are depriving themselves of the power and strategic insights that LGBTQ immigrants can provide. We, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gender-nonconforming people and allies, stand in solidarity with the immigrant rights movement. With this statement, we call for genuinely progressive immigration reform that helps LGBTQ immigrants (Chávez 2013:23).

Queer migration politics connect immigration and queer politics in theory and practice. This is essential research to better understand the UndocuQueer community, because they exemplify this. While the various constituents may have different visions for themselves and other groups, coalition building is central. Moreover, Chávez argues for radical interactionality, which builds

on women of color feminists' idea of intersectionality, a critique from the roots of a social problem that methodically shows how oppression interacts with subjects, institutions, and ideologies. "Radical interactionality shifts from viewing identities as discrete and suggests that the crux of any kind of oppression is multifaceted and complex" (Chávez 2013:52). Chávez (2013) describes radical interactionality and how it relates to what sociologists call "sociological imagination," because it describes how to connect the individual to society and history and acknowledges how systems are interconnected and multifaceted. In this research, the UndocuQueer community enacts radical interactionality by connecting their marginalized experiences, as being undocumented and queer, with systemic oppressions, such as the state and its policies, that shows all of its complexity.

UndocuQueer activism also fits under the category of queer migration politics. There are groups, such as Undocumented Youth Collective and the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (Chávez 2013). Queer migration studies is crucial for social movements "because of the way queer migration politics have exploded onto the discursive scene in the early twenty-first century, they supply a plethora of diverse coalitional moments, junctures that point to other possibilities" (Chávez 2013:148). Hence, their intersectional identities provide ways to imagine another world and other ways to engage in social movements. Chávez (2013) states, "As queer women of color feminists have always shown us, oppression and privilege, power and identity, domination and liberation are experienced in people's lives in vastly complicated ways" (150). Furthermore, according to Chávez (2013), through moments of complexity, people can use their identities for coalitional possibilities. UndocuQueer activists are doing exactly this: they are engaging in coalitional work across the undocumented community through LGBTQ identities and ethnicities to build solidarity.

By using queer migration, I highlight UndocuQueer activists' obstacles as queer migrants. I begin with Luibhéid and Cantú (2005) and Manalansan (2006) by situating how LGBTQ migrants were once barred from coming to the United States, which reflects a history of U.S. immigration discriminating against queer migrants. Lewis (2014) even shows how the process of gaining political asylum is filled with heterosexist, racist, and classist prejudice. Similarly, Manalansan (2006) believes that queer migration includes queer immigrants coming to the United States and confronting issues of heteronormativity. Furthermore, in connecting to the undocumented activism literature, queer migration studies also reject ideas of the “ideal” citizen because it contradicts with queer migrants’ existence as people who are both queer and migrants (Luibhéid 2008). Additionally, Luibhéid (2008) explains how queer migrants of color have histories of multiple diasporas that were established through capitalism and colonialism. These diasporas possibly function as spaces for counter narratives and subaltern counterpublics. Fortier (2001) also argues the existence of a queer diaspora. Combining these perspectives points to a possible queer subaltern counterpublic. Pieri (2016) offers the most relevant research by discussing how UndocuQueer folks are queer migrants experiencing discrimination from multiple social institutions. The state controls their ability to move freely, and they end up suffering. UndocuQueer are at a higher risk for violence in public spaces as well as detention centers. In order to survive, UndocuQueer have to create their own spaces outside of the public sphere, which right now are dominated by xenophobic attitudes and policies.

UndocuQueer

There are an estimated 904,000 LGBTQ adult immigrants in the United States; 267,000 are undocumented and 71 percent of them are Latina/o (Chavez Durant 2016). Arising from this group, activists have merged the terms “undocumented” and “queer” to create a new identity and

activist organization called UndocuQueer. In 2011, UndocuQueer produced a shift in narrative within the immigrant rights movement and LGBT rights movement (Seif 2014; Pieri 2016) by naming a new political identity that falls at the intersections of the two (White 2014). This coalitional political identity began with the undocumented mobilizations of the United We Dream Network (UWDN), which is a coalition with different local committees and organizations that focused immigrant rights (Cisneros 2015; Pieri 2016). UWDN is the largest immigrant youth-led community in the United States with an online reach of over four million people; they have chapters in twenty-eight states. According to unitedwedream.org, their vision is “a society which celebrates diversity and we believe in leading a multi-ethnic, intersectional path to get there.” Thus, this organization’s mission statement and vision aligns with the UndocuQueer community and intersectionality. Furthermore, Cisneros (2015) states, “UndocuQueer [activists] destabilize notions of collective identities by honing in on the complexity of navigating intersectional identities, and the power of creating something new within the contradictions” (3). Here, they are able to embrace the intersections.

The National Immigrant Youth Alliance (NIYA), a radical wing of the undocumented youth movement, created the term UndocuQueer as a political identity. NIYA was founded in December 2010, and its focus was immigration actions with an emphasis on civil disobedience tactics (Seif 2014). Julio Salgado, an undocumented queer activist, expanded the UndocuQueer identity through his many art projects (Chavez Durant 2016). Salgado is the creator and artist of the UndocuQueer art movement (Chavez Durant 2016). On June 25, 2012, he was on the cover of *Time Magazine* named Latino *Voz* of the Year by Cuentame Latino network (Seif 2014). Seif (2014) interviewed Salgado, who said: “UndocuQueer is not a law. It is not a bill. It’s an idea. As culture makers, we need to put those ideas out there. Sometimes I’m gay. UndocuQueer is one

way to describe one's intersectionality" (Seif 2014:306). Salgado has been the most heard voice since the inception of UndocuQueer (Pieri 2016). He presented the UndocuQueer art series with United We Dream's Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP), an LGBTQ committee with sixty self-identified UndocuQueer activists formed by UWDN (Seif 2014; White 2014). UndocuQueer is intersectional in its conception because it exposes "the privileging and normalizing tendencies of organizations and institutions casting LGBTQ undocumented immigrants to the shadows and into the closet" (Cisneros 2015:33). Thus, they hold a triple minority through ethnicity, sexuality, and immigration status (Chavez Durant 2016). Overall, UndocuQueer have made their mark within the immigrant rights movement (Seif, Ullman, and Nunez-Mchiri 2014).

UndocuQueer individuals face many challenges. Studies, such as UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), Terriquez (2015), and Chavez Durante (2016) discuss how "coming out the closet" has two meanings: it refers to gender or sexual orientation and legal status. UndocuQueer activists "come out" both as undocumented and LGBTQ (Seif 2014; Terriquez 2015). They have to come out as LGBTQ to their families and as undocumented to their friends, and they end up facing many U.S. barriers (Terriquez 2015; Chavez Durant 2016). In regard to the former, Latinx households typically also place rigid traditional and Catholic roles on their children, which are restricting for some (Terriquez 2015; Chavez Duarte 2016). According to Chavez Duarte (2016), "Latino and LGBTQ can be a challenge especially when varying values and norms of each community makes interacting within the different social groups and communities difficult" (13). While they want to come out as queer, they do not want to risk losing their family support and financial help (Terriquez 2015). Furthermore, Latinx LGBTQ people lack acceptance from the White and mainstream LGBTQ population (Terriquez

2015; Chavez Duarte 2016). Moreover, in immigration and queer rights, they cannot petition for their same-sex spouses through family-based immigration processes. However, on June 26, 2013, the Supreme Court overturned Defense Of Marriage Act (DOMA) (Cisneros 2015). Thus, they at times experience homophobia and heterosexism. One of the ways that UndocuQueer activists have embraced this “double coming out,” is the Immigrant Youth Justice League (IYJL) in Chicago, who organize “Coming Out of the Shadows Day” event and action (Seif 2004). UndocuQueer activists’ intersectional spaces offer new political hope and resiliency. UndocuQueers advocate for marriage equality in the LGBT movement and as DREAMers in the immigrants rights movement (Cisneros 2015). UndocuQueer organizers build visibility within the immigrant and LGBTQ communities. This is foundational research to my project, because it explains how UndocuQueer individuals experience life as both undocumented and queer; as a result, it also describes how society and even loved ones may treat them.

Seif (2004) studies the UndocuQueer activism because UndocuQueer activists transformed the sexuality discourse. It argues that using “queer” and statements of “undocumented and unafraid” suggest politics of confrontation rather than assimilation (Seif 2004). Furthermore, “coining one word [UndocuQueer] forced people to speak of the experience and confronted them with the issues of those who live at the intersection” (Seif 2004:110). Language and imagery become so important to UndocuQueer activists to challenge the status quo (Seif 2004). Therefore, “coming out of the shadows,” coming out as queer and undocumented, and “UndocuQueer” are ways UndocuQueer activists diverted from normative speech and political compromise (Seif 2004). Overall, how UndocuQueer folks reuse and recreate words changed the way people viewed them as activists.

Another example of UndocuQueer activism center on UndocuQueer testimonies. White (2014) studies UndocuQueer activists in the Bay Area, California and considers how they use art, photography, and short narratives to tell their stories “in order to call attention to the unique situation of queers in the migrant rights movement and to empathize queer leadership” (986). As with previous research with Seif (2014) and Chavez Durant (2016), Julio Salgado becomes the center of White’s (2014) study on UndocuQueer art. A compilation of his art became into *The UndocuQueer Book*, which circulated on Facebook and Tumblr. Salgado’s art combines queer and migrant art and organizing. White (2014) argues:

opens promising space for the vibrant, colorful and festive celebration of new political subjectivities that have the potential to simultaneously challenge the vulnerabilities produced through grids of sexuality and gender normativity and the violences of detention and deportation (990).

It is an example of the UndocuQueer movement challenging nation-states and border security (White 2014). Ultimately, queer migrant politics spatializes or respatializes politics (White 2014). These politics also show how social media and the #UndocuQueer hashtag provide a way for undocumented queer people to find each other and build a community (Seif 2014). Overall, queer migrant activism and anti-deportation actions connect to the discourse of rights and citizenship. This researches is most closely aligned with my project, because it connects UndocuQueer activism with art. As I describe in Chapter 7, artivism is central in the UndocuQueer movement.

Terriquez (2015) serves as another example of UndocuQueer research by focusing on the UndocuQueer social movement as a form of intersectional mobilization. She defines “intersectional mobilization” as people who have high levels of political engagement and commitment among a disadvantage subgroup within another marginalized group (Terriquez 2012). She argues that “these prior movements often made salient a single and unifying identity,

and did not attend to how multiple and overlapping ‘intersectional’ identities shaped activists’ experiences” (Terriquez 2015:344). Ultimately, UndocuQueer activists engage in multi-identity work that addresses their intersectional positions in society, because of their experiences with oppression on a movement level (conflicts between social movements), organizational level (struggles within organizations), and personal level (Terriquez 2015). As a result, these experiences lead to intersectional consciousness. Terriquez (2015) also discusses the spillover effect, where the identity strategy of the LGBTQ movement spills into the UndocuQueer movement, which is the coming out strategy that was previously discussed in this section. Her three findings on the UndocuQueer movement on intersectional mobilizations, spillover, and multi-identity work build the literature for this project. Most importantly, this research sets up UndocuQueer as an intersectional social movement, which helps to place my argument for how they establish an intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

Cisneros (2015) focuses on queer migrants from the borderlands perspective because UndocuQueer individuals’ identity is socially ingrained and reproduced through their environment. By using queer intersectionality, Cisneros (2015) explained their identity through their lived experiences and relationships to citizenship and sexuality by encompassing the state and its sociopolitical context. The UndocuQueer community combined intersectionality and queer theory to make a new analytic tool for deconstructing societal ideas and political actions (Cisneros 2015). Cisneros (2015) also found that UndocuQueer searched for complex identities because they did not like being boxed into identities that did not fully encompass their experiences as LGBTQ, DREAMer, and other identities. Cisneros states, “Redefining themselves as UndocuQueer, participants resisted simplistic conceptions of their identities that reduced their experiences to unitary identity constructs, and essentialized their experiences in accordance with

dominant power structures (e.g., homonormativity, heteronormativity, and citizenship)” (Cisneros 2015:152). Generally, their experiences and beliefs are complex and should not be generalized for all queer migrants. UndocuQueer activists were able to bridge their identities and confront discourses in the LGBTQ and immigrant rights frameworks (Cisneros 2015). Overall, this research reveals, similar to previous findings stated in this section, that UndocuQueer activists are able to navigate multiple social worlds (Cisneros 2015), but it is completed through a new lens. I also take away and apply the notion that UndocuQueer individuals do not want to be essentialized; I discuss this point in multiple areas throughout chapters five through seven.

UndocuQueer activists also have used social media for their activism. Pieri (2016) analyzed a web series on YouTube from 2011 to 2012 called “Undocumented and Awkward.” These videos are self-made by UndocuQueer activists in the social movement: every person in the production is undocumented (Pieri 2016). It depicts the daily lives and struggles of undocumented people with drama and humor (Seif 2014). They use their daily and personal experiences to narrate the awkward and absurd situations they face (Pieri 2016). According to Pieri (2016), “The series results, particularly interesting for the way it represents the contradictions, the struggles and the connection between a political discourse on rights, citizenship, and exclusions and their translation into everyday practices” (111). For example, one of their episodes is a first date between a documented guy and an undocumented person, and they wanted to buy a beer; however, the undocumented guy did not have the proper identification, which led to a discussion about his status and citizenship privilege (Pieri 2016). There are conversations about internalized homophobia, institutional violence, and hate speech against LGBTQ and undocumented folks (Pieri 2016). Pieri (2016) shows how undocumented and queer are political identities and practices, and they are groundbreaking for mobilization

rights. Hence, “Undocumented and Awkward” represents a cultural contribution as well as a political statement through creative means online. This show, and others like them, represents a cultural shift in the undocumented and queer community; they are cultural producers in many ways, which I explain further in subsequent chapters.

The prior research on UndocuQueer activism benefits my project in many ways. Previous research has recognized the importance of the movement and begun to map its history. This scholarship has also noted the importance of social media to the UndocuQueer movement, which my study expands. Seif (2014) and White (2014) centered UndocuQueer art and online activism by focusing on Julio Salgado. This is vital to my project, because his art comes up many times on social media. His presence online is powerful, and he is an online influencer for the UndocuQueer community. In addition, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), Terriquez (2015), and Chavez Durante (2016) discuss how UndocuQueer folks experience “double coming out.” These experiences are based on their identities as undocumented and queer. This set up my research, because I wanted to learn more about their experiences and narratives. Furthermore, Seif (2004) studies UndocuQueer activism because they transformed the sexuality discourse. Since reclaiming words like “queer” and “illegal,” Seif (2004) argues that they are engaging in politics of confrontation. Their language through hashtags becomes essential to understanding different types of resistance. Terriquez (2015) embraces UndocuQueer activists as an intersectional social movement. In addition, Pieri (2016) analyzed a web-series on YouTube from 2011 to 2012 called “Undocumented and Awkward.” It represents how the UndocuQueer community are creating their counter narratives, where they are represented accurately. It shows the beginning stages of the UndocuQueer culture and subaltern counterpublic. Lastly, Cisneros (2015) discusses UndocuQueer in relation to the state, because

their identities come from a sociopolitical context in the United States. These studies inform my project on UndocuQueer activism, and I am adding to it by analyzing hashtags and discussing it from the theoretical perspective of subaltern counterpublics.

Chapter Overview

This chapter acknowledged relevant literature to the UndocuQueer community. First, it is important to note social media studies and case studies that research and analyze social media trends. There is an increase of studies focusing on hashtags and trends. This relates to UndocuQueer activists, because they are using social media for their activism and networking. They are using these virtual online spaces to build their communities; they are making subaltern counterpublics. Next, I discuss immigration studies by focusing on policy, undocumented activism, queer migration, and UndocuQueer activism. The undocumented community face many barriers while living in the United States, including local and national policies that target them. This xenophobia pushed the undocumented community to organize. However, in many of these organizations, undocumented queer folks felt marginalized. Thus, they created their own theories, spaces, and identities. For that reason, queer migration and UndocuQueer have their own sections, to emphasize how they challenge the “original” notion of immigration and expand the considerations of being undocumented. By offering an overview of the previous scholarship on the UndocuQueer movement, I show the relevance and potential of my own study of the organization’s Twitter activism.

Chapter 3 - THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Intersectionality and social movements are the two main theories that inform my dissertation. I begin with intersectionality by explaining its definition, its background, its critique of identity politics, and intersectional research. I also explain two related subareas of sociology and ethnic studies: Xicana feminism centers Latinx life experiences and histories of colonization, religion, language, land theft, and even immigration statuses. Similarly, I develop my social movement perspectives by explaining some of the main social movements approaches. In this section, I also explain framing and subaltern counterpublics. These theories set up my project in a unique way to understand social movements from an intersectional perspective with a focus on Xicana feminism. Ultimately, UndocuQueer activism is built on intersectionality and subaltern counterpublics.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality functions as a key theoretical approach for this dissertation, because UndocuQueer experiences are based on the interlocking systems of racism, heterosexism, sexism, classism, and colonialism. In this section on intersectionality, I describe intersectionality, feminist epistemology, standpoint theory, intersectional critique of identity politics, and intersectionality research.

Intersectionality examines how multiple oppressions marginalize people along class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality social structures and on a daily basis. In sociology, Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins pioneered intersectionality approach and research (Brush 1993; Correa 2011). Collins analyzed how epistemology influences feminist perspectives and social statuses (Collins 1986). This intersectional perspective concentrates woman of color

narratives and how race, class, and gender intersect with social institutions. Women-of-color feminisms do multiple things:

- a) raise consciousness about the inadequacies of narrowly defined social and civil rights movements, including feminist approaches; b) debunk stereotypes relevant to specific groups of women; c) document the multidimensional identities and oppression of women of color as well as within-group diversities; d) enumerate survival skills, agency, and resilience shown by women of color; and e) propose forms of activism and decolonization (Enns 2010:333).

Overall, women-of-color feminism accepts and embraces diversity within various groups and identities. This theoretical approach centers decolonization through a focus on research and community. Such research shows that women of color and third world women experience multidimensional oppressions, because they are racialized, sexualized, and globally exploited (Mohanty 2003).

Women of color scholars claim that their lives are interconnected in varied ways. Kimberle Crenshaw discusses these intersections: “I consider how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend to be represented within the discourses of either feminism or antiracism” (Crenshaw 1991:1244). While Crenshaw focuses on intersectionality through the experiences of Black women, many scholars now use intersectionality to discuss systematic oppressions, such as those related to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, religion, citizenship status, etc. Intersectional scholars further theorize how institutional oppressions influence people in their everyday lives (Correa 2011). Spelman (1998) shows that identities are complex and informed by different positions of and relationships to power: “because women live in a world in which there is not only sexism but racism, classism, and other forms of oppression, some of the differences among women carry with them differences in privilege and power” (Spelman 1998:162). Hence, theories of intersectionality help us understand and better address the fact that

oppression is multifaceted, and as we have seen in the UndocuQueer movement, people can experience multiple oppressions and privileges simultaneously.

In connection to intersectionality, standpoint epistemology embraces people's different social positions in society. Dorothy Smith explains standpoint epistemology and how it proposes that knowledge depends upon a person's position in society (Clough 1993). Smith argues that objectivity is not real; no one can have the same standpoint; and standpoints cannot be taken for granted. Thus, standpoint theory becomes important in research and understanding (Harding 1993). Patricia Hill Collins applied standpoint theory to the experiences of women of color, showing, for example, how Black women have an insider perspective, because they work within the system, but they remain "outsiders" in dominant contexts, because they are marginalized for their race and gender (Collins 1986). Hence, intersectionality and standpoint theory center marginalized experiences within social, political, and historical contexts (Harding 1987). Feminists of color are able to recognize and name the links between these ideas as part of what Chela Sandoval has termed a "differential consciousness" (Sandoval 2000). Differential consciousness is both a method and a theory that demands self-reflectivity, which is crucial to analyzing and reflecting upon ourselves (Sandoval 2000). Feminists of color can shift through complex locations within social structures, which continuously result in their resistance to the dominant culture (Sandoval 2000). By shifting through social positions, scholars and activists can avoid making positivistic generalizations. Differential consciousness appears in different forms from Black, Chicana, Asian, and Indigenous scholars (Sandoval 2000). These survival tactics exhibited by women of color endow them with an all-inclusive perspective and a methodology of and for the oppressed. In sum, women of color feminists also add to feminist standpoint epistemology, which is the philosophical study of how people know what they know.

Overall, standpoint theory informs my research because I am an insider and outsider in this research, as I discussed in my subjectivity statement in the Chapter 1.

Before I discuss intersectional research, I explain the intersectional critique of identity politics, which are politics based on life experiences and institutional discrimination of minorities (Ofreneo and Casal de Vela 2010; Fosl and Kelland 2016). Originally, identity politics focused on a single identity (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1991). For example, Perez (1999), Sandoval (2000), and Blackwell (2003) understand Chicano studies and their social movements from a non-male and non-nation perspective, and they critique patriarchy and sexism (Zepeda 2012). There are many accounts of women's discussions of sexism within their organization and also experience racism from broader society (Brush 1999). Black and Chicano nationalisms were notorious for marginalizing women, because they believed racial justice came first (Blackwell 2010).

Women of color feminism complicates male-centered identity politics in multiple ways, because it critiques and challenges their nationalistic ideology and politics (Zepeda 2012). Terriquez (2015) states, "Because social movements typically make salient a single identity in order to promote a unified collective identity, they can minimize internal group diversity, avoid difficult discussions regarding diversity, or treat minority group identities as secondary" (346). Thus, identity politics is problematic in three ways. One, it minimizes internal group diversity (Terriquez 2015). This means that the demographics in an organization are homogenous, which detracts different identifying people from joining. Two, these organizations, specifically male members, avoid having difficult conversations around other oppressions (Terriquez 2015). When men of color are not able to analyze and check their male privilege, it exhausts women of color exhausted. As a result, these women are both fighting gender inequality within their organization

and racism in society. Three, such nationalist organizations can marginalize members with different identities (Terriquez 2015). Intersectional theoretical approaches and the recognition of the importance of validating multiple identities allowed this critique to come about.

UndocuQueer folks experience this same struggle, as discussed in the literature review, of being marginalized from LGBTQ and immigrant/Latinx organizations. Ultimately, their obstacles led to their political identity as UndocuQueer. This occurs within the LGBTQ movement, which fights homophobia while still perpetuating racism (Bernstein 2005). On the other hand, Black and Chicano nationalistic organizations marginalized women of color while also pushing out LGBTQ members (Blackwell 2011). This is why intersectionality is so crucial. Intersectionality values this complex view. Terriquez (2015) explains, “intersectional consciousness can inspire commitment to multiple subordinate groups, and anchor activists to a more holistic call for social justice and social change” (348). Intersectionality activism becomes an ideological location to fight multiple oppressions with different aspects of identity politics. Additionally, women of color, like UndocuQueer activists, experience oppression within identity politics.

Intersectionality forces people and organizations to look beyond their privileges and focus on multiple levels of oppression (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1991). It offers solutions to the issues of exclusion that identity politics pose. While initially identity politics was a strategy to make and enact social change, it also created divisions among social movements, because it excluded people who are vital to holistic social justice. By contrast, intersectionality centers multidimensionality, where historical, social, political, and economic context is important. Intersectionality offers a new way to do politics and activism that does not have to exclude identities and social structures from the conversation. Intersectionality activism becomes an

ideological location to fight multiple oppressions with different aspects of identity politics. These issues continue because UndocuQueer individuals experience marginalization based on their queerness, which pushed them to create their own intersectional identities and social movements.

Intersectional research analyzes social, racial, and gender groups to illustrate the existence and function of multiple interlocking structures of oppression. Harvey Wingfield (2008) adds to Williams's (1992) original study on men in female-dominated jobs. While Williams (1992) finds that while women may hit a glass ceiling, White men ride a glass escalator in the nursing field. However, Wingfield (2008) finds that Black men, in fact, do not receive the same benefits as White men. Black men are viewed as posing a threat and having fewer skills; thus, they do not experience the same opportunities and promotions, and they are even mistaken for janitors (Wingfield 2008). Hence, Black men in nursing experience racism, where they do not ride the glass escalator, but they do experience the glass barrier (Wingfield 2008). This empirical study shows the importance of studying how gender, race, and class function together. Without an intersectional approach, research can represent an incomplete analysis of social issues.

Furthermore, Guiffre and Williams (1994) studied sexual harassment in the restaurant business, where sexual interactions between White women and White men are seen as playful banter (Guiffre and Williams 1994). However, White women call the same interactions "sexual harassment" when they take place with male kitchen workers of color. This differentiation provides insights into of race, class, and gender interactions within restaurants. Overall, racial homogenous relationships are privileged as part of workplace culture and society in general (Guiffre and Williams 1994).

Alicea (1997) offers another example of intersectional research. She studies how Puerto Rican women use their kin networks and transnational households to resist racial oppression in

order to create community in the United States (Alicea 1997). These women struggled in the United States, because they thought they were leaving patriarchy behind, but that is not the case (Alicea 1997). They were not able to escape race, class, and gender oppression; thus, these women had to create transnational networks for survival (Alicea 1997). They built networks with other immigrant women and remained friends with women back home. Moreover, immigrant women experience an acculturation process in the United States that can be better understood through intersectional thought (Williams, Alvarez, and Andrade 2002). In the United States, their identities are transformed into gendered and racialized identities through cultural assimilation. Overall, gender, ethnicity, and immigration status work together in the acculturation process, where the gender interaction and social structure reinforce each other (Williams, Alvarez, and Andrade 2002). These examples reflect the shift within sociology to include and listen to diverse voices and acknowledge them in society. Fundamentally, feminist critiques of the canonization of white men created valid critiques of the field that have made change. Women of color theorists and feminist sociologists (and scholars who identify as both) have driven sociology toward the productive space of intersectional research. While these examples do not directly connect to UndocuQueer activism, they illustrate the importance of intersectional research. It shows a more inclusive understanding of the world. This project on UndocuQueer activism adds to this list of intersectional research and will allow society to gain a better understanding of the many mechanisms that affect undocumented and queer immigrants.

In sum, the rise of women-of-color critique does not mean that sociology should not continue to improve its theory. As individuals are influenced by the social structures around them, theorists and scholars are as well. Scholars themselves reproduce oppressions in ways that most do not even think about. While sociology has made progress with race, class, and gender,

there is still much work to do with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual communities. For example, Kessler (1998) offers insight on the intersex identity in the discussion of gender and feminism. Rethinking gender in the traditional terms destabilizes gender, genitals, and sexuality (Kessler 1998). While gender scholars argue the problem of binary ways of thinking in regard to gender expression, sex should also be viewed in the same way, because genitals are socially constructed by doctors and the medical practice world (Kessler 1998). This project, then, is part of an expansion of sociological approaches.

Studies of UndocuQueer activists necessitate intersectional theoretical approaches and can help us understand how these populations experience different marginalizations, such as racism from the LGBTQ community and homophobia from the Latinx or immigrant community. Furthermore, within sociology, while trans folks are apart of social construction in gender and queer studies, intersex studies are also growing. Intersectionality allows more experiences to come to light within reality and academia. This intersectional perspective becomes a lens to understanding the experiences of queer activists of color.

Xicana Feminism

Chicana feminism directly relates to UndocuQueer social movements, because both overlap in their relationship with and concerns for the Mexican/Latinx community regardless of citizen status. Importantly, queer undocumented folks can see their unique experiences represented within Chicana feminism (Bhattacharya 2007). Chicana feminism focuses on colonization, religion, language, land theft, and immigration statuses and centers Chicanas' mixed ancestry between Mexican, Spanish, and Indigenous ancestry (Enns 2010). To offer one example, Cherrie Moraga (2011) uses Xicana with an X to acknowledge the rise of emerging youth politics and to reflect an Indigenous ancestry that was suppressed by colonialism. She

identifies as a “Xicana dyke” to incite consciousness and critical thinking. Here, it is important to note that *Jotería* studies came from Xicana lesbians. Thus, Xicana feminism combines critical race theory, gender studies, and queer theory into an interdisciplinary framework, where Xicana feminists critique the feminist and LGBTQ movements for their racism, the nationalist movement for their sexism, and the leftist movement for both. It is important to note that Chicanas/Xicanas/Chican@s/Xican@s² identify in various ways. Throughout the theoretical framework, Xicanas will be used, but it is a complex issue, as is the case with most identity formations. Everyone holds different perspectives.

Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa are the editors of a collection of essays, poems, and narratives of Black, Native, Asian, and Xicana women, *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981). This book is one of the first to offer a voice to queer women of color. Thus, Moraga and Anzaldúa are founders of Xicana feminism. In their Introduction and contributions to *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), they discuss their lived experiences of living in a classist, sexist, racist, and homophobic society. Those experiences gave them knowledge that could not be gained from books and theory. Moraga (1981) explains, “it has brought me into contact with women who invariably know a hell of a lot than I do about racism, as experienced in the flesh, as revealed in the flesh of their writing” (34). Their theoretical interventions and personal stories about their experiences with oppression helped Xicanas begin to theorize the sort of intersectional perspectives that would come to inform the UndocuQueer movement.

² The contemporary Xicano, Xicana, and Xican@ refer to more recent Xicanismo ideas and ideals (Rios 2008). This identity was born from the globalization era, which led to transnational politics (Rios 2008). For the first time, Xican@ incorporates multidimensional and intersecting identities of race, class, sex, and sexual orientation (Rios 2008).

One of Anzaldúa's major concepts is *mestiza* consciousness, which “help[s] understand how social structures of oppression play out in the lives of those who have mixed ancestry and the continuous shuttling between the physical and psychological borders in which the mestizo people engage” (Bhattacharya 2007:109). *Mestiza* consciousness is “a consciousness of the borderlands” and is the “product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to the another. Being tricultural, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual” (Anzaldúa 1987: 99-100). Therefore, *mestiza* consciousness accepts ambiguity and contradictions. Through experiencing privileged and unprivileged identities and colonized and colonizers' identities, *mestiza* consciousness is born. More importantly, Anzaldúa argues *mestiza* consciousness must challenge the sexist notions in Indigenous and Chicana/o culture (Anzaldúa 1987:106). The silencing of Chicana feminism and Chicana lesbians continues the erasure of these histories, perpetuating the legacy of colonization (Zepeda 2012). In sum, *mestiza* consciousness allows for new paradigms of understanding. As a result, *mestiza* consciousness gives room to the UndocuQueer perspective to accept the complexities and contradictions of being both undocumented and queer. Furthermore, the UndocuQueer identity defies sexist and heterosexist notions in the Xicano and Indigenous communities. Hence, Anzaldúa's *mestiza* consciousness can apply to UndocuQueer folks.

Mestizaje is not just about race; it also takes into consideration the intersections of gender and sexuality, which is why it is directly relevant to the UndocuQueer movement. By “queering” Chicano identity, Moraga and Anzaldúa challenged the foundational heteronormative tenets of the movement and identity (Zepeda 2012). One of Moraga's theoretical concepts is “Queer *Aztlán*,” a reformation of Chicanismo and its definition of *Aztlán*. *Aztlán* refers to the birthplace of Aztecs, which affirms their Indigenous heritage (Muñoz 1989). It has three original meanings

in the Chicano movement: 1) it represents the Chicano “homeland,” which is the Southwestern United States: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado; 2) it also symbolizes self-determination of Chicanos; 3) it reclaims its Indigenous past (Valle 1996; Macías 2010). More importantly, Moraga defines it as “a Chicano homeland that could embrace all its people, including its *jotería*” (Moraga 1993:147). Moraga hopes for “Chicana lesbians and gay men do not merely seek inclusion in the Chicano nation; we seek a nation strong enough to embrace a full range of racial diversities, human sexualities, and expressions of gender” (Moraga 1993:164). Therefore, under their utopic Queer *Aztlán*, UndocuQueer individuals would be embraced and valued. Overall, Moraga sees Queer *Aztlán* as the potential for the liberation of all Xican@. Yet, Arrizon (2006) analyzes Moraga’s Queer *Aztlán* as a form of queering *mestizaje*. Xicanas and queer folks are a part of *Aztlán*. *Aztlán* is a significant part of spirituality and identity politics; thus, queering it becomes a part of queering the *mestizaje*. According to Zepeda (2012), “Queering as such can call for a societal shift.” This theory applies to how UndocuQueer folks are queering the immigrant rights movements; they have been challenging heteronormative notions in the immigrant rights movement. Overall, the UndocuQueer activists expanded and made a cultural shift in the immigrant rights movement.

Xicanas discuss their social locations within the United States. Castillo (1995) coins the term Xicanisma to show the intersectionality between feminism and political involvement. While sexuality is taboo, she argues, “sexuality adds a dimension to their lives but is not separated from nor more significant than their ethnic and class identity” (Castillo 1995:137). Thus, queerness becomes intertwined with race, class, and gender. Xicanas made their own political identity, similar to those in the UndocuQueer movement. Furthermore, Rodríguez (2003) explains Latina/o culture in regard to many geopolitical experiences because Latina/o come from all

backgrounds. It is a history of “*mestizaje, mulatismo*, and their resistance and collusion with the state and national narratives” within their cultural identities (Rodríguez 2003:12). Thus, *Latindad* is about all the dimensions and stories of history, culture, geography, language, and self-named identities. Overall, multiple social structures affect Xicanas and their daily experiences. This is important to UndocuQueer activists, because it discusses geography and physical space; being in the United States drastically changes UndocuQueers’ status and social position. By looking at this research, I bring in how UndocuQueer individuals’ geopolitical positions affect their experiences.

Xicana feminism emphasizes borderland experiences (Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez 2012). Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1981) reimagined history and ancestry as female and queer (Zepeda 2012). Additionally, Anzaldúa introduces her concept of *nepantla*, which means living between worlds or beliefs and rejecting binaries (Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez 2012; Zepeda 2012). Through these dualities, Xicanas find ways to survive oppressions. Anzaladúa (2002) explains: “Living in *nepantla*, the overlapping space between different perceptions and belief systems, you are aware of the changeability of racial, gender, sexual, and other categories rendering the conventional labeling obsolete” (541). Here, Xicanas can gain insight from the insider and outsider subjectivities: “Living in *nepantla* reminds us to learn from our borderland experiences as Chicana scholars and teachers in order to construct knowledge” (Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez 2012:520). Therefore, living within and between the border is socially, politically, and economically significant to Xicanas. For example, according to Zepeda (2012), *jotería-historias* are “*nepantal*,” the in-between spaces, because they are in the constant space of dualisms within the colonial/modern gender system. “As re-occurring theme within Chicano identity and culture is a feeling like one is constantly in a

nepantla state due to this long history of racist and xenophobic oppression” (Zepeda 2012:28).

They reclaim academic spaces by sharing their personal stories and experiences. These experiences also apply to UndocuQueer activists, because they occupy this in-between-ness in two worlds. Being undocumented and queer situates UndocuQueer folks in *nepantla*, in-between-ness. Furthermore, they also experience *nepantla* as immigrants because of their borderland experiences. UndocuQueer individuals are from another country but reside in the United States and are unable to move. Furthermore, these *nepantla* positions inform their activism by organizing around immigration policies; I further elaborate on UndocuQueer political engagement in Chapter 7.

Anzaldúa’s book called *El Mundo Zurdo* discusses a place within the margins, where queer folks and the subaltern coexist (Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez 2012). In this example, queering continues to be a form of decolonization. It is a space for the marginalized and a space for healing and transformation:

We are the queer groups, the people that do not belong anywhere, not in the dominant world or completely within our own respective cultures. Combined we cover so many oppressions. But the overwhelming oppression is the collective fact that we do not fit, and because we do not fit, we are a threat. Not all of us have the same oppressions, but we empathize and identify with each other’s oppressions. We do not share the same ideology, nor do we derive similar solutions. Some of us are leftists, some of us practitioners of magic. Some of us are both. Both these different affinities are not opposed to each other. In *El Mundo Zurdo* I with my own affinities and my people, theirs can live together and transform the planet (Anzaldúa 1983:209).

As I situate UndocuQueer folks, it is important to think about how they do not fit into dominant culture and politics. Just as Anzaldúa imagined, UndocuQueer activists create their own subaltern counterpublic. Moreover, Anzaldúa touches on the solidarity within this world, which UndocuQueer also illustrate and I will fully explain in Chapter 6. In sum, queer folks and all marginalized folks are welcomed in these spaces. “Queer of color scholars have done the work to

build this knowledge by undertaking alternative and creative ways of building, re-defining archives, and queering archives” (Zepeda 2012:22). In this context, Xicana feminism has its own subaltern existence. *El Mundo Zurdo* encompasses UndocuQueer folks because dominant or/and Latinx culture does not accept them; as a result, they would reside in this *Mundo Zurdo*. This is where UndocuQueer folks thrive and change the world.

In this section, I describe Xicana feminism and how they focus on Xicana experiences. Xicanisma is a theoretical perspective, and their personal stories inform the UndocuQueer movement. According to Castillo (1995), Xicanisma comes from a self-named political identity, similar to the UndocuQueer political identity. Xicana theorists, such as Moraga and Anzaldúa, established concepts, such as *mestiza* consciousness and *Aztlán*, that have now been “queered.” These concepts challenge the original meanings and create new ones that include and embrace LGBTQ folks. UndocuQueer activists have done this with the immigrant rights movements, where they have been questioning heteronormative notions and making new social norms in the immigrant rights’ movement. Anzaldúa’s (2002) concept of *nepantla* acknowledges people living between worlds and rejecting binaries; here, UndocuQueer individuals experience this concept. More importantly, *El Mundo Zurdo* directly influences my project, because it describes marginal places for queer folks and how they coexist in dominant and Latinx culture. This is about and for the UndocuQueer community.

Social Movements

Social movement literature consists of studying social change and different social movements. Since UndocuQueer activists are their own social movement, I must situate it within the context of social movement theories. There are multiple perspectives within social movement literature, such as classical theory, political participation, resource mobilization, framing, and

new social movements. According to Blumer (1934), people joined social movements in collective action, which occur because of the lack of norms in society. This perspective sees social movements as unusual collective behaviors, such as cults, fads, mobs, and religious sects. Collective action theorists argue that people rise up because of the societal structural strain through rapid change or breakdown of norms. From this perspective, social movements are only emotional, built-up frustrations driven by fear and anger. On the other hand, political participation focuses on the political environment and opportunity (McAdam 1982). McAdam (1982) looked at how the social movement emerged, developed, and operated—not just through structural strains—as collective behavior. His main contribution to the social movement field was looking at social movements as complex. Overall, he presents a more inclusive and well-rounded view of social movements. From this perspective, social movements emerge because of political opportunities, insurgent consciousness, strength of organization, and broad socioeconomic processes. With social movements, resources are an important aspect of continuing to organize. “Resources include both tangible assets, such as funding, and intangible assets, such as the commitment of participants” (Staggenborg 2011:17). McAdam (1982) contributed a few concepts to the field. He argued that organizers need to maintain a stable organization for the followers; organizers must make decisions about strategies for the diverse followers they have, and a social movement’s success depends on resources.

Within social movement theory, the UndocuQueer movement would be considered new social movements because they are based on identity politics. According to Goodwin (2009), “New social movements are in direct response to postindustrialism, late modernity, advanced capitalism, or postmodernity” (383). With this definition, UndocuQueer would fall under new social movements. Johnson, Larana, and Gusfield (1994) argued, “old movements coalesced

around shared grievances and perceptions of injustice...New social movements display paradoxical relationships between identity and grievances.” From this perspective, identity politics would fall under this theory, such as women, gay-lesbian, environmental, racial, disabled, and age-based social movements. This perspective understands social movements within culture, meaning, and identity. For example, Bernstein (2005) argues that identity politics are about being descriptive not exploratory, where the focus is on identities and their experiences. Therefore, in social movement theory, UndocuQueer activism is part of new social movements. New social movement theory becomes a method to understand why these movements were created. Importantly, through new social movement theory, intersectionality, inclusivity, and diversity become central issues within various social movements. In these movements, community is a construct that has been “associated with ethnic groups, non-Western peoples, poor people, religious minorities, and similarly subordinate groups” (Collins 2010). While UndocuQueer activists would fall under this category of identity-focused social movements, that is not the social movements perspective that I am applying to the UndocuQueer movement. My theoretical framework embraces framing and subaltern counterpublics.

Framing

Since my dissertation emphasizes how UndocuQueer activists use social media to advance their social movements, it is important to discuss social movement theory with a focus on the interplay among the public sphere, counterpublics, and framing. Social movement literature consists of studying social change and different social movements. There is a long history with studies that have emphasized a wide range of conceptual issues, including resources, political process, strategic action, and identity formation. This study narrows its focus to

primarily consider dimensions of issue formation, strategic action, and group identity through a focus on framing and subaltern counterpublics.

Framing is important for my dissertation, because it provides an approach to understanding how UndocuQueer activists use social media. The framing approach is useful to study social media activism because hashtags are forms of frames that center important topics. Within social movement literature, framing is part of a constructionist approach. The main authors in framing are social movement theorists and symbolic interactionists (Staggenborg 2011). Goffman (1974) originally discussed a frame as a way to understand and organize events. Thus, framing in social movement theory becomes a tool for the organizations and organizers. In addition, it helps the audience or society understand the social issue from the perspective of the organizers. Gamson (1992) argues frames “are ways of organizing thinking about political issues. One should ask not whether they are true or false...but about their usefulness in increasing understanding and their economy and inclusiveness in providing a coherent explanation of a diverse set of facts” (Buechler 2011). Thus, framing is a political act for the social movements to gain more support. Through the framing approach, I will gain an understanding of UndocuQueer activists on social media. This framing approach manifests in different ways through social media, where Twitter and Facebook become its organizing space.

The framing approach studies the role of constructing cultural meanings and how they are strategically used to build a movement. For example, Hughey (2015) conducts a framing study with White nationalists and White antiracists, where the former frames their issues around White rights and their fight against oppression; on the other hand, White antiracists frame their concerns in ending racial oppression (Hughey 2015). While both White groups receive benefits from the system in place that privileges whiteness, each group frames their ideology for

drastically different messages supported by different audiences. Framing is an important part of social movements, because it is a mechanism to gain support (Goodwill 2009). Activists construct how and what messages they are showing to the media, which include their goals, solutions, and actions (Hughey 2015). From this perspective, I look for how the UndocuQueer activists frame their hashtags and social movements. I elaborate on this in Chapter 7.

In sum, framing is a tool for social movements. It is an instrument and strategy for organizers. Framing is at the intersection of agency and social structure. For example, Goodwill (2009) explains how the pro-life and pro-choice frame their movements. They are not calling themselves anti-choice or anti-life, because they are trying to appeal to a certain audience. Ultimately, it all depends on social context and social position. Hence, the framing decisions of activists reflect their social beliefs and norms. By studying UndocuQueer activists and how they use social media activism, I study how these activists are trying to appeal to society in order to gain more members and participation, and how these activists frame their intersectional identities and activism through social media.

Public Sphere and the Subaltern Counterpublics

UndocuQueer activists use social media to expand on their social movements by participating in the public sphere and, in turn, creating counterpublic spaces. Habermas (1962) explains the public sphere and its connections to the bourgeois state and how it has been transformed through the elite's press monopolization. The public sphere consists of the state, the economy, and arenas of public discourse (Fraser 1990). It consists of physical or mediated spaces for political discussion and gathering information (Squires 2002). The mass media's manipulation of the publicity created "a plebiscitary follower-mentality on the part of the mediated public" (Habermas 1962:247). This is how the powerful impose their power onto the

powerless. UndocuQueer individuals do not hold power in society; they are undocumented, which means they cannot vote. They are also LGBTQ, which still holds particular negative stigmas. The state targets and discriminates against them, as discussed in the previous chapters. Therefore, for Habermas, it was important to study the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere to understand domination and power or the lack of power to become critically involved in public debate. In this context, we must understand how the UndocuQueer community does not hold power in the public sphere; thus, they must create their own sphere.

While Habermas's main critique of the public sphere focuses on the lack of access depending on class, Fraser challenges women's inaccessibility to the public sphere. Fraser (1990) argues, "women's rights advocates publicly contested both women's exclusion from the public sphere and the privatization of gender politics" (61). Because of this exclusion, marginalized groups, women in this case, built their own counterpublics (Fraser 1990). There are also many different competing counterpublics (Fraser 1990). These spaces rejected the bourgeois public sphere and embraced alternative forms of public speech and political participation (Fraser 1990).

Fraser calls these alternative spaces subaltern counterpublics, where women, people of color, LGBTQ, and worker communities find "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (67). Thus, marginalized communities forge their own spaces and discussions, where they are able to center their voices and experiences. Moreover, they create new concepts and terms to explain their social reality, which decreases these marginalized communities' disadvantages within the larger, official public sphere (Fraser 1990). Overall, counterpublics are reactions to exclusions from the dominant public sphere. Since the UndocuQueer community has been excluded from the

dominant public sphere, they have their own subaltern counterpublic, where they hold their own discussions, create culture, and demonstrate political engagement.

Scholars have applied subaltern counterpublics within social media and activist contexts. Squires (2002) rethinks the public sphere and counterpublics from the Black perspective, and she argues that there are three types of counterpublics: enclave, counterpublic, and satellite. An enclave public hides “counterhegemonic ideas and strategies in order to survive or avoid sanctions, while internally producing lively debate and planning” (Squires 2002:448). A counterpublic engages in wider politics and learns strategies to use in its social movements (Squires 2002). A satellite public separates itself from other publics as a form of self-determination, not because of oppressive relations (Squires 2002). In sum, counterpublics have different relationships with the dominant public spheres. This research offers new concepts to compare to the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic. UndocuQueer individuals may have multiple counterpublics; one, to hide their ideas and beliefs to survive in the dominant public sphere and in their own communities; two, to engage and educate broader society; and three, to choose to separate themselves. This situates how I look at the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic.

Furthermore, Squires (2002) traces the history of Black public spheres from the slavery era to the Reconstructive era to the civil rights era, and to the Nation of Islam. Squires (2002) situates enslaved people’s resistance and revolt, even within restricted spaces in repressive systems, as an initial form of counterpublic. Additionally, sit-ins, boycotts, peaceful civil disobediences, Black art, Black slang, and Black pride were forms of counterpublics in which, Black organizers wanted to change the minds of dominant publics (Squires 2002). Last, the Nation of Islam serves as a Black satellite public that maintains separate spaces and worldviews

(Squires 2002). Overall, Squires (2002) furthers the understanding of counterpublics by making them socially fluid and illustrating multiple aspects of Black life. Interestingly, UndocuQueer activists also use different tactics and strategies to engage in dominant and public discussion.

Furthermore, Travers (2003) discusses feminist counterpublics in cyberspace as new ways of creating subaltern parallel counterpublics in hopes of creating social change. Travers (2003) argues, “cyberspace provides feminists with unique opportunities for establishing visible feminist publics, for creating feminist spaces without ‘going away’ from the ‘general’ public space” (231). Feminist publics have two purposes: one, to create a space for dialogue within the feminists counterpublic without being ignored or silenced; and two, to share information and awareness with the dominant publics (Travers 2003). Thus, feminist counterpublics make a parallel structure via the Internet. Travers (2003) claims that this parallel feminist subaltern counterpublic could link many publics. This research specifically ties Internet and subaltern counterpublics; previous research centered on physical spaces and organizations. This opens the door to understanding how social media can create and spread different subaltern counterpublics. For that reason, UndocuQueer activists and their use of social media do represent subaltern counterpublic.

There are two more examples of counterpublics important for this discussion. Johnston (2000) connects the Mexican’s Indigenous Zapatista rebels to employing democratic subaltern counterpublics. Subaltern counterpublics have two objectives: they focus resistance in one area within the counterpublic, and they revitalize democracy between the public sphere and oppressions. The Zapatistas enact both features with their Indigenous identities and its democratic principles (Johnston 2000). Thus, with their organizing, they have created subaltern counterpublics. This research also offers the idea of activists being able to engage in two

different counterpublics. It does not have to be limited to one space for marginalized communities. As a result, UndocuQueer activists may have more than one counterpublic.

Additionally, Dunn (2010) discusses counterpublics from the queer perspectives of remembering those lost to heteronormative violence. In Laramie, Wyoming, Matthew Shepard was brutally murdered and tortured because he was gay, which created a “transformative movement in ongoing discourse over the status of LGBT people within American society” (Dunn 2010:612). Because of the violence, the community established a queer counterpublic and shared memories revolving around his death and how homophobia is culturally sanctioned (Dunn 2010). The LGBTQ community forced this horrendous event into public discussion in a country that refuses to acknowledge its oppressive characteristics. This form of counterpublic-centered action led President Barack Obama to sign the Hate Crime Prevention Act in 2009. Actions within counterpublics have potential to enact social change beyond the counterpublic itself, even if it is a virtual platform such as Twitter. This research proposes a queer subaltern counterpublic, and how they used online spaces to make social change. Dunn (2010) offers another example of why and how UndocuQueer individuals need and spread their subaltern counterpublics.

In research that bears direct relation to my project, Jackson and Welles (2015) examine Twitter hashtag #myNYPD used by the New York police department to relate to the public. The hashtag was created by the police department to garner police support and positive media for the police. It was instead used by activists, and everyday Twitter users to focus on racial profiling and police misconduct; thus, the hashtag created counterpublics. “Using #myNYPD as an example of the evolving power of counterpublics, we identify Twitter as a new and rapidly evolving space for counterpublic protests and discourse, a space that offers unique possibilities for public debate among activists, citizens, and media-makers seeking to define and redefine the

role of the state in civil society” (Jackson and Welles 2015). Thus, as this research shows, Twitter provides space for counterpublics and alternative stories. Tweeters who retweeted challenges against police brutality built a democratic counterpublic. In sum, these counterpublic studies show that these spaces are created out of exclusion from hegemonic spaces in search of inclusion and social change. While #UndocuQueer does not come from the state or one of its institutions, it does explain how powerfully social media can be used, depending on the group. This even relates to framing and how it is interconnected with subaltern counterpublics. UndocuQueer’s hashtags and their subaltern counterpublic are also intertwined, because they inform each other. For example, the UndocuQueer community created the hashtag #UndocuQueer, and other hashtags such as #FUCKICE, to frame their social concerns in society. These hashtags also establish community bonds in the UndocuQueer counterpublic. I further explain this in the results chapters.

In conclusion, I began by explaining how the rich and powerful dominate the public, which excludes marginalized communities from fully engaging in political discourse. As a result of this conflict, Fraser (1990) creates the concept of subaltern counterpublics, where these marginalized communities establish their own public spheres that exist along with the dominant public sphere. Squires (2002) argues that there can be more than one subaltern counterpublic, and each has its own objectives. Similarly, Johnston (2000) explains how the Mexican Indigenous Zapatista’s subaltern counterpublic has two objectives. Travers (2003) discusses how feminist counterpublics are now in cyberspace, and they are advocates for social change. Lastly, Jackson and Welles (2015) examines Twitter hashtag #myNYPD used by the police, and how it was co-opted through social media by activists who changed its frame. Hence, these examples show how researchers have added to and complicated Fraser’s (1990) original concept of the

subaltern counterpublic. In this field, I also contribute by studying the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic. This is an intersectional subaltern counterpublic, which occurs on social media. This counterpublic also has multiple uses of its community. I continue to illustrate these points and how it contributes to this field in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter Overview

We cannot discuss UndocuQueer folks without acknowledging their experiences come from a multidimensional space. Theories of intersectionality enable us to better acknowledge and define the intertwining perspectives of identities. As a result, intersectionality provides a key point of entry into analyzing the public media of UndocuQueer activists. Importantly, Xicana feminism, which was founded and established by Xicana lesbians, laid the theoretical groundwork for the intersectional claims that would later be made by the UndocuQueer movement. Writings by key theorists like Moraga and Anzaldúa come from the intersectional spaces of experience in those margins—they are among the first theorists to engage the sort of queer Latinx intersections that are at the heart of the UndocuQueer movement. Unlike their foremothers, UndocuQueer activists are engaging in the public sphere through social media. Through it, they have created intersectional subaltern counterpublics. Because of their marginalization from the dominant public sphere, these activist movements create counterpublics that embrace their intersectional social positions. From those spaces, they reach out to other marginalized folks. A focus on the subaltern utilization of the public sphere offers insight in how and why UndocuQueer activists are using social media as a tactic to further their social movements. In the end, an understanding of the history of women-of-color feminisms and, particularly, queer Xicana theoretical interventions, combined with a focus on the subaltern

utilization of such public spheres as Twitter, offers insight in how and why UndocuQueer activists are using social media as a tactic to further their social movement.

Chapter 4 - METHODOLOGY

Since immigration and LGBTQ issues are complex and sensitive and UndocuQueer activists already experience marginalization in society, it is imperative that I do not replicate these systems of oppression through this research. Therefore, I use a critical methodology that is participant-centered. This chapter explains my two-pronged methodology: *testimonios* and Twitter data. First, I explain my methodology as critical/Xicana feminism with a focus on the feminist methodological principles that I bring into my research. Through this approach, I aim to shift from the dominant narrative to an interactive research process. This is consciousness raising work and recognizes the researcher as a person and part of the analysis. In my work, I will not solely focus on women's experiences instead; I will shift the narrative to marginalized communities. I describe my methodological framework of Xicana feminism with a focus on *testimonios*. Additionally, I explain *testimonios*, also known as oral histories, as my first research method. I am also employing a critical discourse analysis of UndocuQueer activists' tweets. The findings from the *testimonios* I conducted guided how I analyzed the tweets, because they helped inform my data gathering process.

Methodological Framework

Xicana feminism is part of my theoretical and methodological frameworks. I use a theoretical and epistemological perspective grounded in critical feminisms that are influenced by their lived experiences and thoughts of women of color. By decentering white male knowledge and acknowledging the experiences of oppressed people, everyone gains valuable knowledge. Research on UndocuQueer activism requires the nuanced challenge notions of objectivity while highlighting aspects of positionality that most classical sociological thought does not provide. Following the trajectory of Xicana feminists, who challenge the traditional hierarchy of

knowledge production, I advance the work by centering UndocuQueer activists as legitimate holders of knowledge. Understanding UndocuQueer voices provides insight into society's relationships with queer and undocumented communities. Overall, a Xicana feminist theoretical framework interrogates social inequalities within race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and any other identities (Bhattacharya 2007:21). Therefore, using Xicana feminism allows a space to challenge and critique all oppressive social structure that Xicanas face in their lives. Now I am contributing to the field by considering factors of citizenship and sexuality by learning about the UndocuQueer community. Therefore, critical feminism, more specifically Xicana feminism, becomes useful and necessary. It recognizes and challenges unequal power relations, and it validates and develops alternative histories. This framework becomes useful for discussing and working with UndocuQueer activists, whose existence is involved with resistance on multiple fronts within mainstream social structures.

Prominent feminist theorists propose four main principles of feminist methodology (Harding 1987; Harding 1991; Reinharz 1992; Ramazanoğlu & Holland 2002; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser 2004). Here, I demonstrate how I follow these feminist methodological principles. One key feminist methodological principle is to shift focus from men to women, and by extension to broader studies of human diversity (DeVault 1996; Harding 1987; Nielsen 1990; Harding 1991; Reinharz 1992). I am applying this principle by studying UndocuQueer activists, instead of women only; I shift my focus to complex marginalized communities. Another feminist methodological principle is sharing power through interactive research processes, which attempts to protect women and participants' welfare (Reinharz 1992; DeVault 1996; Stacy 1998). Feminist researchers acknowledge their position of power as researchers and do not want to overstep. Instead, they focus on sharing power within the research process in a manner that

validates the knowledge coming from the collective experience of marginalized groups. I implemented this principle by conducting *testimonios* of UndocuQueer activists, which I discuss further in the next paragraph, acknowledging my power and privileges from the beginning and working with UndocuQueer community to better understand their answers and codes afterwards. The third principle of feminist methodology is consciousness raising and social change for women. Becoming aware of people's own oppression is the first step to social change. I use this principle by presenting the UndocuQueer social movement. I am an advocate. I urge the reader to think about social and political implications and call to action in the conclusion. Lastly, feminist methodology goes beyond the subject matter: it recognizes the researcher as a person and an important part of the analysis. I exhibit this through my subjectivity statement in the research. I am part of the research and this is a social concern for me. I watched Immigration and Customs Enforcement take away my uncles and rip my family apart. This is a meaningful topic and holds a place in my heart. In sum, feminist methodology focuses on all women's experiences, taking care of their participants, making social change, and including themselves and their social positions into the research.

Testimonios Methods

Oral histories, or *testimonios*, serve as a window into a person's life with a focus on a wide range of topics, anywhere from the person's birth into the present. According to Kwan (2008), "Oral history is a method of narrative inquiry that seeks to collect and analyze the stories people told about their lived experiences of past events or major turning points in their lives (657). They are also known as in-depth life histories, life histories, biographical interviews, and personal narratives (Reinharz 1992). Feminists view oral history as crucial because:

- 1) it develops feminist theory, 2) it expressed affinity and admiration for other women, 3) it contributes to social justice, 4) it facilitates understanding among social classes, and 5)

it explores the meaning of events in the yes of women” (Reinharz 1992: 134). [Feminist oral histories illuminate] “the connections between biography, history, and social structure (Reinharz 1992: 131).

These oral histories are intertwined with the participants’ emotions, feelings, and attitudes toward the experiences they narrate (Kwan 2008). Bernal (1998) explains: “Oral histories provide a special opportunity to learn the unique perceptions and interpretations of individuals, particularly those from groups whose history has been traditionally excluded or distorted” (115). Moreover, oral histories allow space for “information from and about people who are less likely to create written records and provide archival material” (Reinharz 1992:131). This method allows people to speak for themselves (Reinharz 1992; Bhattacharya 2007). By using oral histories for UndocuQueer activists, *testimonios* give them space to challenge mainstream views of the undocumented and LGBTQ community. *Testimonios* allows researchers to understand and construct stories based on the individuals’ experience. Hence, UndocuQueer activists speak for themselves. Furthermore, oral histories increase the awareness of marginalized communities (Reinharz 1992). *Testimonios* even give participants an “understanding of their own story through re-telling and interpreting their experiences” (Bhattacharya 2007:80).

These oral traditions have deep roots in Latin America. Xicana feminists have converted many of these into oral histories, or *testimonios* (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012). Beginning in the 1970s, *testimonios* became a literary mode that grew from the liberation efforts and geopolitical resistance movements in Third World nations (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). *Testimonios* are a genre “that exposes brutality, disrupts silencing, and builds solidarity among women of color” (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012:363). They are also considered powerful and valid “as a pedagogical, methodological, and activists approach to social justice that transgress traditional paradigms in academia” (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012:363).

There are many forms of *testimonios*, such as speeches, newsletter columns, songs, spoken word poems, other forms of writing, or other forms of first-person narratives (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona (2012) explain that “*testimonio* differs from oral history or autobiography in that it involves the participant in a critical reflection of their personal experience within particular sociopolitical realities” (364). In other words, *testimonios* become an avenue in which participants can gain a deeper understanding of self and, in sociological contexts, can collaborate with the researcher to take a step toward social change (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012). This method has mainly been utilized by Xicanas, because it is embedded in a familiar cultural tradition and opens ways of understanding and learning for our community (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012).

Furthermore, *testimonios* embrace social change and political consciousness. *Testimonios* bring light to an issue or call to action; it is intentional and political (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). Additionally, “the practice of *testimonio* [is] a legacy of reflexive narrative of liberation used by people throughout the world” (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012:525). In Chicana/o studies, *testimonios* comes from the liberationist pedagogy of Paulo Freire. Telling a story liberates the person telling the story and in turn produces awareness and empowerment for the audience (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). *Testimonios* are “an acknowledgement of the revolutionary aspect of literacy” (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012:527). Importantly, *testimonios* are not secrets; they are political stances for justice and redemption (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). According to Calderon, Bernal, Huber, Malagon, and Velez (2012), “*Testimonio* in education represents an important methodological tool inserts Xicana voices and enacts new forms of political agency, allowing “for different possibilities and interpretations of what exists in the gaps and silences but is often not seen or heard” (525). *Testimonios* have been

powerful for documenting and understanding violent periods in Latin American history (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). Prieto and Villenas (2012) contend, “*Testimoniantes* (the narrators of the text) bear witness to injustice and violence inflicted on their communities” (415).

Ultimately, *testimonios* become a bridge for Xicanxs’ identities, communities, and educational practices (Bernal, Burciaga, Carmona 2012). For example, in her book, *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, Rigoberta Menchu argues for *testimonio* as collective discourse (Zepeda 2012). Overall, *testimonios* allow for generations of underrepresent communities to rise up across time and place. Menchu discusses the military oppression in Guatemala, where she gives insight on the collective experience of her community, using her story to witness and speak out against the injustices they experienced. *Testimonios*, then, are more than just stories. They offer interventions into social and political arenas that have relevance to current research. Additionally, the process of sharing *testimonios* creates genuine connections between the researcher and community members; the activity of data gathering and analysis therefore becomes reciprocal (Bernal, Burciaga, and Carmona 2012).

In the United States, *testimonios* have been important tools through which Xicana/os can express multiple marginalizations. For example, in *Gay Latino Histories/Dying to be Remembered* by Roque Ramirez, gay Latinos struggling with their families and the state, while Moraga and Anzaldúa’s previously referenced *This Bridge Called my Back* includes multiple *testimonios* that express Xicana agency and a call for intersectional representation and analysis. Even undocumented youth have employed *testimonios* by writing short narratives about their experiences. Examples can be found in the University of Southern California’s *Handbook on Undocumented Students and Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out* (Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). Thus, *testimonios* are central to unity,

self-naming, and empowerment for the participants and are also relevant research materials.

While some use *testimonios*, testimonies, oral histories, and narratives interchangeably, they differ in intent. *Testimonios* connect Xicanas to their roots and focus on liberation (Prieto and Villenas 2012; Reyes and Curry Rodriguez 2012). According to Reyes and Curry Rodriguez (2012), “Unlike cultural hegemony of empiricist research, the *testimonio* provides both a methodology and a theory for hope and liberation” (532). This deep cultural significance is vital in continuing the collection and sharing of UndocuQueer activists’ stories.

Testimonios Data Collection

I gathered three *testimonios* from UndocuQueer activists to gain have an in-depth understanding of their personal journeys and what it means to be UndocuQueer. I friended and messaged these UndocuQueer activists on Facebook. I interviewed Yosimar Reyes, Shaila Ramos, and Alessandro Negrete. The first two interviews were conducted in the San Jose State University’s Martin Luther King Jr.’s Library, and the last interview was completed via Skype’s video chat feature. Their *testimonios* ranged from one hour to an hour and thirty minutes. I remained in contact with the participants via Facebook and text. Our first meetings were held through phone calls as an attempt to get to know each other and build rapport. I used this space as a check-in with each participant as well as a way of introducing the participants to my research objectives. I sent them the interview guide³ on Facebook, so they could think about their responses ahead of time. Since this narrative inquiry is an oral history, I conducted a conversational interview, where the relationship is meant to become open and about power sharing (Bhattacharya 2007). The *testimonios* were recorded and transcribed with permission from each participant. I used Dragon Speak software to transcribe. As I listened to the interview,

³ The interview guide is in the appendix.

I spoke into the microphone, and it transcribed the interview. While the software typed the words, I checked the transcript for accuracy. The participants consented for me to use their names and Twitter accounts for my analysis. Furthermore, I e-mailed the transcripts and themes to each participant. They all responded by approving their comments and themes.

***Testimonios* Data Analysis**

The three *testimonios* have different themes. After analyzing the oral histories, I organized them into fourteen different topics: activism, allies, art, Black Latinx, coming out stories, families, government, hopes, ICE, identities, intersectionality, immigration, and social media. Participants had similar answers about their immigration stories and their parents' immigration stories. All three activists had little memory of migrating and shared commonality in their parents' reasons to immigrate, which was the desire for a better life. However, they had different reactions and interactions with the police or ICE: two feared them and one did not. They also shared similarities related to their educational journey from high school to college. This was actually closely related to their activism; they became activists or interested in social justice work in college. However, their activism looks differently for each of them. In terms of their identities, they named several, at the center of which were "undocumented" and "queer." One activist did not believe that undocumented was an identity but more of a social condition. Additionally, they all had two coming out stories: as gay and undocumented. They discussed their first memory of the idea, concept, and identity of UndocuQueer. All of them dealt with issues of Blackness or colorism within the Latinx community as well as issues with the recent political climate and Trump administration. Importantly, they revealed the multilayered benefits of social media: that it connects networking, self-marketing, activism, and community. Similar to the literature review's discussion of depictions of the "good" and "bad" immigrant narrative,

they did not believe that their parents were the main problem; they believed that their parents were the original dreamers. Lastly, they hoped that the UndocuQueer movement continues to grow and continues to be inclusive. These themes informed the social media critical discourse analysis. I focus on three fundamental topics from what I stated above that also connected to the Twitter data. The following chapters focus on The State, The Public Sphere, and the Counterpublic, Intersectional/Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublics, and The Multipurpose of Social Media. Lastly, the word cloud below contains the most frequently used words in the *testimonios*.



Figure 1. *Testimonios* Word Cloud

Critical Discourse Analysis Methods

This dissertation combines two methods social media critical discourse analysis (CDA) and oral history (*testimonios*). CDA allows the analysis of text and spoken word; it “allow[s] us to reveal more precisely how speakers and authors use language and grammatical features to

create meaning, to persuade people to think about events in a particular event, sometimes even to seek to manipulate them while at the same concealing their communicative intentions” (Machin and Mayr 2012:1). With this method, I was able to critically analyze language and how it maintains and regulates society. CDA can reveal underlying ideologies of texts or language (Machin and Mayr 2012). Moreover, this method helps us to understand political and ideological investments and is dedicated to political intervention and social change (Machin and Mayr 2012). CDA makes room for understanding the social construction of language and how it shapes society and how society shapes it (Machin and Mayr 2012). CDA focuses on “why and how these features are produced and what possible ideological goals they might serve” (Machin and Mayr 2012:5). The critical analysis, in CDA, means revealing these ideas and assumptions in the texts (Machin and Mayr 2012). Through CDA, the focus becomes on “how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse. So, the analysis can show how the kinds of power relations involved in racism are maintained through new texts and political speeches” (Machin and Mayr 2012:6). With CDA, I can better understand and analyze hashtags used by UndocuQueer activists.

Critical Discourse Analysis Collection

Since social media activism is a key part of today’s activist movements, I used the social platform of Twitter, one of the most important online platforms used by UndocuQueer activists. Twitter’s information is largely public and accessible (Johnson 2016). It also has a search function for keywords or hashtags. Similar to Jackson and Welles (2015), I downloaded tweets. Once downloaded, archival software allows researchers to search, track, store, and retrieve tweets by date, time, and sometimes location (Johnson 2016). While Jackson and Welles (2015) used a Twitter streaming application-programming interface (API), I used NVivo, a qualitative

research tool, and NCapture, a Google chrome application that captures tweets, to download all the data from each platform and to code the data.

To undertake this part of my research, I logged into Twitter went to the search box, and typed in the subject box. I began with the hashtag #UndocuQueer, and I found other hashtags through its connection to #UndocuQueer. I also searched through accounts and hashtags from the prominent UndocuQueer leaders on Twitter by searching the top tweets and latest tweets. In addition, I pulled from any accounts that had bios identifying as UndocuQueer. Using both strategies meant that I was gathering data from the UndocuQueer’s “highest influencers” on Twitter—the accounts with the largest number of followers.

I began my search with the UndocuQueer word/identity, which gave me a list of tweets and account handles that I downloaded into NVivo. Next, I went through these tweets to find what other hashtags people were using along with UndocuQueer. Then, I repeated the previous step again, where I searched and downloaded tweets from the new hashtag. Moreover, I also found Twitter accounts of people who were active within the movement and/or who frequently tweetedretweeted UndocuQueer-related hashtags even though they might not have referenced UndocuQueer in their bios. I downloaded all of their Tweets from their public pages and added them to my database. Through this recursive process, I gathered over 200,000 tweets from 2011 to March 2018.

Overall, I downloaded data from sixty-six Twitter accounts, many of which had over two thousand tweets. Figure 2 below illustrates a table with all of the Twitter account information. Additionally, I downloaded seventeen hashtags: #EndDeportations, #EndDetention, #ICEoutofla, #ICEoutofsfsf, #ICEoutofCA, #Ni1Mas, #Not1More, #StopICE, #StoptheRaids, #UndocuJoy, #UndocumentedAndUnafraind, #UndocuQueer, and #UndocuTrans. I had seven

twitter searches: UndocuQueer, Long Beach UndocuQueer, DACA, DREAM Act Now, queer and immigrant, queer and immigrants, and queer and undocumented.

Twitter Account	Tweets downloaded	Number of followers
@emergingUS	1,057	8499
@AdoniasArevalo	2,968	439
@les_beat_junky	3,232	671
@amyyuhui_lin	409	205
@ArcusLGBT	3,229	13,105
@AriannaBeee	3,082	10,763
@ASPIREJustice	2,265	6,236
@CIYJA	2,331	1,404
@CMendess3	929	76,991
@DREAMerJ_D	4,206	7,023
@CALimmigrant	3,215	7,053
@CultureStrike	3,190	3,269
@DeborahAlemu	1,795	904
@DefineAmerican	3,121	100,254
@EBIYC	85	169
@thcclatinxcholr	2,349	389
@eperezpreciado	3,107	1,307
@EgleMalin	1,065	403
@TheGranVarones	3,201	1,315
@emeronobaro	3,186	21,165
@Erikandiola	6,126	15,632
@familiatglm	575	1,255
@favianna	3,210	12,829
@GLSENResearch	3,242	5,314
@HeatherEditor	301	351
@LACentComm	532	159

@huffpostqueer	3,155	317,145
@HRC	3,011	825,757
@iceoutofca	358	2,819
@IceOutOfLA	1,030	732
@immigrantpower	2,960	6,236
@JennicetG	3,853	4,907
@jeromeajones21	3,403	217
@jitzelv	719	331
@joealey	3,231	547
@jorgexo	3,217	646
@joseiswriting	2,944	100,236
@iloveluca82	3,218	476
@julio1983	3,212	1,472
@LEA_CA	3,230	1,748
@luigimonstre	2,294	606
@LA_IYC	317	3,316
@LuisGarciaNC	10	77
@maricelaguilar	3,531	1,084
@MasonDREAMers	1,843	872
@mitzieep09	1,855	334
@MonseLGBTQ	1,424	431
@OCAD_CHI	3,532	3,674
@prernaplapl	2,092	7,879
@queerDEP	3,190	2,255
@QueerXiChisme	3,184	17,818
@resilienceoc	1,837	1,943
@SissiYado	2,304	251
@SFVmovement	1,249	414
@_LaTania	3,378	2,645

@MigrantScribble	1,783	568
@TheTinaVasquez	1,830	11,513
@TDRC_CSUF	264	290
@UndocuBlack	2,599	6,348
@Undocumedia	1,907	1,074,325
@UndocuTales	297	208
@UndocuQueerBook	21	92
@UNITEDDREAM	3,048	81,728
@YCarrillo4	3,164	1,434
@YoSoyYosi	262	417

Figure 2. Twitter Data Table

From these accounts, I coded and analyzed 609 tweets with the hashtags of #UndocuQueer and #UndocuTrans. Because of the way Twitter works, there were many that were more than just plain text. Figure 3 is a table with all the information. Additionally, Figure 4 illustrates a table on tweets according to year from 2011 to 2018. Lastly, Figure 5 shows a world cloud with the highest-frequency words from all the tweets.

Type of Tweet	Number Times Found
Donations/petitions	20
Websites	30
Event pages/flyers	39
Videos	39
Articles	66
Images	143
Plain Tweets	272

Figure 3. Table of Types of Tweets

Year of Tweets	Number of Tweets
2011	3
2012	36
2013	92
2014	152
2015	53
2016	54
2017	135
2018	84

Figure 4. Table on Year of Tweets.

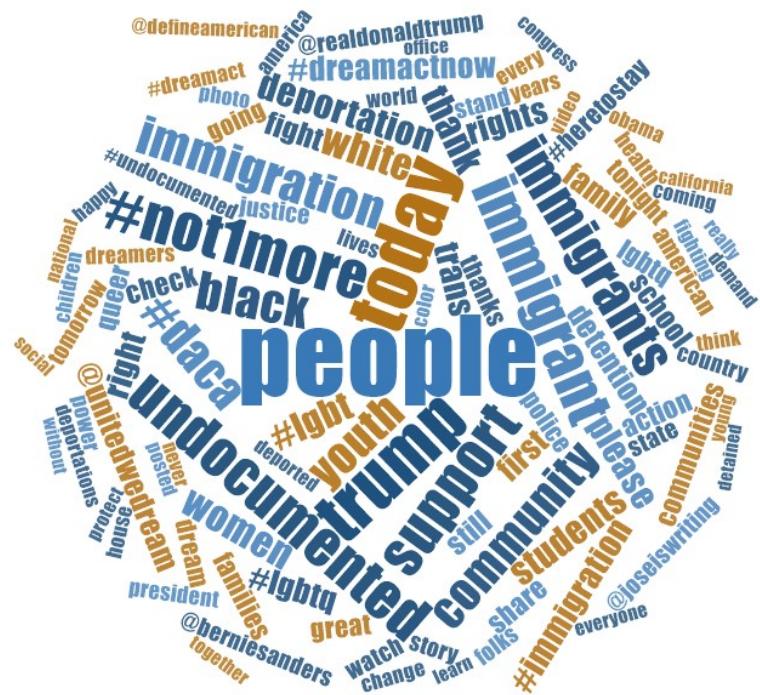


Figure 5. Tweets Word Cloud

Critical Discourse Analysis Data Analysis

The findings from the *testimonios* I conducted informed how I analyzed the tweets, as the *testimonios* helped inform my Twitter data gathering process. From over 200,000 tweets that included these terms, I narrowed my focus to the tweets that created the intersecting counterpublics of the undocumented and LGBTQ communities. Thus, I focused on #UndocuQueer and #UndocuTrans. As a result, I ran a text search in NVivo for UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans in all the above of Twitter accounts, hashtags, and Twitter searches. This resulted in a new dataset of 432 tweets from 62 sources on UndocuQueer and 46 tweets from 15 sources on UndocuTrans⁴. The date time range is from 2011 to 2018. As noted, these tweets had videos, articles, and images that made coding more complicated. I used NVivo to code these texts. When I clicked the link, it opened on the Internet browser. Then, I saved it on Evernote, which saves the link and how the web page looks as is at the time of the downloading. With NVivo, I also ran queries for each source of Twitter account, hashtags, *testimonios*/oral histories, and Twitter searches as word clouds. My focus was the codebook I gathered from the *testimonios* as the guiding framework for the social media critical discourse analysis. Then, I went through each tweet from the new data set, and I coded it on NVivo. I also had access to the mentions, locations, bios, number of followers, number of following, and location coordinates.

Limitations

I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with a social media critical discourse analysis of UndocuQueer activists and hashtags. There is still uncharted ground. Working with Twitter to collect data presents an issue of temporality since people can create posts and proceed to delete them an hour later leaving no record behind. With this in mind, I also

⁴ This data set will be in the appendix.

cannot download the information to NVivo and NCapture unless it exists as a “screenshot.” Thus, throughout the process of downloading tweets and posts, there is a chance of missing key information and data retrieval; nothing can be done to reconstruct the deleted information.

The social media software offer different methods in downloading tweets. These software tools can also only download three thousand tweets at a time. It also does not guarantee to download all the hashtags. The only way to download all the tweets from a hashtag or particular time period is by buying the tweets from a private company. I looked into the price for the #UndocuQueer, and it would cost thousands of dollars to obtain. This was not an option for me. As a result, I addressed this problem by downloading tweets from accounts instead of hashtags. I focused on the most influential leaders on Twitter. That is how I ended up with the 66 Twitter accounts. I mediated this limitation to the best of my ability.

The next limitation of conducting a social media critical discourse analysis, there is a risk of coding and analyzing information from a disconnected perspective. I addressed this by combining my social media analysis with my *testimonios*. Furthermore, this is where my subjectivity statement becomes important because I fully acknowledge the limitations of my own research perspective. The findings of my study are also restricted to UndocuQueer activists; it cannot be generalizable or replicated from the positivistic approach, which for some is a limitation of oral histories.

Chapter Overview

I began this section with a methodological review of feminism and critical feminism, which relates to the critique of positivism and objectivity. Historically, academic knowledge comes from a narrow perspective of those in power; thus, research used to be male, white, heterosexual, and cis-centered. This knowledge and background is important, because my work

continues that critical feminist methodology and epistemology. It is imperative to understand the work that has decentered the white male experience as universal. As a result, UndocuQueer research gives a voice to diverse and marginalized folks. Furthermore, I review the importance of my methodological framework of Xicana feminism and *testimonios*. Given the intersectional nature of UndocuQueer activists, this perspective of telling important untold stories and speaking truth to injustices is central to my work. Additionally, I explained my data collection processes with these *testimonios* and Twitter data. The following chapters analyze 14 patterns from 3 *testimonios* and over 600 tweets divided into three chapters: The State, The Public Sphere, and the Counterpublic, Intersectional/Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublics, and The Multipurpose Use of Social Media.

Chapter 5 - THE STATE, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND THE COUNTERPUBLIC

States are macro-structures, organizations, and institutions, with many different components. Sometimes, the state is viewed as a rational actor in a role of improving society, but at times, the state is an exploiter of the working class and the oppressor of marginalized populations. However, regardless of the state's role, it remains a conglomerate and geographically powerful entity. Weber's classic definition focuses on legitimate means of violence: "The state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be" (Weber 1965). Hence, the state demands authority to survive. As different societal groups fight for power, inevitably there is friction and violence as one group struggles to assert dominance and authority over others. Sometimes this means the state must inflict state violence. By situating this perspective on the state, we can discuss the UndocuQueer movement as well as individuals within the movement and how the state impacts these communities. It is important to consider the multiple roles of states and social movements of marginalized populations in relation to political issues at the time of their struggles.

UndocuQueer folks are marginalized from engaging in the public sphere and were forced into making their own counterpublic. My data illustrate how the state and its anti-immigration policies affect UndocuQueer folks. When this is combined with their lack of formal political participation and general legal vulnerability, it creates significant marginalization for UndocuQueer people. This marginalization leads UndocuQueer activists to engage in the formation, maintenance, and utilization of an alternative public sphere, a subaltern counterpublic that is most readily visible through their Twitter activity and confirmed through their *testimonios*.

I begin this chapter by demonstrating how my participants reflect on their undocumented identity and experiences. Here, I focus on how individual UndocuQueer experiences with fear and secrecy are state formed. Ultimately, through fear and anxiety, members of the undocumented community rely on each other. Next, I highlight how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has influenced the UndocuQueer community by causing fear and anxiety. Through isolation and secrecy from the state and public sphere, they create, what I call and describe as, the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic. My data also reveal how important it is to the UndocuQueer community to have their own public sphere, where they can control their undocumented and queer narratives. Lastly, I show how UndocuQueer counterpublic engages in the public sphere through hashtags, which leads to political participation and strengthens the bonds of the UndocuQueer community. Ultimately, I reveal how #FUCKICE gives a sense of solidarity and community. Overall, social media contributes to political conversations (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016), and the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic do this through #FUCKICE.

Undocumented Identities

My research contributes to a richer understanding of the UndocuQueer community. The *testimonios* give a deep understanding of their complex identities and experiences from an empowered and collaborative perspective. I begin with the undocumented identity because I show how this identity while different for each person also contains key identifiable themes. For some undocumented folks, their identity means hiding and keeping that part of their life a secret to protect their own feelings and the feelings of those closest to them. Two of the participants from the *testimonios* share this experience. The first of the three *testimonios* I discuss is from Shaila Ramos, a twenty-eight-year-old from Acapulco, Mexico, who currently lives in Santa

Clara, California. Ramos has brown skin, dark big curls, wore dark red lipstick, and exuded confidence as we talked. As we began, she told me about her background. She studied Social and Behavioral Studies at a local community college called De Anza College. She also studied Community Studies at University of California-Santa Cruz. During our interview, Ramos was so passionate and eager to tell me about her story. She explains the fear and secrecy surrounding her undocumented identity:

the undocumented part was instilled in me that I should not share that, that I shouldn't share where I'm from. As a child, I never understood why I couldn't share that I was undocumented. And I should be scared of the police because they could deport us. From a very young age, I knew what that meant. I didn't know where they were going but I knew there was a displacement of people that I love. Because my parents explained it to me that, that is what happens when you interact with the law.

Ramos's commentary highlights the fact that a primary aspect of being undocumented is the fear of being deported, which is a fear distinctly absent for native born individuals. Here, I define deportation as, according to Golash-Boza (2015), "the corded removal of a noncitizen from a host country" (6). Because of the concern for deportation, Ramos and her family were frightened and avoided any police interaction. The concern of deportation is often felt by children, which we can see in Ramos's statement that she had this fear "from a very young age." Essentially, undocumented children lose a part of their childhood innocence by knowing this reality. When she was young, Ramos experienced losing people she loved due to deportation and family separation. Her comments show that being undocumented necessitates being hyperaware of her environment in order to survive. I further discuss this fear in the upcoming section.

Similarly, Alessandro Negrete's experience growing up was one of secrecy and fear. He is thirty years old from Manzanillo, Colima, Mexico and is currently living in Los Angeles, California. As we spoke on Skype, he was at a university campus in between workshops at a conference. It made me realized how fortunate I was that he made time to tell me his story. The

full, dark beard covering his face struck me. He wore sunglasses and had a very fashionable outfit. I could feel his presence even on Skype. Like with Ramos, he recalled hiding his undocumented status. He explains: “Mind you, I graduated before the California DREAM Act, and when undocumented and unafraid was not a chant. I grew up in the time when we don’t talk about being undocumented. It’s not something you go around, talking about let alone screaming.” For Negrete and Ramos, being undocumented is not and should not be public information. They show the significant lengths they and their families went to in order to protect themselves as undocumented people. These *testimonios* illustrate the connection between being undocumented and living in fear and in secrecy. Furthermore, Negrete connects his experience of being undocumented with the new waves of undocumented students and their recent social movement, where it is commonplace to be outspoken at rallies and for participants to chant or promote on social media that they are “Undocumented and Unafraid.” Negrete’s comment on the new DREAMer and “Undocumented and Unafraid” slogan illuminates on how he did not grow up having a safe space to be open about his identities. Ultimately, it reveals that there was not an UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic.

Coming out as undocumented comes with a level of social and legal risk. Studies from Abrego (2006), Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri (2014), Gonzales and Ruiz (2014), and Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero (2017) discusses how an undocumented status may prohibit some people from being admitted to college, being hired for a job, earning a scholarship, or obtaining a driver’s license. As an example, Alessandro explains what it was like for him when he first told someone about his undocumented status:

So, I never disclosed, but I never really hid it. I mean my family knew, but if my memory serves me, the first person I told was a mentor. He really wanted me to get this amazing job, and I kept tiptoeing around the issue. I would tell him that there are circumstances

beyond my control. He kept pushing me and pushing me to tell him, so I told him, I can't: I am undocumented. He was shocked, but he said we'll figure that out, just apply.

So, the first person he confided in about his undocumented status was his mentor, regarding a job. Negrete was hesitant and tried to make other excuses to avoid disclosing this information. He did not know how his mentor was going to act; luckily, he was supportive. For others, being undocumented is not an issue that affects in their day-to-day life. Negrete's comment on being undocumented and finding supportive employers or mentors speaks to how larger communities are impacted by huge undocumented populations. When employers and mentors know their workers and students are undocumented, they may have better ways to work with them. They may have more resources to offer to the undocumented community. Chacon (2011) discovers that immigrant communities create their own advocacy organizations to gain support and resources. I find that through these more unconventional or hidden counterpublics, the undocumented community finds way to interact with the dominant society and public sphere. It forces these dominant spaces to understand the undocumented community and find resources for them.

While fear and secrecy are common themes, they are not universal. Importantly, not all undocumented people experience this same struggle for secrecy; the undocumented status experience is not universal. This offers a point of view held by others in my *testimonios* and Twitter data that the undocumented experience cannot be generalized to all undocumented people. For example, Gonzales and Ruiz's (2014) research compares undocumented students' experience in New York City and Nebraska, where their struggles differ because of geographical location. Consequently, this research situates this perspective on fear and secrecy. The third person I interviewed, Yosimar Reyes, did not have the same experience as the other two participants. Born in Guerrero, Mexico, Yosimar Reyes is twenty-nine years old. He lives in Los

Angeles but grew up in Eastside San Jose, California. Since I follow Reyes on social media, I know he has an amazing and big personality. He is full of life and makes difficult moments easier through comedy. His energy is more pronounced in person. He is relatable to many people, especially in the Latinx and LGBTQ communities. He has golden brown skin and a clean-cut face with little facial hair. Reyes grew up within an undocumented community, which means that he did not have to hide this part of himself because everyone knew about each other's citizenship status and their commonalities provided a haven of sorts that was clearly not available to Ramos and Negrete. He elaborates:

So, I grew up in San Jose. My grandparents never told me that I shouldn't tell people that I'm undocumented. We were very open about it. We didn't feel like we had anything to hide. This is early 90s when we came in. We came in 1991. Then in 94, it is when proposition 187, so anti-immigrant rhetoric was something that was super growing. It was born in California. We like to think that were so progressive, but it was born here. So, I grew up during that era. Like I was Pete Wilson's worst nightmare, *laughs* but for me I feel like I pretty much grew up American.

Reyes grew up in a xenophobic time in “progressive” California during a rise of negative rhetoric and proposed laws that targeted the undocumented community. Despite the rising anti-immigrant rhetoric, Reyes and his family were still open about their undocumented status. Additionally, being undocumented and socially conscious, Reyes felt like he was the epitome of everything Pete Wilson, the Republican California Governor in 1991, was against. Wilson is well known for promoting California Proposition 187, which intended to ban immigrants from using health care, public education, and other social services (Olivas 2013; Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). The proposition passed but was later found unconstitutional and never went into effect (Olivas 2013; Seif, Ullman, and Núñez -Mchiri 2014; Gonzales and Ruiz 2014; Person, Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, and Minero 2017). Reyes also did not experience “coming out” as undocumented. He explains:

I've never had a coming out story as being undocumented, because I told everyone. Even with my first employer, I told them I don't have papers. If you want me to work with you, then you have to figure it out, and they figured it out. So, I was able to work through them. For me it wasn't so hard. I already knew what jobs would hire me. I worked assembly lines with my arms. When I was growing up, it wasn't that big of a deal. Everyone was like that. I felt pretty safe in San Jose. Everyone in the Eastside was like that; there was a network of people and supporters. So, we knew what churches give you food, and there was Legal Aid Society with lawyers. So, there was a lot of common knowledge of a network of people.

Unlike Negrete, who was hesitant and fearful of coming out as undocumented, Reyes was not ashamed to tell his employer that he did not have papers, because he felt he would be able to find other work since his local community was comprised largely of immigrants. It is important to note that the undocumented identity and the experiences of undocumented people are complex and vary according to person, as are many other identities and experiences. Unlike Ramos and Negrete, Reyes and his family did not feel a need to conceal their undocumented status. Both of these statements from Reyes reflect how living in a robust community full of undocumented people provided safety in numbers. It was a counterpublic, of sorts, that worked to provide cover and civic space to live openly.

While undocumented status may be a central identity for some, others reject it as a definition or at least as an all-encompassing definition of self. Reyes's response to this question: "What are the most important parts of your identity?" speaks to this complicated intersection:

I think this question is interesting, because of my predicament. I am a queer brown man from Mexico, but then I am also undocumented, but that's not an identity. That's a social predicament by poverty, right? So, for me, I don't think undocumented is an identity, because there's nothing on my body that's undocumented. It's a condition. It's something that was created. Just like growing up poor, that was something that was created. I think those predicaments inform my identities.

This is an important idea to consider. Reyes's statement struck me as interesting and powerful because, as an undocumented ally, I saw how undocumented immigrants embraced being undocumented. Therefore, Reyes's explanation of being undocumented as a predicament and

social condition is meaningful. For some, the undocumented status is not an identity at all. It does not define people like Reyes, but rather it is something that is placed on them without consent. Reyes's first identification – “queer” and “brown” – suggests he sees sexuality and race as part of the key facets of his identity. He also fully claims his original nationality. Yet, he sets these apart from his citizenship status within the United States. Furthermore, he concretely names class as a defining reality in his experience as an undocumented person. These latter points – poverty and lack of citizenship status – are woven together in his explanation of who he is. Interestingly, Reyes is not alone in this feeling. Twitter data also back up his views.

@MigrantScribble on Twitter agrees with this concept. He declares: "#Undocumented" is not an #identity, it's something I temporarily am. Being #Mexican, #queer, #Latino, #male, etc. – those are identities." Here, he notes that undocumented status may only be temporary; it is not a permanent part of a person. Hence, not all undocumented people agree that undocumented status is an identity. These examples reflect how the state created the undocumented social condition, and thus the state had a role in this identity formation. Reyes acknowledges that those social conditions influence his experiences and his identity, but they are not the entirety or the most important parts of who he is. However, this contributes to the UndocuQueer creation. Without the state's immigration policies and UndocuQueer individuals' marginalization from the public sphere, the UndocuQueer counterpublic would not exist.

I introduced my *testimonios* through their experiences as undocumented people. They describe fear associated with being deported and having to hide this part of their everyday struggle. Many undocumented people deal with daily fear and secrecy, and they find ways to protect themselves and their families. Interestingly, Ramos and Negrete did not grow up experiencing any type of counterpublic. As a result, undocumented people are cautious of who

they come out to because it involved serious risks. Interestingly, Squires (2002) argues that there is more than one type of counterpublic when analyzing Black activism historically. Squires defined an enclave counterpublic as a space that hides from the public sphere to survive and avoid sanctions. Ramos and Negrete's experiences, and the experiences of many undocumented people, point to an enclave counterpublic. In this space, undocumented people's main goal is to protect themselves. On the other hand, this section also shows that living with an undocumented status is complex, and people may not experience it in the same way. Some may not identify with the undocumented status as one of their own identities. Some may not live in fear, because they are part of an undocumented community who support each other with love and resources – their subaltern counterpublic. Reyes's experience is another type of counterpublic (Squires 2002). Overall, the state created the undocumented status, which is socially imposed in society. As a result, I propose that the state influenced how the UndocuQueer identity developed through its policies. By marginalizing the UndocuQueer community, the state forged their subaltern counterpublic.

Fear of ICE

The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is an organization that is part of the state, and its duty centers on enforcing immigration laws. While I offered *testimonios* about fear and secrecy about being undocumented, this section centers on how ICE does this and how UndocuQueer individuals are impacted by this organization. The data indicate that ICE is a significant space of internal uneasiness and turmoil for most undocumented people, which often happens through rumors and actual occurrences of ICE raids and checkpoints. However, the UndocuQueer online counterpublic shares information and resources. Twitter allows a space to

voice both fear and strength. Through experiences of state fear, UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic formed.

Before I show stories from undocumented people from my *testimonios* and social media, I would like to situate what ICE does through a few news articles that were shared on social media. According to NPR's "How Kitchen Raids in Buffalo Sent Shock Waves through Immigrant Rights Community," ICE performed a raid on a local Mexican restaurant. In this raid, fourteen workers were charged with civil and criminal immigration violations, and twelve others were detained but later released. In speaking of the raid, one of the cooks stated, "I was in shock. I was complying with their orders, but they were mistreating us. They pointed guns at our heads. They pushed us on the floor and handcuffed us. They brought in dogs." According to the article, ICE executed the raid because there were complaints of worker exploitation, such as working longer hours than allowed under current labor laws and paying workers below minimum wage. However, in what seems like an attempt to help workers, this raid ended up negatively affecting the workers and their families. Additionally, ICE raids undermine the labor laws they seemingly profess to be protecting. The article goes on from a quote of a local immigration activist: "If one of your goals is to protect workers from exploitation, obviously arresting those workers as part of an enforcement action makes workers very afraid to come forward and report if there is exploitation happening." This is one example of how ICE raids are not helping the immigrant community. According to Golash-Boza (2015), deportations function as a social and migration control by instilling fear into immigrants who remain in the United States. She also argues that the state and its resources overwhelmingly target men of color, just as the prison industrial complex does: "both incarceration and deportations remove people from society and work to keep people compliant" (Golash-Boza 2015:18). The state approves, permits, and needs this to

happen in an attempt to keep social cohesion. However, it only acts as a destroyer of communities of color all over the country. Overall, fear of ICE comes from a real space. Immigrants are deported, and it does not matter if they have family in the United States or no family in their birth country. These examples illustrate the UndocuQueer community's validation in their fear and concern. This fear is reflected in the *testimonios* and in the Twitter discourse of the UndocuQueer counterpublics.

Shaila Ramos from the *testimonios* shares several stories about her family and ICE. The first story was about her uncle, who was too scared to go beyond a block's distance from their home. Ramos shares: "So, when my uncle barely got here, he was so scared to leave the house, because he was scared of the cops. So, he will go to the 7-11 around the corner for everything, even for food, because he didn't want to go far. He had so much fear." ICE creates a lot of fear for many people. The fear of ICE and police was so overbearing for Ramos's uncle that he refused to go beyond the 7-11 convenience store. This is the reality for most undocumented people in this country. Ramos also explains her feelings and experience with ICE and law enforcement. She enlightened me by stating that: "Little things for other people are huge things for me. Like seeing a cop; I get anxiety. I've been stopped before. Being undocumented and being scared." Her experience supports citizenship privilege. Citizenship privilege is a level of comfort that comes with being a citizen, which Enriquez (2014) discusses in his research of undocumented and citizen students. Undocumented students reminded citizen students of this privilege, like voting and the importance of voting (Enriquez 2014). Notably, it is absence of fear from participating in day-to-day activities without the fear of police interaction that may lead to deportation. For an undocumented person, just seeing a police officer is traumatic. Ramos goes on to explain other problems with ICE:

And now with this political climate, they have a lot of power. There is no oversight, they can do whatever the fuck they want. We don't know what to expect. If we see ICE, we don't know what to do. That's what was on top of my head after the election and has been ever since. I'm trying to educate my parents on what to do and my uncles and using red cards. We now created a plan on what to do if we get arrested or deported. Even with my roommates, we've set up plans, since they're undocumented too.

The rhetoric of Ramos's comments is mirrored by the threads seen in the UndocuQueer tweets during this same period. Both note that government agencies, such as ICE, have too much power now, and no one holds them accountable. ICE has forced family and friends to create emergency plans similar to natural disaster plans. The undocumented community must prepare and think about things that documented people do not have to worry about. She goes on, "If one of us gets taken, we need to know what to do. This not the first time that one of our family members has been deported. My uncle and cousin got deported years back, and it was really hard on the family." Sadly, prior experience taught her family to put systems in place in case one of them is deported. Ramos's comment on already having family deported illuminates this institutionalized violence against immigrants. It speaks to a greater social problem of immigration and the injustices in it. Similarly, @FLopez shared on Twitter: "Our friends & neighbors are living in fear. Virginia shouldn't have anything to do with that process. Then cut all ties with ICE; pay reparations to the immigrant community! #EndDetention #ICEoutofVA #EndICE #Sanctuary4All #Ni1Mas #Not1More #Reparations." Furthermore, @FLopez is making a call to action to cut all ties with ICE and give reparations to the immigrant community. This tweet reveals the sense of urgency and desperation for social change from the undocumented community.

Rumors and information about ICE raids in cities and public transit elicit fear for many in the undocumented community. In his *testimonio*, Alessandro Negrete expresses the same level of fear for ICE and law enforcement as does Ramos. He goes on to explain more about this fear:

There was a time when I wanted to start taking the bus more, but then the raids started happening on the train. So, I was like, fuck. I know that the color of my skin has gotten me out of tickets, but if they asked me for a California ID and I give them my passport or my consulate ID, then that's it. So, it's fear of that moment. It's a roller coaster.

Sometimes I can be up front and say yes, I'm very scared, especially when enforcement is so close to home.

Negrete knows how the ICE raids on public transportation create fear and hesitation. For him and others, it is an emotional rollercoaster. It is a day-by-day process to understand the barriers for undocumented people. On the same note, this also occurs with immigration checkpoints. It forces undocumented folks to be aware of their surroundings, where they are going and how late they will say out. In Julio Salgado's interview, "UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis," the interviewer explains how Salgado and his family have been impacted by the current administration:

Salgado knows firsthand the fear inflicted by anti-immigrant rhetoric. After Donald Trump got elected, immigration checkpoints began popping up around Los Angeles. Salgado's parents, who are still undocumented, live in Compton, and these checkpoints present an imminent danger for them. If detained, they risk deportation. Salgado knew that he needed to be close to his family in case of an emergency.

Safety is a common concern for those with undocumented family members. Shaila Ramos and Julio Salgado worry about their parents, since they are also undocumented. The state is committing violence against the immigrant community. Immigrants are scared to go outside and go about their daily tasks, thanks to ICE and its checkpoints. ICE is terrorizing the undocumented community and affecting its emotional and mental health. Overall, ICE and its checkpoints inflict fear on undocumented communities. They are hurting the most marginalized communities, the undocumented and the LGBTQ.

Interestingly, this discourse of fear and rights has at times been combined. In one example of this synthesis, Alan Pelaez Lopez, an UndocuBlack organizer, shares his fears

through *Everyday Feminism*'s article "A Reclamation of My Rights as an (Un)documented Person."²

1. I Have the Right To Be Afraid

I am tired of having to control my emotions and pretend that the violence I have gone through has nothing to do with being a displaced Negro from the diaspora. I have the right to be afraid because there is no system in place that can 100% assure me that my body will never again be violated, put in a boat, and be shipped somewhere else in the world without my consent. I have the right to be afraid when people that look like me are more likely to be shot dead than greeted.

Lopez's first point explains that he wants to be able to nurture his feelings and be allowed to feel fear in peace without others misunderstanding, misjudging, or stating that he is overreacting. In other words, he wants to clarify that the undocumented community's feelings and experiences are legitimate and valid, especially given the United States' history of slavery, colonialism, xenophobic policies, and racial profiling. His first point reveals that society does not take the undocumented communities' concerns seriously. Lopez goes to explain his second reclamation of his rights:

2. I Have the Right To Put As Many Locks on the Door As I Want

My community has been terrorized too many times by immigration officials in the middle of the night because, in this country, sleeping comes at a cost. If an additional lock will assure me that my elementary-school-aged siblings will get enough rest and not think about what life would be like if my mother, my stepfather, or I were to be deported, I will add the lock.

His second point justifies his right to protect himself by putting locks on his door. ICE has traumatized the immigrant community in their homes and their workplaces by committing raids in the middle of the night or early in the morning. It reveals how something like sleep becomes a privilege that citizens people experience and take for granted. Hence, the undocumented community has the right to protect themselves and their families from the state's institutionalized violence. The next reclaimed right is:

3. I Have the Right To Not Be Raided

Enough is enough. I always try to imagine what kind of privilege it must be to be calm at work, at school, at the restaurant, at the doctor's, at the grocery store, or at home, and know that no one will just come and arrest me for breathing. But then I remember—my community doesn't have that privilege. We are too foreign to know "calmness."

The third point argues that immigrants deserve the peace of mind of not being raided. Again, the idea of privilege is overtly stated. On the same note, his next right focuses on deportation:

4. I Have the Right To Not Be Deported

Without the freedom to stay, I will never know the freedom to move. My community and I will forever be in chains until we are assured that we will not be deported, and that we will not be separated from our loved ones. I have the right to not be deported because our lives as immigrants matter, our labor carries the weight of this country, and our existence is a living revolution.

Lopez's last point encompasses his worse fear. Not being able to settle in this country also means that immigrants are trapped in America. They are not able to come and go as they please. Sadly, this can restrict undocumented people from going back home to visit their family and friends. Therefore, through their fear of ICE and the state, UndocuQueer individuals made their own counterpublic. However, undocumented immigrants are valuable in their counterpublic and the dominant public sphere. According to the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy in Washington D.C., 2015 IRS data show that undocumented immigrants paid \$23.6 billion in income taxes (Campbell 2018). According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, undocumented immigrants help social security benefits become more solvent, because they pay into the system, but do not receive the benefits. As an example, in 2010, undocumented immigrants paid \$12 billion into social security (Hallman 2018). Hence, undocumented immigrants contribute to the United States in many ways. But Lopez claims his worth, not in economic value but in the terms of human dignity. In sum, one response to the fear of deportation and ICE is to claim that fear and simultaneously, to claim human rights. The immigrant community deserves these rights, not only because they are productive members of society, but because they are human beings.

Reassurances, such as peace of mind and a calm existence without absent of the fear of having to move on a whim, should be afforded to everyone in our nation.

One reaction to this fear seen in both the *testimonios* I gathered and in the Twitterverse is an emphasis on fighting fear with knowledge. In his *testimonio*, Alessandro Negrete expresses the same level of fear for ICE and law enforcement as does Ramos. Yet, he concludes by emphasizing his rights and situating that knowledge as power. He explains:

Much like colorism has been very tied to my narrative, I will be the first one to acknowledge that because of the color of my skin, because of my minor accent, I have been able to get away a lot of things with enforcement. I see the way police treat me and the way they treat my brother; it disgusts me. I also know that there's power in that. I'm not going to give enforcement the power that they want, but of course, do I have a fear? Yes. Immensely. But I also understand that because I do have the privilege of the education that I know, I know that as a queer undocumented person that I have rights. I know my rights. That's what curbs my fear slightly.

Negrete addresses both his privilege and his fear. But he notes, too, that as an activists he knows his rights and has connections to immigration organizations. He states, "I have to remind myself that I have the education. You have the resources. I have people in positions of higher power that have told me if anything happens to you, use your one phone call to call me. So, I rest in that."

One tactic of the UndocuQueer movement as seen in protests and on Twitter has been an emphasis on this sort of knowledge. This is knowledge that UndocuQueer folks spread through their subaltern counterpublic. Negrete emphasizes that as an activist and as a community member, it is important to know the local organizations in case anything happens. It demonstrates a deep connection and sense of obligation to the undocumented community.

@UndocuMedia concurs with this notion as they shared this tweet: "#KnowYourRights if ICE Agents show up at your door! #Retweet and share with family and friends ♥ #ImmigrantJustice."

This study, through its *testimonios* and tweets, reflects the contradiction of living in fear and finding strength in that fear. The counterpublic UndocuQueer creates on Twitter furthers this

strength by emphasizing the power of knowledge and rights. This all speaks to the development of the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic.

On the other hand, for other undocumented people, being deported was not the only concern or the main concern. Yosimar Reyes has already stated that being undocumented was not a secret for him, so fear was not the basis of his experience. He elaborates further that a fear of ICE was not a big concern, either. He asserts:

So, growing up, I wasn't scared. The biggest fear was losing our job, which meant no money coming in. They wouldn't call immigration, though. So what these companies do is that they work through staffing agencies, they don't hire you directly because they have liability over you. So, the staffing agencies hires the workers, buses them to Fremont, and they work, but if something happens then the company is not liable for the worker – it's the agency. Most of those agencies are like rotate anybody because they have to staff it. So, the biggest concern was losing their job, because these people are already going paycheck to paycheck and they cannot afford to not have a check for two weeks. That means you can't pay the fuckin' rent, and the rent is so high. So, I think that was the only fear growing up.

Interestingly, again Reyes does not have the same experience as the two other UndocuQueer activists. His biggest fear growing up was losing his job and not having enough money to pay rent, pay bills, buy food, etc. Since these employers knew they were hiring undocumented workers, they knew that they are not going to call ICE, because the employers would cause their own trouble with fines and having to replace their arrested workers. Overall, while Reyes explained that he did not experience fear specifically, he spoke of an increased level of anxiety.

This section explained the unease and fear inflicted by ICE and the ICE raids and illustrates the responses offered by UndocuQueer members in their *testimonios* and in their Twitter counterpublics. The state becomes an actor in the institutionalized violence against immigrants. These *testimonios* and Twitter data illustrate the UndocuQueer community's validation of their fear and concern. I presented multiple examples and stories of interactions with law enforcement and immigration officers. Raids from ICE leave the immigrant community

to face a long list of fears, anxieties, and stressors. Many undocumented people live with worry for themselves and their families, which often interferes with their day-to-day tasks and emotional well-being. Overall, the state has not stopped immigrant communities from coming together to support each other and to be there for each others if families are separated due to the job loss or subsequent arrests or deportations. Communities share organizations and information for lawyers with each other to further broaden their support for each other. Throughout dark times, they still find ways to be there for each other, and they have found ways to resist the terror that ICE and the government have inflicted on the immigrant community. One way, as we have seen, is to employ social media, and Twitter in particular, as a space to voice both fear and strength. These are more examples of how the state encouraged the formation of the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic.

UndocuQueer Subaltern Counterpublic

Here, I must situate the public sphere literature because UndocuQueer individuals feel marginalized in the public sphere. Through this marginalization, the UndocuQueer community forged their own counterpublic. As previously defined, the public sphere consists of arenas of public discourse, such as the mass media (Habermas 1962; Fraser 1990; Squires 2002). While Fraser (1990) critiques the public sphere for marginalizing women, here, I explain how the public sphere has also excluded queer migrants. In this section, I use *testimonios* to illustrate how the public sphere has isolated and rejected UndocuQueer individuals. I describe how the mass media sells and tells stories about the undocumented community without including them in the decision-making and story-telling processes. By having their own counterpublic, UndocuQueer people can now question the public sphere and the way mass media presents them. Then, by

using Twitter data, I reveal how the UndocuQueer community forges their own culture, spaces, and public sphere.

UndocuQueer folks do not align themselves with the dominant public sphere and the mass media, because they do not like how their stories are being told. Many bloggers and Twitter activists would agree in that they believe mainstream media is elitist and corrupt (Small 2011). The media's stories are not representative of the UndocuQueer experience. From the *testimonios*, Reyes critiques the media:

What happens with the media is that they use undocumented stories to create a moral crisis within the citizens, so that the citizens can vote. However, we never take into account an undocumented audience, so that's why all the deportation stories have doom and gloom stories. They are fed into the citizen and then the citizen is like, "Oh my God I feel so bad for these kids. I want to vote, or I want to call my senator," but meanwhile the undocumented person is seeing the same stories and feeling depressed like, "I have no fuckin' hope." It was very much like this fascination with the trauma, and I don't like that. Yes, that's there, but that should be shared with people who know how to honor it and not exploit it.

Without undocumented folks creating their own media sources and information, the mainstream creates a moral crisis in order to gain empathy and sympathy from society at large. For those who are undocumented, this can breed fear, anxiety, and depression. It reveals how problematic the public sphere becomes the UndocuQueer community. Overall, their stories of hardships and trauma should not be used for ratings. Alessandro Negrete shares similar insight on how the media uses strategies for communication:

I think where social media plays into this is important, and this is where I'm scared about that and net neutrality. The silencing now of our voices is the silencing of these stories. They need to be told because when you look at our news, they are not looking for the most marginalized, they are looking for the stories that resonate with people. When someone is telling a story about an undocumented person what are the strategies of communication that they are using? What are the strings of the heart that you're trying to pull at? What is the story that you're trying to tell?

As an UndocuQueer activist and artist, he feels his community is already being silenced. Reyes and Negrete's statements about the mass media's types of stories reflects a larger concern of how the public sphere does not acknowledge their perspective. This shows how the public sphere does not include the UndocuQueer community. He explains that these news stations are looking for stories that benefit their ratings. If they discuss the undocumented community, they strategically write the stories to pull at heartstrings. This conflict between the public sphere and the UndocuQueer community is a disconnect between those who craft the news and those who are in it. Consequently, the media pushes UndocuQueer folks into creating their own counterpublic. Here, UndocuQueer individuals can center their own stories.

So, by questioning the public sphere and how political dialogue is held, UndocuQueer activists also question their content. The problem is not only how the media targets its audience, as previously described. Another concern is how immigrants are being portrayed. For example, Reyes comments on widening the view of who is undocumented: "There's also a dialogue when we are talking about the "good immigrant" representation. Like ,not all of us are in college; not all of us want to work in these jobs; not all of us want to Pledge Allegiance." It is vital to understand that not all undocumented folks have degrees, have legitimate employment, or want to become U.S. citizens. Reyes's reference to the "good immigrant" is meaningful and connects to many studies previously stated. Negron-Gonzales (2014), Carrasco & Seif (2014), Cisneros (2015), and Pieri (2016) explain this debate among the immigrant rights movement of the notion of who is deserving of citizenship, and how many activists reject the idea of deporting people based on this outdated social norm. Through this UndocuQueer counterpublic, these activists can challenge the "good immigrant" narrative and then support immigrants who do not fall into the

state's definition of deserving citizenship. In addition, Reyes explains how the undocumented community has created their own culture and its relation to social media:

You have UndocuMedia which has a bunch of followers, and they get the word out about whatever's happening on the immigrant rights. They are also funny. They'll put funny memes. It's cool to see. We are creating our own undocumented culture. And we're creating our own messaging. At the end of the day, you need the media by us for us.

While the UndocuQueer community faced exclusion from the public sphere, my data reveal consistent patterns of how they forged their own spaces regardless. Reyes brings up how they have established their own culture and expanded on it through social media. This reflects how social media plays a part in creating and spreading this counterpublic. Past research supports this finding, where Cheong and Lee (2010), Valenzuela (2013), and Stache (2015) agree that the role of social media activism increases awareness of social issues and gives room for alternative voices.

My data and past research indicate the existence of the UndocuQueer counterpublic via social media. In this counterpublic, the UndocuQueer and undocumented culture reflects social consciousness and activism, but it also reflects humor and the everyday. Because of this, social media gave them the means to find self-determination. Pieri's (2016) study on "Undocumented and Awkward," a YouTube web series made by UndocuQueer activists, reveals the expansion of this UndocuQueer counterpublic. They have their own online series that focuses on the undocumented narrative with undocumented people in it. This series discusses the contradictions, struggles, political rights, and everyday life of UndocuQueer individuals. Consequently, through this marginalization, UndocuQueer folks forge their own culture, spaces, and public spheres.

UndocuQueers' marginalization from the public sphere gives them a sense of urgency to build and expand their counterpublics. For example, in the interview, "UndocuQueer Artist Julio

Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis,” Julio Salgado describes how it is crucial for undocumented people to lead their own narratives. The interviewer asked him, “What do you think about the recent commodification of UndocuQueer voices by [mainstream] media?” He answered, “While I am a firm believer of having our voices be heard in media, it is also important that we get to be the ones who drive our narratives. This means that journalists shouldn’t just go for the narratives that seem digestible for audiences. We are complicated human beings.” From this response, Salgado elaborates on the dissatisfaction of how the media has been portraying the communities. Salgado also shows this in a tweet: “RT @CultureStrike: Our own @julio1983 leads our jump into pop culture, to counter anti-immigrant narratives through popular media!” By taking advantage of what social media has to offer, the UndocuQueer community has been able to generate a new culture, space, narrative, and community. In addition, Yosimar Reyes shared this tweet on Twitter: “@glaad @janetarelisquez @UNITEDWEDREAM @LambdaLegal @NQAPIA @DefineAmerican @familiatqlm A2: @DefineAmerican focuses on ensuring we have queer and trans representation in our stories. We uplift #UndocuQueer Stories.” Hence, factual and adequate representation in undocumented and queer narratives is vital for empowerment and self-determination. That is why they have their own UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic to control their narratives.

Overall, my data indicate that through the marginalization of the public sphere the UndocuQueer community established their own counterpublic. The public sphere excluded the UndocuQueer folks by showing stories that are not representative of the UndocuQueer experience or promoting ideas that they do not believe in, such as the “good immigrant” narrative that focused on immigrants who are deserving of citizenship. Furthermore, I show that the UndocuQueer counterpublic primarily rests on social media. While the UndocuQueer

counterpublic focuses on creating political dialogue with itself and the dominant public sphere, my *testimonios* and Twitter data suggest that the UndocuQueer community also created their own culture. Overall, UndocuQueer activists can finally control their own narratives.

#FUCKICE

Inland Empire - IYC
@IE_IYC

Follow

ICE enforcement programs fail and are flawed! We are with you @PuenteAZ!!!
#FuckICE #StopTrump #ShutdownICE

Mijente @ConMijente
UPDATE: Trump protester transferred to immigration authorities in Arizona. Details —> mijente.net/2016/03/20/tru... #StopTrump #UnitedAgainstHate

12:48 PM - 20 Mar 2016

Figure 6. Tweet shared by @IE_IYC

I revealed that through marginalization from the state and the public sphere, the UndocuQueer community made their subaltern counterpublic, and social media maintains and grows it. This section brings in the UndocuQueer counterpublic and how it interacts with the public sphere and the state. I show this through the hashtag #FUCKICE. Travers (2003) finds how cyberspace feminist counterpublics allows feminists to maintain their own counterpublic without leaving the dominant public sphere; thus, feminists can interact with both simultaneously. Social media opens up opportunities about how, as Fraser (1990) argued, counterpublics embrace alternative forms of public speech and political participation, and political engagement occurs. This section illustrates one major hashtag for the UndocuQueer social movement and counterpublic. First, I reveal how this hashtag, and others shown in this section, is one way that the UndocuQueer counterpublic engages in the public sphere. Second, I

show how the UndocuQueer counterpublic and these hashtags bond through their fear of ICE, as previously discussed, and through their – resistance – against ICE. Therefore, I reveal how this hashtag #FUCKICE gives the UndocuQueer counterpublic a sense of solidarity and community. Social media contributes to political conversations (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016), and the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic do this by through the hashtag #FUCKICE. Ultimately, their main call to action is to completely remove ICE.

A few important hashtags that come up when we discuss the immigrant rights movement against ICE focus on abolishing it. The first hashtag, which is the title of this section and illustrated in the image above, is #FuckICE. Jennicet Gutiérrez, UndocuTrans activist, @JennicetG shared this retweet: “RT @AndyFernandez_1: Courageous, heroic @JennicetG @familiatqlm launch hunger strike demanding Santa Ana end contract with ICE #FUCKICE” and “ #fuckice #nodeportations #UndocumentedUnafraid #undocublack #undocuqueer.” Both of these tweets are challenging ICE and its policies and contracts. Gutiérrez’s uses this tweet to discuss the injustices of ICE. It speaks to the larger social justice issues of ICE and the immigration system that this chapter has been explaining. The first tweet is explaining a hunger strike for the local city to cut ties with ICE. This is in response to the knowledge that when a local police department works with ICE, it enables them to pool resources and this often means that more people will get deported, and more families will be separated. The second tweet adds other hashtags, such as #nodeportations #UndocumentedUnafraid #undocublack #undocuqueer, which show different evolutions of the movements and newly developing methods of conveying its message. Gutierrez’s inclusion of these other hashtags is meaningful because it spreads their message to other social movements and counterpublics, which means this hashtags and cause has more reach. It spreads their #FUCKICE to other movements. This tweet also shows that the

movement against ICE is connected to the UndocuQueer and UndocuBlack movements; it is not a singular social movement. I further discuss this intersectional component of the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic in Chapter 6. Other hashtags consist of #ICEoutofLA, #ICEoutofSF, and #ICEoutofCA. This example shows the breadth of the movement. This next tweet also challenges ICE and its connection to local police departments: “RT @gilcedillo: Introduced motion 2day which prohibits ICE from wearing attire with "POLICE" on it #ICEoutofLA #ICEoutofCD1 #LACD1.” The 287(g) and secure communities programs connected the police and ICE, which I explained in Chapter 2. They team up to enforce civil immigration in their cities, where undocumented people are transferred to ICE; these bills were created by President Bush but expanded by President Obama (Seif, Ullman, and Núñez-Mchiri 2014). As a result, this tweet is attacking these local policies and police departments from working with federal agencies that deport undocumented immigrants, where they argue that ICE should not be allowed to wear police lettering. When ICE and police officers wear the same shirts, they attempt to trick undocumented immigrants and misplace their trust. Ultimately, this is how immigrants end up being afraid of both systems. The #FUCKICE hashtag illustrates a component of the UndocuQueer movement, where dismantling and removing ICE altogether is central to their beliefs. ICE inflicts this state violence, which encourages activists to rise up against them.

UndocuQueer activists stand up against ICE through social media and build community in that process. @AdoniasArevalo shared this tweet: “I will protect my family, community & Trans; Queer *Familia* #FuckSb4 #FUCKICE.” This person recognizes how crucial it is for the queer and immigrant communities to be united as a family and to stand against ICE.

@JulioSalgado83 shares this caption with another image shared after the caption. He empathizes with many people who are struggling:

I know times are scary. I know I want to crawl under my bed and go to sleep for days. But we got this, *familia*. We got each other. We might not agree on all the things but I gotchu. I will resist even if I'm crying in the inside. I will push back even if they get me on the floor. I'm thinking of all of y'all. Keep doing you. Keep organizing. Keep loving. Keep fighting. Keep drawing. I know I will.

This idea of family is important. Salgado's comment illuminates the fear within the undocumented community; moreover, he builds that into hope and calls for social change. The post was trying to inspire the undocumented community to keep the movement alive. He will continue his resistance, and he hopes that everyone else will too. He also shared his art, which states, "No sir, I will not show you my papers."

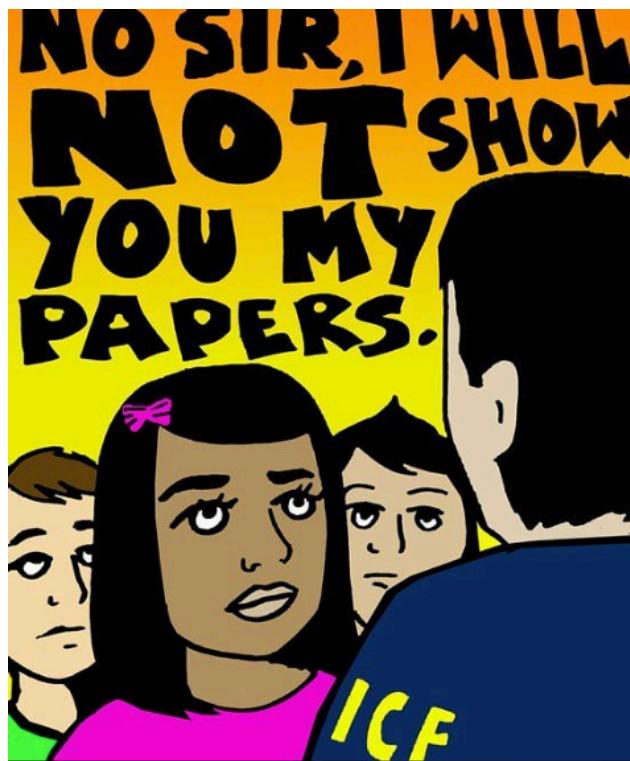


Figure 7. Art by @JulioSalgado83

My data reveal consistent patterns of resiliency from the undocumented community. Through institutionalized discrimination and marginalization from the public sphere, UndocuQueer

continue to connect with their community. I further explain community and social media in Chapter 7. Additionally, in sharing political art pieces, such as the one above, it further connects people through their rebellion.

Another important aspect of the #FUCKICE is the statement on its own. It shows extremely disapproval of this institution. More importantly, the UndocuQueer movement and the immigrant rights movement call for the removal of ICE. Many people connect ICE and the immigrant detention center to the prison industrial complex, where mass incarcerations come from private prisons run by corporations that make a profit (Whitehead 2012). For example, in a recent article by *TIME*, detaining immigrant children is a billion-dollar industry (Mendoza and Fenn 2018). It operates in the same way as the prison industrial complex. There are more than 11,800 children in detention centers awaiting processing; ages range from months old to seventeen years old (Mendoza and Fenn 2018). For that reason, many activists not only challenge the state and ICE, but also to have a discussion about the police. The following event was shared by @IYC:

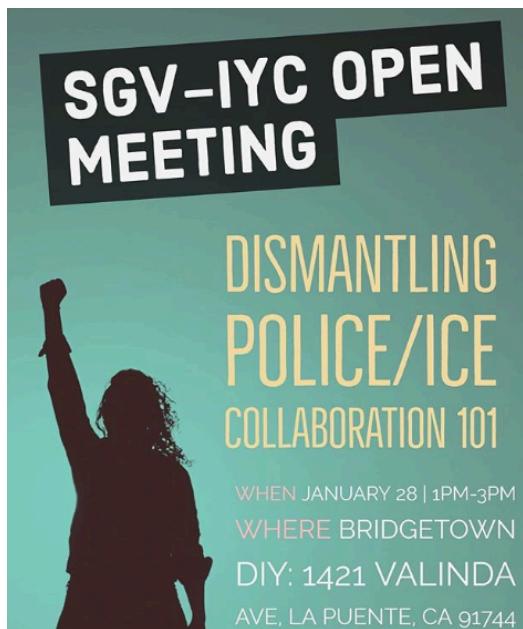


Figure 8. Flyer shared by @IYC

This event was an open meeting to discuss the potential dismantling of the police and ICE. This event reflects larger social issues of the state, prisons, and detention centers and how they are filled with injustice. These institutions are problematic and racist in many ways as I described throughout this chapter. Furthermore, activists also call to remove the borders. I share another art piece by Julio Salgado. This drawing includes eight queer people of color tearing down the border with a sign in the background that states, “Fuck your borders!” These state-sanctioned borders are dividing our communities and tearing up families, and they want them gone.

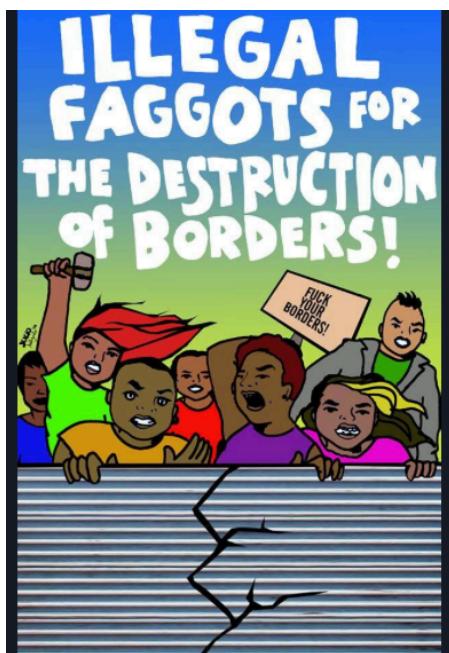


Figure 9. Art by Julio Salgado

This art showcases two derogatory words: “illegal” and “faggot,” which he reclaims through a political message. According to Seif (2004), this illustrates the UndocuQueer politics of confrontation than assimilation. Through using “illegal” and “faggot,” they have reclaimed them and made them politically charged (Seif 2004). Language and imagery become important because it is used to challenge the status quo (Seif 2004). This is another example of how the UndocuQueer counterpublic is transforming political discourse about borders, legality, and gender and sexuality. Moreover, this art piece shows what Salgado, and many others like him,

stand for the destruction of all borders. For them, the state only creates borders to dominate other people, specifically poor people and people of color. It is a tool to keep the same people in power. The UndocuQueer counterpublic allows for them to have this discussion in their own space and also share with the public sphere to gain awareness, traction, and hopefully social change.

This section illustrates how the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic interacts with the public sphere and the state through a common hashtag #FUCKICE. Many within these movements are absolutely against ICE and want to remove it altogether. They do not want ICE in their state, in their cities, or in this country, because it has only caused pain and terror. Since ICE inflicts this state violence, it encourages activists to rise up against it. Furthermore, UndocuQueer activists stand up against ICE through social media and end up building community and solidarity through their shared experiences with oppression. More importantly, UndocuQueer activists engage in the public sphere to show their disapproval of ICE and borders, and to call for their removal. Overall, this reflects how important social media is to their UndocuQueer counterpublic.

Chapter Review

In this chapter, I wove *testimonios* and Twitter data to show how the UndocuQueer community is marginalized from the state and excluded from the public sphere. Many undocumented people deal with daily fear and secrecy; as a result, they find ways to protect themselves and their families. They are living in a state of uncertainty and fear: they do not know what the future holds for them within the United States. They do not know if they or their loved ones will be deported. This has traumatized the undocumented community. Their shared experience comes from how the state treats and interacts with the undocumented community.

Through institutionalized policies, the UndocuQueer people are forced into closets. On top of that, they are also not accurately represented in the public sphere, which excludes them by showing stories that are not representative of the UndocuQueer experience. My *testimonios* and Twitter data indicate that the UndocuQueer community has made their own counterpublic and culture, where they can finally control their own narratives. Through their struggles with the state and the public sphere, UndocuQueer folks come together. I also reveal how the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic engages with the public sphere through the hashtag #FUCKICE. They post images and messages of resistance and hope; this further brings this community together on social media. Overall, this chapter shows how the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic formed through its involvement with the state and lack of involvement with the public sphere to find UndocuQueer's voices and power through social media.

Chapter 6 - INTERSECTIONAL/COALITIONAL SUBALTERN

COUNTERPUBLIC

While the previous chapter demonstrates how UndocuQueer individuals created their counterpublic, this chapter describes it further as an intersectional subaltern counterpublic. I demonstrate how the complexities of undocumented and queer identities can be better understood through an intersectional analysis using social media. As previously discussed, intersectionality is the understanding of the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism (Crenshaw 1991; Brush 1993; Spelman 1998; Mohanty 2003; Enns 2010; Correa 2011; Correa 2011). Furthermore, Xicana feminism centers Latinx life experiences and histories of colonization, religion, language, land theft, and immigration statuses (Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Castillo 1995; Bhattacharya 2007; Zepeda 2012). For that reason, these theories are essential in this chapter. I demonstrate the concept of “double coming out,” in which UndocuQueer folks come out as undocumented and LGBTQ. Once they are out, they also experience difficulties, particularly racism in the LGBTQ community and homophobia in the Latinx community. However, the UndocuQueer community also holds much pride about who they are, so I illustrate how they are out and proud as well. Last, I explain the rise of other hashtags related and connected to the UndocuQueer movement, such as UndocuTrans, UndocuBlack, UndocuAPI, and UndocuSolidarity as further manifestations of the complexities of intersectional identities. Therefore, I argue that UndocuQueer activists created an intersectional subaltern counterpublic through social media. Furthermore, the rise of #UndocuQueer and #UndocuTrans gave way to new counterpublics in the undocu-movements. My data shows how these different counterpublics operate coalitionally. Hence, the undocu-phenomena established its own type of coalitional intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

Double Coming Out



Figure 10. Tweet by @MonseLGBT

As I have presented through this project, UndocuQueer individuals' life experiences are hugely impacted by their identities as undocumented and queer. Undocumented people who also identify as LGBTQ may experience something they call the "double coming out" when they disclose both that they are undocumented and LGBTQ. In this section, I use *testimonios* and Twitter data to show how the UndocuQueer community deals with this "double coming out." First, I show stories of UndocuQueer folks coming out as LGBTQ to their families and how their families either accept them or do not. Lastly, I discuss how coming out of both closets are interrelated.



Figure 11. Tweet by @UNITEDWEDREAM

Twitter data reflect how central the #DoubleComingOut was to the UndocuQueer counterpublic. By using this hashtag, UndocuQueer activists told their stories and showed their online presence. For example, figures 10 and 11, shown above, highlight these hashtags: #DoubleComingOut, #NoMoreClosets, and #UndocuQueer. The second tweet contains an image that shows a group of people standing with the 267,000 numbers the number of the estimated UndocuQueer population, along with the rainbow flag, standing in front of the White House. These tweets' reference of #NoMoreClosets is significant. This hashtag reveals the desire for liberation. UndocuQueer folks do not want to be trapped in any closet, whether it is the LGBTQ or undocumented closet. As previously discussed, their undocumented status pressures them to constantly contain the fear and anxiety of secrecy. From UndocuQueer political identity's inception, one of the purposes was to expose how LGBTQ immigrants were cast into the shadows (Cisneros 2015). This hashtag also highlights how social media is used for coming out and how it has become a place for UndocuQueer individuals to tell their stories. Seif (2014) also found how UndocuQueer folks and their hashtags allow people to find each other and build community. Therefore, #DoubleComingOut and #NoMoreClosets are new ways to understand the UndocuQueer community.

For UndocuQueer individuals, coming out as gay is coming out to their families. In 2017, Shaila Ramos came out to her family and was welcomed with open arms. Ramos says, "In the sense that my parents were very accepting. My parents are hella chill. I was crying. It feels like I was telling them a secret about who I truly am. And they were like, there's no need to cry." While her parents were loving and accepting, she still felt like she was revealing another side of herself. She goes on to further discuss her feelings about being queer, "As I started coming out to myself and embracing my identity and being proud to say that I'm queer. It is fairly recent within

the last couple of years. I'm not scared anymore to say that I'm queer. I want to say it." Overall, Ramos had a good experience with coming out as a lesbian to her family, and they have been accepting of her queer relationships. She also admits that she had to come out to herself and that it was a process for her to admit to herself and say that she was queer. Ramos's initial comments of fear and hesitation speak to others in this study discussed below, and in other research (Fortier 2001; Gorman-Murray 2007; Terriquez 2015; Chavez Duarte 2016). Reyes agrees with Ramos, because they share a similar struggle in coming out. For him, it was about being truthful to himself. He elaborates:

For me, the hardest part was coming out to myself. I did that through a poem about the process. It was hard because I needed to accept all those negative things that I was taught that they were actually beautiful or they were things that made me who I am. That happened when I was 17. I did it through a performance. I got invited to perform at a Cesar Chavez convention. So, I performed and I read this poem and they were all Latino brown kids in high school. It was super super hard. After that, I felt good. Then, I shared it again and again and again. I started to become like this is who I am and that's okay.

This is an essential internal process for many in the LGBTQ community. It is important to note that self-acceptance is also a part of the process. Yet, Reyes also struggled with coming out to his religious grandmother. He says, "My grandma doesn't talk much about it, but she is good; she's always been super supportive. We grew up hella Baptist, so it was rough. But she defends me all the time. I'm her everything, so that's cool. We're very close; that's my life." While his family does not talk about him being gay, overall, his grandmother accepts and loves him. This is the epitome of Anzaldúa's *nepantla* of living between worlds and rejecting binaries in the colonial/modern gender system (2002). Furthermore, UndocuQueer folks also experience *nepantla* through being immigrants because of their borderland experiences. Additionally, according to Zepada (2012), these coming out stories are also known as *jotería-historias*, which is Spanish for gay narratives, and also are *nepantla*. UndocuQueer activist can learn from their

borderlands experiences of being from Mexico and living in the United States to create new language and categories for themselves instead of being bound by dominant society (2002). This is what the UndocuQueer community did with the UndocuQueer political identity.

On the other hand, some LGBTQ undocumented people do not have a positive experience when they come out to their families. Latinx households typically also place rigid traditional and Catholic roles on their children, which are restrictive for some, and UndocuQueer individuals end up facing many barriers (Terriquez 2015; Chavez Duarte 2016). For example, @emergingUS they shared a video on Twitter called “Coming Out of Two Closets,” where they interviewed six UndocuQueer folks. Of the six, three of the UndocuQueer folks explained their difficulty in coming out to their families. One person explained, “I identify as a queer Latinx person of color. I remember the first time I came out to my mother, we had just come from the grocery store. She just straight-out asked [if I was gay] and I just froze. I was not ready for that question. And it didn’t go well. It just became a whole drama.” Sadly, this participant’s story about coming out as gay did not work out well, and it became a drama. Terriquez (2015) explains that many LGBTQ Latinx risk losing their family support and financial help by coming out. The second participant shared: “I am a very proud trans-Latina. The closet, to me, means seclusion, means hiding, means being trapped. Well, coming out as a trans, I was actually disowned by my family for a long time. Coming out as an undocumented person has been definitely a challenge.” The beginning of this comment connects back to the hashtag #NoMoreClosets from the beginning of the section. We can sense the pain of the participant as they describe what the closet felt like to them: “seclusion,” “hiding,” and “being trapped.” In addition, being disowned by their family is a common occurrence for LGBTQ folks. Fortier (2001) explains how the process of LGBTQ folks being pushed out of their homes creates a

queer diaspora. This queer location forces LGBTQ folks to find new homes and new families that will accept them. Queer migrants are on a quest for self-identity and self-determination (Gorman-Murray 2007). The third participant, Jennicet Gutiérrez from the UndocuTrans movement, discussed her mom's comment when she came out as trans: "She was just like, you know, if you were just a gay man, it would be easier." Being trans was actually harder for her mom to accept and process; identifying as gay might have been easier for her mom to embrace. In all three of these interviews, the participants struggled with coming out to their families, and their families struggled with them coming out. The image below comes from the image and information shared on Twitter with the hashtags: #UndocuQueer, #queer, #undocumented, #immigration, #latinx, #interview, #comingout, and #undocumentedimmigrant.



Figure 12. Tweet by @emergingUS

In situating queer relocation and queer diaspora, some UndocuQueer folks find that going to college gives them the freedom and time to process their identities as undocumented and LGBTQ. In a *VICE* article titled "How 'UndocuQueer' Immigrants Straddle Two Marginalized Identities," they interviewed Jesus Cisneros, a professor from the University of Texas-El Paso on

his research. *VICE* asked him about the similarities of coming out as queer and undocumented, and he responded with the following:

Several participants talked to me about not being able to talk about their LGBTQ identities in their homes. They were embraced more within the movement, but didn't come out to family and friends until after becoming activists. In a study I haven't published yet, the participants I spoke to said they knew they were queer and trans from a very young age but, because they were undocumented, they forestalled coming out to their parents until after they made it to college. They knew that as undocumented people, they had to make it to college and get a scholarship, they had to put their queer identities to the side.

These findings differ from the interviews above, because the focus of Cisneros's study was on how undocumented youth who wait to come out to their families until college after becoming activists themselves. Those with undocumented status often pushed their queer identities to the side for their families. Additionally, in an article from *Buzzfeed* titled, "Undocumented and LGBTQ: an Intersection of Movements," Mayra, an UndocuQueer, agrees with Jesus Cisneros: "It's not surprising that I never felt I could embrace my queerness until I finally left [home]. See, in a community like Lakeland, being an undocumented Latina is already not okay. Adding any more complications to my life did not feel smart, especially when my primary goal was to survive and make it to college." Thus, physically separating from their families gives them the opportunity to explore and understand their sexuality better. It is about being able to survive and afterward being able to thrive. Gorman-Murray (2007) proposes that queer migration and queer bodies travel through space to search for home and self-identity. For many, regardless of the challenges, UndocuQueer folks are searching for home and thus participate in queer migration.

Other UndocuQueer folks reveal their coming out stories as interconnected with being both undocumented and queer. UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education (2012), Terriquez (2015), and Chavez Durante (2016) have studied the UndocuQueer community and how "Coming Out of the Closet" has two meanings. For example, in an article on Julio Salgado

called “The Intersectionality of Being UndocuQueer” from the *East Bay Express* “Special Section: The Queer & Trans Issue,” the interviewer states, “As a youth, Julio Salgado had to come out of the closet twice: First to reveal his sexuality, and second to reveal his undocumented status. Growing up in a Latinx family, he said he found it easier to come out as undocumented to some of his friends than it was to come out as gay to his parents.” While they may be separate identities, and coming out may be different to different people, both coming out experiences are equally as important and difficult to do. According to @familatqlm on Twitter, @carlos.padilla92 on Instagram came out to his school as undocumented first, and then he came out to his mom as LGBTQ even though he was concerned about her worries. More interestingly, he states that the “It Gets Better” campaign did not help him, because he was undocumented, and it did not feel like it was getting better. Yet, the immigrant rights movement did help.



Figure 13. Instagram Post by @carlos.padilla92 shared by @UnitedWeDream

Both undocumented and queer identities are equally important, and they impact people’s life experiences. Furthermore, from the video “Coming Out of Two Closets” shared by @emergingUS described above, this interviewee explains: “I am undocumented and a queer

immigrant. First of all, I never thought I was going to come out. I thought I was going to die being in the closet. For me, living in a closet is something that I don't wish on anyone. When it comes to being undocumented and queer, I don't think coming out of either is easy. It's so hard because you know it's going to change people's lives. Coming out of the closet is like coming out of one cage but you are still living in another cage of being undocumented." My data reveals consistent patterns of struggling with being in the closet. @carlos.padilla92 felt trapped, which is a common feeling experienced by LGBTQ and undocumented folks. Moreover, he acknowledges that coming out of one closet is not easier than the other and that someone may be free from one closet but still be stuck in another closet. It is more than just one coming out story for UndocuQueer folks. Again, from the "Coming Out of Two Closets" video, another interviewee explains the complexity and similarity of coming out as both undocumented and queer:

I am queer with lesbian tendencies. I'm here right now, coming out for the first time as undocumented to stop hiding who I am. The experience of being queer and being undocumented, and the experience of coming out and those two identities are very similar. Closets are claustrophobic. I started seeing a therapist about it because that's intense, but I didn't realize how it's affected me, to hide, to be hiding that part of myself. I think the similarities, the lying and experience of it, the fear, the nervousness, the insecurities, the hiding.

This was the first time this person⁵ was openly discussing being undocumented and queer. The restrictions of these closets are not simple or easy to navigate. The feelings associated with living a hidden life are intense, and this person needed help processing all of it. This person even connects the same feelings of hiding, lying, nerves, and insecurities with being both undocumented and queer. More importantly, these UndocuQueer activists' experiences are

⁵ I don't know this person's preferred gender pronoun. Thus, I refer to them as "this person" in order not to assume an identity based on their gender expression during this particular interview.

intertwined with multiple identities and oppressions. That is why intersectionality and Xicana feminism are so crucial to understanding their life experiences. With this perspective, we can see how their race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status affect their lives. For that reason, we can see that their counterpublic is an intersectional one.

Throughout this section, I showed how UndocuQueer folks struggled with being in multiple closets. I began this section with the hashtags #DoubleComingOut and #NoMoreClosets, because social media provides a way for the UndocuQueer community to share their stories. Furthermore, social media allows ways for them to find each other and build community. The *testimonios* and Twitter data that I shared were either positive or traumatic memories. Latinx households typically place rigid gender roles and beliefs about sexuality on their children, which makes coming out an emotional, difficult decision and experience (Terriquez 2015; Chavez Duarte 2016). Furthermore, many UndocuQueer folks may experience the queer relocation and queer diaspora from being pushed out of their homes for coming out (Fortier 2001). UndocuQueer individuals and their coming out stories are forms of *nepantla*, because they are living in between worlds and rejecting dichotomies in the colonial/modern gender system (Anzaldúa 2002). Overall, UndocuQueer folks do not want to be trapped in any closet, whether it is the LGBTQ or undocumented closet. These experiences can be understood through an intersectional perspective by understanding how multiple identities and social institutions affect UndocuQueer people's lives. As a result, I call this an intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

Marginalizations

The previous section centered on UndocuQueer folks' multiple coming-out stories, but this section focuses on other struggles that they face. I situated the previous chapter on

understanding how the state's anti-immigration policies and their exclusion of public sphere's discussion of undocumented stories marginalization the UndocuQueer community. This section discusses how many of the UndocuQueer people experienced marginalizations from the LGBTQ community and from the immigrant community. These marginalizations helps us understand the importance of intersectionality within the UndocuQueer community.

UndocuQueer people face discrimination in LGBTQ communities and organizations, and even in romantic relationships. Jesus Cisneros further discusses how UndocuQueer folks experience anxiety and hesitation about going to gay clubs:

The people I've interviewed struggle with the question, "When do I come out as undocumented?" Is it on the first date? When you're about to have sex? After you have sex? They compare it to revealing your HIV status. There's a lot of anxiety and stress related to it because it's a constant education process—many of my participants talk about the exhaustion of having to come out as undocumented and educating people about what they can and can't do. If it's a date's first exposure to someone who's undocumented, that can require a lot of work. For that reason, some of the people I talked to describe feeling more at ease with other Latinos because of our proximity to immigration processes. When you go into Latinx spaces, you don't have to have your guard up for even more rejection, or to be confronted by someone whose politics doesn't include liberation for you.

Dating someone who is White or has citizenship papers complicates relationships, because UndocuQueers feel they may be misunderstood or judged as a minority. As a result, UndocuQueer folks tend to date people who have experience with people who do not have citizenship documentation. Additionally, from the interview called "Coming Out of Two Closets," an interviewee explains this same hesitation: "Definitely, being in [romantic] relationships is really, really hard because they will never know because you don't have the same rights. Sometimes I'm like 'Oh, I'm not dating citizens anymore.' I'm just going to date undocumented people so they can understand how I am and what I feel. And I'm done. So, they can see how it feels." Overall, even dating within the LGBTQ community can present hardships

for UndocuQueers. Difficulties with LGBTQ dating is something shared by people in this project and in research as well. For example, Pieri's (2016) research on "Undocumented and Awkward," a YouTube web series, explores an episode reflecting this challenge. The episode showed a first date between a documented guy and an undocumented person at a bar, but the undocumented person did not know how to have a conversation about his citizenship status. Since the undocumented guy did not have the proper identification, it led into a discussion about his status and citizenship privilege. This episode illustrates how uncomfortable and possibly embarrassing it is to date a citizen. The "Coming Out of Two Closets" video describes another example. They explain how the LGBTQ community can be marginalizing: "I've had encounters with White cisgender queer males, who totally get the gay thing, and they're all about it. But once you talk about your immigrant experience and what you have to go through, they might not agree." These stories of marginalizations reflect another need for the UndocuQueer community's counterpublic. While dating does not fall under the public sphere, UndocuQueer folks' experiences of being ignored, rejected, or excluded based on their citizenship status continue the need for UndocuQueer support and community bonds.

LGBTQ marriage also becomes a space of contention for the UndocuQueer community. For example, @favianna1 shared an image on Twitter and Instagram. It includes various posters/stickers; one of them states, "Don't stop at marriage! UndocuQueers are being deported." She is calling out the non-immigrant LGBTQ community for their exclusive focus on gay marriage while there is another portion of the gay community, within the immigrant community, being ignored and denied rights. A different sticker from the same image reads, "stop the terrorizing of queer families by the poli migra. Stop the deportations."



Figure 14. Instagram Post by @favianna1

This image reflects how the UndocuQueer community has felt about the LGBTQ community, where they have not felt their needs are heard or met. These stickers challenge the LGBTQ community not to stop organizing simply because gay marriage passed. This art shows that immigration issues are also LGBTQ social issues; they are interconnected. Research from Luibhéid and Cantú (2005) focuses on marriage and citizenship by examining binational lesbian/gay couples, who are searching for recognition and equal rights. This image and research reveal that these issues must be viewed from an intersectional perspective.

The previous examples illustrate how the LGBTQ community has marginalized the queer migrants, but there are also examples of how the immigrant rights movement excludes UndocuQueer activists as well. The interview called “Coming Out of Two Closets” offers this example: “The immigrant rights movement is definitely very cis hetero. The trans rights movement can be very anti-immigrant. The queer movement can be very transphobic. My struggle is not ever part of what the mainstream movement and any movement is fighting for.” These frustrations are valid, and this participant is not alone in their feeling. When Jesus Cisneros was asked about the future for queer people within the undocumented movement, he answered similarly:

Right now, as we're trying to push for the DREAM act, LGBTQ people are going to be pushed aside again. Why? Because we have a Republican-led House and Senate, and a Republican in the White House. That means Christian values are undergirding these decisions and votes, and different gender identities and sexualities are just not accepted or embraced. Again, we're seeing this discourse of exceptionalism, Americanism, and Christian values. That's the language you need to speak to gain a captive audience. It is not currently in the best interests of the immigrant community to put LGBTQ identities at the forefront because that's going to distance individuals whose support we need to pass legislation to replace DACA or supply some kind of relief.

This history and the current state of immigrant rights refusing to place queer immigrants at the forefront is an example of how history continues to repeat itself and marginalization internal members. However, the UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans movements push against such divisive politics by bringing together queerness and citizenship issues. Both of these comments above speak to how important intersectionality is for the UndocuQueer community. As discussed in Chapter 3, identity politics focus on a single identity and cannot embrace or accept other identities at the forefront (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1991). For that reason, theorists, such as Perez (1999), Sandoval (2000), and Blackwell (2003) challenged the Chicano movements from a non-male and non-nation perspective, where they critique patriarchy and sexism. This perspective does not encompass multiple identities and experiences while intersectional theories do value them. UndocuQueer activists have been the catalysts for many social movements. Intersectionality activism becomes an ideological location to fight multiple oppressions with different aspects of identity politics; that is what the UndocuQueer's intersectional subaltern counterpublic does.

I illuminated different marginalizations that the UndocuQueer people experience in the United States. I began by showing how UndocuQueer individuals feel isolated from dating in the LGBTQ community because 1) they are not welcoming of UndocuQueer folks; and/or 2) they do not know how to deal with UndocuQueer folks. Dating people that do not have the same

citizenship status requires a lot of emotional and mental work that some UndocuQueer folks do not want to do. Another space where UndocuQueer individuals feel marginalized is in the gay marriage social movement; they would like the LGBTQ movement to understand that their social justice issues are interconnected. Luibhéid and Cantú (2005) research the fight for binational lesbian/gay couples, who they are searching for recognition and equal rights. This is one space the LGBTQ movement can support the UndocuQueer movement. Furthermore, the immigrant rights movement also does not want to center LGBTQ folks in their movement. Feminists of color critique identity politics, which are more specifically single identity politics, for not understanding how oppressions are interconnected and listening to the UndocuQueer folks' experiences. As a result, these experiences with the LGBTQ and immigrant communities maintain and spread the UndocuQueer counterpublic. Furthermore, I call this an intersectional subaltern counterpublic. Overall, this section demonstrated how essential it is to engage the deeply intersectional nature of peoples' lives and in the UndocuQueer community.

UndocuQueer and PROUD

This section is devoted to the empowered and powerful UndocuQueer activists, who are out and proud. I also highlight *testimonios* of when these UndocuQueer activists heard of the UndocuQueer political identity and when they started identifying with it. As described, UndocuQueer is a political identity formed by queer immigrants searching for a new home. Interestingly, I connect this to *Aztlán*, the Chicano's mythical homeland in the Southwestern United States. Ultimately, during the civil rights era, Chicanos wanted *Aztlán* back for self-governance and self-determination. Chicanos were searching for a place to feel accepted and empowered. Moraga (1993) reconceptualized this homeland for LGBTQ Latinx called Queer *Aztlán*. This spaces centers queer Latinx folks, and they can find liberation (Moraga 1993).

While UndocuQueer activists are not calling for Queer *Aztlán*, this is a space that they can be unapologetically queer and proud, the space they are searching for —home. From an opinion piece shared on Twitter by @CIYJA, Jorge Gutiérrez explains finding his strength in being undocumented and queer: “My mother is a lioness, a woman with a second-grade education but with plenty of compassion, intelligence and wisdom. She inspired me to have the courage to say proudly and unashamedly: I am queer and undocumented. I am UndocuQueer.” His mom inspired him to find the strength for him to proudly state who he is. This declaration of power that arises from, rather than occurs in spite of, this intersectional identity again returns us to the foundational theories of Xicana feminism. Moraga believes in power in their identities. For example, Cherrie Moraga’s (2011) transforms the Chicana identity into Xicana by replacing it with an X, as a way to acknowledge her mixed ancestry of Indigenous, Spanish, and Black. Furthermore, Moraga even identifies as “Xicana dyke” as a form of reclaiming and resistance. They are not defined by loss and, as we see, neither are those who come after them in the UndocuQueer movement. Another example can be found in one of my *testimonios*: Shaila Ramos proudly stated when she introduced herself, “My name is Shaila Ramos. I am undocumented, unafraid, queer, feminist, Afro-Latina, and *CHINGONA*⁶.” The recording of this *testimonio* allows the listeners to hear the emphasis and pride in Ramos’s voice. In addition, Alessandro Negrete also expressed strength in his identity:

I identify as queer. I identify as undocumented. Both of those are political identities. I’m a community member of Boyle Heights. I am on the Council, so I think that carries some weight with it, because I am the first openly undocumented councilmember in the neighborhood.

We can see undocumented and queer identities cited as a place of strength. Sometimes identities are not just a part of who we are; they are political statements. They embody resistance and

⁶ *Chingona* is Mexican slang for badass.

defiance. Being able to say loudly and proudly “I am undocumented and queer” is a political statement, especially when the government and Trump supporters want to deport all people without papers. It is a political statement to come out as LGBTQ when LGBTQ continue to be the targets of bullying and hate crimes. This claim for power arose in part from UndocuQueer activists who, as noted previously, made “undocumented and unafraid” a rallying cry for the movement. As a result, these examples emphasize the power of their intersectional counterpublic, which, as we can see, can replace fear with pride. Overall, this research underscores the fact that courage and power can come from the stories and experiences of UndocuQueer people.

In the *testimonios*, UndocuQueer activists offered interesting insight on their introduction to the UndocuQueer movement. Alessandro Negrete tells his story when he began to identify as an UndocuQueer during this period:

I think the first time that I heard about it was with Julio Salgado and being around American Apparel. He labeled himself as such so I don't know if that's where it started or this other undocumented queer person from New York, Jesus Barrios. He was always doing talking circles for undocumented queer people. I don't know which came first though. I never thought about myself in that context, but it wasn't until the California DREAM Act and someone suggested that I was. So, I thought I am undocumented and queer. So, yeah sure. That's the thing. Then, a health campaign used my picture for their campaign. I didn't identify as one until the House for All Campaign. They did a specific queer health workshop. They used one of my images on their many health billboards. They were going to the Foto Latino Power Center, because I am a social media influencer.

Through his social networks, Negrete heard about the UndocuQueer movement and felt like it included him, so he started to identify as such. Negrete’s reference to social media and being an influencer reflects how powerful social media is and what a reach it has. These spaces offer new opportunities for broadcasting and knowledge (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016).

“Influencers: have social media accounts with a big reach – with many followers and/or retweets

(Pilny, Atouba, and Riles 2014; Callison and Hermida 2015). As a result, social media becomes a facilitator between individual political participation and collective activism (Velasquez 2015). On the other hand, Yosimar Reyes had a different experience with the UndocuQueer identity. He explains his involvement with the UndocuQueer movement:

The height of the UndocuQueer movement was 2012. That's when it was poppin'. It was new. Everybody wanted that. Then, it became the UndocuTrans. It goes in waves. Right now, it's UndocuBlack and the undocumented Asians. I make fun of it and I say that in 2020 this can be undocumented cyborgs *laughs* so it's in waves. So I knew a lot of those activists. So, you build a network through social media then you start meeting more people like you. And then I started performing, and people started connecting me with it. But I never identified as that. I was always like undocumented is not my identity. I'm not that. I'm a poet. I'm a writer. I'm an artist. That's not who I am. Because of my work and I believe it reflects that experience, I became aware of these other people. It was like you're writing for our stories and I was like I guess. *laugh* I became friends with a lot of those activists, and we were still advocating for the DREAM Act so we would do mock graduations, and I would go to support.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter when I introduced Yosimar Reyes, he is a comedian. He has a good sense of humor, which comes through when he pokes fun at different movements, even the ones he is in. He is full of life, and this makes him a big influencer on social media. His response is interesting; he never called himself an UndocuQueer in the beginning. Because his poems and work reflected the UndocuQueer experience, organizers and his fans called him an UndocuQueer poet and saw him as one of the leaders of the UndocuQueer movement. Reyes's many comments show that he does not like or let labels or ideas restrict his dreams or goals. He wants to be seen as a poet, writer, and artist. Again, it is this idea that UndocuQueer folks are so much more than just undocumented and queer. Additionally, the last part of his quote reflects how he supports many different social movements. This is not an individual choice alone; the UndocuQueer movement is an intersectional one. They support each other. In the upcoming section, I demonstrate that UndocuQueer movements are intertwined with other social movements, such as UndocuTrans, UndocuBlack, and UndocuAPI.

This section elaborated on how the UndocuQueer activists' claims to strength and power can be seen in the *testimonios* I collected. It also shed light on the growth and empowerment from the UndocuQueer resistance in which “queer and unafraid” becomes an inspirational message. I explained the power in reclaiming and creating your own identities, which is central in Xicana feminism (Moraga 2011). Again, I highlight social media, because it is central to the UndocuQueer’s social movement and counterpublic. Social media becomes a space for knowledge and political participation (Small 2011; Velasquez 2015; Jackson and Welles 2016). Popular social media people or accounts have the power to spread their ideas and beliefs, especially if they are influencers like Reyes and Negrete (Pilny, Atouba, and Riles 2014; Callison and Hermida 2015). Overall, these examples continue to show the UndocuQueer intersectional counterpublic.

Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublic

So far, the *testimonios* and Twitter data have shown how the UndocuQueer movement has created an intersectional subaltern counterpublic. This section deepens the understanding of this intersectional UndocuQueer counterpublic. Along with the #UndocuQueer, many other hashtags also came up, such as #UndocuTrans, #UndocuBlack, #UndocuAPI, and #UndocuSolidarity. Chávez (2013) explains how the UndocuQueer identity and social movement has the necessity of coalitional thinking because of their lived experiences with marginalizations with multiple people and institutions. Coalitional work is essential to understanding the UndocuQueer social movement, because they are bridging different communities together. The following sections describe each hashtag and the social movement associated with it. The Internet is a major source of empowerment for undocumented activists, including all kinds of undocu-organizers (Corrunker 2012). These undocu-movements work together in multiple ways

through political participation and social media sharing. Therefore, I call this a coalitional subaltern counterpublic.

UndocuTrans

Just as the activism around the DREAMers influenced the inception of the UndocuQueer movement, so too does the UndocuQueer movement continue to evolve. UndocuTrans refers to people who identify as undocumented and transgender. Just as UndocuQueer folks resist being incorporated — and erased — by the often-whole-identified LGBTQ or often cis-hetero-identified immigrant rights movements, so do trans people at times resist being enveloped by the umbrella term “queer,” which likewise can elide their particular needs and identities. Ximena Ospina Vargas, an UndocuTrans activist at Columbia University who goes by @nysylc on Instagram, explains this intersectionality:

For the immigrant community, trans health is not always a priority. For a large part of the LGBTQIA community in the United States, immigration is not always discussed. Erasure of many forms is the daily experience of the UndocuTrans, who seem to only become visible when they are thrust into national spotlight for political dissection. The past year has been disastrous for trans well-being. Hatred in politics is mainstream and fervently defended at the expense of our murder, deportations, and incarcerations.

Similarly to what the UndocuQueer activists explained in the section above, the trans community does not feel support within the immigrant community. At the same time, they also do not feel acknowledged as immigrants within the LGBTQ community. Hence, another counterpublic rises within the UndocuQueer counterpublic; UndocuTrans arose to address these intersectional differences.

When people talk about the UndocuTrans movement, they often reference, Jennicet Gutiérrez, an undocumented trans woman who is a leader for *FAMILIA: Trans Queer Liberation Movement*, an organization founded by queer and trans immigrants. Gutiérrez is well known for her protest interruption of President Obama at a White House Pride event on June 25, 2015.

During Obama's speech, she yelled "release all LGBTQ immigrants from detention." Ultimately, she was escorted out. She stated, "I spoke out because our issues and struggles can no longer be ignored." In an interview conducted by Fusion, @familiatqlm shared this article, where Gutiérrez explains that trans women face higher rates of sexual abuse in detention centers. Gutiérrez stated:

Last night I spoke out to demand respect and acknowledgement of our gender expression and the release of the estimated 75 transgender immigrants in detention right now. There is no pride in how LGBTQ immigrants are treated in this country and there can be no celebration with an administration that has the ability to keep us detained and in danger or release us to freedom.

In another statement for the *Washington Blade*, Gutiérrez proclaims why the issue of transgender immigrants is so imperative, beginning with the rate of violence against this community:

Immigrant trans women are 12 times more likely to face discrimination because of our gender identity. If we add our immigration status to the equation, the discrimination increases. Transgender immigrants make up one out of every 500 people in detention, but we account for one out of five confirmed sexual abuse cases in ICE custody. The violence my trans sisters face in detention centers is one of torture and abuse. The torture and abuse come from ICE officials and other detainees in these detention centers. I have spoken with my trans immigrant sisters who were recently released from detention centers. With a lot of emotional pain and heavy tears in their eyes, they opened up about the horrendous treatment they all experienced. Often seeking asylum to escape threats of violence because of their gender identity and sexuality, this is how they're greeted in this country. At times misgendered, exposed to assault, and put in detention centers with men.

Being UndocuTrans means being highly targeted by different systems, which pushed Gutiérrez to advocate for herself and others that could not. This statement reveals larger issues in society about how trans people are still not seen and respected as people. Gutiérrez's statements reveal an institutionalized cis-genderism, the belief that people who identify with the sex they were born with are superior than people who do not. In addition, their gender identity and gender expression make them targets within society, the immigration system, the criminal justice system, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Sadly, many of them face sexual assault within these detention centers, which causes more traumas. A post by @nysylc on Instagram,

written by Ximena Ospina Vargas, they describe their struggles with this political climate:

Sometimes it's difficult to handle both anti-immigrant developments and anti-trans developments, such as Trump's transgender military ban. In these dark times, we reach out for love and affection, something trans people are often denied by cisgender people, whether they're queer or not. Transgender women are not women enough for cis-het men, are too fem for cis-queer men, or too masculine for cis-queer women. Even those who are open to dating trans women make hormones a requirement. The gender binary continues to ensure our loneliness and fetishization, and I make no distinction between this romantic exclusion and the rates by which transgender women of color are ironically pushed to sex work, arrested, or murdered. Despite leading a movement focused on "love," the LGBQ community does not always apply that to transgender people.

They⁷ elaborate on the battles with the social world as a transgender person and immigrant, where they face double burdens. They use Trump's military ban as an example of our transphobic society. Furthermore, they even describe the discrimination of transgender people from the LGBTQ community. This post shows how daunting it is for transgender people in this political climate. Overall, these issues are important and central to UndocuTrans activists. These marginalizations of the undocumented and trans community make their counterpublic so important to their safety, survival, and well-being.

The following examples illustrate how important social media becomes to the UndocuTrans movement. The article, "In Support of UndocuTrans Migrants" explains Paolo Jara-Riveros's story as an immigrant and transgender man. He was detained at an immigration detention center with many other LGBTQ folks who were fighting for political asylum. Originally, he went back to Lima, Peru and applied for a visa for Spain, but it was denied, which left him trapped in a place that was not safe for LGBTQ people. He explains:

Homophobia and transphobia are written into the laws and society of Peru, which makes acts of violence against LGBTQ people an everyday danger. As a result, LGBTQ people in Peru are often forced to be invisible. Peru does not offer basic legal protections for

⁷ I don't know this person's preferred gender pronoun. Thus, I refer to them as they in order not to assume based on their name.

people who are victims of hate crimes, and trans identified people are routinely misgendered.

The violence against LGBTQ people in Peru is high, so Jara-Riveros came back to the United States, where he risked being detained again during this direct action, because of his undocumented status. He utilized social media to spread his story, create awareness about it, and make a call to action. Cheong and Lee (2010) showed how environmental activists used Twitter to create environmental awareness and encouraged the decrease of power consumption and energy by having an Earth hour. This is how #UndocuTrans use social media as well. This also shows how important LGBTQ immigrants need forms of political asylum in the United States. While the United States is not perfect around LGBTQ rights, it still is better than many other countries. In the image below, Jara-Riveros is chained up and blocking a road's intersection.



Figure 15. Image shared in an article by @IYC

Furthermore, on social media and in face-to-face social actions, UndocuTrans and UndocuQueer activists show how their separate counterpublics can come together to form a larger coalition.

This image shared below by @familiatqlm shows five trans and queer immigrants getting arrested for civil disobedience. They were blocking an intersection at the Santa Ana city jail, where transgender immigrants were being detained. #UndocuQueer and #UndocuTrans utilize social media to show the world their political engagement.



Figure 10. Facebook Image by @familiatqlm

This section described the UndocuTrans movement, centering the creation of a new counterpublic occurred around trans issues within the LGBTQ and the immigrant communities. It showed examples of how their movement has focused on releasing all LGBTQ immigrants from detention centers and exposing the violence committed against trans immigrants within those centers. Their gender identity and gender expression create a target for UndocuTrans folks in the immigration system and criminal justice system. This section also illustrated UndocuTrans activism and direct actions. Their intersectionality across the UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans movements are vital, because they can bridge their struggles and concerns. This movement segment is important to consider it has opened doors to other people and options. Overall, my data show the interconnections between the UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans movements through activism and social media. Thus, they participate in the intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

UndocuBlack

UndocuBlack is another split-off from the undocumented social movement, which comes from undocumented Black people. This movement and hashtag is an attempt to show that Black people are immigrants as well. It is also redefining what it means to be Black, by including the Afro-Latinx, such as Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Haitians, etc. According to the UndocuBlack Network shared by @MigrantScribble, there are close to 600,000 undocumented Black immigrants. They believe that immigration is not just a Latinx issue, as the mainstream media portrays it, but instead also a Black issue as well. Their twitter account is connected to their website, and it shows UndocuBlack's mission:

The UndocuBlack Network's mission is twofold: 1) to "Blackify" this country's understanding of the undocumented population and 2) to facilitate access to resources for the Black undocumented community. Ultimately, our vision is to have truly inclusive immigrant rights and racial justice movements that advocate for the rights of Black undocumented individuals, provide healing spaces, and kinship to those with intersecting identities.

They believe in a more united social movement between the immigrant rights movement and the Black Lives Matter movement. Interestingly, Jackson and Welles (2016) have studied how the #BlackLivesMatter movement has utilized social media as an organizing space, and how they created their own counterpublic, known as Black Twitter. Therefore, this research shows the possibilities of social media and counterpublics. UndocuBlack folks hope to bridge different communities, such as BLM and the immigrant rights movement. It is important to note that they want to unite the Black immigrant community and change the narrative of who is considered an immigrant. By using and being a part of the undocu-movement, UndocuBlack are also participating in the intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublic.



Figure 11. Tweet by @BGDblog

As with UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans, the UndocuBlack movement provides information about its community to share with each other and spread on social media. Another tweet shared by @UndocuBlack focuses on activists in the undocumented, queer, and Black community. The article, “10 (Un)documented Black and LGBTQIA+ Activists You Need to Know” shares that to be being Black, queer, and undocumented can be alienating to say the least:

Growing up Black, queer, and undocumented in the United States was an isolating and frightening experience for me. I was always afraid of being deported, profiled by the police, or shamed for my queerness. Being Black and queer meant that I was not sure how I fit into the U.S. narrative of immigration. This is because the immigration narrative in the U.S. focuses on non-Black Mexican immigration and does not address Black, queer, and trans identities. The truth is, undocumented Black queer and/or trans activists have always been a huge part of the immigration movement and it is time that they receive recognition.

These three marginalizations are overlapping and, according to this interviewee, a constant source of exhaustion. The mainstream discussion on immigration is Mexican centric for the most part, and other ethnicities are ignored. According to the Pew Research, Black immigrants have increased fivefold since 1980; there were 816,0000 Black immigrants in 1980, and now there are 4.2 million Black immigrants. Furthermore, the Pew Research states that in 2015, there were

619,000 undocumented black immigrants. Overall, these numbers show that we must acknowledge the UndocuBlack movement. The articles list undocumented, queer, and Black activists. I want to show this list because it is important to give them space and recognition. The article goes on to list these activists: Karolina Lopez, a transgender Afro-Mexicana who fights against the prison industrial complex; Laura Perez, an undocumented Oaxacan migrant who focuses on afro-indigeneity food injustice; Kemi Bello, a poet and activist, who took part in the No Papers No Fear Ride for Justice; Jonathan Perez, an Afro-Colombian activist who built three new schools in Los Angeles; Grace Lawrence, a transgender Liberian activist who focuses on LGBTQI+ violence in Africa; Ola Osaze, a trans Nigerian writer and activist who co-founded Trans Justice and Uhuru Wazobia, an LGBT group for African immigrants; Angel Patterson, a Dominican trans, gender non-conforming femme activist who is a co-founder for the UndocuBlack Emergency Fund; Christina Mavuma, an undocumented activist from Botswana who works with The Exchange Program to help trans immigrants from South and East African regions; Didi Adiakpan, a Nigerian activist who works on fighting biphobia and towards decolonizing Christian evangelism in Texas; and Jerome Andre, a gender non-conforming femme from Barbados who advocates for the rights of undocumented and LGBTQIA+ migrants. These activists give back to their community and support the UndocuBlack movement. This is why intersectionality is so essential and needed in academia and society. Without it, we cannot understand these groups of activists' experiences of being triple marginalized. Overall, it is essential to disseminate the work of these activists to help change the narrative of who is undocumented, queer, and Black.

As we talk about the Black Latinx and Black immigrants, *testimonios* also reflected a concern for anti-Blackness in the Latinx community. Many activists believe it is crucial for

immigrants and the Latinx community to challenge racism and colorism. Alessandro Negrete connects with fighting color privilege in the Latinx community. He elaborates:

I understand that colorism is real. Both of my brothers are darker than me. Even in my undocumented narrative, there is color privilege. I can't help the fact that I was born the color that I am but that doesn't mitigate the struggle of others. I haven't experienced losing the job because of the color of my skin and things like that.

He has watched his brothers struggle with police and the criminal justice system, while he has not, which he credits to his light skin. His lighter skin affords him the privilege to not be a police target. This is an important realization. Many Latinx do not even want to recognize that many of them have African roots or that they are Afro-Latinxs. On the other hand, Shaila Ramos embraces that history. She explained that her dad is from Copala, a city in Acalpulco, Mexico, which used to be a slave trade town, and has deep African roots. She now identifies more with her African roots:

Recently I have been identifying more with my Afro-Latina heritage and trying to rediscover that, and my sister has been helping me do that because she is also been identifying with that, because she lives with Afro-Latinos. She lives in Nashville. And she went to a historically black college. Little things like learning how to deal with curly hair because mom would always call our hair, but I didn't learn until later on that we should be using coconut oil. You do this and you do that with your hair. Now my curly hair is healthy and starting to show because my mom wasn't taught how to take care of curly hair *laughs* so it's just little things like that, you know about embracing your heritage.

While dealing with curly hair seems insignificant, it is a big part of Blackness and Black culture. Colonialism promotes that straight hair is the best; thus, it is empowering to keep and maintain healthy curly hair. Her mom had Spanish ancestry and was not able to teach her those skills as well as she could have. Overall, it is critical to discuss and acknowledge Blackness in the Latinx community. Negrete and Ramos's comments on colorism and Afro-Latinx illuminate a larger issue of racism in Latinx; more importantly, their discussion of it reveals they want and need to change those things. They value them as parts of the community that shows their intersectional

perspective. Again, these *testimonios* show their commitment to the intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublic.

Twitter and larger social media campaigns intend to broaden the understanding of immigration, queerness, and intersectionality. Julio Salgado created an art series that states, “I’ll be damned if you force me back into a fucking closet!” To the right of the text is a person of color, wearing a shirt with the following slogan ,“Still queer, still undocumented, still unafraid, still unashamed.” In this series, all the people he has drawn have different skin complexions. The image below shows a Black person as undocumented and queer. This image further challenges the notion and narrative of who can be undocumented, queer, and immigrants.



Figure 12. Instagram image by @JulioSalgado83

This section focused on the UndocuBlack movement challenging the immigrant narrative by showing that Black people can be undocumented as well. It also showed how there are undocumented, Black, queer immigrants doing activism for their communities. Additionally, research from the *testimonios* illustrates how essential it is to be aware of Afro-Latinx folks and colorism within the Latinx community. UndocuBlack has also spread into the UndocuQueer movement, where artists embrace representing more than one universal image of the undocumented community. Overall, UndocuQueer activists push themselves to be intersectional

and socially conscious and find ways to question themselves around Afro-Latinx issues. The #UndocuBlack continues to support my concept of the intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublic. The UndocuBlack movement does not stand alone in changing the immigrant narrative; others have also linked with the undocu-movements.

UndocuAPI and UndocuSolidarity

The undocu movements do not stop there; UndocuAPI also joined in. This movement regards the undocumented in Asian Pacific Islander communities. This also emerged due to the skewed view of immigration as only a Latinx problem. However, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, in 2011, 1.3 million immigrants came Asia. Additionally, 340 Asian undocumented students are part of the University of California System. Therefore, we must acknowledge the importance and relevance of the UndocuAPI movement. @UNITEDWEDREAM shares a tweet with the #UndocuAPI: “Being Asian and undocumented has been one of the most isolating experiences of my life.” Alvin, an UndocuAPI, is from Indonesia, and his parents overstayed their tourist visas. Similar to UndocuBlack, there is another marginalization within the immigration discussion and immigrant rights social movement. For that reason, it is important to acknowledge that diversity. He explained that there are not enough immigration resources for those who are not Latinx, where many speak Spanish but no other languages. He elaborated: “It sucked especially because, like, you go through all these struggles, and you can’t really feel like you identify with other folks who also go through that struggle, so you just kind of, like, stay in your own pocket of the world. It’s like you’re a double minority.” Overall, some undocumented Asian Pacific Islanders may not feel connected with the Latinx community, which results in feeling like a double minority.

On the other hand, the undocu-movement attempts to bridge these gaps. For example, the following picture was shared by @UndocuMedia who did shout out for UndocuAPI folks who graduated from UC Berkeley. This picture was taken at the first undocumented graduation ceremony.



Figure 13. Tweet shared by @UndocuMedia

Holding an undocumented graduation connected many different ethnicities through the common denominator of being undocumented. It is meaningful for everyone involved. Furthermore, UC Berkeley has also had rallies supporting their UndocuAPI community. In addition to the image above, here are two additional images from Twitter shared by @MigrantScribble, which focus on #UndocuBlack and #UndocuAPI:



Figure 14. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble

The text in this image stands against Janet Napolitano, the UC President, who has not supported undocumented students or students of color. This picture encompasses #UndocuTrans, #UndocuBlack, #UndocuAPI, and #UndocuLatinx. I call this the coalitional subaltern counterpublic. While the UndocuQueer movement and counterpublic began the undocu-movement, these other hashtags and movements exist in the UndocuQueer counterpublic. They are also participating together and united. They show empathy and community as undocumented people.



Figure 15. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble

Overall, these tweets and images are showing undocu-solidarity. They are supporting each other across different ethnicities and experiences. Their commonality is being undocumented. They have experienced marginalization within marginalizations, which is reflected in their urgency for intersectionality. These movements and groups have bonded over being undocumented. They are now participating in the coalitional subaltern counterpublic. Below, Julio Salgado, the UndocuQueer activist mentioned throughout the chapter, shared his shirt on Twitter and Instagram:



Figure 16. Instagram post shared by @JulioSalgado83

Here, his shirt states #UndocuQueer and #UndocuAPI among other hashtags. In the text, he used #UndocuSolidarity, which reflects the new undocumented movement's focus on solidarity. It is all about solidarity. The last tweet I am sharing below comes from @MonseLGBTQ, which states “our liberation is intertwined, your help is not needed but instead your commitment to fight next to me.” The image also shows a text image that reads: “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” This tweet and image indicate the desire to be intersectional and to work with other identities, people, and groups.

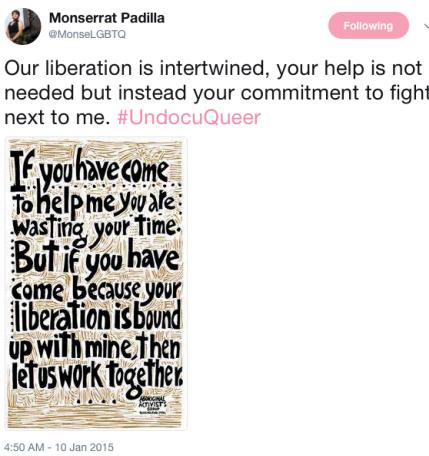


Figure 17. Tweet shared by @MonseLGBTQ

#UndocuAPI, rose similarly to #UndocuBlack, through being marginalized from the undocumented experience. They want to show the public sphere that undocumented is not only a Latinx issue. Being undocumented does not mean they have to look a particular way. This section has concluded the many ways that the undocu-movements have grown and expanded. It does not stop with the UndocuQueer, UndocuTrans, and UndocuBlack. This movement has embraced intersectionality and complexity within the undocumented immigrant community. Solidarity has truly developed here and expanded beyond the original UndocuQueer social movement thought at the beginning of their movement. #UndocuAPI and #UndocuSolidarity work within and expand the UndocuQueer counterpublic. My data show that the undocu-movements are organizing together. Thus, they are participating in this coalitional subaltern counterpublic.

Chapter Overview

This chapter has focused on the different ways people associated with the UndocuQueer movement represent their identities and the concerns of the movement in *testimonios* and on Twitter. #DoubleComingOut is a way UndocuQueer folks share their stories. These *testimonios*, tweets, and retweeted videos, articles, and statements suggest UndocuQueer people can struggle

with both personal identities, with family approval, with friendships and relationships, with employment, and also ongoing institutional discrimination. However, at the same time, the *testimonios* and tweets show me that UndocuQueer folks can draw strength from these spaces. UndocuQueer folks' struggles and experiences as undocumented and queer show that the UndocuQueer counterpublic is an intersectional one, which I call an intersectional subaltern counterpublic. I also explain other undocu-movements, such as UndocuTrans, UndocuBlack, and UndocuAPI, and what they stand for within their social movements. UndocuTrans fights for visibility in the LGBTQ and immigrant rights movements. They also stand up against trans violence in detention centers. The UndocuBlack and UndocuAPI movements challenge the immigrant narrative. These movements and hashtags do this through social media, which Velasquez (2015) agrees is a space for organizing and political engagement. Overall, this chapter centers the importance of UndocuSolidarity between and among differing counterpublics and points to the intersectionality within all of them. More importantly, I complicate the concept of counterpublic. Fraser (1990) says that counterpublics are areas that marginalized groups invent and spread to have counterdiscourses. Fraser (1990) also states that there are different competing counterpublics. We can see that these undocu-movements are not competing with each other; they are working together. The *testimonios* and tweets show how these different counterpublics operate coalitionally. As a result, I call this undocu-phenomena a coalitional intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

Chapter 7 - THE MULTIPURPOSE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media encompasses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and many other platforms, serving many purposes for the UndocuQueer activists. As a result, I bring in social media studies to understand how the UndocuQueer activist community uses Twitter. This chapter focuses on how UndocuQueer activists use social media to create subaltern counterpublics. First, social media hosts an online community, where folks who identify as UndocuQueer can connect and support each other. I described some of these community spaces in Chapters 5 & 6 as the UndocuQueer counterpublic. Here, I provide *testimonios* and Twitter data to show its importance. Second, social media serves as a tool to express art. In the *testimonios*, many UndocuQueer activists shared that their art and artistic identities are important to them. In this context, art is recognized as different forms of expression: drawing, painting, poetry, storytelling, sculpting, etc. These artists use social media to share their work, spread the word about important events, and to make social and political commentary. Third, UndocuQueer activists organize their activism online to share with the world. Importantly, I show that online activism has not replaced traditional activism such as protests and civil disobedience. I also describe how UndocuQueer activists frame their activism and spread awareness through their social media counterpublics by telling their stories and their community's stories. Their social media outreach encourages marches, civil disobedience, events, workshops, petitions, and donations. These three main purposes of social media are forms of how the UndocuQueer counterpublic is maintained and expanded.

Social Media as Lived Community

Social media is an integral part of daily life for many in the United States today. UndocuQueer activists may use one or more of the different social media platforms personally,

socially, and/or politically each and everyday. While Chapters 5 & 6 looked at the UndocuQueer counterpublics, Chapter 7 explains how and why UndocuQueer use social media. Thus, I begin with *testimonios* and UndocuQueer activists' feelings on social media. Then, I show tweets and how UndocuQueer individuals show community online. I also show how they build a community online, or a counterpublic, and how they support each other. Shaila Ramos feels connected to this community, and it positively moves her. She explains about social media and art:

That's what I love about social media that you're able to share and mobilize that idea and that culture and that political statement as well. I hear people say I'm going to delete my Facebook for this in that, and I'm like no. I have never deleted my Facebook and they never will because that's how I'd literally work and I use it so much. That's where I get my news. That's where I share my news. That's where I share my work. That's literally my network. That's how I connect with other UndocuQueers.

Research, such as Small (2011), states that sharing information and reporting news is one of Twitter's main purposes and ties into Ramos's comment about social media. It allows people to share their ideas and act on them. As shown, social media is a way to bring change and awareness (Lim 2013; Velasquez 2015). Social media has room for culture as well as politics. Ramos could never see herself deleting her social media, because it is an essential part of her life that merges her community, networking, and understanding of news and information.

Social media becomes a way for people to connect with each other. Yosimar Reyes is also extremely connected to social media, because he uses it to connect with people and make them laugh. When I asked him about how he uses his social media, he explained:

My art. My social media is my art. It is also to make jokes. I'm very funny. I try to make people laugh. I'm surprised how many people come up to me and tell me "Oh my God, I follow you on social media and you're so funny." I'm like "Bitch, you should read my poems," and they're like, "Yeah, that too." *laughs* It varies. It depends on the audience: there are people that like the poetry in the literature and then people who like the funny comments. When the election happened, I was tweeting. And people were like oh my God you made me laugh thank you so much. When something horrible happens, I tweet or post on sight.

He uses social media as an outlet for his art and as a place where he can tell his jokes. He uses social media to connect with his community and fans, especially in difficult times, such as the presidential election. He hopes to connect both his audiences on his social media: the ones who like and read his poems and the ones who like his funny and political commentary on social media. Reyes's comments about social media show how important it is to him. It not only helps him express himself during dark times, but it also helps his community, his counterpublic. Ultimately, social media provides a safe haven for the UndocuQueer community. Peuchaud's (2014) study found how Egyptian women used social media to prevent sexual harassment and created a women's haven. This is what the UndocuQueer counterpublic does; it creates safety and community, which is so vital, since they experience much fear and anxiety. Reyes also believes that networking is crucial in the work that he does. Here, he explains:

Networking is important, you meet all the people around you and your neighborhood who are in the same predicament as you and able to do so much. With social networking, you are also able to meet undocumented people who are working in a specific field and maybe they can help you get a job or scholarship. People can tell you how they got to Harvard. I think in that way it has been super essential.

Connecting with different communities is important, because it bridges people together. Through their networking connections, they can work with other people, as allies, for the undocumented community. Here, Reyes's comment further shows how the, as previous explained, the Undocu-movements within the coalitional subaltern counterpublic operate through networking. They are able to get resources and information from each other. Hence, social media takes on many roles for him; it is an important part of his life.

Furthermore, Alessandro Negrete describes his introduction to social media and organizing:

At first, I never saw it as a tool when I first started organizing. You know again I was a DJ for three years. For me, it was about a popularity thing, so I was tweeting about

parties left and right. I would follow other DJs, other parties. When I started organizing, it was the same thing. I started looking at people that worked doing this work before the word influencer became a thing. People like Julio Salgado, Jose Antonio Vargas, and other people like that, while we might have had different analysis at the time, they were still bringing the truth to light.

Negrete understood social media from a DJ perspective, but this idea developed when he moved into activism. Social media became essential as an organizing tactic, which I explain further in the upcoming section. Negrete was able to funnel his DJ networks into his social media activism. Being an influencer meant having a higher impact on social media, due to having many followers. His comment speaks to the importance of social media, because it brings “truth to light.” Jackson and Welles (2016) specifically explain how social media allows people to communicate their lived realities. These UndocuQueer activists are talking about their lives and journeys.

Negrete also illuminates how supporting each other in the UndocuQueer movement is crucial. In many ways, he talks about why the creation of a counterpublic is necessary when he states, “we have Jennicet Gutiérrez shutting down Obama’s speech. She is building a trans liberation movement and the network of LGBT and undocumented people and anti-criminalization. Supporting their work is important.” He adamantly supports her and the UndocuTrans movement. This demonstrates how they built a community to maintain a coalitional subaltern counterpublic. These networks are expanded through social media and reach global audiences. Here, Negrete explains the creation of solidarity through social media:

Of course. For sure. I have friends that have added me on Facebook because they have seen me on x, y, z magazine or newspaper or the work that I do. You know I think it is a great connector, and it is a great equalizer. You have an Instagram and I have an Instagram, so let’s connect. Let’s share stories. How are our stories connected or are the same? If I am telling my story from LA and someone from Connecticut can relate to it, then there is our connection. There is a moment now – that voice is not just in LA, it’s in Connecticut. So, our voices are amplified.

Negrete further expands on the benefits of using Facebook: the platform adds visibility to the social justice work of UndocuQueer activists, because friends of friends can add or follow them as well. It may politicize the previously unaware. It connects people who may not have been able to meet because of distance or shyness. Moreover, since anyone is able to post information and messages, this becomes an equalizer; everyday people can interact with well-known activists or leaders. This is why social media is also called democratic media, because the average person can participate (Jackson and Welles 2016; Small 2011). Furthermore, these stories have the potential to cross state and national lines. Negrete's *testimonio* emphasizes that together, UndocuQueer stories can gain more traction, sending an even more powerful message about the undocumented community. Thus, UndocuQueer activists establish their online community to connect with each other and support each other. However, holding physical space is also important. For example, Shaila Ramos describes:

I'm a person that is discovering who I am as an artist. They are very much supportive to the community, but I want to be able to let everyone know that if you are undocumented and queer, you are welcomed in this community. We are going to provide these resources for you and the support. I want us to become a fighter community that is used as a support network. That's what I want to see. I also wanted to be localized as well, like where's my UndocuQueers in San Jose? Let's do some work! Must make some shit happen! Break some rules! Making the news! Let's do something. Let's work on the community here. Let's support each other here. So, more face-to-face interactions as well as online.

Ramos reiterates support and community in being an artist, undocumented, and a queer person. More importantly, she wants to find local UndocuQueer folks. Therefore, the UndocuQueer counterpublic is not only online, or at least she does not want it to be. Through these aspects, they are building themselves. They want to make the news, make art, empower themselves, and overall work together.

On social media, they show their community and solidarity in a few different ways. In many instances, they share images of support and love. An example of this support can be seen in this image that @MigrantScribble shared from the #QUIP2013 #Summit:



Figure 18. Tweet shared by @MigrantScribble

This tweet shows the love between the UndocuQueer community and allies. The image shows a banner that states “Love People → Not Status” and “LGBTQ Inclusive and Immigration Reform.” This image does two things. When UndocuQueer folks post messages like this, others can feel included and a part of the community — either the queer, undocumented, or both communities. It also shows another rhetorical appeal to human rights, to a common humanity. These actions and images tweeted attempts to humanize immigrants to a larger citizen public who has been taught dehumanizing ideas about “threats” and “hoards. For example, @queerDEP shares a tweet and image:



Follow

SUPPORT queer immigrant chosen families!
QDEP is a fam tiny.cc/GIVEQDEP Give 2
@queerDEP today 4 @GiveOUTday!



Figure 19. Tweet shared by @queerDEP

Again, the focus of the image is to support queer immigrants' families and communities. This tweet moves from emotional support to action as it includes a link to a website where people can donate to the cause. The banner states. "Queer Detainee Empowerment Project" as the title. On the bottom, Spanish words translate to: "The struggle continues. Liberation for Trans and Queer undocumented and detainees." The logo in the middle is an upside-down purple triangle with bars and a fist inside, which represents the queer and immigrant communities and detainees as well. Furthermore, the image shows five people holding the banner and makes the situation more welcoming and inviting. The sense of community is strong in this image, and the tweet itself serves as a call to support queer immigrant families. Additionally, @resilienceoc shared this tweet and image:

 Resilience OC
@resilienceoc

Follow

Coming Out of the Shadows was started in Chicago in 2010 by brave youth organizers proclaiming to the world that they were **#undocumented #undocuqueer** and **#unafraid**. Last night we payed our respects to our community and our movement **#COOTS2018 #ICEoutofOC @krcla @OC_IYU @ChispaOC**



Figure 20. Tweet shared by @resilienceoc

This tweet focuses on the “Coming Out of the Shadows” Day event in Chicago in 2010, where there was a double coming out, as explained in Chapter 5, and when activists came out undocumented and queer. @resilienceoc’s tweet has the #undocumented, #UndocuQueer, #unafraid, and #ICEoutofOC hashtags. The pictures in the tweet are of the organizers and people who identify as UndocuQueer. This history is invoked eight years later, in 2018, by activists who continue that struggle. This tweet reference to the UndocuQueer history speaks to how Twitter becomes a way to sustain memories. It reveals another way Twitter can be used. In addition to that example, the following Instagram post shows another group of UndocuQueer folks standing together.



Figure 21. Instagram image shared by @carlos.padilla82

@carlos.padilla92 shared this picture below with the hashtags and caption: “#UndocuQueers y (and) #OtrosDreamersQueers talk about the difficult experience of living dual identities in countries that neglect our humanity, but with our strong spirits, we challenge the norms. #DreamersinMexico #TransNationalLeaders #QUIP #StrongerMovements.” The picture shows four people holding a paper or award, smiling together. These pictures indicate in many ways how UndocuQueer organizers create and express community. They share their successes online to spread happiness or what Yosimar Reyes calls #UndocuJoy. Posting this image encourages other UndocuQueer folks to keep fighting, and that there is hope. Overall, my data reveal consistent patterns of how social media forms, maintains, and spreads support and community bonds.

In sum, UndocuQueer activists use Twitter as a tool in the creation of counterpublics. *Testimonios* revealed their feelings on social media and how essential it is to their lives and their counterpublic. They search for and embrace community by sharing supporting images of their message, promoting their message of social justice and inclusion and asking for help for the

queer immigrant community. Thus, social media becomes a vital link in uniting these communities with each other and sharing their messages with the larger world.

Art + Activists = Artivists

This section focuses on UndocuQueer activists' art, its importance, and its political impact, as well as how social media can also function as self-promotion. All the UndocuQueer activists from my *testimonios* identified as artists, and each shared that creativity is an important aspect of who they are. First, I share *testimonios* from the UndocuQueer folks about their art and their artist identities. Next, with tweets, I show examples of UndocuQueer art. Lastly, I demonstrate how social media connects with art, because social media allows the UndocuQueer activists and artists to self-promote.

Testimonios

I was pleasantly surprised to hear and see how important art was to the UndocuQueer community. Their passion for art represents alternative ways to communicate to their community, society, and the dominant public sphere. Here, I begin with Ramos's comments on how important art and social media is to her and the UndocuQueer social movement:

Very important. I think this is important to relate to artivism with the political and the healing. It is the work that I do, and that's how I see using social media as a tool to share our art. I love UndocuQueer art. I love Julio Salgado's art. I love Faviana's art. I love Yosimar, and he is from San Jo. So, I've worked with him before, and I love that he is growing and sharing his UndocuQueerness. He just makes people laugh, and I love him for it. I love being a part of the UndocuQueer artist community.

Social media is essential to her, because it is a tool for their art and for personal and community healing. She also marks it as a point of connect — she is able to see other UndocuQueer artists' art that she can identify with and appreciate. "Artivism" is a mixture of art and activism; it is a way to utilize art in social movements. While she did not coin the term, it is used often in the UndocuQueer community. Julio Salgado, the UndocuQueer activist discussed in the previous

chapters, explains what is an artivist from his interview in the article “UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis.” He states, “Artivism, the combination of art and activism in the face of oppression, is created to resist the normalization of hate and prejudice.” Like Salgado, Ramos, Reyes, and Negrete combine art and activism to fight oppression, hate, and prejudice. Art is employed to share and promote UndocuQueer ideals and messages.

Art sparks social change and protest; many UndocuQueer artists take part in art for their community. Here, Ramos clarifies her beliefs about art and being an artist:

I’m an artist. I like to be empathetic with people. I took nonviolent communication in college, and that has been a big part of my organized work. I put it into my business too. The whole aspect of being empathetic and being aware of what your feelings and needs are, and I love doing that work. That’s what I want to be recognized for and remembered for. Not only being a *chingona* but someone who cares about the community. I just want to help with my community, that’s all I wanted to and live. I want to help youth mostly, because I think that’s where it all begins.

For Ramos, a big part of being an artist means being empathetic and caring about your community. Her comment reveals how art is more than making money; it is about connecting with the community that needs you. Therefore, art also participates in creating and maintaining the UndocuQueer counterpublic. Alessandro Negrete concurs with Ramos:

I also consider myself an artist. I’m a writer; I have a book coming out. I’m not sure if you saw the *OUT* magazine article, but Yosimar, myself, Jose Antonio Vargas, and some other queer LGBTQ folks were a part of the out 100 influential LGBTQ folks. So, Yosi, Julio, Jose, and myself among others were in the magazine as the Out 100. It is definitely a big accomplishment for all of us. It’s a national publication, so it’s important.

While Shaila likes to organize and create images through her art, Alessandro creates art through his use of language. He, as well as other activists, have received praise for being artivists. The image below shows the *OUT* magazine recognition and includes the hashtags #OUT100, #UndocumentedAndUnafraid, and #QueerTransUnashamed. Furthermore, the noted queer

publications *OUT 100* and *The Advocate* recognized them as “13 LGBT Latinos Changing the World.”



Figure 22. Tweet shared by @les_beat_junk

Overall, the press coverage and recognition shows that this work is crucial to U.S. society and deserves acknowledgment. These artists can tell their stories and move people with their words and images. They are changing the world for the better. This illustrates how the UndocuQueer counterpublic is engaging with and in the public sphere. More importantly, Twitter provides this space. Overall, there are consistent patterns of how the UndocuQueer counterpublic and social media are bonded together.

Writing and storytelling surpass identity politics, in that the purpose is to relate to global audiences across all spectrums. Yosimar Reyes also self-identifies as an artist. When he was sixteen years old, he won first place in a writing competition in San Jose, California. When he was seventeen years old, he won a poetry slam competition in the South Bay. When he was nineteen years old, he was featured in a Youth Speaks documentary called *2nd Verse: the Rebirth*

of Poetry. He has a self-published book titled, *For Colored Boys Who Speak Softly*. He also has several works anthologized in collections. Additionally, Reyes has participated in art exhibitions and has even done a solo show. Now, he works with Define American, an organization focusing on changing the views of immigrant in the United States. However, he does not want to be seen as the UndocuQueer artist; he wants to be seen as an artist. He offers the same perspective from his previous quotes on focusing on more than labels and identities. He explains:

That's one of the things that we learned in my English department, you never want to write with a chip on your shoulder. Like, my writing can stand on its own besides the identities, right? I want you to like my writing because it is good, not because it's coming from an undocumented perspective. My writing can go up against anything. So always took pride in that. I'd try to make it so fuckin' good that besides the undocumented and queer stuff; it stands on its own. There is no identity politics in good writing. It is just what it is. So that's what I tried to do. If it's good, it transcends the politics.

Reyes's emphasis on how his writing can stand on its own shows that it is important to him to be viewed as an artist. He does not want people to apply into labels that later restrict him. His poetry transcends all the politics. This reveals a larger point of wanting to be acknowledged and even accepted by more than just the undocumented community. Reyes takes pride in his work as a writer and artist, not as the UndocuQueer artist. He argues that he wants to make immigration relatable and finds ways to craft a good story:

One of the things that we realize about immigration is that it is so singular and you don't want to do that, because once you box yourself only a certain amount of people are able to read your work or able to enjoy it. So, that's the challenge: How do you open up so that you're inviting people to an experience and you're not making it so singular that people won't understand it? Because there is universality to being undocumented, everybody knows the struggle of trying to have a dream and not being able to achieve it, and I think that's something that's relatable. If you're able to make that into something universal but you don't even need to have papers to connect to the story. Because it's like, "Yo, yes I know what that feels like. I know what it feels like to be stuck." So, that's my challenge, because I'm always trying to think about how to craft a story so that people just know. I've been performing for a while, so it's been really dope to have other people that respond like, "I don't know what that experience is, but I feel it." That's how I know I did a dope poem.

Above, Reyes explains that only writing poems or stories about immigration may be isolating, because some readers may not be able to connect to that experience. One of the aims of art, he is arguing, is to be relatable and broad enough for everyone to enjoy. Furthermore, he does this by expressing how being undocumented is relevant to others, because it is about chasing your dreams, experiencing obstacles, and feeling stuck. He really puts thought and time into how he constructs his art. This shows one way how the UndocuQueer counterpublic opens itself up to the dominant society and the public sphere.

Overall, my *testimonios* demonstrated in multiple ways how art is important to the UndocuQueer activists. Their passion for art represents alternative ways to communicate to their community, society, and the dominant public sphere. These artists tell their stories and move people with their words and images to change the world. Consequently, this reveals how the UndocuQueer counterpublic is engaging in the public sphere through art shared on social media.

Online Art

Here, I focus on UndocuQueer art on social media. I show three components of Salgado's art in this section: his "I am UndocuQueer!" series that highlights intersectionality; some of his other art pieces that show his vulnerability; and his political art statements. Julio Salgado began his activist career in 2012 with his "I am UndocuQueer!" art project. He now works at Culture Strike in Berkeley, California with a network of artists and activists who center their work around immigration. From the article, "UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis," stated previously, Salgado affirms: "Culture Strike wants to change the anti-immigrant narrative." Thus, he is a part of the movement changing the xenophobic rhetoric. White (2014) revealed how UndocuQueer art challenges nation-states and border security, where this queer migrant art and in turn politics, spatializes or respatializes politics (White 2014). She showed

how Salgado's art shows vulnerabilities of sexualities, gender norms, and violences of detention and deportations (White 2014). In "UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis," Salgado goes on to state, "Being queer and undocumented has deeply influenced my art." In Salgado's life as well as the lives of my interviewees, art reflects the intersections of being undocumented and queer. Additionally, Ochoa (2015) analyzes Salgado's digital art through Xicana feminism and *jotería* studies. The latter explores the intersections of queerness, migration, nationalism, gender, and race, as queer-of-color critiques on society. Overall, Salgado's art centers queer subjectivities. Images from his collection underscore this point:

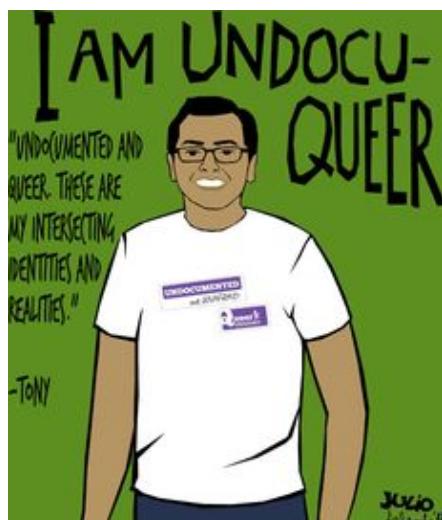


Figure 23. Art (Tony) shared by @JulioSalgado83



Figure 24. Art shared by @JulioSalgado83



Figure 25. Art of and by Julio Salgado

This series, like his other art series, showcases and celebrates queer immigrant identities. Quotes, such as “Undocumented and queer, these are my intersecting identities.-Tony” and “UndocuQueer, taking control of my own identity. I exist” address about the power of self-representation and of speaking out. Through Salgado’s art, the individual experience of the people he depicts become both art and activism; these images change lives and offer hope. Overall, personal struggles and experiences impacted him and he expresses this through his art. In the interview “UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis,” the author explains:

His visual art, in the form of illustrations, comics, and videos, reflects the intersectionality of being undocumented and queer and gives insight into what it’s like trying to survive this duality and how he’s able to keep going. His illustrations depict queer people of color in bright neon colors, using politically charged phrases such as “Out of the Closet! Out of the Shadows! Onto the Street!” One of his most powerful illustrations is a self-portrait in which a shirtless Salgado, depicted as a butterfly, has the message “I Exist. Yo Existo” written across his chest and phrases “migrant queerness,” “amor, familia, unidad, paz” inside his wings.



Figure 26. "I Exist. Yo Existo" Art by Julio Salgado

Being undocumented and queer are key components to his art and his self-image, and like a butterfly, he depicts those identities as beautiful. Further, by becoming a part of his own art pieces, he shows his vulnerability and encourages other UndocuQueer folks to follow his example. While Twitter is often seen as a temporal media, with tweets coming rapid-fire and passing within a day or two, Salgado wants more. In interview in the article “UndocuQueer Artist Julio Salgado on Creating Counter Crisis,” he states about this art, “I want to create a world that can’t be destroyed if something happens to me.” He wants his art and message to live on with and make change without him. Interestingly, Salgado’s perspective on art and how he demonstrates his intersectionality is the opposite of Reyes’s, which I discussed previously. Reyes wants to be acknowledged foremost as an artist, compared to Salgado who wants recognition for his UndocuQueer digital art.

Below are a few other examples of his art that he shares on social media. These pieces are important, because they show his audience and the world his vulnerability as a person and as an activist.



Figure 27. Instagram Art shared by Julio Salgado



Figure 28. Instagram Art shared by Julio Salgado

Both of these artworks express exposure from the unknown or failure. For example, the first piece states, “I don’t have answers” in English and Spanish. The caption states, “And that’s okay.” In difficult political, social, and personal times, sometimes the journeys or answers are unknown. While those moments are difficult and stressful, he is saying it is okay to not always know. Visually, we can sense the sadness with the dripping of liquid through his hands. In the second art piece, the same message of living through adversity comes through. It gives Salgado complexity as an individual. The text on the body of the person in the piece reads: “I read. I create.” It also reveals to his audience that it is okay if they mess up and fall as long as they get back up again. As long as through weakness, like him, his audience can find strength. The text on the body of the person in the piece reads: “I read. I create. I mess up. I fall. I get up. I cry. I laugh. I fuck. I eat. I see. I love. I go numb. I fly. I get tired. I continue.” Additionally, the language Salgado uses shows how life can be a rollercoaster. These messages and images resonate with the UndocuQueer counterpublic. More importantly, his chest states “illegal faggot,” which he frequently uses in his art and hashtags. Salgado’s artwork makes a statement about relatable feelings in life. Again, he connects his undocumented and queer identities

through his art. As previous stated, using this language and reclaiming these words are forms of the UndocuQueer's politics of confrontation (Seif 2004). By using the derogatory slurs, he is reclaiming and empowering those identities. Lastly, Salgado also spreads this consciousness and empowerment when he shares his art on social media.

Like many things in society, art reflects the world. Many times, art speaks a truth or even stands up to injustice. UndocuQueer activists use their art for their own social movements. Art becomes a clear political statement. For example, many of Julio Salgado's art pieces are political testimonies and challenges to the system. Below is one of his pieces titled, "You better work. Queen" from 2017.



Figure 35. Art shared by @JulioSalgado83

There are many things to unpack in this image. The main figure is a brown man with a purple shirt that reads: "God Bless Amerika." First, the Amerika spelled with a k is a criticism of America that people can use to relate to the KKK. On his head is a crown similar to the one lady liberty wears that reads: "Go Queen!" as a reference to sexuality. It is a common LGBTQ statement and affirmation. On the man's mouth, tape attempts to keep a smile up. With the "show me your papers" text, to the left of the man, the image further critiques the SB4 and DACA policies. Hence, this image attacks the immigration policies that have an impact on the

undocumented community. On the right side of the man's head, the text reads: "good immigrant. Health? \$465. Work. Work. Work." Moreover, the background colors are red, white, and blue. Overall, the image critiques the idea of "good immigrants," how they must work hard even though they are in a system with policies standing against them. Chicago's Immigrant Youth Justice League from Carrasco and the *67 Sueños* project continue this critique of "good immigrants." Organizers, who do not believe in the "good immigrant" narrative, do not want immigrant families and underprivileged migrant youth to get left behind (Chávez 2013). Additionally, another example of his political art is the image below. It is titled "Sleeping with the American Dream" from 2017:



Figure 29. Instagram art shared by @JulioSalgado83

It contains the hashtags: #UndocuQueer, #AdventuresOfBitterFag, #IllegalInTimesOfCrisis, #QueerArt, and #MentalHealth. The drawing has two figures – perceived men. One may be Salgado himself or a brown man, and the other person is a White man with a knife behind his back. The image portrays that the American dream is screwing him, possibly raping him, and that it is going to eventually kill him. It is a powerful message and image, which has resonated with his followers. He received many comments, such as "love the series;" "Whoa. This is a

powerful primo;" "Damn Julio. Wow;" "My life;" "Truth;" "Powerful;" "Love this;" "Too real;" and "Tru Tru we should all stay." It reveals how UndocuQueer folks are experiencing American society and the so-called American Dream. Not only is the UndocuQueer community not allowed to participate in the American Dream, they also feel attacked and abused by the American Dream. Salgado is using this art piece to say how the United States is hurting the UndocuQueer community.

While this section focused on UndocuQueer art with a focus on Salgado's digital art, it is connected to social media and the UndocuQueer counterpublic. Online becomes a space to share these images with their community as well as dominant society and the public sphere. I showed Salgado's "I am UndocuQueer" art series, his vulnerable self-reflective pieces, and his political commentary artworks and how all of his digital art is meaningful to the UndocuQueer community. UndocuQueer art reflects their intersectional narratives and experiences to maintain their UndocuQueer counterpublic through social media.

Self-Promotion

Previous research has already stated how social media creates community, counterpublics, and shares art. However, my research contributes to these academic fields by adding how counterpublics and social media also serve as self-promotion. Artists/artivists use social media to get more gigs or to gather more business. Ramos explains how important social media is for UndocuQueer activists:

As UndocuQueer artists, social media is a huge part of it, because it is literally where you get your jobs. I use it very directly with my organization *Chingona* Movement. I recently made my logo, and I started my Instagram and Facebook accounts. I still haven't pushed out, but at least I started it. I opened it. I have plans for that, you know. That's what I'm going to put all the shit I'm doing with my work, you know. That's how I put the word out about my services and get recognized at least one social media. That's how you spread your network in the movement. One thing that I always say when I do artivist workshops

and I show these artists and their work is that unlike protest that lasts one day, our work lasts forever, you know?

Social media allows UndocuQueer folks to obtain gigs and expand their careers. They can share their business with others on social media. More importantly, through art and social media, their art becomes endless and timeless. This comment reveals another way social media becomes a tool. In addition, Reyes agrees that social media is very important. He states, “I get all my bookings through there, too. I just signed on to a speaker’s agency but before that it was just me managing people online who want to book me. My social media is my work, and it helps me a lot.” As a performer and speaker, he gets all his jobs through social media. He shared the image below on his Twitter and Instagram:



Figure 37. Instagram Image shared by Yosimar Reyes

In this image, there are three brown children in their school uniforms, and there is a text bubble that states, “Booking Spring 2017, Yosimar.com, She ain’t going nowhere tour.” He has taken a funny picture and made it into a self-promotional ad. This image demonstrates innovative ways the UndocuQueer community uses art and social media. Additionally, Julio Salgado also self-

promotes on social media. He shared the flyer below, from a workshop and talk in Madison, Wisconsin.



Figure 30. Flyer Shared by @JulioSalgado83

Julio Salgado used the image to share and invite people to his event. He used the hashtags #UndocuQueer, #QueerArt, #QueerLectures, and #QueerArtistsAlive. The flyer includes a short biography of himself as an UndocuQueer activist and artist. Furthermore, UndocuQueer activists do not just self-promote their own events; they also support each other's events. This reveals that UndocuQueer artists can self-promote and build and sustain their counterpublic simultaneously. For example, Salgado shares the image shown below on Instagram, where he is supporting two UndocuQueer activists.



Figure 31. Two Flyers shared by @JulioSalgado83

Salgado is supporting Yosimar Reyes's *Prieto* and Isela 'Chela' Meraz's *Te Sone Libre*. The former is an autobiographical solo show, and the latter is artwork focused on LGBTQ immigrants in detention centers. The rest of the message states, "If you're having some badass queer art shows, plays, etc. in your area, put them in the comments! We need spaces like these in times like these." There is a sense of urgency and support to create more spaces like these for UndocuQueer artists. In addition, @MigrantScribble shares this tweet about supporting other UndocuQueer artists. He states: "Support an #undocumented and #queer #artist during the #holidays. Buy #handmade #jewelry." Overall, social media becomes central and beneficial for these UndocuQueer activists, where their self-promotion occurs and spreads through their networks and social media.

I revealed the multiple ways UndocuQueer activists and artists use their counterpublic and social media. Ultimately, art and social media are both tools for their UndocuQueer social movement and maintaining and spreading the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic. I showed UndocuQueer *testimonios* about their feelings on art and being artists. Their passion for art

represents alternative ways to communicate to their community, society, and the dominant public sphere. I also demonstrated examples of UndocuQueer digital art by Julio Salgado.

UndocuQueer activists are using art as expression and political statement. These artists spread their message via social media. It becomes a space to share their images with their community as well as dominant society and the public sphere. Lastly, I demonstrate how social media connects with art, because social media allows the UndocuQueer activists and artists to self-promote.

Through these outlets, they are creating a social media buzz around their work, and they can get more jobs and gain more fans. Ultimately, UndocuQueer artists can self-promote and build and sustain their counterpublic simultaneously. Social media's benefits do not end there; another key component of social media is organizing, which the following section describes.

Organizing

Organizing is another word for community grass roots activism, where people come together for a common cause. The purpose of organizing is to create social change and change policies or put new laws into place. I begin by situating how UndocuQueer activists discuss organizing and messaging. Goffman (1974) discussed a frame as a way to understand and organize events. In this case, hashtags are forms of frames, because the organizers can use language to center important topics. I connect online organizing and social media. This section illustrates different organizing tactics and strategies used by UndocuQueer activists on social media. First, I discuss and illustrate how UndocuQueer activists post about marches and civil disobedience. Next, I show UndocuQueer events and workshops shared on social media. Last, I reflect on UndocuQueer activists' petitions and donations.

This section describes how UndocuQueer activists spread and create their messaging in their social movement through their use of Twitter. By sharing on social media, these groups are

creating awareness about their causes and experiences. For that reason, it is central to discuss messaging and how they target audiences. In the *testimonios*, all three activists bring up the importance of messaging. First, Shaila Ramos shares: “It captivates a wider audience because I'm on social media, you are able to share this art or poem or photograph that captured immigrant or queer immigrant experience in some sort of way.” She mentions the importance of capturing a wider audience, where UndocuQueer activists can expose them to their experiences as queer immigrants. Spreading their stories and messages on social media is critical. Yosimar Reyes explains how visibility is an important part of social media. He elaborates: “Also visibility. Having hashtag so your story can reach so many people. So, that's been pretty dope to see that kind of mobilization happen within Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.” By using a hashtag, a post can go viral and reach many people. Even if the post does not go viral, it still has the potential to influence people that would not be impacted. As a result, online mobilization has been occurring through social media. @OCAD_CHI shared these tweets about spreading information and awareness: “RT @UndocuBus: "Telling my story is like an invitation to other communities to tell their stories too" #isela #UndocuQueer #nopapersnofear” and “When I say I'm undocumented it invites people to share their stories and be unafraid.” These examples show the conscious nature of these activists' use of Twitter. They are making clear decisions about attempting to further their message and influence. Therefore, we can see how framing ends up being a political act for the social movements to gain more support (Gamson 1992). These *testimonios* and tweets from UndocuQueer folks demonstrate how social media allows for information to be disseminated and counterpublics expanded.

Within the UndocuQueer community, messaging also matters in terms of how and whom they would like to reach through their use of Twitter and other social media; therefore,

identifying and considering audience is fundamental for setting up the message. According to Buechler (2011) and Hughey (2015), activists construct how and what messages they are showing to the media, which include their goals, solutions, and actions. This is important to UndocuQueer activists. Alessandro Negrete shares his thoughts on messaging within the UndocuQueer movement:

I think that's where we have to understand that varying degrees of how messaging will reach you. There are some people at the far end of the spectrum like MESA, who are shutting shit down and doing this and that. And then there's people who like José Antonio Vargas, who are messaging about that we are all American. Each message has a specific target. For me, I really started capitalizing on my own social capital by understanding what is my analysis and where I stood on things. It's about really using hashtags. Hashtag for days. And it's about understanding that UndocuQueer and UndocuTrans were really at the margins but also at the forefront. We were everywhere. We are all undocumented and queer or trans and we are leading this work. We have been on *Democracy Now* and NPR. We are at the forefront. We are talking about the need for collective voices.

He describes different political spectrums within the UndocuQueer movement; some people believe in civil disobedience and direct actions while others focus on becoming Americans and being seen as Americans by society. These political foci have different targets and therefore require different messages. Hughey (2015) shows this through his framing study on white nationalists and white antiracists, where both groups frame their ideology for drastically different messages depending on the audience. In this case, UndocuQueer activists use hashtags for framing. Hashtags allow activists to choose their targets. Furthermore, hashtags are forms of direct messaging and targeting within social media. Negrete goes more in-depth about messaging from the UndocuTrans and UndocuAPI movements:

If you listen to [Jennicet] Gutiérrez, she's a trans woman, so she talks about being a woman as someone who is being violated but not just as a trans woman but as a woman period. If you look at my work, I never really approach it from a clear perspective. Yes I want queer people to resonate, but my messaging is always very much around, look at your brother look at your son look at your uncle—those could all be me. Those are the over-arching messaging that queer people have been able to generate. My friend, Prena, who's a queer API woman, she talks about herself as a woman. That does not mitigate or

hide her queer identity, but it explains the need to see her. She talks about herself as a queer woman, but she always connects it to her being a woman because women in general are being marginalized. I talk about myself as an openly queer undocumented man, but at the end of the day, I am a person.

For him, messaging is vital in connecting with more people than just one community. So, he is saying that when messaging, we have to appeal to the wider audience. For example, Gutiérrez frames her stories not just a trans woman, but as a woman. For his friend Prena, her framing is about not just about being a queer API woman; it is also about being a woman. Therefore, people should be able to see UndocuQueer individuals in different lights. More importantly, people should be able to see them as neighbors, as friends, as co-workers, and as family. When people use terms like “illegal” and apply it to people, it is essential for the undocumented community to humanize themselves. Foremost, they are like everyone else and they deserve human rights like everyone else, and they deserve human rights like everyone else; that is how messaging carries across audiences. Another example comes from the “Coming Out of Two Closets” video, where the interviewee explains humanizing LGBTQ folks and undocumented immigrants:

The undocu-immigrant movement has really co-opted a lot of the LGBT rights language. Encouraging people to come out is so parallel to what Harvey Milk was doing when he was asking LGBT folks to come out so that people know who we are, that we are your bankers. We are your neighbors, we are the person you see selling flowers at the corner.

Moreover, this interviewee attempts to humanize undocumented folks just like the LGBTQ movement did for their community and movement. Undocumented and LGBTQ folks are more than their identities and need to be acknowledged as human beings with emotions. They are our friends, coworkers, and community. While I hypothesized that UndocuQueer activists frame their intersectional identities and activism through social media and they did through the hashtags in Chapter 6, my data indicate that it is more than that. UndocuQueer activists frame to appeal to the wider audience in society and the public sphere. Therefore, the UndocuQueer

counterpublic functions as a space for internal discourse, but it also serves in political engagement with the public sphere.

Marches & Civil Disobedience

This section reflects how the UndocuQueer movements use Twitter as a platform for organizing different actions, such as marches and civil disobedience. Rallies are hosted in one location in which people gather to protest about an issue. This usually includes a speaker and chants. Marches are people taking to the streets to encourage public awareness about a specific social issue. In this tweet shown below, @prernapal shares an image of the LGBTQ contingent from the #Not1More immigrant rights movement:



Figure 32. Tweet shared by @prernapal

The message in the picture states, “Large UndocuQueer contingent for the #Not1More march to the White House.” This is an example of a march, and the people in it are holding signs and flags. It shows the intersectionality of the UndocuQueer movement, because they are a contingent for the #Not1More immigrant rights movement. This means that they support the

immigrant rights movement, but the UndocuQueer contingent wants to center queer migrants as well. Another example below shows a march, which was shared by @SonandoJuntosEP in a tweet: it depicts people marching and holding a banner. It declares, “Great news! Jerson, an UndocuQueer immigrant from Honduras was granted asylum today. Thanks to everyone for your support! #HereToStay #UndocuQueerLiberation.” The banner that the people in the image are holding states: “Caravana Trans Gay Migrante 2017.”



Figure 33. Tweet shared by @sonandojuntosEP

This tweet and image reveal that UndocuQueer activism has positive outcomes. This was a rally to support a fellow UndocuQueer activist who got political asylum. They are showing up to support others in their community. These examples offer how UndocuQueer activists are not just online; they show up physically for different actions. Twitter data and research Valenzuela (2013) and Lim (2013) show that social media activism is not replacing traditional forms of protest, such as marches and rallies; instead, social media activism works in conjunction with physically going to protests, marches, and rallies. UndocuQueer activism reveals the same.

The UndocuQueer movement also practices civil disobedience; some civil obedience actions were also shared in Chapter 5. Civil disobedience is when protesters purposefully commit illegal actions to disrupt business as usual and gain attention from the public and media. It is common for activists to block street intersections as well as freeways. Also, activists may chain themselves up to businesses, buses, or other objects. DREAMers and UndocuQueer activists have done many types of civil disobedience, such as sit-ins, occupying buildings, and blocking streets or freeways (UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education 2012; Galindo 2012; Negron-Gonzales 2014). In the following tweet and image, @TheTaskForce shared the action of shutting down a street intersection. The tweet states, “Undocutrans! Unashamed! UndocuQueer! Unashamed! Undocumented! Unafraind! #BreakTheCage #LGBTQ.”



Figure 34. Tweet shared by @TheTaskForce

In this example, the UndocuQueer activists blocked the streets by lining themselves in the street and placing banners on the concrete. One of the banner reads, “End trans and queer detention.” Another banner has paintings of butterflies to represent liberating migration. The cars are

stopped in the background. This action uses civil disobedience to stand up for LGBTQ detainees. This activism speaks to larger issues going on in the UndocuQueer community. Civil disobedience is one way to force people to look at their cause.

This section showed many images of UndocuQueer activists using social media for their organizing. UndocuQueer activists sharing tweets and images of their marches and civil disobedience, even these actions are intersectional by bringing their immigrant and LGBTQ identities into their organizing. They center undocumented and queer immigrants. Furthermore, my data reveals that, along with previous research (Valenzuela 2013; Lim 2013), online activism is not replacing traditional forms of protest, such as marches and rallies. Social media activism and traditional forms of activism work together in this UndocuQueer counterpublic.

Workshops & Events

This section concentrates on how UndocuQueer activists use Twitter to post information about their events and workshops. One of the most interesting events that UndocuQueer shared on Twitter was a town hall. This event consisted of panels and a call in with UndocuQueer folks, and it was solely conducted on social media. @MonseLGBTQ shared this retweet: “RT @UNITEDWEDREAM: LGBT rights are Immigrant rights. Register for our #DoubleComingOut online Town Hall: <http://t.co/TRPw2wIKAN>.” This reveals how Twitter is revolutionizing political participation, where Twitter becomes the town hall. Hence, Twitter is changing public discourse. Moreover, UndocuQueer activists put in time and effort to find similarly situated individuals. This occurs by using their counterpublic, and they establish strong community bonds online. The following image is a flyer for a breakfast and conversation event with Sonando Juntos and M Factor, who are both undocumented and queer. The event is called

“Being UndocuQueer: Two Closets, One Struggle.” The flyer includes Julio Salgado’s artwork as part of the flyer, which I presented earlier in this chapter.

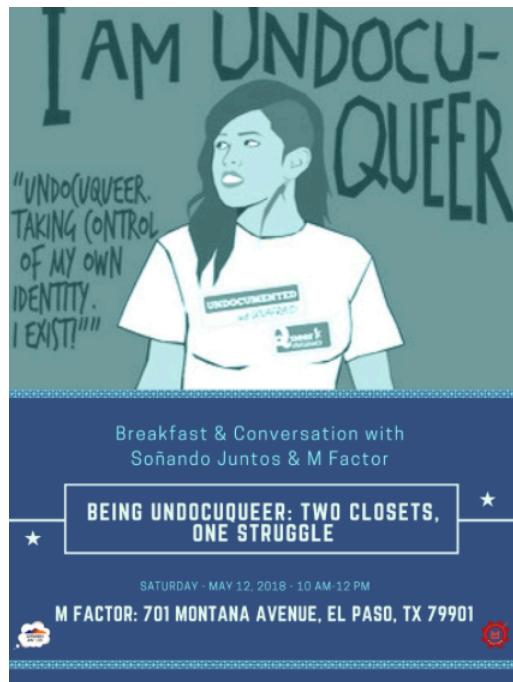


Figure 35. Event Flyer shared by @familiatqlm

By making flyers and posting them on Twitter and Facebook, UndocuQueer activists can spread the message to other people in an attempt to widen their audience base. This way, others can potentially learn and understand more about the undocumented and LGBTQ communities. This builds more than understanding as well. Events like this widen UndocuQueer’s audiences, which expands the potential for public pressure, increasing UndocuQueer’s political influence, and, ideally, garnering votes for issues that matter to them. Moreover, the use of such tweets illustrates how these types of events also brings other UndocuQueer folks closer together, further solidifying their counterpublic.

UndocuQueer folks are participating in university conferences to spread their movement and counterpublic. In this next tweet, @DreamersAdrift shares a post about a conference called Netroots Nation:



Figure 36. Tweet Shared by @DreamersAdrift

In the photo, there is a panel of UndocuQueer folks and what appears to be a facilitator in front of a podium. There is also an alert audience in the foreground. This example demonstrates how widespread the UndocuQueer movement has become. UndocuQueer folks have taken to the streets but have also been able to hold panels and participate in research/educational/academic conferences. This is meaningful, because it is another example of how the UndocuQueer community is expanding their audiences and creating more allies. In the picture below, shared by @UCSF_MRC, Julio Salgado is giving a guest lecture on the UndocuQueer movement. The caption states, “Grateful for @julio1983 and his guest lecture on UndocuQueer and Unafraid @UCSFLGBT @KlintJaramillo.”



UCSF MRC
@UCSF_MRC

Follow

Grateful for [@julio1983](#) and his guest lecture on UndocuQueer and Unaafraid [@UCSFLGBT](#) [@KlintJaramillo](#)



5:35 PM - 1 Nov 2017

4 Retweets 10 Likes

Comment 4 Like 10 Share

Figure 37. Tweet shared by @USF_MRC

Overall, these examples further demonstrate how the UndocuQueer movement has been involved within the university as well as doing grassroots organizing within their communities. This may be a reflection of how effective the UndocuQueer community and movement have become, where they are entering all aspects of the public sphere. These presentations most likely occur because many DREAMers, DACA recipients, and UndocuQueer people are students themselves. This way, they feel heard and represented within the university. In this next example, the event flyer is also on a university campus. @TDRC_CSUF shared a tweet and flyer with a caption that states, “Join us today, April 27th, 5-7pm in the TDRC for UndocuQueer: Intersecting Identities and Realities.”

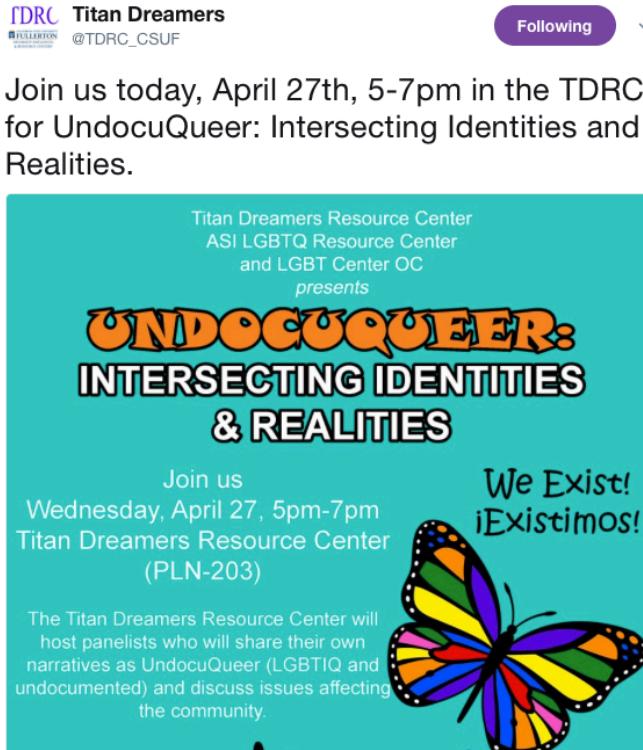


Figure 38. Tweet shared by @TDRC_CSUF

The picture depicts a rainbow butterfly, which again relates to the freedom of movement and migration, specifically the queer immigrant community. The flyer has a description of the event, which reads: “The Titan Dreamers Resource Center will host panelists who will share their own narrative as UndocuQueer (LGBTQ and undocumented) and discuss issues affecting the community.” In sum, they created a space that embraces representation for themselves and their communities.

The next example is of a flyer shared online. The example below is an event flyer promoting for a screening party for an online series on undocumented folks titled “Undocumented Tales.” In this flyer, the text makes it clear that it is for it is a Latino & Night Party with an 8:00 p.m. screening, question & answer time, and a Latino Party. For their panel, they include Armando Ibanez, Mia Penaloza, and Jennicet Gutiérrez.



Figure 39. Event Flyer

As demonstrated by the flyer, the UndocuQueer community has created their own show to represent themselves. Chapter 5 discussed this in-depth about the importance of UndocuQueer representation. More importantly, they are building events and parties around this online series. The UndocuQueer counterpublic made this beautiful creation that has been embraced by their community. Their culture has infiltrated all aspects of their social lives together.

This section explained how the UndocuQueer movement has been utilizing social media for their workshops in conferences and on college campuses, and it showed a season finale screening with an online panel. It is a similar set up to the online town halls that they have organized. UndocuQueer activists are using social media to their advantage in many ways. These events and workshops are strengthening and spreading their UndocuQueer counterpublic.

Petitions & Donations

This section shows how the UndocuQueer community uses social media to share petitions and donation pages. I begin by sharing examples of petitions to stop deportations. I also share examples of petitions against local and state policies. Lastly, I reveal donation pages. All of these examples embrace and support the UndocuQueer counterpublic.

Twitter raises awareness to support and get people out of jail or detention centers: these posts save many undocumented and/or queer folks. Sharing each other's petitions is a common and popular thing to do. It was also mentioned in one of the *testimonios* by Yosimar Reyes, where he describes how social media helps other people. He explains, "I think it has been an essential fuckin' thing. Like, if someone is getting deported, then you do petition in 24 hours you already have national visibility on that person, and you get them out. That's fuckin' dope." In this aspect, social media is crucial to organizers. Petitions save activists and/or families from being deported. It makes for an easier and more efficient way to do grass root organizing, and it allows more people to help. Online petitions have changed activism. For example,

@AdoniasArevalo shared this petition:

To be delivered to Enrique Lucero , ICE Field Office Director, Norma E. Lacy, Assistant Field Office Director, ICE San Antonio
Sulma is a bright, hardworking, and driven woman from Guatemala. Active in the LGBTQ rights movement in Guatemala, she was forced to flee because her life was in danger. On Thursday, June 11, 2015, Sulma not only faces removal but also an imminent death sentence. The state government of Guatemala has been responsible for extrajudicial killings of LGBT activist and individuals.

In this instance, the petition used above was being delivered to an ICE officer. The note is illustrating that, Sulma, an undocumented immigrant, deserves political asylum because of her activist and LGBTQ status in Guatemala. She needed support from her community, not only to help her stay and fight for a better life but also to stay alive. Her birth country does not welcome

or allow her to stay. These stories are so common but so important to understanding the queer immigrant community. In this next example, @ArianaBeee posted this petition on Twitter:

URGENT: Miguel is currently being held in York County Jail in York, Pennsylvania, where he has been for over 6 months. His final plea for asylum was denied and now we are working to get his bond set so he can be released to fight his case from home. Together we can reunite Miguel with his family! Miguel's fiancée, Jessica, is expecting the family's second baby but Miguel's detention is causing major stress during the last months of her pregnancy. The strain of working full time and worrying about the future of her family has caused complications in Jessica's pregnancy. She was recently hospitalized for having contractions months before the baby is due. She was placed on bed rest and remains at significant risk of an early delivery. Please help us get Miguel back to Jessica and their family.

In this petition, the authors are calling for Miguel to be reunited with his family to continue to fight for his paperwork and be allowed to stay in the United States. This case is urgent because of the state of health of his fiancée and their baby. Sharing and signing petitions is one way that the UndocuQueer counterpublic support each other.

In relation to the previous petitions, there are other types of petitions shared on social media. These petitions cover local city policies and state laws. For example, @AdoniasArevalo shared this petition called "Houston Mayor: Protect Immigrant Communities Now!" and it states the following:

To our immigrant community, women, people of color, and to people of conscience across the Houston area,
Houston's mayor and city council have failed in their duty to protect our immigrant community. We have marched, rallied, and spoke out at city council and at town halls. But still our leaders fail to act.
We spoke out against recent hate-filled attacks to our community fueled by executive orders, bans, and one of the most discriminatory and morally bankrupt Texas Legislative sessions in recent history. Yet our leaders failed to act. Women, people of color, students, our LGBTQ+ community, and children and families have been attacked.
But our leaders in Houston still fail to act.
Please sign this petition to demand that the Mayor of Houston and the city council take action now to protect our community and provide equal safety and opportunity to all Houston residents.

This petition challenges Houston's mayor and city council for not protecting the immigrant community. This calls for them to start listening and protecting the minorities in Houston.

Another example of a local petition is one shared by @ArianaBeee; it is called "Tell Mayor Rahm Emmanuel to Defy Trump, Defend Chicago, and Expand Sanctuary." It reads:

Tell our mayor and city council to stand up to Trump and take action that doesn't just symbolically defend immigrants but transforms our city's policies to stop targeting us for imprisonment, risk of deportation, and state violence at the hands of police and aggressive immigration agents. Specifically, we are asking the City of Chicago to: 1) Pass the amendments proposed to the Welcoming City Ordinance, increasing the protections that immigrants have in the city of Chicago, so that there are no exceptions and the ordinance protects all immigrants, increased protections for survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, and prohibit the Chicago police from ever becoming immigration enforcement agents. 2) Pass a resolution supporting a series of recommendations to reduce the violence and use of force in the Chicago Police Department by amending the contract with the Fraternal Order of Police. The resolution follows the recommendations made by the Department of Justice which found that the CPD "engaged in a pattern or practice of unreasonable force—including deadly force—in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution." Both resolutions have been introduced to the Chicago City Council and are waiting for a vote, and need the support of the Mayor.

This is another local petition from Chicago. It challenges the mayor to stand up to President Trump and designate Chicago as a sanctuary city, even though Trump threatened to take away federal funding from any city who does this. This petition wants the immigrant communities protected from state violence. The authors also mention how their police department should review their contracts to reduce violence and use of force. The desired outcome is that city council will protect one of their most vulnerable communities. Additionally, @AdoniasArevalo posted another petition on Twitter focusing on a Texas state policy. The petition reads:

The Texas Legislature meets every two years to introduce and pass legislation for our state. In 2015, we defeated every bill slated to repeal in-state tuition and state financial aid for undocumented students. The Texas Legislature began meeting this January 2017, and legislators have already filed bills that if passed, will eliminate in-state tuition for undocumented students. More recently, the Texas Senate has referred SB 141 to the Senate Higher Education Committee. SB 141 would eliminate state financial aid for undocumented students and like in-state tuition, state financial aid allows undocumented

students to become Texas college/university graduates. Join us by signing this petition to ensure our futures aren't crushed by anti-immigrant bullies in the Texas Legislature. Demand that Texas legislators keep in-state tuition and state financial aid for undocumented students.

This petition focuses on attempting to stop a new policy that wants to remove in-state tuition and financial aid for undocumented students in Texas. They want people to sign the petition to stop anti-immigrant policies for undocumented students in Texas and support them instead. Thus far, petitions occurred within local city council and state policies. In sum, petitions encompass local and state-level policies, but they all fight for the protections of immigrants and the immigrant community.

Another tool that was shared widely on social media were donation pages. Many tweets encouraged support for each other emotionally, politically, and financially. Many donation pages were no longer active and taken down, so I was unable to read, code, and analyze them. For example, @UndocuTales shared this retweet, but the donation link was no longer available: "RT @UndocuMedia: .@ICEgov separated another family today. It is with a heavy heart that we share that Gaston was deported. Donate here." In another tweet, @CMendess3 shared these words: "Please donate and help my friend @NestorRuiz1402 in this time of need!" In addition, @UndocuBlack posted about donating to DACA recipients to renew their paperwork; it says: "DACA recipients eligible to renew. Donate to their pages." Since Trump had announced that DACA would be removed soon, there were many links for individual DACA recipients and for organizations to help DACA recipients. Hence, solidarity is shown among the UndocuQueer community in many ways, including donations.

Most donation sites include some background and explanation on why people should support their cause. The following examples are from donation sites. In this first example, @ASPIREJustice shared this donation site that includes the following information:

As the first pan-Asian undocumented youth group, ASPIRE has grown into a force to be reckoned with. Founded in 2008, ASPIRE continues to provide a safe space for undocumented Asian Pacific Islander immigrants in the Bay Area. We organize, mobilize, and educate our community on issues regarding immigrant rights both locally and nationally. ASPIRE has been involved in a number of successful campaigns such as “Our Families Matter” to halt the deportations of families. This year, members were also involved in the successful passage of the California TRUTH Act, which would increase the protections of immigrant communities from local law enforcement. As ASPIRE has grown in numbers and our efforts have grown over the years, we are aiming to fundraise in order to continue implementing programs catering to the needs of our community. To meet our increasing objectives, our goal is to raise \$5,000. The funds will be used to cultivate leadership among ASPIRE members, such as providing stipends to create paid opportunities and to expand existing and new programs dedicated to further our cause such as our Summer Leadership Academy. Your investment in ASPIRE will be crucial to continue the fight to keep families together from deportations and providing a space for undocumented API immigrants to lead in the social justice movement. Thank you for your support!

As the first pan-Asian undocumented youth organization, they ask for donations to continue outreach and training of more youth organizers. While ASPIRE does not focus on UndocuQueer activists, they are supporters of the undocumented community. They want to keep immigrant families together with an emphasis on the API community. In this next example, the donation page comes from the @UndocuBlack organization and Twitter account, and it is called “Help BLM #ReclaimMLK.” This donation page includes a series of events from the Black Lives Matter movement, such as a Blackout party, #BlackJoySunday, MLK Peace Walk, Parade, and Health Fair, Revolutionary Mothering: Building Community After Loss to Violence, Emotional Emancipation Circle, and Resisting Chaos Through Organized Resistance: A Direct Training.

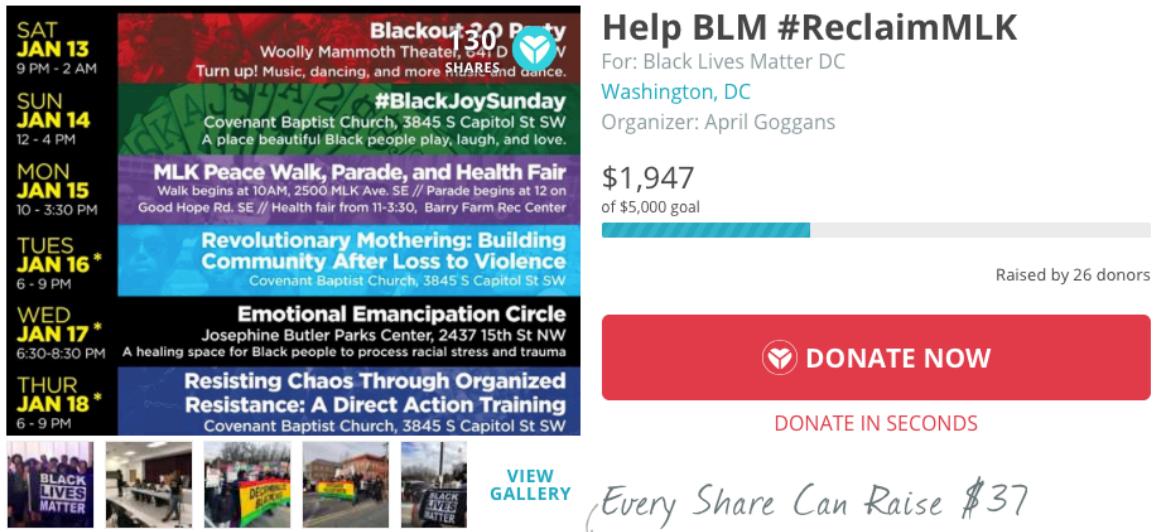


Figure 53. Donation Page

While this donation page has no direct link to the immigrant or queer community, the UndocuBlack organization supports the Black Lives Matter movement and shared their donation page. This example further illustrates how organizations try to work with each other and build bridges across social movements and identities. This next tweet is a call for donations for immigrants from the organization @CIYJA. Its caption reads: “Today on #GivingTuesday donate to immigrant justice! 1. Go to: maldef.org/donations/ 2. Fill out required information 3. Under donation fund, click on California Immigrant Youth Justice 4. Indicate amount. 5. Fill out credit card Info 6. Click ‘Process donation.’”



Figure 54. Tweet shared by @CIYJA

The image that is part of the donation link includes a background photo with members of the organization. More importantly, this organization based out of Californian works to take direct action any anti-immigrant organization and politician. This organization is dedicated to the undocumented community. Likewise, @OCD_CHI posted this donation message:

OCAD is fundraising to send a delegation to Mijente's annual conference, Lanzate, in Puerto Rico. The delegation will represent us in events where they will present and discuss OCAD's local, regional, and national work. They will also learn strategies from groups from all around the country to improve our work on the #Not1More campaign, the national campaign against deportations. Proceeds will go towards round-trip flights to and from San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conference will be held December 2-4th.

This organization is also immigrant centered. Additionally, they want to do transnational organizing and training for the immigrant community. All the proceeds go to fund the trip and fees for the conference. Therefore, it is not just about donations for individuals or organizations; it is for the betterment of the community. With financial help, they can expand and learn about the work the community needs.

Overall, this section reflected on the UndocuQueer and the undocumented community and their use of social media for petitions and donations. Petitions take different forms depending on their reasons. Some focus on stopping individuals from being deported; others ask for citizenship to the United States. In addition to that, other petitions focus on getting local leaders and politicians to get involved; in the examples I used, it was mostly about protecting the immigrant community from anti-immigrant policies. Furthermore, donations are another source of activism for the undocumented community. These are able to share their donation pages can be shared for different causes and therefore spread on social media. While these are not the traditional organizing tools, they have impacted the UndocuQueer social movements, which is crucial to acknowledge. There is no previous research on petitions or donation pages as an activism tool on Twitter. Therefore, my data contribute to social media studies in this aspect.

Chapter Review

I began this chapter by explaining how UndocuQueer activists discuss framing and messaging to spread awareness through their social media counterpublic. More importantly, the primary focus of this chapter was to show how the UndocuQueer activists utilized social media. This occurred in several ways. First, I explained how it was used for art and activism, which they call artivism. Both *testimonios* and Twitter data reflect art as a vital component of their counterpublic and activism. Part of this discussion includes how social media works as a tool for presenting their art pieces and for self-promotion. Additionally, social media allows them to share their business and expand their influence. In many ways, their art pieces are political statements. Second, social media is incredibly important for political organizing. This organizing encompasses more than just protesting, marches, and civil disobedience; it also includes workshops, events, petitions, and donations. Importantly, I show that online activism has not

replaced traditional activism such as protests and civil disobedience. Callison and Hermida (2015) found that the #IdleNoMore social movement was a hybrid of mixed media system through both traditional activism and new social media avenues. In agreeing with Valenzuela (2013), social media has multiple purposes: 1) it is a space for gathering news 2) it becomes a space for political expression; and 3) it allows spaces for joining causes and mobilizing information. In sum, the UndocuQueer movement sees social media as a significant tool that preserves and expands their UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic.

Chapter 8 - CONCLUSION

This project comes from an interdisciplinary perspective that embraces sociology, social media studies, Chicana studies, and queer migration studies. Coming from a critical Xicana feminist perspective, the methodology critiques positivism and objectivity while valuing reflexivity and standpoint theory. As a result, I utilize *testimonios*, also known as oral histories, and a critical discourse analysis of Twitter's tweets.

In this final chapter, I discuss my major findings within intersectionality, activism, the state, and social media, and the theoretical relevance of my findings to Fraser's (1990) subaltern counterpublics and framing. In the process, I describe social implications of UndocuQueer's social media activism. I also elaborate on my study's limitations. And lastly, I explain the possibilities for future research.

Major Findings

This research examines the UndocuQueer movement from the intersectional and social movements perspective. The guiding research questions were: 1) How do UndocuQueer activists create subaltern counterpublics? 2) How do UndocuQueer activists present their multiple and complex identities on Twitter? To answer these questions, I conducted two methods of research, *testimonios* and a critical discourse analysis of Twitter, where I coded and analyzed over 600 tweets.

I theorized that UndocuQueer activists present their complex identities on race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship status in creative ways through unique hashtags and art pieces and that UndocuQueer activists present these intersectional identities on Twitter. In terms of social movement theory, I also hypothesized in the introduction that UndocuQueer activists utilize Twitter for creating safe spaces and networking by establishing subaltern counterpublics.

This last point is correct; however, more than that is occurring through UndocuQueer's use of social media and Twitter, in particular. This section illuminates the complexities of using social media and its multipurpose use by these activists. I also theorized that hashtags are ways to gather stories and are also frames for UndocuQueer activism. I found this to be accurate, because messaging is essential to the UndocuQueer movement, and one way this occurs is through the thoughtful and deliberate use of hashtags.

The major findings are of this project are: 1) the UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic formed through the state's anti-immigrant policies and the public sphere's marginalizations and misrepresentations. 2) the UndocuQueer community forged an intersectional subaltern counterpublic online through their lived experiences as undocumented and queer. 3) the undocumented movements: UndocuQueer, UndocuTrans, UndocuBlack, UndocuAPI, and UndocuSolidarity operate coalitionally; thus, I call this a coalitional intersectional subaltern counterpublic. 4) the UndocuQueer activists use social media for community, expression and support of art, and organizing. 5) Lastly, UndocuQueer activists engage in multiple forms of activism via social media, such as participating in marches and civil disobedience and sharing events, workshops, petitions, and donation pages.

UndocuQueer Subaltern Counterpublic

Through isolation and secrecy from the state and public sphere, the UndocuQueer community forges an UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic. My data show this happens in two main ways: the state and the public sphere.

The State

States are macro-structures that influence all parts of life. In this project, I viewed the state in Weber's (1965) classic definition of domination, control, and power. My *testimonios* and

Twitter data illustrated how the state and its anti-immigration policies affect UndocuQueer folks. Two participants spoke to fear and anxiety about being undocumented. Shaila Ramos explained that “from a very young age” she understood that her family and friends could be deported. Alessandro Negrete experienced the same, because he did not grow up talking about being undocumented let alone use it as a chant. Furthermore, my data indicate that ICE is a significant space of internal uneasiness and turmoil for most undocumented people, which often happen through rumors and actual occurrences of ICE raids and checkpoints. Ultimately, the state becomes an actor and participates in the institutionalized violence against immigrants. Then, while Yosimar Reyes did not experience the same fear and anxiety because he lived in a predominately undocumented community, he understood being undocumented was a social predicament. The state made policies that placed this identity or social condition upon him. The state becomes an actor and complaisant in the institutionalized violence against immigrants. The lack of formal political participation and general legal vulnerability generates significant marginalization for UndocuQueer people and leads UndocuQueer activists to engage in the formation, maintenance, and utilization of an alternative public sphere. Without the state’s immigration policies and UndocuQueer individuals’ marginalization from the public sphere, the UndocuQueer counterpublic would not exist.

The Public Sphere

I viewed the public sphere is arenas of public discourse, such as the mass media (Habermas 1962; Fraser 1990; Squires 2002). Fraser (1990) describes the exclusion of minorities in the public sphere. My *testimonios* and Twitter data reveal that the UndocuQueer community feel marginalized by the public sphere for two reasons. One, UndocuQueer folks do not like how the mass media tells their stories. The media tells undocumented stories to cause moral dilemmas

and hysteria to appeal to the empathy and sympathy of the audience. However, undocumented people see these media stories as causing fear, anxiety, and depression among the undocumented population. Two, UndocuQueer activists do not like the “good immigrants” that the media portrays. Negron-Gonzales (2014), Carrasco & Seif (2014), Cisneros (2015), and Pieri (2016) explain the “good immigrant” narrative pushes the idea that only certain immigrants are deserving of citizenship. As a result, the UndocuQueer activists created their own counterpublic to control undocumented and queer narratives. While the UndocuQueer community faced exclusion from the public sphere, my data reveal consistent patterns of how they forged their own spaces. Overall, the UndocuQueer community has established its own culture and expanded on it through social media.

While the UndocuQueer feel marginalized from the public sphere, they do engage in the public sphere through hashtags. Travers (2003) shows that counterpublics should both maintain their counterpublic and engage with the public sphere, which the UndocuQueer activists do. Since social media and hashtags contribute to political conversations (Small 2011; Jackson and Welles 2016), I show how the hashtag #FUCKICE is a form of political participation and gives a sense of solidarity and community. #FuckICE is so vital to understanding the UndocuQueer movement, because the movement is fighting against ICE’s mistreatment of immigrants and LGBTQ detainees. This hashtag reveals how UndocuQueer activists call for the dismantle and removal of ICE altogether. In addition, this political participation builds their community bonds. Hence, I show the how the marginalizations from the state and the public sphere have led to the formation UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic, and a primary way UndocuQueer folks sustain and spread their counterpublic is via Twitter.

Intersectional Subaltern Counterpublic

The UndocuQueer subaltern counterpublic is also an intersectional counterpublic. Since UndocuQueer folks experience life through the intersection of being queer and undocumented, their counterpublic reflects this. Therefore, understanding intersectionality and Xicana feminism is crucial because we can see how the interlocking systems of class, race, gender, sexuality, and immigration status work simultaneously in their narratives (Crenshaw 1991; Brush 1993; Spelman 1998; Mohanty 2003; Correa 2011; Enns 2010; Correa 2011; Moraga and Anzaldúa 1981; Castillo 1995; Bhattacharya 2007; Zepeda 2012). Merely creating the hashtag #UndocuQueer illustrates how the undocumented and queer identities of the movement are intersecting with one another.

The UndocuQueer counterpublic is intersectional in two ways. First, it is displayed through UndocuQueer individuals' "double coming out" stories, where they experience coming out as undocumented and queer. Sometimes undocumented people are not comfortable with disclosing their status, because of their fear of being deported. These queer immigrants also had to come out as LGBTQ, where their first confidants are usually their family members. I found that, according to queer migration research, by leaving home, LGBTQ Latinx can attempt to find themselves and go on a journey of self-identity and self-determination (Gorman-Murray 2007). I connect these UndocuQueer stories to Anzaldúa's *nepantla*, because the queer undocumented community are living in two worlds and simultaneously rejecting binaries in the modern colonial gender system (2002). Their experience of being from Mexico and living in the United States without a country that truly wants them is also known as the borderland experience. *Ni de aqui ni de alla*. Neither from here and neither from there. While some UndocuQueer folks have a good coming out experience with their families, others do not, and this contributes to the queer

diaspora. This queer diaspora is when LGBTQ folks are pushed out of their homes, which this queer relocation forces LGBTQ to find new homes and new families that will accept them (Fortier 2001). The UndocuQueer intersectional counterpublic becomes a space for these displaced Latinx immigrants.

Second, UndocuQueer folks experience marginalizations from the LGBTQ and Latinx communities. These marginalizations build our understanding of intersectionality in the UndocuQueer community. I revealed how UndocuQueer folks feel excluded from the LGBTQ community, organization, and dating scene. *Testimonios* and Twitter data show that UndocuQueer individuals cannot relate to many citizens, especially when it comes to dating. While dating does not fall under the public sphere, their experiences of being ignored, rejected, or excluded based on their citizenship status continue the need for UndocuQueer support and community bond. UndocuQueer narratives also show that the immigrant rights movement is cis-hetero focused. Historically, identity politics focuses on a single identity and has been critiqued for not embracing or accepting other identities at the forefront (Crenshaw 1991; Collins 1991; Perez 1999; Sandoval 2000; Blackwell 2003). Therefore, these marginalization experiences maintain this intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

While many exclusions and hardships forged this intersectional counterpublic, the UndocuQueer counterpublic is out and proud. These stories and hashtags shed light on the growth and empowerment from the UndocuQueer resistance in which “queer and unafraid” becomes an inspirational message. I connected their stories to Moraga’s work on the power in reclaiming and creating your own identities (Moraga 2011). In sum, my *testimonios* and Twitter data revealed the many ways that this intersectional counterpublic replaces fear with strength and community.

Coalitional Subaltern Counterpublic

Not only does the UndocuQueer community have an intersectional subaltern counterpublic—it also operates coalitionally under the undocu-movements. I explain the rise of other hashtags related and connected to the UndocuQueer movement, such as #UndocuTrans, #UndocuBlack, #UndocuAPI, and #UndocuSolidarity as further manifestations of the complexities of intersectional identities. The UndocuTrans movements focuses on issues that impact the undocumented and trans community; here, UndocuTrans activists speak to being erased from the LGBTQ community and the cis-hetero immigrant rights movement. Furthermore, the UndocuBlack movement focuses on undocumented and Black people; they want to change the narrative of who is viewed as immigrants in the United States. Even some of the *testimonios* acknowledged the Afro-Latinx community and the anti-Blackness/colorism in the Latinx community, which shows an intersectional and coalitional critique. The UndocuAPI movement, similarly to the UndocuBlack movement, centers on the undocumented and Asian Pacific Islander communities and changing the narrative of undocumented immigrants. We can see that all of their commonality is being undocumented.

Therefore, #UndocuSolidarity indicates how these communities are supporting each other across different ethnicities and experiences. Their Twitter presence suggests that they do this by standing with each other, working together, and recognizing that their liberations are bound together. Research by Enriquez (2014) illustrates that an aspect of coalition work by undocumented and citizen students work and empathize with one another as they organized for the DREAM Act. From this project, coalition work is important to youth immigrant rights organizers. As a result, I notice the same coalitional perspective with the undocu-movements. Overall, this shows two things: social media is incredibly important and that these movements

functions coalitionally. According to social media studies, we understand that social media is a space for organizing and political engagement (Velasquez 2015). Furthermore, according to Fraser (1990), counterpublics are areas that marginalized groups invent and spread to have counterdiscourses, where there are different competing counterpublics. Since the undocumented movements are not competing with each other, they are working together; as a result, I call this undocu-phenomena a coalitional intersectional subaltern counterpublic.

Multipurpose Uses of Social Media

UndocuQueer activists see social media as a fundamental tool for their movements and communities. They use Twitter to promote and offer community support, to highlight the artists, activism, and activists of the movement, and, at times, to promote their own work and events. In my research, UndocuQueer organizers explain how important social media is to them because they are able to connect with each other, building a counterpublic. According to Cisneros (2015), sharing the undocumented and queer narratives on social media increases their sense of belonging, group solidarity, and political efficacy. The UndocuQueer community has a sense of community online, and they support each other during difficult moments, whether that be the act of coming out or in response to societal and political events in the United States. Their stories and obstacles reach across state lines. On Twitter, they share images and messages of support and love so others can know that they are not alone. On the same note, this online community is useful for networking. UndocuQueer activists use Twitter to gain and share information and resources with each other. Overall, for UndocuQueer activists, social media is multipurpose. These findings are generally compatible with Valenzuela (2013) in that social media has multiple purposes: 1) it is a space for gathering news; 2) it is a space for political expression; 3) it is a space for joining causes and mobilizing information.

My project finds this to be true and also adds that the activists themselves can use social media for self-promotion. My *testimonios* showed how important participants' art and artistic identity is to them. Art can transcend politics as a form of storytelling, which is shared through social media. I displayed examples of UndocuQueer art. Furthermore, UndocuQueer activists can use social media as a tool for artistic to self-promotion; they can post gigs, pages, flyers, and contact information. Here, UndocuQueer activists are able to spread and grow their business. These artists use social media to share their work, spread the word about important events, and to make social and political commentary. The findings of artivism and political art are the most similar to the findings of White (2014), since she studies UndocuQueer activists in the Bay Area and how they use art, photographs, and short narrative to tell stories of the queer immigrant experience. I found that through their art, UndocuQueer artists made political statements and challenged the status quo. This is not something I was expecting, but I was pleasantly surprised. Social media is now an avenue to become an influencer online and to grow a fan base for your business, including art and artivism. In sum, the UndocuQueer counterpublic becomes a space to share images with their community as well as dominant society and the public sphere.

Diverse Online Activism

An additional major finding of this project is the breadth of activism that UndocuQueer folks participate in online. Through *testimonios* and tweets, this research shows how diverse and complex their strategies and tactics are: they organize marches, undertake civil disobedience, give workshops, have events, share petitions, and promote donation sites. Interestingly, Valenzuela (2013), Nielsen (2013), and Meulman and Boushel (2014) argue that online activism coincided with physical political organizing. In other words, communities are using traditional protests in the street as well as a virtual presence online, which is one of the main components of

this project as well, because UndocuQueer activists engage in different forms of political organizing online.

All of these components were shared and augmented by social media. Although these findings are generally compatible with Galindo's (2012) research on DREAMers on social media and how they had a virtual national presence within social media and blogs, my study stands out from the previous research in several areas. For example, my study shows the more specific types of activism UndocuQueer organizers are engaged with. They want more than just a national presence; they want authentic and global engagement and sharing online. Furthermore, my project even connects to Pieri's (2016) study of an online web series called "Undocumented and Awkward" created by UndocuQueer activists to narrate their experiences and struggles. While this was not a central concept, some of the tweets and flyers I encountered were about continuing Undocu web series. It is a way to understand how the personal becomes and is political. Overall, for UndocuQueer activists, social media is multipurposed.

UndocuQueer activists put together workshops and other events to inform their communities about their struggles as undocumented and queer folks, particularly within university campuses and educational conferences. UndocuQueer folks also wrote and created many petitions to help those facing detainment and/or deportation and donation sites to help each other. Also, Jackson and Welles (2016) argue how Black Twitter challenges and redirects discussion on issues, such as police brutality, where social media is a tool against the power structures. In order to survive and thrive, the UndocuQueer community has to create their own spaces outside of the public sphere, which can be dominated by xenophobic attitudes and policies. While these are not the traditional organizing tools, they have impacted the UndocuQueer social movements, which is crucial to acknowledge. There is no previous research

on petitions or donation pages as an activism tool on Twitter. Therefore, my data contribute to social media studies in this aspect.

Contributions

My research contributes to several aspects of academic fields: sociology, social movements, intersectionality, immigration studies, and social media studies. I add the use of self-promotion, petitions, and donation pages use on social media to social media studies. This project also confirms the findings of other social media research about the multiple uses of social media and how online activism has not replaced traditional protesting. Furthermore, I contribute to the public sphere and counterpublics research by discussing coalitional subaltern counterpublics with the undocu-movements. Previous research shows that there can be multiple and competing counterpublics. I show how counterpublics can also function coalitionally. Additionally, I add to intersectionality research how UndocuQueer activists forged their own intersectional spaces and how UndocuQueer activists use hashtags to spread their intersectionality perspectives and identities.

Limitations

I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with a social media critical discourse analysis of UndocuQueer activists and hashtags. There is still uncharted ground. Working with Twitter to collect data presents an issue of temporality since people can create posts and proceed to delete them an hour later leaving no record behind. With this in mind, I also cannot download the information to NVivo and NCapture unless it exists as a “screenshot.” Thus, throughout the process of downloading tweets and posts, there is a chance of missing key information and data retrieval; nothing can be done to reconstruct the deleted information.

The social media software offer different methods in downloading tweets. These software

tools can also only download three thousand tweets at a time. It also does not guarantee to download all the hashtags. The only way to download all the tweets from a hashtag or particular time period is by buying the tweets from a private company. I looked into the price for the #UndocuQueer, and it would cost thousands of dollars to obtain. This was not an option for me. As a result, I addressed this problem by downloading tweets from accounts instead of hashtags. I focused on the most influential leaders on Twitter. That is how I ended up with the 66 Twitter accounts. I mediated this limitation to the best of my ability.

The next limitation of conducting a social media critical discourse analysis, there is a risk of coding and analyzing information from a disconnected perspective. I addressed this by combining my social media analysis with my *testimonios*. Furthermore, this is where my subjectivity statement becomes important because I fully acknowledge the limitations of my own research perspective. The findings of my study are also restricted to UndocuQueer activists; it cannot be generalizable or replicated from the positivistic approach, which for some is a limitation of oral histories.

Future Research

For future research, I would like to continue adding to this project by obtaining other *testimonios* from more UndocuQueer activists. Furthermore, I would gather interviews from UndocuQueer organizers from all over the country, not just in California. I think other areas for further research include more aspects of social media activism. For example, a cross-sectional study of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram would extend our knowledge of how and why UndocuQueer activists use social media. Since the method is novice, it is important to find efficient and effective ways to download social media content and study it. Likewise, a comparative study could be undertaken that looks at two or more intersectional movements and

considers their use of social media. For example, similar to how UndocuQueer people straddle two identities and two social worlds, many UndocuBlack folks have to inhabit the two worlds of being Black and Latinx in addition to being undocumented. So, I am interested in how Afro-Latinx who are also UndocuBlack navigate the world through their identities and how they have created their online and present social movement. This also means setting up *testimonios* for these different social movements to understand their background and stories. It is relevant to investigate whether other marginalized communities create and have the capacity to find alternative ideologies of and for the public.

Finally, given the stories of fear, anxiety, and depression, UndocuQueer folks may face many issues with mental health. This is an untouched area within the literature. The UndocuQueer community has faced many obstacles and trauma, and while UndocuQueer activism has been central within the literature, it is also essential to understand their coping mechanisms and self-care tactics. For that reason, UndocuQueer and mental health researchers holds potential in creating a collaborative research project.

Implications

The UndocuQueer community and social movement reflect new technological ways to create subaltern counterpublics. Social media gives room for the UndocuQueer folks to have community, networks, and support systems beyond their immediate physical locations. Furthermore, social media allows for different types of political engagement, where physical involvement in the public sphere occurs as well as sharing posts and images about their actions and community involvement. Lastly, social media expresses awareness, art, and artists' information to the world so that they can spread their message, gain recognition, and obtain entertainment jobs. Hence, online virtual space allows the subaltern counterpublics to take many

forms and meanings. Subaltern counterpublics are alternative forms of public speech and political engagement, but UndocuQueer activists use new and innovative ways to maintain and spread their intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublics.

More importantly, my study offers a window into one intersectional social movement, the UndocuQueer movement, and shows how they use Twitter to create and support intersectional subaltern counterpublics. Intersectional counterpublics offer important possibilities for inclusive coalition building. These online spaces permit multiple facets of peoples' existences to be recognized and valued. An analysis of the UndocuQueer movement's Twitter use shows how the group recognizes different experiences, creates a social movement, and how members work together with a mutual compassion and empathy for each other. Historically, identity politics have been limiting and marginalizing for multiple identities. By contrast, the *testimonios* and tweets from the UndocuQueer movement offer hope and insight on what and how an intersectional social movement can be.

My project also gives insight on the anxiety, trauma, and stress that the state has inflicted on the immigrant community. By constantly assaulting immigrants and their families, it has established a consistent fear of any law enforcement. This trauma and anxiety show that there needs to be systematic change for the immigrant community. This means a new comprehensive immigration reform that does not solely focus on more border control and building a wall. While this is only one group's interaction with ICE, *testimonios* and Twitter data show how ICE is problematic and needs reform or complete removal. These entities hurt and tear apart families from all over the world. This also has implications for the LGBTQ detainees in detention centers all over the country. As discussed in the UndocuTrans section in Chapter 6, trans folks face many sets of problems within the detention centers, especially assault and violence. This social

ill needs the public's attention. Public policy should ensure the protection of all detainees, particularly LGBTQ detainees. This research calls for action.

The UndocuQueer community face multiple marginalizations and exclusions from the state through its anti-immigrant policies, the public sphere through its misrepresentations in the media, from LGBTQ communities and organizations, and from Latinx and immigrant communities. We have seen the UndocuQueer's intersectional and coalitional subaltern counterpublic forged online as a safe haven for themselves and to engage with the public sphere. With this information, we have find better ways to be their allies, support them, and listen to their calls to action.

“People, listen to what your jotería is saying”

-Gloria Anzaldúa

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Appendix A - *Testimonios* Interview Guide

Family, Background, and Childhood

1. When and where were you born?
2. Tell me about your parents or your family background
3. What were your parents' religious and political beliefs?
4. What stories did you hear about earlier ancestors whom you never knew?
5. Describe what your siblings were like. Who were you closest to?
6. Do you remember any great stories or legends about your town?
7. What were your family's economic circumstances? Do you remember any times when money was tight? Do you remember having to do without things you wanted or needed?
8. What was your and your parents' immigration story? (How did your parents come to the United States? Why did they immigrate?)
9. What were some of your or your parents experience and difficulties of beginning a life in a new country?
10. How did foreign policies impacts you and your family?
11. How was anti-immigrant rhetoric impacted your and your family?
12. What were push and pull factors for your family to come to the United States?
13. Was anyone in your family involved in social activism either in the U.S. or in their homeland?
14. Where did you grow up? (What was it like?)
15. What was it like when you first moved here?

*Transition: As we talked about your family and background, now we are moving to your educational experiences.

Education

16. What was your first memory of being in school?
17. Do you remember teasing or bullying of you or anyone else?
18. What are your best memories of middle school and high school?
19. What were your favorite subjects? Particular interests? Extracurricular activities?
20. What were you plans when you finished school? Education? Work?
21. How was your journey to get there?

*Transition: Thanks for sharing about your education background, now I would like to switch topics and discuss your identities and activism.

Activism and Identity

22. When you think of yourself, what are the most aspects of your identity?
23. From my own experience, I know how challenging coming out can be and how important it is to hear many different stories people have. Can you tell me about your coming out story? How did that feel?

24. What's your first memory of being/realizing undocumented? What's your first memory of telling other people that you were undocumented? How did that feel?
25. I acknowledge my privilege of being documented, and I would like to hear your biggest challenges of being undocumented. I'm curious to learn about your sources of strength and conviction. How did you deal with the fear of deportation or arrest? Were you even concerned that you might be singled out for violence in some way?
26. Given the political climate with the new administration, how has that impacted your daily activities? How did you feel when Trump won the presidency?
27. When did you first hear or see UndocuQueer movement? How did that make you feel?
28. How did you come to identifying as UndocuQueer?
29. As an UndocuQueer activists, how important is social media to the movement? How often do you use social media for your activist activities? What are the main purposes to you? What are popular hashtags? Can you tell me about your reasons for using social media.
30. What do you see will come of the UndocuQueer movement?

*Transition: Now we're going to wrap up the oral history interview, by asking you reflective and personal questions about your journey so far.

Personal

31. Reflecting back on your life, what were key events or people that made you into the person you are today?
32. What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
33. What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you?
34. Is there anything you wanted to talk about that we didn't get to?
35. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you would like to add?

*Conclusion: Thank you so much for your time and sharing personal stories with me. It really means a lot to me. I'm going to work on transcribing this oral history interview. Once I am done, I would like to share it with you in order for you to give me feedback and any clarifications. However, I acknowledge your valuable time, so we can also just agree on me sending you the excerpts that I will be using in my dissertation to make sure I am adequately reflecting your story. Thanks again and I'll be in contact via e-mail.