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California Dreaming:

Latino/a Undocumented Student College Choices

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

by

Maria Luisa Woodruff

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

California Dreaming:
Latino/a Undocumented Student College Choices

by

Maria Luisa Woodruff

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Walter R Allen, Chair

Undocumented students, lacking United States residency or citizenship, select colleges annually. These students navigate a college application process in California whereby they prove AB 540 residency, take standardized exams, and attend competitive four-year universities without a social security number, a driver's license, or federal financial aid. A total of 20 Latino/a undocumented students and nine faculty or staff were surveyed and interviewed at three postsecondary institution types: Universities of California, California State Universities, and California private universities. This study examined the critical transition from high school to college and applied Laura Perna's college access and choice conceptual model to undocumented college students and explored the social, cultural, and economic resources that provided the conditions enabling their successful navigation through the college choice process.

Participating Latino/a undocumented college students shared similar beginnings. They each migrated to the United States before the age of 13 from Mexico or El Salvador and enrolled, attended, and graduated from local elementary and secondary schools. Students and their parent(s) value education as a means of validation and social mobility, yet the access to a CSU, a UC, or a private university depended primarily on financial aid and secondarily on the information made available to them by counselors, teachers, and organizations facilitating college access. Students with the greatest access to information at every level of Perna's model, from the external legal policy to their community applied to the greatest number of colleges and had the greatest financial resources throughout their college decision-making process.

Chain migration theory informed the application of Perna's model. Individuals and institutions through every contextual level could potentially inform the college decision process for undocumented students, yet available resources varied by institution type. Conferences, document review, and student and faculty staff surveys and interviews corroborated that public colleges have greater transparency about the application process for AB 540 students, and currently have easier access to financial aid information after the passage of AB 130 and 131. Some private colleges have over 20 full scholarships available to undocumented students, yet allies at the colleges and knowledge of such financial aid must be identified in advance to motivate undocumented students to apply. Students identified links in their respective chains for the colleges to which they applied and attended. Families and communities provided the support and motivation to succeed academically in elementary school, but links were vital to connect students to resources throughout high school and to college. The links came from teachers, programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) or the Boys and Girls Club, and most importantly from organized undocumented student groups. Such groups provide

inspiration and information regarding college access to their peers, but also demonstrate through example the ability and potential to access postsecondary education. This study informs practice at the policy, university, secondary, and elementary levels to improve college access for students regardless of legal status, regardless of nation of origin, and regardless of state of residency.

This dissertation of Maria Luisa Woodruff is approved.

Patricia M McDonough

José Luis Santos

Abel Valenzuela

Walter R Allen, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

*to Matthew Everett Woodruff,
in eternal gratitude for your patience, love, and support.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Undocumented Students	2
Relevance	4
Current Study	7
Chapter Overviews and Significance	8
Chapter 2: The Law	15
Legal Background	16
Latinos, Undocumented Immigrants, and the Dream Act Defined	16
The History	17
Prior to IIRIRA	17
After IIRIRA	18
After September 11, 2001	23
Dream Act: Development, relief, and education for alien minors	23
Supporters arguments	25
Opposition arguments	26
Legal Summary	30
Chapter 3: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	32
Latino/a College Access	33
Latino/a College Choice	34
Undocumented Latino/a College Access	35
Undocumented Latino/a College Choice	37
Theoretical Framework	40
College access and choice conceptual model	40
Economic Theory	43
Sociological Models	45
Layer 1 Habitus	45
Capital Defined	46
Cultural Capital	46
Social Capital	47
Levels 2, 3, and 4	48
Chain Migration	48
Bonding and Bridging Social Captial	50
Chapter Overview	51
Chapter 4: Methodology	53
Research Questions	53
Anticipated Outcomes	54
Mixed method case study	55
Case sites and sampling	57
Universities of California	58
California State Univeristy	63
Private Universities	66
Participants	70

Data Collection	73
Recruitment.....	73
Instrumentation	74
Surveys/Demographic Questionnaires.....	74
Interviews.....	75
Document Review.....	77
Limitations	78
Construct validity and data analysis	79
Researcher Role	80
Chapter Summary	82
Chapter 5: Findings.....	84
Demographics	86
Habitus	88
Who or what informed their college decisions	93
School Context.....	94
Elementary School.....	95
High School	97
University Context.....	102
Financial Aid.....	106
Legislative Influence of Postsecondary Ambitions and Decisions.....	115
Student Activism.....	120
Chapter Summary	125
Chapter 6: Implications and Conclusions	127
Perna’s College Choice Model	128
Implications.....	131
Future Research	135
Conclusion	137
APPENDIX A.....	138
APPENDIX B	139
APPENDIX C	140
APPENDIX D.....	141
APPENDIX E	143
APPENDIX F.....	147
APPENDIX G.....	148
APPENDIX H.....	149
APPENDIX I	150
APPENDIX J	151
APPENDIX K.....	152
APPENDIX L	153
APPENDIX M	154
APPENDIX N.....	155
References.....	156

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Perna’s College Choice Model.....	43
Figure 6.1: Undocumented College Choice Model	130

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1.1 Street Sign	1
Photograph 3.1: Dreamer Graduation	32
Photograph 4.1: Dreamer Poster	53
Photograph 5.1: Office Poster	113
Photograph 5.2: Office Poster	114
Photograph 5.3: I Am Undocumented T-Shirt.....	122
Photograph 6.1: Graduation Cap.....	127

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: UC Course Recommendations.....	60
Table 2: UC Admission Differences	62
Table 3: Private College Course Recommendations	68
Table 4: Private College Admission Differences.....	69
Table 5: Student Participant Demographics	72

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Photograph 1.1



*“Nobody looks at that little girl and thinks, what happens to that girl when she grows up?”
(Tran, 2007)*

Tam Tran in her short life and video, *Lost and Found* raised this important question founded in her own experiences as an undocumented student. The visual of the street sign often seen in San Diego, California is symbolic of the estimated 2.5 million undocumented youth under age 18 living in the United States (U.S. Census, 2006) and the 1.8 million undocumented students currently studying in United States schools (Passel, 2006). One such student, Alondra, attended a University of California (UC), alongside an incoming class with a mean grade point average over 4.0. As an undocumented student, *who lacks legal residency or citizenship*, Alondra cannot obtain a social security number, a driver’s license, or a federal student loan. California Assembly Bill 540 allows undocumented students to establish residency and pay in-state tuition rates at public postsecondary institutions (Biswas, 2005), while Assembly Bills 130 and 131 respectively grant access to private scholarships administered by public institutions and state aid (e.g., Cal Grants). Alondra pays annual fees of \$13,200. Attending the local California State University would reduce her cost to \$5,200. Enrolling in a community college would only cost

\$46 per unit, yet she still chose to attend the UC. Under such challenging financial circumstances, this study explores why and how Alondra and other Latino/a undocumented students choose four-year colleges in California.

Undocumented Students

Alondra and Tam's experiences are not unique; children under the age of 18 born to undocumented immigrants in another country migrated to the United States and consider it home. These students are the children of undocumented immigrants who worked on farms, in slaughterhouses, and in the service industry (Paseel, 2006). In the United States, undocumented students demonstrate active educational and civic engagement (Perry, 2006) and cannot be distinguished from their documented counterparts (Abrego, 2006; Pérez, 2009) until they encounter legal, financial, or institutional barriers preventing postsecondary educational access (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010). Despite individual and parental value of education, such obstacles frequently result in lower educational attainment (Abrego, 2006; Flores, 2007) in part due to the limited financial and social support afforded to undocumented students throughout their educational trajectory (Gonzales, 2010). Educational challenges are further exacerbated by uncertain futures (Pérez Huber & Malagon, 2007) since at the time of this study undocumented college students or graduates could not legally work within the United States (Pérez, 2009) until Obama announced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) June 15, 2012.

While Hawkins (2002) estimates that 50,000 to 75,000 undocumented students graduate each year from high schools in the United States, most researchers approximate 65,000 undocumented students graduate annually (Biswas, 2005; Kohler, & Lazarín, 2007; NILC, 2006). An additional 700,000 undocumented individuals already possess a high school diploma, yet only five to ten percent pursue postsecondary education (Batalova & McHugh, 2010;

Gonzales, 2007). Since federal law allows primary and secondary education for undocumented children yet prohibits their access to federally subsidized financial aid and remains silent on postsecondary attendance, thirteen states (including California under AB 540) allow undocumented students to establish residency and pay in-state tuition rates at public postsecondary institutions (Biswas, 2005).

In California, an estimated 20,000 to 24,000 undocumented high school seniors graduate annually. Students may apply, be admitted, and attend one of 112 community colleges, nine Universities of California, twenty-three California State Universities, or 170 private colleges. Statistics of undocumented college attendance range from 1,630 total undocumented students enrolled in California State and University of California campuses combined and an additional 5,000 attending community colleges (Gonzales, 2007) to less than 5,000 AB 540-eligible undocumented students enrolled in California's two public university systems compared to the 30,000 AB 540-eligible undocumented students enrolled in California's community college system (Chavez, Soriano, & Oliverrez, 2007). The \$46 cost per unit to attend a community college differs considerably from the \$39,000 to attend one of the private colleges represented in this study. The 5,000 to 30,000 undocumented students attending community colleges in California far exceed the number of undocumented students attending four-year universities. The successful undocumented students attending four-year colleges within the constraints of federal and state laws are worthy of examination. To understand differences in access and college choice, the experiences of undocumented college students attending different types of four-year universities are necessary to understand nuances in college choice and access for undocumented students.

Undocumented students are as diverse as the United States with the majority of undocumented immigrants being Latino/a with 56 percent from Mexico, 22 percent from other Latin American countries, 13 percent from Asia, six percent from Europe and Canada, and three percent from Africa (Passel, 2006). Until the Dream Act or other immigration reform passes, exploring the college choices of 20 undocumented Latino/a college students attending four-year universities in California merits specific attention for our state and nation since almost one-quarter of the nation's 10.3 million undocumented immigrants reside in California (Fortuny, Capps, & Passel, 2007) and approximately seven percent of Latino/a children are undocumented (Fry & Passel, 2009).

Relevance

Such numbers encourage politicians in an election year to spew rhetoric from the left and right regarding the contentious topic of immigration. Both parties have had Presidents and Legislators working to remedy the broken immigration system. Republican President Reagan was the last President to make drastic immigration changes granting amnesty to many in 1986 when he signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Republican Orrin Hatch and Democrat Dick Durbin first brought the federal Dream Act to the United States' legislature in 2001. Passage of the Federal Dream Act would supersede state law, provide amnesty for a group of undocumented minors, and allow undocumented students to attend college, access federal financial aid, and become naturalized citizens (Olivas, 2004). Democratic President Obama signed an Executive Order on June 15, 2012, to halt deportations for undocumented students and grant two-year work permits even though 1.4 million deportations have occurred over the last four years. Most recently, eight Senators (Republicans John McCain, Lindsey O. Graham, Marco Rubio, Jeff Flake and Democrats Charles E. Schumer, Richard Durbin, Robert Menendez,

Michael Bennet) submitted a bipartisan proposal to the white house for immigration reform on January 28, 2013. President Obama (2013) responded in kind Tuesday January 29, 2013 in Las Vegas Nevada,

Yesterday, a bipartisan group of senators announced their principles for comprehensive immigration reform, which are very much in line with the principles I've proposed and campaigned on for the last few years. So at this moment, it looks like there's a genuine desire to get this done soon, and that's very encouraging. But this time, action must follow. (Applause.) We can't allow immigration reform to get bogged down in an endless debate. We've been debating this a very long time. So it's not as if we don't know technically what needs to get done. As a consequence, to help move this process along, today I'm laying out my ideas for immigration reform. And my hope is that this provides some key markers to members of Congress as they craft a bill, because the ideas I'm proposing have traditionally been supported by both Democrats like Ted Kennedy and Republicans like President George W. Bush. You don't get that matchup very often.

Veiled in humor, the topic of immigration reform is daunting. No official legislation has been formally drafted or released; however, according to the Associated Press (2013), the four-page proposal outlines four expectations for immigration reform. The first expectation would permit access to citizenship for undocumented individuals residing in the United States after an improved system is developed to track Visas and borders are secured. The next modification would expedite and grant green cards to immigrants earning degrees from United States postsecondary institutions in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The third and fourth tenants include a verification system to prevent employers from hiring undocumented workers and a concurrent agricultural worker program. Conservatives and liberals alike suggest impending immigration legislation may include the Dream Act and be proposed by both houses by spring 2013. Even if the federal Dream Act passes next week, as educators at the secondary and postsecondary levels, we must know how to advise undocumented students seeking documentation or postsecondary education within the legal constructs created by our government.

Opponents to immigration reform including AB540, or the California and federal Dream Acts propose undocumented college students diminish the educational benefits intended for United States citizens (Berger, 2007). Proponents of said legislation “reveal that legal status brings fiscal, economic, and labor-market benefits to individual immigrants, their families, and U.S. society in general.” (Immigration Policy Center, 2007, p. 1) Regardless of political persuasion, researchers highlight the economic value of postsecondary education (Becker, 1975; Card, 1995) with the average person without a high-school diploma earning \$419 weekly, compared to an individual with a bachelor’s degree doubling their weekly income to \$962, or doctorate tripling it to \$1,441 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Another study (Julian & Kominski, 2011) similarly demonstrates high school graduates earning \$21,569 annually compared to \$42,783 for college graduates. Increased education also results in lower unemployment rates ranging from 6.8 percent for those without a high school diploma compared to college graduates at 2.3 percent, or doctorates at 1.4 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). The increased income also results in greater federal and state tax contributions. A female immigrant with a college degree when compared to a high school dropout will annually pay \$5,300 more in taxes and cost the government \$3,900 less (Vernez, Krop, & Rydell, 1999). Despite these benefits, undocumented students are financially or legislatively deprived of access to college in 37 states. Some undocumented students lack financial access when charged out-of-state tuition to attend in-state public colleges and universities. In states like Alabama, undocumented students are prohibited to even apply or attend college without proof of legal residency or a social security number.

In California, undocumented students have extensive postsecondary options but not more than 5,000 are enrolled in the CSU or UC systems combined that enrolled 46,569 and 221,524

students respectively in 2011 alone (CalState, 2011; UCOP, 2011). How did these undocumented students navigate the college application process? How did they finance their education without access to federal or state financial aid? Research suggests high-school counselors promote student college access and enrollment more than any other educational professional (McDonough, 2004, 2005). Counselors inform students' college aspirations and facilitate access to financial aid (Adelman, 1999; McDonough, 1997, 2004; Plank & Jordan, 2001). When the national ratio of counselors to students is 478 to one (Hawkins, 2005) and the ratio doubles in poor minority serving schools 1,056 to one (McDonough, 2005), low-income students do not receive the consistent meetings with students and the collaborations with parents needed to improve college enrollment (King, 1996; Plank & Jordan, 2001). Undocumented students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and schools still manage to succeed in spite of all the evidence to the contrary.

Current Study

This study intersects law, literature, theory, and practice. How can universities conduct outreach, provide support, and facilitate access for undocumented students without understanding how they select four-year colleges and universities? Similarly, how can United States judges, representatives, congress members, and other government officials uphold or pass effective immigration legislation without knowledge of these individuals? Finally, how can high school counselors advise students like Alondra without an understanding of existing resources, programs, and laws aimed at improving high school graduation rates and college access?

This study explores the following questions:

1. How do Latino/a undocumented students select four year colleges?

2. Do college choice processes differ for Latino/a undocumented students attending a private California university, a California State University, or a University of California campus?
3. Does financial aid influence undocumented Latino/a college choice?
4. Does state or federal legislation influence future academic or professional aspirations?

These questions and the qualitative methods employed to answer them were developed after exploring the law, the literature surrounding undocumented Latino/a students' college choices, and theoretical frameworks including Perna's college choice model, capital theories, and chain migration.

Chapter Overviews and Significance

The second chapter investigates the federal and state laws and proposed legislation influencing educational access for undocumented students. Undocumented students' postsecondary options are dictated by the interpretation and implementation of federal and state laws, and the understanding of the opportunities within the existing legal framework by the educators and mentors who advise them. All fifty states must provide a K-12 education to all documented or undocumented residents. Currently, federal law does not stipulate college access. To best understand the influence of policy and law on undocumented college choice and access, this chapter also explores the twelve-year history of the Federal Dream Act, proposed legislation to provide a path to citizenship through postsecondary educational access or military service.

The Federal Dream Act was first proposed in 2001, the same year Texas and California passed legislation granting in-state tuition at public postsecondary institutions to undocumented residents. Since 2001, ten additional states passed similar legislation into law, eliminating a

major financial barrier to college. To explore the college choices of undocumented Latino/a students attending four year colleges in California this study therefore focuses on legislation AB 540 (the law granting in-state tuition to residents), AB 130 (the law granting private and institutional scholarships to undocumented students), and AB 131 (the law granting state aid to undocumented students). Understanding the legal opportunities and constraints created by the legal system was imperative in the development of questions regarding college choice and future ambitions. Understanding the complexity of the law is crucial to the practice of educators throughout the educational pipeline of undocumented students.

During data collection, Obama announced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). It could not influence the college choices of the students in this study, but will certainly influence undocumented students' undergraduate and graduate decisions in the future.

Knowledge of DACA is important for practitioners who advise undocumented students in high school and college as it prevents deportation, grants a renewable two year work permit, and provides a federal social security number for undocumented students throughout the United States. Since this study interests policy and practice, DACA is identified and explained in conjunction with other laws influencing college access. This foundation of federal and state laws provides students, educators, and legislators with the context and complexity of our intersecting legal, immigration, and educational systems.

Chapter three provides the academic context and the theoretical frameworks for this study. The literature falls into the following categories: college access, Latino/a college access, Latino/a college choice, undocumented college students, undocumented college access and undocumented college choice connecting college access and financial aid literature to Laura Perna's college choice theory informed by capital and chain migration theories. Students with

inequitable resources experience each stage of the college choice process differently with varying outcomes. Students from higher income families are more likely to attend elite colleges (Hearn, 1987) than high achieving low-income students, women, or African Americans who are more likely to attend less selective institutions (Hearn, 1984, 1990). African Americans (Freeman, 1997), Latinos (Pérez & McDonough, 2008), Asian Americans (Teranishi, Ceja, Antonio, Allen, & McDonough, 2004), and Native Americans (Fann, 2004) each experience the college choice process heterogeneously. Freeman (1997) found that channeling can improve the choice process for African American students and that the generic physical, cultural, financial, and social capital models must be tailored to the target population. Terenishi et al. (2004) found that heterogeneity exists in college choice for Asian students for the following subcategories: Koreans, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, and Southeast Asian Americans. For example, Korean Americans had higher SAT participation; Filipino and Southeast Asian Americans valued living near home; and these decisions varied by income level. This study similarly explores the heterogeneous ways in which Latino/a undocumented students experience the college choice process in light of the legal and financial barriers unique to their status.

At every contextual level in Perna's model, the experiences of undocumented students are unique. As an undocumented student conducts their collegiate cost benefit analysis, they make "reasonable" decisions based on their surroundings and experience (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Horvat, 2001; McDonough, 1997; Paulsen & St. John, 2002). At the first layer of Perna' model, social and cultural capital influencing "habitus" contributes to the volume of information available to them throughout their college choice process. Undocumented students attending four-year colleges and universities possess social capital allowing them to navigate an already complex college choice process exacerbated by their lack of legal status. Since the vast

majority of undocumented students attend two-year colleges, the capital of those attending four-year colleges must be explored to facilitate access to other students struggling to obtain postsecondary access.

Layer two “School and community context” reflects the ways these communities promote or prevent college choice. Chain migration theory influences this community and the college choice process in two primary ways. The first being that the student will be part of a chain that brought them to the United States as a child by their parents. Secondly, a literal or figurative link in the chain led to college enrollment at any California public or private university. Based on research conducted by Person and Rosenbaum (2006), I suspected students heard about the college or university and decided to apply or attend the institution based on an interaction with a link in their chain whether it is from family or another member of their extended community. Although chain migration suggests decisions surrounding college choice are dictated by the financial interests of the family (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964; Person & Rosenbaum, 2006), I expected my research to diverge from these findings. Since undocumented students did not qualify for most student aid at the time this study was conducted, some students and their families opted to subsidize a college education against their current financial interests.

The third level regarding higher education recognizes the influence of postsecondary institutions on college choice. This study explored the influences of three California colleges on the college choices of undocumented students based on document review, interviews with students and university staff to learn if students knew about available resources prior to their application, acceptance, or attendance. I explored if each university distributes information regarding undocumented student access and recruitment from the student and institutional perspectives.

The fourth layer of social, economic, and policy contexts particularly affects Latino/a undocumented students throughout each contextual level since they are particularly sensitive to laws that prohibit or grant educational access. Policy implications abound for members of the “1.5 generation,” as they were born outside the United States but migrated at an early age and live in the United States (Gonzales, 2007; Rumbaut, 2004). For the purposes of my research interests, first generation students are those born outside of the United States, second generation students are those born in the United States with at least one foreign parent (Suro, Passel, & Center, 2003). Second generation students often surpass the academic achievements of first and third generation Latino students (Suro et al., 2003). The students in the 1.5 generation if provided the legal opportunity could certainly surpass the academic achievements of the first generation. Such research may persuade policy makers and politicians to pass legislation like the federal Dream Act. This study asks students and staff to consider whether the passage of such legislation would influence future academic and professional goals of undocumented Latino/a students and additionally asks students if their college decision would have been different had they been documented.

Chapter four delineates the qualitative methods employed to answer the aforementioned research questions. I interviewed and surveyed 20 undocumented Latino/a students at three postsecondary institution types: Universities of California, California State Universities, and California private universities to examine the critical transition from high school to college and explore the social, cultural, and economic resources that provided the conditions enabling their successful navigation through the college choice process. To triangulate the data, I surveyed and interviewed faculty and staff representing public and private universities and conducted document review to explore the availability of information for undocumented students on their

respective campuses. Finally, I attended six conferences and the Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco to explore how different campuses disseminate college and financial aid information to undocumented students and educators working with them.

Chapter five delineates the findings which demonstrate the participating Latino/a undocumented college students shared similar beginnings. They migrated to the United States before the age of 13 from Mexico or El Salvador and enrolled, attended, and graduated from local elementary and secondary schools. Students and their parent(s) value education as a means of validation and social mobility, yet the access to a CSU, a UC, or a private university depended primarily on financial aid and secondarily on the information made available to them by counselors, teachers, and organizations facilitating college access. Students with the greatest access to information at every level of Perna's model, from the external legal policy to their community applied to the greatest number of colleges and had the greatest financial resources throughout their college decision-making process.

Chain migration theory informed the application of Perna's model. Individuals and institutions through every contextual level could potentially inform the college decision process for undocumented students, yet available resources varied by institution type. Conferences, document review, and student and faculty staff surveys and interviews corroborated that public colleges have greater transparency about the application process for AB 540 students, and currently have easier access to financial aid information after the passage of AB 130 and 131. Some private colleges provide over 20 full scholarships available to undocumented students, yet allies at the colleges and knowledge of such financial aid must be identified in advance to motivate undocumented students to apply. Students identified links in their respective chains for the colleges to which they applied and attended. Families and communities provided the support

and motivation to succeed academically in elementary school, but links were vital to connect students to resources throughout high school and to college.

Chapter six explores the implications, applications, and potential for future research. Based on the experiences of these students and staff, information or “migration links” to college were vital to their academic success and access to four-year colleges. These links came from teachers, programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) or the Boys and Girls Club, and most importantly from organized undocumented student groups. Such groups provide important inspiration and information regarding college access to their peers, but also demonstrate through example the ability and potential to access postsecondary education. This study informs practice at the policy, university, secondary, and elementary levels to improve college access for students regardless of legal status, regardless of nation of origin, and regardless of state of residency.

CHAPTER 2: THE LAW

Things I Don't Want by Jirayut

Age 16: A driving permit, the first step to freedom. Age 17: A state ID to watch 300 and Superbad at the boxoffice with my friends. Age 18: Birthday midnight, the first lottery scratcher at 7/11. A summer job at In'n'out burger or Coldstone Creamery. A California Driver's license with an embarrassing headshot and a second hand car to maintain that cost way more to maintain than to even buy. Age 19: Pell grants, Cal grants and [university] grants on my financial award letter. The ability to accept the UC Regents Scholarship for exceptional high school academics. A work-study job at [university library] getting paid to arrange books. Age 20: A paid internship to research the next groundbreaking scientific discovery. Age 22: The travel summer research fellowship at [prestigious] Medical College in New York City. Age 23: The just consideration of my medical school application and the federal Stafford loans to pay for medical school. Every year a day without fear, a life without bars, disability, legality, status, my own nine digits.

The legislation, bills, and policies impacting Jirayut, and 2.5 million young immigrants like him, provide context to the aforementioned research questions regarding college choice and access. In an election year, conservative and liberal politicians alike are competing for the powerful Latino/a vote in 2014 and 2016. Regardless of the motivator for immigration reform by Democrats and Republicans, it is important to understand undocumented students make the decision to attend college without the ability to vote for candidates who might support the Dream Act- the only existing legislation granting a potential path to citizenship, work permits, and federal financial aid. Students like Jirayut cannot vote yet have the most to gain and lose from the passage or dismissal of the Federal Dream Act. In the thirteen states granting in-state tuition to undocumented students, postsecondary education becomes possible, but only if students and those advising them know, understand, and disseminate available laws and resources. If educators working with undocumented students are unaware of state and federal laws, they risk misinforming, discouraging, impeding, or even preventing college access. In order to answer how federal legislation like the Dream Act or state legislation like AB 540 or the California

Dream Act may influence college choice, access, opportunity, and practice for students and counselors alike, they must be defined and explored.

Legal Background

Latinos, Undocumented Immigrants, and the Dream Act Defined

For the purposes of this study, I define *Latino/a* as an individual residing in the United States with ancestry in Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. I use *Latino/a* or *Latinos* synonymously to be inclusive of gender. Undocumented immigrants are foreign nationals who (1) entered the United States with fraudulent documents or without inspection; (2) entered legally but then violated status and remained without authorization (Badger and Yale-Loehr, 2000, 2002). The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, commonly known as the Dream Act, would provide the opportunity for undocumented minors to apply for conditional residency status. Conditional residency status would grant six years of legal residence to undocumented students upon graduation from high school. These individuals could apply and be granted permanent residence (i.e., a green card) at the end of the six-year term if he or she completes either two years of education or military service. The permanent resident could then apply for citizenship after five additional years of residency. Beyond a change in the legal status of these individuals, a federal provision discouraging states from providing in-state tuition to undocumented student residents would be eliminated thus improving their access to higher education.

This complicated bill contains six eligibility requirements:

1. The student must first prove arrival in the United States prior to age 15 and demonstrate he or she has not left the United States since.

2. Undocumented minors must secondly graduate from a United States high school or pass the General Educational Development (GED) test, provided he or she has not dropped out, failed out, or been expelled from an American high school.
3. The third requirement follows the charge of the possession of “good moral character.” This requires a clean criminal record with only minor infractions, which absolutely may not be drug, or more recently, gang related.
4. The forth stipulation requires proficiency in writing and speaking English.
5. The student must then provide concrete documentation proving presence in the United States for a least five consecutive years since their date of arrival.
6. Finally, the undocumented person must be above the age of 12.

Representatives Howard Berman, a California Democrat, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, a Florida Republican, and Luis Gutiérrez, an Illinois Democrat, introduced the Dream Act bill to the House, Wednesday, May 11, 2011. Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, and Senator Robert Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat, introduced the " Dream Act" to the Senate as on May 11, 2011. The House approved the Dream Act, but the Senate did not pass it. More recently, the Dream Act was reintroduced as S. 952, H.R. 1842, and H.R. 3823. All three bills died in committee. Despite this news in current political events, The Dream Act’s history predates this 112th session of Congress.

The History

Prior to IIRIRA

The history of the Dream Act falls into three segments according to Michael Olivas (2004): the time before the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of

1996 (IIRIRA), the time after IIRIRA, and the time after September 11, 2001. Prior to IIRIRA, the seminal case was *Plyler v. Doe*, the 1982 decision by the United States Supreme Court forbidding the consideration of immigration status by public elementary and secondary schools at the time of enrollment based on the unconstitutionality of blocking the use of state funds to educate undocumented children (Olivas, 2004; Perry, 2006). This allowed undocumented children to attend public elementary and secondary schools. Justice Brennan explicitly expressed in the majority decision that children are not responsible for their own citizenship status, yet was silent on the issue of whether protections extended to postsecondary education.

A handful of cases speak to the legality of residency issues in higher education, in *Vlandis v. Kline* in 1973 the Court struck down the practice of treating applicants from out of state as presumptive nonresidents lacking any opportunity to appeal the decision at public institutions in Connecticut. In 1977, *Nyquist v. Mauclet* struck down the New York State statute prohibiting the receipt of college tuition assistance benefits by permanent resident aliens. Finally, in the 1982 decision *Toll v. Moreno*, the Supreme Court declared the preeminence of the federal government in immigration policy matters.

After IIRIRA

IIRIRA, as previously mentioned, is the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration and Nationality Act, the law regulating immigration and border control. It contains five provisions: facilitate legal entry and improve border control; enhance the enforcement and penalties against alien smuggling; advance the process of deportation of aliens; improve the enforcement of restrictions against alien employment; and restrict the benefits aliens receive, which include higher education (Olivas, 2004; Perry, 2006). The oft-quoted and debated Section 505 of this act states:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State (or a political subdivision) for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount, duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident.

States consistently interpret this section of IIRIRA in such a way that undocumented students are ineligible for in-state tuition, since states cannot provide a benefit to an undocumented individual that they would not provide to a U.S. citizen. Congress cannot legally regulate state benefits, yet many states consider IIRIRA binding and therefore believe undocumented individuals remain ineligible for financial aid.

At this time, no federal funds are tied to the ability of states to determine residency requirements and standards. Olivas (2004) provides an example of Section 1623 of the act. He states “State A cannot give any more consideration to an undocumented student than it can give to a nonresident student from State B” (p. 72). Biswas (2005) describes the trends in state legislation either supporting or thwarting higher education opportunities for undocumented students in higher education. Thirteen state legislatures enacted laws granting resident tuition status to undocumented students. These states include: Texas, California, Utah, New York, Washington, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Maryland, and most recently Hawaii. Texas, New Mexico and California additionally grant undocumented student access to state financial aid. Texas is particularly important, as it was the first state to pass such legislation creating the precedent for other states to follow. House Bill 1403 passed September 1, 2001, granted eligibility for in-state tuition and state financial aid if undocumented students meet the following requirements: they must have lived in Texas for three or more years; they must be graduates of Texas high schools or have GEDs; and must sign an affidavit promising to file an application to legalize their status.

In California, Assembly Bill 540 authored by the late Marco Firebaugh passed soon after Texas' HB 1403 on October 12, 2001 with similar stipulations. The California Education Code now included § 68130.5 allowing students to pay in-state tuition if they met the following requirements:

- Attended a California high school for at least three full academic years. (This must be between ninth through twelfth grades, but need not be consecutive).
- Graduated from a California high school, received a G.E.D., or passed the California High School Proficiency exam.
- Registered at an accredited California public college or university.
- Filed an affidavit acknowledging the applicant's intention to apply for legal residency when possible.
- Must not possess a valid non-immigrant visa (with possible exceptions of T or U who are the victims of crime).

For this study, all students attending public colleges and universities in California are AB 540 students and were AB 540 students at the time they applied and decided to attend their respective college, even if they were unaware of the legislation. Although California offers postsecondary access, other states provide more limited opportunities for undocumented students and have attempted to increase them with the introduction of new bills. Many have met their demise in committee. North Carolina expanded admission policies beginning with access to non-credit programs and ultimately included credited courses and programs for undocumented students. These students are charged out-of-state tuition. Similarly, Florida permits admission of undocumented students without eligibility for in-state tuition or aid.

Some states discourage access to higher education for undocumented students. At this time in Virginia, most community colleges will not admit students without documentation and charge out-of-state tuition to undocumented students. The cost of out-of-state tuition far exceeds the cost of in-state tuition and usually prevents undocumented students from attending college. Finally, legislative animosity for undocumented students in higher education is also evident in states like Alaska, Mississippi, Indiana, Georgia, South Carolina, and Arizona- all of whom passed legislation explicitly preventing resident tuition status for undocumented students. Most recently, Alabama's legislation explicitly excludes undocumented students from public universities.

The backlash against the higher education of undocumented individuals continues and manifests itself in related legal matters. Kris Kobach represented 24 United States citizens paying out-of-state tuition who sued the state of Kansas since undocumented students pay in-state tuition based on a high school attendance law passed in 2003. This case was dismissed. Similarly, Kobach appealed *Martinez v. University of California Board of Regents* in the hopes AB 540 would be overturned so California's public postsecondary institutions would charge out-of-state fees to undocumented students resulting in annual tuition increases of \$20,600 to attend a UC school, \$10,000 to attend a CSU, and a minimum \$114 per unit increase at community colleges. This 2006 case was denied certiorari by the United States Supreme Court in June 2011 to uphold the decision of the California Supreme Court ending efforts to challenge AB 540. Since then, Kobach's enterprises have included anti-immigrant legislation Arizona SB 1070 and Alabama HB 56. Most recently, Kobach filed a lawsuit to block the Deferred Action granted by President Obama to students eligible for the federal Dream Act.

At this time, AB 540 students pay resident fees at California's public community and four-year public colleges and universities have increased access to financial aid. The California Dream Act (AB 130) passed the state assembly in a 51-21 vote on May 5, 2011 and was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown July 25, 2011. It allows all public California colleges and universities to provide institutional and private financial aid to undocumented students beginning January 1, 2012. Despite suspension of Assembly Bill 131 by the Assembly's Committee on Appropriations on April 13, 2011, Jerry Brown granted eligibility to undocumented students for state financial aid (e.g. Cal Grants) on October 8, 2011. AB 131 went into effect January 1, 2013 and is expected to aid 2,500 students impacting one percent of Cal Grant's \$1.4 billion funding (Office of Governor Brown, 2011).

The California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) at a UC conference announced 15,000 California Dream Act applications were completed for the 2012-2013 academic year. Since the application was not available until April 2012, the CSAC anticipates many more applications for the 2013-2014 academic year with the January 1, 2013 availability of Cal Grants, UC Grants, State University Grants, Board of Governors Fee Waivers, and Chafee Grants. The online application mimicking the FAFSA without the social security number opened January 22, 2013 and is due March 2, 2013. The deadline seems easy but everything becomes even more complicated for undocumented students. For the California Dream Act Application, students must provide proof of parental income that may include W-2 forms, 2012 records, tax returns, and the signature of at least one parent. For students with parents outside of the United States, they have five weeks from the availability of the application to obtain the requisite information and if income is earned in another currency it must be converted to dollars. To further complicate matters, men from the ages of 18-25 must additionally register with selective service through the

post office prior to the March deadline. If access to financial aid were not complicated enough, Assemblyman Tim Donnelly and Tom Del Beccaro, chairman of the state's Republican Party, currently lead the movement to repeal AB 131 (California Crusader, 2011).

After September 11, 2001

The political climate after September 11, 2001 further complicated the educational experience of undocumented students created by IIRIRA. Dozens of statutes have been enacted or amended by Congress to address terrorism since the attacks on the United States, and several implicate higher education. The most famous is Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA-PATRIOT Act). There are too many others to mention. However, the following relate most to the Dream Act or issues in higher education: Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002; Border Commuter Student Act of 2002; and Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002. Each of these requires increased documentation, training, and bureaucracy for staff, as well as for visiting scholars and students at our nations' colleges and universities.

Dream Act: Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors

Legislators recognize a need to improve the current situation. As much as conservatives suggest “only liberals could think of offering tuition breaks to people that are here illegally” (Hannity, 2007). Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah, first introduced the bipartisan bill in 2001 and again in 2003. As can be imagined, the climate in 2001 when the Dream Act was originally introduced was too politically charged for it to have any real success in light of September 11, 2001. When reintroduced by Senator Hatch and co-sponsored by 47 others in November 2003, it passed out of Committee. Since the bill was never introduced to the House of Representatives, it

died that year. The Dream Act has twice passed the Senate Judiciary Committee by 16-3 vote in 108th Congress (2003-2004) and again in 2006 during the 109th Congress in a voice vote without dissent. In May 2006, it passed the full Senate as part of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006. During the 110th Congress, S. 774 Dream Act was introduced March 6, 2007 and the revised Dream, S. 2205, was later voted upon and filibustered. In the 111th Congress, the House approved the semantics of the Dream Act as part of the Removal Clarification Act of 2010. The Senate by 14 votes would not agree to the Dream Act amendment passed by the House resulting in the death of the bill by the end of Congress. During the current 112th Congress the federal Dream Act has been introduced as S. 952, H.R. 1842, and H.R. 3823. With President Obama's June 2012, Executive Order to defer action for students eligible for the Federal Dream Act (also referred to as "Dreamers"), the future of the bill remains uncertain.

In the briefest of terms, if passed, the Dream Act would repeal Section 505 of IIRIRA, which has come to discourage some states from offering in-state resident tuition to all students who graduate from their high schools and allow eligible undocumented students to begin the path toward legalization. Again, to qualify for the conditional status under the Dream Act, the applicants must: be admitted to a four-year college, two-year college, non-profit trade school, or enlist in the military; have earned a high school diploma or have obtained a GED; must reside in the US when the Dream Act is enacted; have lived continuously in the US for at least five years; must have entered the US when they were under fifteen years old; and must have "good moral character."

Supporters' arguments.

Controversy surrounds this legislation and immigration reform with supporters and dissenters. President Obama recently announced his push for immigration reform in Las Vegas when he stated,

Intel was started with the help of an immigrant who studied here and then stayed here. Instagram was started with the help of an immigrant who studied here and then stayed here. Right now in one of those classrooms, there's a student wrestling with how to turn their big idea -- their Intel or Instagram -- into a big business. We're giving them all the skills they need to figure that out, but then we're going to turn around and tell them to start that business and create those jobs in China or India or Mexico or someplace else? That's not how you grow new industries in America. That's how you give new industries to our competitors. That's why we need comprehensive immigration reform.

Many organizations also support and lobby for passage of the Federal Dream Act and immigration reform. Proponents like the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) lobby with many arguments. First and foremost, since approximately 65,000 U.S. raised undocumented residents graduate from high school every year, society would benefit from an educated population of talented immigrant students demonstrating ability and work ethic to actively contribute to our communities. Secondly, the concept of punishing children who could not consent to breaking the law in the first place is inconsistent with other areas of law. It seems even more punitive to allow this population to attend high school, and in some circumstances college, and create an educated group unable to legally work in the country they call home (Perry, 2006). Bill O'Reilly even said to undocumented Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and activist Jose Antonio Vargas, "We do need to carve out a process for people like you" (O'Reilly Factor, 2012). Worse still, is the idea that should these children be deported to their country of origin; they would be ineligible for legal migration for ten years, virtually precluding any the opportunity for their own legal immigration. Finally, this population of individuals would be able to work legally in the United States or serve in the military, with a

minimum of two years of college education or vocational training. This would not be a cost to society. These individuals would continue paying taxes, buying property, further contributing to their local and national economies and communities.

Opposition arguments.

Kris Kobach (2006-2007), the Republican attorney and Secretary of State from Kansas, represents the conservative right and filed every lawsuit against various public universities in the United States allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition, claiming that such laws are unconstitutional. Since the Supreme Court has not yet heard any of these cases, 12 states continue to legally provide in-state tuition to undocumented students. Other states, without such legislation, charge out-of-state fees even at their community colleges, essentially creating an insurmountable financial access barrier for undocumented students. Proponents of the Dream Act support this legislation because it would grant access to higher education in each state and would provide a path for undocumented students to become naturalized citizens.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) most clearly represents and articulates the views of those opposed to the passage of the Dream Act. According to their website “FAIR seeks to improve border security, to stop illegal immigration, and to promote immigration levels consistent with the national interest—more traditional rates of about 300,000 a year.” These views focus on not only the creation of strict immigration laws, but on their enforcement as well. Dissenters claim the bill will reward illegal activity and encourage even more people to enter the United States illegally. These opponents believe nothing is done to punish the parents who initially broke the law and the proposed law is unfair to those that have immigrated to the U.S. legally. Others believe that laws like the Dream Act would simply be political tools to manipulate and obtain immigrant votes. Organizations like FAIR use fear to

stimulate discord. The reports on the FAIR website remind readers of the scarcity of resources entitled first and foremost to American citizens, in addition to the cost of undocumented immigrants for every state. The well-articulated rhetoric fails to mention that the Dream Act would provide non-monetary benefits to a disenfranchised population, that in-state residency is a right determined by states, or that §1621 actually permits residency reclassification (Olivas, 2002). It stipulates “[a] State may provide that an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States is eligible for any State or local benefit for which such alien would otherwise be ineligible under subsection (a) only through the enactment of a state law (8 U.S.C. §1621(d), 2000).”

Such opposition became particularly evident with President Obama’s announcement of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) on June 15, 2012. Applications became available and could be submitted August 15, 2012. Since DACA is not a law, it can disappear or be revoked at any time. While DACA did not exist for participants in this study and therefore could not influence their college choices, it is important to define and explain its terms and requirements as it may certainly inform the future educational decisions of current undocumented high school, college, and graduate students.

If an undocumented student is granted DACA or “deferred action,” the benefits for the undocumented student are twofold. He or she may avoid deportation and obtain a temporary work authorization renewable after two years. Students may avoid deportation regardless of prior deportation orders or current deportation proceedings if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- They must have entered the United States before age 16
- They must have resided in the United States since June 15, 2007
- They must be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012

- They must be without lawful status prior to June 15, 2012
- They must either be in school, or a graduate from school, or honorably discharged from the military
- They cannot be convicted of any felony and cannot be found guilty of more than 3 misdemeanors

If the requirements are not complicated enough, this process requires the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The Homeland Security Act of 2002 dissolved the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and created the USCIS, the federal agency supervising United States immigration as of March 1, 2003. The USCIS consists of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for more efficient border and immigration enforcement, respectively. Through USCIS, DACA eligible students must collect documents as evidence and complete USCIS Forms I-821D, I-765, and I-765W. Upon completion everything must be mailed to USCIS with a \$465 fee. The biometrics appointment must be completed with fingerprinting to ensure a clean criminal record, and finally the status may be checked online.

Despite this overview, undocumented individuals should consult with an immigration attorney if they have had any contact with law enforcement, prior gang activity, previous contact with immigration officials, use of false documents or false identity, or if they have previously traveled outside the United States since their arrival. These nuances make it particularly difficult for counselors to provide accurate advice and information to undocumented students but the challenge does not minimize its importance. Approximately 103,000 (see Appendix A) individuals have been granted deferred action (USCIS, 2013). These individuals now have work authorization and a federal social security number for work purposes only (it cannot be used for

the FAFSA so undocumented students in California must additionally and separately complete the California Dream Application). For the next two years, and for the first time ever, undocumented students can apply to be interns or teacher's assistants while in school, or work in their chosen profession upon graduation. Should DACA remain in place, or be superseded by passage of the federal Dream Act, undocumented students now have access to better paying jobs and positions on campus that will improve their ability to pay for college or graduate school.

The future of the Federal Dream Act or comprehensive immigration reform is not without challenge. The focus of the literature has encouraged such laws and policy through legal analyses, policy briefs, reports, and theoretical publications. Michael Olivas, as the preeminent undocumented educational legal scholar, chronicles the controversial federal and state bills, laws, and policies affecting undocumented students (1995, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009). Rincon (2008) contributed to this body of knowledge with her extensive history of Texas policy and its passage of HB 1403. Perry (2006) defined membership and citizenship for the undocumented students attending school due to the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision. William Pérez (2009) builds upon this foundation in his work with 16 undocumented students who identify as Americans despite their lack of documentation. Although undocumented students may identify as American, they lack the rights and protections afforded to their documented counterparts. This study uniquely incorporates AB 540 and the federal and California Dream Acts' potential influence on the college choices of undocumented students in California and unravels how knowledge of legal resources by mentors, advisors, teachers, and educators creates educational opportunities and postsecondary access for undocumented students.

Legal Summary

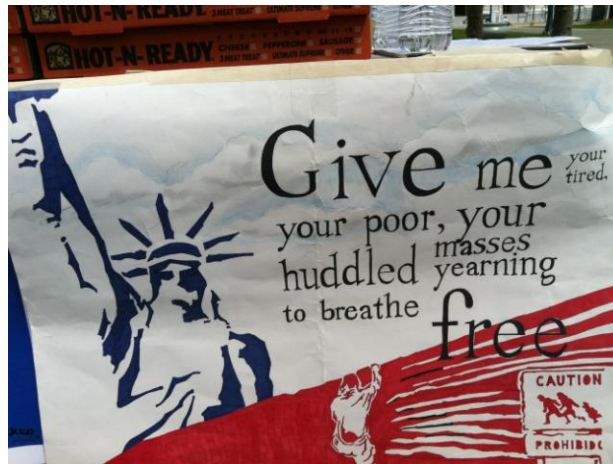
The laws surrounding undocumented students are remarkably complicated and continuously changing. Every branch of government from the federal level in Washington, D.C. to the state level in California influences the lives and college decisions of undocumented students. Since federal immigration laws always supersede regulations in individual states, passage of the Dream Act or any comprehensive immigration reform by the federal government could transform the postsecondary opportunities for undocumented students throughout the United States. The legislative branch has proposed the Dream Act in almost every session of Congress since 2001 to no avail. President Obama as the leader of the executive branch issued the Executive Order for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals June 2012. Even the judicial branch validated an undocumented student's right to public Kindergarten through twelfth grades, but remained silent on postsecondary attendance. Since the federal government has not created a process for the undocumented individuals residing in the United States, thirteen states (including California) have created postsecondary opportunities for undocumented residents graduating from high schools in their states. These states allow undocumented state residents and high school graduates to pay in-state tuition rates at public state colleges and universities. Texas, New Mexico, and California additionally grant access to state and institutional financial aid for undocumented students who meet the eligibility requirements.

Since 1982, all undocumented students in the United States have access to elementary and secondary education. In California, AB 540 established residency requirements for many undocumented college students granting in-state tuition rates at all public postsecondary institutions in 2001. When participants in this study made their college decisions, neither the California Dream Act (AB 130 and AB 131) nor Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals had yet

passed. The college decisions of undocumented Latino/a students are completely contextualized by what the law permits. Current knowledge of the evolution and attention to the perpetual changes to immigration and education law is vital for legislators, educators, and undocumented students alike to maximize opportunities for students, our educational system, and our state. Such knowledge is vital for the 1.8 million undocumented students currently studying in United States schools.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Photograph 3.1



This photograph taken during the Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco June 2012 depicts a banner used by Latino/a documented and undocumented students in their organized demonstration to encourage passage of Dream Act legislation to broaden access to higher education and create a legal path to citizenship and the American Dream. The Latino/a voice in such demonstrations is indicative of national demographics since the majority of undocumented immigrants are Latino/a with approximately 57 percent from Mexico and 23 percent from other Latin or South American countries (Passel, 2006) coming to the United States hoping for a better life and increased opportunities for their children. Yet, studies on assimilation and immigration suggest differences exist for immigrants based on generation, as Latino/a immigrants are failing to assimilate in the same way immigrants did 50 or 100 years ago (Suro, Passel, & Center, 2003). In order to evaluate the assimilation struggles faced by undocumented Latino students, challenges of their documented Latino counterparts must be initially acknowledged and described. Considerable research has been done on college access for Latinos.

Latino/a College Access

The U.S. Census issued *Educational Attainment in the United States: 2007* and found 61 percent of Latinos ages 25 or older had a high school diploma and 13 percent reported earning a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to national averages of 85 percent and 28 percent, respectively (Crissey, 2009). These averages were the lowest of any ethnic group in the United States. Latinos in the United States are less prepared for college, have lower enrollments, and lack access to financial aid information (Hurtado, 2002; Jun, 2001; Nevarez, 2001; Padilla, 1997; Keller, Deneen, Magallán, 1991). Many obstacles throughout their educational trajectory diminish academic competencies and college access. Low income, limited parental education levels, and inadequate English proficiency each negatively influence Latino academic performance (Valencia & Chapa, 1993; Darder, Torres, & Gutiérrez, 1997; Durán, 1983; Gándara, 1993, 1995; Solórzano, 1992; Solórzano & Solórzano, 1995; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005; Valencia, 1991). Schools with fewer resources also offer inferior support and attention resulting in poor academic preparation (Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999). These obstacles further result in minimal understanding of the United States educational system (Valenzuela, 1999; Stanton-Salazar, 2001); an issue exacerbated by the fact that college preparatory programs are more often found in schools that are predominantly white (Oakes, 1985, 1990). These inequities exist throughout their educational trajectory, but remain particularly evident during the college choice process of Latinos lacking the cultural, economic, and social resources predominantly valued in schools. This lack of access results in poorer academic performance and lower college attendance (McDonough, 1997).

Many researchers continue to explore reasons for Latinos considerable high school attrition and low college attendance. In 1998, 40 percent of Latino children lived below the

poverty level, suggesting many of these students would be first generation college students; their peers would be less likely to go to college; and the resources at their schools would be limited compared to conditions in middle class environments (Kloosterman, 2003; Zambone and Alicea-Saez, 2003). Consistent disparities also exist when low-income students' college attendance and degree completion rates are compared to high-income students (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Kane, 2004; Walpole, 2007). Furthermore, many of these students lack access to financial aid information (Nevarez, 2001). Latino students in college face additional barriers including a predominantly white faculty (Wilds, 2000); a white middle class institutional culture (Beauboeuf-Lafontant & Augustine, 1996); and feelings of alienation (Gloria, Hird, & Navarro, 2001).

Considerable research has also been done on Mexican Americans/Chicanas(os) in education (Gándara, 1993; Aguirre, 1993; Tejeda, Martinez, Leonardo, 2000; Pizarro, 2005). According to the 2000 Census, 58.5% of Hispanics identify as Mexican, constituting the largest majority of Hispanics in the United States. These studies demonstrate Chicano high school students are predominantly found in large schools that are overcrowded and underfinanced (Valencia & Chapa, 1993; Donato, Menchaca, & Valencia 1991; Tejeda, Martinez, & Leonardo, 2000; Orfield & Monfort, 1992). Chicanos are further disadvantaged by the lack of Chicano representation in high school faculty, resulting in a deficiency of role models for Latino students in school (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Haycock & Navarro, 1988; Malcom, 1990).

Latino/a College Choice

For the Latinos who navigate the complex college application process, literature suggests college choice differs by race and ethnicity, and is influenced by institution type and sources of financial aid (Heller, 1997; Perna, 2000; St. John, 1991). Multiple studies emphasize the role of

financial aid in the college choice process (Hostler, Braxton, and Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999; McDonough, 1997). When compared to other ethnic groups, Latinos are more likely to receive grants (Perna, 2000), more sensitive to college costs (Alfonso, 2004), and often avoid loans (St. John, 1999; St. John and Noell, 1989). This may be because Latino parents, when compared to Black or White parents, receive financial aid information later, in part because references may not be available in Spanish (Sallie Mae Foundation, 2004). It is no wonder Latino students, regardless of immigration status, are more likely to register at community colleges (Adelman, 2005; Hagy & Staniec, 2002; Kurlaender, 2006), attend postsecondary institutions part-time, delay entry into postsecondary education, and enroll in public, less expensive schools (Swail, Cabrera, & Lee, 2004). Conversely, Latino students are less likely to attend selective colleges, be continuously enrolled, earn a bachelor's degree within four years (Swail, et al., 2004), or attend their first-choice institution (Kim, 2004).

Undocumented Latinos like Alondra share the aforementioned college access barriers with Latino/a United States citizens, but encounter unique challenges based on the lack of documentation. Such barriers require study to improve college access for any Latino/a student. According to Patricia A. Pérez (2010), “uncovering strategies to assist first-generation, Latino undocumented students can sequentially supplement policies to aid their first-generation, U.S. born counterparts” (p.21). Dissemination of such information may aid colleges, high school counselors and their students to apply, attend, and succeed at the postsecondary institutions of their choosing.

Undocumented Latino/a College Access

Numerous national and campus newspapers chronicle the stories of undocumented college students (Beltran, 2004; Borja, 2003; McGray, 2006; Song, 2009). Jose Antonio Vargas,

a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and California State University graduate, recently exposed his own undocumented status and educational experience in the *New York Times* (2011) and *Time Magazine* (2012). These accounts portray the educational achievements of students born outside of the United States, but educated in Californian elementary and secondary schools. Influenced by their American education and upbringing, William Pérez (2009) demonstrates undocumented students in the United States identify as American regardless of their original birthplace. They therefore share achievements, professional, and educational goals with their native born Latino/a counterparts who also apply, are admitted, and attend college. Yet, how does an undocumented student like Alondra navigate the college choice process and select the university they attend?

Research delineates the financial barriers to college access for undocumented students when they are in high school, when they apply to college, and once they are admitted. As previously indicated, undocumented students share the challenges of documented Latino/a students including socioeconomic struggles. Undocumented workers comprise 25 percent of all U.S. construction workers, 20 percent of all cooks; 18 percent of all sewing machine operators; 19 percent of all roofers; and 22 percent of all maids and household cleaners (Paseel 2006). Given the limitation of available jobs for undocumented students and their parents, most undocumented people live in poverty dense areas (Chavez, 1998). Since these students mirror their documented peers, Latino/a children living below the poverty level are likely first generation college students; with limited school resources (Kloosterman, 2003; Zambone & Alicea-Saez, 2003). Prior studies additionally emphasize the negative effect of undocumented status on student educational achievement, motivation, and persistence (Gonzalez, Plata, García, Torres, & Urrieta Jr, 2003; Abrego, 2006; Pérez, 2009).

Despite limited resources, undocumented college students navigated the public school system facing personal, financial, and bureaucratic barriers (Frum, 2007; Gonzales, 2009; Madera, 2008; Pérez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortez, 2009; Pérez, Huber, & Malagon, 2007). As a result, immigrant students not only delay entry into higher education (Erisman & Looney, 2007), but also select community colleges in larger cities due to their open access, low cost, and ethnic makeup in an attempt to remain inconspicuous (Jauregui, Slate, & Brown, 2008).

Undocumented Latino/a College Choice

When Latino/a undocumented students transfer to four year colleges, the cost to attend any postsecondary institution influences college choice. Thirteen states, including California under AB 540, allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities. A small but growing number of studies have been conducted to determine numbers of undocumented students benefiting from the passage of resident tuition legislation (Batalova & Fix, 2006; Gonzales, 2007; Texas Comptroller, 2006). In California, the overall number of AB 540 recipients enrolled in the University of California system doubled from 722 to 1,483 between 2002–2003 and 2005–2006 (University of California Office of the President, 2006). After the passage of AB 1403 in Texas, the number of undocumented students attending public colleges grew from 393 in 2001 to 3,792 in 2004 (Gonzales, 2007) representing an estimated 0.36% of students attending Texas public colleges and universities (Texas Comptroller, 2006). Even lower rates of enrollment growth exist in other states with resident tuition benefits including: Kansas, New Mexico, Utah, and Washington (Gonzales, 2007). Such numbers are indicative of the low systemic levels of Latino educational achievement (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Although in-state resident tuition policies positively influence undocumented student enrollment in public postsecondary institutions (Flores, 2007, 2010), financial aid remains the principal barrier to college access for undocumented students and predominantly influences their college choice (Oliverrez, 2006). At the time this study was created, the only financial aid available to undocumented students included private donations or scholarships. With the passage of the California Dream Act, undocumented students currently have access to institutional aid and were granted access to state financial aid January 2013. For the first time, undocumented graduating seniors and college students in California may qualify for Cal Grants. This study will explore how financial aid or the lack thereof influenced their college choice. It should also be noted undocumented students could not work legally and could only recently apply for work permits as of August 15, 2012, under DACA. For the student participants in this study, these options did not exist during their college choice experience.

Far fewer studies indicate positive influences on undocumented student college choice. Pérez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes (2009) found greater Latino/a undocumented student academic success or “resilience” with individuals utilizing available “personal and environmental resources” (p. 172). De Leon (2005) emphasized the importance of counselors and teachers for undocumented Mexican male college students while Mexican female undocumented college students received beneficial advice from individuals outside of their high school (Munoz, 2008). This study seeks to fill this gap to identify specific resources for undocumented students at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels.

Once enrolled in college, undocumented students confront additional barriers. *Underground Undergrads* (Madera, 2008) highlights the undocumented student experience at UCLA through a creative lens. Students expressed their challenges, disappointments, and

triumphs through poetry, essays, and art. Through these first-hand accounts, undocumented students specified challenges unique to their status including the lack of federal financial aid, fear of deportation, and academic remediation (Dozier, 2001; Jauregui, Slate, & Brown, 2008) shared by undocumented students throughout California (Abrego, 2006, 2008; Madera, 2008), Texas (Jauregui, Slate, & Brown, 2008), Illinois (Diaz-Strong & Meiners, 2007), and Indiana (Gillie, Isenhour, & Rasmussen, 2006). With these concerns, undocumented students are less likely to obtain college services and may struggle to trust faculty or staff with their status (Dozier, 1993; Drachman, 2006).

Despite all the aforementioned research, some undocumented students are attending selective four-year postsecondary institutions. Some choose more expensive public universities and deliberately bypass the more affordable community colleges or California State Universities. Alondra deliberately chose a UC, and began her work there as a first year student immediately after high school graduation. She never attended a community college. The questions remain: How do undocumented students select four-year schools and what resources influence their decision?

This study fills a gap in the existing literature as it explores how undocumented Latino/a students in California choose different kinds of four-year postsecondary institutions including Universities of California, private colleges, and California State Universities. It also specifies resources for counselors and undocumented students, and examines differences in available information based on institution type and the dissemination of such material to undocumented students. Finally, this research investigates how differences in available resources influenced the college choices of undocumented students.

Theoretical Framework

Undocumented students navigate a college choice process fraught with the aforementioned access barriers unique to their status. This study focuses on the cultural and social capital evident in the California Latino/a undocumented college choice process. It additionally explores the habitus, school, university and policy contexts unique to Latino/a undocumented students. To accurately document the complexity of influences on their college choices, I incorporated and elaborated upon theories of capital and chain migration theory within Perna's (2006) college access and choice model. These frameworks allowed me to explore the contextual reasons and capital influencing their decisions at the individual, community, university, and policy levels. Individuals with greater capital have superior access to information about college and are therefore more likely to be predisposed, to search, and ultimately to attend college.

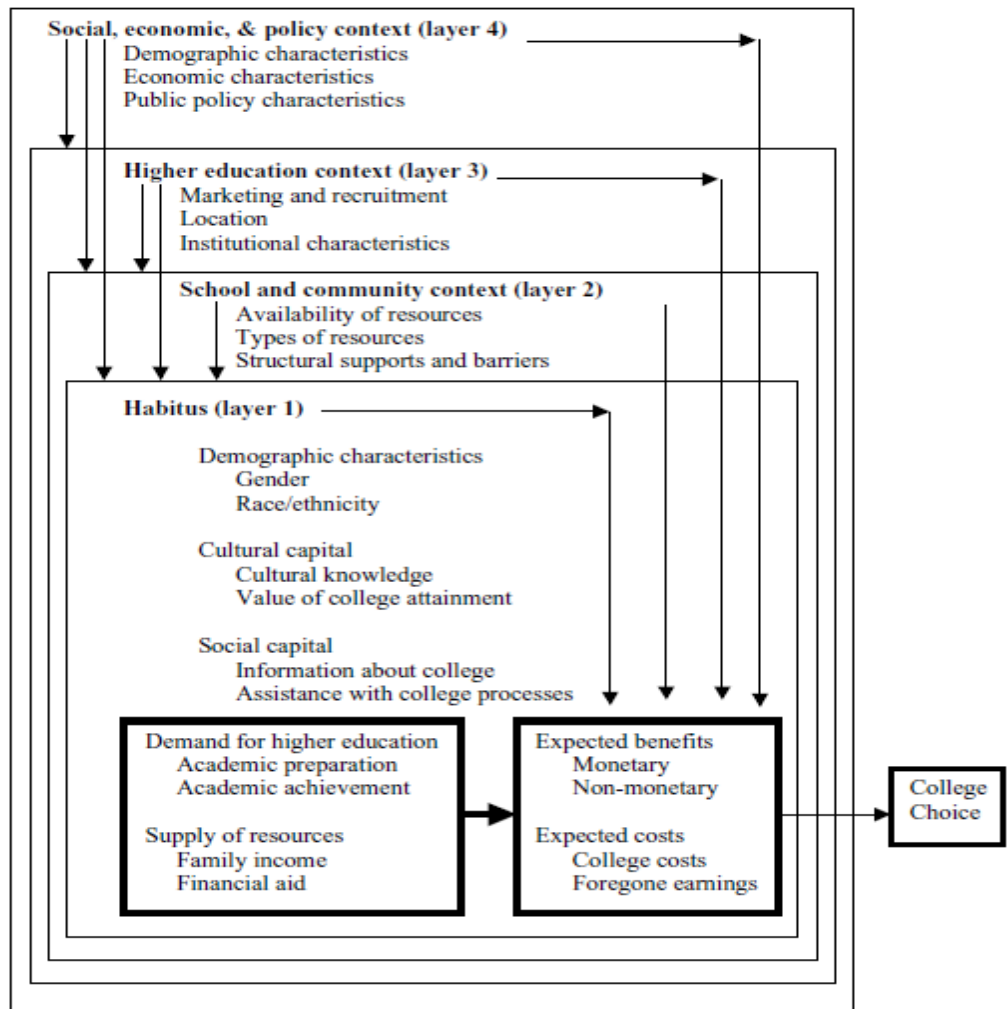
College Access and Choice Conceptual Model

This study of undocumented Latino college choice was guided by Laura Perna's (2006) college access and choice conceptual model created to specifically explore "(1) additional dimensions of the college-choice process, (2) the experiences of more narrowly defined populations, and (3) the effectiveness of policies and programs that are designed to promote college access and choice" (p.145). Undocumented students are a narrowly defined population whose college choices are uniquely affected by state and federal policies and programs including California's A.B. 540 and the proposed federal Dream Act. This innovative framework creates a comprehensive lens with which to examine college access and choice as it consolidates college choice theory with economic and sociological models.

Perna bases her model on Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989), who combined Chapman's (1979) five-stage model of college choice: presearch, search, application decision, choice decision, and matriculation into a manageable three-stage framework (predisposition, search, and choice), emphasizing the student rather than the institution. *Predisposition* refers to the individual's interest in college influenced by social, economic, and domestic factors. Students encouraged by teachers, counselors, and parents believe in their potential to attend and afford college. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) define this predisposition as the "developmental phase in which students determine whether or not they would like to continue their formal education beyond high school" (p. 211). *Search* is the research process of potential colleges and their characteristics. In this stage, students evaluate their academic abilities and financial means beside the college costs and admission policies. *Choice* is the stage when applications are completed and the student chooses from among admitted institutions. Students often make decisions at this stage based on available academic, financial, and personal resources and considerations.

Perna (2006) adds to prior reviews of college access literature from Hossler, et al (1989) and Paulsen (1990) to demonstrate more recent incorporations of economic and sociological models to college access research based on the advantages of each model. In doing so, she suggests the following four layers influence students' college choices: habitus, school context, higher education context, and social policy context (Perna, 2006). This proposed conceptual model of student college choice is visualized in Figure 3.1 (Perna, 2006, p. 117).

Figure 3.1



In its center, sits the capital investment model whereby a comparison of college benefits and costs determines college choice-influenced by financial resources and academic preparedness. Unique to this model are four contextual layers each influencing the cost-benefit analysis. Layer one “Habitus” is based on demographics including race, socio-economic status, cultural, and social capital. Layer two “School and community context” reflects the ways these communities promote or prevent college choice based upon McDonough’s (1997) organizational habitus. “Organizational habitus is a way to understand schools’ roles in reproducing social

inequalities” (McDonough, 1997, p. 156). Layer three “Higher education context” acknowledges the function of postsecondary institutions in college choice. Colleges may recruit, they may possess appealing characteristics or identities, or they may simply be located in close proximity to a prospective student’s home (McDonough, Antonio, & Trent, 1997). Layer four “Social, economic, and policy context” understands these external forces influence college choice directly and indirectly through each layer.

Economic Theory

Perna’s founded the core of her college choice model on labor economic theory; specifically, human capital coined by Schultz (1961), established by Becker (1962, 1980), and expanded upon by Paulsen (2000, 2001). In its broadest description, Schultz (1961, p.1) states

Much of what we call consumption constitutes investment in human capital. Direct expenditures on education, health, and internal migration to take advantage of better job opportunities are clear examples. Earnings foregone by mature students attending school and by workers acquiring on-the-job training are equally clear examples.

Since its inception, human capital values education and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and training acquired by individuals economically benefits employers and society. Becker (1962, 1980) stipulates financial resources, academic abilities, and anticipated costs and benefits influence an individual’s decision to invest in postsecondary education and presumes people finance such pursuits to improve their economic opportunities and earning potential while institutions invest to increase productivity and returns on their investments.

Individuals may pursue higher education for increased earning potential, but such theories postulate that individuals make college attendance decisions whereby they compare costs and benefits and ultimately select the greatest personal benefit (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Paulsen, 2001). Paulsen (2000) presumes people employ a rational decision making process considering the direct costs (e.g., tuition, books) and indirect costs (e.g.,

foregone income). As undocumented Latino/a students conduct a personal and “rational” cost-benefit analysis to their college choice process, they are limited by their job opportunities and access to financial aid. The cost of tuition would arguably have the greatest influence on their college choices.

According to Heller (1997), price response theory demonstrates this precise notion and would explain the low college enrollment of undocumented students in California and throughout the United States. Enrollment declines as tuition increases with two potential responses. Hopkins (1974) would suggest the unintended effect for undocumented students would be a substitution effect, whereby a student selects a different college; or a net discouragement effect whereby they drop out or neither apply nor enroll. Undocumented Latino/a students’ possess limited financial opportunities when choosing colleges compared to United States’ citizens as they do not qualify for federally subsidized loans. Despite this financial disadvantage and limited postgraduate employment opportunities, some undocumented Latino/a students still choose to attend more costly four-year colleges. This study seeks to identify what sources of financial aid existed, if any, prior to the California Dream Act, and whether students selected postsecondary “substitutions” based on financial considerations. Further explanations for college decisions according to Perna are rooted in sociological models.

Sociological Models

Perna’s college choice model is secondarily influenced by sociological theories of social reproduction. Influenced by Durkheim and Weber, Bourdieu and others explain the structural, educational, and economic opportunities or limitations created or thwarted by policy, organizations, and the individuals with the privilege and power to preserve and maintain their status (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1990; Sewell, Haller, & Portes, 1969).

Perna's model contextualizes the four predominant social reproduction protagonists for students in the college choice process: the individual, high school institution, postsecondary institution, and policy. Fortunately for the undocumented students in this study, Bourdieu stipulates the opportunity for social mobility exists within the very institutions promoting the status quo. Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) development of capital and habitus provides an effective lens to examine the reproduction of social order through social institutions like schools and government.

Layer One "Habitus"

The complexity of Bourdieu's notions of habitus and capital must be defined to understand the context for undocumented students' financial decisions regarding college. At its core, habitus encompasses subjective, class-based beliefs existing in an individual's environment that in turn influence personal expectations, attitudes, or aspirations (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; McDonough, 1997; McDonough & Calderone, 2006; Paulsen, 2001; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2000). Habitus further reveals internalized dispositions of restrictions on individual potential based on structural limitations (Horvat, 2001; McDonough, 1997). In more simplistic terms, Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) habitus is an outlook that compartmentalizes individuals and communities based on shared experiences and socioeconomic class. As a result, habitus may facilitate college access for wealthy students with a shared habitus and conversely inhibit college access for poor, undocumented students, with an entirely different habitus. Understanding Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) habitus, its role within Perna's college choice model, and its application to undocumented college students requires defining the different resources or types of capital informing it. Although Bourdieu and others define many types of capital, Perna specifies cultural and social capital as the predominant influences on college choice within habitus.

Capital Defined

Cultural Capital. Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) cultural capital is an abstract resource that informs habitus. McDonough (1997) states, "Cultural capital is a symbolic good that is most useful when it is converted into economic capital. Although all classes have their own forms of cultural capital, the most socially and economically valued forms are those possessed by the middle and upper classes" (p.9). Bourdieu (1992) explains cultural capital involves familial resources (i.e., knowledge and education) that transmit values and perspectives. According to DiMaggio and Mohr (1985), such cultural capital makes one accepted to different levels of society, yet McDonough (1997) emphasizes such class-based knowledge is absent in schools. Bourdieu (1977) suggests cultural capital at home influences success in school particularly when those in the educational institution share familial values thus facilitating a child's educational access (Bourdieu, 1992). For example, parents with cultural capital valued by schools positively transmit the knowledge and conduct rewarded throughout their education, influence the academic placement of their children, and advocate on their behalf (McDonough, 1997).

Research demonstrates cultural capital informs educational aspirations specifically the postsecondary goals of low-income students (McDonough, 1997, 2005; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Reed, 2011; Walpole, 2003, 2007). Dika & Singh (2002) posit that class and race may restrict access to institutional resources and influence a student's perception of educational opportunity (Horvat, 2001). Students with a habitus from lower socioeconomic backgrounds typically possess lower educational aspirations (Walpole, 2007) and even high achieving, low-income high school students are less likely to have postsecondary aspirations (Paulson & St. John, 2002). Fortunately, increased parental expectations can mitigate or improve low-income students' academic pursuits (Reed, 2011).

Social Capital. A logical extension of cultural capital, social capital possesses “features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1993, p. 35). Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (p.51). Lin broadly (1999) defines social capital as resources attained through social relationships. Coleman (1990) more narrowly defines social capital as sources of (a) social control, (b) family-mediated benefits, and (c) non-family resources. Every definition of social capital suggests relationships are the fundamental resource (Bourdieu, 1996; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Lin (2001) established while most individuals associate with those similar to them, some individuals gain additional resources by associating with those with greater social or cultural capital. As such, individuals or groups may therefore utilize social capital to advance personally or collectively (Granovetter, 1973; Burt, 2000). Using these definitions, scholars propose cultural and social capital each provide appropriate models for understanding issues of educational equity and college access (McDonough, 1997). These nuances are important in the exploration of Latino/a undocumented student college choice especially since cultural and social capital appear to overlap (McDonough & Nuñez, 2007).

Literature documents that social capital and the relationships contained therein can facilitate and promote educational outcomes in secondary and postsecondary education (Dika & Singh, 2002). To conduct such studies, scholars explored the support and advocacy employed by students, educators, or family (McDonough, 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Relationships with parents, siblings, extended family, friends, and educators particularly influence the college decisions of first-generation students (McDonough, 1997, 2005). Interactions with faculty (Astin,

1993) and counselors (McDonough, 2005) also positively influence low-income students and help them to navigate the college choice process and successfully transition from high school to college (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Through qualitative methods, I identify potential similarities and differences in cultural and social capital at both home and school within the Latino/a undocumented community. Both cultural and social will influence habitus according to Perna's college choice model and should be explored to identify institutional and individual resources for undocumented Latino/a students.

Levels Two, Three, and Four – School and Community, Higher Education, and Policy Contexts

Chain Migration

Although absent from Perna's college choice model, inclusion of chain migration theory offers special insight into the second (school and community), third (higher education), and fourth (policy) contextual levels of college choice for undocumented Latino/a students. The experiences of all immigrants, particularly undocumented students, inform the community context of their college choice. MacDonald and MacDonald (1964), explain chain migration as a process by which previous migrants provide migration opportunities, transportation, accommodation, and employment to prospective migrants. Borjas and Bronars (1990) maintain a "chain" of relatives that already reside in the United States connects most immigrants. They suggest migration maximizes the income of the entire household and minimizes the cost of migration for the individuals within the family unit. According to the 1970 and 1980 Census data, Borjas states 75 percent immigrants live with relatives and these family members include spouses, children, and more distant relations. As a result, he contends decisions impacting the family are often made as a unit. Palloni and Massey (2001) also emphasize household members

maximize collective rather than individual income. They further stipulate the first person in the chain to arrive in the United States is chosen with great care by the family to improve future access for other family members. Such strong familial-based decisions for immigrants would likely influence the college ambitions and decisions of any member within the family unit.

Chain migration theory extends naturally to the college decisions of undocumented Latino/a students. A few studies have incorporated migration theory into Latino/a college choice. Person and Rosenbaum (2006) first utilized chain migration theory to explore the college choices of Latino/a students attending community colleges suggesting students would likely apply to schools where a link in their chain attended, a link in their migration chain was applying, or would seek to find links once college began. Pérez and McDonough (2008) also incorporated chain migration theory into their methodology to better understand the college choice process of Latinos. They identified chain migration contacts as having great influence on the Latino/a student college decision-making process. This study builds on their research to determine if “chain migration contacts or social support networks” (p.258) similarly influence undocumented Latino/a college student choice.

Bonding and Bridging Social Capital

Although social capital generally influences habitus, two specific types of social capital also influence the school, community, and higher education contexts of Perna’s college choice model and connect to chain migration theory. Recent literature suggests two types of social capital exist: *bonding social capital* and *bridging social capital* (Larsen, et al., 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2001; Putnam, 2000). According to Bandura (1997), bonding social capital accentuates racial or religious identities intimately shared with family or friends. Bonding social capital produces strong connections among members and requires extensive association and trust

(Paxton, 1999). Bridging social capital differs as it “is built when we reach out to (or are reached by) those who are in sufficiently different circumstances from ourselves to be considered unnatural acquaintances. These differences might be class, race, religion, sexuality, education, or a whole number of things” (Conrad, 2006, p. 7). Instead of strengthening familial, peer, or community relationships, bridging social capital requires new networks and contacts.

Bridging and bonding social capital networks are relevant to research related to college students. Stanton-Salazar (2001) differentiates between “bounded” or “cosmopolitan” networks. Bounded networks minimize exposure to information, experiences or people outside the intimate community of friends and family. Conversely, cosmopolitan networks maximize contact with different groups of people (Stanton-Salazar, 2001, pp. 15-17). Granovetter (1973) additionally suggests that peripheral or superficial knowledge of people may sufficiently cultivate and create strong ties or networks. For undocumented students, weak ties with members outside their migrant community might be more beneficial and useful than strong ties from within it.

Each type of social capital implies undocumented students with more cosmopolitan networks may have greater information and access regarding the college application process. This study seeks to identify if bridging or bonding occurred concurrently with chain migration theory to obtain, distribute, or influence individual or collective college application processes or decisions for Latino/a undocumented students. Within Perna’s model, the strength of links and ties from their habitus, through their school and community, to prospective colleges and universities were considered throughout the methodology of this study.

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the academic and theoretical foundations for this study on undocumented Latino/a college choice in California. The literature includes: Latino/a college

access, undocumented college access, Latino/a college choice, and undocumented college choice each informed by financial aid. This study connects college access and financial aid research to Laura Perna's college choice theory informed by cultural, social, bridging, bonding capital and chain migration theories. Undocumented Latino/a students with varying resources experience each stage of the college choice process differently.

In the first layer of Perna's model, social and cultural capital influencing "habitus" contributes to available information throughout their college choice process. Undocumented four-year college students possess the social and bridging capital to make "reasonable decisions" as they navigate the complicated college choice process exacerbated by their status.

Layer two "School and community context" reflects the ways these communities promote or prevent college choice. Chain migration theory influences community and the college choice process in three ways. The first being the student will be part of a chain that brought them to the United States as a child by their parents. Secondly, a link in the chain led to college enrollment. Finally, the financial interests of the family influence college choice (MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964; Person & Rosenbaum, 2006).

The third level regarding higher education recognizes postsecondary institutional influence on college choice. This study explored the influences of three California colleges on the college choices of undocumented Latino/a students based on document review, interviews with students and university staff to learn if students knew of available resources prior to their application, acceptance, or attendance.

The fourth layer of social, economic, and policy contexts unilaterally affects undocumented students since they are especially sensitive to laws prohibiting postsecondary educational access. This study asked students to consider whether the passage of such legislation

would have changed college choice or altered future professional aspirations. The methodology delineated in the next chapter integrated Perna's model of college choice, definitions of capital, and Latino/a and undocumented access and college choice research to fill gaps in the literature and inform policy and practice at every contextual level.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Photograph 4.1



Research Questions

This picture taken at the Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco demonstrates the willingness of some undocumented students to step out of the shadows. The methodology of this study relied on the bravery of 20 such individuals. After careful consideration, this study implemented and utilized qualitative research methods to understand the college choices of undocumented Latino students attending three different types of Californian four-year universities (CSUs, UCs, and private universities) informed by capital, chain migration theory, and Laura Perna's (2006) college choice model. This study additionally explored how financial aid and legislation like A.B. 540, the California Dream Act, and the federal Dream Act may influence college choice. This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How did Latino/a undocumented students select four year colleges?
2. Did college choice processes differ for Latino/a undocumented students attending a private California university, a California State University, or a University of California campus?
3. Did financial aid influence their college choice?

4. Would recent passage of the California Dream Act or the future passage of the Federal Dream Act influence future academic or professional plans?

Anticipated Outcomes

Despite the exploratory nature of this study, I developed the following potential outcomes from available literature and theory.

- *College choice processes would differ for Latino undocumented students attending a private California university, a California State University or a University of California campus.*

Current literature suggested financial aid considerations predominantly influenced the college choices of undocumented and Latino college students resulting in high enrollment and representation in California's community colleges. I suspected undocumented students attending California State Universities were greatly influenced by financial considerations since these four-year colleges are the most economical option in the State of California. Similarly, undocumented students attending private universities were likely recipients of institutional aid in the form of grants or scholarships and selected those schools for financial reasons as well. I anticipated students attending the University of California campuses fell somewhere in the middle. They may have had greater financial support or forms of social and cultural capital when compared to other undocumented students attending CSUs, but with private aid students would still financially benefit from attending a less expensive public university. Therefore, undocumented students attending more prestigious University of California campuses have specific reasons for doing so contradicting individual financial interests.

- *A.B. 540 and Dream Act legislation influence decisions regarding college choice.*

Until President Obama signed the executive order Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals in June 2012, undocumented students could not obtain gainful employment during college or after graduation. Yet they still persevere, attend, and graduate from college. The possibility of amnesty and the hope they one day may become legal United States citizens motivates them. I imagined students attending a CSU would not be attending their first choice. Students attending a CSU may have selected a more costly and prestigious university had they had access to federal or state financial aid. Students that transferred from community colleges may have opted to attend a four-year college instead. Higher achieving students may have additionally ventured out-of-state. Although A.B. 540 allows them to qualify for resident tuition in California, the increasing costs of a public postsecondary education makes UCs increasingly inaccessible for these students. The federal Dream Act or comprehensive immigration reform would change college choice for these students.

- *AB 540 and Dream Act legislation also influences future personal and professional goals.*

I suspected A.B. 540 legislation influenced undocumented college students' decision to pursue graduate education in the state of California. I also theorized the Dream Act would influence their personal and professional goals. What would they do after graduation becomes a very different question for someone who has the legal right and opportunity to work in their field of expertise. Until the Dream Act passes, the question is what will you pursue instead of your dream after graduation?

Mixed Method Case Study

Quantitative or qualitative methods could have been used to study the college decisions of undocumented Latino/a students. Qualitative research provides a nuanced approach for the application

of Perna's model to explore the possible contextual differences by postsecondary institution type simply because qualitative methods focus on experience (Sherman & Webb, 2001). This methodology allows undocumented students to express and convey their "lived" college decision-making experiences formed by their social perspective and worldview (Merriam, 1998) and grants an opportunity to explore the college decision making "processes" as described by Bogdan and Biklen (2007).

Many options exist for qualitative inquiry. They include: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study research (Creswell, 2007). This study of undocumented Latino college students and their college choices employed a mixed-methods approach to comparative or multi-case study research. This methodology has a distinct advantage in that "A "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Merriam (1998) also suggests case study research provides a holistic description and context for a particular phenomenon. Based on my research questions, the qualitative case study was the most appropriate approach to obtain answers and explanations as to how and why undocumented Latino students choose college since quantitative researchers already demonstrate increased numbers of undocumented students attending college, particularly in states with in-state tuition policies.

My study explored why and how these students made their postsecondary decisions. My use of qualitative methods provided a protected voice for students who cannot vote and remain at risk of deportation. Qualitative methods allowed the participants to explain the "process" and "meaning" of their college choice (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Case studies can also "yield explanatory insights" (Babbie, 2007, p. 298) when focused on social phenomena and can be applied to broader theory. As such, this study may result in increased insight into college access, college recruitment, and support for undocumented applicants and students.

This study looked at Latino/a undocumented students attending three types of postsecondary Californian institutions and attempted to understand how public policy, social capital, and cultural capital influenced the decision to attend each school type. Every institution type in California exemplifies a case with unique admission requirements, variances in size, mission, and cost. Examination of the three predominant four-year college types in California endeavors to determine if college choices differ by institutional context. Case studies are particularly useful according to Yin (2003) since the connection between the “phenomenon” (e.g., undocumented college attendance) and the “context” (e.g., UC, CSU, and Private College) is not obvious. This study seeks to determine whether the contextual conditions are applicable to college choice and if differences exist among them.

Utilization of a case study approach allowed me to comprehensively apply various methods of data collection including document review, surveys, interviews, and observations to best understand the college decisions of undocumented Latino/a college students (Merriam, 1998). Case studies also permitted a contextual examination of this phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

According to Babbie (2007), case studies may have broader applications. The college choices of undocumented students within the unique system of higher education in California coupled with the in-state tuition policy for undocumented students may be applied to states with similar policies or may be considered in the thirty-eight states without them.

Case Sites and Sampling

For this study, I purposefully sampled students (Maxwell, 2005) from three types of four-year colleges and universities in California: private colleges, California State Universities, and Universities of California. Although each university grants at minimum a bachelor’s degree, admission policies, cost, and prestige differ for each institution type. These institution types

provide different contexts to explore if college choice differs by institution type for undocumented Latino/a students. In California, the Master Plan for Higher Education (Master Plan Survey Team, 1960) created this state's three-tiered public postsecondary system. California community colleges provide open admission, vocational training, and academic opportunities to transfer to the California State, or University of California systems. California State Universities provide bachelor and master degree programs to the top third of high school graduates, while the Universities of California grant undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees to the top eighth of high school graduates. Literature suggests undocumented students predominantly attend community colleges (Jauregui, Slate, & Brown, 2008). Since community colleges possess open enrollment policies when compared to any other four-year college, they remain an option for undocumented students. Four-year colleges may only become options for undocumented students if they apply, are admitted, and can afford to enroll in their college of choice. Since most undocumented students attend community college, it was important to explore the unique experiences of students attending and financing four-year college educations in light of the varying university contexts. There are certainly differences among the UCs, the private colleges, and the CSU in the study when compared to comparable institution types. However, for the purposes of this study, the shared characteristics by institution type are described within each case study. Within each case, the eligibility requirements, application processes, selectivity, and associated costs are delineated.

Universities of California

Three of nine undergraduate Universities of California (UCs) were represented in this study. Technically, there are ten UC Campuses, but UC San Francisco only offers graduate programs. Regardless, all Universities of California are research institutions offering over 150

undergraduate majors and boasting more academic programs ranked in the top ten nationally than any other university whether public or private (UC, 2012). The missions of all UCs are very similar. The semantics change and vary slightly by campus, but every UC campus explicitly mentions excellence and innovation in education, research, and the pursuit of knowledge at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels. The application of knowledge is further expressed in explicit values of service, education, and civic engagement.

No matter the UC campus, a single application may be submitted to all nine undergraduate campuses with a \$70 application fee per UC institution. At the time participants in the study made college decisions, application fee waivers were only available to United States citizens and permanent residents. Since the passage of the California Dream Act, undocumented students now have access to a maximum of four UC fee waivers if a student's family meets the income eligibility guidelines (See Appendix B). While undocumented students might be willing to pay the application fees for UCs, academic eligibility for the UC application system requires a minimum high school grade point average of a 3.0 and fulfillment of the "A through G Requirements" which include:

- a. two years of history/social science,
- b. four years of English,
- c. three years of mathematics,
- d. two years of laboratory science,
- e. two consecutive years of any language other than English,
- f. one year of visual or performing arts, and
- g. one year of an additional elective from the a-f approved list of courses.

UC Admissions officers have additional recommendations to exceed the minimum high school curriculum requirements for students' applications to be more competitive. They prefer an additional year of language, mathematics, and laboratory science. The differences can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. UC Course Recommendations

Subjects	Required Courses	Recommended
English	4	
Fine Arts	1	
Foreign Language	2	3
History	2	
Math	3	4
Science	2	3

Once undocumented students meet or exceed the grade point average and curriculum requirements, students may apply. The application itself requires students to submit their basic contact information including name, address, date of birth, and email, but does not require a social security number. Courses and earned grades for ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades must also be inputted, while calculating a weighted grade point average for tenth and eleventh grades only with a maximum of eight semesters of additional points offered for Honors or Advanced Placement Courses. Honors courses are considered more rigorous than standard high schools courses while Advanced Placement courses are considered college level classes offered within the high school context. UCs will grant students elective college credit if they earn a four or five, out of a five-point maximum on any of the 31 available Advanced Placement exams.

Planned courses for the twelfth grade must also be provided. After the individual's academic history, students must add extracurricular activities that may include: work experience,

volunteer work, athletics, academic awards or achievements, musical or artistic achievements. Students must then answer two essay questions with no more than 1,000 words and finally submit SAT or ACT test scores to the UC institution. Students may additionally submit SAT subject examination or AP test scores. All participants in the study attending a UC met these minimum requirements. It must be added that until 2011, two SAT subject tests were required for admission. All participants in this study attending UCs took the SAT and at minimum two SAT Subject Tests from 20 available exams through the College Board. Waivers for up to four test dates are available for both the SAT (including subject tests) and ACT for a total of eight potential test dates, two waivers per exam per junior and senior year. Additional tests cost \$50 for the SAT and \$23 to register for any SAT Subject test in addition to the cost of the exam ranging from \$12 for most exams to \$23 for the language plus listening exams. Upon registration for the SAT, test score reports can be sent free of charge to four colleges or universities. Supplementary score reports cost \$11 per university. Undocumented students could receive need based test waivers at the discretion of their high school counselor. Although no longer required, subject tests are highly recommended by admission offices particularly in fields related to science, mathematics, and engineering.

Each UC has differences in average admission rates, high school grade point averages (GPAs) and standardized test scores. As an institution type, the UC system, no matter the campus, focuses on the top nine percent of high school students in the State of California. In admissions, this calculation occurs at the high school level for contextual purposes and by the UC system within the application process. The majority of UC students participating in this study attend one of the most highly selective public colleges in California. Although selectivity and test score averages differ by campus, each UC in this study has at the very least an A-minus

high school grade point average of a 3.7. There are also some minor differences in size, but overall each campus can be described as a large selective public postsecondary research institution. The differences by UC institution can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. UC National Admission Differences by Institution for 2011-2012

	UC 1 (N=7)	UC 2 (N=1)	UC 3 (N=1)
Admit Rate	22.1 %	37.7 %	62.6 %
Size	26,000	24,000	18,000
Majors	130	130	86
GPA	4.11	4.07	3.70
ACT	30	29	25
SAT Reading	659	639	550
SAT Math	702	691	595
SAT Writing	681	661	566

In Table 2, the average SAT Reading Scores for the UCs are 659, 639, and 550 while the average SAT Math scores were 702, 691, and 595. According to the College Board (2013), the national average for the class of 2012 included a Critical Reading score of 496, a Mathematics score of 514, and a Writing Score of 488. The averages for every UC exceed the national average by over 50 points in every testing category. The UCs as a case study, provide a unique context within which to explore college choice for undocumented Latino/a students. In order for such students to be admitted, they must be academically competitive and once admitted, they must decide whether to attend a UC.

The cost to attend a UC remains the same for all California residents regardless of documentation status under A.B. 540. Tuition and fees for any UC for the 2012-2013 academic year are \$13,200. This cost does not include room, board, books, travel, or other incidental costs associated with the cost of a college education. Until January 2013, undocumented students did not qualify for state aid and still do not qualify for federally subsidized student loans. The institutional context or case for UCs allow for undocumented students to explain how they

financed and selected their college choice despite less competitive and cheaper postsecondary options.

California State University

The California State University system consists of 23 colleges and 437,000 students. According to csumentor.org the CSU application website, “The CSU is...the largest, the most diverse, and one of the most affordable university systems in the country.” While the UCs pride themselves on the creation of knowledge and production of research, CSUs emphasize workforce preparation, teaching, and teaching preparation. The CSU system offers over 1,800 bachelor’s and master’s programs (CSU Mentor, 2012).

No matter the CSU campus, a single application may be submitted to all 23 undergraduate campuses with a \$55 application fee per CSU institution. As previously mentioned, at the time participants in the study made college decisions, application fee waivers were only available to United States citizens and permanent residents. Since the passage of the California Dream Act, undocumented students now have access to a maximum of four CSU fee waivers if a student’s family meets income eligibility guidelines. To be eligible for admission, the CSU differs from the UC system as it requires either a 3.0 grade point average or a minimum index. An applicant’s index is calculated using the following formulas using the SAT or ACT.

$$(GPA) \times 800 + (SAT \text{ Reading} + SAT \text{ Math})$$

$$(GPA) \times 200 + (10 \times ACT \text{ Composite})$$

Identical to the UC system, GPA is calculated using sophomore and junior year grades with an additional grade point added for a maximum of eight semesters of Honors or Advanced Placement courses. The minimum index required for eligibility is 2900 using the SAT formula or

694 for the ACT. For example, a student with a 2.48 grade point average would be CSU eligible if they earn a combined SAT Reading and Math score of 920 or an ACT composite score of 20.

The minimum eligibility requirements if met by grade point average or index simply imply students may apply to any CSU. The index only guarantees admission at certain CSUs. For example, students meeting the 2900 index should automatically be admitted to CSU schools like East Bay, Bakersfield, and Channel Islands whose service areas encompass the entire state of California. Different CSU campuses have unique minimum index requirements that vary annually depending on the major and applicant pool. Some campuses have historically been impacted. The CSU Mentor website stipulates, “An undergraduate major or campus is designated as impacted when the number of applications received from fully qualified applicants during the initial filing period exceeds the number of available spaces. Such majors or campuses are authorized to use supplementary admission criteria to screen applications” (CSU Mentor, 2013). As such, indices tend to be higher for CSU impacted campuses like Fullerton, Long Beach, San Diego, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo and are apt to be higher for impacted majors like Nursing and Kinesiology at other campuses. Some CSU campuses have more narrow service areas that receive priority in the admission process. For San Francisco State, all students graduating from high schools in Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties should gain admission to SFSU with an index of 2900 unless a major is impacted. For a college like California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo applicants from San Luis Obispo, southern Monterey, and northern Santa Barbara counties are given additional points in the application process. Regardless of impactation, student undocumented or otherwise may potentially be admitted to a campus with an alternate or undeclared major.

CSUs like their UC counterparts also require the “A through G requirements.” Yet additional recommendations mirroring UC suggestions only exist for impacted campuses and majors. Once undocumented students meet or exceed the grade point average, index, or curriculum requirements, students may apply. The CSU application, like the UC application, requires students to submit their basic contact information including name, address, date of birth, and email, but also does not require a social security number. Courses and grades must again be manually entered for ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. Planned courses for the twelfth grade must also be included.

When compared to the UC application, the CSU application is much easier. The CSU application contains neither an essay nor an opportunity to include extracurricular activities. The only very minor exception is Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Its application contains an extracurricular supplement with four brief multiple choice questions. Aside from basic personal information, grades and coursework, SAT or ACT test scores are the final requirements to complete the application. Seventh semester high school transcripts for the CSU system are submitted by request only. Students may additionally send SAT subject examination or AP test scores. The cost associated with these exams and score distributions remain the same no matter the postsecondary institution.

All participants in the study attending a CSU met the aforementioned minimum requirements. However, each CSU has differences in average admission rates, high school grade point averages (GPA) and standardized test scores. The participants in this study all attended the same impacted California State University students where admitted students possessed a 3.13 grade point average and an SAT score of 1535 out of 2400. The admission rate is 57 percent and the campus size includes approximately 23,000 students. Even the testing average for this

particular CSU exceeds the national average. The CSUs, like the UCs provide a unique context as a case study to explore college choice for undocumented Latino/a students. Once admitted, they must decide whether to attend a CSU.

The cost to attend a CSU remains the same for all California residents. Under A.B. 540, Tuition and fees for any UC for the 2012-2013 academic year are \$5472 but such fees do not include room or board. As previously mentioned, undocumented students did not qualify for state aid until January 2013 and lack access to student loans. The institutional context or case for the CSUs allow for undocumented students to explain how they financed and selected their college choice rather than community college options.

Private Universities

Three private institutions were represented with one bay area private college and two southern California private schools. Each private college offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Two of the three colleges are religiously affiliated, but each university shares similar mission statements. The language varies by campus, but every institution expresses related goals. Private religious college 1 takes pride in its religious identity, its scholarship, and serving its local and global community emphasizing justice and sustainability. The values this campus promotes include academic excellence, engaged learning, service, diversity and the religious heritage of the campus. Private religious college 2 similarly values study, creativity, and active engagement and promotes educational excellence, the education of the whole person, faith, and social justice. The mission of Private College 3 could easily be compared to those of the religious institutions. Its mission “produces engaged, socially responsible citizens of the world through an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary liberal arts education emphasizing social justice, intercultural understanding and environmental sensitivity.”

This private school values social responsibility, intercultural understanding, interdisciplinary learning, student engagement, and environmental sustainability. It further emphasizes the foundations of community, diversity, dialogue, inquiry, and action expected of all community members. No matter the mission or religious affiliation, each public and private postsecondary institution strives for academic excellence. The private colleges due to smaller numbers and campus communities tend to be more student and teaching centered when compared to the public colleges.

Although each private college is unique and located in a different California locale, every private college included in this study accepts a single application through the Common Application. In fact, 485 additional schools both public and private similarly use this program for application submission domestically and internationally. A single application may be submitted to each of the three undergraduate campuses with an application fee that ranges from \$55 to \$65 per institution. Fee waivers for students in financial need can be obtained in two ways. The first is through the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC). Based on the financial eligibility requirements of the federal government for free or reduced lunch programs (Appendix B), high school counselors can request a maximum of four Common Application Waivers through NACAC. Secondly, student participants may simply request fee waivers directly from the private colleges and utilize the fee waivers for colleges who only accept the NACAC fee waiver. While some undocumented students might pay the application fees for private colleges, admission eligibility requirements differed slightly by college.

Unlike public universities, private colleges are not transparent about minimum eligibility requirements. None of the private colleges require a minimum grade point average like the UCs or a minimum index like the CSUs. Each private college does however, have recommended high

school coursework expectations for applicants varying slightly by campus (See Table 3). Each of the private colleges recommends four years of English, three years of foreign language, three years of History or Social Studies, at minimum three years of Mathematics, and two to three years of a science with a lab (namely Biology, Chemistry, and Physics). Only one recommends an additional academic college preparatory elective, and only one requires a year of fine arts. Since nothing is absolutely required, students and undocumented students alike may apply.

Table 3. Private College Course Recommendations

Subjects	Private Religious 1 Recommended	Private Religious 2 Recommended	Private 3 Recommended
Elective		1	
English	4	4	4
Fine Arts	1		
Foreign Language	3	3	3
History		3	3
Math	4	3	3
Science	3	2	3
Lab			
Social Studies	3	2	4

The common application when compared to the UC and CSU applications similarly requires students to submit their basic contact information including name, address, date of birth, and email. None of the applications in this study require a social security number. Courses, earned grades, and planned courses must be included for ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. All colleges consider honors courses and Advanced Placement courses to be the most rigorous academic classes offered within the high school. Every private college in this study will similarly provide attending students elective college credit if they earn a four or five, out of a five-point maximum on any Advanced Placement exam.

The common application differs from the UC or CSU application. Similar to the UC application, once students input individual academic histories, they may add extracurricular activities including: work experience, community service, athletics, academic awards, musical or artistic achievements. Students must then answer one essay question with no more than 650 words that each college receives. For each private college in this study, students must additionally answer at least one supplemental question. The supplemental questions for common application schools range from “Why are you interested in (Private College 1)?” to “Incorporating one or more of our values, propose a solution to a local or global issue you deem important.” Such prompts may be limited by characters, word count, or the space provided.

Once students complete the essay and electronically send the application, they must submit SAT or ACT test scores to every private college. When compared to any public college, students may similarly submit SAT subject examination or AP test scores for consideration. There are various differences in the application requirements between the public and private colleges. Private colleges minimally require one letter of recommendation from a high school counselor and may require one or two additional letters of recommendation from high school teachers. Private colleges also require a seventh semester transcript and mid-year report to evaluate any academic or personal changes before admission decisions are rendered.

Each private college in this study has differences in average admission rates, high school grade point averages (GPA) and standardized test scores. As previously mentioned, the national average for the class of 2012 included a Critical Reading score of 496, a Mathematics score of 514, and a Writing Score of 488 (College Board, 2013). The averages for private colleges 1 and 3 exceeded the national average by over 100 points in every testing category. The religious colleges each have between 5,000 and 6,000 undergraduate students while the smallest private

college has 1,000 undergraduates. The grade point averages range from a 3.61 to 3.76 and admission rates range from 24 percent to 58 percent.

The differences by private college can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Private College Differences by Institution for 2011-2012

	Private 1 (N=4)	Private 2 (N=3)	Private 3 (N=1)
Admit Rate	58 %	53 %	24 %
Size	5100	5950	1000
Majors	49	60	41
GPA	3.61	3.62	3.76
ACT	28	26	Not reported
SAT Reading	605	585	647
SAT Math	625	605	639
SAT Writing	605	592	625

The private colleges as a case study provide a unique context within which to explore college choice for undocumented Latino/a students. In order for such students to be admitted, they must be academically competitive and once admitted, they must determine if they can finance a private college education. The cost to attend a private college exceeds the averages for public colleges by over \$20,000 and remains the same for all United States residents regardless of documentation status. Tuition for the private colleges in this study is remarkably similar with tuition ranging from \$37,000 to \$39,000 per year. Once again the cost of private college tuition does not include room, board, books, travel, or other incidental costs associated with the cost of a college education. The ability to finance such costs without the assistance of federally subsidized student loans seems particularly challenging. The case study of private colleges provides a unique opportunity for undocumented students to explain how they financed and selected their college despite apparently less expensive public postsecondary options.

Participants

The participants in this study included nine allies and 20 undocumented Latino/a students. Of the nine allies surveyed and interviewed, three worked at private colleges, four worked at UCs, one worked at a CSU, and one worked for the California Student Aid Commission. One-third was female and five of the nine were people of color with four Latinos and one Asian Pacific Islander. Of the twenty Latino/a undocumented students, nine attended three UCs, three attended one CSU, and eight attended three private colleges. All of the students identified as Latino/a with 16 students from Mexico and four from El Salvador while 13 were female and seven male. Most were traditionally aged college students with the average age being nearly 21 years old in their third year of college. The mean age of migration to the United States was seven with a range as early as two, but not older than thirteen years of age. Most realized their status by the time they were twelve years old, but all realized it by the time they were sixteen. All but two participants attended public high schools, while two were scholarship recipients at private college preparatory high schools. The average high school grade point average for participants was a 3.86. All students were high achieving and 14 of the 20 took AP or honors courses. Students also indicated parental levels of education with ten mothers having no high school education, seven possessing a high school diploma, one attending some college, and two possessing a college degree. Of the fathers, four lacked any high school education, 11 earned a high school diploma, two attended some college and three could not indicate based on their single parent upbringing. Participants also demonstrated the extent to which Spanish and English were spoken with family and friends. With family, four indicated their home was ‘Spanish only’, compared to 11 ‘Spanish Mostly’ and four “Both Equally.” None of the participants indicated

English only at home. With friends, 14 participants overwhelmingly responded with ‘Mainly English’ contrasting four with ‘Both Equally,’ and two ‘English Only.’

Some of these demographics differed slightly by gender or institution type. This study is qualitative and only means and medians were calculated for descriptive and demographic purposes. An N of 20 would not yield results with statistical significance. I make general comparisons by gender and institution to simply demonstrate participants in this study mirror the characteristics of participants in larger quantitative studies or mirror the demographics of students admitted to the same campuses. Their stories and their experiences can supplement what we know about Latino/a undocumented students. For example, the women outperformed the men academically with an average high school grade point average of 4.02 compared to 3.51. They continued to outperform them in college with 46 percent of women earning above a 3.5 compared to 28.5 percent of men. These differences in academic performance from students in this study demonstrate similar Latina/o gender differences in academic achievement (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, Sáenz, Rodriguez, Martinez, & Romo, 2011).

High school and college academic performance also differed by institution type and can be seen below in Table 5.

Table 5. Student Participant Demographics by Institution Type

	UC (N=9)	CSU (N=3)	Private (N=8)
Male	3	2	2
Female	6	1	6
Age	22	20.6	19.5
Year of college	4.2	2.67	2.5
HS GPA	3.91	3.47	3.95

The average high school grade point average of participating undocumented students attending a CSU was a higher 3.47 when compared to peer CSU admits with a 3.1 but lower than other

undocumented students attending UCs or private colleges with 3.91 and 3.95 respectively. The grades of undocumented Latino/o participants mirror the selectivity of the postsecondary institutions with the UCs and private colleges being more highly selective than the CSU.

Data Collection

I collected the majority of my data during spring and summer of 2012 from April through September 2012. During those months I conducted every survey and interview. From April 2012 through October, I concurrently conducted document review, but continued to attend and observe six conferences at different institution types through January 2013. The locations of interviews varied; most transpired on a student's or faculty/staff member's respective college campus. Students or staff away from campus for the summer, those I met through workshops or conferences, or those who were referred by other participants were surveyed and interviewed by phone. Over the course of my data collection, I did visit every campus with more than one participant and ultimately visited five of the seven campuses in the study (two UCs, one CSU, and two private colleges). Through the dreamer graduation and the conferences, I revisited two of the original campuses, and encountered two additional private colleges with funding and support for undocumented students, an additional UC that just received a \$1 million dollar endowment specifically for undocumented students, and a CSU conference with representation from all 23 California State Universities.

Recruitment

Undocumented students were contacted through undocumented student activist groups, educational conferences, and events like the California Dreamer Graduation during the spring and summer of 2012. I attended seven such conferences or events sponsored by such groups working to educate the public, counselors, or undocumented students themselves about

undocumented student struggles, educational resources, and opportunities. Recruitment of participants included emails to student leaders of political student organizations like “Dreamers” at UCs and activist groups like StudentActivist.org who were asked to post and email my requests online (Appendix C). I approached undocumented students, allies, and faculty or staff conducting workshops at conferences and solicited their participation. Through these different avenues, I recruited 20 undocumented Latino students representing each type of four-year, California, postsecondary institution for this study. I utilized snowball sampling, relying on the recommendations of participants for other research subjects (Babbie, 2007). This approach proved to be particularly useful since undocumented students tend to hide in the background and remain “in the shadows.” I surveyed and interviewed the first volunteers from each institution type willing to participate, for a total of 20 participants. To triangulate the data, I examined secondary sources (Creswell, 2003) including campus websites, student newspapers, local periodicals, and conferences; and I interviewed nine allied faculty, staff, and documented students representing each institution type who work in financial aid, admissions, or as activist student group leaders to further describe the undocumented college choice process through an institutional lens. I also interviewed a seasoned member of the California Student Aid Commission staff to obtain some policy perspective regarding the implementation and influence of policy in undocumented student affairs.

Yin (2003) emphasized theory in guiding case study research. As such, I developed data collection protocols based on the college choice model and the literature regarding predictors of college enrollment that included capital reflected in parental levels of education. Throughout the surveys and interview protocol, questions are founded in college choice theory, definitions of social and cultural capital, chain migration, and bonding and bridging social capital.

Instrumentation

Surveys/Demographic Questionnaires

Surveys were administered prior to the interview in person, over the phone, or via email and took no more than 15 minutes to complete. Students were given a consent form (Appendix D) and began with a demographic questionnaire including: country of birth, age of migration, parental education, major, college year, and estimated graduation date (Appendix E). To calculate means and medians, all survey data was manually entered into Excel and calculations were first done for all participants. Calculations were then conducted by gender and institution type (UC, CSU, Private) to simply see if descriptive or demographic differences existed.

The surveys provided important background information regarding the capital or resources of these students. For example, students with a college-educated parent have greater cultural capital than students with a parent possessing only a third grade education, and students with greater income have superior access to resources. These surveys were used as descriptive data to provide a context to understand students' experiences. The only change I made to the survey was to omit family income. The first three students left the response to family income unanswered yet each student through the interview process utilized fee waivers to test apply to colleges. I instead added interview questions regarding the use of fee waivers in the testing and application process. Since students must qualify for free or reduced lunch programs to qualify for such fee waivers, I used it as a proxy for low socioeconomic status.

Although I did not change the question regarding test scores on the survey, only ten of the 20 students surveyed included or remembered their SAT or Subject exam scores. Even students attending UCs who were required to submit two subject test scores omitted them on the survey. When reminded during interviews, they remembered taking them, but again could not

recall exact scores. Given the inconsistent responses to test scores, calculations have been omitted from the findings.

Interviews

Semi-structured interview protocols (Appendix F) addressed Hossler, et al.'s (1990) college choice model and cultural, economic, and social capital. Predisposition and capital were explored through the questions: When did you realize you wanted to attend college? Who or what influenced you? Search and capital were identified through the inquiries: Where did you apply to college? What did you know about the college application process? To how many institutions did you apply? How did you select them? Who influenced these decisions? Choice and capital were explored through queries: How did you decide on this university? Were your parents involved in the decision making process? Did friends or extended family influence your decision to attend this college? Why did you choose this particular institution when others were less expensive? Did financial aid influence your college choice? Did your status as an undocumented student factor into your college choice process and does federal or state policy influence future professional or academic goals?

These protocols ensured comparability of data collection procedures when this study was expanded to other campuses (Yin, 2003). The open-ended interviews were coordinated via email or phone and were conducted in person or over the phone based on student or staff availability. Interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant to ensure accuracy and pseudonyms were used to protect student and staff identities. The interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to two hours. Throughout the interviews, I took descriptive notes to document participant reactions, disposition, and created separate personal memos and analytic memos throughout my data collection. Every interview was transcribed with identifying characteristics, names, and

locations concealed to protect students, staff, and colleges in the study and avoid potential identification.

Based on recommendations from undocumented students and individual presentations at conferences, faculty and staff were contacted (Appendix G) and with consent (Appendix H) participated in brief demographic surveys (Appendix I) and semi-structured interviews (Appendix J). Protocols with staff addressed university policies that assisted or hindered undocumented student access throughout the college choice process from recruitment and application through admission and financial aid. All student and staff protocols improved construct validity through data triangulation (Yin, 2003).

I originally planned to conduct focus groups, but could not coordinate meeting dates or times with enough students to make a single focus group transpire. I instead added questions from the focus group interview to the individual interviews. Additions to the open-ended survey questions included inquiries into institutional culture, services, strengths, and continued challenges at their respective institution. I also asked questions about peer support to determine if a critical mass of undocumented students existed for support at each campus.

Document Review

Document analysis of primary and secondary materials (Creswell, 2003) closed my data collection. Primary documents included materials provided to me by students throughout data collection including testimonials, poetry, or flyers, emails and announcements for conferences, workshops, or scholarship fundraising events. Other primary documents were educational materials distributed at workshops and conferences I attended. I searched for public information on university websites and campus ‘Dreamer’ Student Activist Groups using terms like AB 540 or undocumented to find relevant information. I also joined Facebook groups and pages for

activists like Jose Antonio Vargas and Julio Sagrado to receive posts, articles, and announcements related to undocumented students. For every university represented in the study, I methodically conducted searches in admissions, financial aid, student services, and student organizations to find how accessible information is for undocumented students and their families throughout their college choice process. Additional primary documents were photos I took on campuses, at the Dreamer Graduation, or at various conferences (Appendix K). Public documents relating to undocumented students included: campus newspaper articles, university web sites, and student organization web pages or educational materials (Appendix L), and conference presentations and materials. These documents allowed for additional triangulation of the data (Yin, 2003).

Secondary materials appeared as I conducted initial document searches. The predominant secondary documents were campus newspaper articles and letters to the editors discovered when more incendiary terms like “illegal” were searched in addition to AB 540, undocumented, California Dream Act, and federal Dream Act. I also conducted additional searches and revisited campus newspapers when students or allies mentioned positive or negative events or opinions expressed in the pages of campus newspapers.

Limitations

The data may be biased as it was predominantly self-reported by student and staff participants. Furthermore, a sample of 20 undocumented college students attending seven California universities and nine faculty/staff members working at these same institutions may not fully represent the experiences of all undocumented students at every postsecondary institution throughout the United States. Since many of the participants in this study are politically active, their willingness to participate may indicate their experiences differ from other less socially

active undocumented individuals. While the experiences of these California undocumented students may not be generalized to undocumented students living in states lacking or prohibiting undocumented access to postsecondary education, the college choices these students made reflect the opportunities made possible by public policy, university outreach, and supportive high school programs or counselors.

Construct Validity and Data Analysis

To avoid concerns regarding construct validity, I incorporated Yin's (2003) three principles of data collection: using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence. As previously indicated, multiple sources including surveys, document analysis, and interviews with students and staff were used to triangulate the data (Denzin, 1989; Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2003). The various sources allowed for a rich analysis and thorough understanding of undocumented college choices.

During data collection and analysis, I created a digital case study database consisting of four components: notes, documents, tabular materials, and narratives (Yin, 2003). Notes consisted of notations made during interviews with analytic memos (Maxwell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) completed after each interview to document potential patterns and common perspectives. Documents included a digital file of all websites, web pages, and newspaper articles available online or in pdf format. A paper file also exists for documents unavailable online. Tabular materials, which included my surveys, were filed, organized and stored in Excel to aggregate and provide within-case and cross-case descriptive data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Finally, narratives were stored as audio files, word documents, and within Atlas.ti. The open-ended interviews and focus groups were conducted in person or over the telephone, and pseudonyms were used to protect student identity. All interviews and focus groups were

conducted and recorded with participant consent, and transcribed verbatim. I provided all participants with the opportunity to review transcripts and findings. Such respondent validation (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Maxwell, 2005) improves validity, accurately reflects participant views, and reduces risks of misinterpretation. One student asked that his survey be included but any quotes be removed from my final dissertation, another student simply asked me to use more inclusive language in my speech and writing, one student requested that her real name be used since she had nothing to hide, and one final student answered questions for a second time due to poor recording and therefore inaccurate transcription quality. Students were not compensated for their participation, but I did provide a phone card to one student without a cellular phone to pay for the phone interview so he would not incur any expense.

All interviews and focus groups were coded using emergent themes (Guba & Lincoln, 1988) with the software Atlas.ti to organize my coding electronically. Maxwell (2005) suggests coding categorizes and informs knowledge of phenomena. To code effectively, I began with open codes to summarize sections of data, followed by a narrowed set of coded categories, and finally recoded for greater clarity when needed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on literature, codes included but were not limited to: predisposition, search, choice, parent, counselor, teacher, peer, and financial aid. These codes allowed me to compare student college choices within one institution and among the three institution types. Notes and memos from interviews, surveys, and document review informed additional codes throughout data collection and analysis. These codes included: mentor, high school organization, college student organization, scholarship, political activism, campus resource, and coming out.

Researcher Role

The primary investigator may be limited by their humanity (Merriam, 1998) but clear delineation of my methods, data collection, and analyses help mitigate human imperfections. Researcher bias may often be perceived as a validity threat, yet it must exist for effective data collection regarding undocumented students. As an outsider (Chavez, 2008), I must protect the identities of these students and honor their voices, struggles, and triumphs. These individuals risk deportation until approved through DACA or passage of the federal Dream Act. Students would be unwilling to risk criticism at best and deportation at worst to share their college choice process with anyone perceived as a threat. Our shared hopes of Dream Act passage contributed to a safe environment where participants could speak honestly about their experiences without judgment or fear.

There is no doubt I was perceived as an outsider to every student and ally alike. Every time I sent an email or introduced myself at a conference or workshop the questions always included: “Who are you? What do you do? Why are you studying undocumented students and the one I was least prepared to answer: What are you going to do with this information? Interestingly, the final question was never asked out of concern that I would turn participants in to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), rather the question’s intention was to prompt action. What was I going to do once I was informed? The Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco was the first major event and protest I attended. When I arrived with recorder and computer bag in hand, I was welcomed and initially asked if I was a member of the press.

Although an outsider to the undocumented student experience, I became an ally and theoretical insider for participants in this study. As a high school college counselor, I help students through the college predisposition, search, and choice process from the moment I meet

them their first year of high school until graduation four years later. Trying to understand how to navigate the process is complicated enough for United States citizens with social security numbers and the privilege those nine digits contain without the added complexities of DACA, the California Dream Act, and AB 540. As an academic trying to bridge research and practice, studying the experiences of undocumented Latino/a college students is instrumental for students, counselors, universities, and policy makers. Once participants understood my “motives,” they were remarkably willing and open with me about their experiences. Since I too am bilingual, many felt comfortable enough to include expressions in Spanish throughout their interviews.

Although students were very open, the more politically active they were, the less excited they were about an outsider telling their story. The grassroots movement has shifted from a desire to have allies tell stories to one where the undocumented individual proclaims they are “out of the shadows,” “undocumented and unafraid,” or “undocuqueer and unashamed” (See Appendix M for t-shirt examples). The 20 undocumented student participants privileged me by sharing their experiences, their academic triumphs, and their staggering disappointments prompted by their lack of documentation. I began this study as an academic and a high school counselor, and have ended it as an activist. It is only in the action and dissemination of my findings that I truly honor the experiences and struggles of undocumented students.

Chapter Summary

To explore the college decisions of undocumented Latino/a college students, this study utilizes a multi-case study approach, employing surveys and interviews with students and staff, and institutional document review. Surveys and semi-structured interviews conducted during the spring and summer of 2012 with 20 undocumented Latino/a students and nine faculty and staff provide the foundation of data in this study. The sample represents Latino/a undocumented

students, but is slightly skewed with the majority of participants being female (65%) and from Mexico (80%). Recruitment predominantly relied on conference and workshop attendance, and snowball sampling.

The case studies were determined by institution type 1) Universities of California, 2) California State Universities, and 3) Private Colleges. Every campus contains strengths and challenges for undocumented students. The UCs and CSUs are very transparent regarding the available resources for AB 540 students. Application information is readily available, as is financial aid information with the passage of the California Dream Act. The private colleges may not be as transparent, but some offer as many as 25 full scholarships to competitive undocumented students. Similarly, undocumented Dreamer activist organizations also tend to be more active at both public colleges when compared to the private schools simply because more undocumented students are attending public versus private universities. Despite such differences, there were some challenges existing at every institution type. Since students could only apply for DACA mid August, when interviewed all students lamented the limited resources available to them through Career Services.

To avoid concerns regarding construct validity, I incorporated Yin's (2003) three principles of data collection: using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study database, and maintaining a chain of evidence. As previously indicated, multiple sources including surveys, document analysis, and interviews with students and staff were used to triangulate the data (Denzin, 1989; Maxwell, 2005; Yin, 2003). Analytic memos (Maxwell, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) allowed me to study the notes, documents, tabular materials, and narratives throughout data collection. All interviews and focus groups were coded using emergent themes (Guba and Lincoln, 1988). These codes allowed me to compare student college choices within

one institution and among the three institution types. Notes and memos from interviews, surveys, and document review informed additional codes throughout data collection and analysis. The various sources allowed for a rich analysis and thorough understanding of undocumented college choices.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

I Exist! By Santi

*I know I exist,
I know that
my hands really feel,
that my lungs feed
from the same oxygen
you breathe
and I know this
as I know--rehearsed--
the answer to the
"Why don't you just apply?" question*

*I know it
like I know the tangled struggle
of my family,
the suffocation of dreams
through the
polarizing, despising
minimizing,
and dehumanizing of
my Self.*

*But I say
it's time for an uprising*

*Let the hands of the
costureras and the maids scream,
Let the backs bent on the fields stand straight,
Let the eyes of the youth,
of the dreamers,
stare back
and say:*

I exist

I exist

I exist,

I exist, and I feel

the oppression,

like a fence keeping me

from the rest of humanity:

illegal, wetback, esl-schooled,

non-tax payer, liability,

alien and criminal...

criminal?

But I exist

here and there,

*no matter what borders
visible, or invisible
you place
I exist,
undocumented
I exist,
in the shadows and forgotten
I exist,
human and unafraid*

Santi, the author of the poem 'I exist' is one of 20 students attending three different types of Californian four-year universities (CSUs, UCs, and private universities) informing this study of undocumented Latino/a college students and telling the compelling tales of college choice informed by capital and chain migration theory within Laura Perna's (2006) college choice model. These low-income students managed to obtain the necessary resources to navigate a college choice process without loans, without a driver's license, and without legal status. At the time this study was conducted, undocumented students' financial aid eligibility was limited to private scholarships for their education. Due to limited availability of such aid, the college choice process for the most academically competitive undocumented students emphasized financial aid considerations. Undocumented students attending competitive postsecondary institutions demonstrated belief in the American Dream and hope that an education will result in financial security, United States citizenship, and assimilation.

After data collection was complete, I had surveyed and interviewed twenty students and nine allies at seven colleges representing three types of postsecondary institutions in California: Universities of California (UC), California State Universities (CSU), and Private Colleges seeking answers to the following questions:

1. How do Latino/a undocumented students select four year colleges?

2. Do college choice processes differ for Latino/a undocumented students attending a private California university, a California State University, or a University of California campus?
3. Does financial aid influence undocumented Latino/a college choice?
4. Does state or federal legislation influence academic or professional plans?

Interviews with students, faculty, staff, and document review answered these questions and descriptive analysis of the surveys substantiated the findings. According to Perna's model, the financial circumstances of the student are the center of her college choice model. The financial considerations are certainly central to the college decisions of undocumented Latino students. However, every context of Perna's model directly influences the availability of financial aid for undocumented Latino/a students. Her model implies the context closest to the student (*habitus*) has the greatest influence with school, university, and policy contexts also informing the opportunities or lack thereof throughout their college choice process.

Demographics

Of the nine allies surveyed and interviewed, three were female, six were male, and five of the nine were people of color with four Latinos and one Asian Pacific Islander, while three worked at private colleges, four worked at UCs, one worked at a CSU, and one worked for the California Student Aid Commission. Twenty Latino/a undocumented students participated with nine attending three UCs, three attending one CSU, and eight attending three private colleges. All of the students identified as Latino/a with 16 students from Mexico and four from El Salvador. Participants were predominantly female with 13 women compared to seven men. Most were traditionally aged college students with the average age being nearly 21 years old in their third year of college. The mean age of migration to the United States was seven with a range as

early as 1.5, but not older than thirteen years of age. Most realized their status by the time they were twelve years old, but all realized it by the time they were 16. The average high school grade point average was a 3.86.

Some of these demographics differed slightly by gender or institution type. These differences in academic performance while purely descriptive lend support to similar Latina/o gender differences in academic achievement (Sáenz & Ponjuan, 2009, Sáenz, Rodriguez, Martinez, & Romo, 2011). The women outperformed the men academically with an average high school grade point average of 4.02 compared to 3.51. They continued to outperform them in college with six of the 13 women earning above a 3.5 compared to two out of seven men.

High school and college academic performance also differed by institution type. The average high school grade point average of students attending a CSU was a lower 3.47 when compared to the similar averages of students attending UCs or private colleges with 3.92 and 3.95 respectively. Such grades demonstrate the selectivity of the postsecondary institutions with the UCs and private colleges being more highly selective than the CSU. Once in college, students also performed differently at each institution type. At the private colleges, 71 percent earned above a 3.5, compared to 66 percent at the CSU, and 11 percent at the UC. Every participant was earning above a 3.0 in college at the private colleges and the CSU compared to only 55 percent attending UCs. This difference is noteworthy even if calculations are not statistically significant since the high school academic achievements mirrored one another for both the UCs and the private colleges upon admission. Although these numbers are simply descriptive, the differences in academic achievement in college may be explained by the cost of education and the volume of scholarship money received by undocumented students attending private colleges.

Every undocumented student I surveyed and interviewed at private colleges received a full-ride scholarship including room, board, books, and tuition. With their undergraduate education fully-funded, they could spend time studying without the worry of finding work or money to pay bills at school. Similarly, students attending the CSU selected a less expensive institution they and their families could finance. Students attending UCs worry each quarter how they will pay for fees and they try to take as many classes as they can. As Ana said,

I think financial hardships have to be one of our major challenges. I took a full course load while I was attending (the community college) and took at least four classes per quarter while attending UCSD. As undocumented students, we definitely do not have the luxury to “take our time” or “explore.” I feel like we definitely have to have a goal set in mind and execute it to the best of our abilities.

This financial struggle for an undocumented student and their family to pay fees at a UC, begs the question: why choose to attend the more expensive UC or any college for that matter with few existing employment opportunities after graduation at this time? Financial considerations are central to the college decisions of undocumented Latino/a students. However, the knowledge of such opportunities is directly related to every context. Students with greater social capital and more cosmopolitan connections had greater knowledge about universities, applied to more colleges, received additional acceptance letters, and better financial aid. They were also more academically competitive throughout the college application process.

Habitus

The basic central habitus regarding social and cultural capital was similar for every participant regardless of national origin. The undocumented Latino/a student experiences paralleled one another. For 16 students, they began with “I was born in Mexico,” and four students “in El Salvador.” Born elsewhere, these students shared three different histories of migration to the United States. The first history is of six students with no recollection of moving

here. They were three years of age or younger when they arrived. These students experienced their entire education in the United States beginning in Kindergarten through twelfth grade graduation. Ernesto, a UC student said, “I don’t remember moving to the United States, I was just a baby.” Mitzie, a private college student similarly noted, “I had no clue I wasn’t born here until I tried to get my driver’s permit. I always thought I was American. I probably wouldn’t have tried so hard if I had known.” Since these students were so young when they arrived, they were usually the eldest among study participants to find out about their status. They, like Mitzie, found out when they wanted a driver’s license or as Alondra said, “I found out I didn’t have papers when (my high school) was going on a trip to Mexico to help build houses. I was so excited to go and my teacher was like ‘you can translate for us!’ and my mom said ‘no way!’ and had to explain to me why?”

The second and third groups of undocumented college students each remember their moves to the United States. The majority overstayed visas, but two remember crossing the border via a coyote as young children. The second group of nine students arrived during elementary school ranging from five to nine years of age with the average for the entire sample arriving at 7.025 years of age. Each of these undocumented Latino/a students began their elementary education no later than the fifth grade. Remarkably, three of the 20 students I interviewed were the valedictorians of their graduating high school classes. All three valedictorians arrived to the United States before their elementary education began in Kindergarten.

The third group arrived during middle school or junior high with five students moving to the United States between the ages of ten and 13, with the eldest of the group moving to the U.S. to be with their parents at age 13. This group knew of their status from the very beginning. The major difference regarding habitus for these three student groups involved their early exposure to

the education system in the United States. The students who started their education in the United States earlier each performed better throughout their educational trajectory when compared to students that arrived later and struggled to learn English in more advanced grade levels. Every six year old regardless of documentation status learns to read and write English in school. As Monica, a UC student who arrived when she was five years old, mentioned, “I never knew anything different. School was always school, and I was always good at it.” Undocumented children arriving later struggled with their adjustment to school and four of the 20 participants pursuing degrees in Engineering and Mathematics attribute their interest to early success in mathematics. Gerardo, a private college student majoring in Engineering, who arrived at age nine said, “I always liked Math, I think it’s because when we got here and I started school numbers were the only thing I could recognize. They were the only thing familiar to me, the only thing I understood.” Jeffrey, a CSU Engineering student, similarly expressed, “It’s different when you start eighth grade and only know how to say ‘Hello, how are you?’ Algebra gave me confidence. I didn’t need to talk to calculate x or y . I could just write it out on my homework, on tests, or on the board.”

It is also noteworthy, that each student in the first two histories or pathways to the United States spoke English with American accents. It did not occur to me to note accents until I interviewed Jeffrey. He moved here when he was 13 and still had the slightest accent of a native Spanish speaker when he spoke fluent English. Of the 20 student participants, only two had any detection of an accent and those students arrived to California when they were 13 years old. Every other participant sounded American, complete with an abundant usage of like, slang, and profanity expected of third year college students with an average age of 21. Consistent with

Abrego (2006) and Pérez's (2009) research, these undocumented students are completely indistinguishable from their documented counterparts.

No matter when students began school in the United States, every student emphasized the value of education at home and the support of parents throughout their educational trajectory. Since the college choice process is informed by a predisposition to attend college and habitus, my first research question regarding how undocumented Latino/a students selected their four year college contained two elements:

1. Who or what informed their college ambitions?
2. Who or what informed their college decisions?

Theoretically speaking, who or what cultivated their habitus? Not surprisingly, 18 of 20 participants indicated family strongly influenced their college ambitions as many Latino families impart their value of education on their children (Auerbach, 2006; Reese, Balzano, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 1995). According to Tseng (2006), immigrants often pursue upward mobility through education. For these 20 undocumented Latino students, two primary reasons surfaced for pursuit of postsecondary education. First, a belief in the American Dream permeated the ambitions of undocumented students. Most students interviewed used the terms “sacrifice” or “support” when they spoke about their parents in their efforts to provide them with opportunities in the United States. Their children’s academic success validated their struggles and dreams to create such prospects. As Ana, a student attending UC 2, said, “My parents would always tell us that we would end up being street vendors if we didn’t put more effort into our education. Being immigrants from China to Mexico, they were living proof of what an immigrant without an education would suffer through.” As Lalo, a CSU student said, “I knew in high school I just wanted to help my parents out. It’s their dream still for me to graduate since I’m like the oldest

and also first generation.” Grace, a UC 1 Math major, stated, “My parents like since we were very young, they understood the value of education even though they couldn’t get it themselves. So they would always push us to learn as much as we could and to be good students in school.” The hope for a better life founded on the hard physical labor by their parents in various service industries, motivated them to work hard mentally and academically for an easier future. As Lola, a CSU Sociology student said,

For me it was definitely my parents, my family. I’m sure you’ve heard it, my parents were always like, “No quiero que trabajes como nosotros.” You know they don’t want us to work like they are, double jobs or you know they’re never home because they’re working so much for us, right? So they don’t want us to work like that so they always encouraged school and higher education definitely.

A second more sobering reason motivated students to pursue higher education. Santi, a private college attendee mentioned, “You are buying time until everything gets figured out. Hard work will give you the benefits of the future so you think like if I study hard I’ll get into college, if I do well in college and if I’m a good person, if I’m a really good student, a company will sponsor me. This country will want me.” This reason for college ambition exists only among undocumented immigrants. Undocumented students are not simply pursuing higher education in the hopes of upward mobility, they hope it will provide an eventual path to legal status allowing them to obtain a drivers license, a work permit, a social security number, a green card, or even United States citizenship. As William, a UC staff member said, “I always think of human beings not just the political undocumented person. It’s a human being, a student in this case a student who has actually done very well and wants to be part of this community, wants to be a part of this country and has done things positively to be where he or she is.”

Who or What Informed Their College Decisions?

The surveys and interviews corroborated the predominant influences on college ambitions and extended to the college search and selection process. There were some slight descriptive gender differences consistent with other undocumented student studies. De Leon (2005) found counselors and teachers to be particularly important for undocumented Mexican male college students. In this study, undocumented Latino men were more greatly influenced by teachers, counselors and mentors than their undocumented Latina counterparts with 71 percent of men reporting being strongly influenced by teachers and counselors compared to 46 percent of women. Women certainly valued the influence of these same individuals, but placed greater emphasis on the role of their families on their college ambitions with 92 percent of women strongly influenced by family compared to 85 percent of men. Of the 13 undocumented Latina students surveyed, ten indicated their families had a strong influence on their college choice compared to only three of seven undocumented Latino men. This sample is small and not statistically significant, but these descriptive differences still support prior findings of familial influences and obligations on the college decision making processes of Latinas (Ceja, 2004; Pérez 2010, Pérez Huber, 2010).

Lola said, “So I just decided community college was like the pathway to get there specifically because my sister is just a year younger than me, so two students in college was gonna be overwhelming for my parents or my family so we decided to do community college.” Such considerations influenced every CSU students’ decision to attend college locally and live at home. Yessenia similarly mentioned, “My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, it was just the two of us, she supported me and let me interview and visit (private college 1), but my heart wasn’t into it, there’s no way I could leave her. It’s like God knew and made sure I got the

scholarship at (private college 2) so I could stay close to her.” Overall, 13 students indicated their family had a strong influence on their college choice compared to 18 who said they had a strong influence on their college ambitions. The reason for the difference during interviews was abundantly clear. Parents were indeed supportive of their child’s pursuit of postsecondary education, but lacked the knowledge to guide the college search and application process. As Sole, a private college student said, “My parents wanted me to do well, they tried to be involved in school even when they didn’t know what was going on. At some point it was just easier for them and me to find the answers to our questions. It’s not like they didn’t want to help me, they just didn’t know how.” Olivia said her mom deferred to her mentor, “We all trusted her and she made sure we all knew what was going on. If she approved of something, I knew my mom would too.” Essentially, parents provided their sons and daughters with tool belts, but they needed others to provide the tools and instructions on their usage.

School context

While the cultural capital created by undocumented students’ families and communities provided support and strength throughout their educational trajectory mirroring Yosso’s (2006) work on Chicano/a college students, this capital alone could not sufficiently navigate undocumented Latinos through the college application and choice process. Every participating student relied on social capital and the various relationships within their academic and extracurricular contexts to obtain the college information offered to them by the very individuals who inspired their ambitions including teachers, counselors, and mentors. As Bourdieu (1992) stated, “...players can play to increase or to conserve their capital...in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes; but they can also get in to transform partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game” (p. 99). The

elementary school contexts were incredibly important for undocumented students' college ambitions and secondary schools were instrumental in the college search and choice process. Both contexts informed and transformed the habitus of the Latino/a undocumented students in this study and facilitated college access essentially changing the rules of the game for participating students.

Elementary School

Elementary school teachers were the first contacts outside of students' families to provide academic support, encouragement, and information about college. For the students that began their United States educations in Kindergarten, they had access to such capital at a very young age. Monica a second year UC 1 Chemistry major said, "I knew I wanted to be a doctor at age five. I didn't know much about it except that I had to go to college first to be one. My teacher told me that and I knew it was the first step." Ernesto, a UC 1 English major said, "I first heard of UC 1 in grade school. One of my teachers had a UC 1 flag in the classroom with a picture in the middle. I didn't know what it was or where it was, I just knew I wanted to go there. I had no clue (laughs)." Something as simple as a college flag in a classroom inspired him and gave him collegiate aspirations and something to daydream about during school.

Elementary teachers also provided a great deal of encouragement for students, especially those that began their educational careers in Mexico or El Salvador and were immersed in elementary classrooms with minimal or no prior knowledge of English. Students shared elementary experiences of bilingual education, English as a second language instruction, or complete immersion. Students preferred their individual experience as they all reached fluency fairly quickly. Most students like Josh said, "It took me about a year to figure English out." Some students appreciated the transition for Spanish to English instruction. One student said he

was lucky because his family moved to a predominantly white neighborhood with good public schools. Lalo said, “I didn’t have a choice. The only people that spoke Spanish were my parents and it had to be English with everyone else. I was held back a year in school, but that was ok because the next year, everything was easy.” The older the student, the greater the academic challenge. Some students lamented their English transition to school. Jeffrey said, “I watched a lot of TV. I really did, but it helped me understand a lot and it gave me something I could talk about with people at school.”

For four students in particular, teachers, mentors, and outreach programs during their elementary years permanently changed their educational trajectories. Josh, a private college student said his Algebra teacher in eighth grade recommended he apply to a local religious private high school. Josh said, “He was the first person I told about my situation. I told him there was no way to ask my family to pay for school and it’s too expensive anyway. He told me about scholarships and financial aid even for high school and recommended me so I applied, got in, and didn’t have to pay.” As Alondra said,

I was in a music class in the third grade. I could play the crap out of that recorder (laughs). Seriously, it seems so stupid, but someone outside the classroom heard me playing and for whatever reason, took an interest in me and told my mom I should take music lessons. (Shrugged shoulders) It’s not like we could afford them so she offered me free piano lessons. Those weekly lessons gave me everything! Turns out she was on the board of a fancy private high school. She used her connections to help me get a full scholarship to the feeder school so from 6th through 12th grade I left my public school and went to school with people whose parents paid over \$20,000 a year for tuition. Meeting her, yeah it changed everything. I’m the most privileged undocumented person you’ll ever meet!”

Similarly, Olivia spoke of her “adopted grandma.” She would tag along with her mother when she would clean her house. Over time, she encouraged her in school, in academics, and in extracurricular activities. Olivia said, “My Mom always said I was smart, but it was different for me to hear it from someone else and it was different for my mom to hear it too. It helped my

mom believe college was possible for me and then for my brother too! Without her, I don't think my mom would have let me go so far away to school.”

Grace, a UC 1 student emphasized the importance of an outreach program during junior high,

I have an older sister and there was this program at the elementary school that was like Families and Schools. So then that's when my parents actually got concrete information about higher education and then it wasn't until like seventh grade that I really understood what college kinda was, like I understood it not just my parents because of a program through Gear Up, it was a subsection of Gear Up called Project Steps.

These specific encounters at the elementary level changed their educational trajectories or migration. Trusted adults, teachers, and mentors created a chain or pathway to high schools with the resources and support to transform the habitus of the students and their families. These students and their families continued to add to their arsenal of tools, but even the 16 students without such powerful cosmopolitan bonds or chains at the elementary educational level experienced other sources of social capital in high school.

High School Context

The high school contexts varied slightly by student. Two students attended private college preparatory high schools in California with one being religiously affiliated and the other independent. Two other students spent their childhoods in other states and were educated in public schools in Oregon and Texas. The remaining 16 were educated in public schools in California. Some were neighborhood schools, but four students attended charter schools, two attended polytechnic high schools, and two attended high schools with special International Baccalaureate Programs (IB).

After family, major influences on habitus and college ambitions included counselors, teachers, and other mentors. Counselors bore the greatest responsibility with 11 of 20 students

saying they had a strong influence and an additional eight saying they had some influence in their college choice. These findings substantiate research on the important role of counselors in college access (McDonough, 1997). Many students praised their high school counselors. A UC sophomore Grace expressed, “I had really good counselors at high school as well. They were my ‘cheerleaders.’” Monica, a UC Chemistry major with medical aspirations shared, “My counselor decided to start this like campaign to bring me to UC (laughs). She contacted [the student activist organization], she contacted every person that she knew, even lawyers that could help me.” Olivia a private college attendee added, “I was in my counselor’s office every day! They helped me apply to private colleges and I ended up at one I had never even heard of.”

Although many students articulated gratitude for the counseling they received, only one student out of 20 indicated their counselor had no influence on their college choice. Lola a CSU student frustratingly said,

You’re a high school counselor? What I’ve noticed is that a lot of students like myself didn’t get that help in high school. And so like I applied and I looked at the CSU tuition and was like how am I going to pay for international because nobody told me about AB 540 so I was like ok I’ll go to community college. At community college, someone said we have this form for you. If I would have known, you know? I didn’t have that help from my counselor. And it was probably there or maybe they knew a little about it but there’s a lot of counselors that don’t as their job make sure it’s out there make sure it’s known that it’s there, but I didn’t have that and I know it stopped a lot of people from even applying.

Without guidance, Lola applied to three CSUs and was admitted to all three. She opted for a community college before transferring to the CSU because she lacked knowledge about resources available to her as an undocumented student. Ana, a UC student, similarly received inaccurate information throughout school and it adversely influenced her college search and application process. She had been incorrectly advised to apply to all private colleges as an international student (although some private colleges possess this requirement, the private

colleges represented in this study did not). Despite impressive credentials including being a valedictorian, earning a 4.4 grade point average and perfect scores of five on AP tests in English, Spanish, and Mandarin, she initially attended a community college and later transferred to UC 2 once she gained access to correct information through a community college counselor. The role of counselors was second only to the role of parents influencing college ambitions and choice for undocumented Latino/a students. The accuracy of information they provided was vital to the successful navigation and completion of the college search and application process. Ernesto was the third and final student in the sample to attend a community college before transferring to a UC. His motivation for doing so had less to do with lack of information and more to do with cost and a desire to avoid standardized exams.

Teachers ranked third with nine of 20 students demonstrating they had a strong influence on their college ambition. These educators subtly and overtly influenced students. Other students appreciated obvious interest and outreach by their teachers in high school. Rachel, a UC sophomore said,

My freshmen English teacher he really was the one that really started talking about college and actually sat with me and one of my best friends, that we both always used to say we wanted to go together, he'd show us websites where to look for schools and stuff, he also went to UC so I started thinking about UC and other schools. And I started to become familiar with different schools that I didn't even know existed.

Such support from faculty provided important information about college to students lacking the capital to obtain the necessary information individually. In Rachel's and Ernesto's cases they each applied to, were admitted to, and chose to attend a UC introduced to them by teachers who were the first trusted links in their migration chains to those colleges. However, college information was just one way teachers helped undocumented Latino/a students. Santi simply said her teachers were "strict, challenging, and they believed in us." Maria, another private college

attendeo articulated, “My dad belittled me, he was abusive and made me feel bad about myself. He’d tell me I was stupid. I was so lucky I had teachers that told me all the time how smart I was and they gave me the grades and put me in advanced classes too that allowed me to prove it to others, but it mattered that I proved it to myself.” The motivation and encouragement at school mitigated negativity for some students and reinforced familial support at home for others creating capital to inform and transform the habitus of undocumented Latino/a students.

Mentors strongly influenced the college ambitions for 67 percent of men compared to 54 percent of women in this sample yet strongly influenced the college choice for one-third of students. These individuals informed students of the colleges they attended, suggested other postsecondary institutions, and the most committed facilitated college visits, made phone calls, paid for college applications, and established connections for students whenever they could. Students during interviews had many terms of endearment for the role of these individuals in their lives including: “guardian angel,” “adopted grandmother,” “cheerleader,” “benefactor,” and “shield.” Mentors came from charter schools, private high schools (two participating students attended private high schools on scholarship), international baccalaureate programs, and student’s mentioned programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Gear Up, the Academic Decathlon, and the Academy of Finance. Academic support and advising also came from non-profit organizations and programs outside of high school like the Boys and Girls Club, One Voice, and the YMCA. For some participants, mentors evolved from initial contacts made through school or family. For Olivia, her mentor was the owner of a home her mother cleaned, for Alondra it was an arranged meeting by her music teacher with a woman who had overheard her performance during an elementary school music class. No matter the mentor or

program, students described the interest and support from their mentors as life-changing. Josh, a private college student stated:

The Boys and Girls Club completely changed my choices. At that moment, community college was not the focus anymore whereas it had been in the past because I was like I don't know how I'm going to fund it. This time it was like we're going to get the scholarships, we're going to get the financial aid, we're going to do this right, and you're going to get into these colleges.

Yessenia, another private college student wrote in a testimonial speech,

The executive director of the school wished to speak with me in his office immediately... I suspected he had read my essay, and I tried to focus on the words that were coming out of his mouth: "I cannot let you graduate from this institution until I make sure I know where you are going next. Until I know which University you'll be going to. Someone like you cannot be left behind because then I would have failed in my purpose. It is my dream to help those with potentials like yours find a place in which they can promote justice and help others as well." At last, I walked out of his office with a college budget. He offered to pay for my college applications and flights to visit colleges of my interest. He said it was his duty to make sure a young woman with my potential attended college because only then, I would make a difference in the lives of others like I had on his.

Counselors, teachers, and mentors in elementary schools, high schools, and outreach programs became the migration links to college for undocumented Latino students outside of their respective families. While Latino/a undocumented families believed in postsecondary education, educators and mentors made undocumented Latino/a student's believe a college education was in fact possible. As Rachel said, "I don't think it's one person in general but a group of people definitely were the ones that created those opportunities." Although students were asked about the influences of religion and friends in their college choice process, 75 percent said religion had no influence on college ambitions, and only 15 percent indicated classmates provided a strong influence. As Maria, a private college student said, "no one I knew was going where I was. If I did what they were doing, I would be going nowhere!" Monica similarly shared, "I've always known I want to be a doctor, and I was never watching what my classmates were doing. I knew what I wanted to do and no one in my class was going to change that!"

There were also students saying they lacked a traditional peer group. For the two students attending private schools, both mentioned they were the first undocumented students their counselors had ever met. Their peers and friends in high school had opportunities simply because they had a social security number. Alondra said, “Everyone I knew was going to college, and everyone I knew was planning to leave (this city) for college, for graduation trips to Europe or Mexico, to study abroad. I wanted that too and there was only one other student like me in the entire school. We both ended up here at UC.” Even students attending local public high schools struggled. Ana confirmed this,

I think my biggest challenge was my fear and the lack of knowledge I had about my status. Being at the top of my high school graduating class, it was difficult to process that my opportunities seemed to be more limited than those of my peers. I could not get any major scholarships and it was heartbreaking to see the effort I put into getting accepted into a good school just get shattered.

For many participants, potential peer groups of undocumented students did not become evident until university contexts were explored.

University Context

When I asked if college choice processes differ for Latino/a undocumented students attending a private California university, a California State University, or a University of California campus, I found the answer to be more nuanced than previously anticipated. While the influences on college choice remained similar for students regardless of college type, the information and capital they received during high school and throughout the college search process varied considerably. For example, 63 percent of undocumented Latino/a students from private colleges said their counselors had a strong influence on their college choice compared to 50 percent of UC students. This difference is so small numerically, but the quality of information and application support the students received from their counselors, mentors, or the institutions

themselves differed drastically by institution type. This became evident in the college search and application process itself.

Students attending private universities applied on average to 13 colleges, compared to an average of eight applications for students attending a UC and four for students attending a CSU. Students attending a private, a UC or a CSU were admitted to an average of nine, six, and three colleges respectively. All students relied upon and qualified for fee waivers to finance their standardized testing and college applications. Almost every student in the study took either the SAT or ACT with the exception being one of the three students who transferred from a community college to a CSU or UC. At the time these students applied to a UC directly from high school, two subject tests were required for admission (this application requirement ended for all applicants fall 2012). As such, every student applying to UCs as high school seniors in this study took at least two subject exams with the average being 2.3 while 55 percent took one AP class. Testing numbers varied considerably for students attending CSUs or private colleges. None of the CSU students took a subject test at one end of the spectrum and averaged one AP exam compared to six of eight private college attendees taking AP exams with the average number of exams being three.

The interviews allowed me to understand and explain these descriptive numerical differences. When asked how they decided where to apply or how they learned of the admission or academic requirements for each college, suggestions most often came from teachers, counselors, and mentors. These individuals were the links once again in their chain of migration to college. Not surprisingly, the better informed their advisors were during high school, the better informed their students became. The 17 students in this study who bypassed community colleges completely had supporters to help them acquire the resources and knowledge necessary to

effectively navigate the college application process. Their formal and informal counselors learned social security numbers were unnecessary for standardized tests and college applications. They provided fee waivers for exam registrations and college applications and recommended or encouraged subject tests. They communicated with students that school identification cards sufficed for proof of identity for SAT and ACT examinations and wrote glowing letters of recommendation when needed for private college and/or scholarship applications.

Students attending private colleges repeatedly acknowledged their educators may not have initially known the answers to their questions, but they took the time to ask and find them on their behalf. They could connect to universities, find allies for them, and learn about potential funding opportunities. For Gerardo, his counselor at his religious college preparatory high school suggested he apply to similarly religiously affiliated colleges. He said,

It's not like I could afford to go to the private colleges, but we couldn't afford high school either and I hoped some of these colleges might be willing to help me again. I applied to a bunch based on my counselor's recommendations after he had called different colleges to make sure they actually had money for students in my situation. He didn't have to do that for anyone else, but took the time to find out for me.

Maria said her mentor actually paid for every application and test score report when waivers did not suffice. "You know my mom has never been to this beautiful campus? When I got the scholarship interview, (my mentor) drove all the way from Oregon with me to California so I could interview and take advantage of this opportunity. To say she went above and beyond, there are just no words."

While each of the students in the study ultimately attends a four-year college, many had been given incorrect information by individuals with the best of intentions. Some students were misinformed about the application process itself. Ana contrasted her experiences applying as a high school senior versus a community college transfer student,

I was definitely a little lost and afraid since that same person who told me that the Dream Act was close to passage mentioned that my sister was possibly deported because UC's could have released her records, which I later found to be untrue. This constituted to another reason why I chose not to apply to UC's, since I was intending to go to the consulate to get a student VISA if I had been accepted to Princeton, Yale or Stanford. When I was applying as a transfer, I had to call schools to ask about what I should put as my citizenship/ residency status to indicate I was an AB540 student. Some schools were not aware of AB540 student status and suggested putting international, while some private schools said it did not matter since everyone pays the same rate... Fortunately, the UC system was more knowledgeable about this and guided me through the application very nicely.

Lack of information discouraged some from applying to certain schools, but many others were dissuaded from institution types due to their undocumented status or a perceived lack of available funding opportunities. All students in the study applied to at least one public university, but half of UC attendees only applied to CSUs or UCs based on a perceived lack of funding for private college tuition. Ironically, some private university attendees applied to CSUs and private schools based on a perceived lack of funding for a UC education.

Students with the most accurate information applied to CSUs, UCs, and private colleges. Many lamented they could not pay for a private or UC education, but with waivers they could apply to the most selective schools as Santi said, "just to find out if Berkeley or UCLA would admit me. Other people were applying so obviously I wanted to apply too." Arguably, the students with the most accurate information possessed the greatest capital and ultimately were able to apply to the greatest number of colleges. As Monica said, "I knew that fee waivers were limited to only four Common Application schools, but then I learned that you could apply for fee waivers for any private school separately. I was able to apply to any college I wanted to free. I applied everywhere I wanted to." These findings reiterate the need for accurate and accessible postsecondary information at the habitus, school, and university levels of Perna's (1996) college choice model.

When surveyed about college recruitment or college visits, 63 percent indicated college recruitment had no influence on their college choice and 28 percent said a college visit had no influence on their college choice. These numbers reflect two issues. The first being a lack of recruitment on the part of colleges and the second being a lack of opportunity or financial inability to visit a college campus. When asked about recruitment, Andrew, a private college staff member said,

On the university paperwork that breaks down race or ethnicity, and all that, undocumented is not a percentage represented in the university paperwork that's distributed. So I would say in that regard, no we don't necessarily go out and specifically look for undocumented students. That said, as a scholarship program we are obviously connected with the admissions office and so when they do their high school visits and whenever they go if they are with certain populations they definitely make it known there is opportunity for financial support for undocumented students at [this private college.]

There were no remarkable differences among institution types regarding college ambition. Even when I averaged the influence of religion on college ambitions for students attending religiously affiliated colleges separately, it remained unchanged with 75 percent indicating religion had no influence on college ambitions. Although differences in college access, capital, and habitus existed by institution type in the college search process, the actual college choice focused almost entirely on cost or financial aid.

Financial Aid

The answer to my third research question became abundantly clear. Financial aid or the lack thereof is the primary influence on undocumented Latino/a college choice at every institution type. Prior studies emphasize the sources of financial aid (Heller, 1997; Perna, 2000; St. John, 1991) and the role of financial aid in the college choice process (Hostler, Braxton, and Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999; McDonough, 1997). In this sample, the strongest influence on college choice was financial aid

with 79 percent indicating a strong influence on their college choice with 68 percent receiving scholarships. When I asked the remaining students why financial aid had little or no influence on their college decision the response was simple. As Ana said, “I did not get any so financial aid did not affect my decision.”

Hopkins’ (1974) “substitution effect” permeated the decision making processes for undocumented Latino/a students. They frequently selected less expensive institutions rather than their first choice. Ana, Lola, and Ernesto each mentioned the financial motivation for attending a community college first. As Ernesto said, “Financial aid was the only reason I went to community college before I went to college for real.” Ana said, “My parents and sister were deported back to Mexico, I’m here all alone and I’m the only one paying for school by myself. Other schools were not an option.” Lola’s decision was based on her family and became their collective financial decision. She had been admitted to three CSUs, but a community college would allow her slightly younger siblings to pursue college also. All three indicated if financial circumstances were different they would have avoided the community colleges completely. As Ana said, “Yeah, if things were different I would of skipped the community college, I would probably be able to enjoy the experience a lot more too since I’m working like three jobs and I’m trying to learn at the same time.”

Similarly, undocumented Latino/a students attending the CSU consecutively from high school were not attending their first choice institution. As Jeffry said,

I wanted to go to UCSB. That was my main goal. After we had a school trip, my goal was to go to a UC. I didn’t get into UCSB, UCSC was my second choice but it came down to the last months you know we planned out how we were going to pay for college and everything and I sat down with my parents and counselor and we realized that I wasn’t going to have enough money for like maybe the last two years. So (CSU) was my third choice...The final decision was between (CSU) and UCSC. The decision was based on money. I’ve gotten five scholarships. They paid for my first year, and now my second year. That money would have paid for just one year at the UC.

Lalo another CSU student mentioned, “I wanted to go to UC Merced or even CSU Monterey Bay, but I live down the street, I grew up (points out the window) three blocks that way. How can I justify the difference in price for room and board? I can’t, you know?”

For students attending UCs, many said it was the best financial option even if it was not their first choice. They had received private scholarships, or private donations, they could live at home and keep costs down and attend the best college. Alondra said she got a wake-up call from a her \$40,000 scholarship donor who said,

You know what? I’m really sorry to hear you are in this position he was like but you got into [local] UC. I’m really happy you got into [distant UC] too but it’s not like you’re comparing [distant UC] against Cal State [local]. It’s UC against UC. If you can stay [local] suck it up just go to UC. How many people want to go to [local] UC and you’re complaining that you don’t want to stay [here] and want to go to [distant UC] instead?

She and every other student made a financially rational decision to apply to and later attend the schools they could access academically and financially. Before Ana attended the community college and the UC, she mentioned, “I applied and got interviewed by Princeton, Yale and Stanford via the Questbridge Scholarship. At the time, I did not apply to any public schools because I had intentions of applying as an international student and getting a student VISA.” When these students surveyed and interviewed in this study made their college decision, the California Dream Act had not yet passed. Public institutional scholarships and Cal Grants were unavailable to them. Unless students received private scholarships, they paid out of pocket to attend a CSU or UC.

Private colleges differed in this regard. All eight students in this study attending one of three California private colleges received full scholarships paying for room, board, books, and tuition. The range of scholarship recipients varied considerably with one private college offering only one full scholarship for an undocumented student each year, to the most generous offering

as many as 30 scholarships. Yet, even students attending private colleges lamented their options.

Yessenia, eloquently wrote,

By the end of March I had been accepted to all the UCs, Cal States, and some of the private schools I applied to. As an undocumented student, however, getting accepted to such great schools was an honor but not a reality...The money signs would sometimes transform into an S shape path to a new road with new obstacles and new adventures but it always came back to its original shape. The big fat S with two parallel lines that only reminded me of the parallelism between my dream and my reality.

Despite the challenging circumstances, Olivia said, "I didn't want a pity party, I got into Boston University, I got into MIT and they even offered me a full-ride which they revoked when they realized I was undocumented. It didn't end up working out and that was the end of the world for me. People who didn't work as hard as I had were getting opportunities that I didn't have."

Yessenia similarly expressed,

I could feel pity and disappointment from other students when they found out about the scholarship. I could feel their gazes following me as I walked down the hallway on my way to the entrance door, I knew what they were thinking: "Oh God, what is she gonna do now? I guess it does not matter that she is valedictorian, she won't be going to college."

For the students attending private colleges, they simply could not refuse the financial aid package. The room, board, books, and tuition made every other acceptance or scholarship seem inadequate in comparison. The eight students attending private colleges were the only students in this study living away from home their very first year in college. As Josh said, "I never had sleepovers when I was a kid, my parents were too protective I slept in my own bed every night and then I got to college and every night was like a sleepover. It took a while to get used to the noise, the parties, and learn how to balance the fun with the work." Students were happy with the financial aid opportunities the private colleges provided and they all mentioned it was the very reason they chose to attend that college above any other.

Financial aid and available funding differs considerably even by private university. Types of programs varied as well. The best organized and established program arranged for undocumented students to visit and interview on campus with every other admitted undocumented student applying for the same scholarship. They participated in group and individual interviews. Recipients of the scholarship were selected based on their high school academic achievements, but also on potential future campus contributions. All scholars are expected to volunteer ten hours a week on campus and apply for a Resident Assistant position which provides room and board. As the Director of one scholarship at a private university stated,

We actually ask that all of our students apply. They don't have to get the job, but they do have to go through the process and apply. And that is a great thing on so many different levels whether they get the job or not. At a school like this, room and board were talking \$12,000 per student. So if we get three or five of those students working in residence life... that's money we don't have to cover and so guess what? Another student gets to attend [private college] that's undocumented and that's huge.

The other benefit from private schools with a critical mass of undocumented students is the support they receive from the students in the program, the faculty, staff mentors and facilitators. The common thread from each private college is the ambiguity of these scholarships. Only one of the schools publicizes or identifies the scholarships as an "Undocumented Student Scholarship." The other two universities named scholarships vaguely to suggest a financial need based award. This is done very intentionally by many private colleges to protect not only the identity of students receiving the financial aid, but also to avoid controversy from potential donors to the financial detriment of scholarship programs.

An unintended side effect of the quiet nature of these scholarships seems to be that students are not nearly as vocal or political about their status when compared to students attending public universities. Students love the quality of education they receive at the private schools, and the traditional campus experience. As Olivia states,

I love being here, I have lived in the dorms every year so far and feel so connected to the community and support here, I found a second family here. It's hard not to get frustrated when everyone takes it all for granted. It's strange because I get mad and happy at the same time, but I've only told my good friends, my advisor, and a few cool profs that get it.

Others spoke of isolation on campuses where students have so much privilege. At two of the three private colleges, students like Sole lamented the majority of classmates "had no idea that undocumented students like me even sit next to them in class." They realize they cannot help their families if they lose their scholarship, so many stay as quiet as possible and avoid bringing attention to themselves to maintain their grades and the financial support they receive from their private college. Mitzie, the only participant in this study attending one private college, felt differently about her scholarship opportunity,

I remember interviewing and there was another student like me waiting. We started talking and she wasn't different from me, we were going for the same thing. I liked her, she was struggling like me too. I got the scholarship and she didn't and I felt guilty about it. My advisor here said to me, 'You can feel bad about it and do nothing or you can feel good and proud and actually do something' So I decided at that moment to take advantage. I'm not quiet (laughs) everyone actually knows about my status, but I'm not normal. I know the other three students on scholarship here and they don't say anything. They think I'm crazy and maybe I am (laughs).

The private college with the most established program in existence for 14 years indicates a gradual change in attitude among scholarship recipients and the broader student community on campus. The coordinator states,

In the six years I have been here, there is an extreme difference. These last two years we've had two separate groups, business school student groups, undergraduates who are required for some class to put together some community service thing. Both this spring and last spring two groups said we want to support this scholarship that supports undocumented students....We're talking the thought not tons of money, but students are starting to get it.

Such encouragement and financial support from the broader campus community, helps validate their educational experiences and place at the private college.

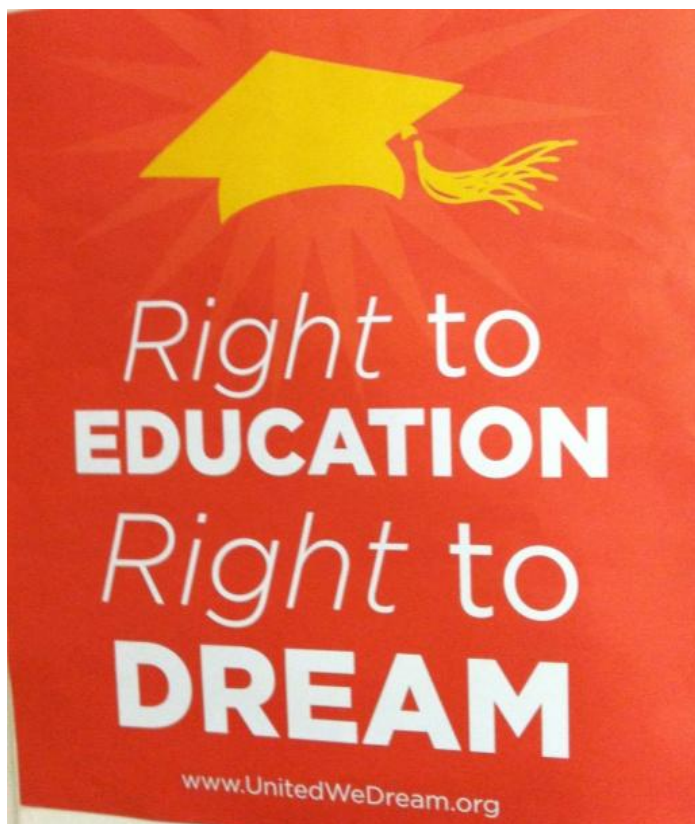
Financial support also exists for students attending the public universities. Once a student has been admitted to any UC or CSU, they have access to the financial aid office, the student resource center, and AB 540 resources as well. While the financial aid information is not transparent at all on the private college campuses during the application process, the opposite is true at every public institution in this study especially after the passage of the California Dream Act. An individual literate in English can conduct an AB 540 search at any CSU or UC and immediately find information related to proving AB 540 residency, completing the California Dream Act application through the California Student Aid Commission, or identifying student resources available on campus. Furthermore, some UCs facilitate students' abilities to make tuition payments. Payment plans currently exist and undocumented students struggling to make ends meet utilize and appreciate this option. Transparency of such resources helped some students choose a UC over private colleges with some aid. Grace stated,

The resources here. I know in terms of payment it's more flexible here than at other schools. The privates offered some financial aid, but it was still cost a lot more than UC 1. Even those that offered the most the financial aid were kinda far away. Also the people I knew here at UC 1, through a summer program in high school. I knew people, I knew what resources were available for people, I knew [Dreamers] was here, and (resource center), I knew where I could seek help.

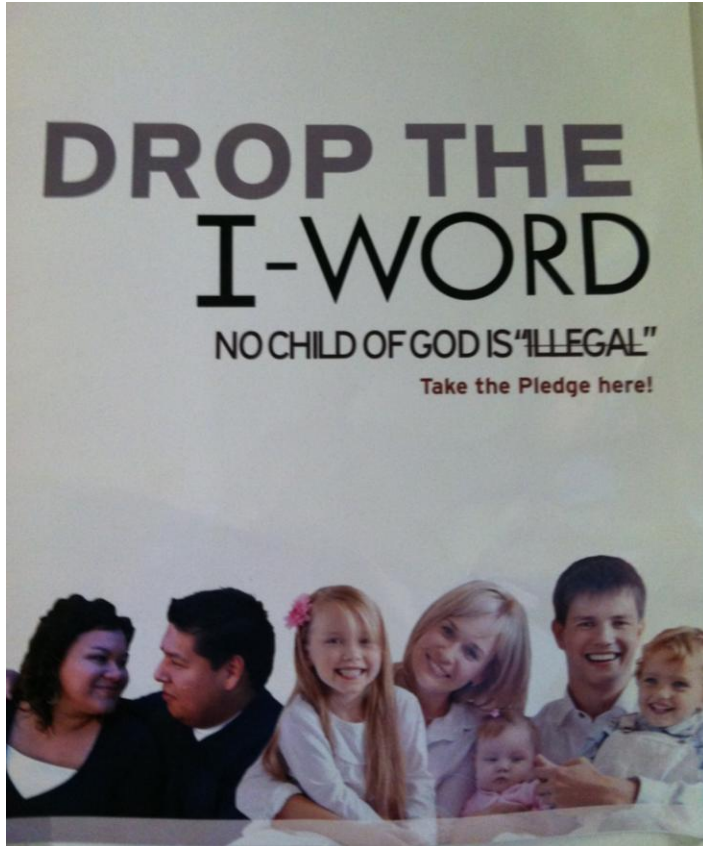
Such resources evolved on the UC campus to meet the needs of all students struggling financially to the benefit of documented and undocumented students. Michael, a 20 year veteran and the current Coordinator for the Undocumented Student Program at UC verified this progress. "We are lucky here to have support for undocumented students at every administrative level here. Are we perfect? No, but we are making changes to address the needs of our students as they arise and as we become aware of them. The financial, psychological, and career counseling aspects continue to be our biggest challenges."

The influence of financial aid is not limited to the decision making process. Students value and require such support throughout college. A unique financial resource in the lives of students attending one UC campus in particular is provided by the support of a church that evolved into drop-in center for hungry students in need. There is a community office with a coffee table, a couch, a few chairs and a kitchenette with a microwave, coffeemaker, and fridge. The fridge is always stocked with bread, some lunchmeat, fruit, and healthy snacks for any students who cannot afford to eat on campus. Students can drink some coffee, tea or hot chocolate to help them get through their day. Pictures and posters on the wall included the following:

Photograph 5.1



Photograph 5.2



Almost every student mentioned it as a safe place for them and an extension of campus support. Even Jenny, a UC staff member said, “They are probably the primary university in the country that has beyond just letting them in but a support group, a network, an allied group on campus, which I am part of too, and an administration that affirms their right to education.” Concurrent social and financial support encouraged students to select a UC instead of a less expensive CSU. Monica said, “I want to be a doctor and I wanted to go to the best school that would best get me to medical school. UC has the best reputation and yeah it’s a sacrifice for me and everyone in my family, but I know it’s possible and I get scholarships and do whatever I can to help make ends meet.” Ernesto even said, “Well you know we are all overachievers, and we all wanted to come here, so here we are! (laughs)” All of the students in this study are arguably

overachievers. Yet the influence of financial aid on their college choices was completely intertwined with the legal policy constructs at the federal and state levels.

Legislative Influence on Postsecondary Ambitions and Decisions

I finally asked the question if state or federal legislation influenced their college decisions of if it has informed future academic or professional plans. In the interviews, I asked every student if their college choice would have been different had they been documented, if they had access to federally subsidized students loans. Students all indicated they were happy with the college they selected and 100 percent were completely confident they would graduate from the same university. However, many students indicated the application process would have been different for them, and the college they attended would have been different as well. Only one student said they were attending their first choice. Ernesto said,

I've always been someone that kinda likes to break the glass ceiling when it comes to like being undocumented when people say you can't do this, you can't do that so I felt like to me coming to [this] UC was a way of breaking that class ceiling to say undocumented people can actually go to one of the best universities in the world, and graduate, and still be involved and do all this other stuff...It was more making that statement more than anything.

The most competitive of participants indicated they would have attended a more highly selective college. Santi stated:

At Dartmouth it was a straight \$2000 a year which is not a lot if you think about the education that I would be getting. And I only live with my mom. So I knew that I couldn't just put that stress on her. Sure they were giving me a full ride, but they weren't paying for books, they weren't paying for whatever other necessity I might have over there or like flights and so that would be added and so I thought \$2000 that's kind of a lot. If I were documented, I probably would have gone a little bit further out of state.

These experiences substantiate findings that Latinos are less likely when compared to other groups to attend their first-choice institution (Kim, 2004). For students attending UCs, many said

it was the best option. As previously mentioned, Alondra chose a local UC rather than one further from home. If policy and law been different and if she had access to student loans Alondra quickly added if she were documented, she at the very least would have attended the distant UC or would have gone out of state. While Lalo said, “If I had the chance I would have gone to UC but I didn’t have the financial support for that.”

Other students additionally indicated they would have applied to different institution types, some mentioned they would have applied to out-of-state schools, and a few said they would have visited more schools before they made their decision. Regardless of institution type, undocumented students in California were tremendously influenced by policy when they made their college choices.

Students also discussed how different their college experience would be if their status were to change. Maria said, “My second major is German, I know it’s totally random but I love it and if I had papers, I would study abroad there tomorrow! It’s just first on a long list of places I hope to visit...someday.” Many students like Ana spoke of their limited financial or work opportunities in college,

I could not even volunteer at my school’s free clinic; let alone any sort of hospitals. I enjoyed being a teaching assistant but was not able to do so more than twice, since you are only allowed to be a TA for credit twice and I obviously could not get paid. Because of my status, I was told to take time off from the research laboratory I had been working for a year. It is extremely difficult to process and understand why we are judged by our status rather than our abilities and why our desire to help is continuously rejected.

Others emphasized this as well, Camila said, “Do you know how much easier it would be to pay for school if I could get a real job, a real internship, with an actual company making normal money instead of taking whatever job I can under the table? I want to work on campus too, but I can’t do that either.” As Rachel said, “It is just so frustrating at every level, but maybe things will change.”

When students were asked about the future, many were optimistic. In the context of the study, I asked about future goals in the survey and when asked to rate from one to five the importance of the following goals: graduating from college, graduating from graduate school, becoming a United States citizen, making a lot of money, working for justice for all people, the opportunity to work in politics, the chance to have influence in society, and job security. Every student said graduating from college was extremely important with 14 of 20 students additionally emphasizing a goal to pursue graduate school. The goal to become a United States citizen was extremely important for 13 participants with 12 hoping for job security and influence in his or her community and ten believing they would work for justice for all people. Although job security was valued, the opportunity to make a lot of money only mattered to four students. While some of these goals remained the same regardless of institution type, there were some differences.

Almost 88 percent of students at private colleges planned to attend graduate school compared to almost 56 percent at the UCs. In terms of U.S. citizenship, 75 percent of private college students placed extreme importance on that goal compared to 44 percent of UC students. Sixty three percent of students attending private colleges planned to work for justice compared to 33 percent attending a UC. This difference could be related to the missions of some of the private colleges and the requirements of the scholarships at those same institutions. Regardless of institution type, undocumented students frequently used the phrase “check your privilege.” It was an equalizer; an acknowledgement in the State of California undocumented students have opportunities that do not exist in the majority of the United States. AB 540 students can pay in-state fees at public universities and now are eligible for state, institutional, and private sources of educational funding with the passage of AB 130 and 131.

With the passage of the California Dream Act, many students immediately applied for previously unavailable scholarships, those attending public schools were planning for some economic relief for the duration of their undergraduate trajectory and many said funding graduate school seemed to be a more realistic financial possibility for their future. The interview I conducted with Kevin, one of 95 employees at the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC), provided unique insight into the implementation of AB 130 and AB 131. The CSAC administers the state Cal Grant program,

a very large program providing \$1.5 billion of grants to approximately 350,000. That's a fairly accurate number. We expect to get more participants and the estimates we have gotten range from 5,000 to 40,000 simply because we don't know. There are that many students that appear to be undocumented, but they are not all going to go to college and they still might have reservations against participating in the government run program so we don't know but we are actually enthusiastic and hopeful that we can serve the student population.

The implementation occurred within six months from October 2011 to April 2012. Kevin indicated the CSAC had followed the various incarnations of comparable bills prior to the final iteration of 130 and 131. When they passed, Kevin and other CSAC employees examined the Texas process for undocumented students. The Texas process remains on paper. Undocumented students complete the form and submit it directly to the college they attend. CSAC saw an opportunity to improve upon the system in Texas.

The CSAC conferred with individuals working in Financial Aid at Universities of California, California State and Community Colleges. The general consensus was to mimic the FAFSA. The Cal Grant program is currently based on the information obtained through the FAFSA and the CSAC and collegiate financial aid offices were also already familiar with its format and content. As Kevin said, "I think, for the first time, we made everyone happy! Since we distribute the Cal Grant information anyway, it made sense to for us to provide and distribute

a California equivalent of the FAFSA, without the social security number.” Once this FAFSA format had been decided, the CSAC went to work on the creation of the online forms. Although paper forms are available, the focus was to have the application go live April 2, 2012. When asked why that date was selected, Kevin responded, “It seems arbitrary, but the UCs had financial aid deadline of March 2nd and they wanted us to be ready by then. We asked them to give us one extra month and we would make it happen and we did.”

Now that paper and online forms are available for undocumented California residents, dissemination of the Cal Grant application process is vital to the success of the program and undocumented student access to college financial aid. Kevin began the process last spring when he presented this information multiple times to large rooms of high school counselors at a regional WACAC conference. He praised the proactive approach of college financial aid offices and activists at the grassroots level. Before the application went live, the CSAC had heard from Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC), Maldef attorneys, and student leaders throughout California each working to obtain information to facilitate its distribution. Such groups are also similarly working to disseminate information regarding the DACA application process and readily provide information comparing benefits and rights based on immigration status (Appendix N).

Although many of the students had already been interviewed before students could apply for DACA, once President Obama issued the executive order in June 2012, I added interview questions regarding the recent turn in political events. Many were excited about the prospect of being able to get an internship for the very first time in their chosen field of study. Everyone eligible planned to apply, but some considered waiting until after the election to see who would win and others said they would apply closer to graduation so they could work full-time for two

years upon graduation. Based on research, eligible students should apply immediately for DACA as it is renewable after 2 years. At the time of interviews, such information was not yet available. Regardless, students mentioned DACA was a small gesture when comprehensive immigration reform is necessary. While all students hope the federal Dream Act passes, many asked about the future for their parents and for immigrants in legislatively hostile states like Arizona and Alabama. The findings of this study may remind undocumented students and their allies in California of the existing opportunities for undocumented students in California, the existing foundation upon which we can build improvements, and the responsibility we have to encourage 37 other states to at minimum grant in state tuition and fees to undocumented student residents living within their state boundaries.

Student Activism

When I created the methodology for this study using Perna's model as a guide, I did not consider the student activism and capital created by other undocumented students throughout the entire college choice process. The notion to support other undocumented students and to give back to their communities permeated interviews and the college choice process for undocumented students particularly at the high school, university and policy contexts. Students volunteered in ways often informed by their college culture. Most students attending private colleges feared calling attention to their status. More than one student said they could not help anyone at all if they did not graduate from college, and attention to their status and full scholarship could jeopardize their education. Instead of bringing attention to his or herself on campus, these individuals return to their high schools to conduct college application workshops, or simply talk about going to college. Others return to the Boys and Girls Club or similar organizations to similarly assist others through the own college search and choice process.

Public university students were much more politically active and involved on their respective campuses and in the extended campus community. Lola said,

I'm really open. I've learned that it helps other people. Other people that probably wouldn't even want to come out or ask for help to go to college or anything because they're afraid or they're scared or they don't even want to say their status. And so if you tell them they're like "Well how are you going to college?" and you tell them it's possible I've found that it helps.

This is not to say they were less fearful, but as Rachel said, "You can't help but think what if something happens to my family? But for me personally, I share my story because I feel like it's the most important thing to do and it's what keeps the movement growing and people coming out and joining the movement." This movement continues to inform public policy in California and throughout the United States. To quote Bourdieu (1992) again, "...players can play to increase or to conserve their capital...in conformity with the tacit rules of the game and the prerequisites of the reproduction of the game and its stakes; but they can also get in to transform partially or completely, the immanent rules of the game" (p. 99). In lives and academic opportunities completely stifled by the law, or the codified rules of the game, undocumented students and documented allied activists are working side-by-side to change them.

Learning about policy, financial aid, and support from undocumented student peers was incredibly important in the college choice process for undocumented Latino/a students. The students in the study have become the links in the chain of migration for prospective undocumented students. Every undocumented Latino/a student participant in this study, and countless others I observed at the Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco, and numerous conferences through universities, WACAC, and the E4FC all voluntarily lead, provided and

shared their stories, their knowledge, and their resources to anyone interested in helping other undocumented students and allies.

These students create a special form of cultural and social capital. In *Undocumented and Unafraid: Tam Tran, Cinthya Felix, and the Immigrant Youth Movement* (2012), the roots and growing influence of this current civil rights movement are evident. Undocumented students are coming out of the shadows, inspired by bravery, bravado, or “cojones” as one student put it of undocumented and unafraid students in California and those fighting for similar opportunities in other states and in our nation’s capital. Such students and allies are identified or described as “being down.” Ernesto said, “I knew this guy, like he went to the airport wearing that ‘I am undocumented’ t-shirt on flight to Washington D.C. He was seriously down.”

Photograph 5.3



Mitzie, a student attending a private college, has been arrested for acts of civil disobedience. She said,

I could get deported for a speeding ticket or something just as stupid. If it is going to happen, I might as well bring some attention to this problem. I also know I have support now. People know me and would fight for me. They couldn't have done that if I stayed in the shadows. I'm lucky. I just tell my professors if I'm not in class I might be in jail. They know me! (laughs)

She also participated in the Dreamer Graduation in San Francisco with over 250 other students and allies. Angela Davis as the Commencement speaker for this event and Reverend James Lawson, Jr. as the keynote for another undocumented conference I attended, lend credibility and support at the local and national levels for undocumented students. At both events, participants chanted "Undocumented and unafraid" and others added "Undocuqueer and unashamed!"

As students walked across the graduation stage across the street from city hall, many of them stopped to speak into the microphone to say it was their first time coming out of the shadows. Each announcement was met with cheers and applause by those in attendance. Signs and mortar boards were decorated to commemorate and support the occasion (Appendix K). Participants also wore t-shirts under caps and gowns with "Dreamer", "undocumented and unafraid", or "no human is illegal" emblazoned on them (Appendix M). Their energy and resolve is contagious and inspiring. In the way their parents migrated to the United States to create or continue a chain of migration for family members, they too create a chain for students to follow to college armed with their individual experience, the knowledge of the college application and choice process, and the ability and desire to share that capital with others.

This student activism and cultural capital is particularly important since, 63 percent of students indicated college recruitment had no influence on their college choice. After interviewing nine faculty and staff, it became clear that none of the campuses directly recruit

undocumented students. Every campus, private or public, has undocumented and AB 540 allies, but it requires students and their advocates to make phone calls to find them in admissions and financial aid offices prior to admission. It also requires individuals to find available resources once students have been admitted and decide to attend their college of choice to ensure AB 540 affidavits are complete and the California Dream Act Application are submitted by required deadlines.

The UC and the private colleges with the largest critical masses of organized undocumented students also had the greatest levels of social and financial support resulting in increased political activism. When I asked students if they were recruited, Charles, a documented student leader and ally said, “Shoot, we are the ones doing the recruiting. We go to our old high school, we do workshops in English and Spanish, we let others know [our college] is an option.” Many students said they chose a UC for this reason. They realized the difference in price when compared to a CSU education was worth the investment for the prestige of the institution and the unparalleled community and support they experienced when they visited or met students attending. Through family support, work, and many smaller individual scholarships many students are starting UCs as soon as they graduate from high school. These students have become the migration links for the undocumented high school students they inspire. Jenny a UC staff member said, “I think it’s the student groups that tend to bring this out and get the word out that UC’s are doing this.”

Another subgroup of Latino undocumented students appeared in this study. Undocuqueer students identify as members of the undocumented and GLBTQ communities. Ernesto and Grace, both UC students, were the only two students that identified as undocuqueer and both are very politically active. Ernesto said,

I'm maybe too open, (laughs) I don't know if I mentioned it, but I got arrested in Alabama protesting the anti-immigrant law. And you know have gone to conferences but I think also like I was talking during the workshop is creating that narrative of intersectionality between being undocumented and queer and I'm feel like that's something I'm starting to focus more on that dialog than on just being undocumented.

Grace similarly said, "Once you get start getting a little more involved you start to see the intersectionalities. You start asking why you are fighting for these other parts of your identity, you are going to be Queer for the rest of your life, right your undocumented status might change so how do you start advocating for both of them?" The issue of immigration reform becomes even more complicated for these students. In states where gay marriage is legal, can undocumented immigrants then apply for a green card as a spouse? Will this be an exclusion from impending immigration reform being drafted in Washington D.C.?

The futures of undocumented students' remain uncertain, but undocumented student activists and their allies continue to protest, educate, organize and disseminate information permeating every level of Perna's model. At the policy level, students are engaging in acts of civil disobedience, they are creating posters and artwork, they write letters to legislators, they speak to sessions of Congress, and they register allies to vote. At the university level, undocumented students conduct outreach, provide workshops, and organize conferences, visits, and overnights to give other undocumented students and their families opportunities to make educated and informed college decisions. This information reaches younger students at the high school and elementary school levels and in turn influences social, cultural capital, and habitus encouraging young undocumented students to pursue postsecondary education.

Chapter Summary

This chapter delineates the findings from this study of undocumented Latino/a college choice in California. Informed by definitions of capital and chain migration theory within Laura

Perna's (2006) college choice model, 20 student and nine ally surveys and interviews were conducted at three different types of Californian four-year universities (CSUs, UCs, and private universities). Participants shared similar beginnings. They migrated to the United States before the age of 13 from Mexico or El Salvador and enrolled, attended, and graduated from local elementary and secondary schools. Students and their parent(s) valued education, yet the access to a CSU, a UC, or a private university depended primarily on financial considerations and secondarily on the information made available to them by counselors, teachers, and organizations facilitating college access. Students with the greatest access to information at every level of Perna's model, from the external legal policy to their community applied to the greatest number of colleges and had the greatest financial resources throughout their college decision-making process. At the time this study was conducted, undocumented students' financial aid eligibility was limited to private scholarships for their education. Due to limited availability of such aid, the college choice process for the most academically competitive undocumented students emphasized financial aid considerations within the federal and state legal constraints that deny loans, a driver's license, and legal status to these high achieving students predominantly educated in the United States. Undocumented students attending competitive postsecondary institutions ultimately demonstrated belief in the American Dream and hope that postsecondary education will result in financial security, United States citizenship, and assimilation.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Photograph 6.1



I began this dissertation with a picture of a street sign and Tam Tran’s important question, “What happens to the little girl when she grows up?” In some cases, she graduates from high school and goes on to college as this picture from the San Francisco 2012 Dreamer Graduation indicates. This study on undocumented Latino/a college choice results in numerous implications mirroring the contextual levels of Laura Perna’s college choice model at the financial, personal, high school, university and policy levels inside California and throughout the United States. At every level, California’s residents, teachers, counselors, high schools, universities, and legislators provide exemplary programs and opportunities for undocumented students regardless of country of origin. Our nation’s leaders and politicians in other states can learn so much from the implementation of such policies and programs. This is not to say California’s policies or programs are perfect, but they provide a compelling foundation to improve college access and opportunity for all underrepresented students. The following implications discuss the theoretical framework for college choice, the strengths and weaknesses

of our Californian resources based on this study's findings, and suggestions for improvement and future research.

Perna's College Choice Model

Interviews with 20 students, nine allies, and seven attended conferences with extensive document review at three types of Californian postsecondary institutions emphasized the financial circumstances of the undocumented Latino/a student central to Perna's college choice model. Every context of Perna's model directly influences the availability of financial aid for undocumented Latino/a students. Her model implies the context closest to the student (*habitus*) has the greatest influence with school, university, and policy contexts having lesser influence and greater distance from the individual making the decision. These contexts also inform the opportunities or lack thereof throughout the undocumented student educational trajectory.

For most documented students, policy has the most distant influence on college choice. Students with the *habitus* valued in education are presumably in the middle and upper classes (McDonough, 1997). These students are less likely to be influenced by changes in policy like changes to student loan interest rates. Conversely, undocumented students cannot make a college decision without prior consideration of federal or individual state laws and policies. These differences became more evident as data was collected and analyzed. The financial opportunities and decisions surrounding college for undocumented Latino/a students cannot not be so far removed from law and policy. For undocumented students, the law and financial aid opportunities are inextricably linked particularly in California and the 12 other states with resident tuition policies. In simple terms, if the Kindergarten through twelfth grade educational obligations granted in *Plyer v. Doe* had been extended through college, all undocumented students in the United States would have at minimum public postsecondary access. Similarly, if

the federal Dream Act passed, every undocumented student in this study would be able to obtain legal residency, eventual citizenship, continue their college education, and utilize federally subsidized student loans to finance their undergraduate and graduate school aspirations.

Working within the existing legal constraints in the United States, Students living in one of the 37 states without in-state resident tuition policies for undocumented students have one or two options.

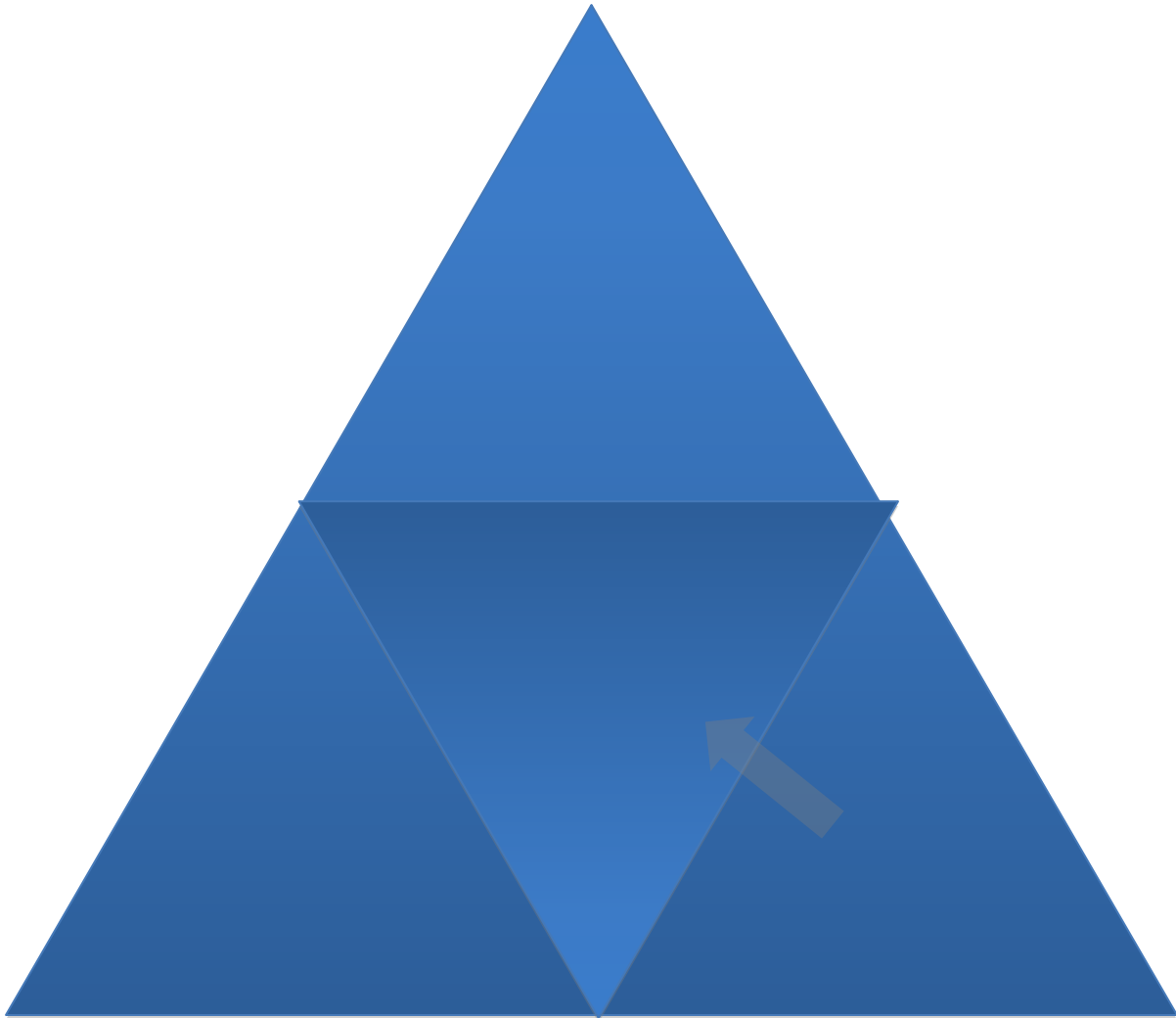
1. In states that prohibit undocumented students from attending public colleges in their state, undocumented students may apply to any private college in the United States. Some colleges require they apply as international students, while others simply want them to apply as a regular student through the common application without a social security number.
2. For states without tuition policies, undocumented students may apply and be admitted, but must pay cost-prohibitive out of state or international fees at community colleges or four-year universities.

Undocumented students in Texas, California, Utah, New York, Washington, Illinois, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Maryland and most recently Hawaii, have additional postsecondary options due to policies and laws in these states that stipulate undocumented students may apply, be admitted to, and attend public colleges paying in-state tuition rates if they can provide documentation of residency. In state tuition rates are less expensive than out-of-state fees, but federal law prohibits their access to federally subsidized student loans. Students attending these schools must pay for all related expenses if they cannot obtain some of the limited private scholarship funding available. Texas, New Mexico and

California are the only three states with in-state tuition policies and additional access to state and/or public institution financial aid.

For undocumented students, the model of college choice differs slightly from Perna's model. The model can be seen in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Model of Undocumented College Choice



At the center of the pyramid, and part of its foundation of undocumented college choice is financial consideration and law. An undocumented student must consider both to determine where they will apply, and how to finance the school they choose to attend. In this model, the contexts of Habitus, High School, and College each inform the legal and fiscal considerations at

the center. Although Perna indicated habitus informed college choice and was closest to the cost benefit analysis, this model suggests the base of college choice for undocumented students or the foundation of their college decision is more equally informed by the cultural, social, bonding, and bridging capital contained within the habitus and high school contexts. This structure further implies colleges more distantly influence undocumented Latino/a college choice.

Implications

Habitus influences the college ambitions and decisions of all students, but for undocumented Latino/a students, the implications of this study are consistent with other studies aiming to improve college access for historically underrepresented students. At a time when budgets and resources at public schools at every level all over California are increasingly cut, increases in financial resources, teacher-to-student ratios, and counselor-to-student ratios are paramount to the future success and access of all of our California residents. Programs like AVID, the Boys and Girls Club, and the YMCA help disseminate information to students and their families, but they lack the funding and ability to inform all intelligent, impoverished, and interested students of college opportunities. Additional support is particularly necessary for documented and undocumented Latino males alike. Teachers, role models, counselors, mentors are necessary in the educational trajectory for these young men to facilitate college access.

Consistent with the findings in other studies, counselors are instrumental in bridging the information gap existing in the college choice process for students (McDonough, 1997).

Although each undocumented student in this study attends a four-year university, many indicated they only applied to schools suggested to them by teachers, counselors, or mentors outside of school. It is imperative counselors provide undocumented students and their families with accurate information. The students attending the CSU predominantly applied to CSUs as they

viewed them as their primary postsecondary alternative and those admitted to UCs chose the CSU when they could not finance the UC education. Students attending UCs largely applied to UCs and CSUs since they were perceived to be the least expensive educational options. Students attending private colleges applied to and were admitted to the highest number of colleges because they believed private schools had more money to give and applied to them based on information they received about the generosity of financial aid to undocumented students. Although undocumented private college students may arguably have the most social capital, many were also misinformed. Some never applied to UCs because they had been told no funding existed for them at those postsecondary institutions.

In light of these findings, all high schools students and counselors should know the following with regard to undocumented students:

1. Undocumented students can apply to any college in California be it a community college, a California State University, a University of California, or a private college without a driver's license or social security number.
2. Undocumented students may also apply to any private college outside of California as well, but must take into account potential risks and costs associated with travel.
3. With the passage of the California Dream Act, private scholarships, institutional aid, and state financial aid in the form of grants which need not be repaid, are available to all eligible California residents regardless of status.
4. Private scholarships are also available to undocumented students at public and private colleges. Although finite in number, they are indeed available. Some private colleges provide as few as 1 full-ride scholarship per year to an undocumented student and some provide as many as 30 scholarships depending on endowments.

5. With the recent passage of DACA, students can now also apply for a work permit for two years granting student access to internship and work opportunities relevant to their major and profession of interest.

Armed with such information, undocumented students and their counselors can work together through the college application process to ensure a student's options have not been limited by a lack of knowledge or information. Not all undocumented students are comfortable disclosing their undocumented status to postsecondary institutions. Counselors assume no risk when they call on the behalf of their undocumented students in pursuit of allies to establish links in their chain of migration to specific colleges.

Counselors or student programs are not the only parties responsible for dissemination of this information. Colleges must provide information, resources, and guidance to undocumented students prior to application, upon admission, and throughout the college choice process. None of the students mentioned being recruited by their chosen school. In the surveys, more than 60 percent indicated recruitment played no part in their college choice process. Other undocumented students provide the support and the networks creating a culture of acceptance and support for one another at most of these schools. Some colleges do an incredible job of creating support at every university level as some provide remarkable scholarship and funding programs, yet some lack the structure, support or campus culture to create an environment to help these students succeed in college or beyond. Career services at every college in this study failed to help the undocumented students in my study apply for or obtain internships, summer positions, or jobs. With the passage of DACA, college career services offices must learn quickly how to connect them with internships or jobs in their chosen fields or professions.

Although this study focused on Latino/a undocumented college students in California, undocumented students throughout the United States struggle for the right to attend or pay in-state tuition at public postsecondary institutions in 37 states. These students and their allies organize against anti-immigrant legislation that limits or completely prohibits college access for undocumented students. For undocumented students everywhere, there is a unique emphasis on the policy context which tends to be the most distant influence on college choice for the average college applicant. Public policy heavily influences every contextual point throughout the Latino/a undocumented college choice process. At the very center of the model is the cost-benefit analysis most students undertake when making their college choice. Since federal policy denies access to subsidized educational loans, undocumented students have limited resources to finance college.

Fortunately, undocumented students in California have the unique opportunity to pay in-state tuition and fees shared by undocumented students in only 12 additional states. Similarly, only three states (Texas, New Mexico, and California) grant access to state financial aid for undocumented residents. Even after the implementation of the California Dream Act, a staff member at the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) said, “the ceiling has not fallen in” for states with implemented financial or educational opportunities for resident undocumented students. Estimates provided to the CSAC of undocumented students who will apply for state funding ranged from 5,000 to 40,000. Even after the passage of AB 1403 in Texas, the number of undocumented students attending public colleges only grew from 393 in 2001 to 3,792 in 2004 (Gonzales, 2007) representing an estimated 0.36% of students attending Texas public colleges and universities (Texas Comptroller, 2006). Such relatively small numbers should encourage the remaining 37 states to propose and pass similar legislation to provide in-state

tuition opportunities to all residents living within their state borders. Such changes would make college more affordable and therefore more accessible to undocumented students outside of California. Passage of the federal Dream Act or comprehensive immigration reform would supersede all such state legislation related to undocumented student postsecondary educational access and would create a path to permanent residency and citizenship.

Although this study focused on Latino/a undocumented students, it is important to note the diversity of undocumented students in California and throughout the United States. They of course come from Mexico and South America, but they also migrate from Asia, Canada and Africa. One student participant in this study, Camila, identified as “China-Latina.” She was born in Mexico, but her both her parents were born in China and had migrated to Mexico prior to her birth. She was the only member of her family still in the United States as they had all been deported to Mexico while she was still in high school. With AP scores of five in Mandarin, Spanish, and English, her trilingual ability would be a tremendous advantage as a future doctor in California, but her unique linguistic skills cannot create or provide the documentation she needs to finance or access medical school at this time.

Future Research

Since none of the students in this study had access to the funding available through the California Dream Act or through DACA work opportunities when they made their college decisions, a logical extension of this study would be to explore the same questions in this study to see how implementation of these new policies may create additional postsecondary educational opportunities or influence the college choices of high school or community college students. Future research on undocumented student college choice in California could be delineated in three time periods the time before AB540, the time from AB540 to passage of the

California Dream Act, and the time from passage of the California Dream Act to the present. The students in this study describe students' college choices until passage of the California Dream Act.

Another area worthy of exploration is a focus on the cultural and social capital created by these undocumented students. They are creating the chain of migration making it possible for other students to attend competitive colleges in California. The student grassroots movement has been engaging in acts of civil disobedience from Arizona to Alabama to Washington D.C. There is an Undocubus leading the charge and others walking the "Trail of Dreams." They are wearing T-shirts that say "No human is illegal," and are yelling and chanting "Undocumented and unafraid," as they come out of the shadows.

In addition to coming out of the shadows, some are coming out of the closet as "Undocuqueer." This movement worthy of its own study struggles with the political movements and mixed identities of students that struggle to come out twice. Grace mentioned, "I came out as first as queer when I was in high school 14? But I feel like I haven't gotten to the level of being comfortable, completely comfortable with the LGBT community as I have with the undocumented and immigrant movement." Research regarding the undocuqueer movement may be able to increase and bridge collaboration between gay and immigrant rights activists. Each group shares a coming out process and undocuqueer youth come out twice. They come out of the closet and out of the shadows. Ernesto came out of the shadows first as undocumented and secondarily as a gay man, while Grace instead came out of the closet first and later as "queer." The coming out process of undocumented and undocuqueer students is worthy of study and could easily be incorporated into student development theory.

Conclusion

Based on the experiences of these students and allies, resources, capital or migration links to college were vital to the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary academic success of undocumented Latino/a college students in California. The cultural capital came from family, while social capital and migration links came from counselors, teachers, mentors, programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) or the Boys and Girls Club, and most importantly from organized undocumented student groups facilitating college access for Latino/a undocumented students. Such groups provide important inspiration and information regarding college access to their peers, but also demonstrate through example the ability and potential to access postsecondary education.

The tragedy for me in doing this study is I met 20 remarkable high achieving undocumented students, three of whom were high school Valedictorians, three were Engineering majors, three were pre-med, one was a Math major, three pursued business degrees, and two aspired to attend law school. Only one had been able to obtain work in a field related to their major. With the average arrival age being just seven years old, none of these students could consent to the decision made by their parents to move to the United States. However, all are bound by the restrictions of their status. If given the opportunity, they would work in their chosen professions and continue to give back to their respective communities. Although more than the passage of the federal dream act is necessary for comprehensive immigration reform, passage of the Dream Act would be an important first step and continued research is required to support its future passage. This study informs practice at the policy, university, secondary, and elementary levels to improve college access for students regardless of legal status, regardless of nation of origin, and regardless of state of residency.

APPENDIX A

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process		Month*				
		Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Intake		36,601	104,910	113,494	77,280	23,604
Accepted						
Rejected		1,263	3,676	3,719	2,477	879
Total received		37,864	108,586	117,213	79,757	24,483
Average requests/day		2,913	5,715	5,328	3,988	2,720
Biometrics		18,616	105,439	98,430	87,037	26,942
Case Review		0	29,552	105,648	147,577	157,151
Under review		0	1,707	26,908	47,954	26,396
Approved						

Top 10 Countries of Origin	Received to Date
Mexico	258,708
El Salvador	15,697
Honduras	9,998
Guatemala	8,960
Peru	5,607
South Korea	5,167
Brazil	4,807
Colombia	4,249
Ecuador	4,143
Philippines	2,862
Top 10 States of Residence	Received to Date
California	98,531
Texas	57,542
New York	21,635
Florida	17,241
Illinois	17,224
North Carolina	13,314
Arizona	12,924
Georgia	11,914
New Jersey	11,779
Colorado	7,124

* August data from Aug. 15 - Aug. 30
 September data from Sept. 1 - Sept. 30
 October data from Oct. 1 - Oct. 31
 November data from Nov. 1 - Nov. 30
 December data from Dec. 1 - Dec. 13

Data represents period August 15 - December 13, 2012
 Systems: Lockbox Intake System, Biometrics Capture Systems, Service Center Daily Reporting, CIS Consolidated Operational Repository (CISCOR)
 USCIS Office of Performance and Quality (OPQ)

APPENDIX B

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES												
		Effective from					July 1, 2011	to		June 30, 2012		
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES	REDUCED PRICE MEALS - 185 %					FREE MEALS - 130 %					
	ANNUAL	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY	ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY	
48 CONTIGUOUS STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GUAM, AND TERRITORIES												
1	10,890		20,147	1,679	840	775	388	14,157	1,180	590	545	273
2	14,710		27,214	2,268	1,134	1,047	524	19,123	1,594	797	736	368
3	18,530		34,281	2,857	1,429	1,319	660	24,089	2,008	1,004	927	464
4	22,350		41,348	3,446	1,723	1,591	796	29,055	2,422	1,211	1,118	559
5	26,170		48,415	4,035	2,018	1,863	932	34,021	2,836	1,418	1,309	655
6	29,990		55,482	4,624	2,312	2,134	1,067	38,987	3,249	1,625	1,500	750
7	33,810		62,549	5,213	2,607	2,406	1,203	43,953	3,663	1,832	1,691	846
8	37,630		69,616	5,802	2,901	2,678	1,339	48,919	4,077	2,039	1,882	941
For each add'l family member, add	3,820		7,067	589	295	272	136	4,966	414	207	191	96
ALASKA												
1	13,600		25,160	2,097	1,049	968	484	17,680	1,474	737	680	340
2	18,380		34,003	2,834	1,417	1,308	654	23,894	1,992	996	919	460
3	23,160		42,846	3,571	1,786	1,648	824	30,108	2,509	1,255	1,158	579
4	27,940		51,689	4,308	2,154	1,989	995	36,322	3,027	1,514	1,397	699
5	32,720		60,532	5,045	2,523	2,329	1,165	42,536	3,545	1,773	1,636	818
6	37,500		69,375	5,782	2,891	2,669	1,335	48,750	4,063	2,032	1,875	938
7	42,280		78,218	6,519	3,260	3,009	1,505	54,964	4,581	2,291	2,114	1,057
8	47,060		87,061	7,256	3,628	3,349	1,675	61,178	5,099	2,550	2,353	1,177
For each add'l family member, add	4,780		8,843	737	369	341	171	6,214	518	259	239	120
HAWAII												
1	12,540		23,199	1,934	967	893	447	16,302	1,359	680	627	314
2	16,930		31,321	2,611	1,306	1,205	603	22,009	1,835	918	847	424
3	21,320		39,442	3,287	1,644	1,517	759	27,716	2,310	1,155	1,066	533
4	25,710		47,564	3,964	1,982	1,830	915	33,423	2,786	1,393	1,286	643
5	30,100		55,685	4,641	2,321	2,142	1,071	39,130	3,261	1,631	1,505	753
6	34,490		63,807	5,318	2,659	2,455	1,228	44,837	3,737	1,869	1,725	863
7	38,880		71,928	5,994	2,997	2,767	1,384	50,544	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
8	43,270		80,050	6,671	3,336	3,079	1,540	56,251	4,688	2,344	2,164	1,082
For each add'l family member, add	4,390		8,122	677	339	313	157	5,707	476	238	220	110

<http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/feewaiver/Pages/default.aspx>

APPENDIX C

Student Recruitment Letter/Script

My name is Maria Luisa Woodruff, and I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation in the Higher Education and Organizational Change division at UCLA. I ask for your participation in a study I am conducting on Latina/o undocumented students' college choice. I am interested in exploring the factors that influenced your college application and selection. I wanted to ask you to volunteer to be a part of my study because as an undocumented Latina/o you can inform the purposes of this study.

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study on the college choice of Latina/o undocumented college students. Participating in this study will include a completing a 15 minute survey and then participating in a one hour long interview that will be scheduled at your convenience. There is also an optional follow up meeting that you can choose to participate in, in which you can review the transcript from your interview and my preliminary analysis. These follow up meetings will be scheduled at the time of your interview.

There is minimal risk associated with participating in this study, and you may withdraw from the study at any point. In discussing your experiences as an undocumented Latino student, you may become uncomfortable with difficult or challenging experiences that you have had. This may be somewhat emotionally distressing or you may worry that your identity will be connected to your comments. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be used throughout the study. Any contact information linking you to your pseudonym will be destroyed after the follow up meeting. You may elect to not answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable, and your identity will be kept completely anonymous in any reporting of data from this study.

If you would like to participate in this study or would like more information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

Maria Luisa Woodruff, MA
mwoodruff@ucla.edu
(310) 902-4654

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Maria Luisa Woodruff
Ph.D. Student
Higher Education and Organizational Change
UCLA

APPENDIX D

University of California, Los Angeles

STUDENT CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

California Dreaming: Undocumented Students' College Choices

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Maria Luisa Woodruff, a doctoral student from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The study is being conducted for her dissertation with Dr. Walter Allen, Ph.D. as her faculty advisor and dissertation committee chair. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an undocumented college student who can inform the purposes of this study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not adversely affect your relationship with your faculty or other university staff.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will explore the factors that influence undocumented students' college choice and their barriers to college access.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to complete a questionnaire and participate in one interview that will be approximately an hour in length. The questionnaire will ask you questions about your background, high school, and educational goals. In the interview, you will be asked about your background and your college application and selection process. The interview will be audio-taped with your permission. There is also an optional follow up meeting, where you will have the opportunity to go over your responses in the interview and conclusions that I have come to based on your responses. The interviews will take place on a date and time that is suitable for you and should last an hour. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

None of the information that you provide will be made available to others in your school and community. The only foreseeable risk is that in discussing your goals you may become uncomfortable with difficult or challenging experiences that you have had. This may be somewhat emotionally distressing or you may worry that your identity will be connected to your comments. You may elect to not answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable, and your identity will be kept completely confidential in any reporting of data from this study. The foreseeable inconveniences include taking up some of your time to participate in the study and to be interviewed. To manage these inconveniences, we will choose interview dates that work for your schedule.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Your participation in the research may help you understand yourself better or you may not benefit directly from participating in this study. However, your participation will be part of a larger effort to learn more about the experiences of undocumented college students, their college choices, and their barriers to college access. Enhancing researchers' knowledge in this area can help policymakers and administrators support legislation like the Dream Act and develop strategies to facilitate the recruitment, retention and academic success of all undocumented students. The results of the research may help us understand the many factors that influence undocumented student college choice. This may give us insight into the reasons why you and others in the study feel this way, which may help us think of solutions to any problems you face.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive no payment for your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All identifying information about participants will be masked: participants and the institution they are employed at will be referred to by pseudonyms. The researcher, Maria Luisa Woodruff, will be the only individual who will have access to the data collected in this study, which will be kept in locked filing cabinets. With your consent, interviews will be audio-taped for later transcription; both will be destroyed after the completion of this study. Subjects will also be able to review, edit, or erase sections of their research tapes and transcripts during follow up meetings.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Maria Luisa Woodruff at mwoodruff@ucla.edu or Dr. Walter Allen at allen@gseis.ucla.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your assent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, California 90095-1694, (310) 825-7122.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR OR DESIGNEE

In my judgment the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed assent to participate in this research study.

Name of Investigator or Designee

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

APPENDIX E

2010 Pre-Interview Student Survey

What is your assigned name _____?

What year are you? (circle one) 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year
other please specify _____

What is your gender? (circle one) Male (1) Female (2)

Where were you born? _____

Where were your parents born? _____

How old were you when you migrated to the United States? _____

What age did you realize you were undocumented? _____

What is the highest grade or degree mother completed? _____

What is the highest grade or degree your father completed? _____

What is your age? _____

What was your high school grade point average? _____

What standardized exams did you take during High School? [i.e. SAT, ACT, AP Exams] What scores did you receive?

To how many colleges did you apply? _____

To how many colleges were you admitted? _____

Are you a transfer student? _____

If yes, did you transfer from:

A public community college

A private community college

A four-year college

Other (please specify) _____

What language(s) do you speak with family? (circle one)

Spanish only Mainly Spanish Both equally Mainly English English only

What language(s) do you speak with friends? (check one)

Spanish only Mainly Spanish Both equally Mainly English English only

Please describe the level of influence the following sources had on you college ambitions during high school: [Circle one for each question.]

	<u>Strong Influence</u>	<u>Some Influence</u>	<u>No Influence</u>
a. Family	3	2	1
b. Classmate(s)	3	2	1
c. Other friend(s)	3	2	1
d. Teacher(s)	3	2	1
e. Counselor(s)	3	2	1
f. Other school staff	3	2	1
g. Other mentor(s)	3	2	1
h. Religion	3	2	1
i. Other _____	3	2	1

Please describe the level of influence the following sources had on you college choice: [Circle one for each question.]

	<u>Strong Influence</u>	<u>Some Influence</u>	<u>No Influence</u>
j. Family	3	2	1
k. Classmate(s)	3	2	1
l. Other friend(s)	3	2	1
m. Teacher(s)	3	2	1
n. Counselor(s)	3	2	1
o. Other school staff	3	2	1
p. Other mentor(s)	3	2	1
q. Religion	3	2	1
r. Financial aid	3	2	1
s. Scholarship(s)	3	2	1
t. College Recruiter(s)	3	2	1
u. College visit	3	2	1
v. Other _____	3	2	1

How important to you are each of these? [Circle one for each question.]

	Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Graduating from a 4 year college	5	4	3	2	1
Graduating from graduate school	5	4	3	2	1
Becoming a United States citizen	5	4	3	2	1
Opportunity to earn a lot of money	5	4	3	2	1
Working for justice for all people	5	4	3	2	1
Opportunity to participate in politics	5	4	3	2	1

Potential to have influence in the community	5	4	3	2	1
Having job security	5	4	3	2	1
Other, please specify	5	4	3	2	1

What is your current Grade Point Average? [Circle one.]

4.0 A 3.5-3.9 A- 3.0-3.4 B, B+ 2.5-2.9 B- 2.0-2.4 C, C+ Below 2.0 D or below

How certain are you that you will graduate from college? [Circle one.]

Completely certain that I will graduate (3)

Completely certain that I will graduate, but not necessarily from this institution (2)

Not completely certain that I will get graduate (1)

APPENDIX F

Student Interview Protocol

1. Introduction – Name, gender, school, year, major, graduation date
2. Background – Tell me about your educational history.
 - a. When did you move to the United States?
 - b. When did you start school?
 - c. When did you realize you were undocumented?
3. Predisposition
 - a. When did you realize you wanted to go to college?
 - b. Are you the first in your family to attend college?
 - c. What exams did you take? How did you do so without documentation?
 - d. Who influenced your college ambitions?
 - e. Why attend college?
4. Search – Describe your college application process.
 - a. Did you attend a community college? Why or why not?
 - b. Where did you apply?
 - c. How did you find out about the schools to which you applied?
 - d. How did you navigate the application process?
5. Choice
 - a. To how many schools were you admitted?
 - b. What three factors most influenced your decision to attend this college or university?
 - c. What is the primary reason you decided to attend this school?
 - d. Would legal status have changed your decision?
6. Challenges
 - a. What was the biggest challenge you faced as an undocumented college applicant?
 - b. What is the biggest challenge you face as an undocumented college student?
7. Future goals
 - a. What are your future plans after graduation?
 - b. Would your plans change if the Dream Act passes? How so?

APPENDIX G

Faculty/Staff Recruitment Letter/Script

My name is Maria Luisa Woodruff, and I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation in the Higher Education and Organizational Change division at UCLA. I ask for your participation in a study I am conducting on Latina/o undocumented students' college choice. I am interested in exploring the recruitment, financial aid, and services that may influence college choice and persistence. I wanted to ask you to volunteer to be a part of my study because as a university faculty/staff member you can inform the purposes of this study.

This letter is an invitation to participate in my study on the college choice of Latina/o undocumented college students. Participating in this study will include a completing a 5 minute survey and then participating in a one hour long interview that will be scheduled at your convenience. There is also an optional follow up meeting that you can choose to participate in, in which you can review the transcript from your interview and my preliminary analysis. These follow up meetings will be scheduled at the time of your interview.

There is no foreseeable risk associated with participating in this study, and you may withdraw from the study at any point. You may worry that your identity will be connected to your comments. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be used throughout the study. Any contact information linking you to your pseudonym will be destroyed after the follow up meeting. You may elect to not answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable, and your identity will be kept completely anonymous in any reporting of data from this study.

If you would like to participate in this study or would like more information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

Maria Luisa Woodruff, MA
mwoodruff@ucla.edu
(310) 902-4654

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Maria Luisa Woodruff
Ph.D. Student
Higher Education and Organizational Change
UCLA

APPENDIX H

University of California, Los Angeles

FACULTY/STAFF CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH California Dreaming: Undocumented Students' College Choices

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Maria Luisa Woodruff, a doctoral student from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. The study is being conducted for her dissertation with Dr. Walter Allen, Ph.D. as her faculty advisor and dissertation committee chair. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are university employee who can inform the purposes of this study. Your participation in this research study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not adversely affect your relationship with other university staff.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will explore the factors that influence undocumented students' college choice and their barriers to college access.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to complete a brief questionnaire and participate in one interview that will be approximately an hour in length. The questionnaire will ask you questions about your background and undocumented students attending your university. In the interview, you will be asked about your experiences with undocumented students, the challenges they face as they apply and attend college, and the services available to them at your college. The interview will be audio-taped with your permission. There is also an optional follow up meeting, where you will have the opportunity to go over your responses in the interview and conclusions that I have come to based on your responses. The interviews will take place on a date and time that is suitable for you and should last an hour. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

None of the information that you provide will be made available to others in your school and community. There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. You may elect to not answer any question(s) that make you feel uncomfortable, and your identity will be kept completely confidential in any reporting of data from this study. The foreseeable inconveniences include taking up some of your time to participate in the study and to be interviewed. To manage these inconveniences, we will choose interview dates that work for your schedule.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Your participation in the research will be part of a larger effort to learn more about the experiences of undocumented college students, their college choices, and their barriers to college access. Enhancing researchers' knowledge in this area can help policymakers and administrators support legislation like the Dream Act and develop strategies to facilitate the recruitment, retention and academic success of all undocumented students. The results of the research may help us understand the many factors that influence undocumented student college choice. This may give us insight into the reasons why you and others in the study feel this way, which may help us think of solutions to any problems you face.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

You will receive no payment for your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All identifying information about participants will be masked: participants and the institution they are employed at will be referred to by pseudonyms. The researcher, Maria Luisa Woodruff, will be the only individual who will have access to the data collected in this study, which will be kept in locked filing cabinets. With your consent, interviews will be audio-taped for later transcription; both will be destroyed after the completion of this study. Subjects will also be able to review, edit, or erase sections of their research tapes and transcripts during follow up meetings.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact: Maria Luisa Woodruff at mwoodruff@ucla.edu or Dr. Walter Allen at allen@gseis.ucla.edu.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 102, Box 951694, Los Angeles, California 90095-1694, (310) 825-7122.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR OR DESIGNEE

In my judgment the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed assent to participate in this research study.

Name of Investigator or Designee

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

APPENDIX I

Faculty/Staff Pre-interview Survey

What is your assigned name _____?

What is your gender? Male (1) Female (2)

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your position? Faculty (1) Staff (2)

How many years have you worked at this university? _____

APPENDIX J

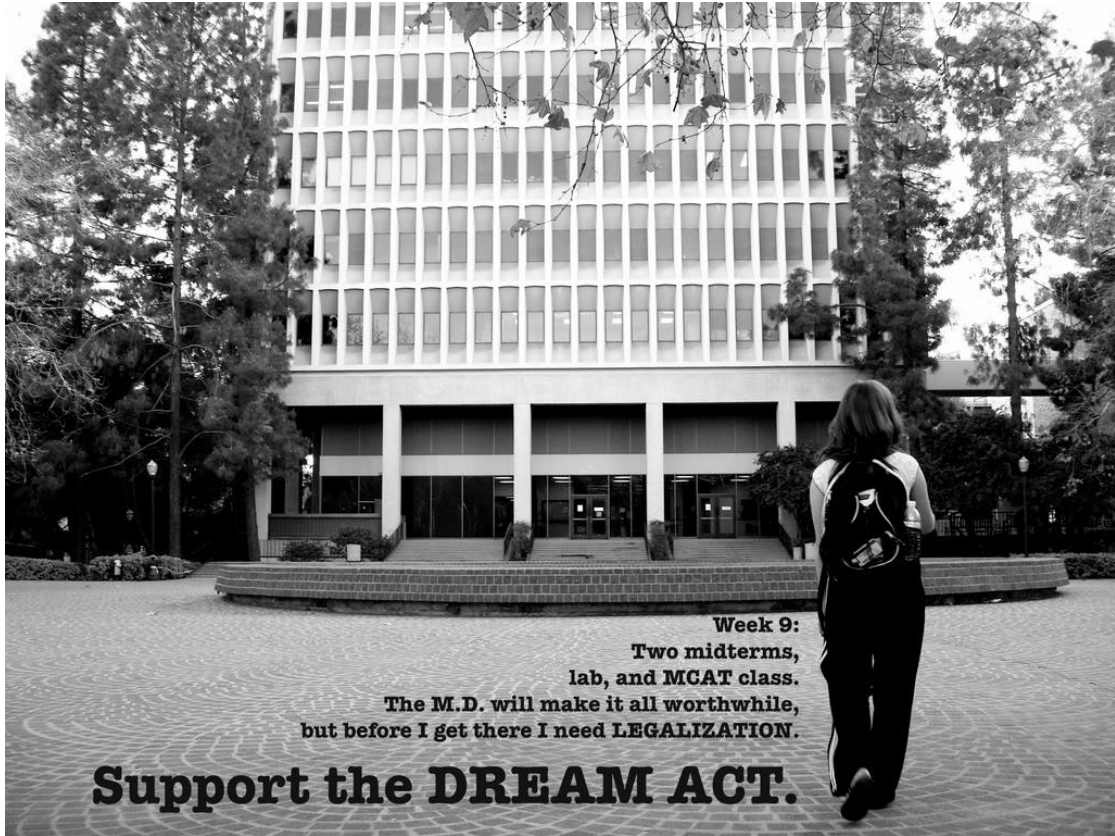
Faculty/Staff Interview Protocol

1. Introduction – Name, gender, race/ethnicity, college, department, position
2. University background
 - a. Approximately, how many undocumented students attend this university?
3. Predisposition
 - a. Does this university recruit undocumented students?
4. Search – college application process.
 - a. How do students apply without documentation?
 - b. Is any financial aid available to undocumented students? How do undocumented students apply for financial aid?
 - c. Is there anyone on staff that guides students through the application or financial aid processes?
 - d. What qualifications and qualities make undocumented students desirable admits?
5. Choice
 - a. Why do undocumented students attend this college?
 - b. What three factors do you think most influenced their decision to attend this university?
6. Challenges
 - a. What do you know about the undocumented students here?
 - b. What are the biggest challenges they faced as undocumented college applicants?
 - c. What are the biggest challenges they face as undocumented college students?
 - d. What support do you offer as an individual?
 - e. What support or services does the university offer to these students?
7. Future goals
 - a. What would you change at your university?
 - b. What is this university's strength?

APPENDIX K



APPENDIX L



**Week 9:
Two midterms,
lab, and MCAT class.
The M.D. will make it all worthwhile,
but before I get there I need LEGALIZATION.**

Support the DREAM ACT.

APPENDIX M



APPENDIX N



COMPARISON OF BENEFITS & RIGHTS BASED ON IMMIGRATION STATUS

THIS CHART IS BASED ON CALIFORNIA LAW. BENEFITS AND RIGHTS MAY BE DIFFERENT IN OTHER STATES.

	U.S. Citizen	Legal Permanent Resident	DACA Beneficiary	Undocumented
EDUCATION & FINANCIAL AID				
For more information about immigrants' rights in education, please visit www.nilc.org/education.html				
Free Public School K-12 Education	YES	YES	YES	YES
Federal Financial Aid	YES	YES	NO	NO
State Financial Aid & Grants	YES	YES	YES	YES
In-State Tuition (Colleges & Universities)	YES, if state resident for 1 Year OR AB540 eligible	YES, if state resident for 1 Year OR AB540 eligible	YES, if state resident for 1 Year OR AB540 eligible	YES, only if AB540 eligible
Private Scholarships	YES	YES	YES	YES
Government Loans	YES	YES	NO	NO
Private Loans	YES	YES	MAYBE, with a legal resident or USC co-signer	MAYBE, with a legal resident or USC co-signer
Work-Study	YES	YES	NO	NO
PUBLIC BENEFITS				
For more information about immigrants' access to public benefits, visit www.nilc.org/access-to-bens.html				
Cash Benefits - General Assistance (GA)	YES	YES	MAYBE	NO
Cash Benefits - Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF/ CalWorks - Standard Varies by County)	YES	YES	NO	NO
Cash Benefits - Social Security Income (SSI)	YES	MAYBE	NO	NO
Obama Health Insurance	YES	YES	NO	NO
Food Stamps, Public Housing (i.e. Non-Cash Benefits)	YES	YES	NO	NO
Emergency Medical Insurance	YES	YES	YES	YES
TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION				
Driver's License	YES	YES	YES	NO
Car Insurance	YES	YES	YES	MAYBE
Travel Domestically	YES	YES	YES	YES, but high-risk for detection & detention
Travel Abroad	YES	YES, with restrictions	YES, with restrictions	NO
WORK & RELATED BENEFITS				
Social Security Number	YES	YES	YES	NO
Work Authorization (Able to be Hired by Employer)	YES	YES	YES	NO
Independent Contract Work	YES	YES	YES	YES
Owning a Business (Including LLCs)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Required to Pay Taxes (Using Either SSN or ITIN)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Unemployment Benefits	YES	YES	MAYBE	NO
Workers' Compensation	YES	YES	YES	YES
CONSTITUTIONAL & CIVIL RIGHTS				
Able to Vote	YES	NO	NO	NO
Right to a Free Criminal Attorney If Can't Afford One	YES	YES	YES	YES
Right to a Free Immigration Attorney If Can't Afford One	NO	NO	NO	NO
IMMIGRATION BENEFITS				
Can Be Deported	NO, except if de-naturalized	MAYBE	MAYBE	YES, high-risk
Able to Naturalize	N/A	YES	NO	NO
Able to Petition for Family Members	YES	YES, but CANNOT petition for married children, siblings, or parents	NO	NO

To learn more about your immigration remedies and benefits, visit E4FC's Legal Services at www.e4fc.org/legalservices.html. This chart was authored by Marilia Zellner, E4FC's Legal Services Supervisor. Thank you to Sally Kinoshita (ILRC), Barbara Pinto (ILRC), and Tanya Broder (NILC) for their input.

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