

**A Study of How Participants in Local Bay Area Organizations are Empowering the
Undocumented Youth Movement**

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Acknowledgements

I would like to dedicate this project to my mom. Thank you for always teaching me to believe in the future, despite the obstacles. I dedicate this to you for your brave decision in deciding to immigrate to a new country, not knowing any English, and without a penny in your pocket. You have taught me the value of perseverance and hard work. Thank you to those who have always believed in me, to my high school English teacher Amy Beare, to my mentor Janet Tornow, to David Burwen, Susan Burwen and Jennifer Pence who have supported me financially and emotionally throughout my college career. They have become my family.

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I. Abstract

For the past decade, undocumented youth have played an important role in the current immigration debate. Many of them have occupied the streets and the offices of politicians, led campaigns, and lobbied outside Capitol Hill. Undocumented youth or DREAMers, as they are known, have politically organized to create one of the most significant current social movements in the United States. Due to their lack of legal immigration status, undocumented immigrants do not enjoy full political rights; however, they have taken ownership of civil rights and demanded an end to legal exclusion, to the path to full citizenship.

This project examines the undocumented youth movement through a case study of two Bay Area organizations in which undocumented youth participate. This thesis seeks to understand, through qualitative methods of participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with participants of the organizations, how local organizations scaffold the process for undocumented youth to assert individual agency and a powerful political voice. Understanding the work that these participants in social movements and supportive organizations do will illuminate how participation translates into political action and consequently legislative relief. Specifically, this case study examines the internal dynamics of each organization, the strategies that the organizations are using to verbalize the conditions of the undocumented youth to pursue change, and the coordination of the organizations with the larger state and national associations.

Most of the current literature surrounding the undocumented youth movement focuses primarily on the activities of national and state level organizations. This focus portrays the importance of a top-down model approach, paying less attention to the grassroots activism happening at the local level.¹ With this thesis I hope to elucidate the dynamics of local organizing in an effort to better understand the processes that underscore major political and legislative shifts at the state and national levels. Some of the shifts include the support to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants, the focus on the executive power, and the end to deportations. The study of the undocumented youth movement is essential since they are currently one of the key agents for bringing change to our broken immigration system.

¹In the book, *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigration Rights Debate*, Walter J. Nichols discusses some of the tensions between the top-down model of the national organization, led often by citizens and the increasing of more localized organizing amount undocumented youth students.

II. Introduction

On November 25th, 2013, in the city of San Francisco, an undocumented student interrupted President Obama's speech about immigration reform. The young activist called for an end to deportations: "Mr. Obama... my family has been separated for 19 months now... I've not seen my family. Our families are separated. I need your help. Mr. President, please use your executive order to halt deportations for all 11.5 million undocumented immigrants in this country right now" (KRWG News).

This outcry had been preceded by acts of civil disobedience across the United States, from occupying the office of Arizona State Senator John McCain to blocking deportation buses in front of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement offices in San Francisco. Growing numbers of young immigrant activists turned away from the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) as their main agenda, and switched their focus to the end of deportations, the abolishment of anti-immigrant policies, and the passage of Comprehensive Immigration Reform for everyone.

The DREAM Act is legislation with bipartisan support that would permit immigrant students who meet certain criteria to apply for temporary legal status and eventually become eligible for U.S. citizenship (National Immigration Center). Due to the increasing numbers of deportations under President Obama and Congress' failure to pass a law benefiting the millions of undocumented people in the United States, undocumented youth continue making demands for a path to legalization, however, for now their focus has switched to stopping deportations.

In Congress, the latest effort to repair the current immigration system was proposed on October 2, 2013 by the Democrats in the House of Representatives. H.R. 15: The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act is based on S.744, the bipartisan bill passed by the Senate on June 27, 2013. Title II of this bill is one of the sections from the bill that concerns the undocumented population since it addresses the legalization of the current unauthorized population. The bill proposes the creation of a Registered Provisional Immigrant program for undocumented immigrants and incorporates a version of the DREAM Act. Importantly, it creates a path that allows undocumented immigrants currently in the United States to legalize their immigration status and eventually obtain U.S. citizenship. Furthermore,

some unauthorized immigrants who entered the U.S as children are placed on a more accelerated path to permanent legal status and citizenship (Immigration Policy Center).

Supporters of the DREAM Act, who agree that children should not be penalized for the decisions of their parents, have nurtured this preferential status. Senator Richard Durbin, one of the strongest advocates for the DREAM Act, argues that most of the children who would be assisted by the act "... were brought to the United States when they were very young and did not have the opportunity to make an independent decision about where they would live" (Deverall 1263).

The so-called innocence argument has been fortified by highlighting the educational achievements that undocumented youth are obtaining. Such arguments made by legislators and allies have created a rhetorical representation of undocumented youth as remarkable immigrants, an image that has positively drawn the sympathy of the public. This rhetorical representation has narrowed the public perception of the undocumented experience leaving millions outside the debate.

Due to the support of various leaders in Congress for the DREAM Act, leading immigrant rights organizations decided to train undocumented youth to carry their message into the public sphere. With training and financial support from leading immigrant organizations, undocumented youth began setting up their own organizations at the national, state and local level. However, tensions over strategies occurred when larger and professional associations,² attempted to exercise control over the DREAMers (Nicholls 7). The youth then decided to create their own identity and declared themselves autonomous. Most of the literature on the DREAMers' mobilizing structures focuses on the work of the national organizations, which emerged first during the movement. Less attention, however, has been paid to the groundwork done at the local level by small and less centralized organizations in places like the Bay Area.

In the hope of acquiring additional knowledge concerning local activism, this thesis studies two local organizations from the San Francisco Bay Area. Through my research, I have developed a central conceptual question: How are local organizations empowering

² Larger and professional organization composed sometimes by adults, sometimes by undocumented youth. Nicholls emphasizes the tensions between adults and undocumented youth, however, Professor Abrams in her research in Arizona has found that this area is not that black and white. She has found that the dynamics were a little more complicated, were pre-existing groups of undocumented youth at the local level were willing to trade off autonomous over resources and training that the nationals would provide.

undocumented youth to construct individual agency and a political voice and, additionally, helping them to assert this voice in the public sphere?³ Additional questions I consider include: What are the internal dynamics and activities of each organization? What are the strategies being used to train the youth to pursue change? And how does each organization communicate with the larger national organizations and vice versa?

III. Literature Review

A. Social Mobilization: Theoretical Toolkit

Scholars of contemporary social movements believe that mobilizing structures, political opportunity and framing processes are a useful toolkit when explaining whether and when social movements occur. This toolkit was originally formulated to explain the American civil rights movement and has been used to illuminate other movements such as the women's suffrage movement in the United States and the peasant movement in Central American countries.

Mobilizing structures are the channels that translate grievances into collective actions, such as networks and established organizations that contribute to the movement's cause (Voss and Bloemraad 22). Experts in social movement theory have distinguished four types of formal organizations: social movement organizations, supportive organizations, movement associations, and parties and interest groups (Hanspeter Kriesi). Other forms of informal organizations include friendship networks and communities from members of the movement (McAdam 152). The DREAMer movement's mobilizing structure includes both formal and informal structures and a range of organizations that support the movement's cause directly or in some cases without directly taking part in the mobilization process.

During the first phase of the DREAMers movement, well-established advocacy structures were important for providing knowledge of the political culture, and legitimacy to ensure that what the undocumented youth were saying was considered believable by the national public. The help from outside organizations is of particular importance to newly arriving or newly politicized undocumented immigrants, who "are unlikely to possess sufficient levels of capital needed to produce effective and believable representations" (Nicholls 13). From the immigrant rights movement, the National Immigration Law Center and the Center for Community Change were

³I define individual agency as gaining the capacity to act; political voice as the instrumental function to communicate and pursue change.

the two main organizations that played an instrumental role in raising the issue of undocumented youth to Congress.

At the earliest stages of the campaigns, the voice was, therefore, not necessarily crafted by the members of the DREAMer movement, but by well-established supporting associations (Nicholls 13). However, when differences over strategies arose, alliances with supporting organizations ended. In the DREAMers' manifesto, members of the movement expressed their frustration with the lack of activity on the part of immigrant rights associations who preferred to negotiate with Congress: "...our allies encouraged us to avoid implementing 'controversial' tactics. We were told to wait for a better time in the future where immigration reform would again become plausible... Yet we continued to endure ICE raids and we witnessed the toxic Arizona S.B. 1070"(Dominguez). While allies of the undocumented youth movement preferred to negotiate with Congress, the political threats of state laws such as S.B 1070 drove the undocumented youth to separate from their allies' organizations and adopt more civil resistance acts, which then declared their autonomy.

Scholars of social movements emphasize the role of political opportunity structures, which refer to how members and organizations of a social movement respond to political threats and possibilities from governmental institutions. Peter Eisinger introduced the term when explaining why some cities in the United States experienced riots in the late 1960s while others did not. Eisinger found that riots tend to occur the most when cities experience both "repression and formal access." Social movements "... tend to emerge in periods when political opportunities are shifting and especially when they expand," however, "... threats and periods of contracting opportunities sometimes spur collective action (Voss and Bloemraad 28). In the case of the DREAMers, both political threats and concrete political possibilities played important roles. Political threats include the enactment of anti-immigration laws at the federal and local level, the inactivity of Congress to pass both Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the DREAM Act as a separate bill, and the increasing number of deportations. For example, in the Bay Area, federal officials detained parents at soccer games, apprehended parents when they were picking up their children from school, and deported immigrants in the middle of the night (Voss and Bloemraad x).

Opportunities for activism have occurred through the support of various senators in Congress who are pushing for immigration reform and for the DREAM Act. An example of the

political opportunities undocumented youth have experienced was the enactment of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Deferred action is a discretionary decision by the Department of Homeland Security, which protects qualified young people from deportation. Although DACA does not provide a lawful status, it is a temporary solution that allows those who meet the criteria to obtain a work permit and a social security number (E4FC).

The last item from the toolkit relates to how social movement dynamics are influenced by collective action frames and framing processes. Scholars in social movement theory have defined collective action frames as, "... action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)" (Snow and Benford). One important feature of collective action frames is the "core framing tasks," which refers to how "... movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition... make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangement, and urge others to act in concert to affect change" (Snow and Benford). Researchers believe that where different social movement organizations differ from one another is when it comes to the articulation of alternatives, which refers to the different proposed solutions to the problem, plans of attack and strategies for carrying out the plan (Snow and Benford).

Frames are defined as the "schemata of representation," a way to help render events, organize experience and guide action. The literature on framing processes includes how activists select the different frame characteristics that will appeal to potential participants and how such frames are constructed. Scholars in the field believe that frames can be conceptualized in discursive processes, strategic processes, and contested processes. Discursive processes are talks, conversations, and written communications of members that occurred in the movement activities. Under discursive process, frame articulation and frame amplification generate collective action. Social movement participants articulate frames by connecting and aligning events. Frame amplification involves the highlight of beliefs; movement's slogans are an example of such. Some of the slogans the Undocumented Youth Movement have used include, *Undocumented, Unafraid and Unapologetic, Education not Deportation, Out of the Shadows Into the Streets, We*

*will no Longer Remain in the Shadows, Stop Deportations, DACAmented, UndocuQueer, and HellaUndocumented*⁴.

Strategic processes, the second conceptualization of frames, are therefore aimed at building frames to achieve a specific purpose; “framing processes that are deliberative, utilitarian, and goal directed... to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, to acquire resources, and so forth” (Snow and Benford). Some examples of strategic processes the Undocumented Youth Movement have used are: success frame (talented and motivated students, despite many obstacles learned English, assimilated, excelled in school), waste for our economy frame (many of the undocumented youth have gone to school and benefit from resources, they are future contributors to the American economy), and assimilation frame (deserve to be here because they consider themselves Americans).

Lastly, contested processes refer to the challenges participants in the movement face when framing identities. The literature recognizes three forms such challenges tend to take: “counter framing by movement opponents, bystanders, and the media; frame disputes within movements; and the dialectic between frames and events” (Snow and Benford). For example, a type of dispute entails disagreements internally within the movement, referred as to “intra-movement disagreement.” Understanding framing contests is important because it helps to better understand the movement’s dynamics, structure, interorganizational relations, and collective identity construction.

Frames need to make sense to participants and sympathizers, and they also need to resonate with opponents. Some scholars in the field of immigration and mobilization rights believe that the most successful framing strategies are family and work because they appeal to American values. On the other hand, experience with the American immigration system, home-country pride or human rights are framing strategies, which have little purchase and often encounter significant mainstream opposition (Voss and Bloemradd 31). However, others, argue that in some cases the labor framework disserves immigrants because they may be perceived as workers who are willing to work for low wages, threatening America's economic security. In addition, when it comes to undocumented immigrants, scholars argue, “emphasizing labor as the way to gain political standing is, simply put, a bad idea, for in identifying immigrants in terms of

⁴For undocumented youth in the Bay Area, the word *hella* originated from the streets of San Francisco. It is commonly used in place of "really" or "very" when describing something.

the jobs they do, the discourse of labor frames undocumented subjectivity in terms of economics and survival rather than democratic action.... emphasizing labor promotes the tendency to see the undocumented as subjects of *necessity* rather than *natality*” (Beltran 597 - 612).

Experts believe that one of the differences between youth and adult immigrants has been the framing of identities; the undocumented youth have attempted to present themselves as more Americanized. For example, when marching and protesting, the DREAMers carry American flags instead of flags from their home country. In addition to the strategic advantage of portraying themselves as Americanized, undocumented young immigrants feel often more American than their parents because they have grown up in the United States, gone to American Schools, learned English, and for many undocumented youth the United States is the only place they know as home (Abrego).

B. Undocumented Immigration After 2000

The mobilization of the DREAMers has been in part a response to political threats such as the increase in the number of deportations and the failure of Congress to pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the DREAM Act as a stand-alone bill. Despite significant public support among members of both parties, Comprehensive Immigration Reform has not been able to pass. For more than a decade, efforts to reform the United States immigration system have been overshadowed by foreign wars and national security concerns. Experts argue that the attacks on the World Trade Center created a larger wall of resistance for immigration reform to occur, shifting “...the administration’s attention to the ‘war on terror’ and immigration was quickly reframed as a security issue” (Nicholls 33). Researchers state that the events not only shifted the focus away from immigration reform, which was seen as a domestic priority issue, but they also “fostered a resurgence of nativism” creating a “policy nexus” between immigration and criminal law (Navarro 280). After September 11th an anti-immigration sentiment spread throughout the country; furthermore, in many states and counties politicians introduced and enacted legislation that criminalized undocumented immigrants, resulting in the deportation of millions of families and the separation of families where some members are documented and some are not.

In addition, anti-immigration policies have been further intensified by the demographic transformation of the nation through the rapid growth of the Latino population (Navarro xv). The

migrant influx of the Latino population alarmed nationalistic politicians who have lobbied for anti-immigration policies. Statistics show that as of March 2009, 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States. Four in five of the unauthorized immigrants are from Latin America (Passel 19- 22). Anti-immigration policies have long been part of our country's immigration history, and during 2004 and 2006 anti-immigration policies began to intensify at the federal, state and local level. Groups such as rancher vigilantes, nativist militias, the Minuteman Project - whose slogan reads: "bringing national awareness to the illegal alien invasion" - and the nativist anti-immigration groups began to take immigration policy into their hands and pushed for harsher immigration policies (Navarro 279).

C. DREAM ACT: Pro-immigrant Legislation at the Federal Level

Although anti-immigrant policies gave rise to the undocumented youth movement, pro-immigrant policies at the federal level gave hope to the DREAMers, reinforcing their struggle. Advocates of pro-immigrant policies in Congress have promoted the opening of political opportunities, which has served as a catalyst to the growth of the DREAMer movement. In May 2001 Senator Chris Cannon of Utah introduced the Student Adjustment Act, which would "amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 to permit States to determine state residency for higher education purposes ... and adjust the status of certain alien college-bound students who are long-term U.S. residents" (H.R 1918). Later in 2003, Senator Orrin Hatch and Richard Durbin introduced a similar bill, The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM ACT). The two bills died after passing to committee (Lee 237). If passed, the DREAM Act would repeal the 1996 federal statute that penalizes states that provide in-state tuition without regard to immigration status. H.R 1819 was the first legislation introduced to Congress regarding undocumented youth; the DREAM Act is the current legislation being debated in Congress and is also included in the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill. Advocates of immigration reform in Congress have attempted to pass some components of the comprehensive immigration reform bill such as the DREAM Act, believing that such a bill stood a greater chance of success. Since 2001, several attempts to pass the DREAM Act as a separate bill were unsuccessful (Nicholls 43).

D. The DREAMer Movement.

The DREAMers emerged in 2010 as a political movement after the DREAM Act was first introduced as a separate bill. During this time, the DREAMers started “coming out” in large numbers, identifying themselves as a distinctive pro-immigration force. The movement constitutes thousands of undocumented youths who have a common identity. Almost all of them were brought to the United States at a young age either by crossing the border or with a visa that later expired. They were raised in the United States, went to American schools, learned English and assimilated to the American culture. Some of them were raised unaware of their status, while others became aware when they reached early adulthood and noticed that they were unable to get a license, identification, social security number, work permit, bank account or financial aid for college (Nicholls 47). Statistics estimate that as of 2008 there were approximately 1.4 million undocumented students living in the United States (Immigration policy Center). Roughly 50,000 to 65,000 undocumented immigrants who meet the terms of the DREAM Act graduate each year from public high schools in the United States (Olivas).

Congressional failure to pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform and the Dream Act as a stand-alone bill served as a catalyst for the growth of the undocumented youth movement. Recently, the media and several authors have documented the multiple grassroots activities performed by the DREAMers. The civil disobedience demonstrations began on May 17, 2010, when four undocumented students occupied the Arizona office of Senator John McCain after the state of Arizona enacted SB 1070 (Nicholls 1). Other activists then followed their path in states including California. On October 12, 2011, five undocumented Latino youth wearing graduation caps held a sit-in at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices in Los Angeles with the purpose of urging the Obama Administration to stop the deportation of undocumented students. Sociopolitical explanations for the strategies of the movements state “... civil disobedience reflects how the undocumented youth movement has transitioned and transformed—from a movement that was initially focused on building support for the DREAM Act to one that has increasingly used direct action to bring attention to broader issues of immigrant, civil, and human rights as a strategy for social and policy change” (Zimmerman).

Experts have found that the shift is due to the failure to pass the DREAM Act, in addition to the implementation of anti-immigrant policies that criminalized undocumented youth. At first, passing the DREAM Act was the DREAMers main goal; now their agenda includes

Comprehensive Immigration reform, which includes an additional version of the DREAM Act and the end of deportations. Following a shift in their agenda, DREAMers realized they had to be more radical and decided to implement civil disobedience acts as part of their mobilization.⁵

There is not a single organization that has guided the undocumented youth; the support comes from national immigrant rights associations, college campus groups, and local social movement organizations. Many of the local DREAMer organizations have formed coalitions with well-established advocacy organizations in order to obtain adequate legal knowledge, knowledge of national political cultures and institutions, legitimacy, and communication expertise. However, work at the ground level comprises an important component of the larger Undocumented Youth Movement, particularly from local organizations located in places, such as San Francisco, that are considered Sanctuary Ordinance.⁶ In addition, California DREAMers feel included and less stigmatized due to in-state tuition policies (Roberto G. Gonzales 224). Places, such as the Bay Area, where undocumented students have the opportunity to organize without having to worry much about security threats, can pay instate tuition, and feel a sense of inclusion, is important in order to understand how these factors affect the mobilization of local organizations.

VI. Methodological/Logic Inquiry

I used a qualitative methodological approach. One of the most crucial advantages in using a qualitative method was the opportunity to personally participate as a member of Educators For Fair Consideration (E4FC) and 67 Sueños (67 Dreams), and as an ally of the undocumented youth movement. In investigating this current phenomenon, I used a case study as the design method. The case study draws on participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of documents and art projects created by members of the organizations. At first, I intended to primarily use participatory observation for the two organizations. However, I found it difficult to find opportunities to observe E4FC since they do not hold meetings with their members on a regular basis. As an alternative, I decided to take on an interview-based approach.

⁵Professor Abrams has found that in Arizona is not a way ratchet -undocumented young people tend to move back and forth between a pro-system “insider” repertoire and and a direct action “outsider” repertoire

⁶San Francisco passed the "City and County of Refuge" Ordinance, which prohibits City employees from helping Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with immigration investigations or arrests unless such help is required by federal or state law or a warrant.

In contrast, 67sueños hosts four youth team meetings per week, which made it more suitable to schedule observations.

This project involves three different levels of data sets: national, organizational and individual. The national level data includes mainly scholarly sources about the debate of undocumented students at the federal and state level. For this part of the project, I include a broad overview of undocumented immigration policies from 2000 to present day; including both pro-immigration and anti-immigration policies. Laws at the national level include the Comprehensive Immigration Reform, H.R. 15: The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act based on S.744, the bipartisan bill passed by the Senate, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (Dream Act), Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Border Protection, and the Anti-terrorism and the Illegal Immigration Control Act (“Sensenbrenner Bill,” H.R. 4437). Such policies help explain the birth of the undocumented youth movement. The data drawn from participant observation, semi-structured interviews and the study of documents from each organization provides data at the organizational and individual level. My units of analysis are E4FC and 67Sueños as organizations, but I will draw upon data regarding those organizations from observation and interviews with individual participants. Since I use different techniques for each organization, I will discuss my method of research for each organization separately and conclude this section with points of similarities.

A. Educators For Fair Consideration

E4FC is a service provider organization located in San Francisco that provides undocumented students with educational resources, legal information, scholarships, grants, and leadership and career development opportunities. Their overall mission includes providing the tools to empower undocumented young people achieve their academic and career goals and to contribute actively to the overall society. E4FC was not originally created as an organization to mobilize youth; instead it started as a supportive organization - service organizations that contribute to the given movement without directly taking part in the mobilization for collective action (Kriesi). However, they are gradually becoming a *social movement organization* with their more recent program, Policy Advocacy. E4FC hopes to politically mobilize youth by creating an

advocacy platform for undocumented students and conducting policy research and analysis to develop and implement an advocacy action plan on education and immigration issues.

I decided to include E4FC in my project, partly because of my experience as a legal intern with the Legal Advocate Team; I have been working with E4FC since September 2013. When I initially joined the organization, I did not know much about their work. In fact, throughout my internship as a legal intern, I was only exposed to the work of the legal team. Through my project, I learned more about the rest of the organization, how it works, included the different service and leaders. I conducted four semi-structured interviews; three interviews were with staff members and the fourth was with an ex-member of the organization. My personal journey with E4FC has guided some aspects of my research, but the findings for this project includes mostly data collected from the four interviews I conducted. In addition, I analyzed documents and art project posted in E4FC's website.

To collect the data from E4FC, I interviewed Katherine Gin (Co-Founder and Executive Director), Krsna Avila (ex-participant and current Legal Services Manager), Jose Ivan Arreola (Outreach and Organizing Manager), and Ju Hong (ex-member). Each interview lasted approximately two hours and the questions varied within each interview. For example, when interviewing Katherine, I asked questions related to the mission and history of the organization, as well as the strategies she uses as a co-founder. While interviewing Krsna and Jose, I was interested in finding about their job as managers, the impact E4FC had in their lives, and their participation in the Undocumented Youth Movement.

Unlike Krsna, Jose came to E4FC as a staff member and has been less inclined to participate in civil disobedience acts. Ju, although not a current member of the organization, has received support and guidance from E4FC's programs. When interviewing Ju, I was interested in learning how participating in such programs shaped his academic and personal life, and his decision to be politically active. Ju is one of the most outspoken persons in the Bay Area when it comes to the issue of undocumented immigration - he is the same person that interrupted President Barack Obama's immigration speech in San Francisco.

The four interviews were semi-structured; I had prepared some questions, but the questions were mostly points of references to guide the conversation. I audio recorded all of the interviews and transcribed most parts of the interviews. Not all my interviewees were undocumented, Katharine was born in the U.S. of Chinese parents. Krsna and Jose, Mexico

natives were brought to the United States when they were babies. When Krsna joined E4FC he was undocumented, but was able to benefit from the Child Status Protection Act due to an old family petition. He is now a Legal Permanent Resident and will soon become a citizen. Jose comes from a mix-status family, he is undocumented, but has benefited from DACA. Similar, Ju has received DACA, he is from North Korea and came when he was 13 years old, he and his family are undocumented.

B. 67 Sueños

67 Sueños is a project funded and supported by the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker Organization. The name “67 Sueños” came about as recognition to the 67 percent of undocumented students who would not benefit from the DREAM Act, if passed.⁷ The program works as an internship, where students receive school credits from participating in it. Instead of services, or financial aid, students experience a one year life-changing class, where they learn about issues related to the undocumented immigrant community. 67 Sueños’ office is located in San Francisco, and works with three different high schools across the Bay Area. The program supports high school students from underprivileged backgrounds, provides them with information about immigration policy and encourages them to participate in direct actions, such as hunger strikes, rallies, sit-ins, and civil disobediences acts.

I learned about 67 Sueños through Professor Kathryn Abrams’ URAP students (Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program) at Berkeley. Most of the undocumented organizations in the Bay Area are service-provider organizations, since E4FC falls under this category I wanted to find an organization that had a heavier political agenda. I was able to find contact information on their webpage and personally met Pablo Paredes, the co-founder of the program. I conducted my observations from the middle of February until the end of April. During this period, I participated in eight of their regular membership meetings; in addition, I participated in three major events the group organized: *Abuelito Fue Bracero* showcase (Grandpa was Bracero showcase), *NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL* mural reception and 5k *Hella UndocuRun*. During my observations, I participated in the group’s activities, spoke at the

⁷Statistics from the Migration Policy Institute show that out the undocumented youth population only 38 percent will benefit from the DREAM Act, if passed. However, 67 Sueños believe that such statistics are too conservative and that the real numbers are closer to 33 percent.

meetings and discussions, and helped the group with small tasks during the events. I brought a recorder and audio-recorded their meetings while participating in the activities with the students.

The first day I arrived to 67 Sueños, I introduced my thesis project topic and told the students about my story. Students responded positively and some of them asked me questions about the school. I felt comfortable since I began participating in 67 Sueños, but I noticed that it took a couple of days for the majority of students to feel comfortable around me. I connected with some students more than with others, but I tried to converse with all of them and asked them about their days, school homework and projects, or taste in music. All of the students were really polite and would always greet me at the beginning of the class. Some even asked me about when I would be back at the end of the meetings and events.

Being an observing participant allowed me to record daily life activities, expressions of feeling, interactions within the group, language used by the participants and time spent on various activities. Unlike with E4FC, I arrived to 67 Sueños knowing nothing about the program or anyone in the group. Thus, using participatory observation helped me become known to the members, thereby easing the communication process with 67 Sueños members. My role as a participant observer affected the student's responses. Although I am not undocumented myself, I connected with most of the youth from 67 Sueños as an immigrant of low-income background raised by a single mother. While most participants in 67 Sueños are undocumented, several were in the process of deportation proceedings and other form of humanitarian visas, such as U-VISA.



Abuelito Fue Bracero Mural - Showcase, Oakland California

C. Points of Intersections

As I focus on social mobilization, I paid great attention to the organization's day to day functioning, performance of particular tasks – such as putting on programs, response to events in the city, state, and country affecting immigrants, and tensions between members and coordinators. I also examined how the organizations respond to the political environment, including both pro- and anti-immigration policies. Finally, I wanted to understand whether organizations are built on an already growing sense of common fate and solidarity or if they were created based on a new sense of shared identity and collective interests.

Ultimately, the interviews and participatory observation provided the opportunity to see two different perspectives of the undocumented youth immigrant community. Working with 67 Sueños offered a closer look into the lives of underprivileged⁸ undocumented students who would not benefit from the DREAM Act. On the other hand, E4FC focused on highly academically talented students and their forms ways of mobilizing. In addition to the interviews and the participatory observation, this paper also included data collected from various art projects created by each organization and individual members.

In my findings, I include an illustrative framework of each organization and a comparative framework between the two local organizations, as well as possible themes of discussion that emerged through my research. Being able to interact directly with the undocumented youth activists enriched my knowledge about the movement and gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the movement. The data I collected illustrates the voices of a variety of undocumented students, allies and co-founders from both organizations. With the gathered data, I hope to broaden the understanding of the undocumented youth movement and provide a detailed understanding of local undocumented youth activism in the Bay Area.

V. Findings

This section includes interview findings and conclusions on my participant observations, which reveal how local organizations empower its participants to construct individual agency and a political voice. In my interview findings, I focus on E4FC's staff members and a previous member of the organization. In addition, the interview findings provided data about E4FC's

⁸ Underprivileged undocumented students as those undocumented students who attend impoverished schools, lack educational opportunities/resources, come from families where education is not perceived as valuable, and parents are uneducated.

target population and the different programs within the organization. The conclusions from 67 Sueños' participant observations focus on leaders and members of the organization, dynamics of the membership meetings and the healing encounters.

A. Educated, Motivated, Undocumented

“My mom was a teacher in Mexico and education was always hugely important, but it was never important for an end in terms of like college or career. My education was important, the way I was thought because there are real injustices in the world, education is important because of real oppressions in the world, we feel it, my family feels it and I need to know because I need to fight that injustice” (Jose Arreola, Interview).

E4FC empowers undocumented students to achieve their academic and career goals, in order to actively contribute to society. The organization started as a service provider organization by providing direct support to undocumented students in the form of scholarships, internships, and mentorship. It was established in 2006, a time where there was not much visibility about the needs of undocumented students. This made it difficult for E4FC to raise funds and recruit allies or even undocumented students to the organization. Their first service was a scholarship fund in 2007 that collected \$14,000.00 and benefited seven students. Throughout their eight years, E4FC has given out a total of \$500,000.00 in scholarships to undocumented students. It started as a volunteer-based organization. In 2010, it collected enough funding to pay staff members. During its first years, E4FC's members met in Katherine's kitchen and living room to celebrate holiday parties, share quotes and exchange gifts; unintentionally it turned into a group of students volunteering to further develop programs. Its first program, the 2009 Ambassador program, provided training in public speaking, media relations, community and campus organizing and federal and state policy affecting immigrant⁹ college students to a selected numbers of students.

i. Katharine Gin

“We as human beings are motivated, but our own success and our own desires, but we also are motivated by our feeling of being part of a group, our satisfaction comes from a feeling that our individual success has meaning to other people. But I feel that most of the people that we work with are really motivated by being successful, but that success feels contingent in being able to bring more people along with them” (Interview).

⁹ I used the word immigrant and not undocumented because during its first years E4FC was not public about helping undocumented students. Their way to fund money and resources was framing the students as immigrants facing difficulties.

<http://www.e4fc.org/images/E4FC.09.AmbassadorApp.pdf>

Katharine Gin is the co-founder and executive director of E4FC, a position she says she received accidentally. She never thought about focusing on undocumented students or starting a non-profit. Her journey began when she saw an issue that grabbed her attention. She describes, “My cofounder and I really were just two people who came into contact with undocumented students.” Like many organizations, E4FC started because there was a need to help undocumented students go to college. She explains, “All the circumstance of building an organization to address that need came secondarily” (interview). In addition to her work with E4FC, Katharine serves on the Leadership Committee of the California Immigrant Policy Center (CIPC) and the National Advisory Board of TheDream.US

Katharine initially co-founded E4FC with Carrie Evans, both who were educators working with low income and minority youth - neither of them come from low income backgrounds. The two of them did not know much about advocacy efforts, or how to pressure legislators. Although scholarships were the first service E4FC provided to undocumented students, originally Carrie and Katharine did not intend to start a scholarship program. They intended to bring visibility about undocumented students to scholarship providers by collecting stories of undocumented students. She reports, “We thought that once scholarship providers read these stories, they could not say no to undocumented students,” but Gin admits that this was really a naïve idea. “It was not as easy as we thought,” she found that scholarship providers were afraid and legal fears prevented scholarship providers from supporting undocumented students. Katharine recalls, “...they felt like they could not measure the rewards of that kinds of investment. If students could not work, they also could not guaranteed students success on being able to go to college,” that “...their investments were worthwhile” (interview). Katharine and Carrie then decided to provide a model for scholarships to show that it was possible to create a scholarship fund for undocumented students and, more importantly, to illustrate that students could succeed academically and provide economic value to society. Carrie left E4FC to continue her career as a nurse. However, Katharine continued to build an organization that now serves 150 students annually. She admits this could not have been possible without the support of the community, friends, her family and undocumented students themselves who have developed and helped to coordinate the organization.

Katharine’s inclination for education allowed her to identify and relate with students who were academically motivated. In addition, her family’s immigration history allowed her to

understand some of the issues immigrants faced. Katharine explained that her American-born grandmother lost her citizenship when she married her grandfather, a Chinese immigrant. Thus, the issues of undocumented students are close to her family's background and her heart. During the early years of E4FC, Katharine decided to conceive a baby, but she experienced some difficulties. This personal struggle enabled her to connect with the undocumented students she met. In them, she saw the power of perseverance in the face of serious difficulties.

ii. Jose Arreola

“E4FC has given me an amount numbers of opportunities, to do something meaningful in my life, to be part of a community that understands me in a very deep way. We all shared really profound experiences, whether that is being undocumented or formerly undocumented, being an immigrant, or just being very passionate about the issued. It has given me an opportunity to growth, I am completely different than what I was in 2010...” (Interview)

Jose Arreola is the Outreach and Organizing Manager at E4FC. He was born in Durango, Mexico and immigrated to the United States when he was four years old. He has been aware of his undocumented status since he was a little boy. Jose grew up in Mountain View, where he graduated high school with a full scholarship to attend Santa Clara University. In many of his classes, he was the only undocumented student, but he worked hard and graduated with 13 Advanced Placement classes. At Santa Clara University, Jose obtained three degrees; Political Science, History and Ethnic Studies. During his college experience, he realized what being undocumented meant when his parents were put in deportation proceedings, as he faced issues of barriers, access and safety. Fortunately, Jose's parents cancelled the deportation proceedings and became eligible for immigration remedies. However, Jose's parents did not include him in the beneficial application in case the application was denied. If this happened, he would be able to stay here in the United States to finish his education and take care of his two younger sisters, who were born in the U.S.

Jose found out about E4FC through an email from a friend. He reached out to Kathryn and she immediately recruited him. In the fall of 2010, Jose came to E4FC and recognized that “the organization was much smaller and less organized.” However, in a matter of four months, Jose had organized the Outreach team with a cohort of 16 undocumented students from all over the Bay Area. Now, Jose spends much of his time training students and giving presentations across the nation to educators, parents and the community. Unlike, some activists in the undocumented youth movement, Jose does not take much initiative in participating in civil

disobedience acts. Instead, he believes in being a part of the undocumented immigrant community, engaging in conversations with community members, and talking with folks about their lives, struggles, and challenges. However, in working with E4FC, Jose has been able to speak at different venues, and travel around the United States speaking with politicians, legislators, and local representatives. Last year, Jose focused on lobbying for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. He sees himself doing mostly community organizing work and bringing people together. He admits that he will do any necessary job “...to uplift - transform society in order to fully integrate my community” (interview). For his future plans, Jose hopes to continue making use of his knowledge and experiences to empower, support and trained undocumented youth immigrants across the Bay Area.

iii. Krsna Avila

“I got my green card, educated we smart
Fighting real hard, till' the DREAM reach us

Let me take you to a place of insanity
Once told me I don't belong but I did my thing

And I struggled, struggled
But I hustled, hustled
Till' they gave me my rights, but it's far from over”
(Song *I wanna be a Citizen* by Krsna Avila, Ju Hong and Beto)

Krsna is the Legal Services Manager at E4FC. Krsna came to the United States with his mother and father when he was four months old. Growing up, he did not ponder much about his immigration status until he was 16 and his parents received a deportation letter from immigration services. At that moment, Krsna became aware of his family’s undocumented status. Fortunately, his parents were able to obtain a cancellation of their deportation proceedings and adjusted their status, but Krsna was not able to benefit from it. After graduating from high school, he attended UC Davis with the financial aid from scholarships. During college, he experienced impediment ranging from being unable to go to nightclubs with his classmates or legally drive. He became devoted to finding a way to obtain a legal status. He began asking for information at school; he was told that nothing could be done and some counselors recommended that he immigrate to Canada. Krsna was devastated, until one day he, unexpectedly, received an email describing

E4FC's mission in helping undocumented students. He decided to contact Kathryn, and he ultimately applied for the 2009 Ambassadors program. Krsna has been part of E4FC for five years.

In 2009, as part of the Ambassadors program, Krsna organized an awareness event about the issue of undocumented immigrants at UC Davis. That day was the first time he "came out" as undocumented in front of friends and classmates. After graduating with a B.S in Sociology and Psychology, Krsna started volunteering his time at E4FC as an intern. His work included creating a guide for undocumented students who were graduating from college and needed more information about continuing their post-graduate education and for those who were looking for job opportunities. Working with E4FC, he noticed the need for legal advice in the undocumented youth community and, with the support of Katharine, developed the Legal Services Team. In this journey, Krsna acquired in-depth knowledge of U.S. immigration law and used this knowledge to pursue and gain lawful permanent residency for himself and to help others in similar situations. After five years of working for the undocumented immigrant community, he will attend Cornell Law School.

iv. Ju Hong

Ju Hong was part of the 2009 Ambassador program. Last year E4FC granted him a scholarship to attend graduated school and he maintained a close relationship with the organization. Ju realized he was undocumented during his senior year in high school, when he found he needed a Social Security number in his college application. Ju, now 24, arrived in the United States when he was eleven years old from South Korea. For more than thirteen years, he has not been able to go back to South Korea and visit his grandma, who he considers his second mom. When Ju found out that he was undocumented, he felt lost trying to figure out how to attend a university. With the help of his mom, Ju contacted the Korean Resources Center in Los Angeles. The organization helped him with his college application and referred him to a Bay Area organization. His biggest dream was to obtain an education in the United States, so he started looking for scholarships and asked his friends about scholarships for undocumented immigrants. In 2008, during his senior year in high school, one of his closest friends found about E4FC and told Ju to apply for the scholarship. He applied, but did not get it. Lacking the appropriate funds to attend a four-year university, Ju decided to attend Laney Community

College in Oakland. He started as a business major, but later discovered his passion for politics and decided to switch majors. He has always been an interest in learning more about immigration laws; this personal motivation drove him to be more active in school and in his community. Ju transferred to UC Berkeley, where he obtained a Political Science degree and joined the student government and other student programs to voice the stories of undocumented students on campus.

Ju considers himself an aggressive and assertive person and he believes his strong personality opened the door to many opportunities. During the fall of 2009, E4FC hosted a workshop where Ju approached Katharine to tell her about his situation. Later on, Katharine contacted Ju and told him about the Ambassador program. As part of the program, Ju decided to create his own website and a video, where, for the first time, he revealed his immigration status as undocumented. Since then, Ju has maintained a close relationship with Katharine, from whom he received mentorship. Ju also received sponsorship from this organization, he explained, “E4FC sponsors me, they put the logo on it, the legitimacy in my events.” The latest event Ju received E4FC sponsorship was 2012 rally in San Francisco, which encouraged undocumented students “come out.” More recently, Ju’s mobilizing goals include stopping deportations, as his courageous act in front of President Obama demonstrates. He said, “My immediate goal right now is to hold deportations, the actions that I am doing, the participations that I am doing, is to hold deportations of the undocumented immigrants’ families.” Ju is now pursuing his masters degree from the University of San Francisco and planning a trip back to South Korea after receiving advance parole - a conditional and temporary international travel permit for those with DACA.

v. E4FC Target Population

E4FC serves three populations: the first category are undocumented students between 14 and 35 years old; the second are parents and family members of undocumented young people; and the third group consists of educators and allies of undocumented young people. Katherine describes E4FC members as students, “... who had a lot of going for them, who just had a lot of family support, seemed to have motivation, support. Who were coming from environments where they had a network for themselves, but were really blocked by something that no amount of human effort, connections and motivations could not overcome” (Interview). E4FC mostly serves and works with highly motivated, academically talented students who graduate high

school with honors and AP classes and go onto college. Many of them struggle with finding ways to pay for their education, but with financial aid from private scholarships they are able to afford college.

Those who receive services from E4FC do not experience a uniform sense of empowerment. The first category is staff members, who have been empowered the most by the organization; they have received Katherine's mentorship, resources, and monetary compensation in exchange for work. The second category are those in the organization that have been members of the different programs, such as the Ambassador program, Legal Advocate team or the Outreach Ambassador Team. This also includes those who have received financial support and monetary compensation from the scholarship fund programs and art contest. The third group are those students who might have never physically contacted the organization, but benefit from information in the guides posted in the website or in social media pages and those who receive legal information from the legal intake. And finally, the last group constitutes parents, family members of undocumented young people, educators and allies that benefit from presentations the Outreach and Organizing Team gives.

vi. E4FC Programs

With only a nine-member staff, E4FC created four major programs: Scholars Program, which provides up to \$7,000 to cover tuition and other expenses to a group of students; Legal Services Team, which offers a free screening and provides legal information with possible immigration remedies; and the Outreach Ambassador Program, which offers presentations, workshops, and trainings for middle schools, high schools, colleges, community organizations, foundations and affinity groups in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. This year the organization is launching their first Policy Advocacy Team with the hope of conducting policy research and analysis to implement an advocacy action plan.

vii. Communication with Local, State and National Organizations

There is not a structural connection between E4FC and larger organizations. When E4FC started, it provided legal advice to the DREAM Activist's members who wanted to evaluate the risks of being deported when participating in civil disobedience acts. They, also, worked with

Dream Defenders group¹⁰ and Deportation Defense. More recently, E4FC partnered with the DREAM Project, a national campaign to help undocumented students to apply for DACA, through the Legal Service. The project is a collaboration headed by United We Dream and other major national organizations. E4FC maintains ties with larger organization, mostly with the Legal Services Team and Krsna. In fact, the Legal Services was partially created because of the need for legally supporting activists in national groups such as DREAM Activists.

B. Hella Undocumented

“67 Sueños, Sesenta y Siete DREAMs
Estamos en la LUCHA, Switchin up the scene
Hella Undocumented, Hella Clean
Migrant Youth Warriors with a Little Lean”
(67 Sueños Poem)

Founded in 2010, 67 Sueños (67 Dreams) empowers under-privileged undocumented youth from across the Bay Area. The program, comprised of a small group of only fifteen high school students, is led by migrant justice activists Pablo Paredes, Jacqueline Garcia and Yoxeli Romero. Students in the program receive support, learn about immigration issues and are eager to become politically mobilized in order to voice their stories and the stories of those excluded from the immigration debate. A total of approximately 40 students have participated in the program throughout the past four years. Instead of services or financial aid, students receive a one-year life-changing training class where they learn about issues related to the undocumented migrant community. Most of the resources are allocated to the cohort of students who participate in the program, but at the events and murals, ex-students, the local community, family members, educators and other undocumented young people in the movement participate as well.

i. Staff Members: Migrant Justice Activists

a. Pablo Paredes

After working with AFSC for more than four years, *Pablo Paredes*, founder of 67 Sueños, was able to obtain funding for the program. 67 Sueños’ mission in focusing on underprivileged undocumented students has been influenced by Pablo’s personal journey.

¹⁰ The Dream Defenders is a national organization directed by Black & Brown Youth, who confront systemic inequality by building our collective power.

Growing up in the South Bronx, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country at that time, Pablo was involved in juvenile crime. At the age of 18, Pablo joined the Navy because he saw this as the easiest way to survive. A few years later, he refused to board a ship ferrying soldiers to fight Iraq and was discharged. Since then, Pablo became an activist about issues that matter to him. As a son of two immigrants, he recognizes the struggles immigrants' parents face when migrating to the United States and understands the implications of these struggles for the lives of immigrant youth. Pablo chooses to invest his time and work in empowering young immigrants who might lack support at school or at home.

b. Jacqueline Garcia

Jackie was born and raised in the United States. She comes from a mixed-status family: her parents immigrated to the United States unlawfully, but a few years ago obtained their papers. She is a full-time student at San Francisco State University pursuing Liberal Studies and Latina/o Studies. Jackie attended Metwest High School and became involved with 67Sueños when she was a student there. She has been in the program for more than three years, and is now a youth coordinator, a part-time paid position. In addition, Jackie was one of the first members in helping to recruit the first cohort of students. She is a hardworking student who balances a full time job, a full load of classes and family responsibilities at the same time.

c. Yoxeli Romero

Yoxeli is a full-time employee of the organization who works as a youth coordinator. She has been part of the program for about three years, but her work as a youth coordinator just started a few months ago. She is originally from Guerrero, Mexico and has been living in the United States for about 13 years without papers. She graduated from Metwest High School and hopes one day to attend college. Due to financial difficulties and family responsibilities, however, Yoxeli has not been able to attend a university. After DACA, she was able to obtain the job with 67 Sueños and now is able to support her family. Yoxeli is extremely proud of her indigenous Mexican culture; she embraces it in the program by including indigenous practices such as burning copal - a sacred tree sap from native peoples of Mexico, used in ceremonies to cleanse the body, mind and soul.

ii. Members: Migrant Youth Warriors

Since 2010, 67 Sueños has been bringing together high school students from across the Bay Area to represent the millions of underprivileged undocumented students that would not benefit from the DREAM Act if passed. Although some of 67 Sueños members are eligible for the DREAM Act, they disapproved of the bill and do not identify as DREAMers due to its exclusion of millions of undocumented young immigrants. For the majority of 67 Sueño's students, attending school is not a main priority due to family responsibilities and (or) lack of financial support to afford school. To get into the program, students have fill out an application and go through an interview process. Leaders of the organization try to recruit the most vulnerable students such as victims of immigration system, those who are involved in gang or crime related activities, and those who face problems at home.

During the first years, the program only included students from Metwest High School in Oakland. Throughout time, it has expanded to two more high schools: Coliseum College Prep Academy (CCPA) and San Francisco International High School. There are currently fifteen students; however, the program keeps a close relationship with some ex-members. Those who currently attend the program range from 16- 18 years old and reflect a variety of class groups. Not all the students are undocumented; some come from mixed-status families and others are in the process of obtaining a legal status. Those who are U.S citizens have a close family member who is undocumented. Although most of the students come from a low-income social class, there are some students that are more privileged than others. For example, while some of the students come from a family where they are able to afford rent for a house and a car, some of the students live in the living room of a house.

Privilege also comes in other forms such as language barriers. Students from San Francisco International are English as Second Language students who immigrated to the United States when they were teenagers. Language is a barrier for these students to participate in discussions. However, it is important to note that the coordinators always encouraged them to speak even if it means speaking in Spanish. The conversations and discussions are mostly in English; however, there is a tendency for most members to blend Spanish and English - particularly when students refer to something that identifies them as Latin Americans or when saying something about their parents. All of the members of the group speak Spanish; there are no monolingual English speakers. The students from the other two high schools are mostly

students who immigrated to the United States at a younger age compared to those from San Francisco International; they are fluent in both Spanish and English.

iii. *Encuentros*

“We are We”
(67 Sueños’ students saying)

The *encuentros* encompasses a variety of activities that aim to target individual trauma, and empower group members to organize within the Undocumented Youth Movement. There are some activities that are clearly created with the purpose of healing some of the trauma the members experienced due to their immigration status: deportation of a family member or common issues that most of the immigrant community experience, such as lack of education, adequate health care or lack of parental guidance. This healing is done formally through storytelling. On a particular chosen day members voluntarily speak about their story; in the process others listen, share, cry, and support one another. Once students share their story, some of them decide to write a poem, which then becomes an important piece of healing for others in the community. In most cases, both Pablo and the other students serve as teachers by providing feedback to the particular student’s poem piece. Later, students are encouraged to share their piece in rallies, events and civil disobedience acts that are sometimes organized by 67 Sueños, or sometimes Pablo and the other leaders simply encourage students to take part in activities that are organized by other groups in the Bay Area. 67 Sueño’s members take part in events organized by other groups, too. For example, Litzy, 15-year-old student in the program wrote a poem about her mom being putted in deportation proceedings. In the poem, she tells her story from when she was only four years old and saw her mom being taken away by Immigration Customs Services (ICE). I have seen Litzy performed her poem about three times and there is not a time her poem brings tears to my eyes. Litzy has been invited to recite her poem at 29th Annual Empowering Woman of Color at the University of California, Berkeley, as well as less formal events such in the Bay Area community. Storytelling also occurs sporadically during the everyday meetings through check-ins and discussions.

iv. Regularly Scheduled Meetings

“We follow our Heart”
(67 Sueño Saying)

Students arrived between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.; some of them get there a little bit earlier to prepare lunch for the rest of the group. Not all the students meet together every day, San Francisco International meets every Monday and Wednesday in their high school, those from CCPA and Metwest meet together as another group every Tuesday in the office. All of the students reunite on Thursdays for their Political Activism class that takes place in the office. The main focus of the class is to present students with examples of political activism and current immigrant right issues. The program usually starts around 1:00 p.m.; the ending time varies depending on the day. One of the two youth coordinators, Yoxeli or Jackie, begins the program with an overview of the agenda for the day. The agenda always starts with a “check-in” question: *from one to ten how are you feeling and why?* In addition, it also includes another question that varies, for example: *what do you like to do over the summer? Or what was your favorite cartoon show?* Such questions are selected according to the main theme of the day. I was always impressed by the sincerity of the student’s responses. Some of the students will take the check-in opportunity to talk about a family problem, a problem at school or just simply a bad night. As a form of respect, it is important for the students to not start eating lunch while others were talking about their feelings. Food is always served either after or before check ins.

The longest part of the meeting includes educational workshops on topics such as healthy relationships, immigration issues, or, for example, a documentary about black history in Latin America. After each educational workshop, a discussion follows: students sit around the table and discuss ideas and express their thoughts and feelings. For the students it is really important to learn about their “own” history as Latin Americans, as well as issues that affect their lives, such as domestic violence and unhealthy relationships. Almost every student speaks at least once during the meetings; there are some discussions that require the students to express their opinion. At the time of participation, there is a ritual that the next person eligible to speak is to your immediate left - a gesture based on the fact that your heart is located on the left side of your chest, thus participation follows to the left, the heart.

A lot of the educational pieces are heavy material, so to balance the energy around the room; the agenda follows with icebreakers or games such as link tag. These games are intended

to change the atmosphere, and to help the youth feel comfortable together and have fun. The last part of the meeting includes community-building activities, where students organize and plan future events. Finally, their day ends with appreciations, where each student appreciates someone else in the group.

v. Dynamics of Activities and Events

In the two months I spent with 67 Sueños I observed and attended three major events: *Abuelito Fue Bracero Showcase*, *NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL Mural reception* and *5K Hella Undocurun*. Activities and events are chosen at the discretion of the students. Before the year starts, the students decide the immigration-related issue that will be studied and discussed: themes in the past include Dream Act, Ag Jobs, DACA, and the Bracero Program. Although facilitated by Paredes, Yoxeli and Jackie, most of the projects are created and developed by the youth. Last year's cohort chose to study and focus on the Bracero Program, a guest worker program that began after World War II and employed Mexicans as farm laborers. During the summer of 2013, the students interviewed 12 braceros, and brought their stories into the public view through a mural, which followed a showcase. When I first arrived at the organization, the students were in the last phase of organizing *Abuelito Fue Bracero (Grandpa was Bracero) Showcase*. Students were in charge in putting together the event, from buying *papel picado*, to getting the food, and promoting the event. The second event was a reception celebrating the reconstruction of 67 Sueños's first mural *NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL*. The mural was one of the largest projects the group worked on, it was a 3,000 square foot long mural located behind their San Francisco office. Unfortunately, a year after the mural was created; the mural was covered by the construction of a major apartment complex.



67 Sueños - 2010 Mural No Human Being Is Illegal.

However, the students were able to find a space outside a small Latino operated business and repaint the mural. The new mural still portrays some of the same elements featured on the first mural, however there were some major changes, including the inclusion of new youth members. The 2010 mural, featured three members from the first cohort of students, one of them is Yoxeli. The youth thought it was a good idea to repaint the mural, but switching the leaders. During the reception, community members and parents listened to the new generation of students' stories and poetry.

Their third event, *HellaUndoRun* was a 5-kilometer run held in collaboration with Mecha of UC Berkeley. It was a fundraising community event to lift through music, art, and spoken word the stories of immigrants who cross running the borders of the United States. Everyone who participated was asked to choose a reason to run, after the run the crowd gathered and for a few seconds everyone shared their reason for running. Participants run for deported loved ones, for family members who had crossed the border and for policy shifts that needed to happen. Communication with local, state and national organizations is similar to E4FC; there is not a structural connection between 67 Sueños and larger organizations. 67 Sueños works closer with local organizations such as the East Bay Interfaith Immigration Coalition and in their latest event *HellaUndocRun* the organization partnered with the school-based group MEChXa from the University of California, Berkeley.

VI. Discussion

Non-profit organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area are empowering undocumented youth by targeting individuals' needs and providing them with the resources and guidance necessary to develop individual agency and a political voice. The strategies each organization uses vary according to their visions of engagement: E4FC adopts engagement through education and institutional advocacy, and 67 Sueños incorporates engagement through community organizing and the arts. At E4FC the discourse of how undocumented immigrants justify making claims on the state level involves progressing toward the American Dream whereas at 67 Sueños it follows by virtue of their human rights¹¹.

A. Empowerment and Healing of the Individual

¹¹ While I saw this divergence in discourse, I didn't have a chance to see how it unfolded in any detail.

Immigrant rights nonprofit organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area, have formed to provide undocumented youth the space and tools to organize. In the process, students learn about other students and allies, and strong relationships begin to form. At these spaces, undocumented youth find that they are not alone; they start to engage in conversations where they recognize common identities and needs. Thus, what started as a group of students who did not know much about one another turns into a community of support willing to take action to bring social change. Through internships, volunteer, or sometimes paid jobs offered by non-profit organizations, undocumented students for the first time learn about the issues that affect the undocumented immigrant community, and gain community organizing and leadership skills. As they benefit from the opportunities organizations offer, undocumented students find ways to address both the individual and systemic problems facing their community. In this context, non-profit organizations have fused services to bring social justice.

i. Undocumented Youth at the Front of the Organization

Horizontal relationships, consensus decision-making, self-empowerment and the belief that as the most affected, undocumented youth should be in the front of the organization, characterize the organizational structure and function of the two groups. At E4FC, the organization has several different programs and all the programs are led by undocumented youth, except for the Legal Advocate Team, which is headed by Krsna - who adjusted his status while in the organization. E4FC holds staffs meetings once a week, where each person checks-in with the rest of the leaders, gives an update about their work and provides feedback to other leaders' projects. According to Jose, all decisions are consensus based, where every person in the room has to agree with the decision, except when it comes to funding – where Katherine is the one who takes care of it. 67 Sueños employs a communication structure between members and leaders, similar to that of E4FC - everyone is heard. At 67 Sueños, students and staff are included in every decision- decisions are taken in a consensus-democratic based approach. For daily level decisions, regarding activities or a particular project, students vote on it. At the beginning of each year, students come together and decide what they would like to see throughout the whole year. Each year the group focuses on a big project for the summer, for the past four years students have decided to create murals. The theme of the mural is democratically determined, students get into different groups according to their preference and each group makes a presentation to the rest of the group. After each group presents their themes, everyone votes and the theme with the

most votes wins. For this upcoming summer, students voted on working on black and brown unity. They plan to interview six African Americans and six Latinos previously incarcerated, with the information they collect; students hope to bring the interviewees' stories into public view.

Undocumented Youth Movement organizations have adopted a crucial approach as their principal strategy: place undocumented youth at the front of the organization. In the process, students have established the mission and vision of the organization. 67 Sueños and E4FC believe in a "holistic approach," that is, the belief that undocumented youth cannot be just looked as people who can benefit from the services and are victims of the system, but rather as people who are capable of delivering services and making changes in the system. The adoption of a holistic approach sends an important message to the participants of the organization: you can make a contribution and solve problems, and you have a right and responsibility to do so. Individual empowerment leads the mobilization of people and communities gaining control over their needs and struggles. A case study, conducted on an immigrant student group in California, found that students who participated in school-based extracurricular activities "developed important organizational skills, and an awareness of community issues and their ability to be a part of the solution" (Gonzales 2008).

ii. Education as a Tool of Social Justice

As an illustration of how receiving services and opportunities from a local non-profit organizations leads an individual to gain agency and consequently engage in advocacy towards social change, consider Krsna's personal journey. After being part of the Ambassador program, where for the first time he came out as an undocumented student, Krsna decided to volunteer his time at E4FC. Through the Ambassador program he was able to create an awareness event where more than 300 people learned about the struggles of undocumented students. He says, this opportunity, "...gave me the ability to learn more about the issue, because I was not really aware of everything that was going on." After he graduated from UC Davis, Krsna recalls, "Kathy invited me that summer after I had graduated to come in and be an intern, really as a volunteer, that was perfect because I was freaking out a lot about what I was going to do... then I just got hella involved... I became really interested in not just doing direct support... but I was also interested in activism, in organizing" (interview). Thus, in many cases local organizations have

been the bridge between college and life after college, and have provided the platform for political participation.

In 2011 for the first time, Krsna was part of an act of civil disobedience against HB56 in Alabama. The event was organized by major national organizations, DREAM Activist and the National Youth Alliance and invited a nation-wide group of young undocumented immigrants to protest one of the harshest anti-immigrant laws. Krsna explained that the group arrived to Alabama a week before and received training, and information about the legal consequences, such as getting deported - activists wanted to “test” ICE by calling them. Krsna remembers, “... the action came and it was crazy, we went to city hall and it was hella like we caught people out of nowhere. It started really as a protest, we were all protesting around city hall and we were shouting ‘Undocumented! Unafraid! Undocumented! Unafraid!’ and then we sat in the middle of traffic around a banner that said: We Would No longer remain in the shadows” (Interview). Krsna recognizes that E4FC, allowed him to believe in himself and provide him with information. He said, “E4FC gave me the ability to understand the organizing world in a comprehensive way by teaching me what was going on” (Interview). Although, E4FC does not organize its members for civil disobedience, it helps members gain agency and serves as a foot in the door for political mobilization. Mentorship from Katharine, helped prepare Krsna for engaging in civil disobedience and in other forms of political protests by always challenging him to take leaderships roles, he once believed he would never be able to accomplish.

iii. Storytelling

Pablo said, “to quote Bayard Rustin, ‘When an individual is protesting society’s refusal to acknowledge his dignity as a human being, his very act of protest confers dignity on him.’ I clearly see this dynamic in the youth at 67 Sueños.”

During the first phase educated college students were leading the undocumented youth movement. In fact, the roots of the DREAMer movement can be drawn to the University of California, Los Angeles when in 2003, a critical mass of undocumented students created IDEAS - Improving Dreams, Equality, Access, and Success. Undocumented youth outside of higher education were not participating in the movement because the organizing occurred mostly at campus universities (Pablo Paredes conversation). For the millions of undocumented students who do not go to college there were not spaces to mobilize or ways to voice their needs. Nationwide statistics show that 49 percent of undocumented students drop out of high school,

which means that out of the 1.4 million undocumented students who enroll in high school only 65,000 graduate. The implications of the aforementioned statistics are important because it brings concern as to the large number of undocumented students who do not get to step on a college campus and are consequently left out of the immigrant youth debate.

Some organizations have been created with the purpose of providing underprivileged undocumented students who do not go straight to college, the opportunity to engage in the movement as well. This is the case with 67 Sueños. The organization acknowledges the structural constraints youth faced in their communities, but also views young undocumented students as active participants in changing their conditions. The leadership and staff at 67 Sueños are aware of the conditions and trauma undocumented youth experience due to their immigration status and impoverished socioeconomic background. 67 Sueños strongly believes that for underprivileged undocumented students to become activists in the undocumented youth movement, a healing process is the first step. One of the most common ways healing is done is through storytelling. Pablo explains how storytelling is used as one of the most powerful tools for students to regain agency:

A way to come to terms with the trauma that these youth have experienced is to take charge of their narrative and what it is used for. This storytelling and advocacy process is deeply empowering. I have watched all the youth in 67 Sueños embark on a journey where feelings of shame and inadequacy slowly give way to a sense of empowerment and dignity.... They go from rarely acknowledging their status publicly and seeing it as a liability, a shameful fact, and a dangerous weakness to a space where it is this piece of their identity that makes them an authority on immigration issues. They suddenly become powerful and gain rather than risk access into a space based on what was once perceived as a liability. You see the transformation when they go to their first March. Suddenly the same person that tip toed around their status when we first met is screaming, “We are people we are not Illegal” or Undocumented! Unafraid!”

For underprivileged undocumented students it is important to have a safe space to share their stories, for most of them, 67 Sueños is the only space where they are able to engage in conversations about their feelings and frustrations. Despite coming from communities with little social capital, lacking a strong supportive system, family guidance, and high levels of poverty, 67 Sueños students turn their experience into collective pain, but collective pain is not the ultimate result. Members of 67 Sueños begin to address that collective pain through community organizing and the arts. During their *encuentros*, new ideas emerged; students pose questions,

and ultimately work together to dismantle their pain through art or involvement in direct actions from hunger strikes, rallies, to acts of civil disobedience.

Storytelling is also used in E4FC through Creative Writing Programs and “Things I’ll Never Say” - an online platform for undocumented young people across the country to create immigration narratives through writing, video, audio, art, photography and other creative media. Storytelling in E4FC serves similar goals from those of 67 Sueños; the healing and empowerment of the individual, however 67 Sueños uses a collective oriented approach - in which the youth gather together in a circle and each person speaks and listens to the person who is talking (Pablo). On the other hand, E4FC is more individually oriented; each student works on creating their own piece and in the process heal. Yet, in rarely occasions students are encouraged to share their piece with others. Even. However, E4FC uses the stories it collects to advocate for policy changes.

B. Vision of Engagement

i. Art as a Response to Oppression

Non-profit organizations have offered the tools, a safe space and the platform, where creative expressions emerge. The use of art serves the two main purposes’ of the organizations, it empowers individuals and it is used as a powerful force to bring social change. The power of art as a form of activism is prominent in the two organizations through writings, music, images, murals, posters, performance and spoken word. In the case of 67 Sueños, students participate in art collectively; students write poems, perform and paint the murals as a group. The healing circles that create a safe space for students to share their stories with each other seed the opportunities for collaborative poetry. Poetry is always used in support of community efforts at 67 Sueños. When the youth identify a migrant justice struggle gaining traction in their communities they intentionally develop poetry and art to address it. In this way when detainees at the Tacoma Detention Center in Washington went on a hunger strike in protest of ongoing deportations and their living conditions in the detention centers, 67 Sueños created a solidarity poem and video and shared it with the local migrant justice community and organizers in Washington through social networks. Youth worked with their adult mentor to research the issue, identify important themes and statements that needed to be addressed and to actually write the solidarity piece as a team.

From the hunger strike poem:

“I have heard disturbing reports
 that you are considering seriously
 That you are drifting hideously
 in the direction of torture
 Force Feeding?
 I can almost hear the detainees pleading
 hear them screaming

Shackled hands and feet
 The power of my will is tied
 America land of the free,
 But Lady liberty lied
 I have no say in what's burning my body from inside
 I keep screaming stop
 but you keep pushing that lubricated tube to the top
 it pierces my thoughts
 goes down my throat and it hurts”

Another form of arts based activism 67 Sueños has been trying to implement in their everyday *encuentros* is the use of *Forum Theatre*. The staff members have been attending trainings and learning more about the practice to bring it to the group. *Forum Theatre*, a device used among practitioners of *Theater of the Oppressed*, originated in Brazil and it is a type of theatre where actors first perform a short play, which ends in conflict and without resolution. Then, actors perform the same play again, but this time audience members can yell, “freeze” and take responsibility to come on to the stage. The purpose is to replace one of the actors *with whom they identify*, and attempt to make the situation better. During one *encuentro*, students were performing a short play about domestic violence relationships and one of the students responded, “I like acting, but when it has real purpose or like a real scenario because there could be some acting, different types of theaters, but it is better when you can relate to it, what is going on I see this with my parents. It makes you reflect, makes you think” (E observation). Local organizations give undocumented students the tools to use art as a useful weapon to tell their story, reflect on it and construct a new narrative of their identity. Forms of art that are real to the stories students are going to face in their home, are powerful: students learn about what they can do if they ever experience a situation like the one presented in the play. The ability to rehearse in a safe space what they might do in a role that reality could force them to play allows them to develop a sense of agency that transforms their identity. Students experience their practice as an

affirmation that they are indeed characters and have the power to impact situations that previously seemed overwhelming.

In addition to using art as a way to empower the individual, 67 Sueños attempts to change the anti-immigrant narrative when using art as well. In the case of 67 Sueños' mural, when a person walks by the mural and reads: *NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL*, the person enters automatically into the conversation about undocumented immigration. The group hopes that in the process, thoughts, hearts and laws are changed. At 67 Sueños most of the art is also created with a political purpose drawing on a human rights framework. Their first mural, *NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL*, is an expression of resistance to the criminalization of undocumented immigrants and an affirmation of their inherent rights, which are possessed by humankind. Since the birth of the organization, 67 Sueños has fought for the inclusion of everyone in the immigration reform debate.

ii. Institutional Advocacy

In many instances being political does not necessarily lead to mobilization, and mobilization does not lead to political change or a change in the legislation. For example political engagement occurs in a different range of forms from informing participants by simply watching a news video where a person dies while crossing the border to engaging participants in a statewide campaign to change a law. Thus, exposing participants to information and knowledge about the issues undocumented immigrants face gives participants the opportunity to engage in critical conversations. Their responses are not limited to conversations, most of the organizations encourage participants to deploy the information in one way or another, using the media as an educational tool to promote a campaign, or writing a poem to be performed in the service of a campaign event.

E4FC has been involved in projects and campaigns intended to bring major social change by appealing to massive groups of people within an institution. Unlike, advocacy organizations, E4FC engages its members mostly to come together to advocate for major legislative change at the state and federal level. Although, E4FC focuses most of its efforts on providing services and support to institutional organizations ranging from high schools, to non-profits and colleges, they are slowly emerging in political advocacy work. E4FC is currently expanding from being a service provider to a political advocacy organization through their recently adopted program: the

Policy Advocacy Team. Their hope is to use students' anecdotes, statistics, and testimonies from educators, funders, government officials and business leaders, to make the case for increased support for undocumented students at the federal and national level. The Policy Advocacy Team focuses on four priorities for the 2014-2015 program. Their foci include: increased access to career and professional licenses, health care, support in higher education, and financial support for undocumented students.

One of E4FC's most recent examples of political engagement was the AB 1024 Campaign, which sought to enable Undocumented law students to obtain a law license. The bill permits the State Supreme Court to admit as an attorney any applicant that fulfills the requirements for admission to practice law, regardless of immigration status. AB 1024 made California the first state to grant law licenses to undocumented aspiring attorneys if they met all other eligibility requirements. Krsna, with the help of the Legal Advocate Team coordinated a small campaign to advocate for the AB1024 to pass. He asked the legal advocates to write letters about their personal stories addressed to Governor Brown.

VII. Found Dichotomies/Future Research

A. Undocumented youth or DREAMers?

In my observations and interviews I found that some youth in the movement - although eligible for the DREAM Act - disapproved the bill and do not identify as DREAMers - due to the bill's exclusion of some members in the movement and community, and its focus on education and the military as the only two options for regularizing their status¹². Other participants on the contrary, might identify with both of the terms; undocumented young and DREAMers, while others accept the two terms. The literature on the Undocumented Youth Movement uses the terms undocumented youth and DREAMer as synonyms. The term DREAMer, unlike undocumented youth, has become an exclusive constructive identity. The name originated from the DREAM Act and it evokes a feeling of optimism in achieving the American Dream. Yet, the American Dream and the DREAM Act are only an illusion for millions of young undocumented immigrants.

¹² The purpose of the 2010 Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act,) is to help those individuals who meet certain requirements, have an opportunity to enlist in the military or go to college and have a path to citizenship, which they otherwise would not have without this legislation. <http://dreamact.info/students>

The term DREAMer has brought some controversy to the movement due to the disproportionate numbers of undocumented students who will not benefit from the DREAM Act and the underrepresentation of those youth in the immigration debate. In 2010 the Migration Policy Institute National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy released a study estimating that out of the 2.1 million undocumented youth eligible to apply for legal status under the DREAM Act, approximately only 38 percent would be able to benefit. Pertinent characteristics such as English language ability, income and/or poverty status, presence of dependent children, and employment status have been recognized as crucial denominators when estimating who will be able to benefit from the DREAM Act. For example, lack of English proficiency could be an impediment for obtaining an education or passing the military aptitude test – a test all military recruits are required to take. Income is another crucial obstacle on the path to obtaining an education, numbers indicate that “Almost one –third of unauthorized children who are still in school live below 100 percent of the federal poverty level.... half of potential beneficiaries who would be eligible for conditional status are in families with lower than \$40,000 median annual family income” (mpi 8). For many young undocumented immigrants affording college is beyond their financial means.

As statistics show, the majority of the undocumented students come from low-income families who barely make enough money to buy food and or afford shelter. Going to school becomes a goal that is secondary to economic survival. Even for students who have the desire to go to college, the DREAM Act explicitly bars beneficiaries in conditional and permanent status from accessing financial aid. Thus, for undocumented students who have the interests to go to college, lack of financial aid becomes an impediment to continue with their education. Yet, one cannot help, but to look at the cases of Jose, Ju or Krsna and the millions of undocumented students who have graduated from top schools without financial aid support and wondered how is it that they did it? And if they did it, why cannot the rest of the undocumented students do it as well? One possible answer might be found by looking at the educational experiences 67 Sueños students faced. On one occasion, I had the opportunity to talk to a student from 67 Sueños who was born in the United States, but from a mixed-status family. He is a junior in high school, and has never had the opportunity to see a school counselor. Students from 67 Sueños come from school districts shaped by poverty, gang violence, high dropout rates, lack of funding and very little educational opportunity. As an illustration, consider the following facts, 68 percent of

Metwest High School students receive free lunch, the school does not offer any Advancement Placement courses, or advanced math and science classes. The statistics at Coliseum College Prep Academy do not improve much, 86 percent of students at its students receive free lunch and similar to Metwest there are zero Advancement Placement classes offered. In addition to experiencing lack of educational opportunities, students at 67 Sueños deal daily with other socioeconomic problems such as, gang violence, gunshots, and drug deals. In fact for some of the students from Oakland, 67 Sueños has become their support system to stay out of the streets.

Although, the literature recognizes the privileges undocumented youth have compared to the rest of the undocumented population due to their educational attainments, and cultural assimilation, there is a gap in the literature that overlooks the gap between underprivileged and more privileged undocumented students in the movement. The term DREAMer reflects those undocumented immigrants, who though undocumented, become the valedictorian of the class, graduate with AP and honor classes, and go on to college and graduate schools. Such students because of their qualities and attributes as good and deserving immigrants have dominated the debate about the DREAM Act during the first phase of the movement. However, more recently a mixture of students, both high-achieving students and students with other important attributes and qualities, has led the undocumented youth movement.

VIII. Conclusion

“A dream you dream alone is only a dream, a dream you dream together is reality”

(John Lennon).

A vibrant community of undocumented students with desire to advocate for their own needs and those of others in similar situations has been born out of these two organizations. Undocumented-unafraid youth have taught us to fight for social justice even when laws deemed them “illegals.” These brilliant youth through education, healing circles, writing workshops, and the arts, have empowered themselves to gain individual agency and empower others in the same struggle.

Local organizations provide the undocumented youth activists with tools, resources, information, and the mentorship necessary for students to advocate for themselves. Through art and institutional advocacy, local organizations in the Bay Area have uplifted the voices of undocumented students.

Nationally the movement to stand for immigrant rights is comprised of local grassroots organizations, state and federal coalitions and national organizations. Within such a robust movement it is necessary to have organizations like E4FC and 67 Sueños in order to tackle the needs and struggles of the individuals whose voices are not being heard. These two organizations make room for all the undocumented students who might fuel the movement by creating new forms of mobilization; art and institutional advocacy.

Undocumented and Unafraid youth have stepped into their own agency and decided to Dream together. From marches to direct actions they are taking in the support and resources and utilizing these safe spaces to transform their trauma into power and turn their dreams into reality.

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