Documenting DREAMs: New Media, Undocumented Youth and the Immigrant Rights Movement

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Abstract

Over the last decade, undocumented youth have participated in immigrant rights activism in unprecedented numbers, defying stereotypes of youth—especially immigrant youth—as politically powerless. This case study of DREAM Activism, or mobilization for the passing of the DREAM Act, traces young people's use of new media to foster participatory forms of political engagement.

Part of the Media Activism and Participatory Politics (MAPP) Project[1], this case study draws on interviews, event observations, and media content analysis to highlight two key and interrelated findings. First, new media presents a powerful way to mobilize collective action given undocumented youth's legal vulnerability. Specifically, blogs, social media, and user-generated video facilitate the formation of networks and communities to foster shared identities. These communities and networks offer youth a space for self-expression, connection, and communication. They also facilitate the construction of alternative identities and modes of belonging, which, in turn, increase participants' sense of self-worth and political efficacy. Secondly, this research on DREAM Activism reveals how communities and networks established through daily friendship and interest-driven use of new media can become politicized. Once politicized, they may further support more formal modes of political participation. In this way, social networks fostered through new media become sources of social and political capital.

As scholars continue to debate the connections between politics and new media, this DREAM Activism case study finds that new media affordances can, and do, increase youth's sense of political efficacy. However, this study also identifies limitations of new media in these spaces and points to the enduring importance of social movements, community institutions, and other contextual support structures. As such, this exploration of DREAM Activism provides insight into how socio-economically marginalized and politically disenfranchised youth use new media to mount and sustain a youth-led movement for immigrant rights.

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[1] A part of the Youth and Participatory Politics (YPP) Network, MAPP is supported by the John and Catherine MacArthur Foundation. See: http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/.

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Part I
Introduction

On October 12, 2011, five undocumented youth wearing graduation caps staged a sit-in at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) offices in downtown Los Angeles to urge the Obama administration to stop deporting undocumented youths.[2] The sit-in launched the national E.N.D. (Education Not Deportation) Our Pain campaign, comprised of a network of immigrant youth organizations and allies demanding an immediate moratorium on deporting youth eligible for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. This proposed legislation would grant conditional legal status to those brought to the United States under age 16 if they attend college or join the military.

The action took place on a busy Wednesday morning when most Angelenos were at work and most students were in school. Fearing a low turnout, Dream Team Los Angeles, a local youth-led community group, and their allies used social media to send links of a live broadcast of the action from a free video-streaming site. While 300 people attended, over 4,000 users watched online as the youth entered ICE headquarters and demanded a hearing with officials. The attendees and online audience looked on as handcuffs were placed on the youth. Immediately after the arrests, users were able to make donations and petition for the arrestees' release through another website.

The E.N.D. campaign's direct action is an example of a strategy to amplify youth voices in the immigrant rights movement by combining traditional community organizing

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[2] Leslie Berestein Rojas, "Undocumented Student Activists in LA Get Audience With Federal Officials, Get Arrested" *MultiAmerican*, October 12, 2011. http://multiamerican.scpr.org/2011/10/undocumented-student-protesters-get-audience-with-federal-officials-get-arrested/ (Accessed on December 22, 2011).

with new media strategies. One of the arrestees and leader of one of the DREAM advocacy groups in Los Angeles acknowledges that a mixed media strategy is key for reaching diverse participants:

> You have to be able to use Facebook and Twitter, but you have to be intentional about it, and strategic. At the same time, you have to also utilize traditional media outlets because our 'tios' and 'tias' are not using social networking. They are still watching *Univision* and the nightly news. So you have to engage in both.[3]

DREAM Activism is an exemplar case of youth capitalizing on new media affordances to recruit, mobilize, and sustain broad-based youth political participation. While initial organizing in 2001 focused on states with high immigrant populations such as California, Illinois, and New York, undocumented youth and student organizations are now active at the national level with chapters in 25 states. The California Dream Network, a network of undocumented youth organizations, boasts chapters on over 30 college campuses. Student and youth organizers credit both their rapid growth and public outreach to the power of new media. Prerna Lal, co-founder of DreamActivist.org, a media-centered youth organization, states in an online video, "New media has indeed taken a small group of undocumented students to new heights and fueled a movement that was stagnant."[4]

Immigrant youth's participation in the DREAM movement provides an opportunity to examine the intersection of new media and grassroots youth-led social movements in the context of a politically disenfranchised and legally vulnerable community. Drawing from field research, event observations, media content analysis, and 25 semi-structured interviews with DREAM activists residing in California, Illinois, Georgia, and Texas, this report examines the role of new media in mobilizing

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[3] Maria (pseudonym). Interview. April 4, 2011.
[4] See: http://dreamactivist.org.

undocumented youth's participation in the movement.[5] Only three of the youth I

interviewed were U.S. citizens. While Mexico was the primary country of origin, some of

the youth came from Colombia, Nigeria, El Salvador, Poland, and Chile. All but three of

the youth were enrolled in an institution of higher learning or had completed their

bachelor's degree at the time of the interviewee. The semi-structured interviews allowed

me to reconstruct the history of Dream Activism and account for existing organizational

networks through youth's narration of events, stories of participation, and the re-telling of

their experiences as members of Dream activist organizations. On an individual level, the

interview protocol was directed at capturing youth's stories of involvement, the

contextual factors and supports that sustained their civic participation, and their use of

new media platforms and practices. Additionally, I probed how their participation in the

Dream movement had shaped their experiences of inequality and identity, feelings of

membership and belonging, and conceptions of citizenship.

As the effects of new media on political participation continue to be sharply

debated, this case study suggests that youth's online and political participation are

mutually reinforcing. Despite the barriers they face because of their legal and socio-

economic status, undocumented youth activists in this study are highly engaged online as

bloggers, documentarians, artists, or social media activists. The positive correlation

between levels of civic engagement and online participation is due to several factors.

Online communities have served as spaces to develop associational bonds, forge social

networks, and amass forms of social capital that are particularly useful given the legal

and political vulnerability of face to face activism. Online communities have also

increased youth's sense of political efficacy by offering spaces for collective

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[5] To protect the identity of the respondents, all interviews conducted have been anonymized.

identification and shared memory. The sophisticated use of new media by undocumented youth has enabled youth to negotiate, resist, and respond to their political and socio-economic marginalization. Through new media, undocumented youth have uplifted the voices, experiences, and stories of an often-ignored segment of the immigrant population in the United States. Simultaneously, these activists have brought attention to the youth voice within the social justice community more broadly.

In this report, I consider these themes as foundations for future inquiry.

Part II
The DREAM Act: Emergence of a Youth Led Movement

Since 2001, Congress has been considering a version of the DREAM Act, bipartisan legislation that would provide an opportunity for undocumented students with "good moral character," who have lived in the U.S. for a certain period, to obtain legal status. The latest version was introduced on May 11, 2011. If passed, it would change current law in two major ways: 1) It would permit certain immigrant youth who have grown up in the United States to eventually obtain permanent legal status and become eligible for U.S. citizenship if they go to college or serve in the U.S. military. 2) It would eliminate a federal provision that penalizes states that provide in-state tuition without regard to immigration status.

Due to several compromises to secure bipartisan support, the DREAM Act has undergone significant changes. The military option—which replaced the community service provision in earlier versions—incited criticism amongst some who saw the new

version of the bill as a military recruitment tool.[6] Some of their concerns are substantiated

by the relatively limited number of youth who would be able to access higher education

in the current economic climate.[7] Currently, only 26% of undocumented youth enroll in

college compared to 56% of 18-24 year-olds who are born in the U.S.. In other words, the

bill would primarily benefit those willing and able to afford college or serve in the

military as an option for legalization.[8] In a July 2010 report, the Migration Policy

Institute noted that while over 2 million unauthorized youth could be immediately

eligible for the DREAM Act, only 33% may benefit from the educational path made

available by the bill.

Despite these changes in the law, the DREAM Act has inspired political

participation and activism of undocumented youth in unprecedented numbers. Prior to the

DREAM Act, immigrant rights activists had primarily focused their organizing efforts on

class action lawsuits to defend the right to education for undocumented students at the

state level.[9] While youth have been historically active in immigrant rights issues, the

immigrant rights mobilizations in 2006 opened opportunities for broader youth

participation.

Undocumented and immigrant youth participated in unprecedented numbers in

immigrant rights mobilizations of 2006 and 2007, albeit with some resistance from some

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[6] A widely circulated video entitled, "Yo Soy El Army: the Dream of Citizenship," produced by an organization that calls itself *Sixty-Seven Percent* is illustrative of the criticism of the Dream Act as a military recruitment tool. See: 67percent.net/.

[7] Jacob Simas and Vivian Po, "Latino College Enrollment Skyrockets, But Will Upward Mobility," New America Media (October 30, 2011). http://newamericamedia.org/2011/10/latino-college-enrollment-skyrockets-but-will-upward-mobility-follow.php. (Accessed on December 15, 2011)

[8] Jeanne Batalova and Margie McHugh, "DREAM vs. Reality: An Analysis of Potential DREAM Act Beneficiaries," *Migration Policy Institute* (July 2010). www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/**DREAM**-Insight-July2010.pdf. (Accessed on October 12, 2011)

[9] Hinda Seif, "Wise Up! Undocumented Latino Youth, Mexican-American Legislators, and the Struggle for Higher Education Access," *Latino Studies* 2 (2004): 210–230.

sectors of the movement.[10] Initially, student issues were not a prominent part of the

immigrant rights movements' broader agenda. Many of the youth groups that were

involved in national marches had to assert themselves and fight for inclusion.[11] Yet,

despite the energy and enthusiasm of the 2006 mobilizations, Congress failed to enact a

progressive immigration reform that year. When the DREAM Act came up for an

important vote in October 2007, it failed to garner the 60 votes needed to proceed to a

debate on the Senate floor.[12] While a sector of the organized immigrant rights movement

responded by focusing on pursuing an electoral strategy—including voter and citizenship

drives to increase Latino/a voter turnout in key states—undocumented youth began to

organize a national movement that could push the DREAM Act as a standalone bill.

National coalitions emerged such as the United We Dream network, which coordinated

undocumented youth organizations across the country. During this time, undocumented

youth leaders also began to question the pace of change working primarily through the

Democratic Party and long-established civil and immigrant rights organizations. Their

mounting critique of these institutions led some sectors of the movement to opt for forms

of grassroots organizing that prioritized undocumented youth leadership and new

strategies. In 2007, four undocumented youth organizers from across the country

published an article stating their concerns about what they considered an exclusion of

undocumented youth voices in the larger immigrant rights movement:

> Until we organized this movement, we had been caught in a paralyzing
> stranglehold of inactivity across the country. We were told that the
> Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act, or CIRA, was still possible. Yet

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[10] Roberto Gonzalez, "Left Out but not Shut Down: Political Activism and the Undocumented Student Movement," *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy* 3 (Spring, 2008): 220.
[11] Ibid 231.
[12] Julia Preston, "Bill for Immigrant Students Fails Test Vote in Senate," *The New York Times* (October 25, 2007).

we continued to endure ICE raids," wrote several undocumented Latino youth in an open letter in September 2010. "We stopped waiting . . . We organized ourselves and created our own strategy, used new tactics . . . At a moment when hope seemed scarce . . . We declared ourselves UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID![13]

Throughout 2009 and 2010, in the spirit of the slogan, "undocumented and unafraid," youth activists organized sit-ins at Congressional offices, hunger strikes, marches, and symbolic graduations, while amplifying their voices through the sophisticated use of blogs, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media. In June 2009, the founders of DreamActivist.org, an online undocumented youth advocacy network, along with United We Dream, organized 500 youth to participate in the National DREAM Act Graduation in Washington DC, which combined a symbolic ceremony with legislative lobbying.[14] Solidarity graduations took place the same day in several states.[15] In another widely publicized campaign, on January 1, 2010, four undocumented youth from Miami Dade College began a 4-month, 1500-mile-trek to Washington, DC to advocate for the DREAM Act. In what they aptly called the "Trail of DREAMs," the youth documented their walk with active blogging, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, and gathered 30,000 signatures to bring to President Obama, along the way. Throughout these mobilizations, undocumented youth became increasingly willing to 'come out' to their peers, teachers, and friends. Using blogs, podcasts, and user-generated video, undocumented youth used social media to declare their legal status openly, many for the first time. The prominence of the 'Our Stories' section in DreamActivist.org's blog, for example, is evidence of how

[13] Jonathan Perez, Jorge Gutierrez, Nancy Meza, and Neidi Dominguez Zamorano, "DREAM Movement: Challenges with the Social Justice Elite's Military Option Arguments and the Immigration Reform 'Leaders,' " *Truthout* (September 21, 2010).

[14] Samya Behary, "Students storm Capitol Hill for National Dream Act Graduation Day," *Immigration Impact* (June 25, 2009).

[15] DreamActivist.org, "DREAM for America: National DREAM Act Graduation Day – June 23, 2009," *Press Release* (June 21, 2009). dreamactivist.org/blog/2009/06/21/nationalgraduation/. (Accessed on March 12, 2012).

the practice of 'coming out', a repertoire used by the LGBTQ movement decades prior, has been a fundamental mobilizing strategy and collective identification tool amongst undocumented youth.[16]

In December 2010, after years of lobbying, legislative visits and phone calls, hunger strikes and sit-ins, the DREAM Act once again failed to gather the necessary votes to avoid a Republican filibuster. Falling a few votes short, the defeat marked a turning point for the undocumented youth movement at a time of economic crisis and anti-immigrant backlash.[17] During President Obama's first three years in office, his administration deported over one million immigrants, and despite the focus on criminal immigrants, undocumented youth continue to move through the deportation pipeline.[18]

In the face of this crisis, undocumented youth have used a combination of direct action and media activism to shine a spotlight on immigrant detention and deportation, which has largely remained hidden from public view.[19] They have staged rallies and sit-ins at detention centers, ICE offices, and have even targeted banks that invest in private prisons, directly confronting the institutions that are profiting from the immigrant detention and deportation system.[20] An important component to their direct action has been their use of grassroots messaging campaigns.

Utilizing Facebook, Twitter, and blogging, immigrant youth broadcast the stories

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[16] See : DreamActivist.org, "Our Stories." (dreamactivist.org/about/our-stories/). (Accessed on January 12, 2012)

[17] Scholars have noted a significant backlash against the immigrant rights mobilizations in 2006 and a rise in anti-immigrant sentiment. See: Alfonso Gonzalez, "The 2006 Mega Marchas in Greater Los Angeles: Counter-hegemonic moment and the future of El Migrante Struggle," *Latino Studies (*7)1 (2009): 30-59.

[18] Elise Foley, "New Policy on Deportations Allows Some Non-Criminal Undocumented Immigrants to Stay," *The Huffington Post* (August 18, 2011).

[19] See: Aarti Kohli, Peter I. Markowitz, and Lisa Chavez, "Secure Communities by the Numbers: An Analysis of Demographics and Due process" *Chief Justice Earl Warren Institute on Law and Social Policy Research Report* (October, 2011).

[20] Elise Foley, "Immigrants to Wells Fargo: Stop investing in For-Profit Detention," *The Huffington Post* (October 17, 2011).

of those who are in detention centers and fighting deportation orders. On the morning that an electronic monitoring device was placed on his ankle, Matias Ramos, an undocumented youth and co-founder of United We Dream, turned to Twitter, posting a photo of himself and announcing that he had been given two weeks to leave the country.[21] Stories like these are transmitted through a broad-based social media network connecting campus organizations, community groups, and allies, providing links to petitions and online donations.

Part III
Overcoming Barriers to Participation

Despite the lack of a clear and immediate path toward legalization, youth activists have continued to organize and expand the national base of the movement. National youth-led organizations like United We Dream, which has affiliates in 30 states, illustrate the effectiveness of undocumented youth organizing. They also raise the question of how youth have overcome significant barriers to political participation.

While some studies have shown that the lack of legal status depresses youth's motivations for academic success and community involvement, others point to how it can motivate youth to overachieve in order to compensate for their legal, political and socio-economic marginalization. The high rates of political participation and civic engagement amongst undocumented immigrant youth interviewed during this research contests conventional wisdom that assumes that political participation is dependent on structural

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[21] See: Leslie Rojas Berestein, "A High-Profile Challenge to the White House New Deportation Guidelines," *MultiAmerican* (September 21, 2011) multiamerican.scpr.org/2011/09/a-high-profile-challenge-to-the-white-houses-new-deportation-policy. (Accessed on October 15, 2011).

factors such as income and education.[22] Will Perez and his team of researchers found that despite barriers including employment, household responsibilities, and illegal status, 90% of the undocumented youth respondents in his study are civically engaged, where civic engagement is defined as providing a social service, activism, tutoring, and functionary work.[23] The barriers that Perez et al. describe are significant. Oliverez' research with undocumented high school seniors found that 60% lived in crowded homes, 90% lived in single or studio apartments, and 60% reported working after school or on weekends between 16-40 hours per week.[24] The lack of legal status has negative effects on psychological coping skills as well. Susana Maria Munoz's study of undocumented college-age women found that respondents shared a sense of frustration, helplessness, shame, and fear.[25] Of the undocumented youth I interviewed, about half reported having struggled with acute depression and, at times, contemplated or even attempted suicide.

Stereotypes of undocumented immigrants as un-American, apolitical, and disadvantaged are pervasive across contemporary political culture. The dominant image of the illegal immigrant is a Latino male, who is not English proficient, and is not culturally assimilated. These images and representations flash across TV screens in political ads and late-night talk shows. However, the number of undocumented children who grew up in the United States is rising, forcing a revisiting of the stereotype. Scholars have noted that despite these youth's undocumented status, they are indistinguishable

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[22] For a discussion and critique of this research, see: Lisa García Bedolla, *Fluid borders: Latino power, identity, and politics in Los Angeles*, Berkeley: University of California Press (2005).

[23] William Perez, Roberta Espinoza, Karina Ramos, Heidi Coronado, and Richard Cortes, "Civic Engagement Patterns of Undocumented Mexican Students" *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 9(3) (2010): 245-265.

[24] P. M. Oliverez, *Ready but restricted: An examination of the challenges of college access and financial aid for college-ready undocumented students in the U.S.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA (2006).

[25] S. M. Munoz, *Understanding Issues of College Persistence for undocumented Mexican immigrant women from the new Latino Diaspora: A Case Study*. Doctoral Dissertation. Iowa State University (2008).

from the typical 'American' youngster. Leisy Abrego notes that undocumented youth are "indisputably full-fledged members of US society – even if only at the lower rungs of the economic ladder. After having been educated in our schools, they speak English (often with more ease than Spanish), envision their futures here, and powerfully internalize US values and expectations of merit."[26]

Even though undocumented status is not easily readable, and many undocumented youth 'pass' as Americans, they have to contend with the stigma and social isolation that illegality imbues. Immigration scholars have noted that the criminalization of immigrants has been institutionalized through a complex reinforcing system of immigration policy and law over the last 20 years and that has a way of inserting itself in various dimensions of everyday life.[27] Driver's licenses, library cards, state identification cards, and credit cards are contingent on possessing a social security number, for instance.

This legal and social marginalization affects undocumented youth's lives in different ways. Sandra Bygrave Dozier found three central emotional concerns for undocumented college students: fear of deportation, loneliness, and depression.[28] At times, undocumented immigration status can lead to disaffection, depression, and low motivation. Susana Maria Munoz also asserts that undocumented status can at times disengage youth, as they become disaffected, frustrated, and alienated.[29]

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[26] L. J. Abrego, "'I Can't Go to College Because I don't Have Papers': Incorporation Patterns of Latino Undocumented Youth." *Latino Studies* 4 (2006): 212-231.

[27] See: S. B. Coutin, *Legalizing moves : Salvadoran Immigrants' Struggle for U.S. Residency*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press (2000); N. P. De Genova, "Migrant "Illegality" and Deportability in Everyday Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2000): 419-447; C. Menjívar, "Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States*." American Journal of Sociology* 111(4) (2006): 999-1037.

[28] S. B. Dozier, "Emotional Concerns of Undocumented and Out-of-Status Foreign Students." *Community Review* 13 (1993): 33-38.

[29] Munoz.

Others have found that undocumented youth can "become engaged in collective action with other undocumented youth who share in their sense of disenfranchisement."[30] Such collective efforts have the potential to build a sense of personal efficacy, a belief that change is possible and that collective actions can have an impact on political process. The lack of legal status, then, can also be a motivating factor in some youth. Munoz found that undocumented youth's engagement with extracurricular activities was a way to feel a sense of belonging. Julio Salgado, an artist and cofounder of a media centered youth organization, argues that despite the uncertainty of the DREAM Act, the movement sustains itself by creating "a sense of community, mutual support, and belonging."[31] Thus, the DREAM Act represents more than a change in legal status for youth, but a validation of their belonging, which sustains youth's ongoing engagement with the movement.

Julio, like many respondents included in this study, reported struggles with paying for books and college tuition, and having to take semesters off because of financial difficulty, working two-three jobs at times. Yet, the great majority of these youth were highly engaged in their communities. For example, all but four individuals participated in more than one community, student, or political organization. The youth I met through my research were also highly engaged online, with more than half reporting that they had at one time produced their own media to express a political, social or community concern.

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[30] C. Flanagan, and L.S. Gallay, "Reframing the Meaning of "Political" in Research with Adolescents." *Perspectives on Political Science* 24 (1995): 34-41.

[31] Julio Salgado, "Queer, Undocumented, and Unafraid: Sexuality Meets Immigration Politics in a Youth-Led Movement for Immigrant Rights," *Briarpatch* (May/June 2011). http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/queer-undocumented-and-unafraid. (Accessed on April 2, 2012).

The high rates of engagement online seem counter-intuitive considering the gap in access to digital technology amongst minorities.[32] High rates of civic engagement and online participation among the youth in this study may be largely due to the fact that I only interviewed self-selected activists, and activism amongst youth includes online participation in social media, blogging, and other forms of media production.[33] Nonetheless, the high rates of civic engagement and digital media literacy amongst undocumented youth activist are still compelling considering the aforementioned structural barriers they face.

Part IV
Literature Review & Analytical Framework

The high levels of political participation amongst undocumented youth challenge arguments that socio-economic status is the most salient factor in determining political participation. Such arguments are based in the experiences of middle class populations and have largely overlooked the patterns of participation in minority communities. In marginalized and racialized communities, strong ethnic identification and a sense of what Dawson calls "linked fate" can be more accurate in predicting political attitudes and behavior of Latino and African Americans.[34] Similarly, qualitative studies of women of

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[32] The Pew Hispanic Center published a report on the media use of Latinos in 2008. Not surprisingly, they found that Latinos lag behind non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks in both their access to Internet in the home and their online use.

[33] Sasha Costanza Chock's work on immigrant organizing attests to the ways in which immigrant communities are appropriating new media technologies to represent their lives, as well as a mobilizing tool for social justice. See: Sasha Costanza-Chock, *Se Ve, Se Siente: Transmedia Mobilization in the Los Angeles Immigrant Rights Movement*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Southern California: Los Angeles (2010).

[34] For an extensive literature review of minority political participation, see: Garcia Bedolla.

color organizing have shown the significance of collective identity in overcoming low

socioeconomic status and stigma.

Lisa Garcia Bedolla's study of Latino political participation in Los Angeles

provides a useful framework to help us understand how collective identification mediates

the negative effects of lower socioeconomic status and other structural barriers.

According to Garcia Bedolla, the analysis of marginal groups must consider how feelings

of stigma affect attachment to their social groups and to the political system as a whole.

While marginalized groups may not have access to certain socioeconomic resources

considered to be important, Garcia Bedolla points out that other factors may fall under

the rubric of political "resources": the level of affective attachment individuals feel

toward the larger social group, that is, psychological capital; and the politicization and

political opportunities available in the group's social context, that is, contextual capital.[35]

The presence of these resources enhances group members' feelings of agency and their

political engagement, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Social movement scholars argue that the existence of mobilizing identities in

addition to the availability of political resources is key in overcoming structural barriers

to participation. A mobilizing identity is an identity that includes a particular ideology

plus a sense of personal agency. According to Garcia Bedolla, such personal agency is

largely the result of "affective group attachment" which is a "positive collective

identification" that an individual forms with their group in a stigmatized social context.

This issue is not simply group identification but also the content of that identification and

the resulting psychological resources it provides the individual, and by extension, his

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[35] Ibid.

social group. Put simply, feelings of attachment and group worthiness is what motivates individuals to act on behalf of the collective.[36]

In addition to positive group identity, contextual variables including social networks that can be redirected toward political activities are also important in mobilizing collective action. Most political science studies measure contextual, or social, capital as membership in organizations or as contact with political campaigns. In contrast, Garcia Bedolla's definition of "contextual capital" includes "access to institutional and organizational resources and the development and nature of immigrant social networks".[37] Garcia Bedolla includes in her definition access to institutions, churches, education, and political parties in the local context. While Garcia Bedolla does not account for online social networks, scholars have found that online communities and social networks can also be important resources. Ongoing work and research of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Youth and Participatory Politics Network (YPP) suggests that the sharing and circulation of information beyond the traditional political infrastructure is a defining element of today's modes of "participatory politics" amongst youth.[38] These networks are available for not only sharing information, but also calls for mobilization and in some cases facilitating political and civic participation at reduced costs through technological advances. According to the authors, these networks are a component of what might be considered digital social capital, social resources that can be mobilized through collective efforts to advance the interests of an individual or group.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] See: http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/.

The YPP concept of "participatory politics" draws from studies in digital media and learning that show the changing norms and emergent skills amongst youth in the age of digital media.[39] Henry Jenkins uses the term participatory culture to describe cultures "with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter and feel some degree of social connection with one another."[40] While not driven by new media technologies, participatory culture includes online affiliations and informal memberships in online communities centered around forms of media such as Facebook, message boards, and games; expressions which include producing new creative forms such as sampling, video making, fan fiction writing, zines, and mash ups; collaborative problem-solving such that groups generate new knowledge through platforms such as Wikipedia; and circulations which include shaping the flow of media with podcasting and blogging.[41] Jenkins' concept of participatory culture helps us understand how youth's new media practices may enable access to certain cultural and political resources through participation in online communities.

Other scholars studying civic engagement have also pointed to the positive impact of social and contextual capital in shaping attitudes towards politics, opportunities for political mobilization, and actual political activity. Garcia Bedolla points out that social networks have the potential to be politicized, but also serve as important spaces for

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[39] Henry Jenkins et al, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. MacArthur Foundation (2006): 9.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

'group historical memory and sharing collective experiences."[42] Social networks are a

benefit to individuals because they create feelings of "bounded solidarity" which

encourages actors to act altruistically on behalf of their group, sect or community.

In the case of DREAM activism, youth have constructed online spaces and social

networks that have fostered youth's capacities for political engagement and participation.

In the following section, I focus on two aspects of this process. First, I examine the types

of social networks and associational bonds that form part of youth's contextual capital.

Secondly, I focus on how these spaces are used to construct new modes of collective

identification and political efficacy.

Part V
Online Networks, Digital Social Capital, and DreamActivist.org

Online communities and social networks have helped undocumented youth

overcome barriers to political participation by forming part of undocumented youth's

contextual, cultural, and social capital and by creating opportunities for interaction,

communication, and connection. These online social networks create pathways for

participation amongst youth who are marginalized and excluded from formal politics.

While these associational networks are not always explicitly political and are, at times,

geared towards providing services and resources to undocumented youth, they can be

mobilized for political ends. Popular Twitter Townhall meetings, for example, are

instances where associational online networks and communities become a bridge between

informal and formal participation. They become spaces where youth develop practices

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[42] Garcia Bedolla.

that build trust, affinity, shared identities and cultural meanings, reciprocity, and solidarity.

Several processes reinforce the relationship between online participation and political participation within the undocumented youth movement. Firstly, the undocumented youth movement has relied extensively on online mobilization due to the ways legal status restricts mobility. In California, youth do not have access to driver's licenses, for instance. Immigration enforcement has targeted airports and air travelers, often setting up detention centers at airports like Los Angeles International, posing risks to those who would want to travel to participate in face-to-face public protest. Also, legal status prevents youth from finding each other as they are generally forced to mask their situation from authorities and the general public. Given these realities, undocumented youth have relied on online spaces to find each other and work together to have their voices heard. Their online activism has included a range of activities, such as: expressing political opinions through blogs and Twitter, creating online networks to support and extend local organizing efforts, and creating videos on behalf of youth facing deportation to galvanize popular support and visibility for these individuals. This new type of activism requires a set of digital media skills. Recognizing this, DREAM activist leaders have consciously endeavored to develop, nurture, and hone other participants' new media skills through peer based learning, informal internships, and community-based trainings. DreamActivist.org, a youth founded website, illustrates how undocumented youth have used new media to network, organize and mobilize. DreamActivist.org was started by a group of youth who met in a chat room. The founders' stories illustrate how undocumented youth use online networks to overcome social isolation and become

politically active. One of the founders was born in Nigeria and immigrated to the U.S. as

a young child. She grew up in Texas and excelled in school, particularly in math and

science. When she graduated from high school, she discovered that she would likely not

be able to attend college because of her immigration status. As she knew no one locally

who could advise her on what to do, she went online to find information and support,

pointing to the importance of media as a resource for youth who are networked in local

activist communities. She found DreamAct.com, a webpage maintained by an activist in

New York. She began to search the discussion boards on the DreamAct.com for possible

paths to follow after graduating high school. But DreamAct.com lacked information

about resources such as scholarships, and was mainly dedicated to legislative lobbying.

It did, however, provide an online discussion forum. It was here that this founder was

able to establish online friendships with other students facing the same situation. Those

online friendships eventually led to the founding of www.DreamActivist.org. While

they do not live in the same cities, and they've only met once or twice in person, the

founders and other users of DreamActivist.org maintain ongoing relationships. In fact,

many of the founders have gone on to become outspoken advocates for the DREAM Act.

Yet, it actually took two years before the founders met in person. One of the founders

recalls that in-person meeting and her apprehension. She remembers, "Well, I was scared

at first, because who knows? These people could be serial killers. Once we met in person

it was like I'd known them my whole lives."[43]

   According to one of the founders, each of the youth brought their particular set of

skills to bear on their organizing. Two of these youth had 'tech' experience including

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[43] Kendra (pseudonym). Interview. May 17, 2011.

website design and maintenance skills. The following is a description from the 'About

Us' section of DreamActivist.org:

> After three years since its inception, the Dream Activist online strategy has grown to encompass a coalition of 30 local organizations, 10 regional media correspondents across the US, and a new media intern program, which is using peer-to-peer mentorship to train future media activists.[44]

DreamActivist.org has since become one of the key organizing tools for DREAMers and

a hub for over 30 organizations across the country.

National DREAM Graduation

In 2009, two years after the website had launched and the original founders had met in a

chat room, DreamActivist.org helped organize the 'national graduation' in Washington

DC under the umbrella of United We Dream, a national coalition for undocumented

youth. The national graduation, "Dream for America: National Dream Act Graduation

Day – June 23, 2009" brought new media based communities like DreamActivist.org

together with more locally-based and traditional undocumented youth advocacy groups.[45]

The following is an excerpt from the DreamActivist.org blog describing the event:

> With the Capitol Dome behind them, hundreds of youth from all over the country, along with education, faith, business, immigrant and civil rights leaders are expected to participate in a National Dream Graduation ceremony, hosted by the United We Dream Coalition (UWD).[46]

The day began with a legislative training session. This was followed by a symbolic

graduation ceremony staged in front of the Senate. The youth dressed in graduation caps

and gowns. As it occurred, the entire event was shared on Twitter and videos were

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[44] See: http://dreamactivist.org.
[45] See: http://www.dreamactivist.org/blog/2009/06/21/nationalgraduation/
[46] UWD is an immigrant-youth led coalition committed to supporting immigration reform policies that create a pathway to citizenship, keep families together, and promote the social, economic, and political integration of all immigrants.

uploaded to YouTube and Vimeo. The event also had its own Facebook page. In conjunction with this local and online event, other symbolic graduation ceremonies took place that day across the United States. The locations of other graduations included Texas, Kentucky, Indiana, California, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, New York and North Carolina. DreamActivist.org served as an organizing hub for this simultaneous action. The participants were asked to post their Twitter updates with the hashtag #dreamact, giving a snowballed and networked feeling to the whole event. A brief glimpse at DreamActivist.org's blog gives us a sense of the additional various media strategies the campaign deployed:

> Flickr – http://www.flickr.com/photos/dreamactivistorg/
> Vimeo – http://vimeo.com/dreamactivist
> Youtube – http://www.youtube.com/user/DreamActivistdotOrg
> Twitter – " http://twitter.com/dreamact
> Myspace – http://www.myspace.com/dream_act_now

Elina, a volunteer for DreamActivist.org, recalls that there were 30 mock graduations that took place that day in solidarity with the national DREAM graduation on Capitol Hill.[47] She sees these 'solidarity' graduations as being inspired by the media produced around the National Dream Graduation. Elina states, "For all the youth that could not be there in person we had to be aware and sensitive to that… so we made sure to help them feel part of the process by putting it on our blogs, sharing videos and helping spread the word about the local graduations taking place that day."

Below is a screen shot of some of the videos uploaded on You Tube of that day.

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[47] Elina (pseudonym). Interview. May 12, 2011.

Source: http://youtu.be/uBbZ9L53B1g

The narrated experiences of participating with DreamActivist.org illustrate how new media practices can create affinity between participants and provide organizational support for both online and local mobilization. After she met other youth in the online chat room, one of the founders recalls that she became very invested in finding resources to help other undocumented youth, including accessible scholarships, information regarding naturalization, and updates on the DREAM Act. Further pointing to the importance of online mobilization in this youth led movement, one of the founders of DreamActivist.org was actually chosen by her peers to speak publicly at the National Dream Act graduation. For the founder selected, the experience was transformative. She recalls that this was her first time speaking publicly to a group of about 500 undocumented students and allies in front of Capitol Hill in 2009. While she had been working through her online community, she felt a different sense of belonging and empowerment to participate in a collective action in person. She explains:

> AZ: When you were telling me about organizing the Dream Graduation
> you made it seem as if it was your 'first' experience as an activist in the
> movement, but I know you had been working with Dream Activist for two
> years. Can you tell me why you refer to the Dream Graduation as your
> first time?

> DreamActivist.org founder: That's true. I didn't notice that. Well I guess I was working to set up the website but it was just me back […home] talking virtually with everyone else. I felt different being surrounded by all these people, speaking publicly for the first time about my status. It just felt different. Not that my work with Dream Activist wasn't important but the national graduation was the first time I immediately saw the impact of our work. And I also felt like, yeah, I'm an activist now.
>
> AZ: How did that change your organizing work back […] home?
>
> DreamActivist.org founder: Well, sadly not much. There really isn't a space for it in my hometown. I feel isolated quite a bit because I don't have a space to organize locally. The organizations for immigrant rights are largely Latino, and I am African American. So my work with Dream Activist, especially the blog, is where I feel like I can be most effective…and, hopefully, through my work there I can motivate others to join me here.[48]

As this exchange shows, new media activism does not exist in a vacuum. The youth involved clearly see the mutually reinforcing connection between online and local dimensions of the movement.

Peer to peer Media Training

As this discussion of the National DREAM graduation demonstrates, becoming a DREAM activist encourages acquisition of new media skills. New media skills are not, however, a prerequisite for participation. For the founders of DreamActivist.org, three of the five youth felt that their media skills were average. Responding to this perceived need, Javier, one of the more skilled founders of DreamActivist.org, decided to pass these skills on to others through a peer-to-peer internship.

Launched in the summer of 2010, the "Dream Activist Summer Media Internship" focused on helping youth articulate their own stories and develop the digital

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[48] Interview with a founder of DreamActivist.org.

media skills to voice these in the public sphere. Javier recruited youth for the internship

through various online spaces undocumented youth frequent. This was the call for interns

that he posted:

> Interns will be responsible for research, archiving, and management of
> Dream Act related content. Additionally, all interns will receive trainings
> on how to operate platforms such as Twitter, Evernote, etc. in order to
> successfully assist in all communications, positions, and postings relating
> to DreamActivist.org. What separates us from other dull internships? Our
> work does not require you to relocate and everything can be done right
> from your computer, so don't miss out on this great opportunity to be part
> of the leading online advocacy group for immigrant youth in the nation!
> Not to mention that we might just let you in as to what our future projects
> might involve, regarding our website of course… shhhhhh…. [49]

The call was accompanied by this image:

Source: DreamActivist.org

All the training sessions for this internship were conducted through a telephone

conference.[50] The nine interns called in from five different states. They were generally

not part of any local youth group or organization, but were active on the

DreamActivist.org site and its affiliated online networks. During the first few meetings

participants shared their stories. Javier explained that sharing personal stories is a

common practice amongst DREAMers. It is a mechanism to foster a connection and build

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[49] See: http://DreamActivist.org
[50] I was invited to participate in the training sessions.

trust. It also emphasizes that the DREAM movement is a peer-based movement. Stressing this connection, Javier often reiterated this training was peer-to-peer, despite his role in organizing it.

Javier narrated how his parents moved to the United States. He explained that a missed deadline by their lawyer pushed the entire family into undocumented status. Despite the fact that he never had formal training in media, Javier is now generally recognized as an expert in this space within DreamActivist.org.

The training aimed to provide the participants with the tools and skills DreamActivist.org founders believed were needed to effectively communicate, advocate, and network using new media. The first assignment in the training asked them to set up accounts through several new and social media providers (including Facebook and Twitter). Next, they had to blog their "coming out as undocumented" story. According to Javier, the youth needed to be able to articulate their story to a broader audience. They also had to search the online sites for DREAM Act related news to share with their new media networks. The participants were also encouraged to establish an easily identifiable, yet unique, "handle" to help them build an online following.

The interns expressed interest in learning new media technologies not only to improve their online activism, but also to help support more local and regional efforts. For instance, two of the interns complained that there were really no local organizations supporting undocumented youth in their city. They hoped their internship with DreamActivist.org would equip them with the skills they needed to help create these local organizations. In fact, most of the interns believed that new media activism and support

for local community organizing are both indispensable to mobilizing a successful movement.

Unfortunately, the DreamActivist.org new media internship ended after just three trainings when immigration issues caused Javier to lose his scholarship, forcing him to focus on these personal issues. Despite this, Javier has stayed very involved in DreamActivist.org. Some of the other training participants also remain active on the site and elsewhere. At the same time, the cancellation of the training points to the multiple challenges undocumented youth face in sustaining their activism despite their best intentions.

New Media: Activating Social Networks and Social Capital

The new media dimensions of the movement are further highlighted in a video DreamActivist.org activists uploaded to Vimeo. In this video, Prerna and Mohammad, two of the founders of the DreamActivist.org, play Mafia Wars, a multiplayer social network game created by Zynga. The game is available on various media platforms, including Android phones and iPhones. In the video, Mohammad explains how playing Mafia Wars can enhance advocacy for the DREAM Act: "All it takes is a few hours a day doing stuff like this… [playing video games]. If you get good enough [at the game], people start to see your avatar, which is the DREAM Act. This is where our youth are, so we have to reach out to them like this." Here, Mohammad emphasizes the media strategies of the movement. He identifies the online spaces where "undocumented youth *are*" and utilizes these social networks to affect social change. Since its launch, DreamActivist.org has straddled the line between social networking, play, and political

advocacy. Since many undocumented youth do not necessarily see themselves as political, DreamActivist.org has focused on speaking directly to the social needs and interests of undocumented youth.

Much like the early versions of the Black Panthers and the Young Lords who offered free breakfast programs, trash pick ups, and other services in order to politicize communities, DreamActivist.org provides resources that service youth's interests and needs. An example of the effective politicization of social networks is the list that DreamActivist.org compiles of scholarships for youth. In fact, the majority of respondents in this study stated that their high school and college counselors were not aware of resources and opportunities for undocumented youth. Below is an image from DreamActivist.org accompanied by a caption that states, "Is this how you feel? We can help."

Source: http://www.DREAMactivist.org/blog/2011/07/20/scholarships/

In this image, Lisa Simpson, a studious character from "The Simpsons", reflects youth's frustrations over trying to find relevant academic resources. Yet the image also highlights how important the computer, a stand-in for online sources of information, can be.

Once youth become active online, they are much more likely to mobilize. For instance, DREAMers have used new media to mobilize youth to participate in cyber Townhalls with Senators and other public officials. In one Twitter post, the media

coordinator of DreamActivist.org encourages participation by emphasizing

undocumented youth's political efficacy. He writes, "Who knows, if we ask enough

questions perhaps the President will tweet back at you, me, or other undocumented

students!". He then describes how Twitter Townhalls have been used by elected officials

on behalf of the DREAM act: "YouTube recently launched their own version of

Townhall where Papa Durbin already is making headway with the DREAM Act."[51]

　　　　While over half of the respondents in this research do not consider themselves

particularly "political" within dominant (legislative and partisan) definitions of the term,

they are all avid social media users and report that at some point they had looked online

for information regarding their legal status. DreamActivist.org uses these media practices

to empower youth politically. For instance, by asking their supporters not only to 'like'

group pages and/or causes related to the DREAM Act, but to also change their profile

pictures to reflect the campaign of the moment, DreamActivist.org has steadfastly

increased undocumented youth's visibility. This was demonstrated during the campaign

to pass the Federal DREAM Act in December 2010 when DREAMers used a 'lame duck'

image that Facebook users could use as their profile picture.

Source: DreamActivist.org

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[51] See: http://www.dreamactivist.org/barackobama-answer-dreamact-tweets-townhall/

The lame duck profile was heavily used in the months preceding the Congressional vote for cloture on the DREAM Act in the Senate. The graphic displays the phone number to key congressional and senatorial staff and the targeted number of calls needed to achieve the goal of the day or week. At times, DREAMers organized phone banks to call these elected officials and lobby for the DREAM Act from their homes or college campuses. The strategic deployment of Facebook tools is a fairly low threshold activity that supporters and allies can do readily and easily. Changing a profile picture is a first step in cementing undocumented youth's commitment to acting collectively. Despite critics who sometimes dismiss a politics driven by social media as "slactivism," several studies suggest that these activities can have significant effects on political activism. Research by Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication and Ogilvy Worldwide in 2010 shows that the small investments in time and effort required to pass along such messages (or to link to causes via our social network site profiles) may make participants more likely to take more substantive efforts later.[52] All of this suggests, as Jenkins argues, that more spreadable forms of civic media may not only reach unexpected supporters, but may be planting seeds which can grow into deeper commitments over time.

From Networks to Politics

Facebook has also become an important platform where DREAMers facing deportation orders against them can reach out to supporters and where their supporters can organize and rally. Specifically, mobilizing around deportation on Facebook often involves setting up a Facebook page with the name of undocumented youth about to be

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[52] Katya Andresen, "Why Slactivism is Under-Rated," *Mashable* (Oct. 24, 2011). http://mashable.com/2011/10/24/slactivism-cause-engagement/. (Accessed on April 2, 2011).

deported. The page will often include a personal video asking for help and support in stopping the deportation orders. It may also include specific information about what supporters can do to help, such as place a call to the Department of Homeland Security or donate to a release fund. DreamActivist.org's blog keeps continual updates on deportees. When a young person is pulled over and arrested, the blog publishes a story about the person facing deportation and a petition that a visitor can sign. In some cases, up to 5,000 signatures have been collected in order to keep a person from getting deported.[53]

For example, after the Mathe's family petition for asylum was denied (including a mother and her children) and orders of deportation were issued, DreamActivist.org circulated a petition along with a video of the family asking for help. The morning of the deportation, tweets were sent asking allies to call Delta airlines and ask them to stop the deportation of the family. Social media, especially microblogging, is useful in sending short and timely updates on the deportation process. The use of social media by youth activists has made the once very secretive deportation process much more public.

While the Mathe family was not successful in avoiding deportation, Naelley's case was more successful.[54] After getting pulled over for a traffic violation, Naelley was sent to a detention center in Colorado. After DreamActivist.org collected 5,000 signatures, uploaded a video of Naelley, and gathered funds for her release, Naelley was released back to her family. Naelley has not been able to adjust her status since then, but releasing her from the detention center where detainees can be held for up to 6 months was seen as a victory by DreamActivist.org.

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[53] See: http://www.dreamactivist.org/blog/2011/07/27/andy-mathe-deported/
[54] See: http://action.dreamactivist.org/nalley/

Posting one's deportation story online, however, comes with its own risks. In fact, anti-immigrant activists have also used these stories to demand deportation.[55] In 2011, for example, a fellow student mounted a new media campaign to deport Pedro, an undocumented youth enrolled at Cal State Fresno.[56] Nancy, a youth activist in Los Angeles, believes, however, that the bigger risk is staying in the shadows. She asserts, "Yes, it is risky, it is dangerous, but most of us feel like it is more dangerous when people don't know we exist."[57]

Another member of a Los Angeles-based undocumented youth organization echoes Nancy's perspective in explaining how social media can be used in cases like Naelley's. He says that 'being in the shadows' is actually worst than being a public activist because if he is ever deported, his entire network of activists and allies would know.[58] Being 'out' at least ensures some due process. Besides, he says, activists are well trained prior to doing a direct action. They write their lawyers' phone numbers on the inside of their arms in black marker. They refuse to talk to ICE agents until their immigration lawyers are reached. Prominent activists are more likely to be released. Some activists eventually even qualify for a work permit and a temporary stay in the US. Those that are least visible, namely those who are not well connected and cannot access social networks and support, struggle to make people aware of their situation . Many might spend months in detention centers, held like criminals in overcrowded facilities, separated from their families. These are the cases that DreamActivist.org is most intent

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[55] C. Scott, "DREAM Activist Targeted for Deportation by Vengeful Classmate." *Change.org* (January 6, 2011). http://news.change.org/stories/dream-activist-targeted-for-deportation-by-vengeful-classmate. (Accessed on April 3, 2012).
[56] See: http://www.therealpedro.com/
[57] DREAMing Out Loud! Symposium. Public Event. University of Southern California (November 2, 2011). For a detailed account of this event, see:
http://henryjenkins.org/2012/01/dreaming_out_loud_youth_activi.html
[58] Ibid.

on highlighting through social media. They create videos. They publish a Facebook page.

They also send their story to DreamActivist.org, to reach a wider audience. The success

of this strategy can go a long way in raising awareness of the plight of undocumented

youth and at times may also have the practical effect of actually helping stop deportations.

For DREAMers, an important feature of Facebook is the SMS messaging system.

When individuals subscribe to a page or group, they can also ask to be sent SMS

messages with updates. This allows the group to communicate with, and update, their

followers even if those followers are not able to be online all the time. This is particularly

important and effective as some youth do not check their Facebook or email every day.

SMS messages are sent directly to supporters' phones, bypassing the need for online

connectivity. DREAMers send alerts about ICE raids, ICE checkpoints, rallies, events,

important legislation, and fellow DREAMers' accomplishments. When there is a major

event, such as an immigration speech by the President, DREAMers use the SMS system

to counter mainstream messaging. The content shared through Facebook is also

simultaneously disseminated across various sites, including Twitter, Facebook, SMS, and

blogs.

DREAMers have also used social media to educate youth on what to do in the

face of deportation, alerting others about workplace and apartment raids by ICE, as well

as locations of checkpoints throughout the city. This is an example of a tweet that warns

of an ICE checkpoint.

This activist's Twitter page shows how he uses his social networks to promote his art like his 'e stickers'. Yet it is also used to warn his social network about ICE checkpoints. In this case, ICE was checking for papers in a busy metro station in Los Angeles. Having a dense online social network allows youth to access these types of resources that are crucial to survival in the face of constant threats of deportation, workplace raids, and street side checkpoints.

Social Networks, Contextual Capital and Supports

Contextual capital, defined as the institutional supports that individuals have available to them in their local contexts, is a key factor in mobilizing individuals to take part in collective action. As shown above, online social networks constitute an added dimension to youth's social capital. However, the contrasting experiences of undocumented youth also reflect the importance of contextual capital in connecting, expanding and deepening youth's online social networks. Paulita was one of the youth respondents who, while a Facebook user, was not connected to activist and resource networks like those offered by DreamActivist.org.[59] In my meeting with Paulita, a high

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[59] Paulita. Interview. April 20, 2011.

school graduate, she told me how she had tried to go to college but she felt she couldn't

afford it. Once she decided to attend community college, she dropped out after only a

quarter. Paulita had a high GPA and was a gifted student, but her counselors were not

able to provide information about opportunities and programs that would help her access

higher education despite her undocumented status. At the time of our meeting, Paulita

was working but was not in school.

Paulita's social networks did not lead to higher political engagement or

empowerment. Her story demonstrates the limits of online participation for youth's

political empowerment. If they are not active online and do not have community support,

many undocumented youth may only be peripherally aware of the new media dimensions

of the movement. Motivated and media savvy youth can find each other online, like the

founders of DreamActivist.org who connected with each other via an online chat room.

Yet these youth had an online life, were high achievers, and were highly motivated to

make a change in their lives. They also had other contextual resources. A principle

contextual resource was their college education and the opportunities associated with

college campuses. Some of the youth who are not involved in more local dimensions of

the movement, however, also do not seem to be aware of the opportunities, resources, and

affordances associated with the movement's use of new media. They often need a

supportive mentor—a teacher, a counselor, or a friend—to introduce them to key

websites and other online resources. While networking between online and local

dimensions of the movement seems to be a clear priority, there does appear to be some

disconnect between youth involved in more traditional local activist organizations and the

media activism of the self-identified media-savvy DREAMers. In this sense, both online

communities and contextual capital seem to be crucial to youth's ability to mobilize and harness the affordances of networked communication.

Part VI
The DREAMer: Collective Identity and Storytelling

Scholars of civic engagement and social movements have acknowledged that contextual capital is necessary but not sufficient in mobilizing individuals' participation. The presence of a robust collective identity is a necessary ingredient for sustained political engagement. The term DREAMer is often synonymous with undocumented youth's activism, yet we have little knowledge of the content of that identity. By looking at online communities, we can better understand how new media has a transformative impact on the construction of identity, and ultimately the fostering of political participation.

In the case of DREAMers, this mobilizing identity is constituted by collective identification with other undocumented youth in spite of other racial, ethnic, or class differences. Storytelling through digital media has been essential in constructing this collective identity. In fact, storytelling has become a tool that helps undocumented youth overcome the stigma of their legal status. Equally as important, these spaces have been significant in helping youth foster a sense of political efficacy. Telling stories about shared struggles and movement victories through user generated videos and blogs have had the cumulative effect of increasing undocumented youth's sense of belonging, which, in turn, has increased their sense of political efficacy. In some cases, undocumented youth have been able to affect the terms of the debate on immigrant rights, giving youth a sense that acting collectively can be effective.

DREAM Activists and Storytelling

Sangita Shresthova, the Research Director on the Media Activism & Participatory Politics (MAPP) Project, and I have begun to develop the concept of 'participatory storytelling' to understand how activism and storytelling intersect in a new media environment. Sharing stories through various social and digital media platforms has allowed youth to challenge and, at times, supplant mass media representations through more locally constructed and participatory forms of messaging. Undocumented youth who engage in 'participatory storytelling' take advantage of new forms of social and digital media, along with their low barriers for participation, to come out as undocumented while simultaneously reframing the immigrant rights debate through their personal narratives. This storytelling is not limited to oral testimonies or text, but is also circulated through movement art and user generated videos and documentaries, which present 'coming out' stories of undocumented youth. Sharing one's story involves high risk, and thus also fosters an ethos of trust, mutuality, and reciprocity that contributes to a sense of collective identification both in online and offline publics. Participatory media practices have allowed immigrant youth a means for self-definition and spontaneous messaging, a form of communication, which diverges from tightly controlled movement 'framing'.

First, the practice of participatory storytelling has given undocumented youth the opportunity to identify and connect with one another online. Given the effects of legal status on youth's social marginalization, isolation, and self-esteem, new media technologies have become an important mechanism of communication and connection. This connection is hard to establish even for youth who are surrounded by others who

confront a similar situation. For example, four of my respondents were from a local high

school where there was no support group for undocumented students, despite the fact that

it was located in a majority Latino immigrant neighborhood where close to 30% of

residents were not citizens. Yet due to the controversy surrounding immigration policy,

teachers and administrators were reluctant to raise the issue. In her interview, Paulita

describes how she devises ways to identify others, but shame and stigma also prevent

youth from revealing their status:

> I suspected there were people like me, but I never asked. I would just
> listen: like if they had an accent, or if they weren't involved in stuff, or if
> they stayed quiet when our teacher would talk about college admissions. I
> knew by how they acted, if they stayed quiet, they probably didn't have
> status. But it was hard to find others that would talk about it and there's a
> lot of people talking bad about illegals and everything so it's easier to stay
> quiet.

Thus, new media, like Facebook and Twitter, micro-blogging, chat rooms, and discussion

forums enable undocumented youth to connect and communicate with other youth

similarly situated and to feel a sense of community when none exists in their high schools,

college campuses, or communities. There are websites solely dedicated to hosting videos

of undocumented youth telling their stories. Some websites, such as Illinois Coalition for

Immigrant Justice, ask youth to submit an audio recording of their story.

DreamActivist.org also has a section titled "Our Stories" where youth are literally

asked to 'come out' as undocumented. The practice of 'coming out', a repertoire used by

the LGBTQ movement, has been a fundamental mobilizing strategy and collective

identification tool amongst undocumented youth, because declaring one's status publicly

can reframe one's identity as a source of pride rather than shame. The practice of

participatory storytelling can also foster feelings of solidarity, trust, and reciprocity

amongst online social networks in spite of not 'knowing' one another personally.

   Take for instance, the example of Mohammad, one of the founders of

DreamActivist.org. During 'coming out week' in March of 2011, Mohammad uploaded a

YouTube video in which he shares his story. As Mohammad states in the introduction,

the organizers have been asking others to share their stories, and he felt obliged to do the

same. The video then embodies a type of participatory online exchange that the DREAM

movement is known for. Like this video, hundreds more can be found on both YouTube

and other portals where youth 'come out' as undocumented.

   The video starts with a young man greeting everyone in a very conversational

tone: "Hey you, I'm Mo from DREAM Activist." The audience just sees Mo in dim light

in what seems to be a bedroom. He has a poster of *The Office*, a popular television series,

in the background. After introducing his reasons for why he has made the video, he

shares his testimony beginning with the simple phrase: "My name is Mohammad and I

am undocumented." A t-shirt he wears, which states 'I am un-doc-u-mented', reinforces

his statement. He goes on to discuss his parents' migratory history, his disadvantages in

pursuing higher education, and the moment that he realized he would become a DREAM

activist. Toward the video's end, Mohammad states that coming out is not "coming out in

a big press conference or in front of a big audience," but rather can be done effectively in

the privacy of your own room with a camera.

   Mohammad's poignant observation about 'coming out' points to the greater

implications of new media on social movement activism more broadly and the changing

parameters of the public sphere. Mohammad's video was not created for a mainstream

public, rather, the video aims to speak directly to other undocumented youth. As he

explains, "We've been asking you guys to share so I thought that I should do the same."

There is a level of reciprocity and trust that shape the implicit norms between the author

of the video and his intended audience. He refers to other undocumented youth who have

already made videos, consistent with the practices of other video blogging

communities.[60] The video garnered roughly 2,000 views on YouTube and prompted some

responses from other users declaring their undocumented status. It is informal,

conversational, and intimate, establishing a one to one relationship between Mohammad

and other DREAMers.

Like Mohammad's video, undocumented youth's stories appear across various

media platforms including platforms such as Tumblr. Sharing such stories is a practice

that has come to define the organizing repertoires of various organizations. Mohammad's

video, for example, was a response to a call to share one's story by Gabriel, another

undocumented student who uploaded his own video. Though these two DREAMers had

never met face-to-face, they were still able to create a common space by sharing their

stories using YouTube.

Gabriel's video is an example of how storytelling can help participating youth to

shed some of the stigma and shame of being undocumented. Gabriel tells his viewers

about coming out as undocumented, "it doesn't roll off your tongue, but every time you

say it, it gets easier". He confesses he was once ashamed to say 'it'. Every time he said

'it', he would shake with nerves, Gabriel admits:

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[60] See: Patricia Lange. "YouTube: Creating, Connecting and Learning Through Video," *Teaching Tech-Savvy Kids, Bringing Digital Media Into the Classroom, Grades 5-12,* Jessica K. Parker, Ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (2010): 37-64.

We have the power to define who we are, as undocumented students, as undocumented immigrants. Unfortunately, we are not using that power. We are letting people like… Lou Dobbs and Bill O' Reilly… define us. And how can we counter act this? By saying these simple words: "My name is and I am undocumented".

In saying those words, Gabriel affirms, "You're not just coming out, you're shattering the stereotype." As soon as you say this, Gabriel tells his audience, "it doesn't define you. By doing that, you're not settling…you're not hiding." Gabriel ends by inviting others to join the movement: "My name is Gabriel, and I am undocumented, and I invite you to come out."[61] Similar to Mohammad's video, Gabriel situates his undocumented status within a story of injustice. While Mohammad tells us of his parents' migratory history, Gabriel emphasizes the negative stereotypes he has endured at work due to a "broken immigration system." While the videos differ in terms of their format and content, they are similar in their intent and message. By sharing their stories through user-generated video and by using a social media platform, each was able to reach thousands of other undocumented students. All respondents in this study felt their interest in formal 'politics' grew when they were able to connect their personal stories to broader structural inequalities.

Participatory storytelling can help mobilize individuals who are disaffected from politics. One activist, who goes by the pseudonym El Random Hero, is an avid blogger who attributes his activism to the impact of seeing others' testimonials online. El Random cites the first time he saw another undocumented youth "come out" as a cataclysmic moment. He viewed a YouTube video by an undocumented student, Tam Tran, who died in a tragic car crash in May 2010 with another DREAMer. During her time at UCLA,

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[61] See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKNgX0jzWac

Tran had produced several videos and a documentary about undocumented student life.

Because of her early online activism, Tran became a household name amongst

DREAMers. While El Random began posting an online diary back in 2004, he became

inspired to declare his status openly only after he saw a video of Tran doing the same.

> El Random: I have been doing the online thing since 2004, on MySpace
> and then in 2006, I switched that over to like a blogger, and
> the whole official blogging thing. So I could be like more
> open about it. I remember that because it was like for a few
> years like I wouldn't give my name out or anything just to
> be safe and then like by the time I wrote the 'coming out'
> post on my blog, I was like yeah, it's like, what are they
> going to do? It was a trip, another full circle for me
> because that's how I got into it, and then somehow I
> managed to do the same for somebody else.
>
> AZ: You saw somebody else do that on MySpace?
>
> El Random: No, no, no. it was just – well, online, it was Tam. On You
> Tube . Like, one of her videos and testimonials. I realized
> that I wasn't unique. There were other people just like me.
> And then I saw her share her story in articles in the LA
> Times and stuff like that.[62]

After El Random published his story, he received what he describes as a 'huge' response

from strangers who commented on the blog, sent him private emails, and reached out to

him at events. El Random is now public about his identity, using his blog to share

personal, playful, and sometimes serious, comments about his life. His blog's title, "Just

a random hero" references *Jackass*, a popular reality television show on MTV. Despite its

use of humor, his blog sometimes deals with issues of undocumented identity in a serious

way. This is his 'about me' entry:

> Over the years, I have developed a moral obligation and duty to do what I
> do. Growing up without a legal status in the United States is a unique

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[62] El Random (pseudonym). Interview. March 28, 2011.

> experience. I personally never had help from others in dealing with my
> legal status, what to do about it or how to cope with it. As a result of my
> experience, I want to help out the next generation of kids growing up like
> me and help them realize that life goes on no matter what happens. I want
> to help them realize their full potential before the world takes it away from
> them. I have the power to help those in need. For me to idly stand by and
> do nothing about the immigration debate/battle going on right now would
> be irresponsible and stupid of me. I realize that in order for change to take
> place, someone has to be a catalyst. I also write a lot about my *personal
> life* and treat this blog as an online journal. I use it as practice for my
> writing. It is said that the first 10,000 pages a writer writes are crap, so I'm
> just getting crap outta my system.

For El Random Hero, blogging provides a low threshold activity where he can practice his craft. El Random is a journalist, but due to his undocumented status, he cannot work formally for a newspaper. He does freelance work, oftentimes writing about immigration issues for local blogs and community papers. The lack of opportunities for professional development frustrates him so much that he has struggled with acute depression and hopelessness. El Random's blogging has raised his profile, leading to other opportunities. El Random is often in high demand to give public statements to the media and is a fixture on Spanish television channels such as Univision.

Group Identification: "Coming Out" Stories of 'DREAMers' and Claims to Belonging

Participatory storytelling amongst undocumented youth has often centered on narratives of what it means to be American. The wide use of the term DREAMer amongst undocumented youth signals the movement's appropriation of the American Dream rhetoric. But, on closer inspection, undocumented youth's narratives about their identities do not merely affirm the American Dream; they are also remaking what it means to belong to the nation. Digital media has given youth the tools to broadcast their personal

narratives, to respond to social stigma, to develop affective bonds with one another, and to make claims about the meaning of national belonging.

Coming out about one's legal status can have long-term effects on youth's political activism. In his interview, Agustin recalled that he survived high school without ever coming out to anyone about his legal status.[63] He joined a youth program for police rangers and found other ways to feel a sense of belonging. Yet he struggled with feelings of shame, loneliness, and despair. He enrolled in a local state university, where he could afford tuition only by working two jobs. He then became involved in campus organizing around the DREAM Act when a friend, someone he met in High School, took him to his first meeting. Agustin first came out as undocumented to the group his sophomore year. He gradually became more confident and rose to leadership positions within the organization. His first 'coming out' experience to a group of his own peers did not match the anxieties he felt when he was invited to speak publicly to a large convention of labor organizations:

> Telling my story was not the hard part. The hard part was just being in the front [of all those people] but then there is a video about me on YouTube now telling my story. [When I watch it] I feel proud. I feel something that's a positive feeling, you know, it was a very -- I didn't feel ashamed anymore. I feel like I came out and I felt safe to come out. We have to come out of the shadows. I think it's time where we should not be afraid of saying who we are. Why be afraid? The more you learn about how this country is run… I think we had enough, now let's stop being afraid and let's start taking action because if there is no action there is never going to be a change.

Agustin's personal journey in becoming politically active was a gradual one that depended on the degree to which he was comfortable with his undocumented status being a public identity. He reflects on it as a transformative moment in his life. With his legal

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[63] Agustin (pseudonym). Interview. March 13, 2011.

status now adjusted, Agustin founded a youth artist collective. He also mentors

undocumented youth seeking to pursue graduate education, having attained a Masters in

Chicano Studies himself.

<u>Collective Identification and Affective Bonds</u>

Youth's narratives of 'coming out' also point to the growing sense of affective

bonds, pride in their social identities, and group solidarity to which participatory

storytelling has contributed. Leaders and highly engaged youth expressed a deep sense of

admiration for other undocumented youth, a strong and positive sense of ethnic identity,

and pride in their undocumented status. Consider the contrasting stories of Lizzy and

Sammy, two young people interviewed in this research.[64]

Lizzy, a community college student, had only attended one meeting of her

school's undocumented student group. Her hesitation to go public about her status limited

her ability to become more involved in the movement. She was also married, worked two

jobs, and had limitations on her time. Another important difference in Lizzy's experience

was that she did not have as strong an ethnic identification as Agustin, who spoke of his

admiration for Chicanos. Speaking of her identity, she explains:

> I tried to unidentify myself from being Hispanic. Santa Ana has a festival
> of Mexico and I never have wanted to go. My husband tells me, you're such a
> bad Mexican. And I'm like, "Why would you want to go?" It was ghetto.
> Like that was my idea. And like, why would you want to go and be
> around all this ghettoness? Like, there's no point to that.

However, Lizzy's college campus does have an active undocumented youth group, which

contributed to her shift in attitude. In fact, the group had won the award for best college

organization the previous two years for its service and leadership. Lizzy has also worked

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[64] Lizzy (pseudonym). Interview. May 12, 2011; Sammy (pseudonym). Interview. March 23, 2011.

in the counseling office where administrators connected her to scholarships and

internships for undocumented youth. There, she also met other undocumented students

and started to develop feelings of pride in her identity:

> But then after being here and just seeing the difference in how all the youth
> were proud and unafraid. Yeah, it's so weird to me like this year because I
> was telling my husband like "Oh, we should go." He looks at me and goes
> like,"Where?" And I'm like, "To the festival."

Seeing other Latino undocumented youth changed her attitude not only about her legal

status, but also towards collective activities like ethnic festivals. Looking back, Lizzy

regrets her lack of involvement in her undocumented youth club, but being exposed to

undocumented youth activism increased pride in her group identity.

Other youth interviewed for this project and enrolled in similar community

colleges, took very different paths from Lizzy. These youth became highly active in their

campus club, expressing pride in their undocumented status and their ethnic identity.

This pride was often articulated in narratives about their knowledge and awareness of

American culture, laws, and customs, their sense of courage, determination, and

academic success compared to their documented peers. Their collective identity was

expressed through their admiration for other DREAMers' sacrifices and courage and a

sense of shared struggle.

For example, Sammy, a self-identified queer and undocumented student, almost

dropped out in high school when he was diagnosed with severe depression, a condition

not uncommon for undocumented and gay youth. Despite his high IQ, he was placed in

special education classes. He was also sent to a psychiatrist who put him on several

different medications. He thrived socially and academically only after he joined the AB

540 club, IDEAS, and began to write and stage plays for the group. Other club members

described Sammy as an outgoing and strong leader, but also remembered his initial shyness. Sammy eventually overcame his initial reluctance, and has become an outgoing leader in his local chapter and at the national level. Sammy is now also an active member of an LGBT Latino advocacy organization. He is also a DREAM activist and was chosen by his peers to represent his youth organization at regional undocumented youth conferences. Sammy and only a handful of other youth have stood in front of large audiences and declared their sexuality and status publicly, drawing attention to the plight of queer undocumented youth.

When he compares his experience participating in organizations led by undocumented youth and those organizations focused on other issues, Sammy articulates what he sees as the difference in the positive attributes of hard work and achievement in his undocumented peers:

> I know for a fact that a bunch of -- all of my friends are documented, every single one of them. And I know for a fact that I know more about the history or the language or what's going on than most of them. Maybe because I – as undocumented, I try to overcompensate for my status -- whereas they have it and it was like okay, it's a given. My undocumented friends, they're doing really well in school… maybe it's because I feel like I have to like achieve or to try harder than my documented friends. So we feel like more American sometimes, in terms of our achievements, but we don't have the papers.

Youth activists interviewed for this research sometimes use the metaphor of a family to describe their relations with other DREAMers. Despite being strangers, El Random states that DREAMers identify with one another immediately. He explains, "I know exactly what that person has been through, and it's like we've known each other our whole lives."[65] Jose is a student at a California state college.[66] He is involved in his

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[65] El Random.

college's student organization for undocumented students as well as the DREAM

Coalition, an alliance of multiple community and student groups. When I asked him to

describe the 'typical member' of these groups, he responded with metaphors of family:

> If I were to distinguish between my friends from DREAMers, I would just
> say the members of OCDT are like Familia…every time there is a meeting
> we give each other hugs, 'nos abrazamos.'

Jose went on to describe why the members of the group are so bonded despite their

differences:

> We're all SO different…we have like different stories and ideologies --
> We are different in a good way. I think we're different in our stories, what
> brought us there [to the organization] for different reasons… but we're
> similar in that we face like the struggle, and we understand it very well,
> but we have a passion.

These connections result from the shared contradictory experiences of legal

exclusion and cultural belonging, experiences that are central to DREAMers' new media

production. In fact, new media can reinforce these affective group connections and the

feeling of 'knowing' someone well despite differences in ethnicity, race, gender, class,

geography and ideology.

One icon by Orange County Dream Coalition was widely recognized amongst my

respondents, despite the organization being relatively small and local in nature. The

image uses the sign of the 'illegal crossing' seen on freeways near the US Mexico border.

But rather than a family running, the image is of three youth wearing caps and gowns

pursuing an education. The back of the T-shirt reads, "Dream, Education, Advocate." The

image, now clearly associated with DREAM activism, is spread via T-shirts, pins, and

posters as well as Facebook profiles, blog posts, and websites.

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[66] Jose (pseudonym). Interview. June 28, 2011.

Source: http://istillhaveadream.org/t-shirts.html

Jose explains what the image means to him:

> For me, it portrays educated people who have legitimized themselves
> through an education because this system…asked them to… but still
> remain a little hidden, but they have that potential. But it also is a critique
> of the immigration system… nobody thinks of their child when they grow
> up, like what happens to the child when they grow up. So, they are
> educated, but they are still in the shadows.

The Orange County Dream Coalition's use of this image contrasts with those circulated

by anti-immigrant activists, such as the photo below, which relays a sense of anxiety

about the country being overrun by so-called "illegals".

Source: http://logisticsmonster.com/2010/03/18/obama-approves-of-amnesty-for-illegals-
and-secures-more-democrat-voters/

DREAMers often use new media to confront and respond to the stereotypes of border

crossers as unassimilated, *foreign*, and unsettled (running). These youth, who are fluent in

English, are acculturated, are college-educated, and serve as community leaders, are still confronted with negative stereotypes of immigrants as utterly foreign and often criminal. Confronting these stereotypes is a recurring theme in the "Our Stories" section of DreamActivist.org. In one entry, a young man from Bangladesh states, "I felt I was an American in every way except where it really mattered: documents. I never told my friends because I didn't know how they would react. After all, it was high school." Dan, from Venezuela writes, "I am not asking for a handout. All I want is the opportunity to earn the things that I want, make my dreams come true and to be able to give back to my community and this country which I consider my own." Also on DreamActivist.org, a young man from Colombia writes, "I love this country…All I want is a little something in return…I want to be part of it."

The youth expressing their stories on DreamActivist.org are very diverse in terms of the countries they were born in, how they became undocumented, where they grew up, and their levels of education. Yet their narratives suggest that they have been subjected to very similar experiences in terms of their position in American society. They are often frustrated that they were being denied the opportunity to be recognized members of American society and pursue higher education. They also share feelings of confusion and regret. The 'DREAMer' identity is forged from these collective stories and shared experiences.

Digital media images circulated across the web are instrumental in constructing this collective identity. Earlier I introduced Agustin. Early on in his life, Agustin loved to draw. He never imagined back then that his hobby would propel him one day to become one of the most renowned graphic designers of the undocumented youth movement. Two

of the images Agustin has produced have circulated widely and have become almost

synonymous with the movement. In fact, when youth 'come out' in videos, they are

wearing t-shirts with the graphic images Agustin produced several years ago. In the

image below, a t-shirt bears the un-doc-u-ment-ed logo.

Source: http://prernalal.com/2011/07/94070/

Agustin explains the multiple meanings behind this design, most famously worn by youth

activists in sit-ins and 'coming out' videos:

> The t-shirt design is meant to illustrate like you were going to a dictionary
> right, because it really kind of like, I really want to make fun of those
> people that don't know how to spell correctly. A lot of tea parties and a lot
> of conservatives that I have seen online with images have signs that are
> anti-immigrants and sometime, they don't know how to spell the word
> undocumented and don't know how to spell this word immigration or
> reform or -- it's just kind of like tells you like, okay, these people are the
> ones standing for being American, yet they don't know how to spell their
> own language. That's why I put I am undocumented in this form, because
> when the students wear the shirt, they are kind of correcting them at the
> same time, but not in a way we are like -- not in a way we're like oh, I'm
> correcting you, you don't know how to spell, but just the shirt will say
> everything for them and if they catch that, I think that's really cool, you
> know, if they catch it, but if they don't catch it, their ignorance continues
> to live on, right. So that was the idea.[67]

Another one of Agustin's images is the "Support the DREAM Act" banner.

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[67] Agustin.

Source: http://thepoliticalcarnival.net/2010/10/

Here, a silhouette of a cap and gown without a face forms the "me". The cap and gown is

genderless; there is no reference to race or ethnicity. Agustin explains that he chose this

anonymous person because:

> A DREAMer is a student who is in college or who wants to go to a college
> or somebody who wants to continue to pursue a higher education. There is
> a lot of DREAMers out there too, that should be considered DREAMers
> that don't have the resources to be at a community college because they
> don't have the funds but yeah they should be considered DREAMers
> because they want to go and that's what they are fighting for as
> DREAMers and so they can pursue their education.

Agustin's admiration for other DREAMers and his positive sense of ethnic identity and

group attachment are evident in his description of DREAMers as heroic. The

'DREAMer', according to Agustin, is someone who is 'fighting' for an education, not

just for him or herself. They do it for others who don't have the opportunity to pursue an

education. A "DREAMer' assumes a heroic position; someone who not only is pursuing

the American Dream, but also redefining it.

Re-inscribing "Americanness" with New Meaning: Media and Collective Identification

Some would argue that the term DREAMer is now so commonly used that it has

become almost interchangeable with undocumented youth. Yet, the DREAMer identity is

much more specific for the youth involved. Through their new media production and

storytelling, the young people involved in the movement collectively frame the

DREAMer identity. Specifically, the movement's use of the term DREAMer taps into

and re-imagines the rhetoric of the American Dream. In a clear example of this, the

image of the "La DREAMer" below appropriates the American Dream through the figure

of the *Chola* who is bilingual and asserts a type of Anzaldua-like mestizo consciousness

while also claiming citizenship through the DREAM Act.

Source: http://justarandomhero.blogspot.com/2010/05/support-cause-and-buy-poster.html

The image of La Chola illustrates the contradictions that youth confront in claiming

membership through the DREAM Act. The norm of American identity has been

constructed legally and culturally as Anglo Saxon, male, protestant, and middle class.

DREAMers seek to put a new face on what it means to be American.

The "1 point 8 million Dreams" project is another example of this negotiation of

Americanness. The project began with the ambitious goal of filming as many of the 1.8

million DREAM Act eligible youth in the country as they could. The organizers of the project amassed 60 videos of DREAMers telling their stories. They were uploaded to the 1point8millionDREAMs YouTube channel. Unfortunately, the group behind this project, which included US citizens and undocumented youth, fell apart due to personal differences and power dynamics. Still, the project left behind a rich archive documenting the undocumented experience and negotiation of Americanness. A Video by participant #8 is particularly exemplary illustration of the project.[60]

The video begins with a young man, wearing a black T-shirt emblazoned with the words, "Yo Adrian!". He is wearing a bright purple 'trucker' hat turned to the side in the style of skaters. He speaks English fluently without traces of a Spanish accent. He tells the viewer, "Hi, I am number 8". This is markedly different from Mohammad's video, in which he states his name. But, the strategy brings up the contradictions of anonymity and personalized storytelling. These youth have, for most of their lives, been defined by their lack of a 'social'—i.e. a social security number. They are reduced, often times, in the immigration system, to a number. Immigrants are measured in dollars and cents and how much they can either detract or contribute to the economy in debates about the pros and cons of immigration. Yet the videos personalize the immigrant experience to the viewer. Opening up a video with, "I am number 8" followed with a narrative about his migration experience, including the deportation of his parents from the US, is intensely personal. In an interview for this project, Jon, one of the directors of the project, recalls how using numbers was a strategic move. He explains, "People make up their minds without knowing who is involved…our videos show the unique stories of everyone but also how

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[60] http://youtu.be/ks8dqBFk1rw

everyone is the same. And since in a way people don't want to know who we are then why tell them our names? I won't tell you my name, but hear my story."[68]

Jon recorded the majority of the 60 video blogs, often travelling to other counties to visit with interviewees, a process that was enabled by the fact that Jon was actually born in the United States and has all the privileges of citizenship. There is something telling in Jon's story and involvement. It demonstrates how a DREAMer identity can, in many ways, extend beyond undocumented status. He states, "Our videos show the unique stories of everyone, but also how everyone is the same." Thus, choosing a number rather than a name to identify participants was another way to suggest that there is much the youth share, thereby constructing strong bonds of identification in the story itself.

Part VII
Youth Voice, Political Efficacy, and Direct Action

Within the undocumented youth movement, the capacity to express one's voice, story, and experience through new media has contributed significantly to a collective identification and sense of belonging. This sense of belonging, fostered in and through the sharing of media, also impacts the rates of youth's political participation. Mentioned earlier, Garcia Bedolla finds that a positive affective group attachment and a positive view of one's group have an impact on a person's perceived ability to act on behalf of their group.[69] This sense of agency is what scholars of civic engagement include in measures of 'political efficacy'. Young people who participate regularly in organizations which focus on supporting undocumented youth often exhibit a stronger sense of political

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[68] Jon (pseudonym). Interview. July 29, 2011.
[69] Garcia Bedolla.

efficacy. That is, they believe their actions are meaningful and that acting on behalf of the

group is a worthwhile endeavor. Not surprisingly, this research suggests that young

people's participation in online activist networks also increases their sense of

empowerment. Agustin said he never thought of his art as more than just a hobby, but

seeing the effects it had online and locally, especially in inspiring others, increased his

own sense of agency. Agustin went on to earn a Master's Degree in Chicano studies. The

topic of his Master's thesis is the role of digital media in the undocumented youth

movement. Like Agustin, many others—Jose, Sammy, Maria, Juan—never thought of

their hobbies as having political potential. But seeing the impact that a video, an image,

or a Twitter message traveling through online spaces could have and how it could

mobilize youth across the country motivated them to further master their new media

skills.

This awareness of their ability to affect change seems to also come with a sense of

obligation. For example, asked during an interview why he chose to risk arrest to bring

attention to the current administration's deportation policies, one activist replied, "I *had*

to. How could I not? I just had to…for my friends, my brother, my community."

This sense of personal obligation is further echoed in El Random's testimony

about why he blogs: "I felt a moral obligation…to help others like me." El Random's

statement expresses a mobilizing identity, which is built on the assumption that to be a

DREAMer is to *act* on behalf of the collective. Speaking on this topic further during the

interview, El Random also takes great pride in his group's successes, especially with

regard to raising the group's public profile in the social justice community: "What can

they do, you know? We know what to do… we know how to get the word out to people

who will vouch for us… so we're not scared anymore. We know more than the agents

themselves…we know who to call and how to get others to know what we're doing

through Facebook blasts, Univision…things like that." His observations reveal his sense

of pride in DREAMers' peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, the importance of mentorship,

and the sense of a collective mastery that is empowering in the face of threats.

DREAMers' successes are indeed loudly celebrated using media. These

celebrations are then reinforced through local gatherings, and brought to life through

activists' personalized narratives. When the California DREAM Act passed in late 2011,

a law that grants in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented residents, Facebook

hosted storytelling and alerts about local gatherings and parties. Social media networks

are spaces for collective memory, showing other movement participants that their actions

matter.

Source: Public Page on facebook.com
(http://www.facebook.com/events/173747869378104/)

Much as participatory storytelling has contributed to a sense of collective

identification and a sense of political efficacy, this practice of creating shared memories

has also effectively reframed the immigrant rights debate by inserting, celebrating and uplifting youth voices where previously they had been silenced. When youth activists see that their storytelling has been effective either through small victories or large ones like the passage of the California DREAM Act, further mobilization is spurred. Youth are now taking greater risks in bringing attention to current immigration policies, which are resulting in the greatest number of deportations in U.S. history.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, immigrant youth participated in unprecedented numbers in immigrant rights mobilizations of 2006 and 2007, albeit with some initial resistance from some sectors of the movement.[70] Initially, student issues were not a prominent part of the immigrant rights movement's broader agenda. Many of the youth groups involved in the marches nationally had to assert themselves and fight for the inclusion.[71] New and social media have become important tools in amplifying youth voices and interjecting a youth-driven agenda into the immigrant rights movement. In fact, youth's use of new media enabled them to disseminate their stories across various media platforms and *contest* elite driven cues more rapidly, bypassing formal gate keepers in the process. These young people have, in effect, managed to shift the immigration debate within the United States through their efforts. For example, President Barack Obama's state of the union address in 2012 addressed immigration by specifically highlighting the DREAM Act. In contrast, when President George W. Bush voiced his support for immigration reform, he referenced guest worker programs, an issue that centered the debate on young immigrant men's experiences. In a matter of a decade, youth have reframed the immigration debate. They did this by successfully building a

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[70] Roberto Gonzalez, "Left Out but not Shut Down: Political Activism and the Undocumented Student Movement," *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy* 3 (Spring 2008): 220.
[71] Ibid 231.

sense of community, mobilizing, telling stories, personalizing the movement and drawing attention to direct action in local settings that may have previously not risen to national awareness. The youth's ability to use new media has been central to these efforts.

At the same time, the DREAM movement can by no means declare its missions accomplished. Whereas initial undocumented youth organizing around the DREAM Act began with the optimism that a new Democratic administration would usher in immigration reform and legalization, changing political contexts have forced undocumented youth to defend their communities against massive deportations, ICE raids, and increased harassment by local law enforcement. Confronting this new political climate, undocumented youth have increasingly opted for civil disobedience and direct action, while also expanding their vision for social change. "The Dream is Coming" (http://www.thedreamiscoming.com/)*,* an undocumented youth new media initiative, reflects this transition from formal politics to civil disobedience. The project was focused initially on passing the DREAM Act. Now, their website hardly mentions it. Instead, it focuses on reporting civil disobedience acts taking place across the country in disparate places like Alabama, Indiana, Georgia, and California. The activists behind "United We Dream" (an affiliated initiative) explain their transition in the 'about us' portion of their website:

> When the DREAM Act failed to get sixty votes . . . many groups focused on . . . election work. In the void, a group of organizers and leaders came together to . . . talk about building a movement and organization that would not crumble on up or down votes in Congress, but that was rooted in a commitment to build an immigrant youth movement that would work to not only pass the Dream Act, but reshape and influence the broader movement for immigrant rights.[72]

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[72] Unitedwedream.org/about/history/.

In a poignant example of this shift in strategy, the "Dream is Coming" features video

blogs of the Georgia 7, a group of youth who staged a sit-in and got arrested for opposing

the draconian anti-immigrant legislation passed in that state earlier in the year, effectively

denying undocumented youth the right to attend college. The blurb on the website is

followed by a video of one of the participants. One DREAM activist opens her video with

the statement, "If you are watching this video it is because I've been arrested." She goes

on to tell her story but also explains why she decided to engage in civil disobedience. In

the 'about us' blurb on the Dreamiscoming.com, the message could not be clearer:

> As The Dream is Coming project, we are compelled by our frustration and
> the fierce urgency of our dreams to act as agents of our destinies and be
> the catalysts for a future in which we are empowered, mobilized, and
> living with the dignity we deserve. We are a group of undocumented
> youth who have worked for years on a path to legalization. We are at a
> point in our movement where radical action has become necessary for
> ourselves and our communities.[73]

Returning to the sit-in in ICE headquarters on August 24th, 2011 introduced in the

opening passages of this report, the movement has now shifted to youth turning to

guerrilla tactics to advocate for their cause. They enter institutions with flip cameras to

confront officials, ICE agents, and border patrol agents. They then broadcast these

confrontations on UStream or other free video-hosting sites. In a public statement, one of

the protestors states his reasons for shifting to these tactics:

> Today five courageous undocumented youth will take things to the next
> level, they will demand an immediate end to Secure Communities and ask
> that the Obama administration stay true to its word. The program has been
> responsible for countless deportations, in fact one of the participants own
> brother was detained last week for nothing more than a broken headlight.
> Despite what President Obama tells us about stopping the deportation of
> certain people we know it isn't true, we know every day people are being
> deported and nothing has changed.

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[73] http://www.thedreamiscoming.com/about/

The message includes a link to a fundraising website, where supporters can use PayPal to contribute to the campaign.

With the use of social media and video hosting sites, supporters can participate in the direct action through new media. This visceral mediated participation marks an important shift from the civil disobedience that characterized the Civil Rights movement. In that context, the public became aware of the 1960s sit-ins through their delayed coverage in newspapers and on television, where their messages were also filtered through other people's narrative construction. In the case of DREAM activism, the mediated viewers participate in a more direct and immediate way. In one of the videos, we see five youth—3 women and 2 men—link arms and sit down inside ICE headquarters. The audience linked in through UStream watches them in real time as the ICE agents immediately ask the youth to remove themselves from the premises. The officers also warn them there are no cameras allowed. The protestors with cameras are then pushed out the door. As the youth with cameras exit, they capture the last view of the youth they left inside, still sitting in the middle of the ICE reception area. The audience on UStream feels the immediate disconnect and isolation of the ICE doors closing. While deportations still occurred that day, the youths' actions were broadcast very effectively using the new media sphere. When she attended the DREAMing Out Loud! Event at USC on November 2, 2011, Nancy, one of the organizers and arrestees, confirms that while only about 300 attended the protest, the U-stream received about 4,000 hits.[65]

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[65] DREAMing Out Loud! Symposium.

Contesting Elite-Driven Cues

Most work in public opinion claims that media shapes public opinion through elite-driven cues.[74] But in the case of immigration policy and DREAMers' communications strategies, we see how elite-driven cues are contested through grassroots driven, locally constructed messaging. On the day that President Obama gave a speech in Washington DC to Latino/a advocates, DREAMers were quick to respond with a counter message. Wearing red t-shirts that read "Obama deports Dreamers", undocumented youth interrupted President Barack Obama several times during the speech, demanding that Obama use his executive powers to halt the deportation of DREAM Act eligible youth. That same day, social media like Facebook and Twitter hosted messages that countered Obama's statements, by emphasizing his record deportations. Presente.org, a progressive website focused on the Latino community, offered this account in its blog post on the event:

> Latino Youth Interrupt President Obama's Speech to Protest His One
> Million Deportations, Including Many DREAMERS… As President
> Obama addressed a national Latino convention in DC, Latino youth stood
> up wearing shirts reading: 'Obama Deports DREAMers' and shouted 'Yes
> you can!' in response to President's remarks that he couldn't pass an
> executive order.[75]

Unlike the social justice community, which has ties to the Democratic party and tends to be more demure in its criticism due to these partisan ties, DREAMer youth vocally contested the claim that Obama was doing everything he could but was blocked by Republican extremists.

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[74] For a counter-argument, see: John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge (1992); T. Lee, *Mobilizing Public Opinion : Black Insurgency and Racial Attitudes in the Civil Rights Era*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago (2002).
[75] Admin, "Latino Youth Interrupt President Obama Speech to Protest His One Million Deportations, Including Many DREAMers". End Our Pain: A United We DREAM Campaign (July 25, 2011). http://www.endourpain.com/2011/07/latino-youth-interrupt-president-obama-speech-to-protest-his-one-million-deportations-including-many-dreamers/. (Accessed on April 9, 2012).

Obama's message to Latino/a voters and allies is thus continuously challenged by DREAMers' framing of the issues involved. Another example of this happened on May 10, 2011 when Obama travelled to El Paso, Texas to deliver a speech on immigration. Within minutes of the speech, I received 10 Facebook updates via SMS text to my smartphone from DreamActivist.org. I later learned that the communications strategy was, in fact, carefully crafted and led by members of the Los Angeles Dream Coalition. Youth activists from across the country had participated in a conference call the night before Obama's immigration speech. They accessed the speech's talking points from their Washington, D.C. contacts and crafted a response including a press release, which they faxed to all their media contacts. Then, the next day, leaders of the Coalition were interviewed at CSNBC. The United We Dream network, of which Los Angeles Dream Coalition is a member, tweeted an alert that this interview would happen. They also circulated the general message that had been crafted the night before. Later, both Spanish and English language media went to the UCLA Labor Center in downtown Los Angeles to document the students listening and watching the Obama speech. At that location, the students were prepared for the media and delivered their message: "We're glad Obama wants to pass Immigration reform, but we want him to stop deportations."[76]

When asked to reflect on the DREAMers' process, Maria, a prominent activist, notes: "Anyone can post on Facebook. The key is to have a strategy."[77] Asked to clarify, she adds: "Using social media strategically is to effectively frame and get the message out." This, she said, is really where social movement and community organizing skills meet new media strategies. The importance of new media is related to generational

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[76] DREAMing Out Loud! Symposium.
[77] Maria.

differences amongst immigrant communities and their allies. Youth may get their news through their social media networks, but their parents still tend to rely on more traditional media. This is why DREAMers need to strategically include both in their communication strategies. Los Angeles Dream Coalition regularly uses this strategy; when someone participates in an interview with broadcast news like CNN or KPFK, they will also "blast it out" through social media so their followers can 'retweet' the news.

DREAMers' recent focus on President Obama's deportation policies has been effective in drawing attention on to the everyday realities faced by undocumented youth. In a powerful example of this, the "United We Dream" network launched the END (Education not Deportation) our Pain (http://www.endourpain.com/) campaign. In the initial stage of the campaign, supporters were urged to change their profile pictures to an image of Obama on Facebook. In an intentional critique of President Obama, the END our Pain campaign used the same color scheme and motif as the original HOPE graphic but with text that included the caption "1,000,000 Deportations."
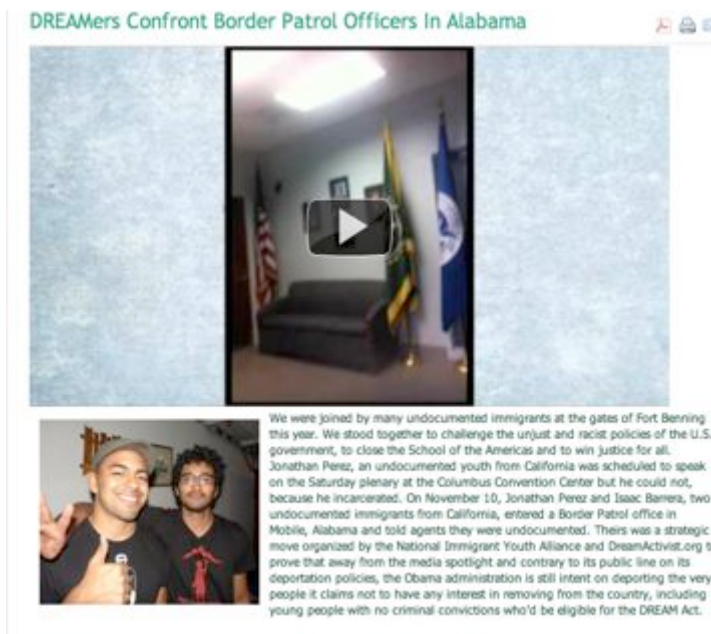

Source:
http://www.justseeds.org/blog/2011/08/1_million_deportations_aint_en.html

These low threshold social media strategies are accompanied by direct action, civil

disobedience, and guerrilla media tactics, which turn the camera on elected officials and

public spokespersons. In one YouTube example of these combined strategies, an

undocumented youth confronts the Obama press secretary at a public event. He asks why

Obama continues to deport DREAMers when he is publicly stating that he is only

deporting high priority criminals. The press secretary defends Obama's position, but the

youth implies that the press secretary is outright lying. The video is low quality,

apparently filmed using a mobile phone camera. The male youth is never seen in the film.

The press secretary didn't seem to be expecting the guerrilla style media session, but he

engages, nonetheless. He seems confident about the President's position. The DREAM

activist also knows his side of the issue. He implores the press secretary to tell Obama

that he needs to use his executive powers to stop deportations. The DREAMer talks over

the press secretary, not allowing him to give the official framing. Beyond this example,

armed with cameras and conviction, DREAMer youth record themselves entering

Congressional offices, official events, town halls, protests, and public sessions to directly

challenge public officials' versions of events. They then upload these videos to YouTube,

Vimeo, UStream and other media sharing platforms.

Barrera and Perez create a particularly striking example of this documentary tactic

when they walk into a Border Patrol office in Mobile, Alabama.

Source:
http://www.allthingsnow.com/all/education/shared/13371730/DREAMers-Confront-
Border-Patrol-Officers-in-Alabama

Once they enter the office and state their disagreement with current immigration policies,

the staffers ask them, "Why does that matter to you?" Perez responds, "Because I'm

undocumented." After some more discussion, the video ends abruptly. In a follow up

posted online later, we find out that both the youth were transferred immediately to a

prison in Louisiana where they were detained for a few weeks before being released. The

lesson learned from this incident, the youth believe, is that undocumented immigrants are

safer when they come forward and organize instead of cowering in the shadows. "We

need to stand up and eliminate the fear and fight the anti-immigrant laws that are

terrorizing our communities," Barrera said in an interview with a reporter shortly after

being released.[78]

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[78] See:
http://colorlines.com/archives/2011/11/dreamers_in_detention_expose_obamas_deportation_lies.html

In Latino Decisions, the premiere polling agency of Latinos in the U.S., researchers found that public opinion has really turned on the issue of the DREAM Act as well as on deportations.[79] According to this polling agency, a majority of Latinos disapproved of the President's immigration policy, with about a quarter of them citing that they know someone personally who has been deported.

In a surprising move, in late August of 2011, Obama issued a statement that he was calling for a halt to deportations for 300,000 DREAM Act eligible youth. Any DREAM Act eligible youth who was picked up for non-criminal offenses—like traffic violations—would not be deported and would have an opportunity to apply for a work permit. While the announcements were met with caution by undocumented youth, it also showed that their tactics in reframing the media messaging were effective in contesting elite-driven cues.

Francesca Polletta, a social movement scholar, contends that storytelling is an effective way for social movements to counter hegemonic meanings.[80] In fact, Polletta suggests that storytelling can overcome some of the limitations of policy frames, particularly in the context of disadvantaged populations. Others have defined a narrative as "an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they occurred so to make a point".[81] Overcoming some conceptual limits of framing narratives effectively provides an orientation to an issue (sets the scene), offering a series of complicating actions and implicit clauses, and establishing the importance of events. Personal stories make the

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[79] See: http://latinodecisions.wordpress.com/

[80] Francesca Polletta, *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago (2006). See also: Francesca Poletta, *Storytelling in Social Movements. Culture, Social Movements and Protest*. H. Johnston: Ashgate (2009).

[81] William Labov and Joshua Waletzky. "Narrative Analysis: Oral Versions Of Personal Experience." *Oral Versions of Personal Experience: Three Decades of Narrative Analysis*. (Special Volume of Journal of Narrative and Life History) 7, (1997): 3-38.

abstract real and the political personal. Stories about injustice or abuse don't necessarily cast the narrator as victim, but may inspire sympathy, solidarity or identification. Collectively, the stories contribute to an alternative framing that centers on immigrant youth's experiences. Like Perez and Barrera, who raised money to travel to Alabama by selling t-shirts from the back of their car trunks, youth believe their collective action matters, that their voices and stories are being shared and heard, which ultimately increases their sense of political efficacy and empowerment.

Part VIII
Conclusions and Future Research

During the research on this MAPP case study, I met many individuals who defied the presumption of civically and politically disengaged youth. Like Jose, who used Facebook to confront the social isolation he felt by posting photos of his drawings online, these youth have used new media tools to overcome rather than succumb to barriers to their political participation. Sammy, an aspiring filmmaker, did not have the means to buy a camera with HD capabilities, but produced a short documentary on the plights of undocumented students. El Random Hero was an avid blogger and yet did not have a computer at home. He accessed the internet through public libraries. The stories of these youth provide a glimpse into the positive impact that new media can have on the ability of youth to become civically and politically engaged.

Through this research, I also met disaffected undocumented youth who were less engaged both in their schools, communities, and empowering forms of digital social networks. Though these youth had access to new media, they had not used this access to empower themselves and engage politically. Anna, a high school student, felt that

Facebook was a detriment at times even, pulling her into a web of high school "drama" causing her to deactivate her account.[82] Anna was graduating high school that summer and hadn't any idea of what she would do next. Would she be destined to work in a low-skilled job for minimum wage?

These varied DREAMer youth experiences show the range of outcomes that are possible. For those individuals that experienced positive outcomes in their civic, political and digital lives, it seems to be a result of access to new media combined with a range of other contextual supports. One important contextual support is institutional, namely the college campus. Most of the youth in this study who were politically engaged are also college graduates or on the way to obtaining a degree. Of course, there are exceptions. El Random Hero, for instance, has not been able to afford to attend community college. But for the most part, DREAMers seem to become more involved once they're enrolled in an educational institution. Students like Agustin, who had been exposed early on to Chicano or Ethnic studies, had a framework to understand their struggles in relation to historical patterns, increasing their sense of belonging and group pride. Several youth in this study started their activism by joining a college campus group. Others found each other online. Some later become active in community-based organizations or national coalitions, but they generally began when a peer or a mentor introduced them to a student support group for undocumented students. This happened both online and face-to-face.

While much research needs to be done in this regard, this study suggests that new media do provide extended opportunities for political advocacy and social engagement for undocumented youth. DREAMers find each other online. They strengthen their sense of community through collective storytelling. They mobilize for action using social

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[82] Anna (pseudonym). Interview.

media. They use their online media savvy in combination with more traditional social

movement tactics. The youth use new media to make the DREAM movement personal,

networked and visible. What remains a question is whether the degree of empowerment

and the sustainability of youth's political participation in this movement relates directly

to institutional supports and contextual capital. If so, how can we strengthen these to

create powerful avenues for broader youth participation in politics and the public sphere?

While community groups like Dream Team Coalition of Los Angeles or the

United We Dream national network are youth-driven, these groups have also successfully

drawn on resources and support from more traditional allies in the advocacy and

nonprofit sectors. These contextual supports may enhance DREAMer youth's new media

affordances towards more sustained political action. For example, in the Los Angeles

area, community-based organizations such as the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) and UCLA's Labor Center have been at the forefront of

undocumented youth organizing. These centers provide both formal and informal

supports such as mentorship, scholarship, organizing and leadership development, along

with access to the broader social justice community. In 2011, the Labor Center sponsored

an event called "Dream Summer", which provided 60 undocumented youth with paid

internships and a trip to Washington DC. Such programs help sustain youth's political

activism and involvement by providing a means of both emotional and financial support

and motivation. In California, especially in cities like Los Angeles, the immigrant rights

community has well-established organizations with a long trajectory of facing an uphill

battle to organize and sustain their political involvement. While new media and online

social networks are a way to counter social and political isolation, DREAMer youth may

benefit by seeking out the support of institutions that can help sustain their activism. Kendra and Jenny, for instance, found it hard to plug into the social justice community in their hometowns in Texas and Illinois, respectively. Because immigrant rights are often framed as a Latino issue, most organizations cater to Spanish speaking, newly arrived immigrants. Kendra and Jenny were not Latin American and were not Spanish speakers. The lack of ethnic ties made it more difficult for them to participate in local organizing activities, so they turned to the Internet. Kendra was more successful than Jenny at connecting to a social network of undocumented students, but she also was pulled further into the immigrant rights struggle when she visited Washington, D.C. for a collective action. Joining others in a solidarity march on Capitol Hill was a catalyst in her political activism.

Clearly, there is still more research that needs to be done in understanding why some undocumented youth become politically and socially empowered, while others, to put it in their words, remain "in the shadows." Further analysis of this research will begin to answer these questions as well. Still, it is already clear that new media placed in the hands of DREAMer youth, inspired by a collective vision and supported by the community, has created a powerful movement for social change.

Part IX
Appendix

I conducted research with individuals from a broad array of DREAMer affiliated youth organizations. The majority of those interviewed were members of multiple organizations, so there is significant overlap of membership amongst these organizations. This is clearly a networked movement.

Wise Up

> Wise Up is known to be one of the first groups to work on advocacy efforts for undocumented youth. It is composed of high school students, recruited mainly from Belmont High and other surrounding inner city schools. It has a Facebook page but it is closed to those that are not 'friends'. It is also hosted by CHIRLA (Coalition for Human Immigrant Rights Los Angeles), a non-profit community based organization.

I.D.E.A.S @ UCLA

> This is an on campus student group focused mainly on serving undocumented students at UCLA by providing information about scholarships and other resources. It also runs an AB 540 outreach program with 60 participating high schools. Many other student groups have modeled themselves after UCLA, including Santa Ana College.

Ideas @ Santa Ana College

> Ten percent of Santa Ana College's student population is undocumented. It has about a 200,000-student enrollment. IDEAS at Santa Ana college functions mainly as a 'support' group for students. But, it also serves to 'funnel' students to advocacy and activist organizations such as the Orange County Dream Team.

Dream Team Los Angeles

> Dream Team Los Angeles is a coalition of community and youth activists. It has close ties to the Los Angeles Labor Center and UCLA.

Dream Team Orange County

> Also a coalition of community and youth activists. Many of its members are college students at UC Irvine, Cal State Long Beach, and Santa Ana College.

Fuel At Cal State Long Beach

On campus student group. Provides support to CSULB students in the form of scholarships and other resources.

DreamActivist.Org

A group of 5 youth located in 5 different states that maintains a website: www.DreamActivist.org. This site has become an important tool in networking various groups and organizations across the country. Its blog and twitter provides weekly and sometimes daily updates on undocumented youth policy, legislation, and direct actions across the country.

Dreamers Adrift

A group of 5 undocumented youth who produce videos about their lives. Formerly, CSULB students.

Imarte

A community organization made of artists that deal with issues of immigration. Founded by undocumented youth.

1.8 Million Dreams

A project that was aimed at filming the stories of undocumented youth and putting them online. The project is currently on hold.

California Dream Network

This is a statewide network of existing and emerging college campus organizations who actively address undocumented student issues and who work to create broader social change around immigration reform and access to higher education; It is active in 38 colleges and universities across the state.