# UndocuLives: Understanding the Information Behavior, Needs, and Networks of UndocuStudents in Higher Education

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## Abstract

UndocuLives: Understanding the Information Behavior, Needs, and Networks of UndocuStudents in Higher Education

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Technology use and information consumption appears omnipresent in the lives of many modern U.S. college students, central to everything from social media posting to opening a free email account needed for most basic online transactions. Information regarding college admissions, deadlines, standardized tests scoring and financial aid can be daunting for many students. It is exponentially more so for undocumented students who must consider legal and financial barriers. Like many immigrants, undocumented populations understand access to education is important and can help create opportunities with greater economic potential, especially for undocumented students. For many in the undocumented community, education and a 'better future' for themselves and their children, is one of the main reasons for their migration in the first place. Annually, an estimated "65,000 undocumented students graduate from U.S. high schools" (Dream Act: Fact Sheet, 2010). However, only about 5% to 10% enroll in higher education and

1% to 3% graduate from college each year (Russell, 2011), with an even smaller number continuing into graduate school.

In Washington State, the undocu-movement advanced with the passage of the 2003 historic law that granted eligibility for in-state tuition rates for undocu-students who previously were charged at international student rate, about twice the rate as in-state tuition. Further momentum was gained in 2014 when undocu-students became eligible for state financial aid with passage of the Real Hope Act, also referred to as the Washington DREAM Act (Hernandez, 2014). These state laws allowed for an increase from 25 undocu-student in 2003 to an estimated 1,100 by 2014. This number represents only about "1% of all undergraduate students in the state," (Wogan, 2015), a relatively low number given the estimated state percentage of undocumented population of 250,000, or 3% state's overall undocumented population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2016). Nonetheless, undocumented students are navigating multiple systems and are enrolling in colleges and universities, in some states with increasing numbers, despite the enormous obstacles. It is a complex quandary.

Undocumented college students use technology to satisfy information needs and will continue to do so, as information can facilitate access regardless of legal status. This is important to undocumented youth who often experience unique challenges including stress, alienation, anxiety, uncertainty a sense of limbo (Gonzales, R. G., 2015; Pérez, W. 2012) and insecurity when considering educational options and seeking help to navigate systems of higher education. Entering college is never easy for any student and can be more tumultuous for undocumented students who are often first-generation students, typically low income and may have higher financial costs to attend college (depending on state) with fewer options for credit and/or loans, especially if they are not eligible for state aid. Nonetheless, undocumented students are enrolling

in colleges and universities and use technology to satisfy information needs, but to what degree? Undocumented students constitute a growing body of research in disciplines such as education, political science, law and policy and sociology. However, there is less in-depth examination through the information science lens.

There is a compelling gap in knowledge about this vulnerable group and their information needs, technology use and overall understanding about undocumented college students' networks and information behaviors. Like undocumented communities themselves, the information needs and information-seeking behavior of undocumented students are complex and multidimensional. The development of a more holistic understanding of undocumented student's information behavior, technology use and support is important.

Using a qualitative exploratory approach, framed through though a social justice framework (Jolivétte, 2015), this study draws on three methodological approaches including a) participatory photography (photo voice) interviews with 11 participants, b) an online document review and a c) focus group gathering to investigate the information behavior of undocumented students in higher education, in an effort to address the following research questions:

1) What is the nature of the information needs and seeking behavior of undocumented students at the college level?

2a) How are online (digital) and offline (face-to-face) connections and networks used to address the information-needs related to undocu-content? The second angle of this research question is, b) How do undocumented students express their undocu-lives in online platforms?

I situate higher education, info-behaviors and the Nepantla state of being ("in-between") to scaffold students' liminal experience and center on their undocu-lives in what I call **UndocuStudent Information Framework (USIF)** to identify several interesting findings.

First, the nature of information needs and behavior of undocu-students at the college level are multifaceted and complex, yet not all entirely related to educational needs, but addressing them is crucial to mitigating 1) an uncertain legal status which creates a constant in-between/liminal stance compelling undocu-students to engage in information seeking and sharing that bridges this liminality at critical point in their education, including the latter part of their high school years and the formative years in college, 2) requiring undocu-students to identify or develop trusted interpersonal networks who are professionals well versed in undocu-info (staff, faculty, teacher, fellow student), who will offer assistance to navigate academic journeys in a holistic way that includes personal, legal, emotional and financial support.

Second, connections and networks of support are used to mitigate critical information deficits experienced by undocu-students who depend/rely on both online and offline networks, but prefer face-to-face connections and a physical space such as an Information Ground (Fisher 2005) where support from undocu-verse staff (faculty, teacher, fellow student, etc.) is able to satisfy undocu-core needs (9 identified). *For the second angle of this question*, undocu-students express their lives online in various ways including multiple identity layers of liminality and engagement in online groups, monitoring of organization websites and participating in social networks to strengthening their own networks and knowledge in order to 1) seek undocu-specific information and monitor (keep informed) overall climate and news related to immigration and education, 2) as a tool to share content on important achievements and creative solutions to

undocu-concerns, understand the 'model undocu-minority' label, yet are not afraid to disengage from the information and technology (push-back) when undocu-fatigue is reached.

I purposefully framed this qualitative approach in a social justice framework, situating higher education, info-behaviors and the Nepantla state of being ("in-between") to scaffold students' liminal experience in an effort to better understand their behaviors and needs, but also to center undocu-students' lived experience as knowledge and expertise. The next step in participatory research is action. My hope is that this work will contribute the field of information science not only by providing a deeper understanding of this population's info-need and behaviors, but also allow researchers, faculty, academic administration including executive leadership at two and four year institutions and first contact staff (such as admissions, academic advisers, counselors, housing and financial aid), to better understand what the needs are, where the gaps exist, where professional staff development is needed, and how budgetary decisions can contribute to proving equitable access for undocu-students in higher education in a powerful, affirming, and validating way.

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# DEDICATION

In movement, migration, *ollín* there is life, in all four directions with no borders: for im-migrants
of the world, edge dwellers, *napantlerxs* living everywhere-- you are the quincuncial center.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I can't possibly include all those who have contributed in some way to the possibility of this achievement, and I cannot thank you enough for your love, support and wisdom. And so, I profoundly apologize if I don't mention everyone I must acknowledge and thank; know I am eternally grateful, indebted, and appreciative of your contribution to this work and the completion of this dissertation, including hourly work, advice, check-ins, an encouraging text, giggly niece pictures that reminded me of what matters, home cooked dinners and meals delivered to my door. How blessed am I to have this support, love and belief in my goals.

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The path in life is not a straight line, but a spiral, so I must thank those in the various circles of friends and family in my life. First, to my familia who have supported me in their own way and in many ways over the years, my mother's strength, my father's spirit and our talks in my dreams, my siblings' solidarity, especially Cat, and all of their seedlings, my nephews and nieces who are such a precious gift and are my inspiration, for whom I constantly want to achieve and be better every day; I want to make this world a better place for you as you grow, dream, thrive. I love you all. My longtime friends who are like family and my guiding elders, you know who you are, my Califas and Arizona peeps who shall remain unnamed-- I won't name you to keep your ID safe from the man (lol!), you have supported me and rooted for me por vida, con safos, hasta la victoria siempre, con ganas, sí se puede, viva la mujer, abajo con la migra, RudoRudo stylo, we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us, all of it: I love you.

For my MESA family in CaliAztlán and Washingtón, particularly Lucy and Kúulani, along with my amazing MESA students; seeing you blossom and transform your lives, bearing witness to your success and empowerment is what sustains me in the work I love to do. Thank you to all my friends and colleagues at UW (the awesome comadres chingonas of OMAD, you know who you are!) and Seattle Central College who supported my work as a professional and my educational goals when I become a student once again, especially Dr. Sheila who has been an example of **what** I want to do and how I want to **be** when I grow up. You are immeasurably impactful and vital as a role model and mentor.

I also have to thank my iSchool cohort and friends, strong badass women and men who have guided and supported me, including the amazing Ivette Bayo Urban who was the first to introduce me to Ricardo, Cynthia del Rosario (the great!), and Mike Eisenberg in the halls of MGH, then took the time to walk me around to show me the lay of the school and introduce me to a legend, Cheryl Metoyer, who shook my hand, looked me in the eye and said, 'your idea is relevant and important, you belong here, you should apply.' That night I went home and began the process of applying online.

Finally, I must thank the brave undocu-students in this work, and all undocu-students in every school, college, university, and all undocu-people in school or not, surviving, thriving, leading the way. You teach me what it means to fight for justice and a truly 'diverse, inclusive and equitable' world with actions and physicality, not just sounds bites or lip service. You are the brave version of what I could not be when I was undocumented; you are life changing energy, in spirals, infinite.

# Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of immigration, both legal and undocumented, is a contentious one in the United States of America. The Pew Research Center estimates there are 11 million undocumented people in the U.S. as of 2015, which represents "3.4% of the total U.S. population," with 66% of these adults having lived in the U.S. at least a decade, and the median time of residency is 13.6 years (Krogstad, Passel & Cohn, 2017). About 4.1 million (about 40%) "reside with children under 18," of which "84% resided with at least one U.S.-citizen child under 18" (Zong, Batalova & Hallock, 2018), referred to as mixed-status households. Annually, an estimated "65,000 undocumented student's graduate from U.S. high schools" (Dream Act: Fact Sheet, 2010). However, only about 5% to 10% enroll in higher education (Russell, 2011), and 1% to 3% graduate from college each year, with an even smaller amount continuing onto graduate with a degree. The data is succinctly highlighted by the national organization *United We Dream* in their training material "National Institutions Coming Out Day Toolkit: Institutional Policies and Programs with & for Undocumented Students" (2015). *United We Dreams* states it is the nation's largest "immigrant youth-led network" (2017).

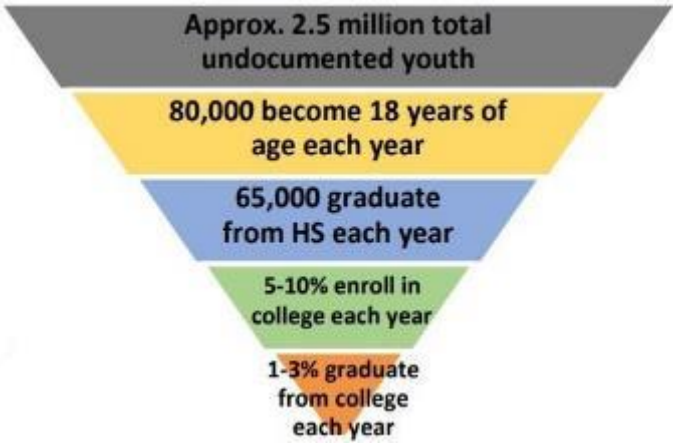



Figure 1: Data on undocumented students ("United We Dream," 2015)

In Washington State, the undocu-movement advanced with the passage of the 2003 historic law that granted eligibility for in-state tuition rates for undocu-students who previously were charged at international student rate, about twice the rate as in-state tuition. Momentum continued and in 2014 undocu-students became eligible for state financial aid. This meant undocu-students became eligible to receive State Need Grant funds with passage of the Real Hope Act, also referred to the as the Washington DREAM Act, which passed the Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Inslee on February 26, 2014 (Buhain, 2014). These state laws allowed for an increase of 25 undocu-student in 2003 to an estimated 1,100 by 2014, and growing. Yet this number represents only about "1% of all undergraduate students in the state," (Wogan, 2015), a relatively low number given the estimated state percentage of undocumented population of 250,000, or 3% state's overall undocumented population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2016).

Nonetheless, undocumented students are in American public schools and will continue to graduate from high school and a small percentage will seek to enter college, despite the enormous obstacles. Prior to DACA and State-friendlier legislation, fewer undocumented students attended college and fewer still were public about their immigration status, making it very difficult to research the information behaviors and needs of this population. Undocu-students are a vulnerable population; for those who graduate from high school, those that either go to college, DACA eligible or not, State financial aid eligible or not, they all face significant challenges. Among the many challenges are "high levels of acculturative stress from immigration-related issues such as separation from family and academic difficulties" (U.S. Dept. of the Education, 2015), as well as financial stress, equitable education access, legal, and

physiological challenges (Arbona, et al, 2010), (Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco & Dedios-Sanguineti, 2013).

As a brief overview, first, DACA was a program created by executive order of President Obama who enacted the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, extending many of the same protections as the DREAM Act but called for the halt of deportations, specifically of students, allowing youth who came/where brought to the U.S. as children to stay and pursue education or military service, (DACA: Immigration Equality, 2015). The results of a national survey conducted by the Center for American Progress found that DACA contributed to an increase in employment, improved wages, recipients of new driver's licenses and the purchasing of insurance, and an in increase in several educational markers, including 92% stating they are in school and because of DACA, "I pursued educational opportunities that I previously could not" (Wong, Richter, Rodriguez & Wong, 2015). Second, the "DREAMers"; the word/title "DREAMer" is an acronym for Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, or the "DREAM Act," initially introduced in 2001. This term is often associated with undocumented youth and is a term used interchangeably (DREAMer and undocumented) to discuss the topic.

However, among the undocumented community, the term DREAMers is not a moniker used by all or embraced by all, given that the term often refers to those who qualify for DACA, a number estimated at 800,000 in the five years since the program began (López and Krogstad, 2017), and not all undocumented youth. Although significant, this is a relatively small number of participants given the potentially eligibility, had the program not ended under the Trump Administration (The White House, 2017). Some prefer to be called DREAMers, some DACAmented, yet most however, prefer undocumented. A convention used among the undocumented community is to add "undocu" to the beginning of another word to indicate

specificity to undocumented people, for example, undocu-stories and youth-led undocu-movement, which currently continues to manifest in public spaces and in national immigration debates (Nicholls, 2013). For this reason, and because no one in my research identified as "DREAMer," I will defer to participant preference and use undocumented students (or undocu-students), not DREAMers.

The rate of poverty among undocumented populations is significant, yet they engage in steady spending and income generation that adds to the national GDP (Hinojosa-Ojeda & Wynn, 2014). Like many immigrants, undocumented populations understand access to education is important and can help create opportunities with greater economic potential, especially for the undocumented students. For many in the undocumented community, education and a 'better future' for themselves and their children is one of the main reasons for their migration in the first place; many undocumented residents over-stayed their visas and did not enter the U.S. as undocumented but instead 'become' undocumented. The possibility of entering Washington's public higher education institutions is more feasible given the state's financial aid access.

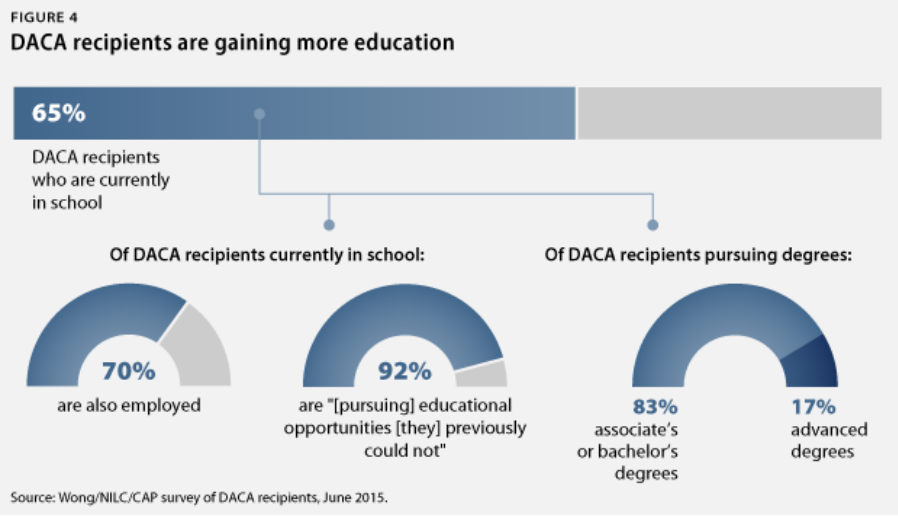



Figure 2: DACA Recipients Gaining More Education

The body of research within the Information Science discipline has a compelling gap in knowledge about this vulnerable group and information needs, behaviors, technology use and overall awareness about undocumented college students' information networks, representing an important area of research ripe for deeper understanding as to the nature of undocumented students' information needs and behaviors in higher education.

## 1.1 Statement of Problem and Research Question

College bound students face daunting amounts of information they must sift through when searching for college information, including (but not limited to) the varying admissions processes, deadlines and financial options for ever-rising college costs. In high school, support staff such as counselors and teachers are typically the first line of help for students. However, not all counselors and teachers or family and relatives can answer students' questions. These difficulties are exponentially multiplied for undocumented students. They must navigate the information available, understand what is not available to them due to their status, and interpret legal verbiage on top of all the general education-industry speak. For example, states differ in policies and provisions for undocumented students with differing state tuition rates, financial aid options, with some states "specifically prohibit[ing] in-state tuition rates for undocumented students, three states prohibit[ing] undocumented students from enrolling at all at any public postsecondary institution" (Undocumented Student Tuition: Overview, 2015).

Undocumented students who have supportive networks may reach out and ask for help, while those that may not may struggle more, and often must face the question of whether or not to disclose their legal status. This in itself is a critical decision, one that can cause fear and anxiety, which can lead some to choose not to self-disclose and not pursue education further.

Even the most prepared and supportive school counselors and teachers may struggle to help undocumented students navigate the college-bound procedures because it is a different process, with unclear undocu-information resources and often hard-to-find information on college sites. Furthermore, access to technology for internet info-seeking does not necessarily mean access to the *correct or accurate* information; some information online is outdated, unclear, or not available at all.

It is a complex quandary. Yet students ***are*** enrolling in colleges and universities while undocumented. Entering college is never easy for any student and can be more tumultuous for undocumented students who are often first-generation students, typically low income and may have higher financial costs to attend college (depending on state) with fewer options for credit and/or loans, especially if they are not eligible for state aid. The defining iconographic imagery of undocumented students, often referred to as "DREAMers" in graduation gowns and hats, a growing national network, and strategic grassroots organizing, have spurred greater visibility not only in the native-language speaking press (Spanish, Chinese, etc.), but in the English language media and press. The current national debate on immigration and border security further highlights the issue, with the uncertainty of comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) ever looming.

Figure 3: Typical imagery representing DACA undocu-movement


I would be remiss if I did not address the 2016 presidential election outcome and the importance of the results for undocumented communities, especially students. I have been focused on the topic of undocu-students' and information behaviors even before I first entered the doctoral program, yet I never anticipated this work would become so timely and relevant. During the last 6 months of 2016, I edited, re-edited and modified my work to reflect the most recent data or information, given the subject and topic in the context of real-life. More statistical data was available, more in-depth close-up stories on undocu-students were done, and in general, there was a greater awareness of the topic in mainstream media. Without a doubt, post-election times exponentially add uncertainty and anxiety among the undocumented community. It is both a perfect time for this research, and the worst time. Not that it was not important before, but given the potential future of immigration policy under a Trump administration, I took extra care and attention with the needs, conditions and personal predicament of undocumented students who participated in this research and those who initially wanted to participate, then opted not. I make no surreptitious stance about this; I stand with undocu-youth.

The study of undocumented student population is increasing, constituting a growing body of research in disciplines such as political science, law and policy, such as Garcia (2013),

Hinojosa-Ojeda and Wynn, 2014, Abrego (2006; 2011), Krogstad, Passel and Cohen (2016), and Batalova & McHugh (2010). In the sociology and anthropology, the works of Chávez (2013), De Genova (2002), the extensive work of former University of Washington professor (now at Harvard) Gonzales, (2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2015), Gonzales & Raphael (2017), and the seminal work of Menjívar (2006), Menjívar & Abrego (2009) and Menjívar & Kanstroom (2013). In the discipline of education, there is a more extensive body of research, for example the work of Dabach (2015), Eusebio & Mendoza (2015), López, & López (2010), Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguineti (2013), Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie (2002), and the important work of William Pérez in the book titled *Americans By Heart: Undocumented Latino Students and the Promise of Higher* (2012), a book that first sparked my interest as an important area or research. These disciplines continue to expand their research and techniques in their respective areas.

From the information science lens, there is a smaller but growing examination of undocumented populations as well, especially related to Latino migrants. The work of Gomez and Vannini (2015; 2017) and Yefimova, Neils, Newell, and Gomez (2015) use participatory photography and photo elicitation as a research method to understand migration journeys of undocumented migrants, while the works of Barón and Gomez (2017) and Baron, Neils, and Gomez, (2014) examine the various information practices of undocumented Latino migrants and day laborers, including social media and mobile devices. How migrants seek information and use technology along their migration routes while in states of impermanence (example U.S. Mexico border), is another area of research addressed by the work of Newell, Gomez, and Guajardo (2016; 2017). However, this body of research has not yet drilled down into *undocumented students in higher education* specifically and their information behavior and technology use.

Undocumented students may be immigrants but they are not necessarily migrants who are in a state of movement.

They are typically stable enough to maintain academic enrollment in high school in such a way they are seeking to enter (or are enrolled in) college. Furthermore, English language abilities of undocumented students in higher education vary from proficient to bilingual. In some cases, some undocu-students do not know they are undocumented until they became teens seeking official documentation such as a driver's license or seeking employment or access to higher education (Vargas, 2011); (Martinez, 2014); (Mineo, 2017). Like the undocumented community itself, the information needs and information-seeking behavior of undocumented students are complex and multidimensional. The various information behavior (IB) models and theories in information science can be the lens used to further expand research in the discipline. The development of a more holistic understanding of undocumented student's information behavior, technology use and support is important and worth further study.

To address the compelling gap in knowledge, I use a qualitative exploratory research approach that is framed through a social justice framework (Jolivétte, 2015), to conduct this study which draws on three methodological approaches including a) participatory photography (photo voice) interviews with 11 participants, b) an online document review and a c) focus group gathering to investigate the information behavior of undocumented students in higher education, in an effort to address the following research questions:

1) What is the nature of the information needs and seeking behavior of undocumented students at the college level?

2a) How are online (digital) and offline (face-to-face) connections and networks used to address the information-needs related to undocu-content? The second angle of this research question is, b) How do undocumented students express their undocu-lives in online platforms?

Undocumented students use technology to satisfy information needs and will continue to do so, as it can facilitate access, participation and connection with others of shared experience in a powerful, affirming, and validating way. This is important to undocumented youth who often experience stress, alienation, anxiety and uncertainty, and face unique challenges in their academic careers, including legal, financial and psychological stressors. Developing a deeper understanding of this population's information behavior allows researchers, academic administrations, supporting staff and educators to better understand what undocu-students' information needs are, where the gaps exist, how they share, create and seek information, and allows for further insight into how undocu-students make academic decisions during their college-going time. Deepening this knowledge can help facilitate improved retention and access for undocu-students in higher education in a powerful, affirming, and validating way.

## 1.2 MOTIVATION AND POSITIONALITY

I am an immigrant, first generation college student pursuing a doctoral degree, whose journey in academia has been rewarding, challenging, enriching, and soul wrenching. A high school diploma is more than I ever anticipated; my mother, having only a 2$^{nd}$ grade education, had educational aspirations for her five children to finish high school and *'hablar el ingles muy bien,'* speak English well enough to have a good job like the supervisors' position at the local cannery, where she worked for decades. She wanted what she thought was the best, represented in a supervisor's position who earned over 10 dollars an hour, wore white hard hats and lab coats

that were minimally soiled by fruits and vegetables. Instead of a supervisor, I became an educator. I've dedicated my work to developing access through an educational equity framework in various educational access programs for over 20 years, where I have worked with underrepresented minority (URM) and non-URM university and community college students majoring in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and technology) field. This work has allowed me to provide my students with excellent student services, fostered a passion to contribute towards impactful change, and work towards diversifying the STEM academic disciplines and workforce. I was also a STEM student who benefitted from support programs such as MESA, TRiO, EOPS and more. Part of my draw to the field of Information science has been identifying the relationship between information, technology, education, and social issues, all of which are core ingredients in my work.

It is in this work that I observed how equity and access eludes some students, despite the best of intentions, specifically undocumented students. Among the "gaps" are the information gaps, lack of assistance with interpreting local and state policy regarding college admissions, and the lack of 'people support' to navigate an already complex system made more so without 'legal' resident status. My research interest lays in the closer examination of the 'undocu-youth movement phenomenon.' They 'dared to dream' and believed in the promise of higher education as part of the American dream. In my work, I have been an "infomediary" for many years. An infomediary is defined by Khosrow-Pour as a "combination of the word 'information' and 'intermediary" (2007, p. 327) and can refer to a website, virtual community or person (for example), who "collects and provides" and/or sources information. For undocumented and other marginalized students, I have come to understand the potential impact of accurate and inadequate

information. Being able to answer questions about majors, funding sources, immigration policy and alternative ways of planning for unforeseen variables is vital.

As a former undocumented student, I often wonder what my path would have been had I not become an "alien resident" at the age of 15. My motivation to pursue this work is inextricably linked to my positionality — I was an undocumented kid in the Central Valley of California, with undocumented, farm-working, cannery-working mother and father who was a weekend as well. I am a first-generation college student, first to graduate from high school, first to earn a graduate degree. I grew up fearing cops, authority figures and county workers. I was an undocumented immigrant in the shadows. This fuels my curiosity and admiration for this generation of undocumented students because they had the guts to say what I never could -- 'I am undocumented and I am unafraid.' I saw their fearlessness in 2010 when undocu-students staged sit-ins in elected official's offices, and organizing grassroots campaigns nationally with emerging information platforms.

I was touched when a sit-in participant said "there's nothing more that we can give but ourselves, and we know the risks that we are taking but it's not about us anymore," to which another add "it's a risk but it's time that we come out into the light and that we make our voices heard…" (Erasmo, 2010, p. 24). Wearing their graduation cap and gown, they were arrested, yet continued to demand immigration reform, staging "pilgrimages" to Washington DC (Trail2010.org, 2010), voicing a clear message: "It's time that our country come together to fix a failed system that keeps millions in the shadows, with no pathway to a better life" (Trail2010.org, 2010). Their work has continued and their strategic tactics have helped contribute to the inclusion of larger immigration topics (border wall, DACA, "DREAMers," TPS, detention centers) onto the larger national political agenda. I will continue to work in

higher education, further enriched by the experience of this work, with an understanding that there is much work yet to do.

## 1.3 Significance and Potential Impact

A study by the Migration Policy Institute (Batalova, Hooker & Capps, 2014) indicates there is a growing number of undocumented students are going into higher education, due in part to the Obama-era DACA Program and revised state policies which extend in-state tuition rates and in some cases financial aid. However, on September 5, 2017, the Trump Administration ended the program and gave Congress the new deadline of March 5, 2018 to produce a "solution" to address next steps that will impact the 800,000 current participants of the program. What will transpire is unknown, yet what is known is that undocumented students are now indeed enrolled in higher education and will continue to do so. Nonetheless, they will continue to be vulnerable. A better understanding of the information needs and behaviors of undocumented students can ensure that despite the enormous pressures and uncertainties in their lives due to their status, there will be stability and support on their college campus, helping to ensure retention and college completion by meeting their complex and multi-dimensional needs. This work asks undocu-students to share their stories and their experience in a visual way. Despite their position of uncertainty, undocu-students offer precious and intimate information that educational institutions can learn from direct perspectives and viewpoints coming from those most impacted by barriers on campuses, intentional or not. Undocu-students bravely share photos of their lives, their families, their homes, work spaces, their college classes. It is important institutions listen to undocu-students. If undocu-students can be brave and share their experiences despite their

vulnerable status, and if institutions claim to value access, equity, diversity and inclusion, then addressing undocu-student lives as a holistic endeavor is important.

Second, the precedent established in Plyler v. Doe (1982) ensured that "states and localities cannot override the right of every child, no matter his or her immigration status, to attend a U.S. public school from kindergarten through 12th grade" (Olivas, 2010). Essentially, K-12 systems are required to provide education to all children regardless of race, sex, gender, religious preference or national origin. Many undocu-students have college-bound aspirations. This work highlights the ways in which the promise of Plyler v. Doe (1982) can demonstrate how the investment in 'education-for-all' is an investment in students, in youth and the future of progress and development, irrespective of status. Providing access and ensuring completion in higher education is a continuation of this 'investment.' Undocu-students are graduating from high school and are attending college, and each year more are graduating from college. There isn't yet much data on the number of graduate level undocu-students. However, there is a growing interest, exemplified workshops and conferences such as the California State University, San Bernardino's first *Dreaming of Grad School Conference*, aimed at providing "resource[s] for undocumented students, their parents, and undocu-allies who wish to learn more about graduate school… wide range of topics that will assist in navigating students from the graduate application process till the completion of their degree" ("Dreaming in Grad School", 2016). Undocu-students become undocu-grads are already a part of this society. Their educational attainment is, despite the obstacles, their participation in society, even with second-class status, which has not prevented undoc-students from achieving and thriving. The 'American dream' is different for everyone, but for undocu-college graduates, their college education can open many more doors. They are buying homes, cars, having children and are a

part of our community (Zong, Batalova & Hallock, 2018). A skilled and educated citizenry can offer a better quality of life and is of benefit to a society at large. Ensuring that a society's most vulnerable are taken into considering and included is both humane and paramount.

Although not new, anti-immigrant sentiment has increased, all during a time when the nation is becoming more diverse. The undocumented population in the U.S. is estimated at 11 million (Krogstad, Passel & Cohn, 2017). Not all undocumented residents are Latinx/o/a/Hispanic. However, they are a large part of this population. Latinos are the "fastest growing ethnic group among eligible voters in the United States. An estimated 27.3 million Latinos – 11.3% of the potential US electorate, will be eligible to vote as soon as 2016 (Bell, 2016, p. 3). The continued disenfranchisement of large segments of the population negates the multiple economic and civic benefits. This is not to say that a pathway to citizenship should be based on the economic potential that undocumented people can offer. Yet undocumented communities should not continue to be second-class citizens.

Third, the mantra of UW's Information School is "we help people and organizations use information to achieve their potential… building information systems attuned to people's needs…. research information challenges and design solutions that improve people's lives" ("Information School, 2017). Developing a deeper understanding of this population's information behavior allows researchers, academic administrations, support staff and educators to better understand what undocu-students' information needs are and can help facilitate, improve retention and access for undocu-students in higher education. This is important because there is growing data that suggests staff, faculty and education professionals can do more to decrease bias and discrimination, and ensure equity and access for undocumented students. For example, a study conducted by the UndocuScholars Project, a research team out of UCLA, found

that undocu-students reported high levels of "being treated unfairly or negatively due to their legal status by faculty, counselors, other students, financial aid officers, campus administrators, and security guards/campus police," in addition to highlighting the need for faculty to better understand the unique challenges and mere presence of undocu-students "in their academic programs, in their classrooms, and as advisees" (pp. ii-iii). The report points to the need for a greater understanding on the part of education professionals towards knowing their campus resources and making such information easily available, including identifying more "safe spaces" (Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, & Suárez-Orozco, 2014).

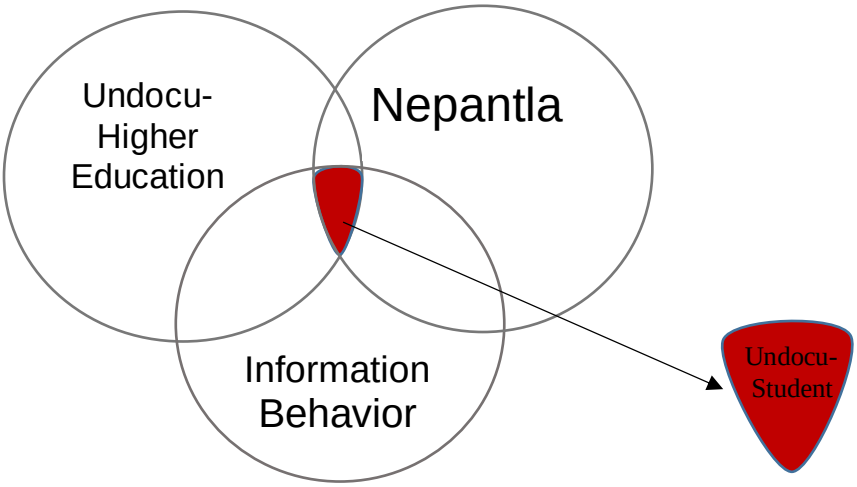
When making policy and budgetary decisions in ever-tight education budgets, knowing what this vulnerable populations' needs are and how to make the best use of resources and dollars is critical. This work will contribute to a small but growing examination of undocumented populations with the information science lens; we "make information work."

# Chapter 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Green (2014) states the focus of a framework is to "aid" and "ensure" that a coherence exists throughout the work, and suggests a "diagrammatic representation [may be] helpful" (p. 36) as a model to illustrate visually the interacting views (circles) the work will draw from. As such, I have diagrammed the **three** working concept circles that overlap with each other, centering a place where all three circles share a connection (intersect), thus creating my guiding frame. The three-point intersection in the middle creates the triangular center that is the place where undocumented student stands, where I center this research work on the experience their undocu-lives. Together, I use concepts, theories and stances germane to the work in **Undocu-Higher Education, Information Behavior,** and **Nepantla** state of being ("in-between")**,** to scaffold students' liminal experience in what I call an **UndocuStudent Information Framework (USIF)** (Figure 4).

From the concept circle of **Undocu-Higher Education,** undocu-students are caught between immigration policies that on the one hand mandate access to K-12 education (Plyler v. Doe, 1982) and mixed policies that do not allow access to higher education, leaving undocumented students and graduates in an 'in between' or liminal state. This liminal state appears extensively (although may be called different names, such as limbo or transitional) in the literature related to education and undocumented students. Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, and Dedios-Sanguineti (2013), Menjívar (2006), De Genova (2002) and prolifically Gonzales (2010; 2011; 2015) describe undocumented students as in transitional state, who must navigate the 'usual' complex adolescent stages of life against the backdrop of an uncertain future that has longitudinal social and economic impacts. The hallmark of an undocu-student is in higher education is constant; uncertainty.

Figure 4: Conceptual Framework: Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF)




The second concept circle is **Information Behavior (IB),** where undocumented students with information needs engage in particular IB, specifically as they relate to information needs and undocu-related information searching, sharing and gathering. I draw upon Bates' definition of IB as the "ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information… [the] types of research conducted in order to understand the human relationship to information" (2010, p. 1). Interestingly, there is no one definition of IB, exemplified by Pettigrew, Fidel and Bruce's (2001) definition as "the study of how people need, seek, give and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living" (p. 44), and Wilson's version (originally coined the term) as "the totality of human behavior on relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use [including] face-to-face communication… and passive reception of information" (2000, p. 49). We know undocu-youth use digital technologies to fulfill information needs. Yet there is not much research that specifically examines their information needs, their searching or sharing habits, or online and offline resources within the context of higher education. I enter this work with this general frame of IB, with the

understanding that more information science models and theories may be needed to interpret findings in this work. For example, I suspect Information Ground (IG) (Fisher as Pettigrew, 1999; Fisher, 2009) may be an important model to include, given the specificity of the research with undocumented students in higher education. Fisher et al., (2005) discuss the local, "regional and global impact" of Information Grounds (IG) and how these spaces can become important places in the daily life of people, in this case the daily college lives of undocu-students.

Finally, the concept circle of **Nepantla**. Nepantla as I am using it is Anzaldúa's (1987) interpretation, from the perspective of a Chicana feminist. In her work, the concept evokes the state of liminality or in-between-ness, a state I assert is experienced by undocu-students. Nepantla as the state of undocu-students' 'in-between-ness' is not only related to issues of liminality between higher education and information needs and behavior, but also to their uncertain legal status that impacts the ways in which undocu-students navigate the world understanding to find solutions when living on the margins to better understand how Nepantla as an embodied state is reflected in the world such as an undocu-student movement and the impact current political discourse, for example. Anthropologist Miguel León-Portilla (1990) and many scholars and academics (Anzaldúa, 1987; Mora, 1993; Keating, 2002) have worked with this concept and used it as a fulcrum to examine social, artistic, academic, spiritual and even gender politics.

This concept is similar to **liminality,** described by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's seminal writing *The Rites of Passage* (1960, [1909]), a work which Victor Turner (1967, 1989, 1992) builds upon. Undocumented students often dwell in the liminal or 'in-between'-ness of the legal, cultural, and academic. For all the uncertainties that many undocumented students face, a constant may be the sense of living in limbo, 'in-between,' an inconclusive existence.

Skjoldager-Nielsen and Edelman (2014) write that "in liminality, participants have lost their former symbolic status, but they have not yet attained their new significance. Liminality, then, is an in-between of potential but dangerous formlessness" (p. 33). This description adds dimension to in-between-ness that speaks to possibilities that are not without "danger," interestingly described as "formlessness." Liminality may not have a 'form' per se, but it is certainly embodied in the behaviors and actions undocumented students in. For all the uncertainties that many undocumented students face, a constant is the sense of living in limbo, 'in-between,' an inconclusive existence.

Together, these concepts allow me to understand how undocumented students dwell in the liminal or in-between space of the legality, cultural and technology, and academics and the methods they develop and strategies they employ to succeed to succeed in an academic setting.

**Why bring these areas together to build the Conceptual Framework: Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF)?**

I am interested in the ways in which information can lead to access, community and autonomy all at once. Mere access to information will not create communities, or build equity, or even bridge access to higher education. Information can be sifted down to our most basic currency for existence; it is key to survival, evolution, longevity and prosperity, imbedded in our DNA, the world and its technology, and the millions of decisions we make in a lifetime. Therefore, how we behave to obtain information is important, especially when maneuvering on precarious thresholds. Perhaps the arcana of the lives of undocumented students is not only that they live audacious and vivid lives in spite of what can be for seem like insurmountable challenges, but that they have adapted to wield information and current technological tools not

only to survive, but to proclaim a space despite their marginality to say: *we are still here*. My research situates at the center of the work, the experiences, needs and information behaviors of undocu-students in higher education because their viewpoints and undocu-lives illustrate the strategies and methods they have developed to communicate, seek, share and surviving despite their liminal status.

## 2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is divided into the three main areas that are the focus of the literature review, specifically for Undocu-Higher Education, Information Behavior and Nepantla.

### 2.1.1 *Undocu-Higher Education*

For many undocumented residents, particularly undocu-students, there is often a feeling of disconnect between their non-American citizenship status and the fact that they 'feel American,' or wish to be "legal residents" and be a more integrated and "legal" part of the American society. Of course, many do not feel this way, yet for a majority, this is their promised land, despite being raised in the shadows within a contemporary education system with juridical processes that guarantee primary education irrespective of the legal status. As such, there is a contradictory conundrum, what Simpson may refer to as "colonial conundrum" (2014), where on the one hand, undocumented children have the right to a free public education yet generally lack rights to access higher education (even if college admissions is permitted, costs are often prohibitive to entry and/or completion).

This quandary is addressed in the prolific work of sociology and education scholar Roberto R. Gonzales, who was also the former advisor and founder, along with students, of the UW Purple Group. His body of work and recent book on undocumented students which will

become a seminal reading on the subject (2015) delves deep into the experience of the undocu-student within the American education system. His latest book posits that in fact a student's legal status, in this undocumented state, or as he calls is "illegality," supersedes all other identities for undocu-students ,or what he calls a "Master Status," creating a "binding constraint" where no matter how prepared a student may be, how enthusiastic about school they may be, this fundamental fact supersedes all else. The development of self-identify for most college students is an important one and often is an exploratory process for many, especially for undocu-students who must weight feeling of not belonging not only on a college campus but in a larger society, for example.

The work of Dabach (2014; 2015) looks at the student experience as well, with a focus on primary education and a sense of "illegality" among young students, while the work of De Genova (2002) brings into question the "unexamined and thus naturalized" ways in which "illegality" as a "theoretical status of the themes of migrant illegality and deportability" (p. 421) are what he called unchallenged "sociospatial presuppositions" (pp. 431, 440). This is an interesting premise that allows for closer examination on the 'assumptions' we make about what it means to be in a "sociospatial" place and the assumed and "unexamined" nature of people (the undocumented student experience), place, space, and the information practices when you know you are 'deportable.' For these writers, the experience of a liminal status becomes the basis of "illegality," where then bodies are subject to "deportability."

The work of Nicholls (2013) is more of an overview account which detailed how "DREAMers" strategically organized to impact the national immigration debate. He asks "how could the DREAMers create a strong and legitimate voice in the public sphere in a hostile political climate?" He argues that the work was strategic and politically savvy, as undocu-

students "learned how to construct compelling rights claims, identify public arenas, such as campuses and the internet, to express their claims, plan and undertake high risk protests, and lobby public officials to support bills recognizing their rights and the rights of other undocumented immigrants on the country" (p. 8). He argues that key political decisions are what has propelled the 'DREAMer phenomenon' to the highly visable place it stands today, for good or bad. This included traditional civil rights actions and civic unrest such as sit-on, walk-out, pilgrimages, and "civil disobedience actions [that] demonstrated the power of the students to come out in public, criticize government policy, and successfully fight the deportation of their comrades" (p. 86). Finally, this book highlights the "legitimate "public" voice" of undocumented students, forging a space where " "coming out" as undocumented was viewed as a way to defiantly assert one's dignity in a world where hiding in the shadows had become the norm, "a way of saying "I exist" while providing that emotional support that repudiated the idea that "you do not have a right to exist," and instead validated the awareness "they are not alone" (p. 121). What this work offers is a context to understanding how the youth-led undocu-movement employed strategic maneuvers learned from other social movements to position themselves in a larger context of immigration rights and immigration reform. While it may seem that most undocu-students are organizers and in the streets and declaring "undocumented and unafraid," in fact there is a wide range of political and social involvement.

Two seminal books by William Pérez (2009, 2011) are key readings in my understanding of this topic on a deep and personal level. I read the book *We are Americans: Undocumented Students Pursuing the American Dream* years ago, one of the first books I read which documented in great detail the data, personal vice and academically rigorous (and altruistic) pursuits in the lives of undocumented students. Through a compilation of 16 "stories"

of undocumented students, as well as 4 recent-legal citizens, Pérez reflects on their "hardships, accomplishments, dreams, ambitions, and the desire to be accepted as regular American" (p. xviii). He argues that undocu-students "grow up American" are dominant in the English language and typically embrace an American lifestyle. Where students diverge from the typical "American teen" is when you ask about plans after high school. Pérez notes that despite the optimism and desires to fulfill their own and their parents 'American dream' scenario, students must deal with the harsh reality that dreams of a higher education route may not be feasible (p. xviii). Similar to Gonzales' narrative of the "Master Status,' undocumented students must content with the realty that their legal status, something they have no control over, controls so much of their academic, economic and productivity potential.

A recent historical analysis by Aviva Chomsky (2014) traces the sordid political policies that shed light on how U.S. laws and the history of immigration policies (by design) created an underclass (of labor) of migrants, and by default their migration status is tied to illegality. This historical analysis mirrors that of De Genova and other scholars' research which contribute to a historical understanding of how national policies foster contradictory narratives, as well as interrogate them through a critical lens. This includes Chomsky's critique of some of the tactics by the undocu-student movement. Specifically, she asks "by emphasizing the innocence of students who were brought to the United States as young children with no choice in the matter, did the campaign tacitly accept the guilt of these student's parents, who made the decision? Were the students being upheld as exceptional, deserving, undocumented individuals, this implying that other undocumented people were not deserving?" (p. 169). The narrative constructed about undocu-students does indeed include the story of the exceptional student who just wants to

succeed and go to college like most American high school graduates. This narrative has both advantages and disadvantages. What is constant, nonetheless, is the state of uncertainty.

The work of Allard (2015) introduces key terminology previously unknown to me. This work makes a distinction between undocumented students who arrived at a young age to the U.S. and therefore experience a more prolonged, immersive educational involvement versus what she calls the "newcomer teen." The former will typical identify with the dominant "DREAMer" life narrative, feel more "American" and seek deeper acculturation into the American experience in what she calls the "American Spirit." The "newcomer teen" is not the same. In fact, this article makes recommendations to educators and advocates on how to better serve the differing needs of what she calls the 1.25 generation. The undocumented student, the more commonly known and studied "DREAMer," is the 1.5 generation. Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, and Dedios-Sanguineti, (2013) also use this generational designation in their work, although specifically as it applies to the emotional and mental health of undocumented students. They too argue that the "formative years" play a critical role in the way an undocumented student experiences personal health, especially stress, anxiety and hope for the future. The differences in the degree of 'American Spirit-ness' is an interesting issue to consider, and one that may have a correlation to when a student entered the education system.

An important work in my deeper understanding of the precariousness of the Supreme Court decision of Plyler v. Doe is the work of López and López (2010). This book, *Persistent Inequality: Contemporary Realities in the Education of Undocumented Latina/o Students* addresses the legal and educational systems through the lens of critical race theory. As such, there is a focus on Latinx/a/o students. Obviously not all undocumented students are Latinx/a/o, but this text offers a reframing from a legal question to one of equity and educational

achievement or education gap. The educational gap in public K-12 education is one that is long-standing and in many states growing. This can significantly impact graduation rates and therefore college-going rates. I am reminded of the work of Gándara (2010) who describe something called "triple segregation," defined as "segregation by race/ethnicity, poverty, and language," the type of segregation often experienced by Latinx/o/a students, both documented and undocumented, this despite the typical binary narrative of segregation as a "black/white issue." Statistically, a small number of undocu-students enter college, an estimated 5% to 10% enroll in higher education and 1% to 3% graduate from college each year (Russell, 2011). This underscores the need for a more holistic understanding of the challenges faced by this student population.

Finally, Garcia examines the "DREAMer phenomenon" with the lens of social capital theory, defined as a "multidisciplinary concept useful in explaining why particular individuals are more successful in accessing educational resources and achieving academic goals," arguing that said theory "helps account for how social relationships and the resources connected to students directly affect them as they navigate educational and social institutions" (2013, p. 7) for positive or negative results. Garcia defines social capital as the "connections and resources within and between social networks that allow individuals and groups to achieve goals," which includes but is not limited to educational goals, where the "underlying assumption in social capital theory is that networks and group affiliations are likely to positively influence the acquisition of relevant social capital resources" (pp. 7-8). Undocu-students have certainly been able to harness the power of networks and allies (or as the author calls is "group affiliations") Peer-to-peer and word-of-mouth information-sharing and connections are as important as online information and resources, if not more so because there is an added element of safety that is

often ambiguous in an online environment (internet trolls, anti-immigrant bullies and sentiments). The combination of these two lay interesting underpinnings that may prove critical to the educational, informational and liminal state of an undocumented student.

### 2.1.2 *Information Behavior*

Caidi, Allard, Quirke (2010) provide an extensive overview of information practices of immigrants, institutions, resources and how technology is used in the "everyday lives" and provide a general overview of the "general terrain that represents the information practices of immigrants" (p. 522). They distinguish international migrants as "anyone living outside their country of citizenship but the condition of permanence in the term immigrant excludes those living abroad temporarily, such as visitors, migrant workers, and international students" (p. 495) and address the "settlement" and "integration" of immigrants in the context of their information practices, identifying the realm of library and information science (LIS) as the lens that "points to the importance that identifying information needs and barriers has on individual lives" (p. 493). They cite information practices as defined by Savolainen (2008): "information practices, which encompasses information seeking, information use, and information sharing" (2010, p. 510), and includes orienting information needs, problem-specific information seeking and social networks of immigrants (pp. 503-507). This work is an important starting point for my research because it provided an extensive overview of the information practices of immigrants. There is growing research into the information needs of immigrants, and although there is a distinction between documented and undocumented, we know less about undocumented young adults, especially in institutions of higher learning. This is an important distinction for several reasons. First, there may be considerable differences in information behaviors of an immigrant who is documented versus undocumented. Second, the information needs can range widely for an

undocu-college student enrolled in an institution of higher education, ages 18-30, varying yet again depending of what educational institution they attend (private, public, community college). Third, despite an undocumented status, college-enrolled undocu-students may have more advanced information needs and therefore unique information behavior not usually attributed to immigrant populations.

I am particularly interested in how undocumented students utilized information and what their information needs and behaviors are within the context of being college students. What then, is Information Behavior (IB)? Bates (2010) defines it as "the many ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information," which include a wide "range of types of research conducted in order to *understand the human relationship to information*" (p. 2381). There is no one theory to entirely encapsulate the definition of IB, but many models attempt to operationalize this process. The work of Dervin is very prominent given that her body of work considers cognitive dimensions of information behavior and uses metaphors to develop her "sense-making" descriptions of how users exist given a particular time and space until they reach a "cognitive gap" and recognize an information need (Dervin, 1992; Dervin, Foreman-Wernet & Lauterbach, 2003). Pettigrew, Fidel and Bruce's (2001) define IB as "the study of how people need, seek, give and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living" (p. 44), and Wilson's definition (originally coined the term) as "the totality of human behavior on relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use [including] face-to-face communication" (2000, p. 49), including info intake in a "passive reception" mode. Given the nature of my research, it is important to start with the **larger scope** of general understanding of IB because my first research question seeks to understand the nature

undocu-student's info behaviors. The extensive work of Wilson (1981, 1999, 2000) speaks to the various models that wrangle with this intersect of technology and human behavior. Wilson developed four IB models over the decades, but I will not engage in an exhaustive survey of his work here. My goal is to use his work as a framing definition for this exploratory research as a way to answer the research questions related to the understand information behavior of undocu-students in higher education.

Wilson discusses the origins of human information seeking and the move to study such a conceptual yet visceral behavior (pp. 50-52). Helpful in his work is the further delineation of the verbs of information behavior, and Wilson breaks them down in great detail. I create a table to illustrate these defied distinctions.

Table 1: Types of Information Behavior (based on Wilson (2000)

| **Human Information Behavior (based on Wilson (2000)** |
|---|
| **Information Behavior** is the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use. Thus, it includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information as in, for example, watching TV advertisements, without any intention to act on the information given. |
| **Information Seeking Behavior** is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as a newspaper or a library), or with computer-based systems (such as the World Wide Web). |
| **Information Searching Behavior** is the 'micro-level' of behavior employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds. It consists of all the interactions with the system, whether at the level of human computer interaction (for example, use of the mouse and clicks on links) or at the intellectual level (for example, adopting a Boolean search strategy or determining the criteria for deciding which of two books selected from adjacent places on a library shelf is most useful), which will also involve mental acts, such as judging the relevance of data or info retrieved. |
| **Information Use Behavior** consists of the physical and mental acts involved in incorporating the information found into the person's existing knowledge base. It may involve, therefore, physical acts such as marking sections in a text to note their importance or significance, as well as mental acts that involve, for example, comparison of new information with existing knowledge. |

Furthermore, Wilson's (1999) "nested model of conceptual areas" helps add visual understanding of the inter-relationships of how key concepts relate to one another to "describe an information-seeking activity, the causes and consequences of that activity, or the relationships among stages in information-seeking behaviour" (p. 250). This is important in the context of the info needs of undocu-students who have multi-faceted and complex educational concerns at various stages of their academic career. We do know (more) about immigrants and their information behavior (and technology use), but regarding policies and procedures, there is not much "research to date [that] has examine[s] how immigration policy affects the everyday life information seeking or information practices of immigrants" (Caidi, Allard & Quirke, 2010, p. 495). However, I believe that this research adds to the efforts which seek to shed light on how anti-immigration policies adversely affect undocu-students, as well as what undocu-students need to mitigate info-obstacles in education. We have a growing understanding of how various technologies are used, which may shed light of how info-needs are satisfied. When it comes to owning smartphones, going online from a mobile device and using social networking sites, Latinx/oa/as are just as connected as other 'Americans' (Lopez, Gonzalez- Barrera & Patten, 2013). Interestingly, regarding language-specific accessibility, among "native-born" (U.S.) Latinx/oa/as who use social networking sites, about 86% do so mostly or entirely in English. By contrast, among immigrant Latinx/oa/as who use social networking sites, more than half (55%) do so mostly or entirely Spanish. More than a quarter of "Latinx Millennials" speak only English at home (Patten, 2016). Millennials (documented or not) use social media, opine regarding various social movements, current issues, entertainment trends, and participate in photo-sharing sites, more popular among Hispanic and Latinx/o/a and Black users than among White internet users. To be clear, not ALL (un)documented immigrants are Latinx/o/a, but they do make up a

significant portion of the immigrant population including a significant portion of undocumented students in WA state and as a part of this research. Immigrants, documented or not, are not going away. The Pew Research Center reports the overall immigrant population as having reached "a new high" of 55.4 million in 2014 (or 17.4% of the total U.S. population), an increase of 1.2 million (2.1%) from the year before. From 1995 to 2000, the annual average growth was 4.8%, with Census Bureau estimates that Latinx/o/a, with a median age of 29 years, are younger than most other racial or ethnic groups. By comparison, the median age for non-Hispanic Blacks is 34; it's 43 for non-Hispanic Whites and 36 for Asians (Krogstad, Stepler and Lopez, 2015). This is a large percentage of the overall population, making it very important to understand the information behaviors and practices of this demographic.

Regarding migrants and their use of ICT's, communication scholar Tingyu Kang's research focuses on internet-mediated transnational communication among immigrants, concluding that internet usage among immigrants "strengthens rather than loosens the relationship between the geographical places of migrants' homeland and their cultural practices," precisely because it is "particularly important for diasporic experiences… to the receiving countries" (p. 327). Another words, migrant communities are using technologies to "strengthen" and maintain ties with families outside of the host country. Additionally, online and offline communities flourish outside the networked world when a migrants' homelands can exist virtually, as Graham and Khosravi argue(s), "be an alternative 'territory', where a transnational community or a virtual neighborhood can be constructed" (2002, p. 228). This is what Kang calls "re-territorialization," exemplified in her work among Chinese in Chinatown in London.

Immigrant communities are not only using technology and information, but are *adopting, adapting and creating tools as platforms it as well*; three undocu-youths have recently designed

and launched apps to help fellow "DREAMers." Community college transfer student now at Stanford University, Sarahi Espinoza Salamanca created an app called *DREAMers Roadmap* to serve as a "guide to college [and] give them hope," and was the recipient the Obama administration "Champions of Change" in 2014, was a participant in the **DREAMer Hackathon** hosted by Mark Zuckerberg in 2013, and was named one of Forbes Magazine 30 Under 30: Education in 2016. She took the 100k prize winnings from the 2015 *Voto Latino Innovators Challenge* and created the app, investing "$50,000 to develop the Android version, with the rest of the money going toward her salary, marketing, and building a website. An anonymous person funded the iOS version with a $25,000 donation" (Simón 2016, Patron 2016). Second, in 2015, Deyvid Morales developed *DACA Scholar,* and this was his second app, the first one created out his personal experience after being detained and his desire to "help undocumented immigrants who face detention and deportation" (Davidson, 2015). Yet a third app, *Pocket DACA*, was designed by the folks at Immigration Advocates Network, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and American Immigration Council. And yet, this community adopting and adapting is not often represented in information science.

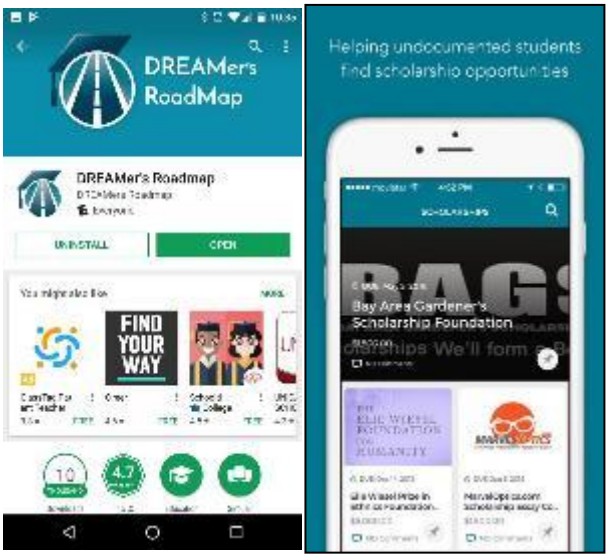


Figure 5: "DREAMer's Roadmap" App created by Sarahi Espinoza Salamanca

The ever-changing nature of migrants, immigration (legal or not), technology and the needs of humans to move is not about to end anytime soon. As Srinivasan & Pyati remind us is in their important work *Diasporic Information Environments: Reframing Immigrant-Focused Information Research* (2007), the "traditional notion of immigrant communities in isolated, localized pockets in different parts of the world therefore simply does not hold true in an age of accelerated media, information production, and ICTs. Instead, the global and local interact at levels of increasing complexity and fluidity" (p. 1735). This fluidity is constant and is reflected in the lives of undocu-students and their education info-seeking needs. Vaquera, Aranda and Gonzales would agree, adding that most migrants, especially the undocumented in the U.S. face "structural discrimination" which leads to normalized "marginalized belonging" and "blocked mobility" (2014, p. 1824), highlighting the importance of technology and information. Information behaviors can be fluid and changing, especially as undocu-students grow, change and will graduate from college. Further research is needed, especially when it comes to undocumented students. Kuhlthau brings me back to a tangible model I understand in the context of undocu-students.

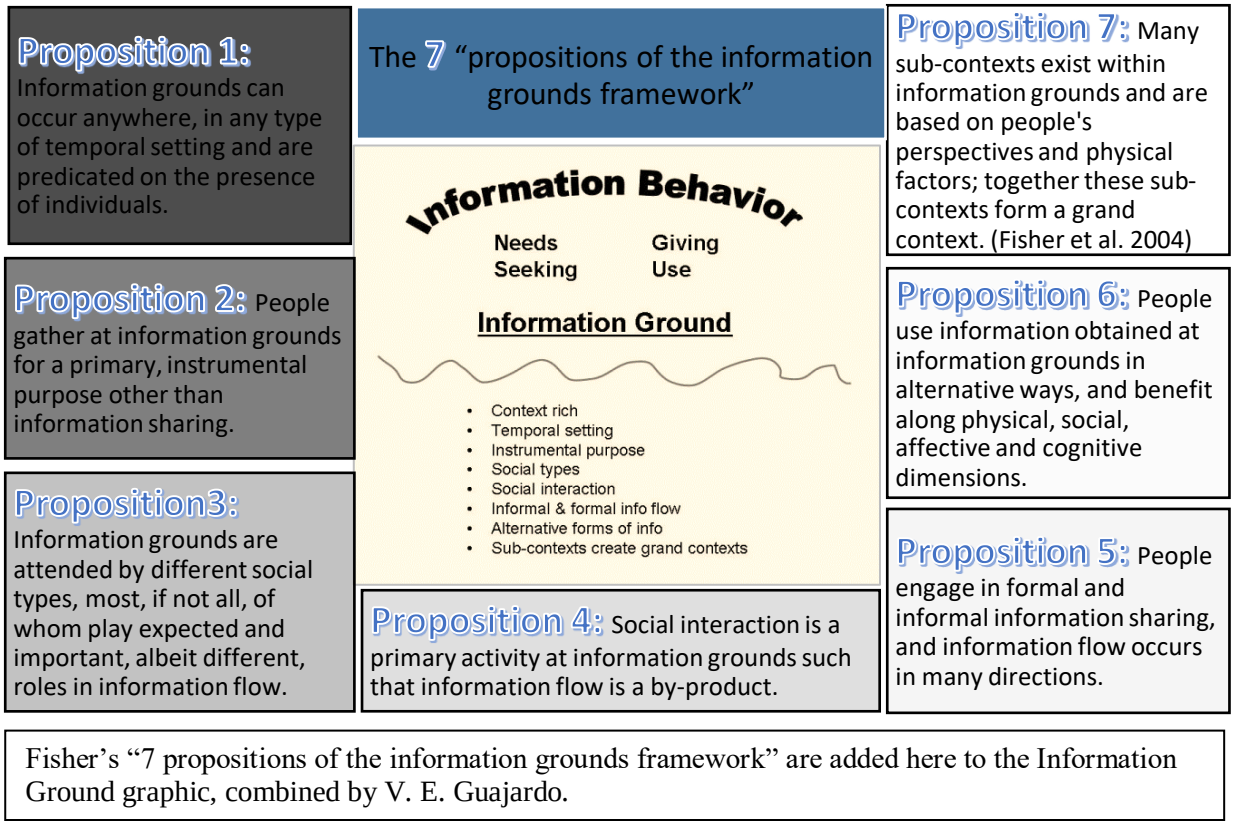
Kuhlthau's model of the "Information-Search Process" is comprised of several stages or steps including 1) the recognition of information being needed; 2) the identifying of the general topic; 3) a period of general confusion and uncertainty; 4) the gaining of confidence about the search; 5) the collection of information; and 6) closure, including either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with what is obtained (2004). Kuhlthau's founding premise is that people (undocu-students included) are 'emotional' human beings and those emotions shape what actions they take. Her model and definitions do indeed describe the stages a student may go through to obtain information regarding entering higher education, specifically treading lightly with a

balance of face-to-face, seeking online information, word-of-mouth information from infomediary allies, and 'closure' with satisfaction or dissatisfaction depending on what was accomplished. However, face-to-face and word-of-mouth info-sourcing is vital for undocu-students. As such, it is important to include the seminal work of Fisher and Information Ground (IG).

In the Information Ground model, one is able to enter an environment "created when people come together for a singular purpose [where] behavior emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (Fisher, writing as Pettigrew, 1999, p. 811). Fisher describe Information Grounds as "temporarily created" and in "unexpected places" where "identifiable social types" are present and participate in "information flows" (Fisher, 2009, p. 185). For undocumented students, this information flow is very important because a welcoming and social atmosphere combined with an information flow that is relevant to the multi-info needs of undocu-students provides added support for what may not be available online.

Fisher provides a framework of seven "propositions" that frame the eight concepts the make up the Information Ground visual model. For the sake of efficiency, I have created a chart that includes the original Information Ground model as created by Fisher, then I "framed" it with the seven "propositions" around the IG model in one graphic. This allows for a quicker visual understanding of how the seven propositions construct the actual IG framework.

Figure 6: "Information Grounds" from Fisher (2005)




Fisher's "7 propositions of the information grounds framework" are added here to the Information Ground graphic, combined by V. E. Guajardo.

Fisher et al., (2005) discuss the local and "regional and global impact" of Information Grounds and how these spaces can become important places in the quotidian life of people. Fisher et al., (2005) cite the work of Ray Oldenburg, who discusses the importance of informal public gathering places. I found this book very intriguing because it adds a layer of context to a place like the Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) at the UW Seattle campus, for example. Indeed the ECC is an important Information Ground for undocu-students and a place that is needed, what Oldenburg called the "third place." There are three places of importance to Oldenburg: home, work, and the "third place." This "third place" is "the core setting of informal public life," a place where friends can convene, converse, and is comfortable for social engagements. These places can include cafes, pubs, taverns (his focus), and I would add community centers and educational spaces that are inclusive of multi-cultural student-centered

services and program. Oldenburg states that these spaces are vital and "the leveling, primacy of conversation, certainty of meeting friends, looseness of structure, and eternal reign of the imp of fun all combine to set the stage for experiences unlikely to be found elsewhere" (p. 43). As such, they become places that foster comradery and companionships and may address the need for "intimacy and affiliation" (p. 63) that many undocu-students feel. Oldenburg's work looks at international setting and compares public spaces to the limited spaces in the U.S., referring to the lack of spaces as "suburbia's lifeless streets, of the plastic places along our 'strips'… congested and inhospitable mess that is 'downtown'" (p. 296), although he is optimistic this can change. For many undocu-students in this study, the ECC is their "third place" where they find information, community and safety. It is a place that becomes their "home away from home," while still being a place that offers professional support yet is an informal setting where holistic support can be provided both from staff and from other fellow student-peers.

### 2.1.3 *Nepantla*

Neither here nor there, *ni de aquí ni de allá*… the state or space of in-between or in liminality is a core hallmark of undocumented students. Although liminality is similar to Nepantla, liminality has a Western perspective of framing this in-between-ness, whereas Nepantla as I will engage the term is squarely from an indigenous and feminist 'new world' perspective. Many writers have worked with this state of in-between-ness and have applied it in various disciplines such as sociology theory, Chicano studies, literature and anthology, to name a few: (Anzaldúa, & Keating, 2002), (Gaspar de Alba, 2004), (Perez, 1998), (Chang, 2015), (Arce, 2011), (Skjoldager-Nielsen & Edelman, 2014), and (Castro-Salazar & Bagley, 2010). This will not be

an exhaustive review of all works engaged in either liminality or Nepantla, but instead focus on the work of Anzaldúa and other works that illustrate the in-between-ness of undocu-students.

The term Nepantla is a Nahuatl (Mexica) word, one of Mexico's principal indigenous languages, and generally refers to the "in-between" state, status, place, space or state of consciousness. Miguel León-Portilla's seminal work *Aztec thought and culture: A study of the ancient Nahuatl mind* (1990) takes the stance that the "Eurocentric" and therefore "Euro-Christian influenced" viewpoints when engaging in cultural anthropological research into post-colonial "Américas" is "oppressive" and perhaps neglectful because it does not understand the scale and depth of the subjects, in this case the indigenous of the 'new world'. As a scholar, philosopher, historian, and linguist, his work has been critical to understating the "vision of the vanquished." In other words, he states that the perspectives and worldview points of the indigenous of the Americans must be considered in order to claim greater understanding of said subjects. Currently Mexico's ambassador and permanent delegate to UNESCO, as well as a master of Nahuatl literature and philosophy, León-Portilla's work also delves into the philosophical and physical state of Nepantla for the Mexica. His work has informed the creative and academic work of writers and scholars.

Many scholars have used the concept of Nepantla to examine the social, artistic, academic, spiritual and even gender politics. Anzaldúa has an extensive body of work and developed many theories and concepts which scholars continue to unpack today. Anzaldúa's seminal book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) is where she enters the concept in a way that allows for the hybridity, creative and intersectionality of herself as writer, poet, and scholar. For Anzaldúa, Nepantla is a liminal space, a "third space" that explain multiple realities described as "everywhere" and "nowhere" simultaneously, a "constant state of

transition" (p. 3). In this context, she engages themes such as identity, sexuality, culture, gender and borders to examine the duality and liminal space of each, something that is also reflected in the poetry collection in the latter part of the text. The text itself is one that occupies various 'in-between' spaces, in part a poetry collection and part essays and academic writing while practicing in various literary technique and linguistic modalities, from English, to bilingual, Spanglish and Spanish, often in the same section. Nepantla as a state of "transformation" is central to how she deconstructs ideas of gender, sexuality and identity, and from a literary perspective, how she engages the thresholds of literary norms and academic criteria: always in-between, always transforming. In *This Bridge Called My Back,* Anzaldúa continues with the "liminal (threshold)" as a "spaces between worlds," where "transformations" can happen "in this in-between space lacking clear boundaries," which is a place she describes as a "liminal zone [that] means being in a constant state of displacement." In this constant state of displacement, there is a sense of discomfort and can even be what she calls "alarming." However, the interesting element is that Anzaldúa concludes by stating that "most of us dwell on Nepantla so much at times it's become a sort of "home"" (p. 1). I am left to wonder how a constant state of "displacement" can become home; how can it be "home" and at the same time be a place "between worlds" that can be "alarming."

Perhaps the possibility of "transformation" is key. For undocumented students, 'home' is not an easy place to claim, but what is clearer is the idea of where home is **for now**. That is, undocumented students have been a part of U.S. educational systems and have to some degree acculturated, not necessarily assimilated, to "American" customs and ways of living. And yet as undocumented, there are things they cannot do, access or engage in without fear. This liminality is perhaps so familiar it becomes 'home' because you know **how** to live in it, and a home can be

a place of replenish, respite, perhaps renovation, alteration, revelation, growth and change: transformation. Anzaldúa is clear that for her, "nepantla represents a threshold, a place of potential transformation" and asks, "do we chose to enter into and cross over this threshold or do we continue clinging desperately to the place we're not at?" (p. 19), which again invites the possibility of renovation. Being a college student can be a time of educational, intellectual and personal growth and transformation. It is a time that forces students to think about their educational possibilities and academic majors as it pertains to what they 'want to be' when they grow up. There is multiplicity of liminality during this 'coming of age' period, a constant state of in-between that can happen despite the liminal positions that create boundaries or thresholds for undocu-students.

The work of fellow editor and scholar Louise Keating stands out as critical to the continued theoretical development of Anzaldúa's work. Keating's seminal article *From Borderlands and New Mestizas to Nepantlas and Nepantleras: Anzaldúan Theories for Social Change* provides an extensive outline/overview of the multifaceted nature of the body of the working theories and concepts Anzaldúa wrestled with till the day of her death. Keating argues readers may "overlooked additional, equally important dimensions of her work… prevent[ing] us from grasping the radical nature of her vision for social change and the crucial ways her theories have developed since the 1987 publication of *Borderlands"* (2002, p. 1). Of interest is the articulated change of Nepantla as state of being (physical or spiritual) to a noun, that is Nepantlera/o. Keating states that Anzaldúa was a *Nepantlera*, "a term she coined to describe a unique type of visionary cultural worker. Nepantleras are threshold people: they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds and refuse to align themselves exclusively with any single individual, group, or belief system." I see an applicable description to undocu-students in

this ‘noun-ed’ definition. For many undocu-students, educational attainment is important, often a priority for themselves and their families. The alignment “with any single individual, group, or belief system” is a dichotomy many express as one that is challenging. How do you want to stay in a country where people don’t want you? How can I ‘feel’ more ‘American’ even though I am undocumented? How can I strive for academic achievements and have career goals when I don’t know if I will ever get to use my education and degree, or know if I will ever be able to work? How does a place that has been home feel like home yet is not *home*? These are the thoughts or predicament expressed by many undocu-students, including those who participated in this study. Therefore, they are as Keating and Anzaldúa state: “they move within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds,” an undocu-status that creates a conflicting existence.

For some undocu-students, liminality is also expressed in their sexuality, where many have “move[d] within and among multiple, often conflicting, worlds” ascribing meaning to their current space, declaring it home, and boldly stating ‘we are undocumented,’ ‘we are queer,’ ‘we are unafraid.’ This is exemplified as a movement within a movement, undocu-queer movement. The work of Dahms (2015) specifically references “Anzaldúan theory on nepantla” and the other liminal states “of mind that question old ideas and beliefs” to engage the sexual, cultural, and political milieu when discussing the reasons why “coming out” as undocumented and queer are part of the same ‘activism.’ The challenge to conventional U.S. immigration systems and “embodied citizenship” emphasize that “multiple sites of intersectionality and nepantleras” are in essence “mediators who work for cultural change” (p. 79) through a multiplicity of self. Undocu-queer-ness lives in a liminal state where they mediate for change, including complicating the often simplistic narrative of undocumented communities and questioning of “old ideas and beliefs.”

The threshold undocu-queer state is further discussed in the work of Jesus Cisneros in "Working with the Complexity and Refusing to Simplify: Undocu-queer Meaning Making at the Intersection of LGBTQ and Immigrant Rights Discourses" (2017), a study based on 31 interviews of self-identified LGBTQI member of the undocu-community, mostly those associated with QUIP (Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project), part of *United We Dream*, the largest national youth led undocu-rights organization. Cisneros argues that "coming out of the closet and no longer living in the shadows, undocu-queer immigrants have tapped into the common thread of confronting fear through organizing" (p. 1), which is the method that draws from the "narrative of the LGBTQ rights movement" to engaged in greater "self-realization, political mobilization, and coalition-building" not only among/between the LGBTQ communities who does not usually include undocumented immigrants (p. 10), but among undocumented communities who have often favored heteronormative ways of being and doing, or as Cisneros calls it "single-axis identity categorization," thereby "complicat[ing] assumptions" (p. 2) in a way that is positive. From Anzaldúa, Cisneros draws on her analysis of marginalization and the intersectionality experienced by those who are immigrants and are also undocumented, whose lives that become "misrepresented" (p. 5). To state 'we are undocumented' and 'we are queer' are not mutually exclusive because nepantla allows for movement between multiple, often "conflicting worlds" as this can be transformative.

From this example, I see a connection to participants in my research and their in-between stances when it comes to identity and even the use of the popular term for undocu-students, the DREAMers. Cisneros states that by empowering oneself to 'name' oneself, including one's political and social self when the personal is the political, "undocu-queer as an alternative formation of identity" is a way of resisting "assimilation" (p. 15) and claiming space, even while

'in-between' movements for social change. Furthermore, Cisneros cites Jasper (1997) to assert that "self-naming is an important tool by which the dominant logic may be shifted" (p. 15), which includes the idea that "equality within collective[s]" (p. 16) are a given; they are not. In socially progressive movements that seek social change, there is no given. Perhaps, then, liminality is experienced in a different way by different undocu-students, especially among undocu-queer students. Although only a few of the participants in this study identified as undocu-queer, their photo-interviews suggests their sense of 'in-between-ness' had added dimensions of liminality. This included less family support, isolation from family and fear of family rejection, something not as evident in other participants who expressed strong family ties and support systems. Nepantla as a place of transformation is experienced in exponentially more complex ways.

Nonetheless, there is the potential for transformation in Nepantla. Anzaldúa and Keating (2002) handle transformation to include both radical dis-identification and transformation…. dis-identify with existing beliefs, social structures, and models of identity, "by so doing, are able to transform these existing conditions" (p. 9) that maybe political, cultural, sexual or in this case, legal(ity). From here, there is a critical step to *conocimiento* or knowledge, described as an epistemological process that gathers information from context, such as events, emotions, memories, dreams, and other elements of personal experience. Knowledge is a direction in which liminality can development into, remembering that thresholds can pivot to transformation. To move towards knowledge is profoundly "relational, and enables those who enact it to make insightful connections among apparently disparate events, persons, experiences, and realities" (p. 10). For example, the idea that undocu-queer identity is an "insightful" way of understanding and complicating the cliché narrative of an undocu-movement; that not all undocumented are from

Mexico (crossing the border narrative); not all undocu-students survive and graduate from high school, and not all undocu-college students are 'model minority' super-valedictorian-4.0-teflon-perfection (data shows only a small percentage enter college). The connections between 'apparently disparate' lives of undocu-people still have a common thread regardless of experiences, and realities, and that is liminality expressed as uncertainty and insecurity.

The concept of liminality in anthropology is evident in the work of Arnold van Gennep's seminal writing *The Rites of Passage* (1960, [1909]), as well as the work of Victor Turner (1967, 1989, 1992). Although both of their work centers more around religious and ceremonial applications (birth, death, puberty) within religious studies, Turner's work takes a more ethnographic nature and humanizes the work in way that is applicable and holistic while still standing to the 'rigors' of social science inquiry. Turner references the work of van Gennap who organizes all rites of passage naming or "transition" into three phases as pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal, or as Turner describes them separation, margins and aggregation. Relevant to undocu-students' liminal state, the "first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point to the social structure, or a set of cultural conditions" (p. 94), is very applicable to the ways in which undocu-communities both live in and live outside of the American "social structure." Although undocu-students are part of their student body as high schoolers and college students, there is an inevitable and further "detachment of the individual or group" when it comes to higher education. The question of legality and liminality cannot be separated. Building on Victor Turner's concept of liminality, the work of Sociologist Menjívar addresses the "uncertain legal status in the lives of immigrants" (1995) and how an "in-between status affects the individual's social networks and family" (p. 221). The seminal work "Kinship networks among immigrants:

Lessons from a qualitative comparative approach" delves into the lives of 80 immigrates various groups including Vietnamese, Salvadoran and Mexican immigrants and their "context of reception" in their respective communities. This work engages the topics of citizenship and belonging and the ways in which the pressure to assimilate is experienced among social networks and "kinship support," while also cautioning that there should not be an automatic assumption that social and kinship networks will sustain and support arriving members. Both Turner and Menjívar seem to suggest that the "separation" or "detachment of the individual or group" (Turner) have implications related to varying "political and economic" conditions, where a "gray area of liminal legality" (Menjívar) is a daily reality. If then undocu-students' reality in higher education is also one fraught with political overtones and constant economic pressures and uncertainties, add to this the "separation" a student may feel from the "group" as a first generation college student, there is perhaps not a 'gray' areas of liminality but an encompassing in-between-ness where building undocu-friendship and undocu-support systems is vital necessity for survival. Participants in this research express the need for strong academic support or family support, often substituting friends and colleagues for family especially if an undocu-student does not have the family support during their academic journey.

Legal liminality is also central in Menjívar's other work, and examines the ways in which legal status is embodied in the lives of immigrants. Specifically, she examines the "immigrants' relationship to the body of laws that governs their lives as it impinges on many vital spheres of their existence" (2006, pp. 999-1001), including how a sense of 'community' is experienced, how social and familial networks are formed (and fostered), and even how artistic expression is performed. For Menjívar, "in-between-ness" is expressed as liminality connected to legality, the status of undocumented citizens **is how** liminality is experienced. For example, policy as related

to immigration, visas, asylum, and work permits can create a liminal state that determines whether you are "inside or outside the law" (p. 1002), determining the degree of participation in a particular community and society. In this instance, if you are not a state-sanctioned 'insider' with legal documentation to live and work, you are "outside the law," not authorized to work. However, for undocumented communities, including undocumented students, a liminal existence is inevitable because they are nonetheless a part of society, participate in communities and live and work in many cases for decades among the legal "insiders." By law, undoc-students are expected to participate in state-sanctioned schools and education systems (K-12), participating in state-created liminal education systems, upheld by legal liminality that perpetuate communities in limbo. Turner (1977) states the liminality of "threshold people" is "necessarily ambiguous, since the condition of these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space" (p. 98). This is important to understanding the "state" and "cultural space" of undocumented students; illegality ("state") is perhaps another way to think of legal liminality, impacts undocu-lives and how a 'community' is experienced, developed, experienced.

Turner (1977) states that in "communitas" or community, it is important to understand the "human needs" of its members which he argues those in liminal states can be classified by common characteristics, as "(1) fall[ing] in the interstices of social structure, (2) are on its margins, or (3) occupy the lowest rungs." And yet he situates that recognizing the "maximization of communitas provokes maximization of structure, which in its turn produces revolutionary strivings for renewed communitas. The history of any great society provides evidence at the political level of this oscillation" (pp. 124-130). This combination of stronger communities and their structures may lead to renewed communities in a powerful way, at all levels but especially

at the political level. Anzaldúa speak to this as a movement from Nepantla as a liminal state, to c*onocimiento* or knowledge, therefore leading to transformation, a transformation that bestows new possibilities. In this in-between-ness, undocu-students can strive to build and grow and move from the "margins" or "the lowest rungs" to a state of renewed understanding of power within and the liminal state. Their 'kinship' network and support are important in higher education, the communities they build, and are important, perhaps vital.

There are other writers engaging the topic of liminality. Thomassen (2014) considers liminality in areas such as travel, leisure, thrill sports, gaming, gambling, anthropology, the Renaissance, even the credit system. His work looks at the ways in which "the applicability of the concept of liminality, now with reference to transition [is] understood in the context of a specific set of sociological phenomena: political revolutions" (p. 191). Even in this passage, the idea of Anzaldúa's transformation and what Turner referred to as "political level of this oscillation" suggest an in-between state of being full of potential and evolution. Despite the liminal locus imposed by physical and psychological barriers that are ever present in the lives of undocu-students, they confront illegality and therefore deportability on a constant basis.

Still, Nepantla is not exactly liminality and vice versa. I chose to use Nepantla instead of strictly using "liminality," which is used in modern anthropological terms and in various disciples and forms. Instead, I participate Anzaldúa and León-Portilla's (1990) use of the word because it centers on an indigenous term, a Mexica (Aztec) *Nahuatl* word meaning 'in-between.' There are several applications of Nepantla, all of which imply something in the middle. For example, *"nepantla tequi"* means *"cortar algo por medio"* or to cut in half. *"Nepantla tonatiuh"* means *"medio día"* or midday, and building on this taxonomy, *"nepantla tonatiuh neellel-quixtiliztlia"* means "*siesta al medio día"* or siesta/nap at midday. Note the use of mid or

middle or half in all these words. However, the term can also reference all in, or what is between us can come together, for example, *"nepantlatquitl"* means *"pertenece a todos o común entre todos"* which means belongs to us all or shared by all, and *"nepantlazotla"* means "*amarse mutuamente"* which means to love each other mutually (Nepantla, 2012).

Nepantla is notably used early on by Dominican Missionary Diego Durán, chronicled in his 1588 account *The history of the Indies of New Spain.* Writer Laura Perez refers to Nepantla as a "cultural and psychological location" (1998), and Gaspar de Alba states she lived Nepantla as "a cultural alien in a white wilderness" at the University of Iowa as a place of "disorientation" (2004, p. v). Other authors and artists using this concept/state of Nepantla is Mexican artist José Luis Arce. Interestingly, he adds further context and corroboration to Nepantla as described by Diego Durán, coinciding with the Spanish conquest (colonization) of the Americas:

> The word Nepantla started being used after the conquest to describe the condition of the *mestizo* who was trapped between two cultures, and also incarnates a place of 'half way down the road,' where it's not of one place or of the other; "the middle point between the conscious and the unconscious, the place where transformations are executed." Additionally, Nepantla in an intermittent state, is uncertain terrain that does not cross as it moves from one place to another, as it changes class, race or sexual condition, as it passes from one identity to a new one. It is a point of suspension that illustrates the possibility if a new identity or its' disillusionment, this is Nepantla. (2011, p. 11) [Guajardo's translation[1]]

This does not mean the term Nepantla did not exist or was not used before Spanish invaded. It does point to a new way of thinking and using the term, however, a way to describe the "condition of the mestizo who was trapped between two cultures," evidenced in the way that

[1] The original quote: "La palabra *nepantla* comenzó a usarse después de la conquista para describir la condición del mestizo que estaba atrapado entre dos culturas, además encarna un lugar a la mitad del camino, donde no es un lado ni el otro: "el punto medio entre el consciente y el inconsciente, el lugar donde las transformaciones son ejecutadas." Además, el *nepantla* es un estado intermedio, ese terreno incierto que uno cruza al mudarse de un lugar a otro, al cambiar de clase, raza o condición sexual, al pasar de una identidad a otra nueva. Ese punto de suspensión que ilustra la posibilidad de una identidad o su dilución, es *nepantla*."

the Spanish 'conquered' the Americas, culturally and racially 'mixing' with the indigenous population (and African populations). The mestizo becomes a liminal embodiment of someone literally from two cultures, perhaps in a state of "*nepantla tequi"* or *"cortar algo por medio"* or to cut in half. Indeed this created "changes [in] class, race or sexual condition," as the Spanish and Portuguese (most colonizers) imposed a Caste System that stratified based on *limpieza de sangre,* or blood purity. Prejudice of skin color (although not all undocumented students are people of color), sexual orientation, varying political ideologies, and the lay public narrative that all "DREAMers" are "model" students and therefore exemplary (perhaps ultra-Americanized) citizens-in-waiting or vicious MS gang members, are all tropes many undocu-students must contend with. This is on top of the challenges of being an undocu-students in higher education, in this United States of America in 2018, under an anti-immigrant Administration, under its' imminent threats and increased enacted removals.

An Anzaldúan Nepantla-ism if you will, embowered with *mestizaje* and cognizant of the multiplicity of in-between-ness, allows me to understand undocu-student not only as a state of being that is in process, but as a threshold place, not a place of permanence, but of place full of knowledge (*conocimiento*) embarking on potential transformation. The educational realm that undocu-students, and their information needs and technology use are all intertwined in a dynamic complexity and intersectionality of race, gender, class, and political variance, struggles that are ever-present in their uncertain undocu-lives.

# Chapter 3. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative exploratory study that draws from three inquiry methods of participatory photography, online document review and focus group to investigate the information behavior of undocumented students in higher education. The **methodological approach** that underpins the nature of this research inquiry is an adaptation of a social research justice framework, inspired by the research framework highlighted in the book *Research Justice: Methodologies for Social Change*, edited by Jolivétte (2015). Social justice research is participatory research, under the larger umbrella of Participatory Action Research (PAR), and is defined as "a strategic framework that seeks to achieve self-determination for marginalized communities. It centralizes community voices and leadership in an effort to facilitate genuine, lasting social change" ("DataCenter," 2018). The social justice framework addresses "methods of producing [knowledge which should] recognize as equally valuable the 1) access to information that impacts lives, 2) ability to define what is valid 'knowledge' and methods to produce this, 3) capacity to produce own knowledge, 4) capacity to use all forms of knowledge, 5) control over stages of "knowledgeable lifecycle"" (pg. xviii). This methodological framework challenges traditional research models and ways of thinking of knowledge production, co-creation of research and where knowledge and power centers.

Jolivétte's text is a direct reflection of the work done at the *DataCenter: Research for Justice* (DataCenter) in California's Bay Area. The DataCenter has been in existence almost 40 years and has been involved in socially progressive movements "including those related to U.S. foreign policy, economic justice, globalization, environmentalism and environmental justice, criminal justice, and youth organizing" (2018). Their site is a user-friendly resource-rich place featuring tangible tools and publications that illustrate what social justice research is and how

marginalized communities can be equal participants and "experts" when it comes to grassroots work. The framework is one that requires equality between the 'researcher' and the 'participant,' acknowledging community members/participants are "experts, and reclaim, own and wield all forms of knowledge and information." The following visually illustrates how social justice framework seeks to "create legitimacy for all types of knowledge":

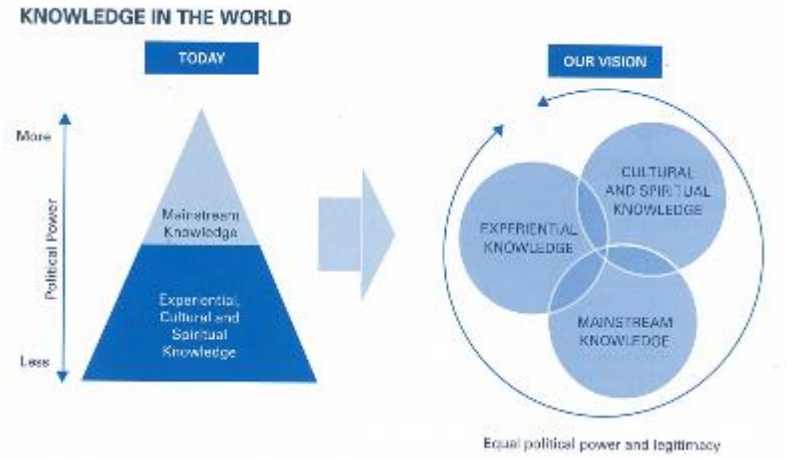



Figure 7: Social Justice Framework ("DataCenter," 2018)

The Jolivétte's text echoes the tools and strategies developed in the 40 years by the DataCenter, established out of the practice and work conducted by various community organizations and researchers. Various projects are highlighted in this collection, and several tools are provided to help create community research projects that consider larger concepts that can impact social justice work such as knowledge construction, self-determination and social transformation. For example, both the text and website offer "research tools designed to help organizers and activists think strategically about the role of information in developing actions and campaigns – and to provide a practical guide for doing effective campaign research," ("DataCenter," 2018). These include toolkits, "handouts and worksheets" and web and online resources. Jolivétte's describes projects steeped in self-reflective questions about whether or not

researchers engage in ‘‘fulfilling our individual roles and obligations to the other participants in the struggle for social justice” (p. 9), and whether the work done is socially just and community-centered research such that it leads to larger social justice outcomes.

This is an exploratory qualitative research design that does not follow the exact grassroots research justice methods, which in part seeks to create “opportunities for communities to confront and reshape power structures in the research process [leading] to community-generated solutions in public policy and decision-making” and “political engagement” (Jolivétte, 2015, p. 9). Although I hope that my research will impact policy and spur decision-makers to effect change, especially in higher education, it is not the explicit expected outcome of this work. I am focused on centering knowledge and power among undocumented-students and take other approaches from this framework, such as “ensuring that research [is] participatory to ensure that impacted communities are seen as legitimate partners” (p. 9). Additionally, as highlighted in a social justice framework, I also recognize participating *undocu-students* are the “experts” who claim, own and wield all forms of knowledge and information. Jolivétte states that “research justice frameworks address methods of producing…[which should] recognize as equally valuable the access to information that impacts lives, ability to define what is valid ‘knowledge’ and methods to produce this” (p. xviii), and I take key inspiration for this methodological approach because undocu-students possess “valid ‘knowledge’” and can and should partake in the method to co-produce research that is reflective of lives.

Given the terse political climate and the nationalistic political tone that devalues the impact of marginalized populations, especially immigrants and the undocumented, I was very intentional in my approach because I wanted this work to be participatory, steeped with elements of co-knowledge production and allow for greater participant voice and greater control over what

information is shared. Understanding undocu-lives through their own voice, imagery, and narrative has been quintessential to this research, central to this methodological approach, and the social justice framework was a conducive approach to achieving this research in a good way.

The approach and practicality are salient concerns for me as a womxn of color and impacts the ways in which I "believe" (ontology) and the nature of my "knowing" (epistemology) and reality. I acknowledge that my position in engaging this work is from a place of privilege and power, in what Chang (2015) calls a place of "seemingly contradictory positions of oppression and privilege" (p. 7), in my case because I am a researcher. My role and my work can be seen as that of a 'colonizer' as change warns, a "researcher that becomes the colonizer, via her position as a university expert investigator and the colonized, as a member of the 'othered' community she studies" (p. 14). This shapes how I engage this research work and the methodological design I have chosen; the social justice framework helps to mitigate some of this power inequity. I understand the power and limitations as a researcher doing this work as well as acknowledge my episteme approaching this work includes personal experience and professional practice that shape my understanding, development of 'knowledge,' and composition of ideas.

My explicit approach seeks to amplify the voice and agency of undocumented students in higher education and I assume them experts, including their lived experience as knowledge. Although I have specific research questions I want to answer, I hope this work will contribute to larger undocumented communities social justice demands, is culturally sensitive, reflective, and socially responsible. I understand the critical complexity of the subject at hand, even as a "researcher" striving to decolonize a small piece of my academic formal training by engaging in less customary research practices in the field of information science, in an effort to better understand the information behaviors of a 'threshold' understudied population.

Therefore what **methods** I selected given the methodological approach is important; I used **participatory photography, online document review and a focus group discussion.** I will more clearly discuss each method in the following section, but I did want to address why these methods and not others.

No research method is perfect and each have their respective strengths and weaknesses. When selecting what research tools to use, I considered the following questions as my guiding light in order to select the right methods:

1. Will the method offer participants control or agency over their story, their voice?
2. Given the vulnerable nature of undocu-students, will the method allow participants to feel empowerment by participating?
3. Will the method foster greater equity or a more power-neutral relationship between myself and a participant?
4. Will the method lead to results which will be visually accessible to undocu-communities, as well as general audiences?

With these guiding questions to help in my selection, I knew I wanted to use methods that were participatory in nature, with elements of co-knowledge production and were visual in nature. Understanding undocu-lives through a social justice framework allowed me to select the three methods I ultimately ended up with. **Participatory photography** or photo elicitation (also participatory video, photo voice, digital storytelling) are under the larger area of participatory action research (PAR), a subset of action research (AR), defined as the "systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change" (Gillis & Jackson, 2002, p. 264), frequently used when conducting research with vulnerable populations, addressing a socially relevant topic of concern or want for change, or used to foster greater understanding of

a specific phenomenon (Riley & Manias, 2004). The positive aspects of this method include co-production of knowledge, greater sense of participation and 'agency,' and a more "equitable" plateau with direct voice as represented though photography (Streng, et al., 2004). The challenges can be a perceived benefit, the question of "equitable" power between the researcher and the participant, ethical questions regarding confidentiality, burdens related to participating even after consent is granted, and misuse of images, for example used for surveillance (Prins, 2010). Despite the challenges of this method, I used this method because of the rich context, detail and nuanced information that is elicited when using photography, specifically the photo taken by undocu-students.

The **focus group** allow for greater human dimension with what can be impersonal data, discover how a groups feels/thinks on certain topics, and can help to validate or even clarify results from other data methods. Disadvantages include a difficulty guaranteeing confidentiality or anonymity, personality conflicts and distractions that can arise when groups are formed. Ratcliff defines the focus group as a qualitative research method that "can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the respective positions, the potential value of [a] case" (2002, p. 40), as well as offer candid insight a researcher may not have considered. Despite the challenges of this method, I thought it important to use this method because I knew my participant sample was small enough that a meaningful discussion could be managed. Additionally, undocu-students have a close knit community, and many of the participants in this work already knew each other, addressing the concern of ensuring a safe space with confidentiality, anonymity and respect. A social justice framework is inclusive of both participatory photography and the focus group, and both research methods are used in the cases highlighted by Jolivétte (2015).

The **online document analysis** is a technique used to describe, review, examine of interpret online content. This can mean documents as a data sources as well as textual content (Bowen, 2009). Some advantages include triangulation, flexibility to the research (set your own hours to be online) and cost efficiency, and an understanding of emerging thematic topic/concerns. Some limitations includes vast online content, quality of online content, time consuming reviews. The online document review did not involve research participants, other than to seek their recommendations for what online review I would do. I chose this method because it offered a way to review content in a systematic way. Reviewing or "interrogating" online content related to undocumented students can reveal something not expressed by individual interviews or by the focus group, or affirm what has been collected in the data, provides an opportunity to "see" a reflection of the undocumented student community online and allows for some triangulation of findings from the photo interviews and the focus group.

## 3.1 PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY

In the participatory action research (PAR) wheelhouse, participatory photography is often used in the health and medical research field as a photo part of participatory action research, as it can help "identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997). However, it is a method that has been used extensively where there is a benefit to having "representation and diversity of participant voices that assist to define and improve realities," as often this method highlights the "importance of images to identify what is significant … and provides participants a voice and language through which to voice salient concerns" (Hergenrather, Rhodes, Bardhoshi, Cowan & Pula, 2009). Such populations include people in a medical setting (Ortega-Alcázar & Dyck, 2012), documented and undocumented migrants (Yefimova, Neils, Newell, & Gomez, 2015), (Vila, 2013), immigrant

women, (Sutherland & Cheng, 2009) and native communities, for example (Mcintyre, 2003) (Thomas et al., 2015).

Furthermore, participatory photography allows for the possibility of a greater sense of agency or partnership between the participants and the researcher, towards an "equitable" plateau where hopefully participating student is empowered to partake with their direct voice as represented though their own photography (Streng, et al., 2004). Images of the self are not the focus of the research, such as described by Rose (2001), but rather the response provoked by the photography. Hurworth believes the method allows for reflective, deeper meaning, and cites Collier (1979, p. 281) who described the method as "invaluable" because "picture interviews were flooded with encyclopedic community information, whereas in the exclusively verbal interviews, communication difficulties and memory blocks inhibited the flow of information." Hurworth lists the many benefits of this methodological approach, including "bridge psychological and physical realities, allow the combination of visual and verbal language, assist with building trust and rapport, and provide a component of multi-methods triangulation to improve rigour" (2003), among others. A common theme that emerges from this process regardless of particular research study differences is how photos become tools for the researcher to probe more feeling into meaning, circumstance and context, "serving as a medium to elicit rich and detailed firsthand information from participants" (Yefimova, Neils, Newell & Gomez, 2015). It is often in these rich trails that ah-ha moments reveal themselves.

For critical perspectives on the notion of voice in media production and of visual methodologies in general, it is important acknowledge the power-dominance in the structure of producing visual media (photographs). A few critical perspective on the notion of voice in the media and visual methodologies includes Yates (2010), Buckingham (2009), and Prins (2010).

Buckingham offers a critical view with poignant questions "in what ways does our work differ – either methodologically or theoretically – from market research?" and "are such data necessarily more truthful than data gathered using other approaches? Whose 'voice' do they actually represent? And how are we to interpret or analyze them?" (p. 634). In a further critique, Buckingham states his view of participatory methods as such:

> such methods cannot be seen simply as a means of enabling participants to 'express themselves' or to 'tell their own stories' – or indeed of enabling researchers to gain privileged access to what people 'really' think or feel. However attractive it may at first appear, this argument typically neglects the formative role (and indeed the responsibility) of the researcher; the generic and formal characteristics of the media that participants are asked to employ; and the participants' understanding both of the context and aims of the research itself, and of the media that are used. By contrast, I will argue that the use of such methods – as of any method – needs to display a degree of reflexivity: we need to understand how research itself establishes positions from which it become possible for participants to 'speak'. (p. 635).

This perspective leaves much to ponder; although undocumented students in my research project engage in media production endeavors, the point is well taken regarding the power dynamic between the researcher and participants. What did I do about this, address not only with privilege as a researcher but of the power imbalance? As the researcher interviewing undocu-students, I engaged in purposeful reflexivity when thinking about how I interpreted data, how I make decisions about how to anonymize images, even reflecting on my emotional connections to during each interview. I try to mitigate imbalance of power and my personal investment and connection to this work and this population by keeping research notes not only on the interviews, but also on decisions made regarding the iterative coding process and most other aspects of this research. Even though my participants sample was small (n=11), I had a second reader (coder) to help with the coding scheme and codification of interviews. Not only did I get consent from each participant, but I also created a consent form which delineated all the points about consent, and

included my content, my advisor's content, and the UW office of research contact (although no form was required via the IRB process). Additionally, I dedicated the first 10 minutes to discussing what is informed content in research generally, why it is important, the overall research project scope and advised students that even if we finish the interview and they accept the $20.00 compensation they received at any time, I was still able to remove any or all images from their interview, including sensitive material they felt comfortable sharing with me, but were not comfortable with it as part of public record. Finally, understanding I needed time to reflect and have some distance from interviews, I burned copal, sage and tobacco immediately after each interview for my own well-being, based on my indigenous teachings, then relaxed on the content and process and gave myself about 2 to 3 days distance after each interview before I engaged the work again. This is not necessarily part of any research method; this was self-preservation and 'self-care.' Participants shared intimate and difficult stories. To say I am unaffected and not touched by the vulnerability of undocu-lives is untrue; stories are life.

The work of Yates (2010) also takes a critical analysis of this methodology, with a slightly different approach, where the goal is to "encourage the young people to produce their own photographic accounts… of who they were and what mattered to them, with some sense that these visual records would be more than an elicitation device to supplement interviews, but would also be a potential means of communicating directly to public or professional audiences" (p. 281). This means that an element to consider and understand is that "direct" communication with a larger audience is important to participants, and not just an "elicitation device" that does not frame personal accounts as central. Yates states that how this narrative and 'voice' is "produced, whose voice it represents, and how the product of that research is used and interpreted" are important questions that involve understanding a researchers epistemological,

political and "centrality" stance; these must be considered by researchers. Furthermore, Yates argues that when "producing any accounts themselves [with the] need to be interpreted, that meanings and narratives need to be considered over time, and recursively (McLeod 2003; Thomson and Holland 2003; Yates 2003)" (p. 281). Reflexivity is important, but so is contextualizing the work within an ethnographic place which considers not only the power relationship between researcher and participant, how a story/image/voice is 'interpreted, and how such "commitments frame decisions about technology and methodology" (p. 280). There are important considerations at hand, even though I will not use media production as a research method, it is important to consider the critical aspects of visual and participatory methods that include images as a reflection of a participants' voice. I acknowledge the limitations of this methodological choice, my positionality as a researcher in a 'research institution', and my non-neutral stance on political conditions that have made educational conditions for undocumented students even more difficult.

The work of Dahya and Jenson (2015) also echoes the concerns expressed over "the authenticity of voice and representation of those multimodal productions" used in visual production (methodologies), and like other researchers that use visual research methods used "with marginalized young people", they posit that there should be greater "in-depth consideration for power structures that influence participants' creative self-expression." This is speaking to the power inequity between a participant and a researcher, the influence (intentional or not) than can have bearing on the "power dynamics [to] impact what Muslim girls make and how that digital media work is re/presented and interpreted to and through educators and researchers" (p. 109). They argue that despite the 'voice' the students bring to the work, "school norms and expectations, and the interests and goals of adults, shape student work in complex and

nuanced ways" (p. 113), with researcher also adding 'voice' and academic language and research stances that have baring on the work and must be considered, including the educational setting, all of which are not neutral. This sentiment is reverberated in Dussell & Dahya (2016), an article that takes a critical and addresses the "discomfort" or critique leveled against participatory visual methodologies that claim to be "'giving young people voice' through the production of media" while not engaging with the issue that such "discourses of empowerment do not always problematize the very notions of voice and representation and how they are (or are not) constitutive of their promises" (p. 2). The idea of 'giving voice' is more than allowing for youth to participate and speak their mind and be inclusive of their "utterances" but instead is more complex and dynamic with often unexamined assumptions.

Understanding the nuances and power dynamics imbedded in the "context of production" is critical to acknowledging the narrative story or 'voice' and understanding it is not simply about 'giving young people voice' to participants, in this case digital youth. There are larger issues to consider, for example, as Dussela and Dahya (2016) point out, "issue of who speaks, in what context, with which languages, becomes as important as the utterances themselves. Real and perceived audience(s) and the situated context of production also matter in the construction of narratives and re-telling (or omission) of personal and political experiences and events" (p. 2). The speaker and their cultural context, as well as what is being said and how it is being storied, and the power dynamic of all involved, should be a part understating how and why researches use visual participatory methodologies and addressing their assumptions and shortcomings. Additionally, it is important to consider the collective narrative being told, the socio-cultural story that is coming into focus, and understand how and why 'misrepresented' or highly curatorial narratives can take place.

The work of Mitchell in *Doing Visual Research* further stresses that integrating the 'voice' of participants who can be from marginalized groups means seeing them as "producers and not just the objects of the consumers of research," urging that there is a "compelling argument" for practicing researchers to meets the highest ethical standards "not one just for researchers in the usual sense of the word, but also for the participants who are themselves engaged in the process of community engagement" (p. 30). As such, the conversation about the importance of reflexivity when working with visual participatory methodologies is central, and she stresses the importance of being cognizant that as researchers who are working with marginalized populations, care should be taken so that participants are not "marginalized" further or their lives "endangered" while participating (p. 30). She cites examples of research work in Rwanda, Sierra Leon and China and other projects, declaring that "one might argue that the cornerstone of community-based visual research is reflexivity- the reflexivity of the research team, but also community and the production process" (p. 16). This is an important consideration that is in tandem with the works of others writers who closely examine assumptions, ethical concerns and questions of power and reflexivity when using visual methodologies. As a researcher, I too must be aware of ethical concerns and how participants' use their 'voice' and their images are interpreted, especially because as Mitchell cites Leach (2006) who asks, "are participatory research methodologies and interventions inherently exploitive" (p. 31), I understand the research methods I am choosing to use are not without critics, criticism and without flaws.

How to "guard" against the deficits and how to alleviate the concerns for the purpose of this research is a question I take with great seriousness. The lives of undocu-students, their stories, life experience and their willingness to share and help co-create knowledge merits the

utmost care and attention to and reflective work. A social justice framework also requires me remember and knowledge production and participatory methods must also reflect the community I work with, recognizing as invaluable the "access to information that impacts lives" (Jolivétte, 2015, pg. xviii), which I am privileged to be granted access to.

### 3.1.1 *Sampling Rationale for Participatory Photography*

I recruited n=11 undocumented students in higher education, which includes the University of Washington, Seattle Central College and other local community colleges. DACA eligibility was not required, and ages varied, with the most defined requirement being that participants self-identify as undocumented and in higher education.

The sampling rationale of this population includes (1) variety of higher education experiences in the Seattle region, geographic location and access to this demographic of participants, specifically from University of Washington Seattle and Bothell, Seattle Central College (2) manageability of production of data from three methodologies, including interviews, transcriptions, coding times restrictions (academic year), (3) an understanding that this is an exploratory qualitative study drawn on a small sample of undocumented students rather than a statistically significant sample to represent this population, and (4) limited resources for compensation to participating undocumented students; each participant is compensated $20.00 for each data collection activity (participatory photography and focus group), for a maximum total of $40.00[2].

My aim is for a sample size of n=10-12 and I was able to interview 11 participants.

[2] I have no grants funds to help with such expenses. These are funds that I paid directly from my personal funds.

Table 2: Overview Information on Participatory Photography

| Item | Participatory Photography |
|---|---|
| *Total Participants* | Total n=11<br>(Female: 8, Male: 3) |
| *Countries of Origin* | 5 |
| *Education, standing* | 4 university, 3 community college (including transfers), 4 graduate students |
| *Identify as LGBTQI* | 2 |
| *Total interview hours (or review)* | 19 |
| *Total pictures shared (or saved for data collection)* | 140 |

Eligibility criteria include the following:

- Self-identify as an undocumented student, or DREAMer, or as a student who qualifies/d for DACA eligibility under federal or Washington state guidelines, or does not qualify for DACA.
- College going student or recent graduate of a Washington State higher education institution, including community college.
- Agree to participate in the photo interviews and a facilitated group discussion, understanding complete confidentiality in the focus group may not be possible, given then the group setting, but that all efforts will be agree upon confidentiality, in additional to anonymity of all participants shared information.
- Agreed to meet for 1 hour, 1.5 hours maximum and consent to have the focus group session audio-recorded.

### 3.1.2 *Data Collection & Procedures for Participatory Photography*

During the recruitment process, I initially met with each potential participant (quick 5-10 minute orientation) to explain the details of the research study, the compensation and ethical considerations. If a student was interested, we would set a time and date to meet up and do the

interview. Participants had 2-3 weeks to take 12 photographs of their authorship (no photos taken from the internet or from another source). This was meant to be 'their lives' in pictures. The photographs served as an elicitation device during our interviewing. In a casual yet private setting, via a semi-structured interview approach, I interviewed each participant and audio record the interview with a digital recorder. As anticipate, each interview was about one hour to 1.5 hours.

Participants selected the 12 photos they wish to discuss and these were the photos we discuss individually, as the basis of our interview. Each participant chose the order of how they wanted to discuss each picture. This is important and can influence the way participants want to narrate their story. As an interviewer, I asked follow-up questions related to the research questions when needed. For each interview, I used a laptop to download/upload each participant's photographs, and re-number them in the order of the interview progression, so that we could have the image in front of us as we discuss it. Each photograph was then anonymized of any faces and identifiable information of each participant, keeping only the anonymized version and deleting images that were not anonymized of 'scrubbed' of personal information. This was done to for added protection and safety. A digital audio recorder captured the interview with each participant, and the audio file then transcribed and coded each interview (had a second 'coder' review the transcript and emerging codes), removed all student identifiers from their photos, and took notes on each interview. I kept each audio file and once transcribed and coded, I deleted each file for further anonymization of each participant. All participants received $20 for their time as compensation. Although I have a digital camera available for loaning to participants should they need or want it, no students requested it and all opted to use the camera on their phone.

**These are the instructions to participants**:
*Over this next 2-3 week, take photographs that are a reflection of your life as an undocumented student in college. Or, you may already have all the picture you want to share and are ready for the interview! Your pictures do not have to be taken only on campus, but can be. Your life takes place in many spaces and place. Photograph things you see in your daily life--no need to do a "photo shoot." Think about what images you think tell your story, what illustrates who you are, and how you use technology in your life, and who your social networks are. Remember, there are no wrong photographs--we will talk about whatever you bring back to share.*

***Photograph Prompt List***
In case they feel stuck on what to photograph and need ideas, here are some!

- A selfie (does not have to show your face, can be representative, a coffee mug, for example, because you love café)
- Places you go
- Food you eat
- Your current home, work place, room (wherever "home" is, messy, neat, whichever!)
- Technology that you use (phone, computer, tablet, etc.) and how you use it
- Your use of technology to create and share content (music, photos, videos, writings, etc.)
- A picture you like to share online
- Something about your life you would like to share with people in your hometown
- Something you are proud of
- What reminds you of home or family
- What gives you hope about the future
- What you are afraid of
- What you wish you could change (these 2 are very similar)
- The change you would like to see
- Other things that are part of the story that is you

Reflecting on the words of Yates (2010), it is worth noting these prompts are not intended to restrict the type of photos that can be shared or discussed. My intent as a researcher was to offer ideas should they be needed. I had these instructions and photo prompt printed out on paper and offered it to participants, none of which wanted it or kept the copy, although all read the prompt and instructions. By contrast, similar research conducted by Gomez & Vannini (2015) at *Casa Latina,* a non-profit organization in Seattle that assists immigrants in labor and work force training, did not have prompts and

was more open ended, yielding interviews and results which were less rich in content. Research is a practical yet personal matter, and I realize I will have to be very specific, be critical and honest in my approach and method.

### 3.1.3 *Data Analysis for Participatory Photography*

Each participating undocumented student took 12 photographs, which I anonymized, transcribed and coded. I transcribed all interviews, including translations when needed. The transcripts were coded using semi-structured coding. Emergent thematic coding is a form of qualitative analysis where the approach is to analyze a text, in this case the transcribed interviews and identify themes that emerge from the (text) data in an iterative process. The objective is to identify passages of text which share a commonality in theme or idea, to form the basis of a "framework of thematic ideas" (Gibbs, 2007) which will sift further into specific codes based on themes. This method is time consuming and usually requires several readings. For this reason and in the hopes of alleviating researcher fatigue, I used a second reader to assist with coding, for stronger coder reliability and to help ensure a consistency in coding. This was perhaps more of a "consensus" coding. Smagorinsky (2008) states that "coding makes evident the theoretical approach used to analyze the data by applying code names to segments of text (typically, in my work, field notes, interview transcripts, and transcripts of people speaking as they work)" (p. 399). Thinking about the social justice framework I'm using to underpin these research methods, indeed I applied "code names to segments" in my codebook noted as "Emerging Theme". I found that having a second reader to reach consensus on coding was very useful and affirming and allowed for a second set of eyes for better quality work.

Specific codes and sub-coding emerged to be the basis of my codebook. Codes allow for tagging or labeling of concepts, themes or ideas derived from the transcribed interview text. With each transcription, I add the photograph into the document in the chronological order that each photo was discussed in the interview. This creates clearly marked sections of transcription referencing the corresponding photograph.

The order of photographs and photo interview cadence was determined by the participant. If they had no preference for the order of how undocumented students wanted to discuss their photos, photographs were discussed in the order they were taken and downloaded for their device to the laptop. The order in which photographs are discussed in an interview can be important to some participants. For example, some prefer to share and discuss their photos in a chronological order, where they share their life story in a linear order. Other participants are not as linear and can move from photo to photo to share a more 'organic' narrative.

The software I used for the qualitative research is *Dedoose,* which I have used in past research projects and know the software's limitations and cost, yet know it can be helpful with organizing, compiling and production of data. One of the biggest draw packs is the fact the images are not extracted with the data pulled. This means I had to manually add images back into the data pulled, a time consuming process.

## 3.2 Focus Group

A focus group can be used as a community-based participatory approach. Ratcliff defines the focus group as a qualitative research method that "can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the respective positions, the potential value of [a] case" (2002, p. 40), as well as offer candid insight a researcher may not have considered. Focus groups are a qualitative research method that has

long-standing traditions of use and practice in health fields (Redmond & Curtis, 2009), political science, with elderly and disabled (Quine & Cameron, 1995), and with various demographic-specific cross-cultural groups (Colucci, 2008). Redmond and Curtis offer a good introduction geared towards students designing research protocols that include "focus groups as a means of collecting data… [and] activities associated with the planning, organizing and conducting of focus groups" (2009). Focus groups may vary in size, ethnic, race of gender classification, and the typical goal of a focus group is to create an environment where participants speak candidly and provide descriptive information about any variety of topics, subjects or specific questions.

The focus group is more than a group interview where all members participate. The facilitator or moderator, Rubin & Rubin (1995) recommends, should facilitate specific timed interviews (1 to 2 hours maximum) with a group of 6 to 12 participants. Focus groups can help with exploratory phases of the research, or for affirmation of emerging findings. Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook (2007) describes common uses of focus groups includes collecting general information, generating a creative environment of ideas-formation, and clarification of qualitative data already collected (corroboration and cogency).

Conversely, Krueger and Casey state that focus groups should not be conducted for the purposes of seeking consensus, when sensitive information is shared and participants do not feel emotionally 'safe,' for example a controversial topic, or when confidentiality is con consigned by the participants (2000). As such, focus groups must be handled with great care and be conducted by a facilitator who is experienced and confident while being inclusive and flexible with the energy and flow of the group dynamic.

A focus group is a useful methodological tool with this population of students because as Krueger and Casey point out, it is ideal to better understand how students interpret and discuss

certain topics. In the case of this research, my goal is also to use the focus group as a way to share what I have learned, a way to reflect back to students what they have helped create through their participation. In many ways, it's a closing and 'report back' for those who have entrusted me with their most intimate lives and stories and pictures. It is a validation of my understanding of their stories and way to be accountable to the community I respect and serve and humbly research; their stories matter.

### 3.2.1 *Sampling Rationale for Focus Group*

Table 3: Overview Information on Focus Group

| Item | Focus Group |
|---|---|
| *Total Participants* | Total n=5 |
| *Countries of Origin* | 3 |
| *Education, standing* | 3 graduates, 1 university,<br>1 community college |
| *Identify as LGBTQI* | 0 |
| *Total interview hours* | 1.5 |

Drawing from the participants' pool of the photo interviews, I invited all participants to join in the focus group, hope for participation from 5 to 6 undocu-students; 6 confirmed but only 5 actually showed up on the day of the focus group. Who chooses to participate can influence the dynamic of a group conversation and I think the energy, engagement and overall wiliness to participate. I provide a homemade lasagna dinner, desserts, and drinks and was purposeful in my attempt to provide a comfortable, relaxed and inviting atmosphere. Each participant will receive $20.00 for their time and participation.

### 3.2.2 *Data Collection & Procedures for Focus Groups*

On November 11th, 2017, a total of 5 undocu-students participated in a 1.5 hour conversation session where I facilitated a discussion with semi-structured questions. I made sure

to audio record the session but not video record. A student assistant, visiting international student from Colombia, helped to take notes and keep track of time, so the session was efficient and respectful of all participants time. As the moderator, I advised student participants that I could not guarantee total confidentiality for the focus group, given the nature of a group setting. However, they verbally agreed to observe confidentiality. My goals was to create a safe and open forum dedicated to inspiring a comfortable and relaxed environment. This is especially important given the sensitive topics that were arise. This included discussion about undocumented family member, concerns about the political climate, and shared stories about emotional and mental health challenges.

I completed the photo interviews and the document review analysis by the time I conducted the focus group. This allowed me to share some preliminary 'finding' with participants. Presented in a power point format, the focus group "saw" the work they helped produced collectively and heard the preliminary finding that included shared themes as well as unique 'data' points. The opportunity for a rich dialog was not wasted. I asked follow-up questions related to the topics raised in the discussion, but did not push participants to share any information they may not be comfortable sharing. The final guiding questions were:

1. Do these "results" ring accurate based on what you shared in your interview? Anything missing?
2. Information seeking, searching and info needs vary from person to person, but as a college student, how did YOU fulfill your info needs? How did you decide who to ask, where to look, when to share/disclose your status? Do technology or platforms matter in your info needs/seeking?

3. How was the experience for you in participating in this research, especially participatory photography method?

After the focus group, I transcribed the conversation, and between myself and my second 'coder,' we sifted down the main parts of the discussion, detailed in the Findings section. In general they affirmed the nine themes that we identified.

### 3.2.3 *Data Analysis for Focus Group*

I followed a protocol similar to the analysis approach of audio-recorded photo-interviews for the focus group session. However, I we did not code the entire focus group discussion. Instead, we transcribed the discussion areas that are pertinent, compelling and that add context to the questions and discussion. Using a PowerPoint presentation, I shared "preliminary findings" in a power point format with my focus group and had a discussion about the findings in an effort to validate, confer, approve, or disapprove the preliminary findings that emerged from the interviews and the content review. Since the focus group discussion was the last of the data-gathering methods, I had preliminary results to present to the group and discuss. Having shared preliminary findings, a lively discussion about the 'findings' provided more context, allowed for discussion of things that may have been missed, and in general provided an opportunity for participants to share what the process was like for them as participants in this work. This validation of their stories is important. They have entrusted me with their intimate photos of their lives and have shared their lives- this step is important. Additionally, this discussion allowed for triangulation of data.

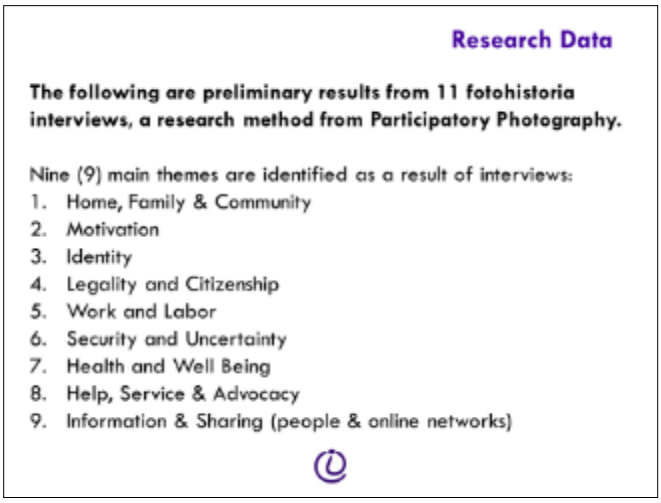



Figure 8: Sample Slide from FG PPT Presentation of "Preliminary Results"

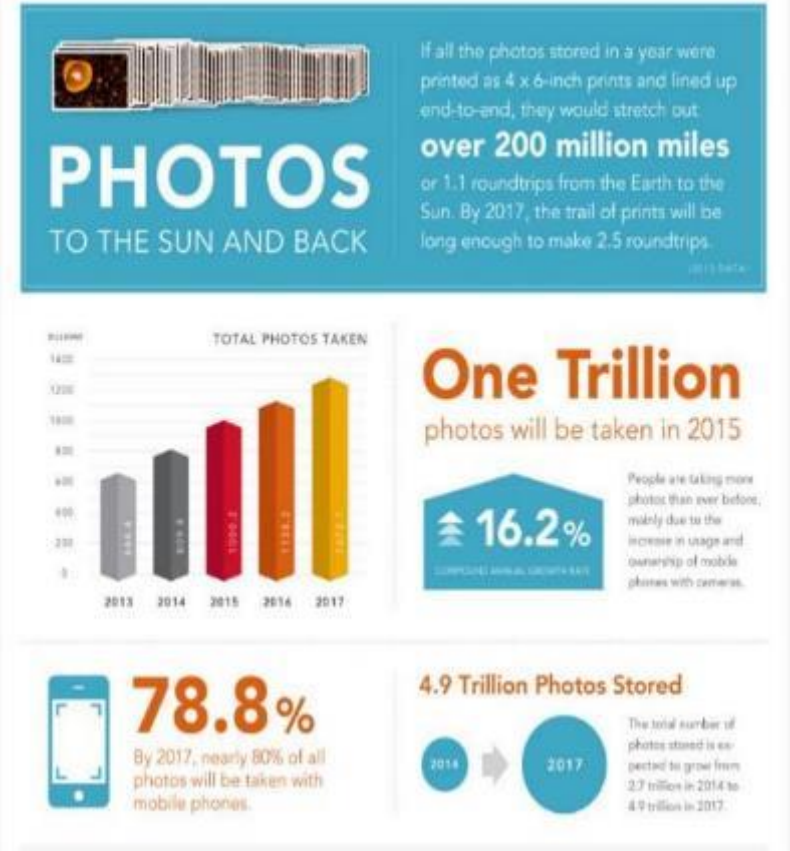
The goal of a Focus Group was to dialog, affirm and/or elucidate unexpected revelations as opposed to finding "consensus," as student participants shared what they think of the emerging results, is anything surprising, very unusual, or if they oppose the findings; even this data is valuable critical information.

## 3.3 Online Document Review

According to InfoTrends' 2014 Worldwide Image Capture Forecast, it estimates that consumers took 810 billion photos worldwide in 2014. This number grew to 1 trillion photos in 2015 and is expected to increase again to 1.3 trillion photos by 2017. The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2014 to 2017 will be 16.2%. Additionally, the growth is expected to increase more over time given a projected increase in mobile phone usage, (Worthington, 2014). Initially for the purposes of studying propaganda, media content analysis was introduced by Harold Lasswell (1927) as a systematic method to study mass media. It is a common method/analytic tool in Communication. However useful in that realm, I will only borrow the most useful and applicable technique for this research. I will not use this method in the

traditional sense, but instead do less of a content analysis and more of an overview of specific online sites.

Figure 9: "Rise of digital photos taken" (Worthington, 2014)




### 3.3.1 *Sampling Rationale for Online Document Review*

After interviewing each participant, I asked each to name their **top three** website or page from a business or just social media, that they use frequently and rely on to obtain, share or seek information related to undocu-topics. The inclusion of the online review is important to understanding the online information behavior of undocu-students, to understand what they are looking for, where and what sites they rely on. I did not be an exhaustive review, but instead tallied the sites that participants said they frequent and these where the ones I focus on. In this way, I took a more a heuristic process in determining which sites I ultimately reviewed.

Table 4: Overview Information on Online Documents Review

| | **Top 3 Sites for Online Review** |
|---|---|
| Total Recommendations: 11 | 1. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) |
| | 2. Facebook Undocu-Groups<br>a. DACA Update<br>b. I Have DACA<br>c. UndocuQueer |
| | 3. Leadership without Borders (LWB) |
| *Total interview hours dedicated to review* | 80 |
| *Total pictures, posts, content reviewed and analyzed* | 300 |

In this section, it is also important to point out limitations and acknowledge who is not being represented based solely on the information behavior and top 3 preferences of participants I interviewed. For example, the Undocu-Black Network, the API community Networks, Los Otros DREAMers, or Undocu-Queer group with sites and lively online communities were sites that participants I interviewed may never mentioned. Based on my scope of reviewing 3 sites only, it is important to acknowledge this is not an exhaustive review of online undocu-communities. For many students, going to college is not feasible, desirable, and for others, they have tried college and were unable to complete a degree.

### 3.3.2 *Data Analysis for Select Digital Content Review*

Using an Excel sheet, I tracked the activity on the main sites identified by participants. I did not a tradition digital content review. Instead, the goal was to review the sites students use with frequencies to see what types of sites they are (social media, business, institution, political) and what type of activity is happening. A more detailed explanation are in the Findings, however, here are the top three sites that emerged as sites/websites undocu-students visit most frequently are listed in the following table.

Table 5: Top 3 Sites for Online Review

| Top 3 Sites for Online Review |
| --- |
| **1. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP)** |
| **2. Facebook Undocu-Groups**<br>a. DACA Update<br>b. I Have DACA<br>c. UndocuQueer |
| **3. Leadership Without Borders** |

The purpose of this review was to 'interrogate' the sites/web pages that students say they frequent in an effort to see if there is triangulation with the emerging themes that have been coded from the interviews. For example, do the themes I see online mirror or are comparable to the emerging codes from the photo interviews such as borders or family.

To refine a process for review, I these are the elements I considered:

1. Selection Criteria- What are the 3 top sites participants claim they use most. "What information sites are reliable when seeking undocu-info specifically?" These sites will be identified with a short survey at the end of the photo interview.
2. Content type- What type of site are these, for example social media site, business, non-profit, educational, search engine, a political site?
3. Duration and Frequency- What is the duration of the online review? The scope of the time frame will be 6-10 months, check regular checks to each site at least once a week.
4. Ownership- Is this a site authored, monitored or otherwise 'owned' by an institution, and organization, or by undocu-peers?

## 3.4 Ethical Considerations

Working with undocu-youth and their stories and their own positionality is central. Positionality matters. I do not take lightly undocu-student's positionalities, the nuances and realities of their lives. The current political climate is one that is hostile towards many marginalized communities, including immigrant and undocu-communities. It is important to ask who/what is helped, privileged, or legitimized and who/what is harmed or excluded when conducting research among this population. I do not take lightly that the undocu-community is under siege and that an increase in detentions and removals by ICE and other federal agencies has increased has many on edge, starting with President Barak Obama and continuing under the Trump Administration. Along with increased nationalistic rhetoric and islamophobia, as well as the recent end of DACA, many undocu-students are experiencing high levels of anxiety where they once experienced some level of stability. Many have professional plans after college and for several in this study, they have professional jobs with various employers, and now those futures are uncertain. For those that were considering graduate school, the current political climate has an impact on their lives; once again, they wait—life is on hold. As such, I realize the vulnerabilities which underpin the undocu-lives I am wanting to learn more about.

## 3.5 Limitations of the Study

The number of participants may be a limitation. Interviewing 11 students offers an introductory view into the lives of undocu-students, yet I hope that the in-depth way in which I am delving into the lives of students will offer a rich, nuanced and genuine view into the world of these specific participants. Recent political reality with the election of Donald Trump as the 45$^{th}$ President has added a palpable and real burden and unease for many in the immigrant and

undocumented communities (among others). Undoubtedly, this impacted some undocu-students' the willingness to participate in a research study that asks for intimate details of daily life. For my work personally, it delayed my completion goals by at least 5 months.

Regarding research methods, I acknowledge the limitations that choosing to do participatory photography may bring, specifically given requirement to share their lives in images, again for safety concerns related to possible deportation and the power imbalance the method may foster. However, I believe that for these 11 participants, ultimate choice and power to share their stories, in the way they chose to, provided some benefit and for many empowerment and as they indicated, an opportunity or their "voice and lives" to be heard.

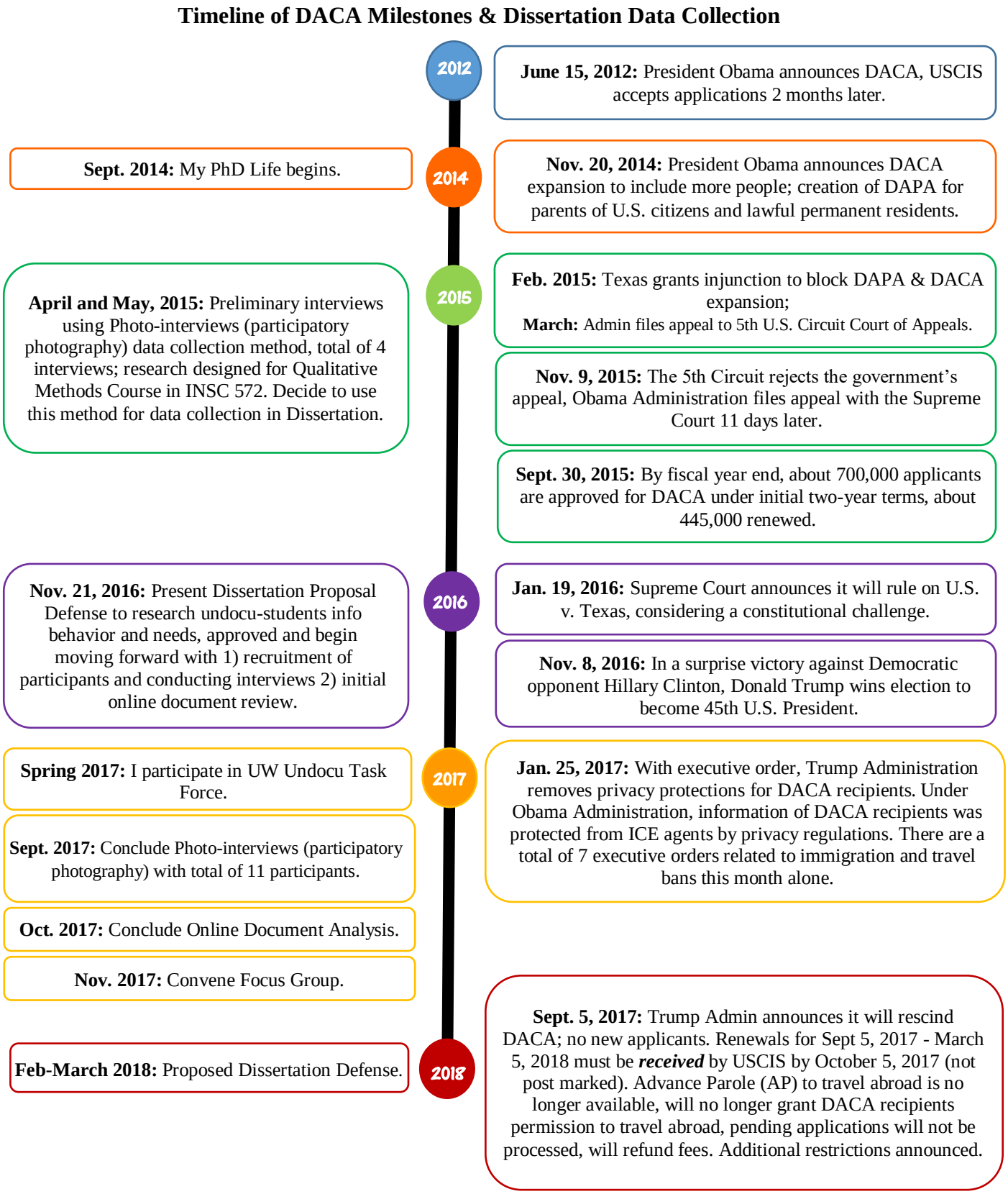
There are limitations in the online document review selection; I am only surveying the 11 participants in the study and asking for **their** top 3 sites, so the selection of site review is limited to whatever is suggested by participants. This creates the challenge of not reviewing other sites which I as a researcher with interest and expertise in undocu-issues and education find compelling and rich in information. The small sample size presents limitations as a way of checking websites to track information behavior.

Finally, I acknowledge my positionality as a researcher from a 'tier one' research institution, a place of privilege and power, and my non-neutral stance on political conditions that have only made educational conditions for undocumented students even more difficult.

# Chapter 4. FINDINGS

In this section I present the finding of my research, organized by the results of each data collection method. However, I want to provide general overview information as overall context. I then offer a timeline of the data collection activities and events related to DACA. (Table 5. Timeline of DACA Milestones & Dissertation Data Collection). This table helps to understand the political context in which my doctoral dissertation work was taking place, and the increasing uncertainties and fear faced by undocu-students which made it especially challenging to recruit participants and to gain their trust in order to participate and share their experiences. The timeline also helps to highlight the urgency of the subject matter of my dissertation.

Table 6: Timeline of DACA Milestones & Dissertation Data Collection




**Info sources**: https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/pressreleases/DACA-DAPA-SCOTUS-Timeline.pdf; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_executive_actions_by_Donald_Trump

## 4.1 PARTICIPATORY PHOTOGRAPHY INTERVIEWS

The demographic information of participants, as well other information related to how students identify and express their status was gathered at the end of each interview. Interesting highlights include the fairly even number of participants who are undocumented because they were brought to the U.S. as children and the participants who overstayed their U.S. Visa.

Table 7: Participants' Demographic Information

| Gender | Age | Edu | County of Origin | Arrival Age | Mixed Status Hshld? | Self-Identification? | How become Undocu? | Do you share your status? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Female** | 27 | Grad | El Salvador | 8 | Yes | Undocumented | Overstay visa | Sometimes, when needed |
| **Female** | 19 | Soph | Mexico | 10 | No | Undocumented | Brought as child | Sometimes, when needed |
| **Female** | 22 | Senior | Mexico | 6 | Yes | Undocumented | Brought as child | Yes. I'm undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic |
| **Male** | 31 | Grad | Mexico | 12 | No | Undocumented | Brought as child | Yes, but only as needed |
| **Male** | 21 | Junior Transfer | Peru | 6 | Yes | Undocumented | Overstay visa | Yes, but only as needed |
| **Female** | 24 | Grad | Mexico | 3 | Yes | Undocumented | Overstay visa | Yes, but only as needed |
| **Female** | 22 | Grad | Guatemala | 12 | No | Undocumented | Overstay visa | Yes. I'm undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic |
| **Male** | 33 | Junior | Mexico | 14 | Yes | Undocumented Undocuqueer | Brought as child | Yes, but only as needed |
| **Female** | 23 | Junior Transfer | Mexico | 11 | Yes | Undocumented, Undocuqueer | Brought as child | Yes, but only as needed |
| **Female** | 20 | Soph | Mexico | 4 | Yes | DACAmented | Overstay visa | Sometimes, when needed |
| **Male** | | Junior Transfer | Eritrea | 13 | Yes | Undocumented | Other (*asylum in process) | Yes, but only as needed |

**Photo Interview Results: Emergent Themes**

The iterative coding process used with the 11 photo-interviews initially yielded 13 codes that represent central themes emerging from the conversations and photos, later grouped into nine

principal themes. The table "Emerging Themes from Photo Interviews" summarizes the major themes for the participatory photography interviews, indicating some of the sub-themes in each one. They are presented in *order of frequency* of appearance in the interviews, starting with the most frequently mentioned theme, security and uncertainty. The last theme is a cross-cutting theme that appears throughout, I call it out to be able to focus on my research questions.

Table 8: Emerging Themes from Photo Interviews

| Emerging Themes from Photo Interviews |
|---|
| **1. Home, Family and Community**<br>This theme relates to 1) Where is Home, 2) Belonging and In-Between-ness, 3) 'Nuclear Family', undocu-friendships, and intimate relationships. |
| **2. Motivation**<br>This theme relates to 1) Education and educational goals, 2) the idea of the 'American Dream' and Perseverance and persistence. |
| **3. Uncertainty and Security**<br>This theme relates to 1) Deportability, Rights and Advocacy, Authorities (ICE, DHS, USCIS), 2) Bullying, Violence or Hate (anti-immigrant) and Privilege/Guilt. |
| **4. Legality and Citizenship**<br>This theme relates to DACA Renewal, Advance Parole (AP)/ Travel, Documentation and Forms, Legal Processes, and Legal Aid & Questions |
| **5. Health and Well Being**<br>This theme relates to Stress & Support, Fear (deportation/ detention), Physical harm, Medical & Health Services, and Gatherings/Celebrations. |
| **6. Identity**<br>This theme relates to Cultural Pride (language, undocu-status,) Undocu-Identity (DREAMers, DACAmented, undocumented), Sexuality and Gender (LGBTQ, Undocu-queer, Gender Bias Awareness, Gender Roles). |
| **7. Help, Service and Advocacy**<br>This theme relates to Political Advocacy, Organizations of support (student or community orgs) and Educational support (counselors, advisors, teachers, mentors). |
| **8. Work and Labor**<br>This theme relates to Work 'because of DACA', Uncertainty in labor or having multiple jobs, Pride in work, and Ownership/Wares. |
| **9. Information and Sharing (people & online networks)**<br>This theme relates to Technology Platforms & Tools, Information Sharing (social media, word of mouth) and News. |

### 4.1.1 *Home, Family and Community*

- *This theme relates to 1) Where is Home, 2) Belonging and In-Between-ness, 3) 'Nuclear Family', 4) Friends as family, undocu-friendships, and 5) Marriage and relationships.*

**1) Where is Home**

Participants discuss the idea of home, what is home and *where* is home, either concretely as a country of origin, or what and where is home now, or where they were 'raised' in the U.S. This is the most the most predominant theme expressed by participants, as well as this first theme of 'Home, Family & Community'. The questions and concerns and thoughts about 'where one belongs,' a sense of belonging, where someone feel their place lays, and conversely, where they don't feel they belong, was very clear in their interviews. This is often a contradiction because participants 'feel' as the U.S. is their 'home' and for many, there is little recollection of a 'native homeland,' yet they feel as if they don't belong in present-day society, in a place where they "are not wanted" and laws are their lives are in a constant 'in between' or liminal state. 'Where is home' is also discussed in the context of *who* is family, or who is the nuclear support that creates a sense of belonging and community. For example, friends can act as family, especially in instances where participants may not have extended or nuclear family members nearby. As such, they rely equally if not more on friends to offer support and, in essence, become a part of the extended family.

Following is a selection of quotes that illustrate the notion of Home.

*Valentina – "This is my home… for now"*

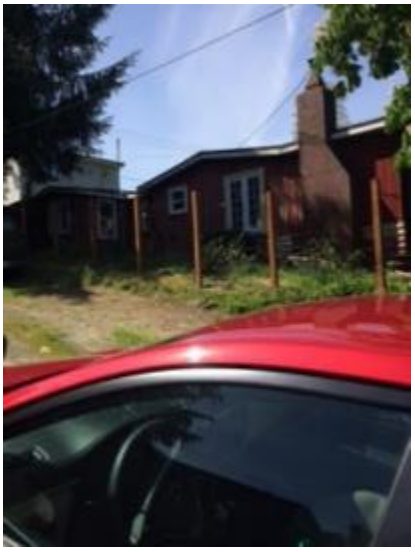


Figure 10: Valentina – "My home… for now"

*"…well because how my parents were able to get our house is that back in the day you could get loans, even if you were undocumented and that's how my parents bought it. But we've been receiving a lot of notices in the mail saying, hey, we want to buy your property because our property's big, and a lot of people coming and seeing our house, and even some company went as far as to show us a drawing and say 'this is what your property could look like, and made a drawing of apartments and a parking lot and how much the building could be worth and how much they could sell it for. And to me, I was pissed and hurt because I was like, I've lived in this house for 18 years and you're doing this? This is my home… for now."*

*Gaby – "Call something a home"*

Figure 11: Gaby – "Call something a home"

*"And even though it's a big jump, cuz you know we are paying over $800 more than we used to pay where we lived before, we're doing it as a trio, my mom, my brother and I, we finally have our own space after living together in a 1 bedroom apartment for the last 10 years. We finally each have our own room. It's a huge deal. And I think it's cool that we*

*finally have something to call our home. And fix it up more. I think the outside is hideous, so I'm hoping it will be pretty one day, but we need money for that. But I think this just shows that one I'm REALLY here to stay. You know, I will go back when it's needed, and when it's the right time, but I'm staying here for now. And then, it finally shows some stability with my home, it took us ten years for us to be able to call something a home again."*

*Ramona – "Its home there"*


Figure 12: Ramona – "Its home there"

*"I have friends that are documented, US Citizens, but they will never have that connection. They will never understand like no matter how much I try to talk to them about it, they will never understand the situation the same way those people (Purple Group and LWB friends) do. They know, like the night of the election I was in there with the group family, we watched and cried. Being there (EEC) …being surround by the students and staff and the EEC was really empowering. You can feel the love for everyone. It's like a home there… its home there."*

All participants spoke about home and feeling at home. Gaby and Valentina are referencing a literal home that has been obtained through great sacrifice, work and collaborative family effort. They speak about the safety experienced in the home as well as the uncertainty that comes when thinking about mortgage payments and how precarious work and jobs can be as undocumented people. Yet there is always a sense of pride and hope when thinking about home, either one's

own home, for like with other participant, their home and apartments they rent. Still, they discuss 'home' as a place that is still difficult to pinpoint. For a few participants who don't live at home with parents, they commented on whether 'home' is where family is, since they "go home" to see "mom and dad." Yet, there is also a second home that is referenced by participants, often a place that is safe and welcoming and part of their educational setting. Several participants, including Ramona identified the Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) as a 'home' or 'home away from home', and other spaces where they feel 'at home' while on their educational campus (in once case a community center). I include the example of Valentina because expounded in detail the aspects of friendship, family and support that she experiences at the ECC, making one of the few places she feels safe in and can call a 'home.'

**2) On Belonging and In-Between-ness**

Participants expressed a strong feeling of wanting a bond and develop a connectedness with others who understands them, share their experiences, provide support and "get you" even without "having to explain it" as a way to alleviate the constant feeling not belonging or fitting in. Participants shared my stories and scenarios of feeling in limbo or not fitting in, and this included a connection to not belonging to a specific place (community, home, college campus), and not belonging in the more ephemeral sense (dreams of the future, home, in the American society). Sharing experiences with someone who "understands" can bring stability although not complete remedy to the sensation that not belonging, be that on campus, in a class, or via a relative that provides a sense of origin or root. When this is gone, a sense of not-belonging can arise. The sensation of not being 'situated' is prevalent in all participants. This is often most saliently expressed when discussing the question of 'what is home,' but also in everything from education, finances, work, even when considering employment opportunities. Uncertainty, not

knowing what's next, feeling like you're waiting (therefore an in-between stage) and not fitting in or belonging are all familiar sensations for all participants. Sharing experiences with someone who "understands" can bring stability although not complete remedy to the sensation that not belonging, be that on campus, in a class, in the U.S. The sensation of not being 'situated' is prevalent in all participants.

*Ana – "I really don't have a home"*

Figure 13: Ana – "I really don't have a home"

*"I don't really feel like you belong anywhere. I feel like you make with what you have, but you don't really belong anywhere, like I could say, oh my home is here in Seattle like, I've lived here for the last five years, and I've created really strong relationships and this is where I live, right? If I say Eastern Washington, that's where my parents are, that's where I grew up, but I'm no longer living there, right? So I don't have those ties to like, to a lot of people, like my parents, and my brothers, and that's it. That's 'back home,' or that used to be home. If they ask you well, where are you from, usually they mean like, en dónde naciste [where were you born] or something… and like for me to say México, that's really hard too because that's not my home. Like, I was born there and I lived there till I was eight, but that's not home. So I really don't have a home. I don't belong anywhere, know what I mean? I've just lived in different places and I've had different experiences in different places, but I don't have a set place that's home, or considered home…"*

*Jaime – "The only connection to home"*

Figure 14: Jaime – "The only connection to home"

> *"My abuela was a very sturdy woman, you know, the head. She was left by my grandfather with 6 kids in 1950 something with no money. So she, as women do, they figure it out, but at the cost of her health and everything. So by the time I was born and my parents left me there, she sort of, se engendró conmigo [she became attached to me]. She was like, you know, I didn't have the chance to be a loving mother with my kids cuz she had to work 5 jobs, cook, and there were awful things she had to go thru to raise 6 kids. With me she was ALL LOVE, but you could still feel the hardness. I went to go see her last year for the first time since 1998… she had shrunk. She was very small, the hardness of life had worn her out cuz she was older. Now that passed away, my grandma is really the only connection to home in Mexico. So now that is gone. What do I have now? I don't know…"*

Ana expresses a clear lack of place to fit in, as well as a general sensation of in-between-ness or liminality when she clearly states, "I don't really feel like you belong anywhere," a common sensation expressed by most participants. She further complicates this sensation by declaring that her parents' home is also not her home, not is her birthplace, and yet neither is the current places where she is now, despite her many years of living in Seattle in her own, stating simply, "I don't belong anywhere." There is a shared sentiment by Jaime who suggests he may have felt a "home" was in his birthplace, connected to his grandmother. Now that she has passed away, that sense of root or belonging is gone. Jaime, as well as many participants connect family and home to the sensation of belonging. Most participants state they simply "live" where they live **now**. It is a place for now, adding to the feeling of in-between-ness that affects everything in

their lives from planning for a family, buying property and high cost items, even considerations of attending graduate school.

**3) On Nuclear Family', undocu-friendships, and intimate relationships**

Relationships in family and community are critical, and often lead to strong non-platonic connections such as dating, relationships and marriage. This presents a set of new challenges depending on whether the partner is also undocumented or is a citizen. Some participants express concern when it comes to long-term relationships, where personal status can impact the relationship in various way. Nonetheless, undocu-status has an ever-present role in the relationship, which again summons the question of where is home and where will a 'home' be developed and nurtured in the future, given the uncertainly on the sense of belonging and in-between-ness and liminality. Friendships, more specifically 'undocu friendships' are an excellent example of how friends can develop into family-like support systems because of a common shared experience regarding undocu-status, shared personal struggles (including financial, emotional health and well-being), educational pathways and challenges (even college social life including dating and feeling alienated in higher education), and in general similar concerns and challenges that can impact the daily life when you are undocumented. Participants expressed a strong feeling of wanting a bond and develop a connectedness with others who understands them, share their experiences, provide support and "get you" even without "having to explain it."

*Marcos – "Family gatherings as we were dating"*

Figure 15: Marcos – "Family gatherings as we were dating"

*"When I visit her family, you know, you have the women in the kitchen, you have the men either outside or in a place where they're just having a drink, just doing their thing, woman and man separately. The way that I was raised was that the woman is not the chacha, or the house keeper, right? You know, when we had dinner, we were always taught to get our own food. My dad was like, 'your mom is not your housekeeper, your mom is not your server, you get up and get your food.' I'm not gonna be dependent on my mom to feed me. So, that was a disconnection that I had with my wife's family. It was, you know the first time that I went to her family gatherings as we were dating, I would overhear the ladies say, 'you need to take care of your man!"*

*Jamie – "We're best friends in life"*

Figure 16: Jaime – "We're best friends in life"

*"We're best friends in life, what we have gone through, even this immigration thing. I had boyfriends that left because I was undocumented, and I understood it's scary, you know? And now that he's dealt with this, he's becoming SO worn out, I know it! It's humiliating and it's unfair, so I thank him for sticking up with me. Still, the whole immigration process has weighed a lot on our relationship, which again it's one of those things where even in terms of relationships, as undocumented people have a hard time finding whoever we want to find, that we may only be with or find another undocumented person. Even in that sense, such a limiting concept of, 'no, you were not born here,' a little card that says seven or eight numbers…"*

*Gaby – "Soul sista!"*

Figure 17: Gaby – "Soul sista!"

*"Soul sista! We're in front of the Taj Mahal in India, which is ridiculous. We met in Arizona, which is sooo funny, of all places to meet an undocumented person, you go to Arizona! We bonded a lot, you know started to do really dope work together and there reason why I picked this picture with her is because this is like, a life changing experience for both of us… we got to, I think our friendship got stronger in this time, lived together for 2 weeks, but we also did one of the scariest things with each other which was to leave the country and try to come back, and we literally went to the other side of the world, which who the fuck would have thought that!"*

Friendships can become cornerstone to mitigating the constant feeling not belonging or fitting in. Relationship development, whether plutonic or intimate are important and all participants express their need and gratefulness for their tight network of friends. For the undocu-love connections that happen, there can be more dimensions of difficulty, as exemplified

by Jaime and his past relationship experience. There is an added layer of complexity when relationships develop into marriage of more formal courtships such as with Marcos and his then girlfriend-now wife. Like in any relationship, meeting the family of your loved one is wrought with typical anxieties and concerns. These may be compounded if, as in the case of Marcos, family has strong preferences that your relationship is with a U.S. citizen.

### 4.1.2 ***Motivation***

- *This relates to 1) Education and educational goals, 2) the idea of the 'American Dream' and Perseverance and persistence.*

**1) On Education**

Participants discuss at length education as an important element in their lives and a key factor that is often at the root of why their parents migrated to the U.S. Participants speak of education with a mix of emotions including pride (graduation season prompts creative, expressive mortar board hat messages of pride as undocumented), hope, disdain and trauma. The pride is expressed in degree completion or completion goals as well as an acknowledgement that the educational endeavor is physical, emotional and financially draining. Trauma is conveyed in a variety of ways, including depression, self-doubt, guilt, and emotional stress. Physical harm is also expressed, such as suicidal ideations and anger. For all, their educational pursuits have not been easy and have required them to be ingenious, creative and persistent when it comes to enrolling, continuing and completing their (higher) education. A striking point is that given the current political situation, some wonder if their educational successes will matter, wonder whether they will be able to work in the discipline where they have their degree. Some have expressed graduate school aspiration but again wonder if this is a futile pursuit.

*Marcos – "I am going to grad school"*


Figure 18: Marcos – "I am going to grad school"

*"Never in my life did I say "I am going to grad school." I don't know if I was lucky or not, but I only apply to one school and I got accepted. I think I was the first undocumented grad student they had, what I was told. I feel myself that I still have things to do, to work on, but just to be here, it is just unrealistic. So, for me to be here, it's like unrealistic, it's just… I MADE IT WORK, hahaha!"*

*Valentina – "The trauma is at this institution"*

Figure 19: Valentina – "The trauma at this institution"

*"A lot of people ask me if I'm gona go back to school, get my Masters, and I'm like no... You don't understand the trauma I've been through at this institution, fighting everyone, even people that I thought I could trust… trying to be myself, continue to advocate for myself in this space, paying a lot of money to this place and still continue to not be given what I deserve… But also it represent like what my parents immigrated here for, right?"*

*Gaby – "DACA was announced"*

Figure 20: Gaby – "DACA was announced"

*"I graduated on June 16, 2012, the day before DACA was announced. And the day that DACA was announced, my mom got those text messages, and she said, '****, the DREAM ACT passed,' and I was like, that's impossible, yes! Next thing you know I'm at El Centro [de la Raza] sharing this whole story of like, what this would mean to me,' and the next day I'm graduating from high school, which was very like, WHAT?! I did it!"*

All participants expressed a similar dichotomy when talking about their educational experience: it was difficult but it is a central reason why they came to the U.S., for a better education and opportunities. Marcos is a graduate student and works several jobs to cover his educational expenses, given that most masters programs do not offer significant aid, and most rely on loans or scholarships. Marcos takes many courses in the evening and online, so that he may continue to work full time to pay for school. He feel excited and happy to be a grad student, but states it comes at great costs, often at the sake of healthy sleeping, eating, and spending time with family. For Gaby and Valentina who have since graduated from college and one is in graduate school currently, their educational journey experiences are similar and echo with the experiences of other undocu-students, who must navigate complex educational barriers and mitigate challenges like rising tuition costs, constantly searching for funding via scholarship, loans and GoFundMe efforts, while also experiencing a common theme of not belonging or fitting in. In some instances, participants describe not only unwelcoming staff and college

departments and office, but actual hostile and untrained, not-knowledgeable staff and faculty providing undocu-students with incorrect information or no information at all. Achieving their educational goals is truly something they fought for.

**2) On the 'American Dream' and Perseverance, persistence.**

Despite the disenchantment often felt due to immigration status, participants articulate a clear drive, desire for personal growth and intellectual fulfillment, and sharp 'can do' attitude focused perseverance and persistence. There is a mix of belief and incredulity when it comes to the ideals of the American narrative as one where 'if you work hard enough you will succeed.' On the one hand, participants articulate a belief in this idealistic sentiment, especially when speaking with pride at what they have been able to accomplish despite the overwhelming obstacles. Yet they know that there are limits to what they can accomplish, no matter how 'hard' they work.

Participants share ways they find solutions to challenges and attitudinal drive that compels them to continue to seek solutions and not only survive but thrive, no matter the odds. This includes a drive to prove naysayers wrong, debunk the stereotypes often associated on immigrants and undocumented (including gender and sexual orientation) and imposed biases on their person related to professional goals. These education solutions are shared in a variety of way, from peer-to-peer info sharing to posting online in carefully monitored support group pages. The disenchantment of reality, questioning of goal merits hardships, struggles and achievements is also present, yet they are committed to debunking stereotypes. Here is a select sampling that illustrate result and their theme most saliently.

*Luna – "Should I be thankful about this"*

Figure 21: Luna – "Should I be thankful about this"

*"I considered not even applying to UW, like going back to México. It's always been in me, going back to México, but it's this fear of doing it, like it's something that is just there, and people might judge me, or be like, 'why are you going back there when you have this opportunity here and be at this institution?' Am I here just because of that, or am I here because I really want to be, you know? And will it matter anyway… the corruption is what influenced my parents to migrate here, but then I'm like, 'should I be thankful that México is corrupt, thankful that I had to migrate here? Should I be thankful about this? I wonder… too much for me to think about [laughter], but it's just a lot."*

*Janet – "She was able to adapt"*


Figure 22: Janet – "She was able to adapt"

*"My mom had to cross three borders to get here, and she did this and she left El Salvador when the Civil War broke out. Yeah, that was in the 80's. And so she came all this way. She did so much at such a young age, I think she must have been around 17 or 18 when she left. And you know, crossing borders and going through these different new countries… she was able to adapt."*

*Flora – "Getting up again and not giving up"*

Figure 23: Flora – "Getting up again and not giving up"

> *"I got my AA in Business Administration. I should have finished earlier, but you know I was working full time, I failed a couple of classes, and I wasn't sure if business was something I wanted to do, you know how this is supposed to help my community... so it kinda represents me failing, but getting up again and not giving up, you know? So it took me a while to be able to finish at Bellevue College, like 4 years I think. So I feel proud. I didn't want to walk but my mom was like, you should because it took you effort and time, as she says lágrimas [tears], you know?"*

Flora shares a common issue that was expressed by many participants, and that's having to work many hours and multiple jobs at time, to make tuition each quarter, which often results in undocu-students taking longer to graduate. Yet for all three of these voices, their family and often a parent is a key motivating factor for continuing on with their educational goals, despite the often overwhelming challenges. Many shared a sense of guilt for wanting to quit their studies, given the "sacrifices" that their family made, while several others describe what I know to be an Imposter Syndrome, where they "suppose" that they are smart, they often wonder if they are smart enough to be in college. I see a connection again to a sense of not belonging or feel lost, in this case in an institution that is often not welcoming to students by way of their homogeneous student body or because institution size. This disenchantment is real, for many

undocu-students palpable on a daily basis and for some, too much to endure, resulting in leaves of absence or dropping out altogether.

### 4.1.3 *Security and Uncertainty*

- *This theme relates to 1) Deportability, Rights and Advocacy, Authorities (ICE, DHS, USCIS), 2) Bullying, Violence or Hate (anti-immigrant) and Privilege/Guilt.*

**1) On Deportability, Rights and Advocacy, Authorities**

Participants articulate a concern with their security and uncertainty for their future. For those who are DACA recipients, deportability is currently a relevant concern, especially with the Trump Administration executive order that ends the program on March 5, 2018, ending the respite from deportation that the DACA program once offered. Non-DACA undocu-students are equally concerned, perhaps from a different angle, as the immigration enforcement in communities of color have increased. Participant convey a keen awareness of the anti-immigrant sentiment that is often at the core of some of the 'push back' they have heard or receive personally, either from a co-worker, fellow students, in the media and on social media. There is a varying degree of political activism among participants, some clear leaders and spokespersons for the undocu-community and some not political in traditional ways such as rallies, marches, and other direct political advocacy.

However, all articulate a clear idea of the rights and dignity that all undocumented and immigrant community members deserve. The harsh reality is that for many undocu-students, they live with constant fear or authorities, especially immigration enforcement. It is an every-constant fact that agencies such as ICE or local law enforcement working with immigration will come a remove undocu-students or family members. There are several organizations working with and on behalf of undocu-communities. However, the continued increase in detentions and

deportations creates a hyper vigilance in undocu-communities. Participants acknowledge their precarious, in-between state as a way of being, at least for now.

*Jaime – "Wrong existence"*

Figure 24: Jaime – "Wrong existence"

*"You know there's a lot of pain in being undocumented because not only have you left a life behind, that you have to at some point sort of block because there's no point in remembering. You have to focus on being here but it's also not quite a full life because you're time is borrowed, really. So it's very unstable place to be […] Yo creo que el ser indocumentado es algo tan inhumano [I think being undocumented is something that's very inhumane] because I don't think anybody should walk around knowing that the world underneath them can just be taken from them in a second. And that they're intrinsically, there's something wrong about their existence.*

*Janet – "Student again"*

Figure 25: Janet – "Student again"

*"Having that status as a students, I think there are some sort of quasi-protection. There are something certain things that cannot say right now. As where as if I were a student, it would be "oh yeah, she is a radical student, that's who she is." But I can't do that right now [laugh]. I look forward to being a student again."*

*Valentina – "Sabotaged"*


Figure 26: Valentina – "Sabotaged"

*"The Principal basically wrote a letter and passed it out to students and when they read it, they interpreted the letter as ICE can come into the school and we won't do anything about it. And a lot of our students stopped coming to school because they said, 'what is the point of me going to school if ICE can come for me here? I might as well just stay home and wait for them there.' And a lot of students were really angry and really, they're SO amazing that they like scheduled a walk out because they were so pissed, and it was sabotaged by Admin."*

Feelings of concern in the workplace as well as at home are common among participants. The general concern of anti-immigrant sentiment is constant, and although undocu-students do not always feel welcomed on many educational institutions, they understand the irony that being on a college campus does offer some security from immigration authorities, which can appear at the home or at work, and even on the streets. Second, there is a sense of greater academic freedom and protection for voicing your "truth" on a college campus for reason that include communities of support and allies among peers and some staff and faculty, and because on some campuses, campus administrations have issued memos of support or sanctuary stating they will

not cooperate with federal agencies seeking the names of undocu-students. This provides some relief, although less so for more and more college graduates who are in the workforce now, or working and in graduate school. Strong feeling of uncertainty and concern with immigration authorities reminds participants that they are 'deportable.'

**2) On Bullying, Violence or Hate (anti-immigrant) and Privilege/Guilt**

Hate and anti-immigrant sentiments are currently high and participants feel this negative sentiment in many ways, including (for some) in the workplace, which does not feel like a "safe place." It is also felt in public spaces and some express concern for personal safety given the current political climate. Interestingly, several participants discussed the idea or 'self-deporting' or leaving the U.S. for the possibility of living in another country, either their homeland or another country which may be less hostile or where they can migrate legally and work. They are not entirely convinced they will live in the U.S. forever as their deportability looms heavy, nor are they certain they will leave a place that has been home and that they know. Yet the idea of privilege and guilt came up several times. For most, coming to the U.S. was the desire of their parents, yet there is guilt not only from the perspective of the parent who feel anguish to see their children in distress, as well as guilt on the part of the participant for 'having made it when so many others didn't,' as well as guilt that they are unhappy/disenchanted with the 'American Dream' yet know there is privilege in their success. This dichotomous feeling emerges as central to feeling uncertain, in-between worlds (liminality) and feeling unsafe.

*Valentina – "Mixed feelings"*

Figure 27: Valentina – "Mixed feelings"

*"So I have mixed feeling, like one of those great but depressing kinda things… so when I graduated, something that I was struggling a lot with and still struggle with now is guilt, right? Like the guilt of being the one who made it, the guilt of the first one, and being on Facebook I get to see a lot of what my high school friends do and a lot of them, including my best friend, they didn't get to go to college or graduate and I DID get to go and… I got to go because of people who guided me there, but for me, it's like I wish we could have all been there [crying], but we couldn't because not everyone had the same resources, but it also reminds me of how the people that I grew up with went to school but didn't get those opportunities the same as me and it's like a guilt… a guilt thing and I don't know how to work with it and I'm still learning how to navigate it."*

Jaime - *"Broke my face, punched me and broke my nose"*

Figure 28 Jaime – "Broke my face, punched me and broke my nose"

> *'So two of the kids came to my class and broke my face, just punched me and broke my nose, and I was kicked out of school for that because I was engaging in sexual things… in junior high school. And then I think of it and think, I did nothing wrong! I hooked up with a kid, who cares! And then the kid punched me, a hate crime because I am gay and I was the one kicked out of school! It's one of those things that I look back and people think I'm kidding! That's not possible! But it's true and the shame of it and everyone had to hear about this… the kid punched me because he wanted to prove that he wasn't gay or something. I'm like, I sorry that it got out, but you knew, EVERYBODY knew… I just, I just… it's a very painful, not ashamed but painful because it's so unfair. At that time you couldn't fight that… anywhere in the U.S. that would be in the news, make a point of the unfairness."*

Several participants grapple with a sense of guilt and acknowledging certain privilege to being a college student or college graduate when so many other undocu-friends or family members are not able to attend college. The guilt continues when the hardships of continuing an education rise and rise and often they feel like quitting or taking an educational leave of absence, which further sparks feeling of guilt: 'how can you just give up when so many like you have not even had a chance to be in school' is a common thought. They experience multiple levels of feel and micro-aggressions. In some cases, there have been physical assaults. In the case of Jaime who was assaulted as a child in Mexico, his fears and concerns did not necessarily end when he came to the U.S., but rather added more complex layers on, adding fear of being undocumented and a man of color in the gay community over in a usually conservative, Latino undocu-community. Being an undocu-queer college students provides some respite from fear and targeted hate, as explained by the few participants in this study that identify as undocu-queer. Yet it continues to be a complex situation. Any educational attainment is hard fought. Academic high achiever such as these undocu-students are not safe from harassment and a sense of uncertainty, whether on campus, at home, or on public streets, even online.

### 4.1.4 ***Legality and Citizenship***

- *This theme relates to DACA Renewal, Advance Parole (AP)/ Travel, Documentation and Forms, Legal Processes, and Legal Aid & Questions*

  Note: As I continue to present finding, you will see that there is less sub-division of the contents of the themes, as those themes with more frequency and evidence were presented first (from greatest to least). Therefore, I will present the finding under a more general larger topic.

Most participants are deeply engaged in the topic of citizenship and the mechanisms that are part of the immigration system. They articulate an understanding of the legal processes related to their case, how marriage, asylum, renewals and U Visas can impact status, for example. This includes having family members who are U.S. citizens (or other legal residency), commonly referred to as 'mixed family status.' These family member can represent a pathway to citizenship, but also represent a key fear factor: the idea that undocumented family members will be deported, leaving behind their 'legal status' family members. Participant often serve as their family 'interpreters' both when it comes to the language of the legal content and the documents that are in English. They are often the ones who will interpret the information and if they do not know how to interpret the content, they will reply on their networks of friends and allies. This includes networks online and on their respective campuses or via local community organizations.

For those who have been able to travel outside of the U.S. via the Advanced Parole option, participants say the process is expensive, emotional, but ultimately worth it. Questions, concerns and assistance with regards to immigration law and its machination is a topic participants discuss with frustration and knowledge. Ironically, participants become well versed

in finding the correct information regarding immigration and legal question, whether this is from specific sites of people.

*Gaby – "My Guate Passport"*


Figure 29: Gaby – "My Guate Passport"

*"This is when I got my Guatemalan passport which I got before I went to India, or else I couldn't have gone, but the reason why is that I wana show. But this was the day I got my passport. My original passport's still in Guatemala cuz my mom sent it back. But I have this one, and I just wana show it cuz it cute, and two it's because it gave me access to travel back and have once again a Guatemalan something because all I have is my birth certificate because when I turned 18 I couldn't get to leave or anything like that. So that thing sat in my drawer for like 2 years without being used. I was like, I have it, in case I go there, so I have it.*

*Janet – "A Society that never wanted you"*

Figure 30: Janet – "A Society that never wanted you"

*"I am not for assimilation. I am not like other people who would do everything to get a green card or US citizenship. For me, I was like "why, why do you want to be a part of the society that doesn't want you? You're not wanted. You're gonna look the same way you look… Even if you're a blonde and blue-eye Mexican, or Venezuelan, people can are still going to hear your accent. So you're not wanted where you've been most of your life. "*

*Ali – "I was expecting my mom to get the papers done"*

Figure 31: Ali – "I was expecting my mom to get the papers done"

*"So yea, I left the country when I was like 12, I wouldn't be able to do that by myself, it was like a family decision, then we went to Sudan and I lived in Sudan for 4 years. I was expecting my mom to get the papers done, but even though she had her green card after a while she was not able to get her citizenship cuz her fingerprints, something happened and she wasn't able to get me… Then we got people who smuggled us. The group of people I was with didn't want to go to immigration. We got caught then they me in house, cuz I was under age, and there was a different detention center. They ask you, what do you want to do from here, and then you ask for asylum. I told them, 'my mom is here and stuff.' And they're like, oh more paperwork is needed. They helped with the paper work, and basically they give you a paper to come here. Then my mom came there [El Paso]. She had to sign papers… come and get me basically."*

An advanced understanding of legal processes does not ensure correct actions. That is, undocu-students ask and research as much as they help and assist others. Each immigration case is different and nuanced. In the case of Ali, he is in Asylum proceedings, while other participants are at different and various stages of the legal process. Legality and the desire for immigration reform is addressed differently by participants, with several vocalizing clearly that "becoming American" is not a goal, where assimilation is the process by which citizenship is demonstrated,

as mentioned by Janet and a other participants. This is not to say that they do not want to become legal citizens. It simply means they are not willing to forego their culture and heritage for the sake of citizenship. It is a complexity of emotions. For others, they ready their documentation to be travel ready, either by one's own volition or by immigration proceedings.

### 4.1.5 *Health and Well Being*

- *This theme relates to Stress & Support, Fear (deportation/ detention), physical harm, Medical & Health Services, and Gatherings and Celebrations.*

Participants discuss stressful and emotionally draining life situations that have pushed many to critical points. The stress they feel is visceral and consuming, so they seek ways to mitigate these stresses by seeking support as well as offering it to others, on an interpersonal, one-on-one level or from group support. Due to their status, many do no quality for any medical coverage, especially those that are recent university graduates who no longer have access to university-linked health services. Mental health and self-care are prominent concerns for participants, and coping mechanisms range from depression, addiction, suicidal ideation, panic attacks, self-doubt, feelings of loneliness and isolation, ignoring 'the issue', physical activity (hiking, camping, painting) and even humor. Juxtaposing this stress and anxiety is the acknowledgement by several participants that despite this stress, they wonder if they would be who they are today if not for their trials and tribulations. That is, how different would they be, consciously and socially, if they had the "privilege" of citizenship, sparking an interesting introspective speculative reflection.

Gatherings and celebrations are also a way to relieve stress and offer/receive support, celebrating everything from birthday's graduations, and political victories, celebrations enjoyed by most but take on a special meaning for undocu-students and their (usually) undocu-family.

Many participants shared deeply personal struggles they have endured yet also articulate a salient optimism that pushes them to survive and continue with their personal and professional goals. This does not eliminate the presence of fear either from concrete entities such as law enforcement or other fear factors such as anti-immigrant hate crime or discrimination. Participants describe 'self-care' and health and well-being as an ongoing process with deliberate intention to remember to take better personal care.

*Marcos – "From Yakima"*

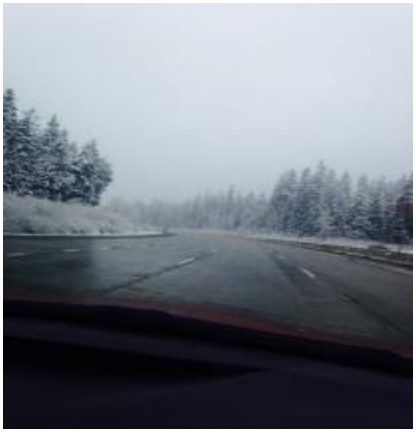


Figure 32: Marcos – "From Yakima"

*"I had to work. My first year in the grad school, I had to be travelling from Yakima to Seattle back and forth. I had to make my schedule, you know, in such a way where I could come Friday mornings, have a class on Friday night and then have a class on Saturday. That would be the only way that I could come. So, and it took a toll on me, after a year driving. It was not easy."*

*Ramona – "I survived"*


Figure 33: Ramona – "I survived"

*"This reminds me that I survived… I was hurting myself, taking pill… I wanted to die because I felt so alone. And like this reminds me I'm strong… that's all I want to say…"*

*Valentina – "I didn't qualify for insurance"*

Figure 34: Valentina – "I didn't qualify for insurance"

*"The lady who was checking me out was like 'you shouldn't pay for this, this is a lot of money,' and I told her that I just couldn't because I didn't qualify for insurance and I told her my situation and she told me she'll help you figure it out. So I go to this lady and I think it was at North Seattle College cuz they have a clinic there and I went there and I talked to her and I told her and she was like, 'are you one of those DREAMers?' And I said 'yea!' And she was like I "I know how to do this!' She said, 'it's tricky but I did help someone else already,' and then she started to fill out the paperwork and I was able to get help. I got medical attention finally."*

To endure moments of hardship and becomes stronger for it, is what participants indicate they do and will continue to do. Several participants discussed ways of coping with stress and fear and the multi-layered challenges if their undocu-status, sharing that coping was not always easy or healthy. Several participants discuss scenarios of self-hard and even suicidal ideations and attempts, for example Ramon who got the tattoo on her inside wrist to remind her to be 'brave' and be 'strong.' For others, they coped with substance abuse and sexual promiscuity. Yet other suppressed all stress and concern until their bodies reacted and they experiences emotional break downs and depression. Participants discuss the various ways they were able to survive, and undocu-friendships and personal relationships were important to their survival. I was surprised at the lack of professional help that was available to some, although I understood from the

interviews that for some, there was a sense of not knowing where to get help as an undocu-student, in addition to the stigma or embarrassment of asking for help for not being 'tough enough' to be able to just "suck it up" and keep moving on. Gaby found herself in a desperate situation where she needed medical attention and was unsure she would be able to get it. She remembers struggling to disclose her status to the health provider who sensed she was being reserved and luckily had just recently had another experience with another undocu-person and was able to help. Some variation of this example was shared by several participants, and causes them concerns; 'what do I do if I get sick, I have no coverage.'

#### 4.1.6 ***Identity***

- *This theme relates to Cultural Pride (language, undocu-status,) Undocu-Identity (DREAMers, DACAmented, undocumented), Sexuality and Gender (LGBTQ, Undocu-queer, Gender Bias Awareness, Gender Roles).*

Identity is expressed in a complex and dynamic way, despite shared status and includes sexuality (undocu-queer, straight), language, culture, food and being undocumented, an integral part of identity that shapes/defines a 'coming of age'. Identity for participants includes sexuality, language, culture and being undocumented. For many, being a student is an integral part of their identity, part of their life that shapes and defines their 'coming of age' from childhood to adulthood. Being an undocumented student ironically brings a status that participants know and understand and in some instances miss. For example, this is expressly missed by participants who have recently graduated and are now in the work force or seeking employment. The perceived "safety" that higher education provides is missed, for some articulated as the freedom to express themselves as undocu-students or the comradery with other colleagues, allies and undocu-students. This is often in conflict with other feelings of being unsafe and unwelcomed in a college-setting, a familiar sense of lack of belonging, fitting in and feeling 'different.'

Pride in culture, language and sexual orientation or gender is also voiced strongly. Participants who identify as LGBTQ discuss a "coming out twice," once as undocumented and second as gay/queer. But "coming out" as undocumented is articulated by all participants as something they either express freely, with caution, or not at all, detailing the negotiating factors they must assess when determining when undocu-status can/should be shared. Interestingly, most expressed a preference to be called, and self-identified as 'undocumented,' not 'DREAMer' or 'DACAmented' and were keenly aware of the political implication of such a label, as well as aware of the "privilege" that DACA granted status brings- not all undocumented students in higher education have DACA status. This creates a situation where many resources are not available for undocumented non-DACA students. While they are happy more financial resources are now available to undocu-students, many have as a requirement that the recipient must be DACA eligible. At its peak, only about 800,000 applicants were approved for DACA, with estimates at 1.3 million applicants that would have been eligible had the program continued, and a projected 1.3 million to 3.6 million would gain legal status if a version of the DREAM Act passed (Robertson, 2018). Participants understand the multifaceted nature if the immigration debate and are aware of the popular cultural misconceptions and assumptions about their undocu-lives. This add another layer of complexity to the topic of identity and one' sown ethnocultural realities.

Gender is discussed in the context of how culture and language can influence and perpetuate gender biases and sexism, as well as cultural gender norms and expectations. There is a political nature to this topic that seems to lend itself well to the context of political activism of undocu-activism, given the "intersectional" nature and complexity of undocu-identity. The gender roles and expectations often imposed by their own culture and family norm and

expectations is articulated, for example the expectation of marriage for women and family strife and banishment due to sexual orientation.

*Luna – "Valuing your identity"*

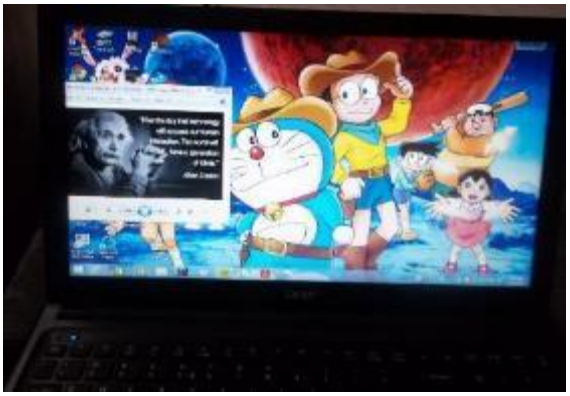


Figure 35: Luna – "Valuing your identity"

*"I may be undocumented, may be Hispanic or Latino or Mexican, I may be a woman. But where I've gotten to, like to really understand the meaning of my life is that with my thinking nobody. And I know that's for any human, but being conscious and aware of that and understanding that that's a fulfillment, that that is actually like a way of valuing your identity, of identifying yourself… Because that's what I wrote my identity essay about, that it's my consciousness that makes me* ***me****, not being Latino or being 18 or 19 or, or being brown, or having black hair, or being at UW, or being undocumented. That's not what makes me* ***me.*** *It's just a part of me"*

*Valentina – "Part of my identity"*


Figure 36: Valentina – "Part of my identity"

*"So, for me like, being a student is a part of my identity. I miss being a student right now. I miss it so much. It's not just like being in dialogue with community of other learners, but just having that status as a student."*

*Jaime – "Compartmentalize your love"*

Figure 37: Jaime – "Compartmentalize your love"

*"There was a lot of anger inside of me, porque me mandaron aquí porque soy homosexual, ¿verdad? [because they sent me here because I was homosexual, right?]. It hurt a lot because you know you have these people telling you they love you, then no… you can't compartmentalize your love for somebody that way… and it was just painful. So having gone to seen my grandma, I love her but of course there's a lot of resentment because, you know we're passed the wounds, right? If your mom has a wound, they pass on as if family wounds, right? It's the struggles, and this can be very productive and very great if you can tackle, or they can be very hurtful. But I am who I am."*

*Gaby – "Abanderada"*

Figure 38: Gaby – "Abanderada"

*This was in Guate… I liked doing well in school and being heavily involved in school even though you didn't have a choice because you had to do it. You know, it was part of class, but it was just really fun and it is until this day a very big honor for you to be able to carry those flags because it's literally for all the students in your grade level. So, yea… I picked it because it's one of the few very vivid memories I have of school. I remember doing this, like completely. And I like school, so I like to remember that stuff."*

Identity is a complex and ever-evolving topic for your people, especially during the college years, and that is also the case for undocu-students who must also consider whether their undocu-status is part of their identity. This is an important topic because some of the literature (for example Gonzales and Nicholls) suggests that being undocumented becomes the overarching identity marker for undocu-students that supersedes other identities. For this small sample, however, I can only point to about half of the participants who felt that being undocumented was closely linked to their identity and how they identified themselves in the world. For the rest, they did not see their undocu-status as being their main identifier, and for some it was not something they considered as part of their identity at all, but rather a 'status' that was relevant to their current context in the U.S. For most, being a **student** in general was by far a more important identity, some even missing this 'identity' now that they are new professionals in the workforce. Interestingly, several shared stories of always having loved school and being a 'good student' and enjoying learning even as children and adolescents. For self-identified undocu-queer participants, this was also an integral part of their identity, although they shared vary different reactions from family when it comes to support and acceptance.

### 4.1.7 ***Help, Service and Advocacy***

- *This theme relates to Political Advocacy, Organizations of support (student or community orgs) and Educational support (counselors, advisors, teachers, mentors).*

Participants express a range of political engagement, and their 'activism' ranges and manifests in varying ways. For some, their undocu-status links them to political activism and social

movements for justice and equity, while others find different ways of political engagement which as more personal, for example speaking up in class when there is misguided information about undocu-topics and immigration, an act that can in itself lead to vulnerability and unwelcomed attention. Most participants discuss their networks of support and advocacy, joining support groups or establishing new ones with a more political directive. Not all organizations are political, and can simply offer general support. However, this theme is more salient because it specifically identifies politicization as central to the way in which service, support and advocacy is articulated.

For those participants who did not seek group advocacy and help, they still sought help in the form of educational figures such as counselors who help with mental health, advisors in an academic setting, teachers in their high school, and mentors and mentorships relationships that have flourish. Participants spoke about their strong academic support or the unsupportive academic support, and how they navigated this information landscape, relying on their social and interpersonal networks to address their financial, emotional, and info-needs in order to succeed academically.

*Gaby – "We're in Olympia"*

Figure 39: Gaby – "We're in Olympia"

*"There's three of us in this picture. We're in Olympia testifying for the Washington State DREAM Act. I don't know if it was passed or introduced, but there was this big campaign. This was in 2012-13. A lot of us who were undocumented literally rode down to Olympia with our cap and gown showing folks that, yo, we graduated and we want to go to school, and we need access to funding."*

*Janet – "I get involved"*

Figure 40: Janet – "I get involved"

*"One because I'm always trying to advocate and do stuff for the community. And it doesn't just mean the undocumented community, but the larger Latino community in general, so like I get involved in a lot of different projects that have meaning, or like make an impact."*

*Luis – "UW Medical School"*

Figure 41: Luis – "UW Medical School"

*"If it wasn't for programs like that and the guidance from the teachers and faulty and mentors I have had, I really don't think I'd be here now, like no joke. I'm doing my summer*

*work in the UW Medical School and I'm like, how did I even get here, like so crazy. I'm very lucky."*

All participants pointed to key support person(s) or key personnel in education, a point person that offered guidance, assistance and helped to navigate the educational maze. This included counselors, teachers, advisors, faculty, staff, community centers and friends, among others. Ironically, undocu-students are very good at finding solutions to barriers and know college and university policy and rules well, are good about sharing information about what personnel is committed to helping resolve issues and are well versed at understanding that academic institutions are not always going to be accommodating and therefore they must rely on their political advocacy support and groups to seek and demands institutional support and recognition. Many undocu-students are the leaders of the undocu-movement and several participants articulated skepticism and disparagement for personnel and institutions that did not acknowledge their work and leadership, often taking credit for their solutions and their "undocu-labor". The examples of Janet and Gaby illustrate an interesting yet different way of doing community work, advocacy and being an activist. For example, Janet is very active in undocu-activist circles and a prominent voice in various organizations who serve the needs of undocu-communities in a larger, more political way, evident in the multiple visits she makes to elected officials in WA state, while Janet is more keen to support an organization that has been supportive of her family and her educational development, and from there is in turn supportive and a burgeoning mentor to members of that organization who she helps on an individual and direct basis. For other participants, they focus on helping their fellow students and especially undocu-students who may need their help in an academic setting specifically. Because all participants spoke of key educational support as being fundamental to their success, they then

feel a commitment to help others to navigate a process or issue the way that they were help; pay it forward.

### 4.1.8 ***Work and Labor***

- *This theme relates to Work 'because of DACA', Uncertainty in labor or having multiple jobs, Pride in work, and Ownership/Wares.*

All participants work at least part time, with several working full time or several part time jobs while still attending school full time. The ID number that is granted under DACA allows an eligible applicant to work in a legitimate way in better paying, better condition employment than they may have had in the past. However, not all participants were DACA recipients. A few did not qualify for DACA, with two participants having completed their undergraduate degrees entirely before DACA was enacted. They were then able to take advantage of DACA as graduate students. In spite of this, they all worked to fund their education (some had scholarships but still had to work), attended school and made it through.

Participants expressed pride in their work (academic or non-academic setting), yet have concerns over future employment opportunities but are confident that no matter what, the will continue to survive and thrive. For this example many reference their parents who have been able to survive even without the protections of a program such as DACA. Some refer to them as the 'original DREAMers'. Participants also discuss their pride in ownership of good and wares, for example a home, a vehicle, a bigger apartment, and better living conditions in general. Interestingly, even with great pride, there is a conflict with the intersection of ownership and acquisition of good and its 'fulfillment' as part of the 'American Dream'. For participants with property, they share a concern for what may happen to their achievement. Participants with

partners or with children specifically express this concern. Decisions they make impact more than themselves.

*Valentina – "A really good job, right?"*

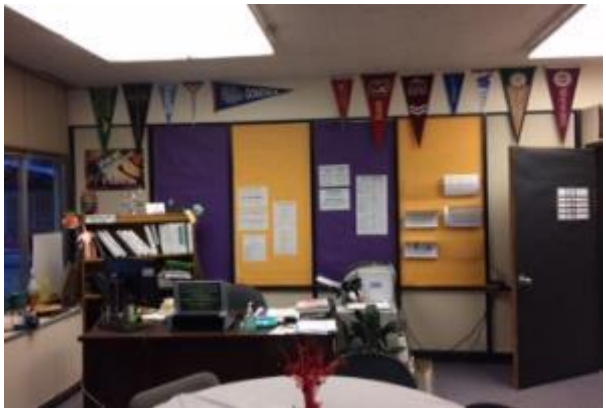


Figure 42: Valentina – "A really good job, right?"

*"So coming out of college it was difficult for me to find a job and I got this position as a college and career access specialist at Tyee High school because the person who's job this is was going on maternity leave… so I was like ok I will take the position even though it's not something that I wanted in my mom's eyes I was supposed to graduate and get a really good job, right? It was me not being able to bring my whole self, this identity of being undocumented because it affected the work that I did. So I felt like I had to leave parts of myself at home when I was going to work, which was really hard for me because I came from a place where I was able to say I AM UNDOCUMENTED and UNAPOLOGETIC and people were being supportive of me I could find way to navigate it, but now I found myself really thinking about who should I tell? Who can I tell? How do I tell you?"*

*Marcos – "It's a corporate job"*

Figure 43: Marcos – "It's a corporate job"

*"Luckily with DACA, that was a big help. It allowed me to come back, even though I couldn't apply for a certain scholarship, I still haven't received any financial either or applied for any scholarships. But I took this picture because that's what I see every*

*morning. It's early in the morning, and it makes me think of how far I've come. This is a panoramic shot, because a regular shot would just show the building, and I wanted to capture what I see every morning. It's a beautiful day in Seattle… it's a corporate job, I never had a corporate job before. I don't know how I got there, to tell you the truth. I did and internship there and that's how I started."*

*Ali – "Time at work"*

Figure 44: Ali – "Time at work"

*"I spend a lot of time in a week working, so it took a big part of my life. I work a lot… and I like working. I've been working the food industry since I been here… I worked in a pizza restaurant, Subway, Middle Eastern restaurant, for a short amount of time and yea… I feel like it's a big part of, like working with people, working in a kitchen, with customers and stuff I think taught me a lot, and I like it... I feel like work in general it teaches you how to work with people... So, being patient, listening, not taking things personally at work, and you work with other people you know."*

*Gaby – "That's my car, thanks to DACA"*

Figure 45: Gaby – "That's my car, thanks to DACA"

*"That's my car and I wanna tell you about my car cuz I got it brand new when I was 19 years old, and it was because of my DACA, basically. So I was working a full time summer job, so you have a stable enough income. So, literally that has been my payment commitment for the last couple of years… this became my stability, as somebody who had*

*to be a commuter student, which meant I needed to have a reliable car all the time. And I was able to get it thanks to my privilege that I have DACA… um, it was one of my first grown up responsibilities besides going to school."*

Working is a part of each participant's lives, and often the uncertainty of how school will be paid for comes at the sake of other purchases and wares; for a few participants, homelessness has been a real possibility, especially because school and tuition fees took precedent. Luckily, none were actually homeless, but considered the possibilities and weighed the options of dropping out of school and focusing on work and income generation. Yet for several, they have been able to purchase a home and as with Gaby, a new car that served as a critical part of her educational endeavor because she had to commute over an hour to go to school on a daily basis. Living on campus would have just been cost prohibitive, so she decided to invest instead in a vehicle that could be used on her daily commute. As Valentina points out, as well as other participants, working in a professional setting beings about other hardships and questions about safely, job security and even identity, and they describe a varying degree of support at work when it comes to co-workers and supervisors. For a few who are working in the area connected to their academic major, they are excited to work in an industry they prepared for and often consider themselves 'lucky' for their in a job that they hoped for and majored in.

#### 4.1.9 *Information and Sharing (people & online networks)*

- *This theme relates to Technology Platforms & Tools, Information Sharing (social media, word of mouth) and News.*

This theme is transversal in relation to most others because information sharing an information seeking is a part of everything most undoc-students do, from checking emails, weather, social media updates, to more specific undocu-related needs like what forms to fill out for school, USCIS updates, scholarship funding available, what things to avoid and how to navigate

different things such as education, health care, transportation and political organizing. Social media is a powerful tool which participants use either to seek information or to share information or develop collaboration(s). They use various platforms but interestingly, for most, Facebook was their primary platform to share, seek and express information. For many, Facebook is their primary news source, or the Facebook pages of those few organizations they trust, for example Northwest Immigrants' Rights Project (NWIRP). This organization offers workshops on topics such as know-your-rights, and strategies to keep safe as undocu-communities and legal defense advice and clinics, and often take on cases related to deportation and removal orders.

However, several participants talked about a 'technology push back,' a topic Professor Ricardo Gómez has researched in the past. Several participants express skepticism, stress and overwhelming sensations with news and information and as such, purposefully avoid social media or have suspend/inactivated their accounts. Another way to mitigate the stress of news is that several participants used social media and other medial platforms, but for entertainment purposes or general research purposes. Given that the theme of Well Being and Health emerged as a salient one, the 'push back' or more selective way of using technology and social media is a possibly a way to be more 'healthy' and 'sane,' and reduce "stress" and anxiety, something all participants expressed as a factor they continuously struggle with.

Information seeking model that emerged as prevalent with this group of participants includes Information Grounds (Fisher), and Info-mediation, but their online networks of trusted sources were limited. Their information landscape online versus offline, specifically related to education (college setting), were environments participants had to know well. For undocu-students, their ability to traverse and understand the information landscape around them draws a

parallel to their success in education and in their ability to find assistance when they need it. Their social and personal networks are vital.

The preferred is word of mouth, or interpersonal connections, and is central to their information seeking and sharing, a most salient factor shared by participants. Trust worthy friends, confidants, staff, faculty and other info-mediaries who provide word-of-mouth or interpersonal information is critical to participants and most trusted the people-networks more so that online information. Additionally, posted online information on various educational or resource sites was often incomplete or out dated or not available at all, often providing only a general overview, usually not tailored to undocu-students. On the other hand, staff, faculty and other info-mediaries provide updated info and personal support, and can take into account the nuances of each undocu-status case. If people as info mediators do not know or can't address the info-need, they are usually more equipped to info-seek on behalf of the undocu-student seeking specific help, info or support, usually because they are in a position to broker information due to their professional position (counselor, advisor, faculty, staff member) or their persona dedication and advocacy to providing students support. In the selection below, note how social networks are used in tangible and mutually beneficial ways. Offline peer networks lead to strong social networks where information sharing is core to finding solutions. This can translate into online social networks, although with some limitations. For example, for Gaby (in "This is the day I learned I could go to college"), she had to be present at this educational event and benefit from the social worker-to-student relationship to learn about WAFSA and understand how she might be able to attend college. Then, she is able to share this information with her peers both in person and online on social media platforms. A high school student at the time but now a graduate student, Gaby is one the students in this study who is very prolific online and shares much of the

information she obtains regarding any undocu-topic with others. She posts often and is versed at connecting students to events and resources, however, as she points out in our interview, sometimes students do not push outside their comfort zone. In her opinion, this means students need a personal 'push' or nudge to act upon an invitation or attend an event. Social networks are at play, although peer-to-peer networks are more productive.

*Ana – "Access to information"*

Figure 46: Ana – "Access to information"

*"To be a undocumented or not, technology can give you more access to information and allows you to process things, like at a lot younger age, like in high school. Now let's say we're talking about undocu-students in college, they need information for resources, information for like support and help from, it can be like an entity, or it can be like an office, or wherever the resources are available. Some undocu-folks that I know, like don't own a smart phone, or don't have like, you know… and that makes it harder to get acclimated to the world, right? I feel like if it wasn't for the support of like friends and the ECC, I probably wouldn't be here today."*

*Gaby – "This is the day I learned I could go to college"*

Figure 47: Gaby – "This is the day I learned I could go to college"

*"So this is a group of folks that I went to school with, and I was a sophomore in HS, and this was taken in May. Also our school social worker is in the picture and we're at PLU in their cafeteria. This was the day I learned I could go to college in Washington state, which is freakin' dope that I have a picture. My school social worker took us to the Proyecto Mole Conference in Tacoma. He told me, "hey, you should check out this workshop, it's a 'how to pay for college' workshop." I go into the workshop and the presenter starts talking about how undocu-students in WA State can pay in-state tuition. So, basically that was the day that I learned that I could go to college and before all of that, I wasn't doing good in school or anything… um, that was the day that all turned around, which was pretty dope."*

*Valentina – "Fight for it"*

Figure 48: Valentina – "Fight for it"

*"And it also was the first time that my partner came with me to a protest for immigration, yea hahahaha! He wanted to go, like he really really wanted to go and he posted a picture on Facebook of us being there, you know being super supportive. So it also signifies that support and he's the supports me in the work that I do, that I can count on them when I need them to be there for me. And I think he felt empowered because of the caption that he put on the post, it was like 'when you believe in something that's right you should fight for it,' or something like that!"*

*Marcos – "Show who I am"*

Figure 49: Marcos – "Show who I am"

*"The reason I posted these pictures on FB, and it wasn't just because I was doing this project… I wanted to show my friends a different view of who I am. Because they see me and 'oh yea, he took a picture of a baseball game, or he took a picture of food.' They never thought about my school, they never knew about my school. They never knew where I was going, where I was a grad student. So, I wanted to show that to them, and I got quite a few likes and comments. It captured the way I do things, the way I take pictures, telling a story. I like to tell stories, even though I don't have stories, or good ones."*

*Ali – "Read it when someone posted about it"*

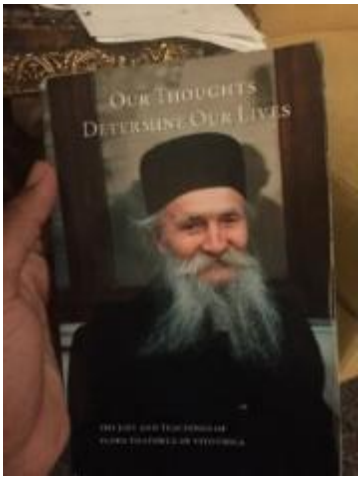



Figure 50: Ali – "Read it when someone posted about it"

*"So yea, this is my favorite book so far… I have read this a couple of times. I first read it when someone posted about it on Facebook. The title was catchy. The page I follow they usually post quotes from texts books and I said, this is interesting. Yea… it's my favorite*

*book, it's also something I use to shape my life. My go to, kind of, especially whether it be psychological advice or advice on life…"*

Ana and Gaby once more point to the importance of having information from a trusted source such as supportive educational staff and teachers or in a physical place, for example the ECC, where Ana feels is a safe place that provides the information and resources she needs. For Gaby, having the strong high support and informational opportunities (student conference) allowed her to know about how to enter college and have financial assistance. For her, it was one of the turning points that made her focus on school because it was not possible to 'go to college'. The information sharing is critical in these experiences. There is a significant use of technology and online activity by participants, as most post and engage in social media on their cell phones. For Valentina, Marcos and Ali, they engage in social media for various reasons, Valentina, to express her and her husbands' 'activism' in a public way, for Marcos to show friends and family a bit more about who he is as an undocu-grad student, and for Ali to learn something new and engage in literary pastimes he feels contributes in a positive way to his life.

Participants engage in daily online activity and interesting, all use Facebook as their primary way of connecting to social media, and as a general way of getting "some news." Yet they express skepticism and some caution with online content, especially as it relates to immigration and undocu-content. Some express a guarded approach to participating on online social media, although not all (several are very active online as it relates to their political activism). The Online Analysis Review, detailed more in the next section, provides more in depth information. Facebook online groups such as "I Have DACA", "DACA Updates and Renewals" and "DREAMers Only" are among the ones that participants identified as some of the sites they are active on, in addition to a few organizational sites.

Undocu-students disclosure their undocu-status for various reasons, needs and with varying expectations. For example, a few participants discuss the first time they 'came out' to someone as undocumented, usually in an academic setting, with mixed results, some supportive and some outwardly discouraging. This is referencing the undocu-students in this work. None of the participants indicated they 'came out' on Facebook or other social media as their first outing. For the most part, sharing status was related to the need at hand, which was usually academic or related to social services. I also did not specifically seek this information from the online review, meaning I didn't seek out posts that specifically shared their 'undocu-outing' for the first time. There are several video online and in social media networks that went viral, where a student reveals their status, but it is usually reported and news that is then shared in social media networks. For example, the case of Larissa Martinez, the Valedictorian of McKinney Boyd High School in McKinney, Texas who in 2016 shared her status as part of her speech. She was met with a mix of cheers, support and boos (Richmond, 2016). Her 'outing' was a very public one and garnered much media attention and social media shares. However, most undocu-students do not reveal their status in this manner. What is a applicable is varied and mixed responses students get when they share their status. There was not enough information to know what key factors a participant needed to know when it was safe or necessary to share, although all express there was always a key person (infomediary) that helped in times of dire need. Only two participants identified their undocu-status as "undocumented and unafraid,' while the rest stated they share their status only as needed or not at all. In academic settings, undocu-students felt safer than in other environments to share their status, and many of their close friends were aware of their status. For a few students, this was not the case and for one particular students, she did not share her status with anyone at her high school because she attended a "high performing" high school,

away from her siblings who attended their local neighborhood school. She knew she wanted to attend college and so she attended a predominantly affluent (and majority Caucasian) school. In this environment, she was not comfortable sharing her status. This led to a serious case of isolation, cultural alienation and eventually depression. In fact, she graduated from that high school with very few people knowing she was undocumented, and not having the support of any counselor, teacher or administrator when it came to applying to college and seeking the information on housing and Financial Aid. Future research endeavors can be to look at what the key factors are for how an undocu-student decides to disclose their status, to whom, and how (if) technology can mitigate some structural barriers and fears that undocu-students face.

## 4.2 Online Document Review

To determine which sites I would review online, participants were briefly surveyed at the end of our photo interviews. I asked them to name the tops three sites they use with frequency, sites they believe have quality information, or in general recommend I review the site for another important reason. As a reminder, here are the top three (3) sites that emerged as sites/websites they visit most frequently. They fall into two categories, one is Facebook Groups and the other is Organization Websites.

Table 9: Top 3 Sites for Online Review

| | **Top 3 Sites for Online Review** |
|---|---|
| Total Recommendations: 11 | 1. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) |
| | 2. Facebook Undocu-Groups<br>a. DACA Update<br>b. I Have DACA<br>c. UndocuQueer |
| | 3. Leadership without Borders (LWB) |
| *Total hours dedicated to review* | 80 |

| | |
|---|---|
| *Total pictures, posts, content reviewed and analyzed* | 300 |

These were sites that a few participants said were interesting and doing 'good work', but just not sites that had the most votes. These sites include from organization or community groups such as *UndocuBlack Network* (http://undocublack.org/) with their new initiative Mental Wellness Initiative (MWI) and Guide, as well as *Colectiva Legal* (https://colectivalegal.org/).

With this information, I was able to focus my review on the three main sites that participants most used. The timeframe for this review is about 10 months.

### 4.2.1 *Facebook Groups*

For the *Online Document Review of Facebook Groups*, the approach to gather data is similar to the process I followed of emergent open source coding which is did for the photo interviews. I took weekly "samples" or reviews of activity online and over time, I was able to categorize them and organize them in such a way that the main themes began to emerge. About 7 months into the process, I did not see much new information or themes that did not fit in the codes identified (saturation). The samples are 'recorded and tracked' by screenshots of posts which capture the essence of the theme or provide an example of a certain theme. The eight themes that emerged are the following:

Table 10: Summary of 8 Themes from Online Document Review

| **Summary of 8 Emerging Themes from Online Review** |
|---|
| **1. Home, Family and Community**<br>This theme relates to discussions about home in the context of the U.S. as a place that is 'home', seeking and giving support for families, supporting undocu-communities online, undocu-friendships and support for community efforts related to undocu-status. |
| **2. Motivation** |

| |
|---|
| This theme relates heavily on posts related to educational goals, questions about college scholarships and what resources are available to undocu-college students, general sharing of achievements, setting goals and sharing words of encouragement for perseverance and persistence, support. |
| **3. Uncertainty and Security**<br>This theme relates to rights and advocacy, concerns about authorities and ICE sightings, immigration raids at home, and feeling stressed, online bullying, trolling, anti-immigrant sentiments, and Admin controls and the sense of 'safety' when posting in a group discussions. |
| **4. Legality and Citizenship**<br>This theme relates to questions regarding processes of DACA renewal, questions about location of offices and biometrics info, Advance Parole (AP)/ travel, how to fill out certain forms and legal processes, deadlines and processes related to status adjustment, sharing legal updates and general 'how to' questions on documentation. |
| **5. Health, Well Being and Humor**<br>This theme relates to the topic of feeling stressed and seeking support, fear regarding deportation and detention, physical harm, discussion of depressions, suicide and self-harm, and seeking medical and other health services, sharing celebratory moments and sharing humor posts, memes and jokes. |
| **6. Identity**<br>This theme relates to expressions of cultural pride (language, undocu-status,), country of origin, undocu-identity (DREAMers, DACAmented, undocumented), sexuality and gender roles, including LGBTQ, undocu-queer, gender bias awareness, and general gender roles). |
| **7. Help, Service and Advocacy**<br>This theme relates to political advocacy including campaigning and reaching out to legislative representative, organizations of support (student or community orgs) and educational support (counselors, advisors, teachers, mentors), and know-your-rights related information. |
| **8. Work and Labor**<br>This theme relates to work accomplishments, popular pops with the phrase 'Because of DACA', work permits questions, suggestions for work ('who's hiring'), pride in work, sharing new ownership of wares such as cars, homes, owning a business. |

Note these are the **same eight themes** that emerged from the participatory photography interviews, minus the last these of **Information Seeking and Sharing,** given that all themes were about information seeking and sharing in an online platform. As a qualitative research study, this can perhaps point to triangulation via the methods (research design), offering some validity of data findings while adding a different dimension or understanding of the same phenomenon. The same eight themes that emerged online point to an affirming and deeper level of understanding of how undocu-students info-behave online. The limitation is that I did not track the specific behavior of just the 11 participants of this study, but rather reviewed sites and

groups as a collective, sites recommended by the participants as sites they frequent. Despite the limitations, using participatory photography and online document review as differing methodologies while still finding some comparative data confluence (convergence) help to reinforce the core themes as 'accurate' findings. For these emerging themes, I have not arranged them in order of frequency, since there was not a real 'most frequent' theme that emerged. Finally, it's worth noting that a clear added dimension not as present in the participatory photography interviews is the dimension of humor memes and jokes as a much more salient item in the online review, which I have included under theme of **Health and Well Being.**

**1. Home, Family and Community**

- This theme relates to discussions about home in the context of the U.S. as a place that is 'home', seeking and giving support for families, supporting undocu-communities online, undocu-friendships and support for community efforts related to undocu-status.

The online review revealed a wealth of postings asking for and proving support for families in need, for example there are many posts of users asking for "prayers" as well as funds for urgent family crisis, including funerals, surgeries and other emergencies. In this context, the 'home' being discussed is slightly different than in the photo interviews. These posts were usually related to the U.S. as a place that is conceptually 'home', despite not belonging due to undocu-status, yet post of the physical home with family in it was rare, except when posting about purchasing a new home, showing other the physical home. There is also support and affection for undocu-friendships, and online undocu-communities. Many posts were dedicated to things such undocu-family celebration such as birthday parties and other celebration, but not many actual pictures of family were posted and if they were, there was discretion with faces. Several posts were about friends who are as close as family, often times referring to undocu-friendships as family. The vast majority of posts, however, related to family and home had political overtone,

such as “DACA family” and support for “undocu-family” and their political work as advocacy for immigration change.

*“I stand with my DACA family”*

I will stand with my family, I will stand with my daca family, I will stand for myself, with my community and every other community and/or person who is belittled by society today. We are one, and we deserve much more than what we're given recognition for, we will fight for what we deserve and work had for every single day, we are united! And no one will tear us apart. We are DACA. And together we will win.
#istandunafraid
https://www.facebook.com/DACAscholars/posts/1412719335493497

Figure 51: “I stand with my family”

As the post suggests, “family” in this context is a larger concept, an extended undocu-family that is engaged in political action to support these undocu-activists who staged a sit-in during a parade. Not all undocumented users online are DACA recipients and in general, unless someone specifically discloses, I was not able to tell if they were an undocu-student in higher education. Identifying who undocu-students is easier to do when they self-disclose and most evident under the “Work and Labor” I will discuss later, especially as it relates to the heading “Because of DACA, I…”

**2. Motivation**

- This theme relates heavily on posts related to educational goals, questions about college scholarships and what resources are available to undocu-college students, general sharing of achievements, setting goals and sharing words of encouragement for perseverance and persistence, support.

Conversations about education were abundant, questions about scholarship availability for undocu-students, not just DACA eligible students, what states allow for undocu-enrollment, sharing educational goals and concerns regarding costs, major selection in college and deciding what institution to attend, were among the sampling of popular topics. Additionally, there were many questions about financial resources available, questions about college scholarships and what resources are available to undocu-college and whether or not they will be allowed to continue in college now that DACA has ended. There was also much sharing of academic achievements, sharing degrees earned, showcasing intricate and creative decorated mortar board hats that declare an undocumented status, and pride with such accomplishments.

*"Share this great scholarship"*


Figure 52: "Share this great scholarship"

*"Let's stay positive"*


Figure 53: "Let's stay positive"

These two posts represent the many examples of sharing academic achievements, sharing funding sources, scholarships and also sharing things like graduation celebrations and new jobs with new degrees. The first post is typical of scholarship info being shared. The second posts represents the interesting and wide assortment of images if mortar boards with messages, but I selected the one above because it is celebratory but also optimistic in its attempt to encourage and bring hope to other undocu-students. The image posted is by someone I assume is a DACA recipient, and many messages were DACA relate, although many had other creative messages about family and what they call, 'the original Dreamers'. A few participants in the participatory

photography interviews also reference their parents as the 'original Dreamers,' and most expressed a sense of pride and desire for a comprehensive immigration reform that provides a pathway to citizenship for the as well, not just on "us college kids."

**3. Uncertainty and Insecurity**

- This theme relates to rights and advocacy, concerns about authorities and ICE sightings, immigration raids at home, and feeling stressed, online bullying, trolling, anti-immigrant sentiments, and Admin controls and the sense of 'safety' when posting in a group discussions.

As a theme, I found these posts to be abundant and very distressing. Strong anti-immigrant sentiments can be found in many online forums, but I found it disturbing that these posts were in member-only, DACA and Undocu-specific Facebook groups. This prompted several responses I observed: 1) a call to have the group administrator step in, 2) questions as to how the administrator allowed a "troll" or "hater" in, 3) a dialog among the members that includes everything from expressed fear, threats to leave the group, encouragement by other member to shake it off and continue in the group, and dialog about changing ones' profile information to be more anonymous and less filled with actual personal details. This echoes some of the concerns and action of participant I interviewed who often responded to hate and anti-immigrant trolls by curtaining their online use and using alias profiles. Often, the group administrator would join the conversation and share that in fact they decline many requests to join, but some "slip thru the cracks." These posts show such examples.

*"Stay out of America"*


Figure 54: "Stay out of America"

*"Getting put into concentration camps"*

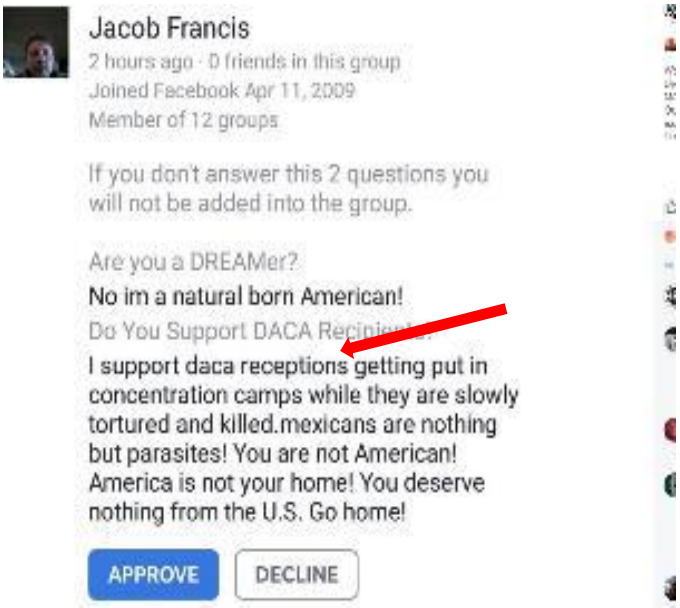



Figure 55: "Getting put into concentration camps"

*"ICE will be grabbing people"*


Figure 56: "ICE will be grabbing people"

The second post from a would-be member Jacob Francis was shared by the group administartor as an example of the many requests he declines. "This one is obvious," he stated, but he also shared that many others are people who 'seem" to be legitimate sympathizers or even undocuemnted themselves. This sparked a long discussion over many days about how to tell if someone is a "troll" when it is not obvious, such as the case of how the first post was aded to the group discussion: "Illegal immgrants stay out of America." This post represnet typical anti-immigrant, anti-undocumented sentiments.

However, the second post generated interesting moments of humor and discussion when someone pointed out that Fancis (second post) actually has a major typo: I support daca ***receptions*** getting put in concentration camps," to which all sorts of jokes were added. A few include "you should wear your fancy white supremist outfit for the reception," while non-

Mexicans in the group joked that since they were not Mexican, they were therefore American and America was their home, and deserved everything because they were home. Humor aside, the frequency and abundance of threat and anti-immigrant posts were surprising, more so because these were 'closed' groups. There were also many posts regarding ICE sightings, rumors of upcoming immigration raids and a general information sharing related to concerns and uncertainty as is shown in the final example where a member is warning other members to be alert because "ICE will be grabbing people." These online environments did not necessarily enhanced fear about deportation because this fear is ever-present in the lives of undocumented citizens. However, what I observed was that the heightened awareness sparked conversations (in post formats) about what to do in case you are caught in an ICE raid (know your rights), suggestions on alternate routes on the road or days to take off work, and in general discussion about the validity of the information being shared regarding raids and federal law enforcement round-ups. For many, this environment seemed informative and engaging, which is why when anti-immigrant trolls joined the conversation, many participants would respond either with direct counter attacks or silence while still being present, or announced their leaving of the group. Anti-immigrant trolls, bigots, nationalists and haters are easy to spot when they speak, but much harder to identify if they remain quiet and simple observe in a group. As many pointed out, always exercise caution when posting information about yourself, because the "smart racists" (as someone said) knows not to give themselves away and instead stays and observes. Again, the threat of deportation and insecurity is ever present.

**4. Legality and Citizenship**

- This theme relates to questions regarding processes of DACA renewal, questions about location of offices and biometrics info, Advance Parole (AP)/ travel, how to fill out certain forms and legal processes, deadlines and processes related to status adjustment, sharing legal updates and general 'how to' questions on documentation.

Asking plenty of question regarding forms, documentation for filing, DACA renewal concerns, travel questions and concerns about Advanced Parole (AP), were among the vast question on the topic of citizenship. Many questions were somewhat simple, such as seeking direction for an immigration office or recommendation for good immigration attorney, and questions fees and costs. Others were more specific such as "what goes on this line of this form" and "where do I download xxx form from?" Common questions included updates on DACA, where to find resources related certain forms and seeking general direction on legal matters. These posts usually garnered a lot of responses and likes and information was vetted and challenged by other members if the information was wrong. This included frank warnings about not taking another person's experience and end results as the way to solve your own questions or concerns because "every case is different." These posts serve a general good starting places with some guidance, followed by good advice to make sure you have professional representation when dealing with immigration matters.

*"Visual Guide of documents and options as DACA ends"*


Figure 57: "Visual Guide of documents and options as DACA ends"

This post offers a visual guide to understanding what the legal options are as the end of the DACA program looms; post was shared many times and generated many questions and discussions. There was a discussion about what would happen if Congress did not act and what the outcome would be, especially for those DACA recipients that have U.S. born children and own property such as cars, homes and are enrolled in higher education or in a vocational program. An example of various 'how to' info sharing on this topic, I found this post interesting because the discussions were not just about how to fill out a form or where to find the form, but rather about larger questions about how to prepare for deportation and possible contingency plans of what to do "in case the come for us."

**5. Health, Well Being and Humor**

- This theme relates to the topic of feeling stressed and seeking support, fear regarding deportation and detention, physical harm, discussion of depressions, suicide and self-harm,

and seeking medical and other health services, sharing celebratory moments and sharing humor posts, memes and jokes.

Feelings of anger, frustration, sadness, depression, sense of hopelessness, even suicidal ideations were among the posts most added in this theme. Public displays of support were strong, providing sense of community and ally-ship, especially since many posts commented on “not fitting in” or felling like they don’t belong and all hope is gone given the political climate. Common posts included: "Guys, I'm feeling like there's no hope for us" or “I can’t get deported, I have kids here and my life is here…” This usually spurs a flurry of supportive responses and hopeful messages of strength and encouragement, making this theme one about health and wellbeing and support for those expressing high levels of stress and anxiety. A unique aspect of this theme that is not as salient in the photo interviews is the abundance of humorous posts, including memes, funny gifs, jokes, and ‘comic relief’ posts. As such, I have included humor as part of the “Health and Well Being” theme given the supportive nature of humors posts: "I know it's been very tense lately, so go ahead and share your funniest joke!" Despite the humor and comic relief, other serious concern are posted, including intimate partner violence, depressions, suicide and self-harm.

*"Suicide hotline"*


Figure 58: "Suicide hotline"

*"The only green card I've ever had"*


Figure 59: "The only green card I've ever had"

The first post is asking for information for a suicide hotline. The post is simple, but the responses it garners are vast and detailed about getting help. Unfortunately, this is one example of many posted, and in all cases, responses include offers to DM privately, even offers to going to grab coffee, for example an offer of support such as this one: "just tell me what part of the city you are and I'm there!" An interesting detail is that part of the discussion often includes the lack of support professional support and mental health providers for those who do not have insurance. Second, touching comments shared include frank discussions about the stigma related to depression and mental illness in many communities of color and in undocumented communities, including 'that's for rich people' and 'just snap out of it', among others. The lack of mental health and insurance coverage to address these concerns is also echoed in the photo interviews, where most participants addressed the need for health care that includes mental health and wellness programs. As such, I am not surprised humor would be a natural coping mechanism for this population. Humor can heal, at least for the moment.

**6. Identity**

- This theme relates to expressions of cultural pride (language, undocu-status,), country of origin, undocu-identity (DREAMers, DACAmented, undocumented), sexuality and gender roles, including LGBTQ, undocu-queer, gender bias awareness, and general gender roles).

Posts related to identity are expressed in many ways including posts about being 'undocumented, unafraid and unapologetic', sharing the latest news about "DREAMers" making news, and posts related to country of original, for example, "I'm from Brazil, anyone else?" There is also a strong visible presence of undocu-queer posts. Such posts it include topics such as "coming out twice" meaning coming out as undocumented and then coming as gay. This sentiment was shared with

one of the photo interview participants who express fear and concern in coming out to a conservative and traditional family. She articulated being less concerned about "being gay in the world" and more concerned about being undocumented in the world, the opposite of what she feels at home and around extended family. With friend and family, it is more precarious to be "gay because it's new to them." She did share a concern with the "whiteness" of the LGBTQ community in Seattle, and wonders where the 'gay community of color' is, as she only recently "came out" as gay. This resonates with some of the post that I read, where undocu-queer members express a concern with the lack of diversity in local gay scenes, prompting folks to chime in and "rate" their local scene as well. Regarding other identity, there are a lot of posts on the activities and lives of other "DREAMers" and undocu-people. There is always an interesting and healthy back and forth when it comes to the diversity of undocu-communities, whether the stereotype that all undocu-folks "are from Mexico" and that all undocu-college students are Ivy League model minority students.

*"Magazine cover: DREAMers"*


Figure 60: "Magazine cover: DREAMers"

*"Importance of Including LGBTQIA in Undocu-community"*


Figure 61: "Importance of Including LGBTQIA in Undocu-community"

The screenshot above are typical of the types of themes in posts (although having undocu-people on the cover of a magazine is not common place). The first post depicts the cover of People Magazine en Español with "DREAMers" on the cover with a subheading that says *Todos somos DREAMers* or we are all DREAMers. The posts prompted much discussion about the 'DREAMer' term versus the term 'undocumented.' Several responses included a critical view of narrowing immigration reform to be represented as a DACA-centric argument, when in fact there are an estimated 11 million undocumented citizens in the U.S. The second post depicts a rainbow flag in an article that discusses the need to greater inclusion of undocu-queer voices in the undocu-movement. For many in the undocu-movement, they feel they must constantly remind others that they are "I'm undocumented and queer and unafraid" and this voice and inclusion is important.

**7. Help, Service and Advocacy**

- This theme relates to political advocacy including campaigning and reaching out to legislative representative, organizations of support (student or community orgs) and educational support (counselors, advisors, teachers, mentors), and know-your-rights related information.

Political advocacy is a predominant topic in this theme, with many posts related to rallies, sit-ins and teach-ins, and promotion of outreach efforts to legislators and senators with comments like, "we need to keep the pressure up so call you representative!" Consistent across the three Facebook groups I reviewed was a strong sense of political awareness and sharing information related to the latest news on immigration, policy and political developments. This is to be expected given the group pages I reviewed, yet what stood out was the diverse responses and discussion about what is the 'right' way to engage politically, protest, rally and in general advocate for immigration reforms. For example, responses range from those that want political change and engagement at all costs are visual and vocal to those who advocate for political change and reform but are concerned with the "tactics" used. There is also a variety in the types of organization that champion immigrant rights and engage in political advocacy, including national organization that are undocumented-centered youth-led organizations such as *United We Dream.* However, there are many others and the following is a screenshot of an interactive map of the organizations dedicated to undocumented support and advocacy which are youth led. This list excludes the organizations that focus on general immigrant and immigration support, but not focused on undocumented immigrant support primary, an important difference.

*"Undocumented youth-led organizations"*

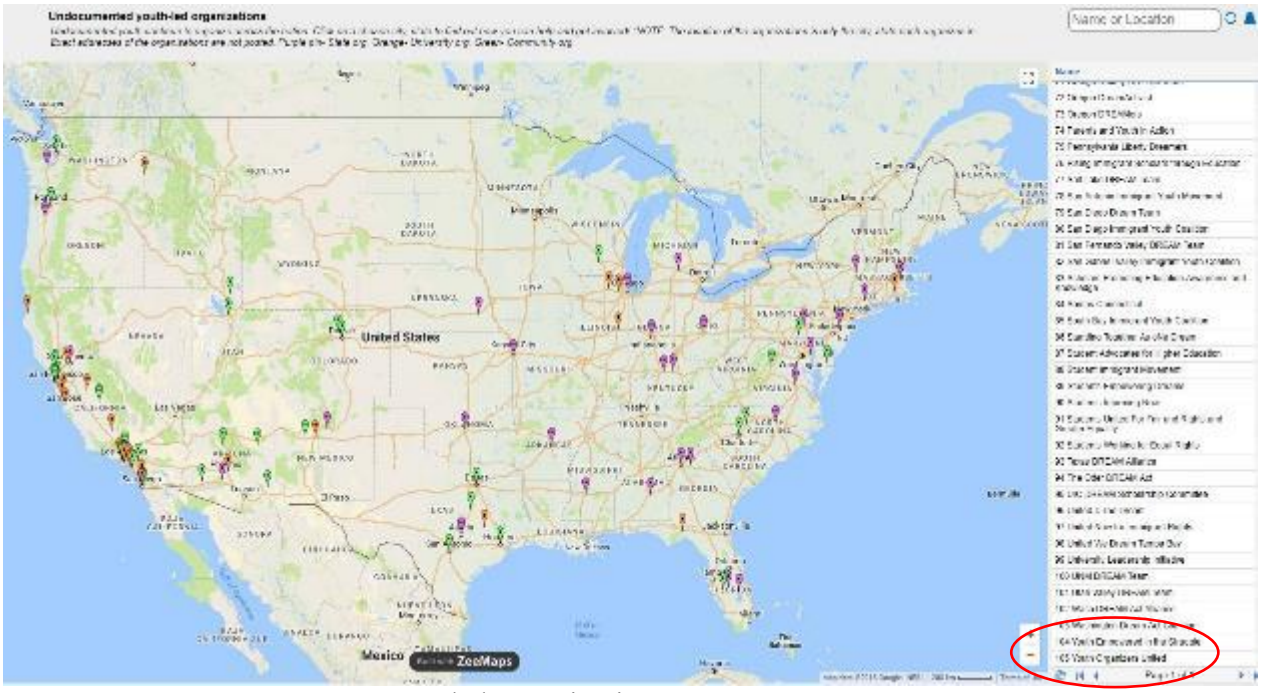


Figure 62: "Undocumented youth-led organizations" Map

The top description on this map states:

***Undocumented youth-led organizations***

> *Undocumented youth continue to organize across the nation. Click on a chosen city, state to find out how you can help and get involved! *NOTE: The location of the organizations is only the city, state each organizes in. Exact addresses of the organizations are not posted. Purple pin- State org. Orange- University org. Green- Community org.*

I include this image because it is important to show the scope of the work that undocumented-centered youth-led organizations are doing nationwide. Note that on the RIGHT SIDE of the image is a list of the organizations: there are 105 nationwide so far.

Advocacy and political engagement is not without criticism from within the undocu-community. There are frequent posts about the "tactics" used by many organizations and groups. I include two examples of 'advocacy' and examples of the most frequent types of posts related to this theme.

*"I wrote Barack Obama"*

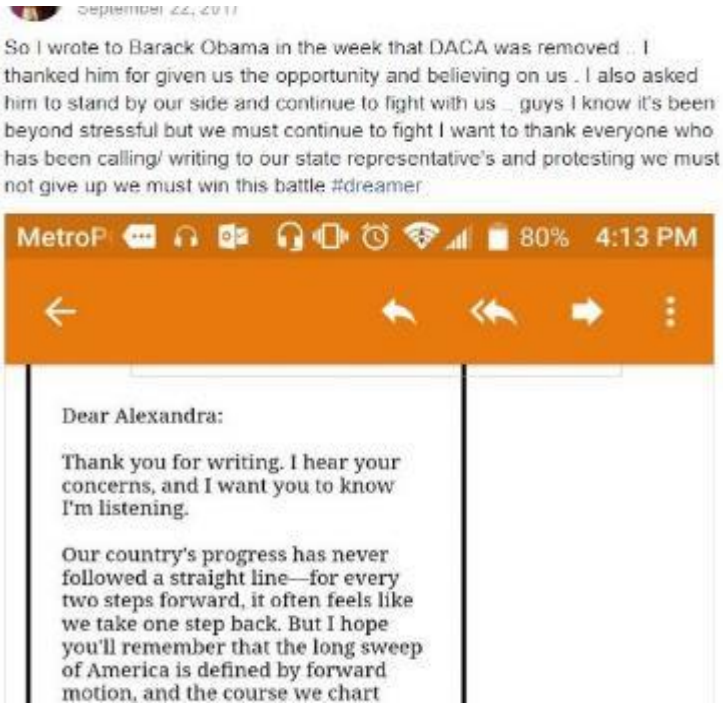


Figure 63: "I wrote Barak Obama"

*"They are making things worse😐"*

Figure 64: "They are making things worse😐"

The first post from a group member sharing her response from Former President Barack Obama where he reassures her that he is "listening" and encourages her to stay continue to fight for

undocu-rights and continue to believe in the democratic ideals of the nation. The second post is from a member who expresses concerns about undocu-activists interrupting an event with Nancy Pelosi, stating that this action is not helping and therefore "making things worse." These posts are example of the varied and diverse reactions and beliefs among undocu-communities, as undocu-communities are not a monoliths of thought and action. Participants in the photo interviews also exhibit a range of political engagement, advocacy and ways in which the offer their help and service to various organizations.

**8. Work and Labor**

- This theme relates to work accomplishments, popular pops with the phrase *'Because of DACA'*, work permits questions, suggestions for work ('who's hiring'), pride in work, sharing new ownership of wares such as cars, homes, owning a business.

Being able to work is significant not only because in this society it is how you earn money to pay for goods and services such as housing and education, but also there is a sense of purpose that is important when considering what we labor in; making meaningful contributions, for many, is an essential part of who they are and weighs in on what work chose to do. For undocu-communities, finding work and earning better wages and finding better opportunities are often among the driving forces behind migration (although not the only drivers of migration). This theme centers on posts that share information related to accomplishments that are work related, concerns about permits and advice for dealing with racism on the job, and was a popular subject for posts for many months, *'Because of DACA…" (*also *"thanks to DACA"* or *"without DACA"* or a derivative that attributes a success accomplished because someone was DACA eligible), with group members sharing the fruits of their labor and adding posts that highlight their accomplishments.

*"'Thanks to DACA' I am a surgeon"*


Figure 65: "'Thanks to DACA' I am a surgeon"

*"'Without DACA' gets sworn in as Attorney"*


Figure 66: "'Without DACA' gets sworn in as Attorney"

I included these two posts because they represent not only the various posts exemplifying the types of labor and accomplishments shared, but also to illustrate that the DACA program generates interesting discussions about the "privilege" and advantages that I creates for certain undocu-citizen. Those that are not DACA eligible face significant challenges which can be forgotten in the singular narrative that can suggest that undoc-accomplishments are only had by those who are DACA eligible. The first image above is a post from a young undocu-woman sharing her excitement at being at becoming a surgeon with the title "Thanks to DACA" I am a surgeon. The second image is of an undocu-man being sworn in as an attorney, "Without DACA" gets sworn in as Attorney". I share these examples as an illusion of the various ways in which undoc-folks share their labor and work accomplishments, although a doctor and a lawyer are not representative of all the various jobs and the type of labor that undocu-communities engage in. A large number of undocu-labor continue to serve and fuel the service sectors, construction and agriculture work. Interestingly, there were less posts from people posting their "average" work and labor, with the exception of posts that had an ironic or sarcastic tone that mocked the idea that immigrants taking jobs, for example "They say we take their jobs…so come pick this lettuce… I'll save some for you!"

Participants shared their accomplishments in the photo interviews, and their sentiments resonate with some of the posts and comments in this theme. They too express a pride in work and are pleased their education degrees has allowed them to earn money to pay for goods and services, but also have 'meaningful' work that allows for living wages. For many participants, it is an essential part of who they are and weighs in on what they do. As they have shared, access to education and degree completion can lead to better work opportunities, but it's important to

remember those that do not and will not have a degree and at still providing for their families and surviving, “like our parents who are the original dreamers.”

### 4.2.2 *Analysis of Web sites*

**Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) Web Site**

The **Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP)** is a non-profit organization which “promotes justice by defending and advancing the rights of immigrants through direct legal services, systemic advocacy, and community education” (https://www.nwirp.org/). This site is identified by participatory photography participants as one they frequent for news and events. The coding and data collection method is the same as the Facebook review, but given the static nature of this site, there wasn’t frequent activity. In my review, I noticed that the one place where there is activity is the **calendar.** Trainings and events are posted in the site, and here is where there is fruitful information.

I monitored this site bi-monthly for activity from November 2016 to October 2017. I did not subject this review to a second reader. Note the months included in this online review are longer than the actual time that I monitored the site. The rationale for this is that once I noticed what types of events and trainings offered by the staff at NWIRP, I also noticed the increase in the frequency. When I reviewed the posted calendar events over the 2016 and 2017 year, there was a clear increase in events after the November 2016 elections. For this review, monthly screenshots of calendar activity are collected in Excel. However, I have selected those months that illustrated the increase of events.

*Examples from Online Document Review of NWIRP*

This screenshot shows the calendar events for December 2016. Before this month, there were minimal number of events, on average about 2 a month. After November, there is a sharp increase in trainings and events.


Figure 67: Online Document Review, NWIRP, December 2016

December 2016 is the month when events posted take a sharp increase, from none in November to **23** in December. Events include "Know Your Rights" and "Immigration 101" workshops and legal clinics. By December 2016, it is a certain Trump won and there will be a Trump Administration in the White House, as the presumed winner Hillary Clinton lost. In general, there is concern and fear among many communities of color and especially in immigrant communities given the anti-immigrant rhetoric Trump has espoused. This may be a reason for the increase in events and trainings posted by NWIRP. The increase continues over the next several months. For Example, March 2017 shows a total of **39** events.

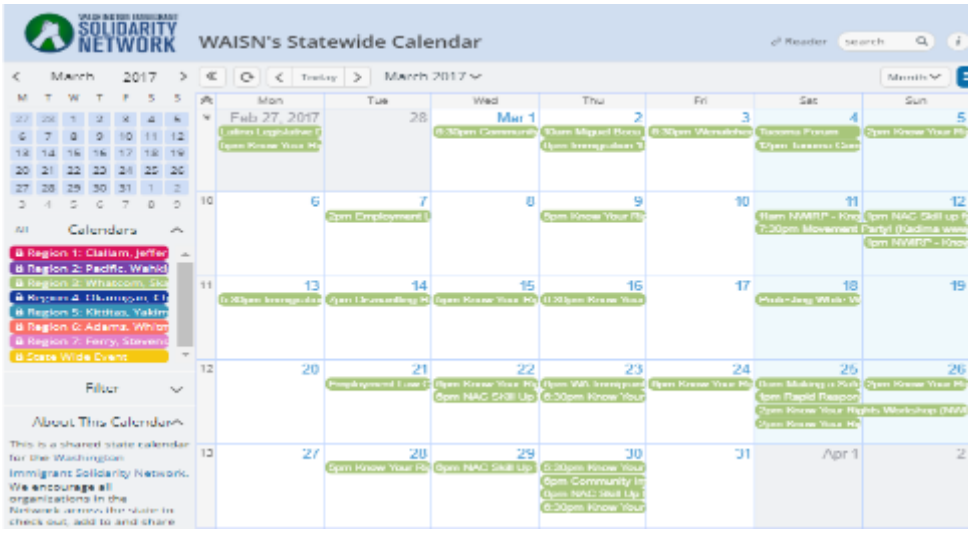


Figure 68: Online Document Review, NWIRP, March 2017

There are different regions where NWIRP offers events. The green marks are region 3 (Whatcom and Skagit Counties), which represent the counties where the majority of events and trainings are offered, a region with a growing population, including a large Latino Community working in the service and agriculture sectors. The yellow is a state event. Multi-region events starte to appear on the calendar in June, 2017 and peak in September and October 2017, with events in all regions. The following screenshot displays a multi-colored calendar month were spots represent the different events and trainings held in different regions of Washington State.

Figure 69: Online Document Review, NWIRP, September 2017

Note that September 2017 represents the month with the most multi-region events in one month, with events in all regions except one, Region 2(Pacific-color purple). There are a total of 26 events and training in the same month. It's noteworthy to state President Trump announced the **end of DACA** this month on Tuesday September 5. Note the steady offering of events after this date and throughout the remainder of the month.

Finally, the following screenshot is the final month of the Online Document Review.


Figure 70: Online Document Review, NWIRP, October 2017

Participants identified the NWIRP page as a site they frequent and seeing the various events and trainings offered by this organization, it is understandable why participants monitor this site, especially their calendared events. The site also posts news and update. However, the activities on the calendar are the primary reason participants frequent this site.

**Leadership Without Borders (LWB) web site**

Leadership Without Borders (LWB) is a student-support program housed out of the Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC) at the University of Washington Seattle. It was established in 2014 "as a space dedicated to provide resources and support for undocumented students' leadership development" (http://depts.washington.edu/ecc/lwb/testing/history/). The mission of LWB is to "serve and empower undocumented students at the University of Washington. LWB offers leadership development resources, college success navigators, the Husky Lending Library, a space for community building, and connections to other campus and community resources." This site was identified by participants as one they frequent for news and events. This site is mainly static. Following the logic from the NWIRP review, I reviewed the posted calendar of events to see the types of activities being sponsored by LWB.

*Example from LWB Web Site*

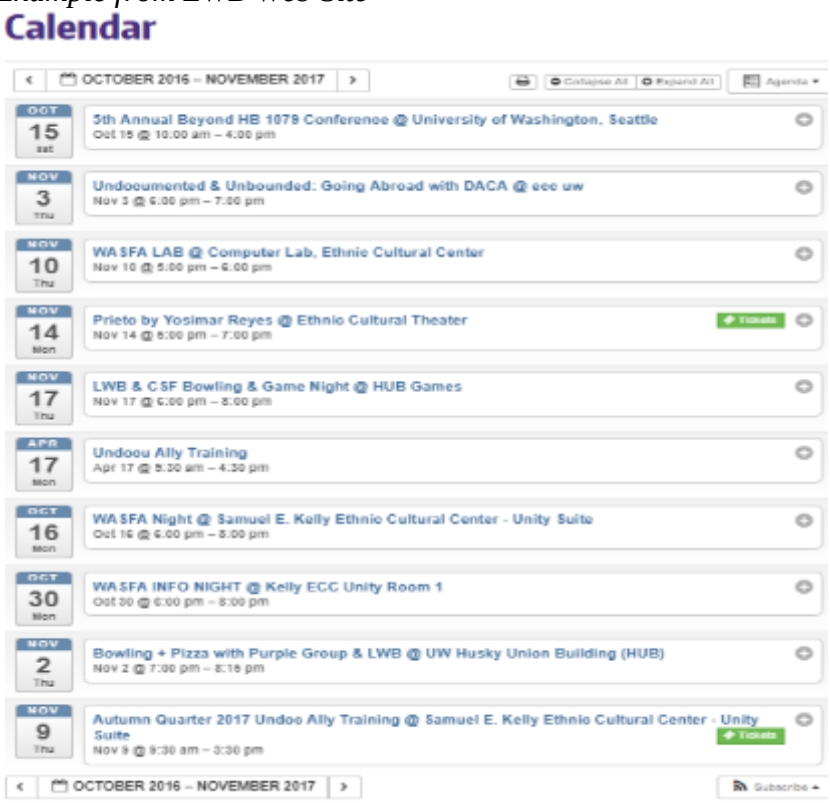



Figure 71: Online Document Review, LWB Calendar

The calendar is essentially a list of events. The screenshot captures the essence the pages. I monitored this site bi-monthly for any activity. The timeframe captured in the calendar is October 2016- November 2017.

Although this is a fairly static page, it is worth noting that LWB is one of the many programs house at the ECC, with one of the many programs that sponsor varios activities. There are over 800 Registered Student Organizations (RSO) at UW, many of which hold events at the ECC, and not all student groups' activities are posted. The calendar screenshot represent events that are sponsored by the ECC as an organization under the banner of LWB, dedicated to the mission of this program. There are many events that happen on a daily basis which are student-run and student-organized. So although there may appear to been limited activity based on calendar activity, it does not capture the peer-to-peer and word-of-mouth interactions that happen at the ECC, a place where a "wealth of resources and opportunities available [are] to students including student advising, organizational development, personal growth, and referrals to different departments and programs" (Samuel E. Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center, 2017). The diversity and frequency of activities, welcoming informed profession staff and student staff and the open, multi-use environment at the ECC make it a prime example of an Information Grounds (Fisher) where meaningful interactions and information flow make this a site that is dynamic and important in the lives of UW students, including undocu-students. The static nature of the LWB program site is not indicative of the wealth of activity and information flow that happens at the ECC.

## 4.3 FOCUS GROUP

The focus group took place in early November, 2017. Dinner was provided to participants, six confirmed and a total of five people attended the day of the event, event time from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. Three countries of origin were represented in the group, with a mix of 3 females and 2 males. I was diligent about staying on track and not going or allocated time as well as making sure participation in the focus group was a good mix from the participants.

Table 11: Focus Group Participants Information

| Item | Focus Group |
|---|---|
| *Total Participants* | Total n=5 |
| *Countries of Origin* | 3 |
| *Education, standing* | 3 graduates, 1 university, 1 community college |
| *Identify as LGBTQI* | 0 |
| *Total interview hours* | 1.15 |

The preliminary results of participatory photography interviews where presented to the group, using an earlier version of the above findings. The results I shared back with the Focus group included the 9 themes that emerged as salient from the photo-interviews, which were 1) Home, Family and Community, 2) Motivation, 3) Uncertainty Security, 4) Legality and Citizenship, 5) Health and Well Being, 6) Identity, 7) Help, Service and Advocacy, 8) Work and Labor, and 9) Information and Sharing (people & online networks). We had a discussion about each one theme, engaged in a dialog and used these guiding questions for the focus group:

1. Do these nine emergent themes as “results” ring accurate based on what you shared in your interview? Anything missing? Anything surprising? What’s your reaction to these findings?

2. Information seeking, searching and info needs vary from person to person, but as a college student, how did YOU fulfill your info needs? How did you decide who to ask, where to look, when to share/disclose your status? Do technology or platforms matter in your info needs/seeking?
3. How was the experience for you in participating in this research, especially participatory photography method?

Additionally, to my surprise, participants wanted some definitions, especially around Information Science, which I could provide on the spot based on my notes. For example, the participants wanted to know what information behavior means and why it mattered. I explained that there is not one definition of IB but that in general to refers to the how people seek, manage need, give and use information in in various contexts. Their response was one of interest and asked me, "so do *we* do those things different from other people?" It was a great discussion because we were able to have a discussion about what we know and don't and I was able to share that there is not enough work and research in the field of information science with undocu-student populations that looks at their info-behavior, and that in fact this is why it is the core of my research. Several participants responded that they were not 'surprised' given the only recent acknowledgement of this small but growing demographic is a significant one in higher education. A few others expressed their excitement in knowing they are 'contributing' to an area that is under-studied.

My final slide during the focus group was the following. Several joked "someone tell Trump that":

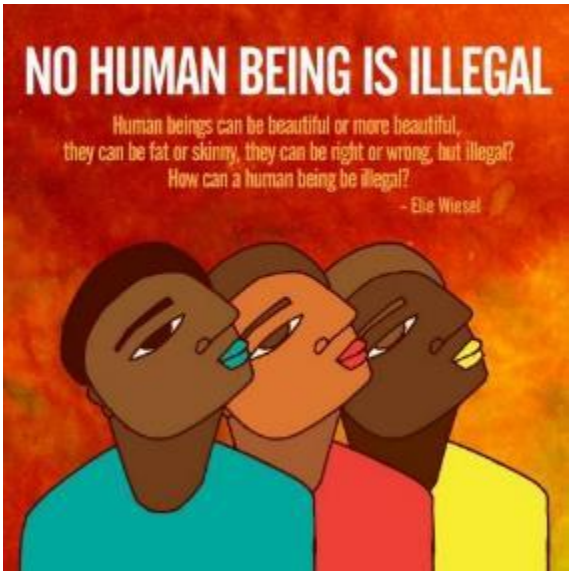



Figure 72: "No human is illegal"

The group engaged in a discussion about the current political times and the stress it causes them to hear some of the negative, anti-immigrant rhetoric and the changes recently made to DACA under the Trump Administration. Several participants said they are not surprised that DACA was rescinded, but are unsettled with the direction of general anti-immigrant, anti-people of color, nationalistic tone that the current administration seems not only to foster and encourage, but to initiate. As they stated, "we were here before DACA and we will be here after DACA."

### 4.3.1 *General responses and discussion for Guiding Question #1*

*Do these "results" ring accurate based on what you shared in your interview? Anything missing? Anything surprising? What's your reaction to these findings?*

Overall, participants stated that the nine larger thematic areas sounded accurate. The conversation was general at first, and participants remarked on the news fatigue and the mental stress it may lead to. They see this reflected in **the Health and Well Being Theme**. Two

participants have an example of immediate family also being distressed, then call "me frantically saying, *van a deportar a la gente ya* [they're going to deport people now]." There was laughter in sharing similar stories from other family members that are also alarmed by what they hear in the news on online. Participants express having to mediate and fact-check the information that comes from the news or is posted online, especially Facebook.

One participant spoke on his fairly new hobby of running, claiming that at first it was not a 'distractor' of bad news, but rather a curiosity for the sport of running. This lead to an interesting discussion about privacy setting **on social media sites such as Facebook, Snapchat** and others because since this participant is running and posting a few more things about this new hobby, participant has received "a lot of requests" to change the privacy setting and allow public access to his videos and images and data – he tracks every run he takes and even records the weather, as this "can impact a run," he states. This is done via a running app used on his phone. The participant discussed the pros of changing his setting to public access, including connecting with other runners from all over the world, sharing tips with and from other runners, and in general connecting to a larger community of avid runners.

However, the participant then shared the cons of changing privacy setting, primarily that he initially established the setting to private so that he could have grater peace of mind knowing his information was private. Second was the idea that you do not need to change settings to "connect with other runners…I can do that anytime, and look up stuff anytime so the settings won't necessarily give me more info or access." Ultimately, the participants shared that he believes that often, especially younger consumers of social media, are more interested in "how many likes" they get," and how many of your posts receive attention. For these reasons, the participant shared that although he has contemplated changing his setting, this train of thought

shared with the group is one that plays out in this mind regularly every time he sees a request or considers changing settings.

Other participants added their agreement that a "like culture" is often the reason why privacy is compromised. In fact, one participant stated that all her social media are pseudo-names. She is careful with what she posts online about herself and her settings are all set to private as well. This does not mean that's she does not post genuine things related to her person, she is just careful with certain identifiers such as location, faces and real names. I found this very interesting and asked if others had gone as far as to have pseudo-names on all their special media accounts and they said no, joking replying, "not yet."

### 4.3.2 *General responses and discussion for Guiding Question #2*

> *Information seeking, searching and info needs vary from person to person, but as a college student, how did YOU fulfill your info needs? How did you decide who to ask, where to look, when to share/disclose your status? Do technology or platforms matter in your info needs/seeking?*

The conversation was very interesting because participants seemed to share the similar view that the platform itself does not influence what they share. They state that depending on what their info needs are, for example if it's general news, more info on an immigration forum, or just general info on a trending topic, their **platform usage** varies from Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Pinterest, and search engines such as Google and the USCIS website. In general, this is a habitual exercise, daily activity, not a conscious effort to use a specific platform per se. The one exception is a participant that posts all his art paintings to Instagram due to the ease of posting his work. Ironically, they agree that for specific legal or immigration questions, internet

sources such as groups and forums are not very accurate for reasons such as case nuance and simply wrong information. They are nonetheless good 'sounding boards' of a way to know what "undocu-folx are saying" and what the "mood" or current "attitude" may be.

When **seeking info,** especially as college students, participants repeat a familiar participatory photography theme; they rely on a key person or key educational resources when they seek information or need help with education related info needs. They agree that a key person to can help with finding answers if they themselves don't know, is very important. They rely on key people such as a mentor, advisor, faculty, staff member or community organization to help with everything from scholarships, issues related to college life, health care and more. They state that for these key info-mediaries, "knowing it all" is not as important as "caring, and supporting by helping us find the right info and the right resources. Like, we know that on one knows it all, but if they care and want to help, that is so important. You feel human and like you're being treated with dignity." Several share their own experience of how personal support with educational issues made the difference between taking a quarter off or finding the resources to be able to afford and pay for tuition.

I asked how they know who to seek help from, who is it they trust to ask for help and how do they know this to make this judgement call. After all, revealing your undocu-status is something they have expressed is something they share on a 'need-to-know' basis. Their responses echoed once again the themes and content from the photo interviews. It is the interpersonal networks that help bridge this information need, the word-of-mouth that is key to sharing information about who "is good and can help out." Several students remarked on the increased number of resources now available to undocu-students including scholarships, tailored websites, and on some campuses a designated office or staff member to address the needs on ca

campus' undocu-students. They jokingly stated that "today's DREAMers have it good," because for most of the participants in the focus group, their educational journey was long and arduous and most did not have the programs and services specified to undocu-students the way resources now seem to be available. They jest because in general, they state that these resources are needed, and more.

Finally, when it comes to sharing, participants state they closely monitor who their "friends" are on the various platforms they use. I asked if given the new Administration if they were worried about government surveillance or other nefarious federal activity. Most expressed they are somewhat concerned not because they will be "spied" on but more so because to apply to DACA, copious amounts of personal information is shared, including a biometric process. Although they are skeptical of the idea that big brother is watching," they are concerned with what may come next from this current administration, such are more bans based on ethnicity and country of origin, no resolution to DACA and a potential DREAM Act, and of in worse case scenarios removal orders and deportation of DACA recipients.

### 4.3.3 *General responses and discussion for Guiding Question #3*

*How was the experience for you in participating in this research, especially participatory photography method?*

Participants express a variety of opinions about participating in this study, such as feeling empowered by their own "story," feeling "proud" of what they have accomplished because they don't often stop to reflect on their own accomplishments, and how (for some) it was a challenge to collect the images they felt represented their lives. Having to edit and select only 12 pictures to share forced participants to think about what they wanted to share, why they were sharing the

image, and the narrative to be shared. Most participants even knew the order of the pictures they wanted to discuss and the two students that had not selected their images beforehand made the selections and order during our interview and I found those interviews less focused, at times long and other times short, or similar pictures that expressed the same idea. For example, "friends as family" was something one student shared in 5 of his 12 photos during our interview. The information was more developed with each picture, but there was not more new information.

Every participant is different and they express variations of emotions, although all are positive. For example, one participant said that with the hustle and daily schedule or work and family obligations, she rarely takes time to see her "own life in pictures." There is a sense of self affirmation and happiness when the participant discusses her accomplishments and her successes, despite the obstacle in life as an undocumented mother and now young professional working in the world. Participating in this study, she states, allows her to take a moment and appreciate who she is, what she still wants to accomplish, and what she still wants to accomplish. She is reminded that there is support out there for her if she decides to continue on with graduate school.

Another participant states he enjoyed the project so much that he actually shared his photos and the stories behind them to his friends, family and his co-workers, most of whom did not know he was undocumented. This sparked a whole conversation about "outing" oneself at work when your co-workers do not know our undocu-status. Several participants shared similar experiences of 'coming out at work' and the reactions by their co-workers, including amazement, disbelief ("no, really? You're one of those DREAMers on the news?"), empathy, and a "crowdsourced" approach to wanting to help. Some have even pointed out that they know of other co-workers who are also undocumented but that the co-worker did not shared this info

publically. This was a very interesting conversation and by far the most specific any participant had been their undocu-status to the 'world' outside of their immediate family and close network of friends.

From here an interesting discussion occurred related to dating and friendships. A few shared how they do not share their status with their dating partners until later in the relationships, if at all. One participant said this was a critical issue for him when he was dating his now wife who is also undocumented. He states that both their families were very worried and even discouraged them from dating because marriage to another undocumented person would only perpetuate the difficulties in life and not offer possible pathway to citizenship. The participant share that despite both of their family's objections, they continued to date and eventually got married. This conversation was a powerful one where this participant declared that indeed "love has not borders."

The opposite was true for another participant who stated that due to status, marriage is not something she will ever contemplate or do. She states that she does not bring up the topic when dating and in fact has declines 2 marriage proposals. She is simply not interested in having to explain her situation, and she does not want to elicit sympathy or pity or a sense of obligation on the part of potential partner. She states that she has been accused of being selfish for choosing this path on 'no marriage' both by family and close friends, but she asserts that this is what makes her happy and doubts she will meet someone who will convince her otherwise.

For another participant it was an opportunity to remember his difficult journey through various African countries, several counties in Latin America including Cuba, Cost Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and more, to the U.S., and reflect on his current status as a university student, a goal he has fought and struggled to accomplish. Interestingly, he states that

he does not think of himself as undocumented not because it isn't that he claims not to be undocumented but because "in the larger world, it does not matter." He states that these labels are very American and that if he ever decided to immigrate to Europe for example where he has friends, he would have his visa and paperwork and college degree and immigrate. This is not his goal, but he shared this example to illustrate something many other participants expressed; we are more than our status.

In summary, this chapter offers the findings of this study based on the methodologies applied to gather information, specifically *Participatory Photography Interviews, Online Document Review and the Focus Group*. The nine major themes identified through the photo interviews as the most salient are also those identified in the online document review, with an added nuance that **humor** is more salient in the online environment. The focus group discussion offered an affirmation of these findings, and provided an opportunity to talk more in depth about immigration, family and information and technology in the era of Trump. However, more importantly, it allowed me to share this work with the community that co-created these finding, their interviews and online recommendations as the foundation of this work. Using a social justice framework which values "self-determination for marginalized communities" and values a community's capacity to produce knowledge, ("DataCenter," 2018), I was delight to share this work with participants of a community I work with and serve, and illustrate how vulnerable communities can have an impact and hand in knowledge production and co-creation of research. This work center on dynamic and complex undocu-lives, the center of the findings presented here.

The following discussion section attempts to interpret and describe the significance of the findings in the context of the literature and research questions.

# Chapter 5. DISCUSSION

This chapter is a discussion of the findings and tentative answers to each of my research questions. It also relates the findings back to the literature review, and concludes with some of the implications of these findings for undocu-students in the current context.

As a summary, the findings presented in chapter 4 are results gathered by using the three research methods selected for this study. First, the *Participatory Photography Interviews* were conducted with a total of 11 participant. Using an iterative coding process, I was able to identify nine major themes as the most salient derived from the photo interviews. These nine themes included 1) Home, Family and Community, 2) Motivation, 3) Uncertainty Security, 4) Legality and Citizenship, 5) Health and Well Being, 6) Identity, 7) Help, Service and Advocacy, 8) Work and Labor, and 9) Information and Sharing (people & online networks), where Information and Sharing is a theme that cross-cuts all others (or larger umbrella).

Interestingly, the *Online Document Review* showed that these same themes were representative of the topics and subjects most posted and commented on in the online environment which participants claim to frequent most, with the added nuance that **humor** is more salient in the online environment. Review included Specific Facebook Undocu-Groups (DACA Update, I Have DACA and Undocu-Queer) and two organization sites including Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP) and Leadership Without Borders (LWB), all recommendations from the participants themselves. These two sites are more static in nature but are examples of sites that address the dynamic information needs of participants, mainly needs related to financial aid and funding resources, undocu-community building events and legal information and advocacy work such as know-you-rights and other legal advice.

Finally, a culminating *Focus Group* event in November 2017 was an opportunity to share with participant the 'findings' of this work and engage in a dialog about what they shared and how their participation resulted in the findings. The preliminary results of the photo interviews where presented to the group (nine major themes), which are also echoed in the online review of sites from their recommendations. Participants agreed that these 'findings' resonate with the information they shared and rings true in their undocu-lives both online and offline.

A lively dialog revealed added rich context to the findings, including more examples of family as friends, the importance of undoc-friendships, and the complexity of romantic relationships and dating, especially if you are dating someone who is a citizen and is not familiar with the world-context of an undocumented person. Family dynamics (and opinions) are ever present and relevant. Finally, there was rich dialog about how participants are information brokers and interpreters for their family, especially around topics of immigration and strategies they use to squelch mis-information and how to push back in an online environment that is often hostile and draining.

In this discussion, I seek to interpret and describe the significance of the findings, and offer insights and understanding related to the statement of need, engaging my research questions and literature review presented.

## 5.1 RQ #1: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE INFORMATION-NEEDS AND BEHAVIOR OF UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL?

**Answer:**

The nature of information needs and behavior of undocu-students at the college level are multifaceted and complex, yet not all entirely related to educational needs, but addressing

them is crucial to mitigating 1) an uncertain legal status which creates a constant in-between/liminal stance compelling undocu-students to engage in information seeking and sharing that bridges this liminality at critical point in their education, including the latter part of their high school years and the formative years in college, 2) requiring undocu-students to identify or develop trusted interpersonal networks who are professionals well versed in undocu-info (staff, faculty, teacher, fellow student), who will offer assistance to navigate academic journeys in a holistic way that includes personal, legal, emotional and financial support.

### 5.1.1 *It's complicated: Information needs not always about "education"*

Overall, participants are clear in their sense of mission and purpose when it comes to their family (both nuclear and friend-based) and their motivation to focus on education. For most, educational opportunities are central to the reason why their parents migrated to the U.S. Like many in the immigrant community, the desire for fulfillment of their parents' dreams and hopes for a better future' highly influences their own desires to advance dreams of educational attainment, as more education often means better career opportunities and more stable financial security, another driving factor in their family migration.

The 11 participants in this study mirror the educational desires of their parents, often finding personal "meaning" and "purpose" in the pursuit of this educational attainment, which represents the fulfillment of their parents' sacrifice in migrating, their "hard work" and "hope." This creates a complex and multifaceted plane of existence for undocu-students because their information needs in pursuing higher education may not always me about education. Participants often talk about the trauma and financial hardship of being in college and the toll on their mental health and physical and emotional well-being, while also acknowledging their 'privilege' in being able to attend college, the sacrifices family makes as a collective to ensure they are successful in higher education. However, they simultaneously wonder if their career goals and

expectations are realistic given the political climate and lack of resolution for immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented citizens currently in the U.S. Further complicating this calculus is the September 2017 announcement of the end of DACA under the Trump Administration. There is a March 5th 2018 deadline to find a resolution to be crafted by Congress. To date, no resolution has been reached.

The 'upset' victory of Trump affected this research as well. Despite my familiarity with several undocu-students, they expressed extreme levels of anxiety and uncertainty, the result being that several students already recruited and willing to participate asked me to "wait a bit" to see "what's going to happen." I knew they were afraid. The election results were not what the undocu-community anticipated (not what many expected); my research was delayed due to their rightful concern and uncertainty. True to their resilience, however, undocu-students continue in their lives, education and for a few (two of the 11 in my sample), they are still adamantly "undocumented and unafraid."

Despite having been born in another country, a few participants express a sense that they "feel" American in spite of their undocumented status. These are the 4 participates brought as very young children and in general have few memories of a native country and more memories of growing up the U.S., having only ever been in the American educational system. They are from immigrant parents often with mixed-status family members (some documented and some undocumented). Other participants did attend school in their native country and some memories of this, with clarity of those memories varying widely. One participant in particular shares he has only ever known the U.S. public schools so he doesn't know any other way of "learning," while another participant has a memory of being in school as a child in her native country and participating in school traditions and festive events she was involved in. This is one of the few

memories she has as a child. This memory is made more vivid only because she has the photo her mother took. She shares this photo in her interview (see Figure 39, "Abanderada") and states she remembers the event, but not details of the event or how she came to participate. However, it is a cherished memory because aside from remember the day and knowing she was in school in her native country for about a year before migrating to the U.S., she does not remember much more of her year in school. Her U.S. education experience are the majority of her school memories.

It is as if the picture her mother took offers proof she was a child in a school in a place far away, yet she can only remember a few details. This sentiment or "feeling American" is reflected in the work of Pérez (2012) whose researches the way undocumented students feel "Americans by heart" and describes the "frustration and anguish" often experienced by students as they negotiate the reality of being undocumented and not 'belonging' in the U.S. yet feel more 'in place' in U.S. educational institutions than they do elsewhere. They must often consider their educational options in the high school setting (like their classmates) and face an "uncertain future as they transition into higher education and early adulthood" (p. 2). Interestingly, to juxtapose this sentiment of "feeling American" with the unique information behavior of immigrant populations as described by Caidi, Allard, Quirke (2010), offers interesting insight into the "orienting information needs" and the "problem-specific information seeking" of undocu-students who may not necessarily see feel like immigrants (for some who feel more American than immigrant), yet rely on their "social networks of immigrants" (p. 507) to address needs. The "problem-specific information seeking" of these participants is not necessarily related to seeking employment or looking for ways to connect to their 'native country' as can be the case for many immigrants as Caidi et al. describe, but often related to topics such as what schools accept

undocu-students, what financial resources are available for college tuition, and general searches that address their needs as youth in college or transitioning into higher education. In this area, information seeking and sharing is accomplished using various "social networks of immigrants" or peers who they are familiar with who may be in their same situation or have information based on experience or professions, such as a counselor, mentor or teacher.

### 5.1.2 *Constant "In-between-ness" and Not Belonging*

Participants articulated this *Nepantla* state (Anzaldúa) in their interviews, focus group, and it is reflected in the online document review in a most powerful way. For example, under the theme of **Home, Family and Community**, Ana in Figure 13 grapples with the question of belonging, articulating simply, "I don't really feel like you belong anywhere. I feel like you make with what you have, but you don't really belong anywhere… So I really don't have a home. I don't belong anywhere" when referring to a picture of herself with friends at an event. Not only does she express a sense of not belong, but she refers to her friends as often being closer than family. Another example is from Janet in the theme of **Legality and Citizenship**, in Figure 30, where she state "For me, I was like 'why, why do you want to be a part of the society that doesn't want you? You're not wanted." The image shared is one of a car stopped at the light. In the interview, she stated that she wanted to share this seemingly mundane photo because "being stopped at the red light is like being undocumented here," and goes on to explain how being on the road is analogous to living in the U.S. as undocumented, being stopped at the red light when you are ready to go and "get to your destination but you can't" despite "having a full tank of gas" and knowing where you want to go in life.

Several participant in the focus group also mention the sense of being "in-between" and not knowing what will come next, in this case as an added sense of liminality due to the recent

Trump Administration end of the DACA program and continued anti-immigrant and anti-undocumented community rhetoric.

Furthermore, online analysis of Facebook screenshots corroborate this notion of not belonging. There are abundant examples of posts and discussion about 'fitting in' and feelings of not belong in society despite the often life-time of being in the U.S. Other examples included under Health, Well Being and Humor include several posts related to the stress and anxiety felt by the thought of being separated from family, with constant stress about not knowing "what Congress is gonna do... I hope they do something." As suggested in the **Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF)**, there is an ever-present feeling of belonging yet not belonging, of waiting as if for something to begin (or end), the sensation that there is no 'secure' space, something expressed clearly with anguish, pain and as inevitable part that comes with being undocumented. There is a constant "in-between-ness." As a researcher, I expected I would find this sentiment, but was unprepared for the depth and profundity of the ways the state of *Nepantla* effects the emotional, mental and physical health of participants. More than a "cultural and psychological location" (Perez, 1998), or the sensation of "disorientation" (Gaspar de Alba, 2004), undocu-students live in a society where they must constantly negotiate their existence. The photo interviews reveal that depending on the situation, students express their undocu-status in various way, some as "unapologetically" undocumented but also cognizant of when not to proclaim this, and others on a "need to know" basis, but willing to share when necessary. Their information needs and need for support often figures into the decisions of whether or not they will disclose status. The focus group allowed for a more in-depth discussion and participants discussed the "in-between" state as one that is ever-present in their lives. For some, it has caused physical illness such as panic attacks, suicidal ideations, large group phobias and for others is

expressed in a push back of social media technology platforms. We discussed whether they were concerned that 'the government' or 'big brother' is watching their social media activity, to which they say 'no'. Most participants are DACA recipients, so they know the federal government has all their information. The current administration and its' polices add more stress and insecurity to their lives, but state they rely on a key sentiment, one identified in their interviews: motivation. This motivation is a driving force that enables undocu-students to persevere and endure.

This ever-present sensation of liminality resonates with the education and sociological literature on undocu-students. The work of Gonzales (2015) refers to this liminality as a state of "limbo" and posits that undocu-students take on a "master status" which overshadows all other experiences and accomplishments in life. That is, their primary identity is 'undocumented.' In our discussion, participants made it clear they "are more than that", more than their undocumented status; they are mothers, daughters, sons, artists, runners, young professionals, graduate students, undergrads, engineering majors with dreams of starting their own business, bio majors with dreams of medical school. The focus group discussion allows for vivid dialog on identity and the "multiplicity" and reality of their "complex lives". This does not mean that the status of being undocumented is not a constant reality in their lives. For this group, it is a part of their identity, just **not** one that overshadows their intersectional identities and vast accomplishments. In fact, "belonging" and the idea of 'where is home' was **more salient** for this group, a core theme also identified in the literature (Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguineti, 2013; Gomez and Vannini, 2017). Perhaps belonging and the in-between sensation (Nepantla) is one that becomes more familiar with time and as such establishes a new norm of being which pressurizes and hardens, allowing for the creation of fortitude and longevity.

For those that they have stronger memories of their educational journeys and their countries, they nonetheless feel their educational maturity, self-fulfillment and realization happened in the U.S. as they have grown up in American high schools and then enter higher education. As young people who want to "do well" in high school and want to go to college, I asked about their info-seeking behavior around college. Participants report that when seeking information about certain colleges on websites, none had dedicated pages that provided perspective undocumented students specific information tailored to their needs. This includes specific information in one dedicated page or information on specific pages such as financial aid, housing or even admissions. This finding mirrors the education literature that discusses the unmet needs of undocumented students in higher education (Dabach, 2014; López & López, 2010). It is only in recent years some colleges and universities have begun to include website information tailored for undocumented students. However, **none** of the participants in this study had the benefit of this recent addition. These sites simply did not exist at any of the institutions these participants are enrolled in, including UW Seattle, Bothell and various local community colleges. It isn't that undocu-students did not know their needs; they specifically looked through college sites looking for information tailored to their needs and they simply did not exist. When they applied to college, they state it was the guidance and encouragement of a key mentor, teacher, counselor or friend from their high school that helped with the college process.

#### *5.1.2.1 Critical Stages of Undocu-Info Needs*

From the discussion in the focus group and based on the photo interviews, I identify **two stages of information seeking and information needs** that are critical as related to higher education: **one** at the junior or senior grade level of high school when they must make a decision if they will apply to college (deadlines for SAT's, admissions applications, financial aid options,

scholarship submissions), and **second,** once at the institution of higher education (university/college or community college) they are enrolled in.

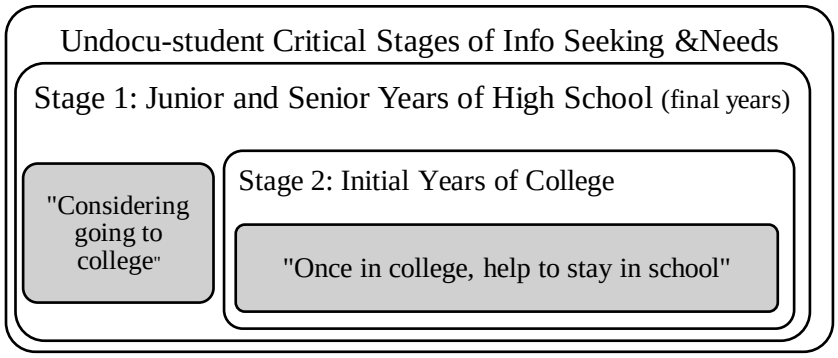



Figure 73: Undocu-student Critical Stages of Info

**Stage 1: Junior and Senior Years of High School (final years)**

Participants express that their information needs as high school students were harder to articulate because they "didn't know what they didn't know" and in general, the entire college admission process added a complex layer of information needs that took precedent. For example Valentina shared her frustration with the application process, stating that "it's better now, but at the time, no one knew answer to my questions, like if I don't have sosh [social security number], how can I submit the application online?" referring to the admissions application to UW. I did not include quote or photo this in the sample finding, as I had to make decision and chose other examples. I think, however, this example illustrated a point of critical information need.

All participants are first generation college students, although a few have parents who have some formal higher education in their country of origin. This helps with the encouragement and understanding of the challenges ahead, yet parents are not familiar with the American higher educational systems and cannot offer help. I asked whether information technology made accessing information easier, and they stated that accessing technology to find the information was not necessarily the challenge (they used their cell phones, school computers or library

computers). The main challenge is the information provided on most college and university pages is tailored to in-state residents, with dedicated information for out-of-state residents, even robust pages for international students. Little information is provided for undocumented students. This stage, along with the following stage ("Stage 2: Initial Years of College"), point to a liminality or nepantla state that positions undocu-students in a vulnerable locus where educational information and resources are not available to satisfy their needs, further exacerbating an in-between-ness that positions these students in a space of liminality as they try to navigate life-impacting decisions, permeating every level of the education decision-making processes.

**Stage 2: Initial Years of College**

Once enrolled at a university or college, information needs are more salient and most can articulate their needs because they better understood their needs such as needing help paying tuition and scholarship seeking assistance. Info needs are most intense during the first stages (moths to years) on college life. It is here that participants discuss their information needs, how they seek, search and find what they need as one that requires they understand how the university information landscape works. For example, in some cases, information posted pertains to undocumented students, yet this information is usually more of an alert or announcement. For most, their central information needs are met by the guidance and encouragement of a key mentor, faculty, academic advisor, or fellow undocu-friends who is emotionally encouraging and knowledgeable in undocu-matters. This is also expressed in the focus group discussion, where most participant point to a key point person (staff, faculty, teacher, fellow student) or key program or office (Ethnic Cultural Center, MESA Program) where critical information was provided and assistance was offered to address an urgent undocu-need.

Another point of critical information sharing and info gathering is with group support such as undocu-friendly support groups like The Purple Group, MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantíl Chicano de Aztlán), sororities or fraternities, or from undocu-friendly community organizations such as Centro de la Raza, Casa Latina or the Washington Dream Coalition. These organizations offer financial, political and moral support and a 'sense of belonging' to something larger than oneself. Although undocu-students have **ongoing info-needs** throughout their educational pathway, these two stages are critical times to their ability to seek the info, resources and support they need to be retained and succeed. Unfortunately, for transfer students, this critical stage of info-need can be repeated once an undocu-student has transferred to the four-year university. This can create added stress and difficulty for transfer students, who have "learned the system" at their community college and must now establish understand a new educational setting and its information landscape.

Thus, notwithstanding the label and connotations that comes with being a tech savvy millennial generation, **using online information and digital technology access did not necessarily meet the information needs of undocumented students when it came to college-related info-needs.** The nature of undocu-info needs are vastly complex, unique to each circumstance, and often encompass needs of a holistic nature, such as legal questions, financial navigation without bank accounts, and securing medical assistance beyond the basic services provided (community colleges may not have any medical support). As highlighted previously, the **information needs may or may not be related to educational needs,** yet constitute a large portion of the information-seeking students engage in. To succeed and remain matriculated in college, students need help with complex life issues, most of which are not addressed in a techno-platforms on college websites. People therefore address the complex undocu-needs

almost thoroughly. Wilson's definition of information behavior includes "both active and passive information seeking and information use [including] face-to-face communication" (2000, p. 49) and states that the "totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information" are what encompasses information behavior. From the interviews and from the focus group discussion, participants credit their 'luck' or 'help' or 'good guidance' and their success to key mentors, advisor, staff, or fellow undocu-friends and key leaders in support organizations. Therefore, the development of interpersonal networks are vital.

### 5.1.3 *On Trust, Developing Interpersonal Networks and Undocu-Info Behavior*

How do undocu-students know who can help and how do they know they can trust enough and self-disclose as undocumented? Without exception, participants state it was the use of interpersonal networks or word-of-mouth information that helped them to **identify who to trust** and ask for help with undocu-related concerns. They have a small but efficient network of friends, advisor, staff member or faculty, for example, who they trust and feel safe disclosing their undocu-status. From there they are directed to campus resources, other undocu-friendly staff members, and undocu-friendly groups and events that can further assist. For example, in Figure 12 when referencing the Kelly Ethnic Cultural Center (ECC), Ramona shares that she was unaware of support services on campus and was struggling with loneliness, missing home and family (she is from the East side of the state), and feeling out of place given the lack of diversity at the University of Washington Seattle campus, especially having graduated from a diverse high school. This is something she did not seek help with immediately because she assumed it was not something a university would be able to help with, her "emotional stuff." She perceived her struggles as not related to being an undocumented student, or so she first thought. By word-of-mouth, a friend helped Ramona "find" the ECC, which is a dedicated student space that fosters a

sense of being and community on the west campus of UW (Seattle). Once there, she discovered various clubs and a support group for undocumented students. She states that finding this group "saved" her life because she did not realize there were so many other undocumented students on campus. She expressed suicidal ideations. Still in her first year, she had no met any other undocumented students and genuinely believed she was alone and it was something she would have to 'deal with' alone, as she had in high school. I asked if she knew any undocumented students in high school, she replied that she knows there must have been some, but it was simply not a topic anyone brought up or discussed and she did not feel safe enough to disclose her status with others, including teachers and staff. She began participating in the support group and other undocu-students, as well as discovered opportunities she once thought unavailable to her such as internships and study abroad programs. One participant from the focus group also stressed the importance of developing strong **interpersonal networks** who then become part of the close knit network that is well versed in undocu-info and can 'info-mediate' to help meet info needs. This network of staff, faculty, teacher or fellow student, for example, who will offer the assistance to navigate the academic journey, and can do so in holistic ways, addressing needs that include personal, legal, emotional and financial support.

In this example, Ramona obtained information she did not know she needed, but once at the ECC, the information came to her in a spontaneous and serendipitous manner. In the way, we can describe the ECC as an **Information Ground (IG),** where this undocu-student is able to enter an environment "created when people come together for a singular purpose but from whose behavior emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (Fisher, writing as Pettigrew, 1999, p. 811). As Ramona stated, the staff and fellow students present were able to offer assistance and provide her and other participates in this study

with the direction and support they needed. In an Information Ground, networks can be developed and fostered in this environment and sometimes the network is developed without an IG present. In this example, however, participants in this IG environment are able to receive the help while also adding to their networks of support, with an added dimension of support which is the identification of a physical place that is info-rich and welcoming.

Undocu-students are entering college and will continue to do so, despite the challenges of being undocumented and the constant sense of not belonging or being 'in-between,' layered on top of the overall challenges of college life. Although a small sample, the data supports a rich and nuanced insight into what is the multifaceted and complex nature of information needs and behaviors of undocu-students in higher education. There is no one theory to encapsulate the definition of information behavior, and many models attempt to operationalize this process. Bates (2010) defines IB as the many "ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information" (p. 2381), while the work of Case (2006, 2007) and the extensive work of Wilson (1981, 1999, 2000) speak to the various models that wrangle with this intersect of technology and human behavior. In the **Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF)** conceptual framework, the presence of information behavior suggests that undocu-students have info needs, yet regardless of the fact that technology use and information consumption appear to be omnipresent in the lives of college students, undocu-students require trust to develop their close, interpersonal networks of support in order to bridge a liminal sense of being. Technology helps but it is not a stand-along solution, nor can it offer holistic support that includes personal, legal, emotional and financial support.

## 5.2 RQ #2A: How are online (digital) and offline (face-to-face) connections and networks used to address the information-needs related to undocu-content?

**Answer:**

Connections and networks of support are used to mitigate critical information deficits experienced by undocu-students who depend/rely on both online and offline networks, but prefer face-to-face connections and a physical space such as an Information Ground (Fisher 2005), where support from undocu-verse staff (faculty, teacher, fellow student, etc.) is able to satisfy undocu-core needs.

### 5.2.1 *Taking a Chance: Building Interpersonal Connections*

Reaching out to the right people can mean accessing the most accurate information, and Luis is a good example of this, in Figure 41 (p. 115) titled "UW Medical School," Luis comments on the 'luck' he has had in having the strong networks and support from certain academic programs as well as the "guidance from the teachers and faulty and mentors I have had" which he feels have contributed to his success in achieving his academic goals and working towards medical school at UW. What he also shared in the interview that was not included in the quote is that as an undocu-student in high school, he was shy and reticent to share his status with other, especially teachers. This impacted his ability to navigate the admissions process into the university directly from high school. So instead, he attended community college in an effort to transfer to a four-year institution. He states that finally at the community college was when he understood he needed to share his undocu-status and begin to develop networks of support and

connection. He shares that there is an interesting **"chance you have to take"** in sharing undocu-status and hoping this will garner support and the resources you need in higher education.

Although a responsive and knowledgeable undocu-info network can exist on campuses, they are labor intensive and require a physicality to the information exchange. For example, a participant in the focus group shared that one of the groups she attends for support does not post any info online, even in closed and protected sites such as Facebook, in order to provide an added layer of security and protection to their fellow undocu-members. She speculates that this may be the case because the group is mostly made up of adult undocumented women, mostly mothers, laborers and non-students. For many, the physical meet-ups are the preferred method of information sharing. Yet others shared frequently and posted very sensitive and private information online, in private groups, because it is a form of info-sharing they consider necessary or perhaps cathartic. Several participant, one from photo interviews and another from the focus group shared the same information, which I found compelling. They shared their experience in dealing with depression. They stated the university campus offers mental health support but only for a certain amount of sessions. Once those sessions run out, the university provider issues a referral to community organization that offers services in order to continue with this mental health care. However, this creates an added layer of stress because trust is a critical part of network development and second, many organization take health care insurance, but many undocu-students do not have it and therefore rely more heavily on campus-available medical and mental health services as their primary care service providers. This points to another area where liminality in education is related to more than education, in this case to health services. Returning to our 9 themes from the participatory photography interviews, **Health and Well-Being** was an important area of need identified by undocu-students. The info behavior around

this need is heavily reliant of word-of-moth and trust development, given the sensitive nature of sharing ones medical and emotional needs with someone else; trust within an info-network is critical. For both participants who discussed their clinical depression, asking for help and relying on their networks of support was how they were able to find a low cost alternative and continue their sessions. These participants exemplify how undocu-students navigate educational systems and must find the information they seek and use their networks of support to mitigate critical information needs.

Undocu-students develop and rely on networks of support to address the information deficits the face, and once they learn to navigate different systems such as education and health care, then share this undocu-knowledge with trusted others. The methods of information sharing is mostly done through interpersonal communication, face-to-face (offline), either one-on-one with friends or family, or in a group setting with like-status colleagues. However, there is critical information being shared online as well. Two participants discussed their advocacy work ("Help, Service & Advocacy") and their sense of community as central reasons they use, share and trust certain online organizations and social media. To illustrate, Figure 39 (p. 113) depicts Gaby testifying in Olympia in support of the Washington State DREAM Act. This images was posted and shared to several among several pro-immigrant rights groups in the State. Social media is a powerful tool, which participants use either to seek general information, to share, to develop collaboration(s) or garner support for a particular task or event. This info-gathering and sharing may (or may not) be related to their educational needs, yet addresses personal needs as undoc-students identify what is important enough to share, such as identity, political activism and health and wellbeing.

Participants use various platforms including Snapchat and Instagram, but interestingly, most use Facebook as the primary platform to share, seek and express information. For several others, Facebook is their primary news source, or the Facebook pages of those few organizations they trust. However, most the participants in the photo interviews and focus group state they engage the online sites 'with precaution'. The word-of-mouth information sharing or "face-to-face communication" as Wilson calls it, as a method of dissemination and verification among undocu-communities, is identified as the primary and most trusted method of info sharing and gathering. Undocu-students demonstrate context of this information behavior by sharing among themselves detailed institutional insights, 'how-to' and 'know-how', and information beyond the educational institution, thereby expanding their information landscape to include support organizations and services to address larger needs related to undocu-specific issues or legal assistance, for instance.

The **network of support** may be different online than they are in 'life' or on a college campus. Nonetheless, the interpersonal connection are essential for undocu-students when drawing upon their support networks. Harris and Dewdney (1994) describe several *principals* of information behavior, one of which states that people tend to seek information first from those who are similar to themselves, and "tend to seek information that is easily accessible, preferably from interpersonal sources such as friends, relatives or coworkers rather than from institutions or organizations" (p. 27). This principal seems applicable to how undocu-students satisfy their info needs, gather and share information with each other their reliance on their networks of support. Other parts of this principal are not necessarily applicable. For instance, in this context, high quality information related to undocu-needs is not necessarily "easily accessible" or on a digital platform, especially since not on many college and university sites. Despite several apps

*designed by and dedicated to* undocu-student audience, most apps only provide general information on scholarships and tips for securing funding (Davidson, 2015, Patron, 2016, Simón, 2016), not comprehensive campus-specific information. None of the institutions from which participants in this study are enrolled in or recently graduated from offer college-specific, undocu-audience apps, including specific department apps to help navigate and disseminate department information as it may pertain to the needs of undocu-students. I do not know if undocu-students would use such an app given their preference for interpersonal information seeking. However, the appeal of a place to centralize information tailored for undocu-needs may be a starting place that at least sends a message that states, we care, we know you have undocu-info needs and we are here to help. I do know that of the students that participate in this study, none use undocu-edu apps to meet their edu-info needs. A few mentioned limited use on messengers such as *WhatApp,* but usually in the context of connecting with family, not as a way to maintain networks and connections with their undocu-networks of support and not as a way to address information needs related to higher education. Several mentioned email listserves (2) but it did not resonate as a strong method in which information sharing is happening among their social network or their behaviors online.

### 5.2.2 *Addressing Core Needs and Information Grounds*

The nine overarching themes that emerged as central to undocu-lives are not just themes from the photo interviews and affirmed through the online document review and focus group, but rather are **Core Needs** which are at the center of the info-needs articulated by participants. These **9 Core Needs** are: 1) Home, Family and Community, 2) Motivation, 3) Uncertainty Security, 4) Legality and Citizenship, 5) Health and Well Being, 6) Identity, 7) Help, Service and Advocacy,

8) Work and Labor, where 9) Information and Sharing which cross-cuts all other core needs. Information and Sharing overlaps Core Needs because info-sharing and seeking is a part of almost everything undocu-students do, from searching for and filling out college forms, job and work related information, scholarship applications and legal-related forms. Social media is a powerful tool used for information seeking and sharing or to further develop and strengthen collaboration(s) in an online environment. Participants indicated they use various platforms but interestingly for most, Facebook is their primary platform by which to share, seek and express information. For example Figure 48 (p. 123), Valentina shared an image that was posted by her husband while at a pro-immigration rally. It was the first time they were together at an event, and the topic was immigration and the halt of detention centers. She states that "I think he felt empowered because of the caption that he put on the post, it was like 'when you believe in something that's right you should fight for it,' or something like that!" Online networks and information sharing are important to undocu-students. The core needs identified are example of the types of needs more common in higher education for undocu-students.

However, most participants indicated that they prefer face-to-face connections and usually seek assistance from a trusted source in their support network in the form of an actual meeting or visit. How can a physical space further contribute to addressing the needs of undocu-students? A physical space that is formal-informal with a welcoming environment, where support from dedicated staff, faculty, teacher or fellow student are able to address complex undocu-needs can become an **Information Ground (IG),** especially in higher education. Several participant identified key IG sites on their college campuses and stated it was a critical part in their retention and success in their academic journey. The example of Ramona and the ECC is once again a salient example of the importance of an Information Ground and how it can address

the core needs of undocu-students. In the IG model, one is able to enter an environment "created when people come together for a singular purpose [where] behavior emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (Fisher, writing as Pettigrew, 1999, p. 811). Fisher describe IG as "temporarily created" and in "unexpected places" where "identifiable social types" are present and participate in "information flows" (Fisher, 2009, p. 185). For undocumented students, this information flow is very important because a welcoming and social atmosphere combined with an information flow that is relevant to the multi-info needs of undocu-students provides added support for what may not be available online.

The ECC provides intentional programs and services to students for over 50 years, so although the setting is not an unexpected place and offers programming that is dedicated to the needs of UW students, I argue it is nonetheless an Information Ground. For Ramona and for other participants, it is a place that operates with knowledgeable and welcoming student staff who are "identifiable social types" ready to help. In this IG, there are many kinds of support, events, and peer-to-peer interactions that create condition that are conducive to "information flows" (Fisher, 2009, p. 185). Even with its calendared events and hundreds of students visiting the ECC on a daily basis, it still nurtures an "atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (Fisher, writing as Pettigrew, 1999, p. 811). The experience may be different for every visitor to the ECC; for participants in this study who specifically mentioned the ECC, it is a place of "help," "family," and "people who care."

Fisher et al., (2005) discuss the local and "regional and global impact" of IG and how these spaces can become important places in the quotidian life of people. Fisher et al., (2005) cite the work of Ray Oldenburg who writes about the importance of informal public gathering places.

I found this reference very intriguing because it adds a layer of context to the ECC as an IG and a place that is important and needed, and what Oldenburg called the third place." There are three places of importance to Oldenburg: home, work, and the "third place." This "third place" is "the core setting of informal public life," a place where friends can convene, converse, and is comfortable for social engagements. These places can include cafes, pubs, taverns (his focus), and I would add community centers. Oldenburg states that these spaces are vital and "the leveling, primacy of conversation, certainty of meeting friends, looseness of structure, and eternal reign of the imp of fun all combine to set the stage for experiences unlikely to be found elsewhere" (p. 43). They become places that foster comradery and companionships and may address the need for "intimacy and affiliation" (p. 63) that many undocumented students feel. Oldenburg's work looks at international setting and compares public spaces to the limited spaces in the U.S., referring to the lack of spaces as "suburbia's lifeless streets, of the plastic places along our 'strips'… congested and inhospitable mess that is 'downtown'" (p. 296), although he is optimistic this can change. For many undocu-students in this study, the ECC is their "third place" where they find information, community and safety. It is a place that becomes their "home away from home," a direct phrase heard several times from participants. In this context, this "home away from home" in part of the Information Ground described by Fisher.

For community college participants in this study, their Information Grounds vary from academic program spaces to community meeting spaces, and common areas. Unfortunately, many community colleges do not have a dedicated cultural center, making it difficult to provide the preferred face-to-face connections and that are further supported by a physical space. However, this is why this work points out the building interpersonal connections and strengthen networks of support is critical. Undocu-students are saying that they usually seek assistance from

a trusted source and that they prefer actual meeting or visits with undocu-verses professionals and allies. If we are to mitigate the liminality that is ever-present in the lives of undocu-students, and address the **core needs** identified by undocu-students in higher education, it is important to consider how the manifestation of a physical space with staff and peer-to-peer contact can render greater opportunities to address complex needs and requests. It is important to think about undocu-needs in a holistic way, where their information behaviors demonstrate a need to satisfy not only needs related to their education but to their entire existence as a whole student who is straddling many in-between spaces. Referencing the **Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF)**, undocumented students engage in various Information Behaviors, including information searching, sharing and gathering to address their undocu-info needs in higher education. Understanding this vulnerable populations' information behavior as "the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use [including] face-to-face communication" (Wilson, 2000, p. 49) allow us to better understand their technology and information preferences. As undocu-students in college, there are added layers of complexity and support that is required to provide these students with an equity-framed opportunity to succeed.

## 5.3 RQ #2B How do undocumented students express their undocu-lives in online platforms?

**Answer:**

Undoc-students express their lives online in various ways including multiple identity layers of liminality and engagement in online groups, monitoring of organization websites and participating in social networks to strengthening their own networks and

knowledge in order to 1) seek undocu-specific information and monitor (keep informed) overall climate and news related to immigration and education, 2) as a tool to share content on important achievements and creative solutions to undocu-concerns, understand the 'model undocu-minority' label, yet are not afraid to disengage from the information and technology (push-back) when undocu-fatigue is reached.

### 5.3.1 *Multiple Identity Layers of Liminality and Undocu-lives Online*

The liminal locus imposed by physical and psychological barriers are ever-present in their undocu-lives; to be an undocu-student means many different things to every participant, who express complex, multi-dimensional lives with multiple identity layers of liminality. This multi-dimensional expression is exemplified clearly in the Online Document Review. I reviewed three Facebook groups and two organization sites, recommended by participants. Interestingly, after coding the online review, the 8 themes that emerge mirror those of the themes that emerge from the photo interviews, with the added nuance of Humor (Table 10: Summary of 8 Themes from Online Document Review"), which I incorporated into the Health and Wellbeing Theme. I followed several heated discussions on topics such as the end of DACA and the probability of the passage of a "CLEAN DREAM ACT," defined as "an act that create a pathway to U.S. citizenship without using young immigrants as bargaining chips to harm immigrant communities" ("What is the Dream Act?", 2017). I was able to observe the infiltration of anti-DACA, anti-immigrant people into these closed groups. Most gained entry by falsely answering basic entry Administrative Questions such as 1) are you a DACA recipient? and 2) why do you want to join this group? Without exception, the group Administrator reviewed the answers but did not closely look at the posts from these members, most of which were clearly filled with anti-DACA and hate-filled postings. For example, one Administrator shared with the group a failed

attempt by someone named Francis. Titled, “Getting put into concentration camps” in Figure 55 (p. 133), the post is clearly anti-immigrant and racist.

Humor was an unexpected finding in the Facebook groups’ review of the Online Document Review. Humor and sarcasm were prevalent in the three groups I reviewed (Facebook Undocu-groups: (1) “DACA Update”, (2) “Have DACA” and (3) “Undocuqueer”). For many, the stress of DACA ending, employment firing because their DACA permit expired, and national anti-immigrant rhetoric, seems daunting and overwhelming, so they respond with humor. Humor in the “Undocuqueer” page relates to current events, but had the added dimension of humor relate to Trans and CIS gender topics and ‘coming out’. A discussion I followed was on “coming out” as gay/queer/trans versus “coming out” as undocumented. Posts included jokes about what was more difficult, coming out as “gay” or undocumented, and the reactions of family and loved ones, and how they handle’ the news, exemplified by memes. These sentiments echoed those of the two participants who identify as LGBTQIA. Both shared their “coming out” stories and the dual anxiety of their sexuality and their status. “Coming out” to family as ‘gay’ or ‘queer’ was the most difficult because family usually knows your undocu-status. However, “coming out” to the external world is also challenging, on both fronts. Assessing and deciding when to disclose is doubly tough as this **information withholding** can impact physical safety and livelihood. As such, there can be **multiple identity layers of liminality**, further adding to the complexity of living lives on a plane of uncertainty. Identity formation can be a difficult process and for undocu-students, there is a question of whether being undocumented is part of their identity. In the findings, focus group participants were clear to point out that *being undocumented did not “define” them, nor was it their primary identity;* it was the thing that held them back. Adding sexuality and gender identity to this equation presents a layer of difficulty that further adds to the

sense of in-between-ness. As was the case for one participant, his gender identity was one of the prime factors he was displaced from his homeland and sent to the U.S., a double liminal vulnerability that affected his wellbeing because it was core to his depression, drug usage and suicidal ideations. Furthermore, he shared specific examples of potential partners that ended their budding relationship when he disclosed that he was undocumented. This created a sense of secrecy when dating as he became more cautious and selective about to whom he disclosed. Yet the predicament of withholding this information meant he had to gamble whether or not allowing more time for relationship to blossom meant greater heartbreak if he disclosed and the partner decided to end the relationship.

Other humor in other groups is more subtle such as jokes about marriage to "fix paper" or "get a green card." Marriage and relationships are topics in the Online Document Review, but this topic was very prominent in the focus group. Identified in the findings from the focus group, courtships, marriage and family are topics the participants discussed in an open and honest way. Several participants state they do not share their status when dating, others their family skepticism when the family learns that the partner is also undocumented. Some participants did not have a preference in disclosing status, while one particular participant states she "is never getting married." Our focus group discussion fostered candid conversations about what it means to tell someone you're falling in love with that you are undocumented, and the burdensome feeling of having to explain what that means, all while concerned with rejection ("will she dump me cuz I'm undocumented"). Undocu-lives are complex and this sample of participants are mostly young and did not have children, except for one participant (two kids). This discussion included aspects of what it means to create a home, buy a home, the insecurity of such a decision, and the sense of impermanence some feel despite the irony of "going to college" to

"prepare for a career." We entered into the discussion of the "American dream" and how this narrative is viewed, as well as the "myth" of the model "DREAMer."

### 5.3.2 *Model Undocu-Minorities Narrative and Content and Pushback*

They identify the 'media' is a double-edged sword. One the one hand, it helps foster a movement around a topic that is central to many political campaigns (for good or bad). Yet like dynamic and difficult topics, the media can simplify, vilify and even misinform when it comes to undocu-related topics. Participants expressed a clear dislike for many media outlets, but to my surprise an especially strong dislike for Spanish language media outlets, whom they say create "fear" and offers "misleading" or incomplete information. This creates an interesting **language liminality** that adds another layer of Nepantla-ism in the lives of undocu-students, who often grew up interpreting for their adult parents. Additionally, students often have to engage in clarifying misinformation, especially as focus group participants mention the ways in which Spanish language news consistently mis-inform, alarm and otherwise provide unverified information.

Most discussed how they are "fact checkers" and info-mediaries for their family and often friends. One participant in the focus group stated he has to ask him mother to limit her "*noticiero*" (news) watching because it causes her distress and fear. An "infomediary is defined by Khosrow-Pour as a "combination of the word 'information' and 'intermediary" (2007, p. 327), and participants express a dislike for having to do this work due to misinformation from Spanish language media outlets. Ironically, their allies, social and support networks represent a network of info-mediaries who are knowledgeable in various information landscapes. Perhaps they dislike this type of info-mediation with family and friends because it is predicated on having

to remedy misinformation, then calm rattled nerves. The emotional stress undocu-families experience is significant.

In the focus group participants discussed the danger in the '**undocu model minority' label** or narrative where undocumented students can be are portrayed as only ivy-league bound with infallible academic credentials and impeccable character. Participants express a clear understanding of their privilege in being able to go to college, yet understand this narrative is often represented in the media because they are "stories that sell." However, there are many organizations and individuals that do amazing work and deserve exposure. This is exemplified by the award presented to Valentina from the organization Progress 21, where the plaque reads "2017 Image Us Award … for bold and visionary leadership" (see Figure 36). In this quote she is speaking about missing school as it as a "part of my identity." What was not included in the quote were larger parts of the conversation where Valentina share shares her pride in doing "undocu-work" while also sharing her feeling of commitment and obligation because "someone has to  do it" even though she recognizes there is honor and pride in the work done. Still, it is a burden that is obvious from the photo interview. Many participants had achievements but were generally shy about discussing them. In the online document review, there were ample posts dedicated to posting achievements and responses of accolades. These posts vary as far as what emergent code they are posted in, and in fact were posted in most places.

A closer review of pro-immigrant movements that advocate for the pathways to citizenship reveals an intentional effort to profile stellar undocu-students. These profiles are a way to demonstrate that 'high caliber' talent that would be missed if immigration reform does not address undocu-students. In his book, *"The DREAMers How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate"* Nicholls outlines the ways in which pro-

immigrant organizations are intentional in their narrative crafting that profiles high achieving young people (2013). Many academically high achieving undocu-students do amazing things. The challenge, participants' state, is to remember not all undocumented people can go or want to go to college, sharing examples of cousins and friends who are "brilliant," but were just not as connected to people and resources to be able to go to college. Again, the importance of word-of-mouth and social networks is reiterated.

For this reason, several participants also talked about a 'technology push back,' a topic Morrison & Gomez (2014) have researched, as a way to manage negative or misinformation online. Although Morrison & Gomez' research on pushback identifies a general "frustration with devices," the high costs and new technology know-how usage, this 'pushback' is not necessarily a diet from technology but more of a diet from the platforms and frequency with which undocu-students are checking things like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The general negative content and the current political climate of anti-immigrant sentiment of this Administration, along with being "fed up" with the general misinformation related to undocu-topics are fundamental reasons some participants are highly selective of the sites they trust to provide accurate information. They reiterate that sharing things going on in your life is good and family appreciate the update, yet must be done in moderation. Privacy, security and info-sharing online is something participants do with specific intention. There is no substitute for a strong social and support network where face-to-face engagement with allies is the best way to share information. IN the focus group, one participant made it known she has at times been completely without social media, only engaging in select new outlets online. When I asked why she returned to social media, she state that family pressure convinced her to re-activate her social platforms.

Therefore, I also argue undocu-students indeed participate and use online environments to seek creative solutions to undocu-concerns and seek advice or engage in a conversation that may be fruitful. However, these participants made it clear they are not afraid or unwilling to disengage from the information and technology when are close to or have reached what I call undocu-fatigue. This is similar the 'push pack' Morrison & Gomez (2014) discuss, with an added twist that stressors include the topic on immigration and push-back due to a sense of personal demoralization or fear for self. Undocu-info needs are steeped in dynamic complexity and intersectionality of race, gender, class, and politics, among others. The technology available to participants in this study was fairly standard; all had smartphones, access to computers and tablets. For this group of social media and technology users, when they share snippets of their rich and diverse undocu-lives online, they do so with great care and would appreciate the addition of a 'dislike-thumbs down' or 'this is fake' "reaction" option.

## 5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

I hope this will add to the field of infosci in a way that matters, especially in a way that will affect how institutions address the needs of undocu-students. I am concerned with the current Administration that the anti-immigrant sentiment will only increase. I wonder if like in previous years, undocu-students will retreat to the shadows once more. At the same time, I have to believe that institutions of higher educational are responsive to the needs of their students, all of them, even the most vulnerable, despite the odds and statistics.

To summarize a few important points in this work, despite the label and connotations a "tech savvy" millennial generation, online information and technology access *does not necessarily meet the needs* of undocumented students when it came to college-related info-needs**.** Interpersonal connection such as direct staff support is the preferred way in which this vulnerable

population satisfied their information needs. This disconnect may be due to the complex nature of their undocu-student needs which can include needing help with legal topics, intricate financial and scholarship help, securing medical assistance and mental health and well-being.

This is in addition to the usual student challenges that can include academic advising, time to degree/completion challenges and the challenges of retention and completion for first generation, low income students. Higher education staff, faculty and administers can help better meet the complex needs of undocu students. “Face-to-face communication” is how undocu-info needs are most significantly satisfied in their info-needs, calling for the importance of safe spaces that act as Information Grounds (IG). These practices can be complemented but are not replaced by printed and online resources, an important point for educators, administrations and public policy officials to reflect on, especially as resources are limited and counselors and advisors have an increased case load of students.

Furthermore, some higher education institutions have strong first-years programs, while others do not. This can be a source of support for the needs of undocu- students with proper undocu-ally training. High schoolers should also not be neglected, and perhaps “completion coaches” who are attune to the needs of undocu-students can be hired to assist counselors who have large student caseloads.

Finally, although not the preferred way to address undocu-needs, online tools and information resources are still very important. Online resource pages and ‘spaces’ can create a sense of belonging based on common interests, experiences and identities, generate a channel for humor, health and well-being, strengthen interpersonal networks and connections, and receive accurate and updated information sharing. Still, the things that can make it beneficial can also make it a detriment, where students can experience anti-immigrant sentiments, biased hate

speech and misinformation. Information is important to undocumented students in higher education as it can facilitate access, impact funding, and can make the difference between continuing or dropping out. Educational institutions can meet the needs of undocu-students by understanding their information behaviors, what their needs are and how they prefer satisfy those needs.

# Chapter 6. CONCLUSIONS

The study of undocumented student populations is increasing in several academic disciplines, although less so from the information science lens. This research is one of many more studies needed to further unpack and expound on the multi-faceted nature of immigrant undocumented populations, especially undocu-students in higher education. Using three methodological approaches including a) participatory photography (photo voice) interviews, b) an online document review and a c) focus group gathering, I interviews n=11 undocu-students in higher education in an effort to address the following research questions:

1) What is the nature of the information needs and seeking behavior of undocumented students at the college level?

2a) How are online (digital) and offline (face-to-face) connections and networks used to address the information-needs related to undocu-content? The second angle of this research question is, b) How do undocumented students express their undocu-lives in online platforms?

I used a qualitative exploratory approach, framed through a social justice framework (Jolivétte, 2015), and situate higher education, info-behaviors and the Nepantla state of being ("in-between") to scaffold students' liminal experience and center on their undocu-lives in what I call **Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF) .**

The answers to these research questions; First, the nature of information needs and behavior of undocu-students at the college level are multifaceted and complex, yet not all entirely related to educational needs, but addressing them is crucial to mitigating 1) an uncertain legal status which creates a constant in-between/liminal stance compelling undocu-students to engage in information seeking and sharing that bridges this liminality at critical point in their

education, including the latter part of their high school years and the formative years in college, 2) requiring undocu-students to identify or develop trusted interpersonal networks who are professionals well versed in undocu-info (staff, faculty, teacher, fellow student), who will offer assistance to navigate academic journeys in a holistic way that includes personal, legal, emotional and financial support.

Second, connections and networks of support are used to mitigate critical information deficits experienced by undocu-students who depend/rely on both online and offline networks, but prefer face-to-face connections and a physical space such as an Information Ground (Fisher 2005) where support from undocu-verse staff (faculty, teacher, fellow student, etc.) is able to satisfy undocu-core needs, identified as 1) Home, Family and Community, 2)Motivation, 3) Uncertainty Security, 4) Legality and Citizenship, 5) Health and Well Being, 6) Identity, 7) Help, Service and Advocacy, 8) Work and Labor and 9) Information and Sharing (people & online networks). *For the second angle of this question*, undoc-students express their lives online in various ways including multiple identity layers of liminality and engagement in online groups, monitoring of organization websites and participating in social networks to strengthening their own networks and knowledge in order to 1) seek undocu-specific information and monitor (keep informed) overall climate and news related to immigration and education, 2) as a tool to share content on important achievements and creative solutions to undocu-concerns, understand the 'model undocu-minority' label, yet are not afraid to disengage from the information and technology (push-back) when undocu-fatigue is reached.

**Positionality and Limitations**

I do not take lightly undocu-student's positionalities, nor my own. The current political climate is one that is hostile towards many marginalized communities, including immigrant and undocu-communities. Undocu-community is under siege; many undocu-students are experiencing a high level of anxiety and many have professional plans after college and for several in this study, they have professional jobs with various employers, and now those futures are uncertain. Graduate school is on hold for several. The vulnerabilities which underpin undocu-lives is constant and I acknowledge the privilege and responsibility I have as a researcher to be sensitive, respect and protective of knowledge I am privy to. Given this, there are several limitation in this study. As a qualitative study, interviewing 11 students offers an introductory view into the lives of undocu-students, not generalized answers of how undocu-students info-seek and behave. This can also have limitations` in the online document review, given the small selection of sites based on so few recommendations. Second, participatory photography and the prompt I used lends itself to semi-structured interviews and an iterative process of collecting data, perhaps missing out on the benefit of a direct questionnaire, for example, that is specific and asks about information seeking specifically and a bit less about the holistic lives of undocu-students. There can also be a power imbalance as a 'researcher' when working with students, even if I myself am also a student.

There are limitation in the online document review selection; I am only surveying the 11 participants in the study and asking for their top three sites. So the selection of site review is limited to whatever is suggested by participants. This creates the challenge of not reviewing other sites that I as a researcher with interest and expertise in undocu-issues and education find compelling and rich in information. The small sample size presents limitations as a way of checking websites to track information behavior. Finally, I acknowledge my positionality as a

researcher from a 'tier one' research institution, a place of privilege and power, and my non-neutral stance on political conditions that have only made educational conditions for undocumented students even more difficult.

**Significance**

Despite their position of uncertainty, undocu-students offer precious and intimate information that educational institutions can learn from, those most impacted by barriers on campuses, intentional or not. If undocu-students can be brave and share their experiences despite their vulnerable status, and if institutions claim to value equity, diversity and inclusion, then addressing undocu-student lives as a holistic endeavor is important.

Second, this work highlights the ways in which the promise of Plyler v. Doe (1982) can demonstrate how the investment in 'education-for-all' is an investment in youth and the future of progress and development, irrespective of status. Providing access and ensuring completion in higher education is a continuation of this 'investment.' Undocu-students are graduating from high school and are attending college, and each year more are graduating from college. There isn't yet much data on the number of graduate level undocu-students. However, those numbers are growing; undocu-students become undocu-grads and are already a part of this society. They are not going anywhere. The hashtag #HeretoStay sums it up succinctly. For all intents and purposes, they are citizens, American. Ensuring that a society's most vulnerable are taken into considering and included is both humane and paramount. Finally, developing a deeper understanding of this population's information behavior allows researchers, academic administrations at two and four year colleges, support staff, faculty and educators to better understand needs and challenges undocu-students' face. Deepening this knowledge can help

facilitate, improve retention and widen access for undocu-students in higher education. This is important because there is growing data that suggests staff, faculty and education professionals can do more to decrease bias and discrimination against undocu-students, who report high levels of unfair or negative treatment due to their legal status by faculty, counselors, administrators and staff in departments such as financial aid, housing, admission and other 'first contact' offices on campuses. Budgets are moral documents and making the most informed policy and budgetary decisions in ever-tight education budgets matters. Listen to undocu-lived experiences of your students, and acknowledge their work, efforts and capabilities.

**Future Directions, Future Imaginary**

In researching the information needs and behaviors of undocu-students, I have looked at needs and behaviors regardless of age by including community college and university students, as well as graduate students. The issue of age is not a significant factor when it come to the institutional struggles undocu-students face. Instead, the liminality and vulnerability experienced by undocu-students point to critical information needs related to their education, even though they may not all be needs related to education, with legality, financial stressors and physical/mental wellbeing among the multiple and complex needs. Future research opportunities are many. First, more research is needed which specifically looks at race and gender among undocumented students and communities, for example black undocu-communities. An example is the work of the **UndocuBlack Network** as an important marker in the need for the inclusion of Black communities in the current immigration narrative, as their mission states, "to "Blackify" this country's understanding of the undocumented population and 2) to facilitate access to resources for the Black undocumented community," in an effort to foster a more "inclusive immigrant

rights and racial justice movements that advocate for the rights of Black undocumented individuals, provide healing spaces, and kinship to those with intersecting identities" ("UndocuBlack Network", 2018). A 2017 Pew report indicated the rise of African immigrants in the U.S., yet there is more research needed which specifically delved into undocumented African immigrants (Anderson). However, there is also a need to exploring the experience and lives of Black immigrants from other countries such as Latin America (Afro-Latin Americans), and other nations. Black immigrants can often be more vulnerable and susceptible due to the long standing biases and discrimination, which only compound the vulnerabilities experienced when they are an immigrant (language, income, culture shock, work), are undocumented (uncertainly, legality, deportability), and are Black in America (racism, prejudice, police state violence).

Second is a deeper exploration of what the consequences have been for students who disclosed under DACA. Undocu-students understand the 'necessary evil' of disclosing their status and the risks involved when participating in programs like DACA because it exposes or 'outs' them, placing themselves and their families in danger. Students have expressed **guilt and anger** with themselves and a federal program that promised relief from deportation. What (if anything) are these students and their families doing? Are they 'preparing' or have a contingency plan? What of those that have already been deported, often referred to as *"los otros DREMers"*- how are they fairing in a country they said they did not know? What institutional, educational, cultural and language barriers are they facing? What about military veterans and single mothers; are they more vulnerable to local geopolitical powers and violence (financially motivated extortion or kidnapping)? Are they integrating into their country and if so how (how not)? For

those deported, how/do they use technology to keep in contact with their loved ones? Do communications or social media platforms help keep connections strong, how, why or why not?

Third, there are several benefits to online resources, despite the many deficits with educational institution sites and the preference for peer-to-peer, people support. However, I suggest more specific apps could be useful if they were available, some type of online resource or live service that ensures anonymity while addressing education-related answers. This can provide quick answers to questions which may have simple answers, or provide information on office and staff locations as a potential follow-up where the student can make a call to address their specific needs, and then decide if meeting in person is needed or is safe. Would this work? What would this look like? What could an undocu-user centered design look like? Is this a 'college call center'? Is it a more interactive site, with an ability to connect in a 'live messenger chat' capability, like with retail sites? What would a shift towards 'customer service' approach in addressing educational needs look like and how can technology help? Does it harm? Would complex needs be met, missed, exacerbated? How can an Undocu-Student Information Framework (USIF), which consider liminality and information behavior in higher education, inform this process?

Finally, how can libraries be included in this equation in an effort to address not just educational needs of undocu-students but undocu-community members in general? Are libraries being under-utilized by this demographic? What are the info seeking habit and needs of undocumented students who use public libraries? As an undocumented young student, I did not know the local library was a place to borrow book for free with free computer time until I was in the 5$^{th}$ grade. Despite the book mobile deliveries and migrant literacy reading programs I took advantage of, I assumed everyone had books delivered to their barrio and was unaware a larger

place existed with bookshelf after bookshelf of amazing books. This was a common secret for the children of some undocumented immigrants. How can library science also benefit from, participate in and grown in its research endeavors by including the needs and behaviors or undocumented populations specifically?

I purposefully framed this qualitative approach in a social justice framework (Jolivétte, 2015), situating higher education, info-behaviors and the Nepantla state of being ("in-between") to scaffold students' liminal experience in an effort to better understand their behaviors and needs, but also to center undocu-students' lived experience as knowledge and expertise. They are the experts. Yet the next step in participatory research is action. My hope is that this work will contribute the field of information science not only by providing a deeper understanding of this population's info-need and behaviors, but also allow researchers, academic administrations, supporting staff and educators to better understand what the needs are, where the gaps exist and contribute to proving equitable access for undocu-students in higher education in a powerful, affirming, and validating way.

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# APPENDICES

## 1st Coding Scheme - UNDOCU-STUDENTS (iterative)

1. Home, Family & Community
   - 5.1 This IS home
   - 5.2 Belonging/Where is home
   - 3.2 'Nuclear Family'
   - 3.1 Friends as family
   - 3.3 Undocu-friendships
   - 3.4 Marriage

2. Motivation
   - 8 'American Dream'
   - 8.1 Personal Growth, Self-Improvement
   - 8.2 Education
   - 8.3 Family
   - 8.4 Culture, Spirituality, Xenophobia
   - 8.6 Creating Memories

3. Identity
   - 6.1 Undocumented
     - 6.1.1 DREAMers
     - 6.1.3 DACAmented
   - 5.5 Undocu-status
   - 6.2Gender/Queer
   - 6.3 Pride in Culture (incl. language)
   - 6.5 Understanding world
   - Border

4. Legality & Citizenship
   - 13.1 DACA Renewal
   - 13.2 Advance Parole/ Travel
   - 13.3 Other Official Documentation
   - 13.4 Legal Aid, Questions, Assistance
   - 13.5 Costs/Expense/Money
   - Work
   - 12.1 Social Advocacy Work
   - 12.2 Uncertainty
   - 12.3 Activities
   - 12.4 Pride

5. Security and Uncertainty
   - 10.1 Deportability
   - 10.2 Rights, Advocacy, Justice
   - 10.3 Authorities (ICE, DHS, UCSIS)
   - 10.4 Bullying, Violence
   - 10.5 Racism
   - 10.6 Privilege
   - (TRUMP)

6. Health & Emotional Well Being
   - 11.1 Stress
     - 11.1.1 Uncertainty of Immigration/DACA
     - 11.1.2 Political Elections
     - 11.1.3 Fear of Deportation/Detention
   - 11.2 Medical Attention/Urgent Care
   - 11.3 Insurance/Health Services
   - 11.4 Support/Advice/Therapy
   - Entertainment & Fun

2.1 Food, Exercise, Nature
2.2 Gatherings/Celebrations
2.3 Art
2.4 Music
2.5 Humor

7. Help, Service & Advocacy
   4.1 Political Advocacy
   4.2 People Helping People
   4.3 Orgs Helping People
   4.4 Food Insecurity

8. Information & Sharing (people networks vs online networks)
   7.1 Technology Platforms & Tools
      7.1.1 Facebook
      7.1.2 Twitter
      7.1.3 Instagram
      7.1.4 Scan Genie
      7.1.5 IM
      7.1.6 Snap Chat
      7.1.6 Other
   7.2 News & Information Sharing
      7.2.1 Media outlets
      7.2.2 Word of Mouth
      7.2.3 Social Media
      7.2.4 Organizations
      7.2.5 Educators (counselors, advisors, teachers)
   Content Creation, Sharing
      7.3.1 Photos
      7.3.2 Music
      7.3.3 Resources, Resource Pages, Info

Rev ~~9/18/16, 11/10/16, 2/20/17, 4/12/17, 6/22/17~~

| | 2st Coding Scheme - UNDOCU-STUDENTS (iterative) | |
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| **Open Code** | Properties, description | **Example from Interviews** |
| **Code 1: Home, Family & Community** | **Relates to items such as 1) where is home, 2) Belonging and Liminality, 3) 'Nuclear Family', 4) Friends as family (undocu-friendships, and 5) Marriage and relationships**<br><br>Participants discuss the idea of home, what is home and where is it, either concretely as a country of origin, or what and where is home now, or where they were 'raised' in the U.S., the only home many have known. The idea of 'where one belongs', a sense of belonging, where some feel their place lays, and conversely, where they don't feel they belong. This is often a contradiction because participants 'feel' as the US is their 'home,' for many there is no recollection of a native homeland, and yet they still feel as if they don't belong, which speaks to an 'in between' or liminal state. 'Where is home' is also discussed in the context of who is family, or who is the nuclear support that creates a sense of belonging and community. For example, friends can act as family, especially in cases where participants may not have extensive or nearby nuclear family members, they rely equally, if not more, on friends to offer support and in essence part of the extended family. Friends, more specifically 'undocu friendships' are an excellent example of how friends can develop into family-like support because of a common shared experience regarding status, shared personal struggles, educational pathways and challenges, and in general similar concerns ad challenges that can be impacted by being undocumented. Relationships in family and community are critical, and often lead to strong non-plutonic connections, | "well because how my parents were able to get our house is that back in the day you could get loans, even if you were undocumented and that's how my parents bought it. But we're been receiving a lot of notices in the mail saying, hey, we want to buy your property because our property's big, and a lot of people coming and seeing our house, and even some company went as far as to show us a drawing and say 'this is what your property could look like, and made a drawing of apartments and a parking lot and how much the building could be worth and how much they could sell it for. And to me, I was pissed and hurt because I was like, I've lived in this house for 18 years and you're doing this? THIS is my HOME!"<br><br>  <br><br>"I started thinking that I don't have a good relationship with my mother. Our relationship was has always been very difficult, precisely because I don't believe in a lot of religious ideas that she does. But I was thinking about my mother, even though she and I don't get along very well, I was like, yeah, my mom, she is an original DREAMer."<br><br>"Yeah. But home, home would be again the idea of, of selfhood, and thinking, and ... and nature. ... It's interesting because I don't include my family anymore. And that is something that I am conscious about. Because again I used to be like the whole, the whole traditional values of like, oh, family and stuff, but it's weird because I'm, it's been extremely weird, because I barely see them now."<br><br>"Soul sista! We're in front of the Taj Mahal in India. I think our friendship got stronger… we roomed, lived together for 2 weeks, but we also did one of the scariest things with each other which was to leave the country and try to come back, and we literally went to the other side of the world, which who the fuck would have thought that." |

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| | such as relationships and marriage. This presents a set of new challenges depending on whether the partner is also undocumented or is a citizen. Nonetheless, here again, undocu-status has an ever present role in the relationship, again summons question of where is home and where will a 'home' be developed and nurtured in the future, given the uncertainly on the sense of belonging and liminality. | "Like for me, even at home, whenever like my sister, brother and mom are home, they have to have coffee ceremony, and they are there, they can usually for 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours, we just talk and we have coffee and you have. So first, you like boil it first. It has names, like you call it AWEL, so you go first, second, third… You don't get a big cup, the cups are very tiny [called FINJAL], so you'd drink first, that's the stronger one, with less water. They put water and they pour it and wait and talk and give you the second cup, that's called KALE'I, then DEREJA [to be blessed] everything has names." |
| **Code 2: Motivation** | **Relates to items such as 1) the idea of the 'American Dream', 2) Education and educational goals, 4) Perseverance, Persistence**<br><br>Participants discuss this theme in all interview. For many who were brought to the U.S. or came alone as children or young adults, education and the promise of a better future is a key factor towards migration. The pursuit of the 'American Dream' is a prevalent topic, but there is mixed feelings about what this means, the sacrifices made towards achieving it, the shortcomings of this narrative and a questioning of whether this goal merits the hardships, struggles and strife that is prevalent in their lives. There is a clear critique of the idea of the 'American Dream'.<br><br>Education is a key factor for participants and they speak of it with a mix of emotions including pride (graduation season prompts creative, expressive mortar board hat messages of pride as undocumented), disdain and trauma. For all, their educational pursuits have not been easy and have required them to be ingenious, creative and persistent when it comes to enrolling, continuing and completing their (higher) education. A striking point is that given the current political situation, | **"**So I think of like, I didn't necessarily grow up in México or El Salvador, but I have had another relative who have to come here and as they are older and they are always thinking 'oh, the US is a land of opportunities,' but for me, the land of opportunities is modality more like the land of monotony and this kind of boring border."<br><br>"My mom had to cross three borders to get here. And she did this and she left El Salvador when the Civil War broke out. Yeah, that was in the 80s. And so she came all this way. She did so much at such a young age, I think she must have been around 17 or 18 when she left. And you know, crossing borders and going through these different new countries. She was able to adapt."<br><br>"I was so disappointed and just so disillusioned with everything here that the solution with everything here that I thought about leaving and going back to Mexico. But I decided to against it, just because I can at least still make it work, I will FIND a way to make it work here because here I feel that at least I can work the system, or at least I've learnt to, to some extent. Whereas over there, I know nothing and I know no one. I don't know if I could actually work in the system to my advantage. Or even that as a means to survival. So that's why I don't want to go back to either of those countries."<br><br>  <br><br>"Never in my life did I say "I am going to grad school [at iSchool]" I don't know if I was lucky or not, but I only apply to one school and I got accepted. I feel myself that I still have things to do, to work on, but just to be here, it is just unrealistic. So, for me to be here, it's like unrealistic, it's just… I made MADE IT WORK, hahaha." |

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| | some wonder if their educational successes will matter, wonder whether they will be able to work in the discipline where they have their degree. Some have expressed graduate school aspiration but again wonder if this is a futile pursuit. Despite the disenchantment of their situation, participants expressed a clear drive, desire for personal growth and intellectual fulfillment, and sharp 'can do' attitude that was expressed in focused perseverance and persistence. Participants shared ways they found solutions to challenges and attitudinal drive that compelled them to continue to seek solutions, no matter the odds. This included a drive to prove naysayers wrong, debunk the stereotypes and imposed biases on their person. | "You know, being from Yakima Valley, being Hispanic, being undocumented, you know, you get framed, you get stereotyped to be another drop-out high school, working in the fields, working low-paying jobs, then later have kids. That would be your life. It's a... I wanna break that stereotype."<br>  |
| **Code 3: Identity** | **Relates to items of 1) being undocumented (ex., DREAMers, DACAmented, 2) Pride in LGBTQI, gender bias awareness general gender, 3) Pride in Culture, Language, including Undocu- status**<br><br>Participants discuss the theme of identity in complex and dynamic way, despite a shared citizenship status. Identity for participants includes sexuality, language, culture and being undocumented. For many, being a student is an integral part of their identity, part of their life that shapes and defines their 'coming of age' from childhood to adulthood. Being an undocumented student ironically brings a status that participants know and understand and in some instances miss. For example, this is expressly missed by participants who have recently graduated and are now in the work force or seeking employment. The perceived "safely" that higher education provides is missed, for some expressed as the freedom to | "So, for me like, being a student is a part of my identity. I miss being a student right now. I miss it so much. It's not just like being in dialogue with community of other learners, but just having that status as a student."<br><br>"even with other Salvadorians, I don't really feel I am a part of it, or other Mexicans, or even other DREAMers. I don't feel I am a part of it, because a lot of them are about assimilation and that's the one thing I am against. I am not for assimilating."<br><br>"I have built this sense of in my identity of me… I'm very and extremely analytical sometimes [laughing], like I can get to the point. I actually had a conversation with a person, the ACE conference with MEChA, 'cause we had to watch over the high school students… we started talking about immigration and what it mean to be undocumented, like, an immigrant, and things like that."<br><br>"while we were in India, we did not think ONCE about being undocumented… That wasn't our thing there. We were NOT… were simply were NOT… and that felt like a relief. But the fact I've been there over a year ago, I realize that the experience was really powerful and that was one of the reason that, to be able to share it with somebody so special, like a life-changing moment, and then not having to be thinking about being undocumented." |

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| | express themselves as undocustudents or the comradery with other colleagues, allies and undocustudents. Pride in culture, language and sexual orientation or gender is also expressed strongly. Participants who identify as LGBTQI discuss a "coming out twice," once as undocumented and second as gay/queer. But "coming out" as undocumented is expressed by all participants as something they either express freely, with caution, or not at all, detailing the negotiating factors they must assess when determining when undocustatus can/should be shared. Interestingly, most expressed a preference and self-identified as 'undocumented,' not DREAMer or DACAmented, and were keenly aware of the political implication of such a label, as well as aware of the "privilege" that DACA granted status brings- not all undocumented students in higher education have DACA status. Finally, gender was discussed specifically by participants, and how culture and language can influence and perpetuate gender biases and sexism, as well as cultural gender norms and expectations. There is a political nature to this topic that seems to lend itself well to the context of political activism of undocu-activism, given the "intersectional" nature and complexity of undocu-identity. | "the reason I posted these pictures on FB, and it wasn't just because I was doing this project… I wanted to show my friends a different view of who I am. Because they see me and 'oh yea, he took a picture of a baseball game, or he took a culture of food.' They never thought about my school, they never knew about my school. They never knew where I was going, where I was a grad student. So, I wanted to show that to them, and tried to be really big, and I got quite a few likes and comments and that's why I liked the project. It captured the way I do things, the way I take pictures, telling a story." [image] |
| **Code 4: Legality & Citizenship** | **Relates to items such as 1) DACA Renewal, 2) Advance Parole/ Travel (other official documentation, 3) Legal Aid, Questions, Assistance**<br><br>Participants are deeply engaged the topic of citizenship and the mechanisms that is part of the immigration system. They expressed an | "DAPA was pretty much like DACA in which we would have granted work permit for parents of US citizens or US residents, legal residents. So a lot of people could essentially like gotten better pay, find better jobs, stop being abused hopefully, whatever jobs they have. But it is on hold. So when DAPA came out, and the President Obama made that statement that only parents of U.S. citizens or U.S. legal residents are gonna be able to get this permit, there was a huge let-down." |

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| | understanding of the legal processes related to their case, how marriage, asylum, and U Visas can impact status, for example. This includes having family members who are U.S. citizens (or other legal residency), commonly referred to as 'mixed family status.' These family member can represent a pathway to citizenship, but also represent a key fear factor: the idea that undocumented family members will be deported, leaving behind their 'legal status' family members.<br>For those who have been able to travel outside of the U.S. via the Advanced Parole option, participants say the process is expensive, emotional, but ultimately worth it. Questions, concerns and assistance with regards to immigration law and its machination is a topic participants discuss with frustration and knowledge. | "I graduated on June 16, 2012, the day before DACA was announced. And the day that DACA was announced, my mom got those text messages, and she said, 'XXX, the DREAM ACT passed,' and I was like, that's impossible, yes! Next thing you know I'm at El Centro sharing this whole story of like, what this would mean to me,' and the next day I'm graduating from high school, which was very like, WHAT?!"<br><br>"So I'm at UWB, that's all of my DACA paperwork blurred out… it was my 1st renewal, so I had to re-apply once before and that was all the papers… One, I literally took the paperwork to campus because the Bothell campus is really close to a post office, so I was like, "I'll just mail it from there cuz there's no way I'll get home on time to mail it. Um, I'm holding my money order with a sad face, cuz it hella money, and I had my supervisor at the time take the picture of me."<br><br>"He [younger sibling] also signifies a pathway for citizenship to my parents, cuz he was born here, so he's like the trophy child, you know, he can provide that for them because he was born here." |
| **Code 5: Work** | **Relates to 1) Work because of DACA 2) Uncertainty in labor or having multiple jobs 3) Pride in work, and 4) Ownership/ Wares**<br><br>All participants work at least part time, with several working full time or several part time jobs while still attending school full time. The number that is granted under DACA allows them to work in a legitimate way in better paying, better condition employment than they may have had in the part. However, not all participants were DACA recipients. A few did not qualify and were undocumented yet still worked, attended school and made it work. Participants expressed pride in their work (academic or non-academic setting), yet have concerns over future employment opportunities but are confident that no matter what, the will continue to survive and thrive. For this | "This actually is really important to me because when I was pregnant, I didn't think I was gonna breast feed. I was of the mindset that I was going straight to work cuz I need to work. I was in so much debt, I need to start paying debt.<br><br>"No I didn't have the money and I even applied for FAFSA, but I was naïve and didn't know you couldn't! I just, my mom, when I turned 15 my mom said, soon after I got here said here is your fake social security number… go get a job."<br><br>"I just got my work permit a few years ago, but I've been focusing on school and I said, 'you know, in this relationship, I will get a job that pays good money and I would like to pay back, while I focus on school, it's what I love to do and I'm good at it."<br><br>"Luckily with DACA, that was a big help. It allowed me to come back, even though I couldn't apply for a certain scholarship, I still haven't received any financial either or applied for any scholarships. But the fact I was able to work and get better pay has allowed me to come back and finish. But still, you know, I think of a few more weeks I will be graduating and it hasn't hit me yet." |

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| | example many reference their parents who have been able to survive even without the protections of a program such as DACA. Participants also discuss their pride in ownership of good and wares, for example a home, a vehicle, a bigger apartment, and better living conditions in general. Interesting, despite this pride, there is a conflict with the intersection of ownership and acquisition of good and its 'fulfillment' as part of the "American Dream." For participants with property, they share a concern for what may happen to their achievement. Participants with partners or with children specifically express this concern. Decisions they make impact more than themselves. | "So coming out of college it was difficult for me to find a job and I don't this position as a college and career access specialist at Tyee High school because the person who's job this is was going on maternity leave, and they were like she's leaving for this amount of time- do you want to come in and sub for her? I said sure cuz it was a long time and I knew the person who referred me and they said this would look really great for you cuz now you have experience working in schools and it looks good. So I was like ok I will take the position even though it's not something that I wanted in my mom's eyes I was supposed to graduate and get a really good job, right?"  |
| **Code 6: Security and Uncertainty** | **Relates to 1) Deportability, 2) Rights, Advocacy, Justice, 3) Authorities (ICE, DHS, UCSIS), 4) Bullying, Violence or Hate (anti-immigrant) and 5) Privilege/Guilt (why did I make it and other did not)**<br><br>Participants express a concern with their security and uncertainty for their future. Despite being DACA recipients, deportability is a relevant topic but is more so for non-DACA undocumented. Participant express a keen awareness of the anti-immigrant sentiment that is often at the core of some of the 'push back' they have heard or receive personally, either from a co-worker, fellow students, in the media and on social media. There is a varying degree of political activism among participants, some clear leaders and spokespersons for the undocu-community and some not political in traditional ways such as rallies, marches, and other direct political advocacy. However, all express a clear idea of the rights and dignity that all | "just having that status as a students. I think there are some sort of quasi-protection. There are something certain things that cannot say right now. As where as if I were a student, it would be "oh yeah, she is a radical student, that's who she is." But I can't do that right now [laugh]. I look forward to being a student again."<br><br>"co-worker had never been undocumented, she got her papers in a different way, and I was telling her what all this meant, what it was and she said "you literally have to pay to work?" And I was like, oh shit… yea, because UW is a federal institution at the end of the day, who does E-VERIFY..."<br><br>"So that's the day… and you also the privilege I have to be able to have DACA, I acknowledge it cuz not everyone has it, and I think it's important for me to share that." "I'm not sure what's going to happen next. I'm waiting for my DACA renewal. So, until I have my DACA renewal I don't really know what's going to happen. I might go home and like spend some time with my mom and my dad and just figure out my life."<br><br>"the Principal basically wrote a letter and passed it out to students and when they read it, they interpreted the letter as ICE can come into the school and we won't do anything about it. And a lot of our students stopped coming to school because they said, 'what is the point of me going to school if ICE can come for me here? I might as well just stay home and wait for them there.' And a lot of students were really angry and really, |

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| | undocumented and immigrant community members deserve. Hate and anti-immigrant sentiments are currently high and participants feel this negative sentiment in many ways, including (for some) in the workplace, which should be a safe place.<br><br>Interestingly, several participants discussed the idea or 'self-deporting' or leaving the U.S. for the possibility of living in another country, either their homeland or another country which may be less hostile or where they can migrate legally and work. They are not entirely convinced they will live in the U.S. forever as their deportability looms heavy. Yet the idea of privilege and guilt came up several times. For most, coming to the U.S. was the desire of their parents, yet there is guilt not only from the perspective of the parent who feel distress to see their children in distress, as well as guilt on the part of the participant for 'having made it when so many others didn't,' as well as guilt that they are unhappy/disenchanted with the 'American Dream' yet know there is privilege in their success. This dichotomous feeling emerges as central to feeling uncertain (liminality) and unsafe. | they're SO amazing that they like scheduled a walk out because they were so pissed, and it was sabotaged by Admin."<br><br>"So I have mixed feeling, like one of those great but depressing kinda things… so when I graduated, something that I was struggling a lot with and still struggle with now is GUILT, right? Like the guilt of being the one who made it, the guilt of the first one, and being on Facebook I get to see a lot of what my high school friends do and a lot of them, including my best friend, they didn't get to go to college or graduate and I DID get to go and… I got to go because of people who guided me there, but for me, it's like I wish we could have all been there [crying], but we couldn't because not everyone had the same resources, but it also reminds me of how the people that I grew up with went to school but didn't get those opportunities the same as me and it's like a guilt… a guilt thing and I don't know how to work with it and I'm still learning how to navigate it."<br><br>Add from S and MC |
| **Code 7: Health & Well Being** | **Relates to 1) Stress and Support, 2) Fear (deportation/detention, physical harm 3) Medical & Health Services, 4) Gatherings/Celebrations, and 5) Humor & Arts**<br><br>Participants discuss heaviness, stressful and emotionally draining life situations that have pushed many to critical points. The stress they feel is visceral and consuming, so they seek ways to | "I was so afraid of going that I really didn't know much about DACA. I didn't keep up with it, but she said, 'I think there's something you can do,' and she gave me the money for the consultation and she helped me kick start the process, which is so scary.<br><br>"I had to work. My first year in the grad school, I had to be travelling from Yakima to Seattle back and forth. I had to make my schedule, you know, in such a way where I could come Friday mornings, have a class on Friday night and then have a class on Saturday. That would be the only way that I could come. So, and it took a toll on me, after a year driving. It was not easy." |

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| | mitigate these stresses by seeking support as well as offering it to others, on a one-on-one level or from group support. Due to their status, many do no quality for any medical coverage, especially those that are recent university graduates who no longer have access to university-linked health services. Mental health and self-care are prominent concerns for participants, and coping mechanisms range from depression, addiction, suicidal ideation, panic attacks, self-doubt, feelings of loneliness and isolation, ignoring 'the issue', physical activity (hiking, camping, painting) and even humor. Juxtaposing this stress and anxiety is the acknowledgement by several participants that despite this stress, they wonder if they would be who they are today if not for their trials and tribulations. That is, how different would they be, consciously and socially, if they had the "privilege" of citizenship, sparking an interesting introspective speculative reflection.<br>Gatherings and celebrations are also a way to relieve stress and offer/receive support, celebrating everything from birthday's graduations, and political victories. Many participants shared deeply personal struggles yet also expressed a salient optimism that will survive and continue with their personal and professional goals. This does not eliminate the presence of fear either from concrete entities such as law enforcement or other fear factors such as anti-immigrant hate crime. Participants describe 'self-care' and health as an ongoing process with deliberate intention to remember to take better personal care. | "at that point I was really really really worries about it, and I was really upset. But then over time you kinda just learn how to ahhh… [shrug] oh well, or like, eeeehhhh…. It'll happen when it happens, it's not going to happen anytime soon, but I know it will happen at one point, because it has to… they can only ignore the issue for so long and then they're going to have to do something about it."<br><br>"the lady who was checking me out was like 'you shouldn't pay for this, this is a lot of money,' and I told her that I just couldn't because I didn't qualify for insurance and I told her my situation and she told me she'll help you figure it out. So I go to this lady and I think it was at North Seattle College cuz they have a clinic there and I went there and I talked to her and I told her and she was like, 'are you one of those DREAMers?' And I said 'yea!' And she was like I "I know how to do this!' She said, 'it's tricky but I did help someone else already,' and then she started to fill out the paperwork and I was able to get help." |
| **Code 8:** | **Relates to 1) Political Advocacy, 2) Organizations of support (student and** | "There's three of us in this picture. We're in Olympia testifying for the Washington State DREAM Act. I don't know if it was passed or introduced, but there was this big campaign. This was in 2012-13, that school year. A lot of us who were undocumented |

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| **Help, Service & Advocacy** | **community orgs) and 3) Educational support (counselors, advisors, teachers, mentors)**<br><br>Participants express a range of political engagement, and their 'activism' ranges and manifests in varying ways. For some, their undocu-status links them to political activism and social movements for justice and equity, while others find different ways of political engagement which as more personal, for example speaking up in class when there is misguided information about undocu-topics and immigration, an act that can in itself lead to vulnerability and unwelcomed attention. Most participants discuss their networks of support and advocacy, joining support groups or establishing new ones with a more political directive. Not all organizations are political, and can simply offer general support. However, this theme is more salient because it specifically identifies politicization as central to the way in which service, support and advocacy is expressed. For those participants who did not seek group advocacy and help, they still sought help in the form of educational figures such as counselors who help with mental health, advisors in an academic setting, teachers in their high school, and mentors and mentorships relationships that have flourish. Participants spoke about their strong academic support or the non-existing academic support. All, however, pointed to key support person or key personnel in education, a point person that offered guidance, assistance and helped to navigate the educational maze. Ironically, undocu-students are very good at finding solutions to barriers and know college and university policy and rules well, are good about sharing information about what | literally rode down to Olympia with our cap and gown showing folks that, yo, we graduated and we want to go to school, and we need access to funding"<br><br>"it was really cool how I dedicated 2 years of my life to go to Olympia from Bothell or leaving South Seattle to be able to go there. That day Carlos got El Centro to let one of their employees drive us down to Olympia. Carlos was literally on the floor sitting cuz we didn't fit in the van. So yea… it's just a good reminder of how we were hustling for stuff to get things done. Yea… for change."<br><br>"To be a DREAMer or not be a DREAMer, gives you more access to information and allows you to process things, like at a lot young age. So if you're like DREAMers, in that sense means access to information really early on. Now let's say we're talking about DREAMers in college, they need information for resources, information for like support and help from, it can be like an entity, or it can be like an office, or wherever these resources are available."<br><br>"And it was just dope, that day I was like, I'm undocumented, woman of color, from Guatemala, and it's like, I don't know who the fuck you are but I'm fighting for me and for my people. And multiple students did the same with their own identities and that's the day that we realized how many people were hurting on campus becuz they didn't know other people who were like them, and their identities…"<br><br>"UW Bothell has been around for 26 years, so we can do a lot of things, so I think that was powerful for us to know that we literally re-shaped the whole university, cuz now, they're gona call it the center something about liberation, social justice… like it's not even gona have diversity or equity in it, which I think is dope."<br><br>-add more from MC |

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| | personnel is committed to helping resolve issues and are well versed at understanding that academic institutions are not always going to be accommodating and therefore they must rely on their political advocacy support and groups to seek and demands institutional support and recognition. Undocu-students are the leaders of the undocu-movement and many expressed skepticism for personnel and institutions that did not acknowledge their work and leadership. |  |
| **Code 9: Information & Sharing (people & online networks)** | **Relates to 1) Technology Platforms & Tools, 2) Information Sharing (social media, word of mouth) 3) News**<br><br>This theme overlaps most codes because information sharing an information seeking is a part of everything from what forms to fill out for school, USCIS, what scholarship funding is available, what things to avoid and how to navigate different things such as education, health care, transportation and political organizing. Social media is a powerful tool which participants use either to seek information or to share information or develop collaboration(s). They use various platforms but interestingly, for most, *Facebook* was their primary platform to share, seek and express information. For many, Facebook is their primary news source, or the Facebook pages of those few organizations they trust, for example Northwest Immigrants' Rights Project (NWIRP). This organization offers workshops on topics such as know-your-rights, and strategies to keep safe as undocu-communities and legal defense advice and clinics, and often take on cases related to deportation and removal orders. | "Yo creo que por es, y hasta ahorita no me gusta Facebook ni Instagram por que en cierta forma representa esa ideología de me, 'mira mi vida, hice esto, hoy pensé en esto, hoy tengo esto, y hasta cierto punto me recuerda, eh… mis imposibilidades, ¿verdad? The things that I can and can't do, and it just becomes a pity party in my head, so I just avoid technology. But yea… I had to find these."<br><br>"Those who didn't have any siblings who are U.S. citizens or U.S. legal residents knew their parents wouldn't be able to qualify. So then this meme started floating around on social media, the one that said "our parents are the original DREAMers." So I started to think about that…"<br><br>"I post a lot on Facebook. I post a lot of stuff about Lupita and about the environment, and about the things I messed up and cared about, twitter, and Instagram, and I'm using Snapchat. I stated using Snapchat."<br><br>"Pictures, yeah. Camera from my phone. Just use it for that, and um speak to people, Skype, and, you know, call people. So I'm using technology, but I'm... I actually−my computer that was given to me by a friend."<br><br>"So there's this whole social media thing about what it means to be a "low-pro" and a "high-pro" and basically, its so fucken funny… it got way too out of hand, but it was funny. People like Jose Antonio Vargas are high profile, that's what "high-pro" means. And then your "low-profile" which is like you're so deportable… so, here we are [laugh]… um, you know there are some things that make you "high-pro" and some things that make you "low-pro" like, going to India. We're like, we hella "high-pro" right now! So that was going on, and we posted this is hella "high-pro"!" |

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| | However, several participants talked about a 'technology push back,' a topic Professor Ricardo Gómez has researched in the past. Several participants express skepticism, stress and overwhelming sensations with news and information and as such, purposefully avoid social media or have suspend/inactivated their accounts. Another way to mitigate the stress of news is that several participants used social media and other medial platforms, but for entertainment purposes or general research purposes.<br>No single method of information seeking model emerged as prevalent with this group of participants. Their information ecosystem seemed to mirror that of general populations in their comparable age and gender demographic- college going or college educated users. However, where there was a significant uptake in use was in the ONLINE document analysis and the specific Facebook groups, specifically groups such as "I Have DACA", "DACA Updates and Renewals" and "DREAMers Only."<br>Word of mouth information seeking and sharing proved to be the most salient factor shared by participants. Trust worthy word of mouth information was critical to participants and most trusted the work of mouth more so that online information. Additionally, posted online information can be out dated or provide only a general overview. People, on the other hand, have details and can take into account the nuances of each undocu-status case. Furthermore, if people as info sharers do not know or can't address the info-need, they may be better equipped to info-seek on behalf of the undocu-student seeking specific help, info or support, usually because they are in a | "So yea, this is my favorite book so far… I have read this a couple of times. I first read it when someone posted about it on Facebook. The title I thought was catchy and I… mmm, I want to check it. The page I follow they usually post quotes from texts books and books like this and I said, this is interesting."<br><br>"I feel like they still need access to information and they still need access to technologies cuz like, some DREAMers that I know, like don't own a smart phone, or don't have like, you know… and that makes it harder to get acclimated to the world, right? Because everybody now, like has that and let's say, I'm a DREAMer that doesn't have access to a computer access to a phone, and I'm trying to get a job across campus, but I can't email someone or I'm trying to connect with my teammate about doing this… it makes it all harder to kind of acclimate to your environment, acclimate to living a normal life, kinda thing."<br><br>"In FB I like to share articles and I read, not very many, um, but if something catches my eye and I think it will be interesting to other, my friends, I know they will read it. It's something that I will post just to spark a discussion, something that I want to share. It can be any news, events, I try to stay away from what's happening now, you know with the cops, you know Baltimore and different things like that cuz that turns into a race discussion and I don't wanna have a race discussion with my friends."<br><br>"the reason I posted these pictures on FB, and it wasn't just because I was doing this project… I wanted to show my friends a different view of who I am. Because they see me and 'oh yea, he took a picture of a baseball game, or he took a culture of food.' They never thought about my school, they never knew about my school. They never knew where I was going, where I was a grad student. So, I wanted to show that to them, and tried to be really big, and I got quite a few likes and comments and that's why I liked the project. It captured the way I do things, the way I take pictures, telling a story. I like to tell stories, even though I don't have stories, or good ones," |

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| | position to broker information due to their professional position or their dedication to providing students support.<br>Finally, undocu-status disclosure is a topic that was not very salient. For example, a few participants discussed the first time they 'came out' to someone as undocumented, usually in an academic setting, with mixed results, some supportive and some outwardly discouraging. There was not enough information to know what key factors a participant needed to know when it was safe or necessary to share. | And it also was the first time that my partner came with me to a protest for immigration, yea! Hahahaha… and he wanted to go, like he really really wanted to go and he posted a picture on Facebook of us being there, you know being super supportive of it. So it also signifies that support and he's the supports me in the work that I do, that I can count on them when I need them to be there for me. So that's what that signifies. And I think he felt empowered because of the caption that he put on the post, it was like 'when you believe in something that's right you should fight for I,' or something like that, hehehe! |  |

NOTES:

Lingering Questions--

Where is stereotyping?

Is "regionality" and "humor" relevant here?

Is "Motivation" too big? Comparable Codes from Photo Interviews

Music? Art?

AH-HAS:

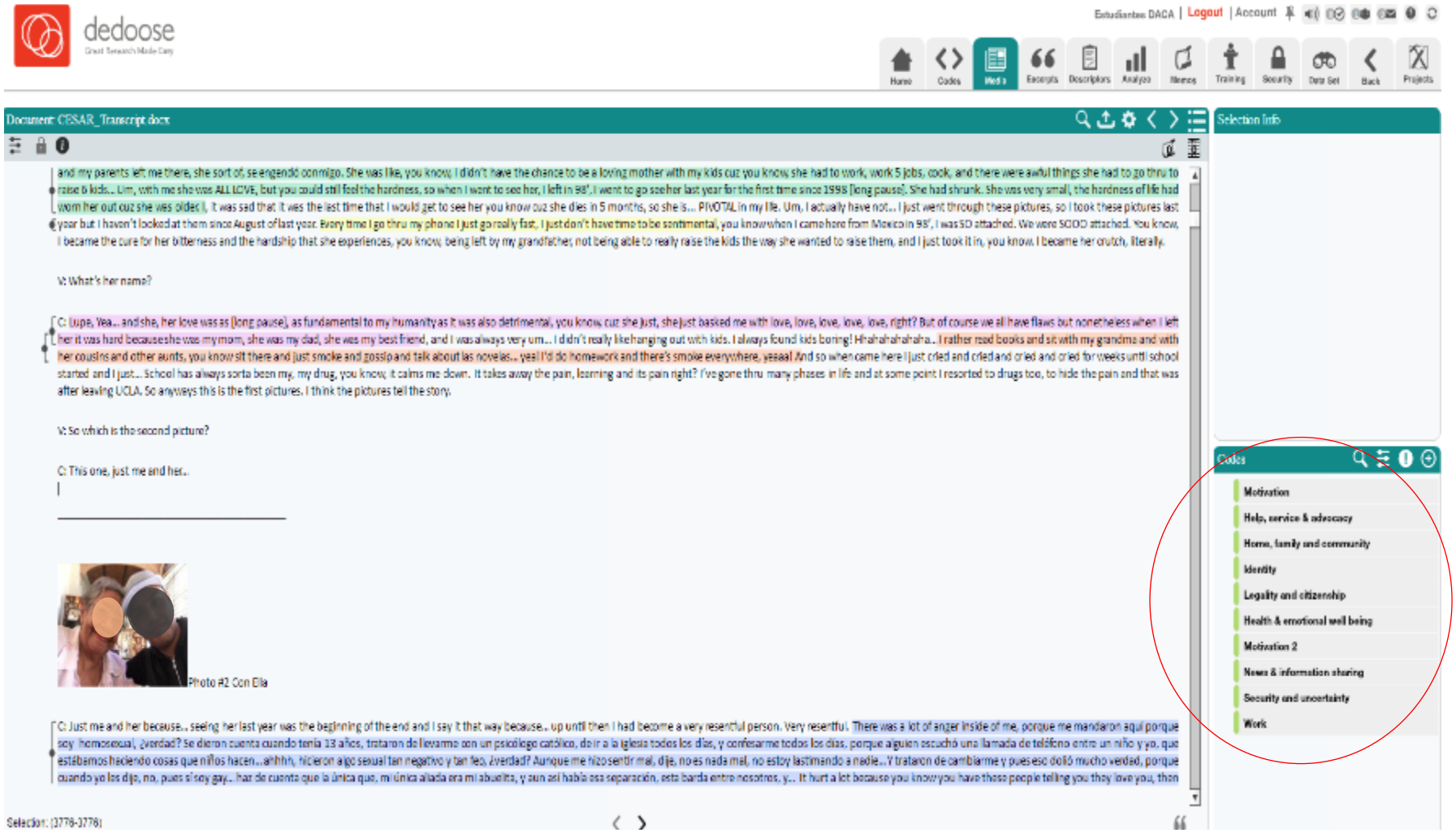
Note similar themes from Online Review!

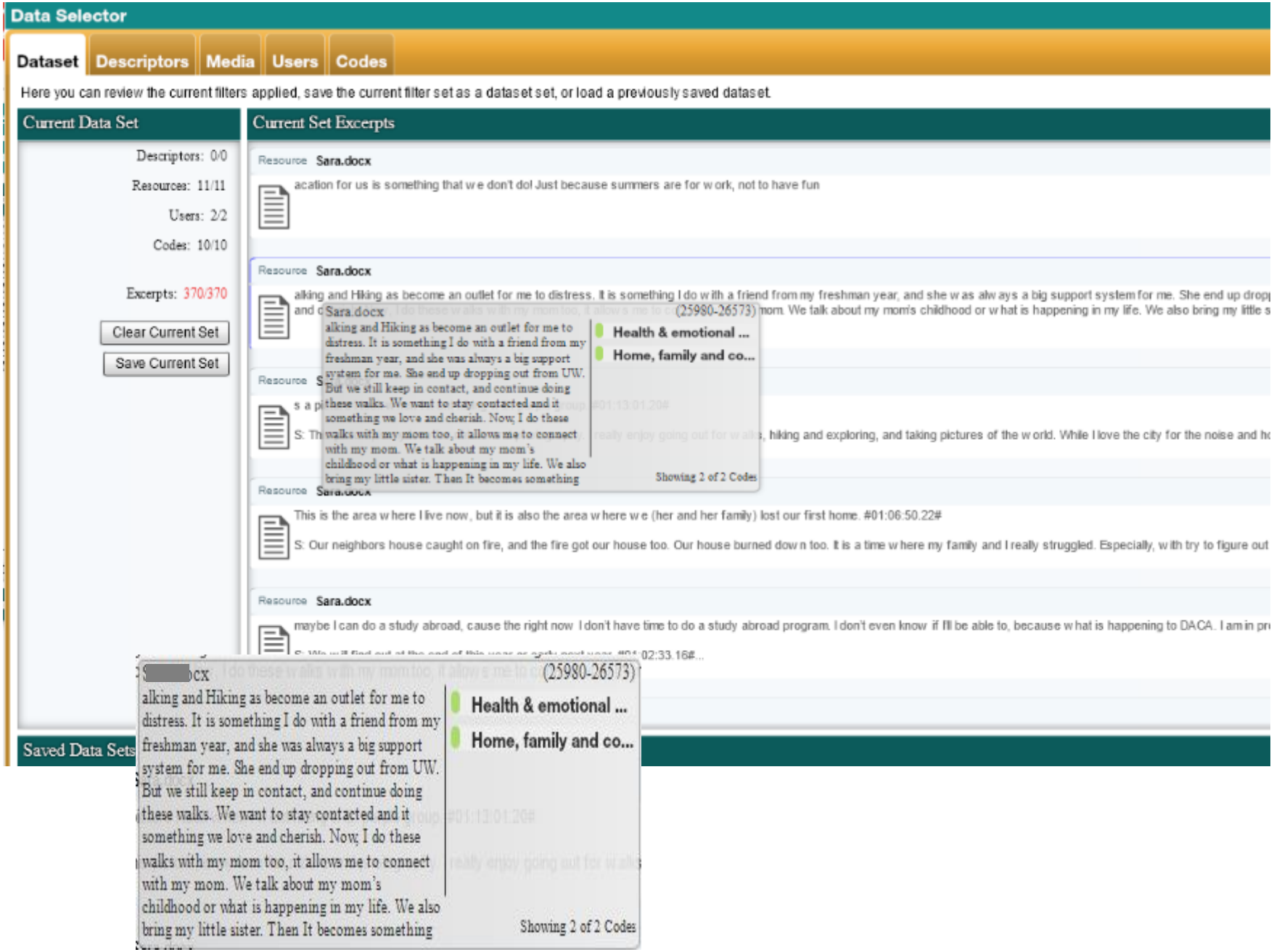
What is missing from interviews is interesting…

Graduate dreams, mis… on hold, a go, why bother…

~~Rev 7/10/17, 8/20/17, 9/12/17 10/12/17 11/10/17 12/20/17 01/26/18~~

# Sample Dedoose Coding




Data Selector
Dataset
Descriptors
Media
Users
Codes
Here you can review the current filters applied, save the current filter set as a dataset set, or load a previously saved dataset.
Current Data Set
Descriptors: 0/0
Resources: 11/11
Users: 2/2
Codes: 10/10
Excerpts: 370/370
Clear Current Set
Save Current Set
Current Set Excerpts
Resource Sara.docx
acation for us is something that we don't do! Just because summers are for work, not to have fun
Resource Sara.docx
alking and Hiking as become an outlet for me to distress. It is something I do with a friend from my freshman year, and she was always a big support system for me. She end up dropp
(25980-26573)
mom. We talk about my mom's childhood or what is happening in my life. We also bring my little s
Sara.docx
alking and Hiking as become an outlet for me to distress. It is something I do with a friend from my freshman year, and she was always a big support system for me. She end up dropping out from UW. But we still keep in contact, and continue doing these walks. We want to stay contacted and it something we love and cherish. Now, I do these walks with my mom too, it allows me to connect with my mom. We talk about my mom's childhood or what is happening in my life. We also bring my little sister. Then It becomes something
Health & emotional ...
Home, family and co...
Showing 2 of 2 Codes
Resource S
s a p
S: Th
, hiking and exploring, and taking pictures of the world. While I love the city for the noise and ho
Resource Sara.docx
This is the area where I live now, but it is also the area where we (her and her family) lost our first home. #01:06:50.22#
S: Our neighbors house caught on fire, and the fire got our house too. Our house burned down too. It is a time where my family and I really struggled. Especially, with try to figure out
Resource Sara.docx
maybe I can do a study abroad, cause the right now I don't have time to do a study abroad program. I don't even know if I'll be able to, because what is happening to DACA. I am in pr
Saved Data Sets
[redacted]ocx
(25980-26573)
alking and Hiking as become an outlet for me to distress. It is something I do with a friend from my freshman year, and she was always a big support system for me. She end up dropping out from UW. But we still keep in contact, and continue doing these walks. We want to stay contacted and it something we love and cherish. Now, I do these walks with my mom too, it allows me to connect with my mom. We talk about my mom's childhood or what is happening in my life. We also bring my little sister. Then It becomes something
Health & emotional ...
Home, family and co...
Showing 2 of 2 Codes