

Yulenni Venegas

Reflective Essay

UW Undergraduate Research Award

The primary information gathering tools I utilized in this research was previous research in the discipline, the analysis of current immigration policy, and the collection of primary source material in the form of interviews. Engaging the topics of mobilization of the Latino immigrant rights movement and state violence allowed me additionally integrating library resources in the research and expanding upon the resources available to me through additional research on the ground.

This project is situated within the intersection of Latino politics, mobilization, and state violence. Traditional social movement theory overemphasizes the importance of resources, concluding that the assembly of resources from a more privileged middle class is necessary for successful mobilization. However, cases of Latino mobilization run contrary to this norm. Additionally, this occurs under the discipline's understanding that Latinos are not highly political because of their lack of consistent voting. The majority of the literature on state violence and social movements emphasizes oppression as the use of penal state, with incarceration as the metaphorical riot baton. Although deportation does result in the physical removal of a person from the U.S., deportation is not considered under the legal framework of a punishment due to the fact that it does fall into civil law, not criminal. This does not fully align with some of the literature on the intersection between criminal and immigration law, or "cimmigration." Some of this literature exposes a rising perception of criminality attributed to Latinos or the similarities between prisons and immigration detention centers. Although I was able to find all of these interacting aspects of the literature through engaging professors, the UW library search systems such as JSTOR, and previous syllabus, there was still the issue of a hole in the literature that does not fully analyze the effects of

deportation proceedings themselves on how they affect the Latino community. For this reason, I decided to evaluate the ways in which the threat of deportation affects mobilization of the Latino immigrant rights movement through the utilization of interview data.

For the purposes of measuring levels of threat, the study utilized data on the levels of cooperation between local law enforcement and ICE at the county level as well as a consideration of local immigration law that influences resource attainment and upward mobility. The Immigration Legal Resource Center (ILRC) released a report in December 2016 which outlines the levels of cooperation between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement across the country at the county level. Some of the variables in that report include the presence or absence of policies such as 287(g) agreements, ICE detention contracts, ICE holds, and ICE alerts. Due to the nature of the project in analyzing the impacts of the Latino community, I realized that this report did not fully account for the ways in which immigration and the threat of deportation can interplay with the daily life of an immigrant. The topic of my research is a literal community of individuals which share vulnerability in their need to go about the functions of daily life such as through work and the attainment of resources which lead to the American Dream. The inability of the Latino community to attain resources via upward mobility lowers the community's ability to challenge deportation proceedings, making deportation more likely to occur. Therefore, analyzing law that affects upward mobility allowed me to better analyze how immigration can impact the accumulation of resources such as access to higher education or driver's licenses. I found all of this data through utilizing some of the previous scholarship available from the UW library system, syllabus from previous classes which addressed some of these interacting parts, and also through the utilization of Lexus Nexis in order to find particular case laws.

In order to examine the ways Latino communities and immigrant rights activists are impacted by the threat of deportation and mobilize, I conducted eight intensive interviews with

immigrant rights activists and advocates from established immigrant advocacy organizations. Some interview subjects were initially found as a result of their organization's participation in other studies in the discipline looking at Latino immigrant rights mobilization. For other interview requests, this study employed a 'snowball' technique to find members of other organizations that also work in the field. Through this research I found a richness in the experiences of real living people that cannot be usually attained through quantifiable data. Poll data on the attitudes of the Latino community towards law enforcement or in support of immigration reform cannot reveal the ways in which the threat of deportation substantively affects both the actions and the decision-making process they calculate when they mobilize the community. Hence, I was able to utilize this data collection not only to attain the results of the threat of deportation on mobilization action but also attain a better picture of how exactly the threat affects the community and the way that they express their concerns and actions.

Some of the largest difficulties of attaining this research was partially in finding the interview subjects themselves. Although there are a number of Latino immigrant rights organizations and activists spread across Washington and Arizona, one of the innate issues is that not all interviewees have the time, resources, or will to engage in this research. Prior to conducting interviews, several of the interview subjects asked me whether the interview would be anonymous, and this question was also repeated several times during the interview itself due to the information they were revealing. Should the interviewee's private information be found alongside their expressed fear of law enforcement then find itself accessible to law enforcement, this places that particular interviewee in a position where they themselves can be deported. In order to resolve this issue, I made it a point to explicitly inform all of the interview subjects how their information and the names of their organization would be kept anonymous and additionally provided an informed consent form that

outlined their rights as interview subjects and how to comment me should this continue to be an issue.