

DISSERTATION

HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION LOBBYISTS: THE INFLUENCE OF FORMATIVE
EXPERIENCES ON COLLEGE-ACCESS POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Submitted by

Meriah E. Heredia-Griego

School of Education

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Doctoral Committee:

Advisor: Sharon Anderson

Timothy Davies

Ernesto Sagás

Christine Sierra

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ABSTRACT

HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION LOBBYISTS: THE INFLUENCE OF FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES ON COLLEGE-ACCESS POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Lobbyists are increasingly a central part of the administration at higher-education institutions. The purpose of this study was to explore the formative life experiences, regarding race and racism, of lobbyists for Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)—institutions with 25% or more Hispanic student enrollment—and how those lobbyists discussed access to higher education for undocumented students. The study describes how the participants constructed identities for themselves and undocumented students in a policy discussion, and it describes the role of HSIs in this timely policy discussion. To accomplish these goals, I used a qualitative research design that integrates elements of narrative inquiry and case study. I used holistic content analysis and dialogic/performance analysis to understand the relationship between formative life experiences and policy discussions. Additionally, descriptive and substantive representation theories provide a framework for critiquing the representation of undocumented students in HSI lobbying efforts. This first-of-its-kind case study informs lobbyist hiring practices, lobbying behaviors, policy discussions, and alignment of institutional values with lobbying initiatives at HSIs.

DEDICATION

To Joaquín and Gael, *mis amores*, this dissertation would not have been possible without your unconditional love and gentle patience.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As the undocumented-student population increases in United States colleges and universities (Dougherty, Nienhusser, & Vega, 2010; Passel & Cohn, 2009), immigration policy is a growing concern for public higher education. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) serve 54% of the Hispanic student population in the US, including a large majority of the undocumented-student population (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2012); hence, HSIs are uniquely positioned to engage in the immigration debate. The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) has made college access for undocumented students a top legislative priority for Latina/o education (HACU, 2011); however, this dissertation is the first study to explore how individual lobbyists at HSIs discuss support for undocumented-student access.

When it comes to educational policy making, there are many sources of influence: legislators, administrators, faculty, students, and the general public. Additionally, the social contract between higher education and the people is increasingly contentious as the country debates who should and should not have access to the benefit of a public higher education (Douglass, 2007). The politicization of public higher education has become increasingly complex and influences the evolution of policies that guide institutions and political navigation. Two examples of these influences are the growth of government relations and lobbying¹ in the administrative structure of public higher-education institutions (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006) and the influence of immigration policies on access to higher education for undocumented students. Although lobbyists have come to play an influential role in shaping policy and policy discourse

¹ The focus of this study was those actors whose role in higher education was conducting lobbying activities for HSIs; hence, I use the terms *government relations officers* and *lobbyists* interchangeably to describe the individuals and the activity of lobbying.

(Brown, 1985; Brumfield, Miller, & Miles, 2009; Burkum, 2010; Burton, 1994; Cook, 1998; Horst, 2009; Key, 1993; Levine, 2009; Murphy, 2001; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006; Salisbury, 1984; Terry, 1998; Thelin, 2004; Thompson, 2002), the literature on higher-education lobbyists lacks a profound analysis about the life experiences lobbyists bring to their work and the role formative experiences play in social policy advocacy.

Undocumented students and families face unwelcoming campuses and daily challenges to disguise their undocumented status at colleges and universities; they often risk their livelihoods and possible deportation by pursuing postsecondary education (Ellis, 2010; Gonzales, 2010; Jacobo, 2010; Martinez-Calderon, 2010; Nerini, 2008; Reich & Barth, 2010; Sahakyan, 2008; Vega Najera, 2010). As undocumented students increasingly enter higher education, pending federal legislation and many state laws provide some relief for undocumented students and families (HACU, 2011; National Immigration Law Center, 2011a, 2011b); however, immigration has become a divisive political issue that conjures up strong emotions during times of economic recession, high unemployment, and national elections.

The challenges undocumented students face to access higher education made me ponder the following questions: How is college access for undocumented students represented in policy advocacy at HSIs? What are the backgrounds of the lobbyists charged with representing the institutions' interests in the state and federal policy-making process? How do university lobbyists understand the challenges that undocumented students face? and What personal formative life experiences influence lobbyists' understanding of access to higher education for undocumented students?

To wrestle with these questions, I conducted a quantitative survey of institutional government-relations officers who function as lobbyists. The survey provided context for the

larger, qualitative case study centered on three higher-education lobbyists from different institutions in one state. Research on the influence of formative life experiences, university lobbying and representation, higher-education policy making, access policy making, and undocumented students in higher education provided the context for this study. In this study, I describe the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that inform lobbyists' discussion of access to higher education for undocumented students. Through identity construction of self, identity construction of undocumented students, and the perceived role of the institution, I attempt to understand how those lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse. Furthermore, I have allowed the data to influence an emergent theoretical framework for the analysis.

The purpose of this study was to closely examine the formative life experiences and policy discussion of lobbyists at HACU-member HSIs and Emerging HSIs (EHSIs), to explore how the lobbyists understand and represent undocumented-student issues at the institution level. As the premier association for HSIs and EHSIs, HACU has served as the uniting organization around Hispanic student access since 1986 (HACU, 2013). College access for undocumented students and support for the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) have been a leading legislative priority for HACU. The act was reintroduced in 2009 after first having been proposed in 2001.

Formative life experiences are key influences on individual worldviews and can provide insight into how an individual focuses a discussion. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) referred to Alder (1931; 1964, 1923) and Freud in psychology theory to demonstrate that early life memories are formative influences on individual identity. These individual identities, rooted in formative life experiences, guide how one frames discourse. "Memories therefore are,

according to Adler, an efficient tool for making inferences about an individual's personality and lifestyle" (p. 79). The purpose of this study was to describe the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that inform lobbyists' discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students. Through identity construction of self, identity construction of undocumented students, and the perceived role of the institution, I attempt to understand how those lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse.

Research Questions

In this research, I studied how the formative life experiences of university lobbyists representing HACU-member HSIs influenced the framing of their discourse about undocumented students and access to higher education. The primary research question was "How do the lobbyists' formative life experiences regarding race and racism impact their discussion of access to higher education for undocumented students?"

To help me describe this relationship between formative life experiences and discourse, the following related questions guided the study:

- What were the formative life experiences surrounding race and racism for each lobbyist?
- How did each higher-education lobbyist present the discourse about access to postsecondary education for undocumented students?
- How does the discourse reflect or contradict the dominant public narrative about undocumented immigrants?
- How have their formative life experiences influenced the lobbyists' construction of realities and identities?

Need and Significance

Many sources influence the development of educational policy, and contention over the public funding of higher education has increased in a slumping economy (Douglass, 2007; Paulsen & Smart, 2001; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). The political players range from legislators to governing boards, while media and public opinion increasingly influence educational policy making. As educational policy has become highly politicized, research on affirmative-action measures and other social policies has found that political-party affiliation, racial identity, and other demographics help explain social construction, issue-framing, and policy-making decisions (Doyle, 2010; Ledesma, 2007; Reich & Barth, 2010).

The concept of social contracts characterizes the relationship between people and their government (Hobbes, 1969; Locke, 1794; Rousseau, 1920). This notion has been applied to public education and illustrated through state and federal policies that target and indirectly impact funding, access, and curriculum (Callan, 2001; Douglass, 2007). Legislators have used policies and legal measures to influence the widened of access, increased efficiency, and higher productivity of higher education (Douglass, 2007).

Higher education has long faced the challenge of equity in access and outcomes for students of color (Acuña, 2000; Gándara & Contreras, 2009; Moses, Yun, & Marin, 2009; Rendón, 1972). Racism in higher education, institutionalized through the traditions of meritocracy, elitism, and competition, exacerbates this inequality (Chang, Witt, Jones, & Hakuta 2003; Wathington, 2005; Woodson, 1990). In 2012, the racialized public debate on immigration was having a drastic impact on undocumented students in higher education. The K-through-12 public school system provided education to all children regardless of immigration status

throughout the United States; however, access was less consistent in public higher education (Dougherty et al., 2010; Reich & Barth, 2010).

Latina/o students comprise the largest population of undocumented students in and approaching higher education (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Although Mexico and Latin American countries are not the only source of immigrant students in the US educational system, they have become the center of the debate about immigration and homeland security. The increasingly hostile political climate toward Mexican and Latin American immigrants has created limited access or complete refusal of access in some states through public policy measures (Gonzales, 2010). For example, South Carolina has denied admissions to all public higher-education institutions for undocumented students. Georgia had a similar bill to deny admissions during the 2011 legislative session. Despite the failed state measure in Georgia, the University System of the Georgia Board of Regents advanced a plan to deny admissions for undocumented students to its five most selective institutions (NILC, 2011b).

State and federal legislators have been creating higher-education policy measures that address access since the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1869² (Douglass, 2007). These legislative initiatives aimed at increasing access opportunities for populations traditionally excluded on the basis of socioeconomic status. Although policies that are focused on access for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have implications for people of color, race-based policies have long been an area of contention and, more recently, have been shunned under the guise of a postracial society.

² The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1869 granted land to postsecondary institutions, thus establishing agricultural and mechanical institutions. The federal funding made way for graduate programs and, later, research agendas. The legislation is credited with providing access higher education to the general US population (Cohen, 2007).

Affirmative action is a prominent and heavily studied example of a broad social policy with specific implications for higher-education access that targets students marginalized on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, gender, and age. Many contemporary scholars continue to examine the debate about affirmative action and other race-conscious policies (Chapa, 2005; Chavez, 1998; Coverdale, 2008; Garcia, 1997; Jones & Custred, 1995; Ledesma, 2007; Ong, 1999; Palmer, 2008; Pell, 2007; Reyna, Tucker, Korfmacher, & Henry, 2005; Yosso, Parker, Solorzano, & Lynn, 2004). Affirmative action also has been targeted for dismantling through the judicial system and ballot initiatives (American Civil Rights Institute [ACRI], 2007; Moses & Saenz, 2008; Schmidt, 2007). The influences on and implications of affirmative action policies and antiaffirmative action initiatives provide an analytical framework to help us understand the implications of pending access initiatives for undocumented students. Similar to affirmative action, the DREAM Act has faced racially charged debates in the legislative, state-referenda, and litigation processes. Through my examination of the discussions about affirmative action and current political maneuvers to either end or defend it, it was clear to me that higher-education institutions can become an effective player in addressing access for undocumented students.

The bipartisan DREAM Act was federal legislation that Senator Dick Durbin (D) of Illinois and Senator Orrin Hatch (R) of Utah, first proposed in 2001 (Immigration Policy Center, 2011). The DREAM Act would allow qualified undocumented students (outlined in chapter 2) to serve in the military or attend a public college or university. The proposed legislation also includes a pathway to citizenship. Most recently, Senator Durbin reintroduced the DREAM Act (DREAM Act of 2011, 2011) as standalone legislation on May 11, 2011. The Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security heard it on June 28,

2011. The hearing provided proponent and opponent testimony; however, the subcommittee did not make a motion on the bill, and it was not scheduled for future hearings.

Under this legislation, the estimated 65,000 undocumented students who graduate from the US public school system every year would be legitimized as a part of society and would be provided access to social-mobility opportunities in the United States (Dougherty et al., 2010). Despite the anti-immigrant sentiment prevalent in the media and political discourse, some states have used the legislative process to provide state versions of the DREAM Act, exclusive of a pathway to citizenship (Dougherty et al., 2010; NILC, 2011b). Every year the number of undocumented students increases in higher education, without a uniform approach to equitable access. Although higher education is central to DREAM-type initiatives, individual higher-education institutions have largely been absent from the public debate. Students, faculty, national higher-education associations, community-based organizations, and other nongovernmental organizations have been at the forefront of DREAM advocacy work.

The complexity of the policy-making process and the extensive implications for higher education have encouraged institutions to change how they engage with the political process (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). Universities have created government-relations areas to represent university priorities. Institutions dedicate staffing to facilitate the relations work and to hire and contract with lobbyists (Brown, 1985; Brumfield et al., 2009; Burkum, 2010).

Official lobbying roles have been relegated to appropriation funding and legislation that impacts institutional operations (Burkum, 2010). Reviews of the higher-education leadership literature reveal a lack of studies with lobbying as a central point of analysis (Brown, 1985; Burkum, 2010; Murphy, 2001; Thompson, 2002). I looked to descriptive and substantive representation—political-science theories—as a theoretical framework to anticipate the findings

of this study. Descriptive representation argues that people from a particular community (racial, ethnic, or gender) will best represent the issues of that community through political advocacy (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Pantoja & Segura, 2003). Scholars have used this theory to examine the representation and political attitudes of communities of color (Sanchez & Morin, 2011). Substantive representation is a measure of responsiveness to the needs of particular communities by elected officials, regardless of the racial or ethnic background of the representatives (Hero & Tolbert, 1995). The current study considers how descriptive representation and substantive representation apply to university lobbyists who represent HACU-member HSIs in the discourse about access to higher education for undocumented students.

Although access and equity are important values of postsecondary institutions and society, there is limited research about how these stated values are made explicit in institutional lobbying behaviors. As higher education becomes increasingly involved in state and federal policy making, this involvement encourages further examination of how stated institutional values relate to lobbying behaviors, particularly in the areas of access, equity, and diversity.

Never have the formative life experiences of lobbyists been analyzed as an avenue to greater understanding about how what underlies the social construction of a student population in a policy discussion. This study contributes to the developing body of literature about higher-education lobbying by describing the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that informed the participating lobbyists' discussion of access to higher education for undocumented students. It also contributes to our understanding about how lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse. By providing an analysis of lobbyists, this research can help inform future lobbying behaviors, hiring practices, and ways that institutions can become leaders on social-policy development and advocacy. This study also can add to the policy-development and

lobbying literature specific to the political-engagement process of those in public higher education.

Implications

This study offers several benefits and implications, which span multiple disciplines. First, the study allows for our increased insight into and understanding of the role and influence of university lobbyists within the political-engagement process in higher education, as well as the identity-construction process of lobbyists and of DREAM students by lobbyists. Second, this research provides a reference point for our being able to own and reframe the discourse about educational access by undocumented students in federal and state policy making on behalf of institutions. Third, it creates an opportunity for us to further examine how stated institutional values relate to lobbying behaviors. Last, this study informs lobbyist-hiring and -contracting practices for institutions, and sheds light on how institutions can develop leadership on social policy development and advocacy. For these reasons, this study contributes to the higher-education leadership, administration, policy-development, political-science, and human-resources literature.

Researcher's Perspective

I approached this research topic because there was a need to better understand how individual HSIs and EHSIs can more effectively serve the policy interests of undocumented students. My experience has shown that postsecondary education is in a reactionary position to state and federal social policies; its current passive approach to social policies is having a profound impact on students from marginalized student populations. For example, the institution in which I work is located in a state considered to have liberal access policies for undocumented

students; however, the institutions across the state still struggled, with little oversight, to adapt to the implementation of the laws.

I believe that, because of the increasing number of Latina/os in the United States and the changing demographics in higher education, higher-education institutions, particularly HSIs and EHSIs, have an opportunity to utilize lobbyists as a powerful human-resource tool. These lobbyists can frame the discourse about social policies and, in turn, will impact the institutions' policies for future generations of students of color. I also believe that institutions of higher education must consider the dissonance that exists between institutional statements of access, equity, and diversity and their performance on the policy issues that specifically reflect these values.

Although numerous policy measures have an impact on higher education, I chose to focus on access for undocumented students because of my experience and background in student-support programming. I have worked closely with undocumented youth and college students for most of my career. I have seen the struggles and resiliency of these students. I have found the students' desire to contribute to the country in which they were raised to be immeasurable and amazing, considering how they have been intentionally marginalized through state and federal policies, criminalized in the media, and dehumanized in the court of public opinion.

During the past 15 years, my work life has revolved around improving the access and success of students of color in higher education. Particularly, I have worked with Latina/o students and families. Throughout that time, I have supported and advocated for students and families attempting to navigate an educational system that was never designed to want, welcome, value, or serve them. These structural challenges have led me to understand the policy

constraints facing one of the most marginalized groups of students within the Latina/o student population (i.e., undocumented students).

When I first began my professional career at the university, government relations did not exist as a department, although lobbying was a common practice. Over time, the administration allocated resources to streamline university lobbying efforts and eventually created a government relations office. I am very knowledgeable about the experiences and challenges of DREAM students³ and higher-education policy advocacy. I have experienced working in an advocacy role for immigrant students and families. Additionally, I understand the complex political dynamics affecting institutions from my experience as a state educational policy analyst and my work within government relations at a large, public research institution.

Immigration is a controversial political topic that involves many stakeholders. It never ceases to stir up debate and controversy in the media, and around dining tables. While conducting this study, I conjectured that HSI lobbyists not only had an opinion about immigration but also were well versed in the state and federal legislations that had a direct impact on students, their marching orders from university administrators, and institutional values of access and diversity. I also expected that the sociopolitical dynamics surrounding the participants had an influence on the discourse, and that someone who influenced policy, such as a government-relations officer and lobbyist, would have basic knowledge about how immigration influenced the institution the lobbyist represented. Furthermore, I expected that a Latina/o lobbyist would be a descriptive representative of an HSI, would have a pulse on the political landscape of immigration, and possibly would be an advocate for DREAMers.

³ Some undocumented students refer to themselves as DREAMers. I use DREAMers and DREAM student interchangeably throughout the document to refer to undocumented students. The terms are intended to encompass all undocumented students, not just those who would benefit from passage of the DREAM Act.

Lobbyists are always lobbyists, which means that, on or off the record, their language matters in the representation of the institution. This research brings lobbyists and their discourse out of the shadows of secrecy that surrounds university lobbying activities and into the light for analysis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational policy making has many sources of influence: legislators, administrators, faculty, students, and the general public (Douglass, 2007). The politicization of public higher education has become increasingly complex and influences the evolution of policies that guide institutions and political navigation. Examples of these influences are the growth of government-relations and lobbying components in the administrative structure of public higher-education institutions (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006), and the influence of immigration policies on access to higher education for undocumented students.

Several bodies of literature contributed to this study. A review of this literature provided the conceptual framework for my research, which includes the role of lobbyists in higher education; policy making in higher education; and, to make the case that higher education needs to examine closely how institutions engage in social-policy discussions, an overview of affirmative action to illustrate the history of access policies. To give a context for the policy discussion in this study, the chapter offers an overview of the literature that examines the experiences of undocumented students in higher education. Last, I provide a look at the psychology and political-science literature that affords a theoretical framework for the current study.

Lobbying and Representation

Framing the higher-education lobbyist as a policy driver within and external to the institution was central to this study. Lobbying is a political behavior individuals and groups use to represent policy agendas and frame policy interests for the purpose of influencing policy makers and constituents to support the interests of the given institution (Levine, 2009). Lobbying has evolved into a profession in many sectors of US industry and politics. Although studies

dispute the efficacy of this approach to engage with the political system (Thompson, 2002), lobbying continues to be a growing phenomenon in the nation's capital and in state capitals across the country (Levine, 2009).

Although there has been much scrutiny of the lobbying profession in public discourse, lobbyists remain a central component in the policy-making process (Horst, 2009). Examples of lobbying behaviors include identifying policy threats, informing legislators about policy positions, providing materials about the significance of a policy, suggesting amendments to proposed legislation, testifying at hearings, courting legislators at public events, attempting to influence government appointments of interest, building influential social relationships with legislators, and clandestinely opposing threatening legislation (Levine, 2009).

The behavior characterized as lobbying is not new to higher education, although its institutionalization and monies allocated to its efforts are establishing a place in administrative structures. The literature regarding higher-education lobbying provides a historical context and framework for us to understand how higher-education lobbying evolved to become commonplace in postsecondary institutions.

As government trims educational budgets, including higher-education appropriations, the roles and duties of government-relations personnel are on the rise in postsecondary education as a strategy to increase advocacy for institutional priorities (Brumfield et al., 2009; Murphy, 2001; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). Although the literature is unclear about the efficacy of lobbying in higher education, institutional lobbyists and government-relations departments are central institutional policy drivers. The fundamental role of higher-education lobbyists is to mediate the political negotiations of government appropriations, institutional governance, academic freedom, and social policy (Brumfield et al., 2009). Additionally, a university lobbyist advises

administrators on how to navigating the political landscape, coordinates institutional lobbying efforts, and advocates for the legislative interests of the institutions. Some institutional interests include funding formulas, student financial aid, capital outlay funding, public contracts, employment procedures, and employee benefits (Burkum, 2010). How public institutions are spending resources on government relations varies by institution and by state. Lobbying representatives range from contract employees to internal staff lobbyists and external association representatives (Brown, 1985).

University lobbyists walk in two worlds (i.e., government and the postsecondary institution) worlds whose cultural norms and values often diverge. Lobbyists are part university administrators and part politicians. Higher-education advocates or lobbyists have become the translators between government and higher-education institutions, communicating in both directions and “packaging” and “selling” higher-education priorities in a way that can sway elected officials and public opinion (Levine, 2009). The lobbyists then become key conduits of information between these different institutions (Thompson, 2002). Both worlds exercise powers to advance institutional priorities: Legislators wield power over taxpaying constituencies and public opinion, while those in academe leverage the power of research, scholarship, and economic development (Murphy, 2001). Often, the two worlds come into great conflict over issues such as the rising cost of higher education, economic prosperity, solvency of state funds, and institutional operations (Key, 1993; Thelin, 2004).

Lobbyists establish relationships year around with policy makers and elected officials. The work of lobbyists is ongoing and happens in and outside of public spaces (LaPira, Thomas, & Baumgartner, 2009). Through the relationship-building process, many policy discussions and decisions between lobbyists and policy makers happen in social settings, and many never

become public record. The relationships created in the lobbying process create opportunities for lobbyists to influence and drive the policy discussion on behalf of the institution (Child, 1997). These interactions are why we must examine how individual lobbyists represent various issues relevant to higher education. One such issue is the debate over how to address the needs of undocumented students in the higher-education system. The immigration controversy crosses institutional boundaries and bleeds beyond a typical educational policy arena, thus making the undocumented-student access issue and the pending Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act,⁴ timely topics for a policy discussion.

In the review of the literature, two similar studies emerged as important in the development of the current study. First, Ryaru (2009) studied the behaviors and influence of an education lobbyist in California. His findings highlighted how the close interactions between the lobbyist, other lobbyists, and elected officials advise, influence, and shape education policy. Although the study focused on only one lobbyist, it pointed to the importance of examining how lobbyists understand and construct policy discussions.

Second, the National Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good, at the University of Michigan, has been the leader in the discussion about undocumented- student access and policy. Ortega (2012) used social capital theory to examine how a national higher-education association influenced the policy discussion of the DREAM Act. Ortega's findings highlight the collective power of higher-education institutions to steer the public immigration discourse toward a discourse about access and opportunity for all students.

Many dynamics influence individual political decisions, and studies have shown that individual perceptions, such as those about race, play a role in these policy decisions (Neblo,

⁴ I describe the DREAM Act in depth later in this chapter.

2009; Valentino & Sears, 2005). Additionally, race and racism influence the construction of identities in policy discussions—identities both of the discussion participants and those who are the focus of the discussions:

The political process is about the construction and maintenance of identities. From mundane administrative policies to statements of grand politics, the process of identification is central. It involves the exercise of power. The formation of identities of ethnically marked populations is part of a political process... The ascription of an identity involves more than the designation of a label. It involves the establishment of a variety of ways in which identity is regulated and policed. (Sayyid, Law, Phillips, & Turney, 2004, p. 150)

In the current study, I have combined these two frameworks (the role of higher-education lobbyists as policy drivers and the lobbyist's individualized perceptions, contextualized by race) to serve as the structure through which we can examine how lobbyists draw on life experiences to construct a political self-identity and an identity for undocumented students in policy discussions about the DREAM Act.

Policy Making in Higher Education

With the national economy experiencing a slump, current levels of governmental funding for higher education have come into question at both the state and federal levels. Higher education looks to state and federal government to fund large portions of public higher education while government increasingly expects the investment of public monies in higher education to yield economic prosperity. As a result, government oversight has increased, thus changing the relationship between higher education and government to include added accountability.

Although most public institutions rely heavily on state and federal funding, postsecondary education is often treated as a private benefit rather than a public good in public policy decisions. Paulsen and Smart (2001) discussed the limited extent to which higher education has the characteristics of a pure public good, and that it instead has been referred to as

a publicly provided private good. Higher education offers public benefits (for example, increased tax revenue and workforce productivity) and private benefits (increased personal income and marketability for jobs) (Pusser & Doane, 2001). The personal consumption of a partially public-funded good, which results in a public benefit, characterizes higher education as an impure public good (Paulsen & Smart, 2001).

Higher-education policies are not always born out of the postsecondary institutions that they govern (Richardson & Martinez, 2009). Federal and state legislators use their powers to control and influence tuition rates, administrative salaries, curricula, admissions, programming, services, and governance structures. “Governors, legislators, and business leaders continually call for colleges and universities to start new programs and services while constantly castigating them for trying to be all things to all people” (Burke, 2005, p. 17). Institutions must adapt their administrative structures to meet the changing expectations that occur with the political and market shifts of the political process. For example, government-relations activities have increased to accomplish institutional priorities and to maintain a good institutional image within the legislative process (Brown, 1985; Burkum, 2010; Cook, 1998; Murphy, 2001; Parsons, 1997). Consequently, a major shift within institutions has been the addition of government-relations officers and departments (Brown, 1985) to carry out lobbying activities.

Governments often use public-funding allocations to exercise influence over higher-education institutions, and the public-funding allocations have become a topic of increasing contention (Paulsen & Smart, 2001). Since the establishment of US colleges and universities, states have taken on the responsibility of partially funding public institutions, while federal appropriations to higher education reach institutions in the form of direct student financial aid, educational tax credits, and entitlement and research grants (Thelin, 2004). State funding of

institutions differs by state, although it usually arrives at the institutions in the form of direct instruction and general funding, capital outlay, state student financial aid, and research and special-project funding of individual programs and services (McLendon, Hearn, & Mokher, 2009). The public funding⁵ of institutions affects governance, accountability, and administrative structures of public higher education.

Legislative Behaviors and Higher Education

Higher education is not often the center of political debates; however, higher education is largely impacted by broader policy decisions (e.g., taxes, immigration, loan privatization). As the federal government has become increasingly involved in postsecondary affairs, federal control has increased and higher-education policy has become entangled in partisan debate (Doyle, 2010).

Doyle (2010) examined the votes of US senators on higher-education measures since passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965. His findings indicate that the issues that have to do with college affordability (e.g., Pell Grants, tax credits, funding, and loan programs) had the highest saliency with politically “left”⁶ legislators, while issues that pertain to operations of higher-education institutions (e.g., savings programs for historically Black colleges and universities [HBCUs], conference report approvals,⁷ and funding reauthorization) had the lowest saliency with “left” legislators (Doyle, 2010). Additionally, Doyle (2010) found that although legislators did not differ so much in the past on higher-education legislation, there is increasing

⁵ Private monies also play an influential role in political interests of public institutions; however, private contributions to public institutions were not integral to the context of this study.

⁶ *Left* was the dominant political term Doyle used to describe liberal or progressive political interests of particular legislators in this study.

⁷ Conference report approvals consist of all actions taken and details involved that pertain to a piece of proposed legislation in Congressional conference committees.

contention and division on the issues. Increased contention over public higher education has also made way for institutions to aggressively insert themselves in political debates.

Ultimately, the government and the public are questioning whether investment in higher education is the best use of tax dollars (Pusser, 2006). The increased accountability for public funding of higher education has also spawned university structures that include lobbyists hired to protect institutional interests—namely, financial appropriations, governance, and academic freedom (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). The conflict between the accountability of this impure public good and institutional interests emphasizes the social contract that exists between higher education and the public.

The Social Contract and Legislating Access

Government legislation does not stop at allocations; federal and state laws have dramatically affected access to higher education for marginalized populations. College access is the system by which colleges and universities admit students into their institutions. Although admissions policies are an important component of college access, tuition costs, campus climate, and scholarships all contribute to the perceived accessibility of higher education, as well (Avery & Kane, 2004; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Douglass (2007) has highlighted admissions policy as one of the most apparent ways the dynamic relationship between public institutions and government affects access through public policy.

The concept of the social contract, used to describe the relationship between the people and their government, originated in the writings of Locke (1794), Rousseau (1920), and Hobbes (1969). This notion has been used to examine public education, as well as other areas of public subventions. Douglass (2007) argued that the social contract in higher education began with the

Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which created land-grant institutions that “extended college education to new populations and expanded the curriculum to include practical and applied areas” (Callan, 2001, p. 84). According to Douglass (2007), “It was incumbent on public universities to help build educational opportunity, to open its [*sic*] doors to the people, and essentially, to push the demand for a higher education and supply it” (p. 5). Passage of the Morrill Acts became the foundation for open-access public institutions, community colleges, and vocational postsecondary institutions.

Higher-education institutions have turned a blind eye to the discriminatory and racist practices of society, although postsecondary education has been impacted greatly by the sociopolitical climate of the time (Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005; Douglass, 2007). The US public higher-education system has long been thought of as a group of progressive, free-thinking institutions with a liberal political slant; however, legislative agendas and institutional lobbying priorities have not reflected higher education’s active engagement in controversial public discourse (Saenz, 2010).

During World War II, the University of California struggled with the sociopolitical environment, which challenged the institution’s social contract for access and equity in higher education (Douglass, 2007). The World War II era in the United States was a hostile time for its Japanese and Japanese-American residents. The US government positioned these groups as national enemies and evacuated them to internment camps. Meanwhile, the existing social contract for access to higher education meant that these individuals would continue to be eligible to attend public institutions. Amidst this hostile political climate, the University of California granted the highest academic honor to a Japanese American undergraduate student just before the government evacuated him to an internment camp. Neither a degree nor honors was able to

prevent his evacuation. “The fate of Akio Itano offers one rather extreme example, juxtaposing his academic success with the university with political events” (Douglass, 2007, p. 46).

What Douglass described as “extreme” has become commonplace in the reality of today’s undocumented-student population, whose members live under the threat of detention and deportation, despite their educational attainment. The current immigration debate is a modern example of the complex, ongoing negotiation of this social contract in higher education. In most states, students are eligible to be educated in the public higher-education system, regardless of immigration status; however, postsecondary education access is not guaranteed to undocumented students in every state or at every institution, and it is in constant flux (NILC, 2011b).

Admissions policy is not the only component critical for access to higher education. State and federal financial aid, among other social policies, has impacted access to public higher education, as well (Paulsen & Smart, 2001). Affirmative action, GI bills, and nondiscrimination policies are some examples of how state and federal legislators have developed social policies aimed at widened access to higher education (Hersh & Merrow, 2005). Although not related to direct funding allocations or the governance structures of higher education, these public policies have created greater access to working-class and middle-class families, changing the landscape of postsecondary education by increasing the participation of students and faculty of color (Garcia, 1997). Some researchers, however, have argued that these initiatives have done little to diversify the socioeconomic representation of students in postsecondary education (Marginson, 1999).

In contrast, the more recent anti-affirmative-action laws and measures advanced by the American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI)⁸ are examples that clearly exhibit state legislation having a negative impact on access (ACRI, 2007; Moses & Saenz, 2008; Saenz, 2010). Although not limited to higher education, the cumulative result has been lower admission rates of students of color and of low-income, first-generation students into higher education (Chavez, 1998; Ong, 1999; Santos, Cabrera, & Fosnacht, 2010; Yosso et al., 2004):

Decades of egalitarian educational reform have led to much higher participation, but little equalization of the socioeconomic composition of the leading universities. It is no longer widely expected that educational competition can be rendered socially neutral through government action... Struggles around education funding, or organization (for example the roles of private and public schools) continue, but they have lost something of their previous urgency and their power to displace elected government. (Marginson, 1999, p. 28)

The potential impacts of these laws and measures on students and the broader society make it critical that we understand what keeps institutions from engaging in these far-reaching policy discussions. A higher-education lobbyist is but one of the institutional actors involved in this engagement process, holding some of the responsibility for representing the institution in the policy-making process.

The stated missions of public institutions are increasingly expanding to include values of access, equity, and diversity (St. John & Parsons, 2004). President Barack Obama's recent call to increase the numbers of individuals who attain postsecondary degrees in this country reflects this change (Daguerre, 2011; US Department of Education, 2010). As is clear from recent national student data, access and success for marginalized populations have become national imperatives in order to meet this presidential call and cannot accomplish this task without addressing the education of Latina/o students (Longanecker, 2010). Additionally, national Latina/o

⁸ The ACRI leads and funds new initiatives in various states aimed at dissolving affirmative-action policies (ACRI, 2007; By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), 2010).

organizations such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) have stressed that the plight of undocumented students is central to this discussion of Latina/o education. And if “public institutions reflect and are affected by the cultural values and policies of the larger world,” as Douglass (2007, p. 46) has indicated, then what is the proactive role of higher education in these policies and, more specifically, in the current immigration debate?

The political nature of higher-education institutions has evolved throughout American history and continues to change, with increasing accountability and efficiency requirements. Scholars have argued that the value added to society by higher education is worth the public investment and vital to the well-being of a healthy society (Cole, 2009; Kempner & Tierney, 1996; Paulsen & Smart, 2001; Zumeta, 2001). An analysis, whose results showed how the essential contributions of ivy league institutions in the areas of research and scholarship in general, emphasized the need to continue and expand public support of higher education through government subsidies, entitlements, and appropriations (Cole, 2009).

Douglass (2007) used admissions policies to illustrate a social contract with public higher education that is distinct from the relationship between community and private institutions. He suggested that the admissions policy is an example of a particular interest, influenced by many access stakeholders:

There remains a natural tension regarding the elite concept of the university and the duty of a public institution to be, within reason, broadly accessible – a tension exposed repeatedly in interaction with state lawmakers, public school officials, university alumni, and the general public. (p. 44)

Government-relations officers and lobbyists are one human resource tool that higher-education institutions use to negotiate conflicting higher-education policies. The current study

explored how these individuals, representing the institutions in policy negotiations, understand and contextualize issues of access concerning undocumented students.

Access Policy Making

The outcomes of the DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform remain to be seen, so it will be some time before the literature includes *ex post facto* studies on the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act and comprehensive immigration reform have the potential, similar to past legislative initiatives (e.g., the Morrell Acts, GI Bill, and affirmative action), to impact higher-education access for undocumented students. In the current study, I have taken cues from the literature on affirmative action and the anti-affirmative-action initiatives to develop a conceptual framework for how racialized social constructs, the politics of higher-education policy making, and the need to examine how lobbyists frame the policy discussion through identity construction have influenced the access debate. In this section, I will briefly discuss the evolution of affirmative action and the current American civil rights initiative sweeping the country, and their impacts on students as an example of how public policies have far-reaching influences on access to higher education.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is a policy that continues to be targeted, critiqued, and researched. We continue to see research by scholars across disciplines that investigates its creation, framing, and reconstruction (Chapa, 2005; Chavez, 1998; Coverdale, 2008; Garcia, 1997; Jones & Custred, 1995; Ledesma, 2007; Ong, 1999; Palmer, 2008; Pell, 2007; Reyna et al., 2005; Yosso et al., 2004). The cited studies are just some of those on affirmative action and the residue of affirmative-action debates that highlight the role race and racism have played in the establishment of college-access policies.

It is widely known that students of color and students from other marginalized populations lag behind their White-male counterparts in educational attainment (US Census Bureau, 2012). Affirmative action has been a legal tool to minimize and eliminate such disparities in higher education through targeted admissions, service, programs, and hiring policies (Moses et al., 2009).

Following generations of oppression, slavery, and colonization of women and people of color, the women's-suffrage and civil-rights movements changed the direction of the United States toward a path of equality and social justice. As a result, the federal government instituted the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Act intended to limit discrimination against and marginalization of people of color and women in the workplace. Title VII of the Act created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce the antidiscrimination laws, prevent further discrimination, and resolve discrimination complaints in the workplace (Clinton White House Staff, 1995).

However, implementation and accountability for these new regulations posed a problem across the country. In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson required "affirmative action" by Executive Order 11246. The Executive Order was a directive to the Secretary of the Labor Department requiring that there be a process for implementation of the Civil Rights Act (Clinton White House Staff, 1995). As a result, hiring quotas and other integration policies emerged to remedy historical exclusion and oppression of groups and individuals.

Almost a decade after President Johnson's Executive Order, the decision in the case of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) expanded the reach of affirmative action into higher-education admissions policies. The *Bakke* (1978) decision determined that "the use of numeric quotas and set-aside places within admission programs seeking to promote diversity in

higher education is forbidden because it violates the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution” and “the Supreme Court indicated to the nation that affirmative action programs were constitutional and could be implemented legally (Moses et al., 2009, p. 5).” Although the outcomes of *Bakke* (1978) were contradictory, this was the first case to justify the consideration of race and ethnicity in university admissions as a tool to diversify the student body while it prohibited the use of quotas (Moses et al., 2009).

The benefits of diversity in academia stood as the legal justification for affirmative action until the *Hopwood v. Texas* decision in 1996. The 5th Circuit Court ruled against race-based admissions policy, invalidated the diversification of academe as legal justification, and required that colleges and universities use only these race-based policies to “remedy the present effects of past institutional discrimination” (Moses et al., 2009, p. 5). Since the *Hopwood* (1996) decision, institutions of higher education must demonstrate compelling evidence that past discrimination continues to have a negative impact on the student body and student outcomes. This discussion has been complicated by society’s ineptness to honestly discuss the contextual, historical, political, and moral complexities surrounding affirmative action (Ledesma, 2007; Moses & Saenz, 2008).

Studies have emphasized the influence of individual perceptions on policy changes and implementation (Coverdale, 2008), the need for critical examination of access policies to undo the institutionalized racism in higher education (Finnie, 2007), and the usefulness of narrative analysis in exploring the influences on policy discourse (Ledesma, 2007). The Coverdale (2008), Finnie (2007), and Ledesma (2007) studies have helped in the construction of a conceptual framework we can use to explore how lobbyists discuss access for undocumented students.

Anti-Affirmative Action

The wave of anti-affirmative-action ballot initiatives, spearheaded by Ward Connelly and the ACRI (ACRI, 2007), hints at the increased involvement of public opinion and influence on higher-education policy. Moses and Saenz (2008) have discussed the need for education researchers to proactively engage in the political process to influence educational policy development. If the free press is not keeping the public well informed about the potential impacts of particular ballot initiatives, educational institutions need to take an active role in influencing the public. Moses and Saenz used philosophical inquiry and media content analysis to argue that the ballot process requires higher-education institutions to engage in information campaigns, particularly when those campaigns have consequences for educational-policy outcomes. These public-policy and ballot measures allow special interests to shape the public debate through the media and voters to be deciders in vital education policies (Moses & Saenz, 2008).

Saenz (2010) has examined policy issues related to the anti-affirmative-action ballot initiative and the impacts of the anti-affirmative-action policies. She has suggested that further research inquiring into how institutions can better engage in the political process is necessary to reposition higher education in the policy-making process (Saenz, 2010). The examination of how institutions engage in the discourse about the pending DREAM Act sheds light on how institutional lobbying efforts in general may contribute to access-policy discussions.

The DREAM Act

Immigration is a contemporary example of a social-policy issue that involves attempts to assimilate a population that has been excluded from higher education. The DREAM Act is a bipartisan, federal legislation first proposed by Senators Dick Durbin (D) of Illinois and Orin Hatch (R) of Utah, and Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA) and Chris Cannon (R-UT) in

2001 (NILC, 2011a). Following numerous unsuccessful congressional attempts to pass the legislation, Senator Durbin reintroduced the bill in 2009. The DREAM Act would allow qualified, undocumented students to serve in the military or attend a public college or university, and it also includes a pathway to citizenship. To qualify, a student must

- have entered the United States before the age of 16 (i.e., age 16 or younger);
- have been present in the United States for at least 5 consecutive years prior to enactment of the bill;
- have graduated from a US high school, obtained a GED, or have been accepted into an institution of higher education (i.e., college/university);
- be between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time of application; and
- have good moral character (DREAM Act Portal, 2011).

It is estimated that 65,000 undocumented students graduate from US public high schools every year and would meet the qualifications for the DREAM Act (Dougherty et al., 2010).

Many of these students were brought to the United States as children and were educated in the public school system, and they demonstrate a high value for education. Several states (California, Illinois, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin) have granted in-state tuition and state funding (California, New Mexico, and Texas) to qualified, undocumented students, while others allow admissions at out-of-state tuition rates (Kansas). But some states have denied admissions altogether to undocumented students (Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, and South Carolina) (Dougherty et al., 2010; NILC, 2011b). Much of the public debate about access to higher education for undocumented students centers on the perception that undocumented students put a financial strain on state budgets:

Experience in the states that have passed in-state tuition bills suggests that such legislation does not deprive the states of the revenue of large numbers of students who

would otherwise pay out-of-state tuition. Rather, it raises the percentage of high-school graduates who pursue a college degree. (NILC, 2011a)

Despite the hostile political environment, undocumented students, or DREAMers, as some prefer to be called, are fighting the odds and are successfully matriculating through higher education. However, neither college enrollment nor a degree prevents potential detainment and deportation for minor legal infractions, or permits these students to be employable under current labor laws. Most recently, on May 11, 2011, Senator Durbin once again reintroduced the DREAM Act (DREAM Act of 2011, 2011) as standalone legislation. It was heard in the Senate Judicial Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security on June 28, 2011, where advocates and opponents discussed the potential impacts of approving the Act. The Subcommittee heard the testimony, although it failed to make a motion to refer the bill to future committees for deliberation.

An effort to move to a resolution on this issue requires strong support from the college and university community. Much of the upsurge of advocacy on the DREAM issue has occurred through student activism and faculty scholarship. Little research has been done on the role of government-relations officers who lobby for, or oppose, the DREAM Act and other state DREAM initiatives as a part of university priorities.

Several states have implemented their own versions of the DREAM Act, providing access through admissions and offering in-state tuition rates, although they stop without offering a pathway to citizenship because that is a federal issue. Several empirical studies provide analysis on the development and influences on state attempts for opening access to undocumented students.

For example, Sanders (Sanders, 2006) conducted a case study on the attempt to adopt in-state tuition for undocumented students in North Carolina. She used coalition advocacy theory

(Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1993) to understand how the measure was defeated. Her findings indicate that anti-immigrant messaging was used to persuade public opinion.

Dougherty et al. (2010) conducted a study of the political actions taken on in-state tuition for undocumented students in Texas and Arizona. Both states are considered politically conservative based on the large Republican make up of state government for an extended length of time, although Texas has granted in-state tuition and Arizona has not. The authors of the study offered the following explanations for the contradicting outcomes:

(a) the speed with which the undocumented immigrant population was growing during the time these measures were being considered—much faster in Arizona than in Texas; (b) the timing of the introduction of in-state tuition legislation—before 9/11 in Texas, afterward in Arizona; (c) the racial political cultures of the two states—greater acceptance of immigrants and Latinos in Texas than in Arizona; (d) the political power of the Latino population—much greater in Texas; and (e) the constitutional power of citizens initiative—available in Arizona but not in Texas. (p. 164)

Reich and Barth (2010) used a logistic regression analysis of roll-call votes to analyze the impact of social construction and framing on votes for in-state tuition for undocumented students in Kansas and Arkansas. They examined the relationship between factors “such as party affiliation, policy values, and demographic features of legislative districts” (p. 427), and how legislators voted on the measure. The researchers also conducted extensive qualitative analysis of the social construction of immigrants, framing of this policy, and the floor debates to understand how these determined the independent variables. In this nonexperimental, *ex post facto* study, they indicated that

Capturing social construction and framing effects via a roll call vote is admittedly difficult, as there is no way to directly measure the cognitive effect of a specific argument on each legislator and correlate this with a subsequent vote. However, we do know that the themes conveyed by issue frames attempted to tap into certain attitudinal and ideological predispositions of legislators, which allows us to infer how these arguments may connect with individual characteristics. (p. 431)

The results indicate that legislators in Kansas and Arkansas with a large percentage of Latino residents in their district were far more likely to vote for the in-state tuition than those legislators with a small percentage of Latinos in their district (Reich & Barth, 2010). This study provides insight into the indicators that influence how legislators vote on in-state tuition for undocumented students. This information is valuable in predicting which states would be viable for similar legislation and which legislators, and under what conditions, would need to be persuaded to support such a measure.

The literature on access for undocumented students continues to unfold; however, it currently lacks exploration of the role of institutional actors. The DREAM Act is still pending legislation and has yet to be the focus of political analysis. The three preceding studies provide preliminary findings on the influences of public narrative and the sociopolitical context regarding access for undocumented students. Additionally, if a substantial percentage of Latina/os in a legislative district influence how elected officials vote on DREAM initiatives, a substantial percentage of Latina/o students at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) may be an indicator for how lobbyists will discuss the DREAM Act.

Undocumented Students in Higher Education

“Hidden” and “in the shadows” have become the terminology used to describe the experiences of undocumented students in higher education (Albrecht, 2007; Barato, 2009; Brown, 2008; Jacobo, 2010; Jauregui, 2007; Martinez-Calderon, 2010; Oliverez, 2006; Vega Najera, 2010). The literature aims to shed light on the unique experiences of documented students. Unlike other discrimination against students based on their skin color, citizenship and residency are not identifiable by appearance. Anonymity allows students to disguise their status as a means of protecting themselves and their families from further negative interactions. This

secrecy, compounded by marginalization on the basis of national origin, race, and language, presents challenges and barriers to their access to higher education.

The literature focuses on the barriers to individuals' access to higher education, the challenges to their success, and best practices to improve programs and services for undocumented students. Since the largest population of undocumented students derives from Mexico and Latin American countries (Passel & Cohn, 2009), the literature is largely focused on the Mexican immigrant experience. The literature indicates a need for us to examine how administrators and policy makers understand the experiences of undocumented students in higher education (Albrecht, 2007).

Although not all DREAMers are from Mexico and Latin American countries, these countries are the source of the largest portion of undocumented students in the public education system and so have become the center of a larger immigration-policy debate. According to HACU, HSIs enroll 54% of the total Hispanic student population in the United States (2012). An institution must meet particular enrollment criteria to qualify for the federal HSI designation. Specifically, institutions must have an undergraduate full-time equivalent Hispanic student enrollment above 25%, of which 50% or more qualify for federal Pell Grants. US enrollment figures for the 2009–2010 academic year show 62 public, 4-year HSIs (Excelencia in Education, 2011b) and 45 public, 4-year EHSIs (Excelencia in Education, 2011c). Because of the high representation of Latinos in the undocumented-student population, the high concentration of Latino students in public HSIs, and the geographic concentration of HSIs, this study focused on lobbyists who represented HACU-member institutions in one state with the HSI government designation.

Theoretical Framework

Two bodies of literature provided a theoretical framework for this study. Psychology and political-science theories allowed for the exploration of the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that informed lobbyists' discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students; and these studies also support the examination of lobbyists' identity construction of self, undocumented students, and HSIs to increase understanding of how lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse.

Formative Life Experiences

Central to this study is the concept of formative life experiences. Alfred Alder (1964, 1923; 1931) drew upon Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory of early memories to develop the concept of formative life experiences, ubiquitous in individual psychology literature. "Alder viewed the EM [early memories] as a means by which the individual validates and justifies his or her current view of him- or herself in the world" (Burhn & Last, 1982). Formative life experiences are useful in our understanding of how and why an individual views the world the way he does (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979). Additionally, formative life experiences provide insights about how a person's childhood and adolescence shape self-identity construction and lifestyle behaviors. Alderian theory on formative life experiences is widely used in the professions of counseling, psychotherapy, and other mental-health research and treatments (Dattilio & Bevilacqua, 2006). Within the context of narrative inquiry, formative life experiences derived from memories allow us to make inferences about a person's behaviors and worldview. These inferences are central to the narrative-inquiry and holistic content-analysis process (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Political Representation

Two theories from the political-science disciplines provided a theoretical approach for this study. Descriptive representation theory argues that race influences the relationship between political representatives and constituents and their political attitudes. Additionally, the research suggests that individuals from a particular racial and ethnic community will best represent the issues of that community through political advocacy (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Sanchez & Morin, 2011). Although the research about descriptive representation focuses on the political representation of communities of color by elected officials, the concept may be applicable to other types of political representatives.

Substantive representation is an emerging theory in a conceptual stream similar to descriptive representation. Substantive representation measures the responsiveness by the representative to the central issues of the community they represent. It provides a framework to examine political representation for evidence of policy outcomes that benefit the racial community, regardless of the racial or ethnic background of the representatives (Hero & Tolbert, 1995).

Higher-education lobbyists are not elected or appointed political representatives; however, institutions hire lobbyists to represent a particular political agenda with specific, targeted, policy outcomes. Higher education lobbyists serve as a proxy for political representation of higher education constituents. Although they receive directives from institutional governing boards and administration, lobbyists bring formative life experiences to their work as policy drivers in higher education, just as descriptive and substantive representation would suggest.

Conclusion

The literature regarding higher education policy making, the social role of higher education as an impure public good, and the increased government involvement in institutional behavior through legislative measures points to a need for further examination of the politicization of higher education. The implementation of and challenges to affirmative action provide an example of the high emotions that civil-rights legislation has generated amongst elected officials and the electorate. Although it represents a different societal and historical context than the DREAM Act, the affirmative-action literature provides a lens through which we can examine the DREAM Act debate. Both the literature regarding undocumented students and the DREAM Act indicate that a critical need exists for us to develop the scholarship that will inform discourse and practice regarding access policy making. Furthermore, the literature regarding formative life experiences and descriptive and substantive representation points to evidence that a person's narrative about race and racism influences policy discourse and decisions. All of these areas of research provided the conceptual and theoretical framework for the current study of how formative life experiences concerning race and racism influence lobbyists' discussion of access to higher education for undocumented students. I attempt to understand how lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse, through their identity construction of self, the undocumented students, and the institution.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

In this chapter, I provide a description of the research design and a rationale for the use of case study and narrative inquiry as methods. I also outline the selection process I followed for the institutions of higher education and the participants in this study. Finally, I detail the data-collection and data-analysis methods I used, and my perspective about the trustworthiness of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

Through this study, I described the formative life experiences concerning race and racism and explored how the experiences informed lobbyists' discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students by examining their identity construction of self, the undocumented students, and the institution in this timely discourse. The current study describes how the participants understood the political environment of their institutions and their respective roles in political advocacy for undocumented students. To explore the relationship between life stories and political advocacy, I focused policy discussions on the federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act and on other state access-policy initiatives for undocumented students.

Because it was most applicable to completion of this study, I used a qualitative research design that integrated elements of narrative inquiry and case study, and employed surveys and interviews. Merriam (2009), Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Stake (2006), among others, have described *case study* as the intensive examination of a bounded instance, unit, or participant. Although there are varying types of case studies, the instrumental case uses a single unit to provide insight into an issue (Stake, 2006). The focus on lobbyists who represent HSIs in one state made instrumental case analysis suitable for this study. Originating with the social sciences,

the case-study design was useful in this study to enable me develop an in-depth analysis of a single case by drawing on multiple sources of data (Creswell, 2007).

Several features mark this project as a multisite case study:

- I identified three participants from one state for the case study. The focus of the case was on university government-relations officers, or lobbyists, and the sociopolitical environment that impacts college access for undocumented students.
- The case was bound in time (6 months of data collection) and place (three public institutions or higher-education organizations).
- I used participant interviews centered on personal narratives and policy discussions, and multiple sources of information from each institution to construct an in-depth picture of how each participant understood the challenges of access for undocumented students and the extent of the institutional lobbying efforts of these Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)-member institutions.
- I spent extensive time analyzing and describing the participants' formative life experiences with race and racism, how each participant perceived and understood his lobbying role, and the policy-advocacy efforts of the respective universities regarding undocumented students.

Given that the twofold purpose of this case study was to explore and describe the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that informed lobbyists' discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students, and to understand how lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse, narrative inquiry was the appropriate methodological approach. By general definition, *narrative inquiry* is a research approach used to coconstruct stories, memories, and discourse with a participant. The coconstruction of realities through an

interview setting allowed me as the researcher to examine how participants told their story and created their respective realities (Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 2008; Yin, 1994).

Data Types, Site Selection, Participant Selection, and Data Collection

During the development of this study, two approaches emerged for data collection: (a) a broad, quantitative survey to HACU-member-institution lobbyists at public 4-year institutions; and (b) a case study that included three in-depth interviews with each of three lobbyists who represented HSIs in one state. The multiple data-collection processes required distinct approaches for participant selection. In this section, I outline the types of data I used for participant selection, and the processes I used to identify eligible institutions, select survey participants, collect survey data, select case-study participants, and collect case-study data.

Data Types

The complexity of the participant-selection and data-collection processes required multiple types of data for me to build a profound understanding of the study participants. The study includes surveys, interviews, material documents, and researcher-observation notes. Although this was not a mixed-design study, I used both quantitative and qualitative data in the study. The survey provides quantitative, descriptive data of several lobbyists at various public, 4-year institutions. Three participants made up the qualitative, (narrative) case study, which includes three interviews per participant, material documents, and observation notes.

Site Selection

The institution-selection process reflects a two-tiered approach. I first used a criterion-based approach to identify the public 4-year colleges and universities:

- Must be an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) or an Emerging HSI (EHSI).
- Must be a member institution of the HACU.

Because Latina/os are the largest ethnic population at the center of the immigration debate (Passel & Cohn, 2009), the site selection focused on public 4-year institutions with substantial Hispanic student enrollments. Specifically, institutions that have an undergraduate full-time-equivalent (FTE) Hispanic student enrollment above 25%, of which 50% or more qualify for federal Pell Grants, are eligible for federal HSI designation.

Next, I compared the list of public 4-year HSIs and EHSIs in the continental United States to the HACU member-institution list (HACU, 2012a) to identify the possible study participants. HACU is an international organization of colleges, universities, and organizations committed to Hispanic student access and success. Additionally, HACU has been a strong advocate for the DREAM Act, which would provide college access and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students. The federal DREAM Act is continuously on HACU's legislative agenda and is a high legislative priority (HACU, 2012b).

HACU-member institutions comprise public and private 4-year and 2-year higher-education institutions and, most recently, public school districts with high concentrations of Hispanic students. In spring 2012, HACU had 237 HSIs and 105 EHSI-member higher-education institutions (HACU, 2012a). Unlike the federal designation, HSI memberships to HACU are not dependent on student Pell Grant eligibility. Based on HACU membership and HSI or EHSI status, there are 77 public, 4-year institutions in the continental United States that meet the site criteria for this study. I designated all institutions that meet these criteria as survey sites and possible case-study sites. I invited the government-relations officers and lobbyists with public contact information from these institutions to participate in the survey.

Participant Selection

Although this was not a mixed-design study, the survey and case-study elements required slightly different participant-selection processes. I used two processes (a) to identify survey participants (quantitative), and (b) to identify case-study participants (qualitative).

Quantitative. I sought to find a comprehensive, publicly available list of HSI and EHSI lobbyists; however, my search was unsuccessful. To compile a targeted list of possible survey participants, I first developed the following narrow criteria for institutions:

- All survey participants were government-relations officers and lobbyists at public 4-year institutions in the continental United States.
- Each institution met the criteria for an HSI or EHSI based on its Hispanic student enrollment during the 2009–2010 academic year.
- The institutions were members of HACU.

According to Excelencia in Education (2011), there were 62 public, 4-year HSIs (Excelencia in Education, 2011b) and 45 public, 4-year EHSIs (Excelencia in Education, 2011c) based on 2009–2010 enrollment data. Of the 107 institutions I identified, 42 were HACU members.

Once I identified the eligible institutions, I searched the Internet for contact information for the government-relations officers and (noncontract) lobbyists at each institution. Through my research of online directories and phone calls, 32 government-relations officers and lobbyists surfaced as possible participants in the survey. Some institutions did not have designated institution staff to conduct the government-relations business of the college, while other institutions had multiple people in this role. In summary, I selected and invited 32 people from 42 HACU-member institutions to participate in the survey.

Qualitative. A clear picture of the eligible institutions began to emerge from the compiled survey-participant contact list. From my examination of the list, several states emerged as possible locations for case studies. I investigated each eligible institution to see if there was evidence of public support for the DREAM Act. I determined support through the presence of public statements of support from the institutions (i.e., governing-board resolutions and letters submitted to the US Congress). Although HACU is a supporter of the DREAM Act, many of the member institutions have remained silent on the highly politicized debate about access for undocumented students. I sought out states with a high concentration of HSIs, stated support for the DREAM Act, and accessible lobbyists. These specific criteria further narrowed the scope of eligible case-study participants.

I contacted several institutions to solicit interest for their participation in the case study. My previous relationships with government-relations officers and lobbyists eased the process of identifying case-study participants. To maintain confidentiality, I did not inform participants of the identity of the other participants.

Data Collection

In this section, I outline the data-collection processes I used for the survey (quantitative) and case study (qualitative). Although the site selection for the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study was related, the quantitative survey and qualitative case study data collection processes were not interdependent.

Quantitative. I contacted all participants individually via email. The survey was administered through Survey Monkey. All surveys were anonymous and, to ensure confidentiality, they did not identify the lobbyists or their affiliated states and institutions. Once I

had compiled a list of contacts, each potential participant received three requests to participate in the survey over a 2-month period (April 2012 through May 2012).

The email introduced possible participants to the study and asked them to read and sign a statement of informed consent (see Appendix A) before they completed the survey (see Appendix A). Because I conducted this survey online, participants also received and approved a request for a waiver of documented consent through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. This research involved minimal risk to subjects, as described below, and it involved no procedures for which written consent was normally required outside of a research context.

The survey asked about the lobbyists' racial and ethnic backgrounds, their positions at the university, what they knew about college access for undocumented students, and any lobbying activities that pertained to state and federal legislation about undocumented students. Seventeen lobbyists completed the survey, which resulted in a 40% return rate. The survey data serve as an introduction to the political landscape of the lobbyists at the HACU-member institutions.

Qualitative. The purpose of the interviews was to discuss, in depth, the lobbyists' life experiences and to capture their professional language about college access for undocumented students. For the study to achieve the desired outcomes, it was important that the participants felt comfortable and could share their formative life experiences associated with race and racism. To create this dynamic, I held the interviews one-on-one, face-to-face or over the phone, and in each participant's place of work when possible.

I conducted three, 1-hour interviews with each participant. Each interview had a distinct purpose. I began with a grand-tour question to guide and frame the discussion, and then I allowed for subsequent questions to emerge from the discussion. The purpose of the first set of interviews was for me to gain an in-depth understanding of each participant's life story and

formative life experiences regarding race and racism. The grand-tour question for the first set of interviews was When was the first time you can recall experiencing racism or racial differences in your life? The purpose of the second interview set was to construct a policy discussion about undocumented-student access. The grand-tour question for the second set of interviews was If you were charged with creating your ideal policy to address access for undocumented students, what would it be? I developed the remainder of the interview questions as the conversations evolved. The second interview set also built upon the data from the first interviews. I pointed to the transcript for the first interviews when the conversation illuminated emphasis or contradiction of something we had discussed in the first interviews. The format for the third set of interviews was an unguided conversation reserved for member checking and clarification of points from the two previous interviews. I audio-recorded and transcribed all of the interviews in preparation for the analysis process.

I collected and analyzed public documents from the participants' institutions before, during, and after the interviewing process. These material documents were institutional mission statements, legislative priorities, memos, minutes from Regents' meetings, and letters from college and university presidents, governing boards, and lobbyists specific to the institutional support of or position on the DREAM Act. I also collected transcripts from Congressional hearings on the DREAM Act for analysis. I captured all observations in a researcher's journal for use as a data source.

Data Analysis

The narrative-analysis approach I used for this study was inductive and emergent. Although I found it difficult to predetermine the narrative-analysis approach the data would call for, experiences from a pilot study in a narrative-inquiry course served as a foundations as I

developed the multifaceted analysis plan for this study. The first technique I applied was holistic-content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998). Through this approach, I highlighted the narrative of each participant's experiences with race and racism and identified the lasting impact of related critical incidents on the professional life of each. Next, I completed a dialogic performance analysis (Riessman, 2008) to illustrate each participant's identity construction of self and DREAM students throughout the policy discussion. Additionally, I used descriptive and substantive representation theories (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Sanchez & Morin, 2011) as frameworks within which to examine each government-relations officer's representation of Hispanic student issues. I provide a deeper explanation of holistic content analysis, dialogic performance analysis, and the representation theories in chapter 4, following the contextualizing survey data.

Trustworthiness

Each participant had a unique life experience and philosophical approach to the policy issue in question. The purpose of this study was not to generalize about the individuals lobbying on behalf of HACU-member institutions, but to provide possible transferable knowledge about how individuals' unique life experiences influence their policy advocacy. That said, trustworthiness of the study was central to the qualitative research design and process. What Creswell (2008) refers to as "qualitative validity" required rigorous methods to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this study. As a qualitative researcher, my establishment of trustworthiness began with an audit trail. This audit trail consisted of detailed accounts of data-collection and -analysis procedures that colleagues serving as external auditors of the study discussed and reviewed.

I captured my assumptions, biases, and observations in a journal during the data-collection and -analysis processes. Because I am not an apolitical professional outside of the academy, I brought my own predispositions and worldview to the study. The journal served as a tool to help me identify my multiple roles as researcher, higher-education colleague, and participant in the political process. This journal served as tool for peer debriefing to ensure accuracy of the data and meaning making.

Member checks helped me ensure the internal validity and accuracy of the data. This process required that I obtain feedback from the participants. I provided the text and textual descriptions of the narrative for each participant to ensure that the data I captured reflected an accurate account of his reality from one transcript to the next. This process also created an opportunity for the participants and my colleagues to provide peer examination and feedback about the analysis and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER 4: CONTEXT FOR THE CASE STUDY

My professional experiences include working to support undocumented students and families who are navigating the educational system and attempting to access public higher education. During the time I have done this work, I, along with a community of staff, faculty, and students, have advocated for policy changes within the institution and at the state level, and for the federal DREAM Act. Over the years, advocacy for undocumented students and families in education has come from the pockets of passionate people within the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in which I work, and from the surrounding community. As a result of advocacy work, the university president signed a letter of support, the Board of Regents issued a resolution, and the student government issued a resolution in support of undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act. However, it has been unclear whether the stated, public support would translate into more than a “hands-off” approach and extend to political advocacy and legislative priorities for the institution.

I wondered whether this hands-off approach to the issue was common at other Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)-member HSIs. To pursue this question further, I conducted a descriptive, online survey of HACU-member-institution lobbyists regarding their knowledge of the federal DREAM Act, college access for undocumented students, and undocumented-student initiatives in their respective states. The purpose of this survey was to explore the landscape of HSI advocacy for undocumented-student access to higher education, and to better understand how HSIs were engaging in the struggle for educational opportunity for undocumented students. In this chapter, I outline the survey results, provide an analysis of the survey data, and offer a discussion of what the data mean for the more in-depth,

qualitative portion of this study. I have fully developed the details about the survey design, institute- and participant-selection process, and data-collection methods in chapter 3.

Survey Results

I sent the survey to 32 possible participants at HACU-member HSIs and EHSI public, 4-year institutions. In total, 17 participants completed the survey over a 2-month period (April 2012 through May 2012). I provide the participant responses for each survey question in the following section. Please see Appendix A for the complete survey instrument.

Table 1

Participant Job Titles

| Position Title | N | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Chief Research Officer | 1 | 5.9 |
| Special Assistant to the President | 2 | 11.8 |
| VP, AVP, AVC* | 5 | 29.4 |
| Director (Includes Associate and Assistant) | 8 | 47.1 |
| Coordinator of Academic Advising | 1 | 5.9 |

* Vice President (VP), Associate Vice President (AVP), Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC)

First, the participants provided their specific job titles for the survey (Table 1). Close review of the various job titles revealed five categories: (a) Chief Research Officer; (b) Special Assistant to the President; (c) Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Associate Vice Chancellor; (d) Director and Associate or Assistant Director; and (e) Coordinator of Academic Advising. Nearly half (47.1%) of the participants identified a job title that was typical of a high-level administrator (e.g., Chief Research Officer, Special Assistant to the President, Vice President, Associate Vice President, or Associate Vice Chancellor) and, depending on the organizational structure, a position that typically reports directly to the president or chancellor of

the institution. The same number of participants (n=8) reported that their job title was Director, Associate Director, or Assistant Director (47.1%). One participant reported having the title of Coordinator of Academic Advising.

The survey asked the participants to identify what type of position they held at the institution (Table 2).

Table 2

Participant Position Type

| Position Type | N | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| University Administrator | 14 | 82.4 |
| University Staff | 3 | 17.6 |
| Contract Lobbyist (Individual or Firm) | 0 | 0.0 |
| Temporary Employee | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 |

Representing a large majority, 82.4% of the participants reported a position as a university administrator, while 17.6% of the participants reported a position as a university staff member (Table 2). None of the participants indicated a position of contract lobbyist, temporary employee, or some other category.

The survey also asked participants to self-identify their sex (see Table 3). Nine (52.9%) of the participants were female and eight (47.1%) were male.

Table 3

Participant Race and Ethnicity Self-Identity

| Racial/Ethnic Self-Identity | N | % |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Latino/Hispanic | 9 | 52.9 |
| White | 4 | 23.5 |
| Biracial/Ethnic | 2 | 11.8 |
| No Response | 1 | 5.9 |

Participants provided their racial and ethnic identification through an open-ended question. When I analyzed and coded the answers, four categories emerged: (a) Latino/Hispanic; (b) White; (c) Biracial/Ethnic; and (d) No Response. A majority (52.9%) of the participants self-identified as Latino/Hispanic. This category included responses such as Hispanic, Hispanic of Mexican Decent, Latino, Mexican American, and Chicana/Chicano. One participant categorized as White identified as Anglo with the following subtext: “historic Anglo-Saxon but likely a mix including Black Irish (Spanish).” The two participants in the Biracial/Ethnic group reported their self-identities as White and Hispanic, respectively.

Through their responses to an open-ended question, participants provided an approximate percentage for the Hispanic student enrollment at each of their institutions. I reviewed and grouped the responses based on whether the Hispanic student enrollment characterized the institution (a) as a HSI, with 25% or more Hispanic student enrollment; (b) an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (EHSI), with 15% to 24% Hispanic student enrollment; or (c) as unknown, based on participants who reported that they did not know an approximate percentage of Hispanic student enrollment (Table 4).

Table 4

Percentage of Hispanic Student Enrollment

| Hispanic Student Enrollment | N | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) (25%+) | 9 | 52.9 |
| Emerging HSI (15% to 24%) | 4 | 23.5 |
| I Don't Know | 3 | 17.6 |

Based on the participant-selection criteria and the targeted participant list, all of the participants in the sample represented HSIs or EHSIs; however, three participants reported that they did not know an approximate Hispanic student enrollment at their institutions. Additionally, all participants were associated with HACU-member institutions. When the participants reported on whether their institution was a member of HACU, 88.2% responded “yes,” two participants reported that they did not know, while none of the participants responded “no.”

The following questions were also open-ended to support my effort to understand the policy awareness, advocacy work, and sources of knowledge for the participating lobbyists in regard to undocumented students. I analyzed and coded the answers to create the results in Table 5.

Table 5

Awareness of Undocumented-Student Access and Discussion

| Response Category | N | % |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| Yes—Cited Policy | 4 | 23.5 |
| No—No Policy Discussion | 1 | 5.9 |
| Yes—No Policy Discussion | 8 | 47.1 |
| Not Sure | 2 | 11.8 |
| No Response | 2 | 11.8 |

I designed the question whose results are displayed in Table 5 to elicit the lobbyists’ knowledge base about the existing access policies for undocumented students in their respective states. I examined and then categorized the responses for this question based first on the preliminary answer of “yes” or “no” to undocumented-student access, and then on whether the participants provided a description or discussion of the existing policy. Several participants (23.5%) reported that undocumented students in their states have access, and then provided a policy discussion about the level of access. Nearly half of the participants (41.7%) reported that undocumented students have access to higher education in their states, although they did not provide a policy discussion or description of the level of access. Four participants (23.5%) either said they were not sure about the level of access or declined to respond to the question. Last, one participant reported that undocumented students do not have access to higher education in his or her state. This participant did not provide a policy discussion about the level of access. The survey asked participants if they were familiar with the federal DREAM Act and, if so, also asked them to provide a brief explanation about how they became familiar with the legislation. I

reviewed, analyzed, and grouped the responses into the descriptive categories delineated in Table 6.

Table 6

Familiarity With the Federal DREAM Act and Discussion

| Response Category | N | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| Yes—Personal Interest and Advocacy | 4 | 23.5 |
| Yes—Proposed Legislation, Reports, and Media | 4 | 23.5 |
| Yes—No Discussion | 3 | 17.6 |
| Yes—HACU | 2 | 11.8 |
| No—Student Activists | 2 | 11.8 |
| No Response | 2 | 11.8 |

Four participants (23.5%) reported that they were familiar with the DREAM Act, and that they learned about it through personal interest and participation in local advocacy efforts. Four participants (23.5%) reported that they were familiar with the DREAM Act, and that they learned about it through proposed legislation, reports, and the media. Three participants (17.6%) reported that they were familiar with the DREAM Act; however, they did not provide further discussion about how they learned of it. Two participants (11.8%) reported that they were familiar with the DREAM Act, and that they learned about it from HACU. Two participants (11.8%) reported that they were not familiar with the DREAM Act, and that they had heard mention of it from student activists. Last, two participants (11.8%) did not respond to the question.

Finally, I asked participants whether access to higher education for undocumented students had been a state or federal legislative priority for their institution; I also asked them to provide an explanation for their response (see Table 7).

Table 7

Access for Undocumented Students As a Legislative Priority

| Response Category | N | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| No | 5 | 29.4 |
| Yes—Federal, State & Local Involvement | 2 | 11.8 |
| Yes—No Discussion | 5 | 29.4 |
| Not Sure | 1 | 5.9 |
| No Response | 3 | 17.6 |

Five participants (29.4%) reported that undocumented-student access had never been a legislative priority. Seven participants reported that access for undocumented students had been a legislative priority; however, five of those participants (29.4%) did not provide an explanation of the priority. The two remaining participants (11.8%) discussed institutional involvement in the issue at the federal, state, and local levels. One participant (5.9%) was not sure whether undocumented-student access had ever been a legislative priority, and three participants (17.6%) did not respond to the question.

Analysis

Interestingly, nine out of the 17 participants described their racial and ethnic identity as Latino/Hispanic. When the Latino/Hispanic category included two biracial (Hispanic and White) participants, a total of 11 participants identified with the Latino/Hispanic category. The 11 participants resulted in well over 50% of the participants being in the Latino/Hispanic category.

Although descriptive and substantive representation theories (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Hero & Tolbert, 1995; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Sanchez & Morin, 2011) from the political-science literature primarily focus on elected officials, these approaches provide a lens through

which we can view the results of this survey (I provide a full description of these concepts in chapter 2). Descriptive representation would say that Latino/Hispanic policy advocates would (a) represent interests specific to HSIs and EHSIs, (b) be supportive advocates, and (c) be well-informed about undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act. Similar to descriptive representation, substantive representation applied to these lobbyists would say that lobbyists of any racial or ethnic background would be equivalent advocates for issues since they were selected to represent the issues of an HSI or EHSI. The biggest difference between the responses of Latino/Hispanic lobbyists and the others in this survey was that two of the Latino/Hispanic participants had learned about the DREAM Act from HACU. As members of HACU, the institutions need to make an effort (e.g., attend conferences and meetings) and a financial commitment (e.g., membership dues, conference and meeting costs) to participate in HACU. This variation in responses may indicate that the lobbyists who racially identified as Latino/Hispanic were more likely to be involved with HACU; hence, they learned about policy issues facing undocumented students from HACU efforts and outreach.

Although I had prescreened all participants for HSI status, EHSI status, and HACU membership, some participants declined to report their respective institution's approximate Hispanic student enrollment and reported that they were unaware of their institution's HACU membership. Whether their lack of a response to these questions indicated that the participants were not aware of the Hispanic student enrollment and the HACU institutional membership, or they declined for another reason was unclear.

The responses to this survey also raised some particular concerns about how aware institution lobbyists are about undocumented issues, given the institutions' HSI or EHSI status. When combined, the results show that more than 70% of the participants did not give any

explanation about undocumented-student access to institutions in their states, said that they were not sure, or gave no response to the question. If 70% of the participants did not provide even a short explanation about access to higher education for undocumented students, how prepared would they be to advocate on behalf of any undocumented-student access legislation?

Interestingly, three out of the four remaining participants who were most aware of the current access policies in their state (Yes—Cited Policy) reported that they learned about the issues because of their personal interest and personal involvement with local advocacy efforts. Not surprisingly, these three participants also reported that undocumented-student access has been a priority for their institution. The insight these lobbyists had into the DREAM Act and undocumented-student access was not driven by institutional priorities, or even largely by HACU. Based on the survey results, I surmise that prioritizing the issue for the institution required a personal interest and investment in the issue by the lobbyists to bring the discussion to the forefront.

More than the concern about those who said that the access issue has not been a priority for the institution is a concern about the large proportion of participants who reported that it is a priority issue, but then they could not provide an explanation, or gave no response, or said that they were not sure. Not to prioritize the policy issue is a reflection of the institutional values around this student population; however, to prioritize and not discuss it, to avoid the discussion, or to be unsure about the issue demonstrates a lack of personal investment and interest in undocumented-student access.

Limitations of the Survey

There were several limitations to this survey. First, it was a high-level survey of public, 4-year, HSI and EHSI institutions that were HACU members. Although these 4-year institutions

were more likely to have government-relations officers who conduct institutional lobbying, the survey results give a limited view of the engagement of HACU-member institutions with the issue of undocumented-student access. The survey results do not allow for inferences regarding the advocacy efforts of 2-year institutions, which enroll a large number of Latino/Hispanic and other underrepresented students.

Second, this survey targeted government-relations officers at the institutions. In addition to these staff members, many institutions contract lobbyists for particular lobbying efforts or rely on association lobbyists to represent their issues. This survey did not include contract and association lobbyists because of the lack of access to these individuals and their contact information, including limited transparency about who they are.

Third, the survey was anonymous, which made it easy for government-relations officers to pass the survey on to another staff member. This limitation is reflected by the one Director of Academic Advising who completed the survey. The survey was not intended for anyone outside of the top government relations staff. The government-relations officer who received the survey must have passed the survey along to this individual in the institution who had more information about undocumented students. However, I included the participant's responses in the analysis because transferring the survey was how the government-relations officer chose to address the discussion about undocumented students as it related to his or her work. It is possible that deferral to an institutional expert on undocumented students, outside of government relations, may be a common practice on the issue.

Last, the survey findings are not generalizable to all HSI, EHSI, and HACU-member-institution lobbyists; however, the survey provides a glimpse of the landscape for some HACU-member HSI and EHSI efforts around undocumented-student access. The survey results also

point to a need for increased understanding about what drives and inspires the personal interests and investments of individual lobbyists. The survey results lay the foundation for us to investigate further how lobbyists' formative life experiences, particularly around race and racism, impact their discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students.

Moreover, the survey results tell a story about the lack of institutional investment by HSIs in the DREAM Act. It is evident from the results that those institutions involved in actively lobbying for the DREAM Act, which they have proven by making the DREAM Act an institutional priority, have been driven by the personal interest and investment of the individual lobbyists. So that I could delve more deeply into how personal experiences influence individuals' interest and investment in issues around undocumented-student access, I explored the life narratives and policy discussions of three HSI lobbyists through the following case study.

Case-Study Analysis Methods

Three participants made up the qualitative, (narrative) case study, which includes three interviews per participant, material documents, and observation notes. The complexity of the research question required two distinct analysis methods. In this section, I describe holistic-content analysis and dialogic performance analysis, and the narrative analysis techniques I used to examine the case-study data.

Holistic-Content Analysis

I first examined the case-study data using the holistic-content analysis technique and following the steps that Lieblich et al. (1998) outlined:

1. Read (and listen to) the material several times to develop emergent patterns and establish a global impression of the participant's life story.

2. Use the global impression to write the participant's narrative, noting contradictions to the broader global impression and topics sensitive to the participant.
3. Decide on a core incident as a foci, or themes that will be followed throughout the story and analysis.
4. Code the themes and read the narratives as isolated stories to identify contradictions in "content, mood, or evaluation by the teller."
5. Track the results of the analysis by following the themes and noting when a theme emerges and concludes in the narrative. (p. 62)

The holistic-content analysis required that I review the recordings from each participant interview several times. Through this approach, I highlighted my global impression of each participant's experiences with race and racism, and identified the lasting impact of critical incidents on the professional life of each. Further reading of the transcripts allowed me to piece together the narrative that spanned three interviews for each participant. Next, I used the global impression as a starting point from which to draw out critical incidents, which emerged as themes from the personal narratives.

During an initial pilot study with another HSI lobbyist, I had examined the role of a formative life experience from the participant's childhood. This formative experience resurfaced through critical incidents during his life. The formative life experience became the subtext of the participant's worldview. The use of holistic-content analysis provided insight into how the core incident impacted major identity factors such as language, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic identification, familial relationships, and current policy discourse for him.

Dialogic/Performance Analysis

Dialogic/performance analysis is a new and evolving narrative-analysis method that involves extracting details from a number of sources to examine the narrative data.

Dialogic/performance analysis draws upon symbolic interaction theory, performance theory, and literary theory for the purpose of examining the construction and coconstruction of identities through personal narrative storytelling (Riessman, 2008). The dialogic/performance analysis technique allowed me to coconstruct a policy discussion about undocumented students using the participants' dialogue.

I chose to use dialogic/performance analysis to reveal elements of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and self-efficacy in the personal narratives and policy discussions. As Riessman so elegantly described,

Stories don't fall from the sky (or emerge from the innermost "self"); they are composed and received in contexts—interactional, historical, institutional, and discursive—to name a few. Stories are social artifacts, telling us as much about society and cultures as they do about a person or group... Dialogic/performance analysis attempts to deal with these questions... (p. 106)

To establish her dialogic/performance-analysis theory, Riessman drew on several theories as a framework. The first was Goffman's (1963, 1969, 1981) approach to symbolic interaction theory. Riessman's interpretation of Goffman's approach was "We are forever composing impressions of ourselves, projecting a definition of who we are, making claims about ourselves and the world that we test out and negotiate with others" (Riessman, p. 106).

Second, Riessman pointed to Krisen Langellier's work on performance of identity.

Langellier (1999) stated that

From a pragmatic perspective, personal narrative performance is radically contextualized: first, in the voice and body of the narrator; second, and as significantly, in conversation with empirically present listeners; and, third, in dialogue with absent or "ghostly audiences" (p. 127).

The concept of a “ghostly audience” refers to the people for whom a performance is made and who are not in the room or space to hear the discussion. A member of these ghostly audiences may be a supervisor, manager, or other authority figure. In the case of the policy discussions in this survey, the ghostly audiences may be legislators, administrators, the media, HACU, or undocumented students, among other stakeholders in the issue of access to higher education for undocumented students. I would also argue that, in the case of some of the participants in this study, one segment of the ghostly audiences was family and other people from the participants’ past who had an influence upon their personal narratives.

Through interviews with the participants, I was able to cocreate a policy discussion about undocumented-student access. For the purpose of this study, the participants (lobbyists) are narrators; I, the researcher, am the listener; and policy makers, institutional administrators, institutional constituents, and anyone else who may read this document are the ghostly audiences.

Third, Riessman (2008) pointed to Bakhtin’s work, in Bakhtin & Holquist (1981), on literary theory to highlight that the performance between people in social and historical contexts emerges through dialogue. Individuals present themselves through interactions. This interactive performance portrays the individuals as having certain desired characteristics. “These performances involve the creation of a ‘front’ that includes emotions, appearance, manner, and physical or ‘stage props.’ Through these fronts, people present ‘idealizations’ of identity that reflect the values of their society or community” (Correll, 2002, p. 241). I describe in chapter 9 how the social and historical contexts emerged in this study.

Riessman (2008) stated that the dialogic approach “interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative” (p. 105). My past

relationship with the participants, my familiarity with the political nature of higher education, and my awareness of the plight of undocumented students made me a cocreator of the narratives in this study. My presence in the room and the participants' assumptions about my racial identity and policy position influenced the construction of the policy discussion.

I considered these relational dynamics while I was making process decisions so that I would not lead or entrap the participants. I informed all participants upfront about my intention to examine the life narratives and policy discussions about undocumented-student access. However, the participant interviews began with personal narratives, life stories, discussions of family, and other topics the participants deemed important to discuss as part of their formative experiences with race and racism. This approach allowed us to establish a comfortable relationship and to discuss personal experiences outside of a professional policy discussion. The policy discussion came at the beginning of the second interviews so that I would not lead or entrap participants in the conversation by revisiting the emerging themes prior to our policy discussions.

One of the main functions of lobbyists is to influence legislators' and other policy makers' decisions about legislation and policies that impact the institutions the lobbyists represent. Evidence from my pilot study highlights how the role of a government-relations officer or lobbyist is to take the priorities of the various institutional stakeholders (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff) and package them in a way that can be marketed and sold successfully to legislators. Most often, the package is aimed at selling an idea (Levine, 2009) and, according to my pilot study, results in a financial benefit to the institution. Although the examples in the current study included many layers to the packaging and selling of a policy idea (e.g., relationships, constituent mobilization), the two components of interest were the

participants' construction of a lobbyist identity and their construction of an identity for undocumented students.

Use of the dialogic/performance-analysis approach allowed for an analysis of participants' policy positioning as it related to the public-immigration discourse. The technique also allowed me to highlight how the participants' core incidents from their life narratives influenced their worldviews and policy discussions. Findings from my pilot study revealed that the lobbyist had limited knowledge about the political and social issues surrounding undocumented students. I found this outcome to be particularly surprising because of his background: He was raised near the US-Mexico border, had picked crops in the fields, was a child of a Mexican immigrant, and was working at an HSI in a state with some of the most liberal laws surrounding college admissions and financial aid for undocumented students. The lobbyist insisted that he was supportive of unlimited access for undocumented students. Through further examination, however, I learned that this policy position was political rhetoric and conflicted with prerequisite standards he articulated for access.

Despite the fact that this lobbyist intended to present a liberal policy position, he in fact reflected the dominant, conservative immigration discourse. Formative experiences from his childhood laid the foundation for his identity development. Consequently, he had spent most of his life trying to be like the White dominant population, meanwhile separating himself from his culture, family, religion, and community. Dialogic/performance analysis allowed me to infer how his identification with the White population influenced his policy position on access to higher education for undocumented students. Additionally, his formative experiences limited his knowledge about the immigrant community and even his willingness or ability to acknowledge the strife undocumented students faced within his institution.

It was essential that, as the researcher, I minimize my influence on the policy discussion to capture an honest, improvised response. In this study, just as in my pilot study, dialogic/performance analysis illustrated how each participant constructed a self-identity and an undocumented-student identity, and portrayed the advocacy role of HSIs. In the following chapters, I provide individual narratives and analyses for each participant's life experiences and policy discussions.

CHAPTER 5: GABRIEL, THE FIGHTER

Gabriel's life story is one of personal struggle and triumph. The following narrative outlines the primary aspects of my global impression of Gabriel's life, with a focus on his formative life experiences and discussions about his work: (a) navigating multiple identities; (b) coming from the Flats; (c) evolving from fighter to teacher; (d) coming back home; (e) connecting life to lobbying; (f) discussing DREAMers; and (g) supporting the DREAM Act. A holistic-content analysis of the themes that emerged from his personal narrative follows. The chapter concludes with a dialogic/performance analysis of a coconstructed policy discussion specific to access to higher education for undocumented students. I have created pseudonyms for all names, cities, states, institutions, organizations, and other identifiable information to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Navigating Multiple Identities

Gabriel described his racial identity as “coyote”—in this context, the son of a Hispanic father and a White mother. Gabriel's racialized⁹ experiences during childhood illuminate the challenges of he faced being biethnic and multicultural while being raised in a predominantly Hispanic community. His father and mother both came from humble beginnings, and Gabriel described his mother's family as low-income Anglo-Saxons from the southern part of the United States. Gabriel's first racialized experiences took place when he was a young child because of his biethnic/biracial family. The following struggle and racialized dynamics with language within his family set the context for other challenging experiences throughout his life.

I [hesitating], I compare, I feel with what my father and them had to go through, and where almost like a generation was lost, at least here in Palo Vista where most of us, me and a lot of my friends, were [exposed to Spanish], but we didn't learn Spanish. Um...

⁹ I use this term throughout the text to describe when a participant has a formative life experience that placed him in a racial category as a result of social organization based on race (Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

we should have [learned Spanish] ... I mean, you're growing up with grandparents [and] a father whose English is their second language. And they all, they wouldn't talk [to us in Spanish]. We just never felt completely—we never felt, we never really felt like we fit in with our mother's side of the family as much as we do with our father's. So we had this more of an affiliation... just, we felt more comfortable with... and, you know, we referred to back then as our Hispanic or Spanish or Chicano, Chicana, whatever... our family here in Palo Vista.¹⁰

Gabriel began describing his desire to speak Spanish in the past tense. However, when he spoke about his connection to his father's Spanish-speaking family, Gabriel used the present tense. He said "as we do," implying a continued close association with his Hispanic family.

When I asked Gabriel about the first time he remembered experiencing racism or noticing racial differences, he recalled without hesitation a time he spent with his mother's family and had a hostile engagement with a distant, maternal family member.

My mom's sister married a guy from [southern US state], and my... we ended up in a car in Farmington with his mom... I can't remember her name, but she was a mean, mean lady, and she was from [southern US state]. My brother and I, at that time, we would repeat... we would talk, we would say things in Spanish that we would hear our "Tata," our grandpa, my dad's parents [say]... So we're in a car in Centerfield¹¹ with my uncle's ...um... mom from [southern state]. My brother and I were talking to each other in Spanish, and I remember hearing her tell, I think it was either... it was Dana or David, to shut us up or she was going to choke us. Because that's how... she was so offended that we were talking in Spanish. At the time it really kind of threw us both off, and we didn't stop. It actually pissed us off [laughs], And the more we did, the more she got angry. So finally our aunt just asked us to please stop and we did. But, I look at this day, and we're... our question is, here we are in [state west of the Mississippi River], why are we having to stop speaking Spanish because of some woman from [southern state], who we thought was racist? [Racist] because [she] used a violent word in terms of us, what she would do to us if we didn't stop talking in Spanish.

Gabriel struggled with the dissonance between the social and cultural norms of his mother's and father's families. His parents were divorced; and although he and his brother were

¹⁰ Palo Vista is a pseudonym for a nearby city with a considerable Latino population.

¹¹ Centerfield is a pseudonym for a nearby city with predominantly an Anglo population. Much of the economy there was generated by a growing oil and gas industry.

raised primarily in his mother's home, Gabriel had a strong attachment and cultural identification with his father's family.

We grew up speaking English, and because our parents are divorced, we spent most of the time with our mom's side of the family, which just—at least for me I felt, just never really felt like I completely fit in. I've always leaned more towards being Hispanic than being Anglo. That's the term we grew up using was *Hispanic*. I look back at people like that woman who [threatened to choke us]. I see how so many other people were like that. They tried to make people [fearful]. They threatened people. They were violent people, but they were just being who they are.

Although Gabriel described some of his mother's family as “violent people,” he also said that his mother's immediate family was nice to him and his brother. “My mom and my aunts, everybody, were really nice people; but they're... they're very, I guess, very White. They just have a different culture, and we just preferred this [Hispanic] culture a little bit more.”

Gabriel's parents divorced when he was a young boy. The relationship between his father and his children was strained throughout Gabriel's childhood. He recalled the day his father left, stating that everyone was crying and sad; but all he remembers was being angry. Throughout his childhood, Gabriel resented the fact that his father left the family “vulnerable” and with no sense of security. He said, “I never felt safe with my mom. I never existed... I always felt we were vulnerable. When he was around, ...always felt safe.”

Over the years, Gabriel grew to have conflicting emotions toward his father, emotions laden with resentment and admiration. As a high-profile public figure, his father was required to spend a lot of time working. Gabriel recalled how there were ever-present threats to his father's well-being because of his public role. His mother tried to protect Gabriel and his siblings from the public light; however, their protected life created a shroud of secrecy, fear, and mistrust around him and in Gabriel toward others. The protection also kept Gabriel longing throughout his childhood for a stronger relationship with his father and his father's family.

Gabriel fondly recalled memories of spending a lot of time with his Tata—taking long walks with him, and trying to absorb this Tata’s native Spanish language. Although he spoke a lot about a deep connection with his Tata, Gabriel expressed animosity about not getting to know his father’s family and extended family. Particularly, he had a large number of cousins and extended family that he did not know while he was growing up. Unbeknownst to him, some of his peers with whom he came into conflict in high school were his cousins. Gabriel described a fight he got into with an opposing team member while playing on his high-school basketball team. He said an argument escalated on the court, and Gabriel threw the ball at the guy’s face and gave him a bloody nose. Gabriel later found out that the guy he bloodied was his cousin.

And then later on, afterwards, we find out we’re cousins; and now we’re good friends. Well, I would have rather had those guys on my side—my cousins, you know, we would go to parties and we were always at odds in the Flats. And here they are my cousins. That’s the resentment, a little bit what I have for my father, is why did I not know these [cousins]; and I have a lot of cousins, tons of them that are just all... and, you know, I’m meeting them now. And so it probably was my Tata was the person who I... that happened through his brothers, my great-uncles, stuff like that... but my father I think could have done more in that situation.

As he became an adult, Gabriel’s relationship with his father improved:

He was also the father that... I was never one of those kids who wanted to bring... whom I wanted my father to be someone else... you know, like bring your father to school—that never happened—but my father was my idol... [He’s a] big man; he’s funny. He was such a fun, funny father; you know, he’s got a hilarious, great sense of humor, and he’s a heck of an athlete, good-looking guy; everybody loved him. You know, he got... everybody I still meet to this day tells me, “I’ve worked for your father”—these are justices, these are people that have really done well for themselves. They’ve all said, “My first job was with your father.” He’s a very loved man so... I start getting emotional when I talk about him. So at the same time [as the resentment], you know, he’s my best friend...

Even through his difficult relationship with his father, Gabriel found glimmers of adoration and respect for his father that grew into a close, loving, adult relationship.

Gabriel and his brother emulated speaking Spanish just like his father and Tata. He expressed the resentment he felt as an adult about not having learned to speak Spanish. His father would make fun of him for not knowing Spanish, yet he never taught Gabriel and his siblings. Gabriel said that his father and grandparents had a difficult time growing up because Spanish was their first language, so his grandparents thought “the best way for your White kids not to go through what I went through is they just speak perfect English.” As an adult, Gabriel was between jobs and decided to leave the country on his own to immerse himself in a Spanish-speaking culture with the hope that he would pick up the language.

And so you know that’s part of that whole identity deal is that I think that goes on for a lot of folks. A lot of kids like I grew up with here that really were... it’s... I don’t know if I’m really angry about it anymore, but it’s something that it’s a big gap, a big hole in our character and our identity... Now you get into this whole bilingual world and you’re [excluded]. I think that’s also part of that where my growing up... not going to... not growing up around my family, not having them [to teach me]... You have this other, this identity, not somewhat of a crisis, but there’s also this anger that, “God, I wish.” And you got to let go of that to a degree. It doesn’t matter. I think how old I’m becoming you still tend to hold on, you have those chips, you know?

Gabriel had a “preference” for spending time with his father’s family and identified with the Hispanic cultural norms (e.g., language, food, familial relationships). This preference was not solely driven by his contact with his father’s family; Gabriel lived in a predominantly Hispanic community, and he attended school with a large concentration of Hispanic kids. The high concentration of Hispanics in his social environment influenced his close identification with a Hispanic identity. Growing up in this environment was not always easy for Gabriel. He struggled throughout grade school to fit in with predominantly Hispanic schools and communities. Although he strongly identified with his Hispanic community, his fair skin tone made him the target of hostility from his peers at school. Gabriel described his first fight in grade school with another young boy. He said the boy was Mexican born, and that he and his peers would refer to

the Mexican kids as if they were members of a Mexican gang: “Imagine, you’re in the first grade and you’re thinking of a kid being a [gang member].” Gabriel detailed why the altercation happened: “His name was Manuel Romero. He called me a White boy [laughs]. I remember it pissed me off because I grew up in Laguna,¹² and I’m thinking, ‘I’m not a White boy!’ So I remember I hit him and said, ‘Don’t you ever call me a White boy ever again.’” As Gabriel told the story, he gave a laugh at the thought of such a silly interaction at a young age.

As he described his experiences, Gabriel identified the conflict and struggle to find a place of belonging within his ethnic communities:

But there I was, again... it’s both sides, you know? I have a Mexican-national kid calling me a White boy, on one end. [Then, on the other,] I’m getting told to stop [speaking Spanish by a family member or she would choke me]. So it was interesting. That’s how it was when I was growing up being coyote, which we refer to ourselves here.

Furthermore, Gabriel spoke about the dissonance between his racial and ethnic self-identity and how he was racialized, or experienced the process of others imposing a racial category upon him:

It’s funny when I look back at [that fight at school]. I kind of joke about it with a friend of mine who went to school with me—we’re still friends. He is a lot lighter complected than I am, and we laugh about it now. I told my brother and some of my other friends about that story when we were that young. My brother looked at me and said, “Well, Gabriel, uh, you kind of are White. I mean, you are light-skinned. You know that, right?” And I said, “Yeah, but I never really thought of it that way.” To me, I thought he was putting me down. So, you know, at the same time, I would say I’m not so comfortable with my mother’s side of the family, but I also wasn’t going to let somebody make fun of any part of my race, you know? Whether it’s White, whether it’s brown, you name it. Um... it’s just you either stood up for yourself or you’d be picked on.

Gabriel’s first fight in elementary school was the beginning of a fighter identity that became a pattern throughout his life. Gabriel was able to use that fighter identity throughout his life as a way to defend his biracial and biethnic and background, and his growing up in a

¹² A pseudonym for a predominantly low-income, Hispanic neighborhood west of the Mississippi River.

turbulent social environment. Although many of his peers shared a similar upbringing surrounded by violence and gangs, some had tragic endings to their lives at a young age.

I wasn't gonna allow him [Manuel] to continue to tease me. If I had let him say that about me and I didn't end up doing anything about it, what else would he have done? Hitting him did kind of nip it in the bud because we actually became friends afterwards. Later, he passed away violently; but we were friends all through high school. So it was one of those things... I don't know about girls, but in terms of boys, you tend to use the person's vulnerabilities if you get in a fight with someone.

Gabriel identified his race and ethnic background as a vulnerability that Manuel used to initiate a fight. This aggressive interaction they had experienced as young children resulted in a friendship that flourished into their adolescent years. Manuel lost his life violently as a youth when he was shot, and the friend he was with was dismembered. Gabriel said the event was likely over a drug or guns dispute.

I was really lucky because I got to go home to a good home and good family; even though they were divorced, I had that, and we had that safety there. These guys [Mexican youth]... from... and I'm talking about back to first grade. And so, I mean, here we are in first grade, and already their lives are determined for them, you know? And so then, you know, he ended up dead.

In high school, Gabriel went on an exchange program to a southern US state where the population was predominately African American and White. The local residents where Gabriel lived during his exchange used a derogatory term to describe the African American neighborhood:

“Nigger town,” then there was just the regular town. I remember when these guys said that, and it really threw me back because that was one word that we never used, at all. And they said it so nonchalantly, like that this is just a common thing to say.

While Gabriel's Mexican peers at home teased him for being light-skinned and called him “White,” his time in the South was a starkly different experience. Although Gabriel self-identified as coyote (Anglo and Hispanic), his peers racialized (racially categorized) him as Mexican during his time on exchange.

I remember interacting with most of the black kids that went to that school. I went to go play basketball in the gym, and they kept calling me a “Messican.” And you’d say *Mexican*, but they’d say it *Messican*. And so here were these black kids who live in a town that was referred to as “Nigger town” and then calling me a “Messican.” It’s weird—and we were playing basketball, and they were talking smack... They were like, you know, “You can’t make that ball, you can’t make that shot, Messican,” and that kind of stuff.

Gabriel’s childhood was laden with a struggle to fit in within his dichotomous White family and Hispanic family and related communities. Moreover, he was consistently racialized through other people’s need to identify him within a racial and ethnic category, and then treat him according to a racialized power structure that has negative impacts and outcomes for people of color in the U.S. (Gándara and Contreras, 2009; Grebler, Moore, and Guzman, 1970; Telles and Ortiz, 2008). Gabriel faced challenges to his coyote (Anglo and Hispanic) identity throughout his formative years and acknowledged the incongruity in his interactions with various groups of peers throughout his childhood.

Coming From the Flats

Many communities continue to be racially and economically segregated in the United States (New York Times, 2010). These segregated communities often develop a community identity and stereotypes based on their geography. For example, in Oakland, California the lower socioeconomic community and predominantly people of color are from the Flats, while the people of affluent means live in the Heights. I use the terms *Flats* and *Heights* in the same way to describe Gabriel’s kinship to place and neighborhoods.

The neighborhood where Gabriel grew up was central to the formation of his identity. His hometown was economically and racially segregated. His Flats neighborhood was predominantly low income and Hispanic. Gabriel described the racial and economic dynamics between the Flats and the Heights this way:

If you're from the Flats, there's this Flats vs. the Heights mentality. The Heights is where most of the White people or Anglos live. So anytime you'd go up there during that time you felt like you were being treated differently because of being Hispanic or being from the Flats. My sisters and my brother and I were on a swim team [in the Flats], and we'd swim against Alta Mira and all those up neighborhoods [in the Heights]. When we'd win, they would sometimes yell out racial slurs. They were really spoiled and bratty kids, and they would say mean things... We were kind of considered the multicultural, less wealthy, swim program. But we were really good!

Gabriel expressed pride in being from the Flats, and the swim team was one example of the competition between the Flats and the Heights. He described the social dynamics in the Flats:

To me, growing up in the Flats was a lot harder than the Heights. You really had to work hard. You had to pay your dues on certain things, and things weren't given to you easily. And you never thought you were better than anybody because if you did, you'd get your butt kicked.

Gabriel faced ongoing challenges of having to work hard and "pay his dues," and the basic challenges were compounded by the colorism¹³ within his community:

Even growing up, like if I had certain jobs, people always thought I was from the Heights but never from the Flats. You would see... what I saw sometimes was what we call reverse racism, to a degree. If you had blonde hair and you went to our middle school, you really got treated badly sometimes. Well, most of the time. If you were blonde and White, you got picked on. It was really hard, especially in middle school. It was hard on some of these kids, because at the school I went to the majority of the kids were Mexican. There were just very, very few Anglo-Saxon kids; so the ones that were there really got picked on a lot for the fact that their skin wasn't brown.

Gabriel told a story about a young boy who went to his school. He said that the Hispanic kids on the bus would continually harass and pick on the boy because he was White. They even put mud in his hair and face to "make him brown."

As Gabriel grew up, he defended his Hispanic identity, and his peers came to know by his boldness that he was Hispanic and from the Flats. Later, he challenged accusations from his peers that he was from a wealthy family:

¹³ I use *colorism* as a term to describe prejudice and discriminatory behavior based on the color of one's skin tone.

If anybody ever picked on my brother and I, it was because they thought we were wealthy... And that wasn't the case. Our mom was a legal secretary at that time; our father really wasn't making a lot of money. But still, there was this perception that just because we had parents who did provide for us that we were wealthy. I don't think that was really racism; I think it was more of this... I don't know if it was... if it was jealousy, or it was just kids being bullies... that kind of stuff.

Gabriel's upbringing was marked by questions about his race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. As a child, he continuously fought the assumptions about him and his family. As a 39-year-old reminiscing about these experiences, his expressions and animation as he told the stories from his time in grade school and junior high signified the lasting impression these events had had on his life.

Evolving From Fighter to Teacher

Gabriel's middle- and high-school years were lined with violent interactions (e.g., being threatened by a family member because Gabriel spoke Spanish, fighting at school because someone called him White, defending himself at school and in the community from being teased for being wealthy), efforts to avoid gang violence, and family traumas (e.g., addiction and suicide). He gave an example of a party he had been planning to attend with some friends. Gabriel had heard that some people who wanted to fight him over a previous altercation were going to be waiting for him at the party. He decided not to go and told his friends not to go. His friends decided to go to the party without him. An altercation broke out at the party, and his friends nearly killed three guys at the party. His life was laden with many instances in which he avoided extremely dangerous situations.

Gabriel never hesitated to physically defend himself and his family from false accusations and hatred. By the time he graduated high school, he had built up a reputation for being short-tempered and bold. As a result, there were people from local gangs and other

neighborhoods who wanted to kill him. He described an incident when his brother was mistaken for him during the height of tension:

When I left [for college] I had a lot of people after me. I mean, lot of people. One time my brother was at a gas station, and a guy walked up to him and said, “Hey, you’re Gabe,” since we kind of look alike. And he put a gun right up to his head. That’s how out of control I was towards the end of things. I was so confident, and I grew up in this violent [environment] where everything was solved by fighting. It got a little crazy. I’m lucky I did really well in school.

The violence surrounding Gabriel reached an apex. To avoid possible harm to himself and his family, he capitalized on his academic abilities and chose to attend college out of state. He adapted quickly to his new college environment and embraced a traditional college lifestyle. He joined a fraternity and quickly became a leader within his organization. During his time in the fraternity, Gabriel recognized the racially bigoted behaviors within the group. As a part of the leadership, he took the opportunity to teach the other members how to recognize and avoid damaging behavior:

I have been in situations where I have been able to use my own experience to at least identify or help educate people that don’t [get it]. Like those kids, those guys in my fraternity... they grew up in very privileged Anglo-Saxon, White, communities. When they would make those comments, say those [derogatory] things to others, in some way they did it to just be jerks; but they didn’t really know how deep that went. When I gave that presentation, it stopped automatically. It was a no-brainer for these guys; these guys were like, “Well, hell, we don’t... that’s not what we’re trying to accomplish here. We’re just being jerks. Like, when you’re on a basketball court, you talk smack. We’re just talking smack. Like, if you were to call me, if you were to say something about me, or call me Whitey, or whatever you want to call me.” That’s how they looked at it because they didn’t understand. They’d never had really experienced racism. And I think that’s one thing that I realized is that we’re [Latinos or people of color] so much more sensitive, and you’ve got these other people that aren’t sensitive. Sometimes you find out that there’s a difference. There are people that are just truly racist... I just thought that was interesting that these guys just [didn’t get it]. The sad thing about it is they just didn’t know any better.

Although moving out of state was against the wishes of his family, Gabriel described his college years as the time he “lost and found” himself. He attributes much of this soul-searching to his time in the fraternity:

I did find myself. I think everybody goes through it. Are you your father’s son? Do you remember where you’re from? And it’s easy [to get lost]. And I’ll admit there’s been times when I lost sight of that [who he was]. It’s times like this past [legislative] session that wakes you up again to say, “Wait a minute; who are you?” Do you know what I mean? And then when you have a child. Who do you let your child to grow up to be? And so on. There’s been times where I was lost. Like the fraternity guy. It’s funny, I look back and sometimes think I was lost a lot back then. When I went away to school, and I look back at myself, and I was kinda lost. I was a very confident, very tough, very outspoken kid in high school and growing up. When I left Palo Vista High, you know, I was one of those people who was going to succeed and was going to be accomplished—all this kind of stuff. And then I went away... And I’ll be honest with you... I allowed some of these White kids, kids from these upper-class [families], with very wealthy lives... I allowed myself to be insecure around that. It was weird, through my pledgeship, where they break you down to end up being one. Being exposed to that, I really... In some ways, it was bad that I lost myself for a while. I look back at myself, and in ways it was good because then I built myself back up. I encourage anybody and everybody to try to venture out, and hopefully if you lose yourself, you will find yourself. I look back, and I found myself in a better way; and that ties into how I approach things [as a lobbyist].

Gabriel’s aggressive, fighting nature did not serve him well in the college environment where fighting was a last resort. Additionally, he dealt with various groups of friends who did not get along. His friends in the dorms chastised him for being in a fraternity, and his fraternity friends ridiculed him for spending time with friends outside of the fraternity. “I liked all of them, and I just wanted to be friends with both groups.”

Gabriel’s college experience was a pivotal time in his life. College was his escape from a violent upbringing, an opportunity to be a leader and shape new young leaders; this time offered him the gift of a positive re-identification with his family and community. Gabriel identified the process for “rebuilding himself”—remembering who he was, who his family was, and where he came from—as foundational for how he approaches his government-relations work. The college years shifted him from being a fighter to being a teacher, yet never losing the fighter spirit.

Coming Back Home

All of Gabriel's life experiences provide insight into how he approaches the work in his professional life. Before his lobbying role in higher education, Gabriel worked with the local court system. A story he told about working in the local court system highlights the transformation he described from being the fighting kid with "a chip on his shoulder" to becoming the teacher and servant to his community.

Upon his return to Palo Vista after college, Gabriel reconnected with his best friend from high school. His best friend had grown up in a low-income, predominantly African American neighborhood, was student-body president of their high school, and was a talented chess player. Gabriel described how his friend later became addicted to drugs, yet Gabriel continually welcomed him into his home. Gabriel remembered his friend fondly:

Naches—that's another area that's low income, and there's a trailer park where my best friend grew up right on the other side. And... but he just got caught up in drugs bad, and I was living at the Vista Apartments. He would show up and you could smell it. He just smelled burnt, you know... All night he'd just be burning, and he'd sleep. I'd leave and come back, he'd clean my whole place and take off and say, "Thanks for letting me crash." We'd sit on those steps... we'd play chess; he'd kick my butt at chess. I could never beat the guy at chess. He'd beat me like in three, four moves in chess! He was a very bright guy but he just got caught up. In the Naches area, and the African American area, that's really hard to get out of because of the drugs that were going through there at the time.

Gabriel's friend came and went from his apartment when he needed a place to stay. Then several years passed before Gabriel heard from his friend, while Gabriel was working for the court system. He told the story of how they reconnected through his work at the courts:

I ended up getting this letter from him while I was at the court, and it was a letter saying, "I had a fever. I'm homeless. I had a fever and I lost most of my hearing." So here's a guy who was student-body president, an incredible chess player, bright... he... he used to perform at the Metro Performing Arts Center right after high school. Now he's homeless, and now he's deaf. He said they locked him up at the detention center. I don't even know if there was a charge or what the charge was; but, it turned out, he was in there for almost six months. He should have only been in there for maybe 30 days and released on his

own recognizance. But because he was deaf, he couldn't understand anybody. They just held him in there. So I got this letter; he was out within the next day.

Gabriel acknowledged that discrimination played a role in his friend unjustly being incarcerated without cause. Gabriel discovered his own ability to address the systematic issues within the court system that caused this injustice:

Two things are going on there. One, he's black. Two, he couldn't hear. I was able to help somebody that, if I was not in that position, [would have stayed there]. 'Cause I didn't sell out. Then the other thing we realized... How many of these people are sitting in jail? And how many people are wasting taxpayers' money? You always hear these overruns that cost [so much]. [Because of where I'm from] those things, when you come into lobbying and you come into management, you start tying those things together. And some other people don't. I think it also comes from where we're from because you tend to see. See the bigger picture. So we [at the court] did a study, and we found out that there was a number of people in there that stayed in longer than they should have. And when we got 'em out, it reduced the cost of the jail. Then we began to look at other things too.

Although some people from his community described Gabriel as a "sellout" for working for the courts, government agencies, and higher-education institutions, Gabriel strived to change the systems that created barriers and had disproportionate negative impacts on people from his community. He attributed his success navigating and addressing necessary changes within these systems to growing up in the Flats:

Here [the university] you have the three campuses or working within that court system. I think it [his background] allows me to be somewhat of a better manager because it's amazing how many people don't use common sense on how they approach things. That's what I think that growing up there has given me. The best thing you've got going for you is common sense. You hear about street smarts. That's the best thing anyone's got going for them. It's amazing how so many people don't understand how important that is or valuable, or even really, have never really had that experience growing up. Sometimes, you're somewhat forced into it [learning to be street smart].

Gabriel was committed to his work during his time as a student and a professional because he truly believed he could use his insights, street smarts, and leadership positions to help people. He received criticism from some family members and friends for his choices that did not

reflect the norms of his community. However, this shift in approach from being a fighter to being a teacher and problem solver presented Gabriel with a new challenge—being considered a “sellout”:

I had a lot of friends who thought I sold out because I went away to school. I had my brother and family members that gave me a lot of hell for being in a fraternity. When I went to work at the courts, some said I was a sellout because I became the administrator. Some of my friends said, “You’re part of the man. You’re with the man now.” And I remember telling them, “Can you help our friend who has been in longer than he should be because he can’t get representation or doesn’t know the system, or because he can’t bond out, or because he doesn’t know what to do, or these bondsmen are lying to their families about having money?” I said, “Can you help that person out from where you’re at? ‘Cause you’re just fighting the system?”... I said, “So, can you get that person out? No. But I can.” So long as you don’t forget where you’re from and you keep it in the back of your head—sometimes you’ll wear it on your sleeve. But I’ve been lucky and fortunate to help out a lot of folks, whether it’s through my jobs, whether it’s helping them within the process, because it’s just big and confusing process.

Returning home and becoming a professional continued to present challenges to Gabriel’s identity. Friends and family questioned his loyalty to his community because of his prominent father, with his accomplishments and smooth transitions to powerful positions. Gabriel was diligent in remaining true to his identity and community through his work despite the adversity he faced from others. He believed that growing up in the Flats gave him an advantage and a worldview that allowed him to work on behalf of his community and of people at disadvantage because of their lack of knowledge about complex government systems.

Connecting His Life to Lobbying

Gabriel connected his childhood and growing up in the Flats to professional work in a profound way. He described his ability to see the big picture in his work and how his street smarts helped him successfully help others. The tests in Gabriel’s life required that he navigate difficult, and sometimes dangerous, situations. These tests prepared him for his work as a

lobbyist and ability to navigate political systems effectively. Below is his only explicit account of the relationship between his past experiences and his work:

Well, I see that upper administration, they don't always know what is happening with their staff. There's so much staff below and a lot of things filter either up or going down, both ways. Sometimes, some folks in leadership roles who just have people providing them information. A lot of it, what you've got is differing cultures. So you got like the Vista Campus—you've got the Downtown Campus, and then you split that up—you've got your administration, you've got your academics. And within those three areas, you know... it's easy to say we need to take care of the medical center, we need to take care of the faculty and the graduate [students], then we also need to function like a business. So you've got these different groups. Everybody tends to forget, though, we all fall under one umbrella at the university.

Although there were competing interests within the institution, Gabriel acknowledged the need to remember that ultimately what was best for the institution should be the interest that binds these groups within the university. Gabriel related this concept to his experiences from his childhood. "...that made me think about...we tend to forget that, OK, yeah, I'm from this barrio, but I'm still a citizen of my state. I'm still an American." In this statement, Gabriel drew a parallel between the conflicts and infighting that had happened in his community and now occurred within his institution.

Policy Discussion for DREAMers

One area in which Gabriel drew upon his upbringing to guide his choices and help him navigate competing interests through his lobbying work was on the topic of undocumented-student access. I asked Gabriel, if he was given the opportunity to write a policy that would address college access for undocumented students, what would that policy look like? Without hesitation, he told a story about the most recent interaction he had had with an undocumented student at his institution:

We have a student right now. He came in undocumented but he came in [to the country] young. He went to elementary school here, middle school, high school, and he excelled. His GPA was like, you know, 4.0, 3.5 and above. He was involved with younger kids in

terms of mentoring and youth camps and soccer programs, and he's won all these awards, and these types of things. The reason why I know all this is because recently he got accepted to a master's program in our School of Architecture. Last year, he was driving with his sister; he got pulled over by an airport police officer, not even city police, at the airport... The officer asked him if was a citizen. He said, "No." The sister, quicker on her feet, said, "I don't need to answer that question." Next he finds himself in a situation where he is told, "If you volunteer to go back to Mexico, you won't have anything on your record." Well the guy goes back. Oh, and he's got his grandma... his whole family is here. His parents are here, all his friends. His sister, nothing happens to her. She's fine. He gets accepted to the School of Architecture. So I guess you'd consider him undocumented, right? So he cannot get back into the United States; they've denied him access. If he volunteered, why is he having a problem getting back? So we're working with one of the senator's offices and our federal delegates, and we're working with our Dean of Architecture, and other allies. We're working with this group, and we're making some progress; but to me, here's an example of a kid that probably is an example of most undocumented students who want to go to school; and that's what happens, or can happen.

This personal experience assisting an undocumented student at his institution was

Gabriel's point of reference for his policy discussion:

What I'm getting at is my policy. You have a student like this person who's gone to every public school in Palo Vista, goes on to the community college, then gets accepted to the university. One problem with the policy that we found is... I believe is that it comes to... say he wants to go on to grad school. That I don't think he could be admitted to grad school based on that, is that correct? Or he can't get a waiver, something. It's got to be part of the policy that once you've [the institution] accepted that undocumented student into undergrad, they should be allowed to go all the way through and get a grad, whether it's a doctorate, you know graduate of school of medicine, law school, and so on. There is a glitch there that I think prevents that from happening as an undocumented student. Also in terms of the licensure, of being a licensed architect. You've got to make sure that [the policy] allows for that to happen. I also think the undocumented, if they have demonstrated that they have gone to these schools and got accepted, there should be part of the policy that makes... helps them... I'm trying to figure out a way to say this; it's not *streamline*, but *circumvent*. Not *circumvent*, we don't say *circumvent*. That... What's the word to move something faster through? *Accelerate*, or something that then also parallels them getting their citizenship.

Gabriel also pointed to the "Mexicanization" of undocumented students— meaning how the dominant discourse about undocumented people in the United States is focused on Mexicans, versus a global view of how current immigration laws impact people from many other countries.

This acknowledgement pointed to his opinion about how immigration rhetoric criminalized and demonized the Mexican population:

Accelerate, or something that then also parallels them getting their citizenship. And a dual citizenship. Why not allow them to have their citizenship in Mexico, for example; say it's Mexico. That's the thing we always tend to think about undocumented, we always just think of Mexico. Well, shouldn't undocumented be Canada and be [other countries too] you know?... but the stigma is that it's Mexico, right? It's that person who we really don't want in our country or we have issues with. And that's the other thing I'd look into is how difficult it is for somebody from another country that's not Mexico, a Central American, a South American country, or the Caribbean. That's why I think within the policy we're missing out on an opportunity to really take care of a number of things.

Gabriel's policy to address college access for undocumented students aligns with the federal DREAM Act. He stressed his belief that all students who have moved through the public school system should have access to college. "I think that every undocumented student within the United States, that's graduated, or got a GED, from a high school... should be accepted in, too. Just like any student that went [through the process] in terms of their application, their grades." Beyond equal access to a 4-year degree, Gabriel said the students should be able to earn postbaccalaureate degrees and be eligible for licensure in a profession in which they have demonstrated academic ability through degree attainment. Gabriel said the ideal policy would also provide a pathway to citizenship and dual citizenship with their countries of origin.

Gabriel described how current immigration policies create roadblocks for undocumented immigrants. He pointed out the added stress that an undocumented student struggles with because of not having a pathway to citizenship. Gabriel expressed that access to higher education for undocumented students who are educated in the public school system should be a part of a comprehensive immigration-reform initiative.

It's almost like we're setting up this kid. For an example, he's gone to elementary, he's gone to middle school, he's won all these awards... I mean he's, he accomplished far more than I ever did going through school. What this kid's done—I mean he's... What

are we missing where this kid's not getting his citizenship? And I think that's something that would bring a lot of relief down the road is they should tie to one another. That's one policy. Now some people may disagree that, because of the way citizenship is set up, it is a lot more difficult from the way I'm making it out to be. But that's something that we should look at as the overall process, OK?... When we're talking about undocumented getting into school, they've had to pretty much, well... If they're in this group that has gone to public schools, or a school like a charter school or something, that comes through. Once they've graduated or got their GED, I think that even though people say they're here illegally, if they've gone through that much time, there should be a point to where we automatically say, "OK; you know this student, we want them to become a resident." And even if they're not a resident, I still think that they should be, because they finished school and did all those... they finished—they graduated, they should be accepted into the university... I guess what I'm saying is that, you have a kid from elementary through high school... where is the residency component to that? You know, once we've established these kids, we as a country... This kid's an example, he demonstrates that he wants to succeed, he contributes to the community, to the city, to the state. Why would we not want to make this kid a resident?

To Gabriel, the discussion about undocumented-student access to higher education was coupled with a broader discussion about immigration policy.

Supporting the DREAM Act

Gabriel recognized the progressive policies and procedures in his state and institution when it came to undocumented-student access. He suggested that his state could be a model for other states to use to develop similar policies, and that, should the states take the lead on creating access to higher education for undocumented students, this would deem the DREAM Act unnecessary. "So I would start with looking at [State] and helping [State] being an example or model for a policy... And then you actually wouldn't need the DREAM Act... I mean really, the DREAM Act just gets it [the practice] into law."

State policies enabled Gabriel's institution to create broad access and financial support for undocumented students who attend the university. One such policy was reflected in a tuition waiver that institutions received to admit students who graduated from a public school or received a GED and did not have a Social Security number or state residency. During the

previous state legislative session, this financial waiver to the institutions came under fire and was ultimately eliminated from state budget allocations to higher-education institutions. Gabriel described his institution's position on the waiver:

You have this... what was it? The waiver that they reduced, it's called the nondiscrimination waiver. I mean the waiver's there; we're giving these students... so there's all these things at least for our state. [State] is actually pretty good too; I mean they're not as bad as some other states, you'd think but... Our state I think is a good example. We have these waivers. We have this driver's license, and we're pretty good about admitting undocumented students... And that waiver, all that waiver is, is to give them in-state tuition. That's what the waiver does, because they're not really a resident of the state, right, 'cause they're undocumented?... Yeah, for example, some of the compromises, like the waiver is a good example, OK? So we took like a 50% cut, or maybe less, on the waiver funding. One of the things is that, when we did the analysis, we found out that because the [state scholarship] recognized already that they were a graduate of a state public school and that we were already accepting them in, the waiver wasn't a huge impact on the budget, compared to some of our other things. I mean, there's ways to still support these [students], and I don't think we've missed a beat with that waiver reduction for out-of-state, for... But now someone like the community college... What they found out was the community college is abusing the waiver, and that they were miscounting, and there's even an article in the paper about it. So basically we found out the majority of the waiver was being used at the community college, and because the institution wasn't reporting correctly. That was also part of how we gave up a little bit on that waiver. If you report it correctly, it wasn't a big impact to the budget, the waiver wasn't. So when you get into the graduate students, that waiver is BIG. And they were threatening to go after that waiver. We had to make a decision: Which one can we absorb easier? And it was that [nondiscrimination] one. So it had nothing really to do... it wasn't a race issue whatsoever; it was a waiver issue, and it was a budget issue.

Gabriel briefly discussed recent attempts by the governor in his state to revoke and prohibit driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. He pointed to this attempt as an opportunity to address a more comprehensive approach to the challenges undocumented students face:

There should be something with this licensure bill that should tie into your citizenship. If you got a license, that the governor's against, all that should make a case for someone getting their citizenship. And then you would kill a number of birds with one stone. That's why I think within the policy we're missing out on an opportunity to really take care of a number of things.

Gabriel pointed to the community-activism strategies used in another state to establish a Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and the relationship between the Civil War and abolition of slavery to illustrate the need for financial and political motivations to make undocumented-student access policies successful:

It's like back on Martin Luther King Day... [State] wouldn't accept it, and they lost the Super Bowl, and they saw what an economic impact—that was the only reason they did it [acknowledge Martin Luther King Day]. Not because we think that there should be a Martin Luther King Day representing... They did it because of the economic impact and the perception that it would cause tourism issues with the state. Losing the Super Bowl was an example for them. But if you look at, like, the Civil War and those things, did anything really ever take place because of, you know, racism or slavery? It was because we got to keep the Union together. So... but I think that there should be some incentives there. I think there should be some things that, you know... You have these things with undocumented [immigrants]. And then I think it's up to the state to demonstrate the success of these undocumented [students].

I asked Gabriel how he would reply to someone who opposed access to higher education for undocumented students because they are not authorized to be in the country. Gabriel pointed to three issues with this argument: (a) this position holds children responsible to actions of their parents; (b) employment and payment of taxes demonstrate value to society through financial contributions; and (c) the deportation of adults impacts children and families. He said,

This, to me, becomes an adult versus a juvenile issue. We have all these rules in this country that if you're a juvenile, you murder somebody, and you're gonna go away for 2, 3 years. We're gonna treat you as an adult, and there's a huge process within the law that's thought out before that's even determined. What's any different about this? The parents may be a different story; but the parents came, are here working, and this is where it gets tricky, 'cause I know it's not a perfect world... But you want to think, OK, how are they working? Who's employing them? And so, if someone's employing them, they've demonstrated that they have credibility. They're working and they're contributing. If they're getting a check, they're getting taxes taken out... If I [take the] adult/juvenile [approach], then someone would say "OK, fine; then kick the parents out." Well, then what happens to the kids? And so you've got to be able to at least say OK, the parents... there has to be something for employment, maybe the fact that they're employed and that they're working, you tie that to getting a Green Card, those kinds of things. Wasn't the process at one time [if parents have a] kid [here], people to get their residency? But I know it's not that easy. I don't even really talk about knowing a whole

lot about it. The way I see it though is there's a way that the parent is employed and they're working.

Gabriel did not claim to be well versed on immigration policy and the naturalization process. It was clear from the energy in his voice and demeanor in the conversation, even through his limited knowledge about the issue, that he was passionate about seeing justice served for students and families trapped by the current immigration policies.

Through his discussion about access for undocumented students, Gabriel related his life experiences and fighter spirit to how he approaches his lobbying work. He took the opportunity to highlight his approach to negotiating legislation:

Alex [a friend and state legislator] always approached things with “It’s a brown deal! We’re getting screwed! Our rights!” And I would say, “Alex, I’m with you on that, man. But if you completely go this far that way, you could eventually be ineffective.” You’ve gotta have a balance. And you’ve gotta get to a place where you’re not just being seen as, this is my own position. People might say I’m a sellout. But if you’re too radical to where people... Eventually, sometimes, what I’ve seen in the school, whether it was in the court system, whether it’s legislature, or whether it’s higher ed, [what I’ve seen] is that eventually, people that are making decisions... There’s got to be a balance there. If you’re not willing to compromise... Some people will say compromise is selling out, but if you’re not willing to go in there and get the MAJORITY of what you want—you may not get everything you want, but if you don’t go in there, then you won’t get anything. And then you come back around again.

Gabriel told a story about how his lobbying and advocacy approach was effective at getting work done:

I’ve had a boss call me an Apache Indian! I said, “Why’d you call me an Apache or a Cherokee?” And he said, “Because you fucking keep on coming back and circling around! I tell you ‘no’ and you come back! I tell you ‘no’ and you come back!” Now, even though that’s a really screwed-up statement... And I told him, I said, “That’s messed up.” At the same time, I took that as a compliment! They [Apaches] didn’t back down, they kept on coming back around. I’ll chip away, and chip away, and chip away if I believe in it. So that fighter’s in me. If I really believe in something, I will chip away... What you’re doing is when you talk about lobbying and negotiating, that’s back to my point, is chip away at it if you have to—if you can get it, if you can hit a home run, hit a home run, for crying out loud! But if not, then, start with something. Education first, then military, or vice versa.

Gabriel said he would approach implementing an access policy through compromise and negotiation. He suggested and described an incremental or phased process to undocumented-immigrant access to postsecondary opportunities. The young man once willing to fight anyone and everyone who challenged his family, identity, or community had evolved into a fighter with stamina, diligence, and a more calculated approach to winning and beating the challenges before him.

Analysis

Holistic-content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998) of the interview revealed the above narrative as a global expression of Gabriel's life, from which several core themes emerged. Additionally, use of the dialogic/performance-analysis technique (Riessman, 2008) allowed me to coconstruct a policy discussion about undocumented students from Gabriel's dialogue, and in turn to complete an analysis of his policy positioning as it related to the public-immigration discourse. The combined analysis techniques highlighted how the Gabriel's formative life experiences influenced his policy approach to undocumented-student access. In the following analysis, I outline the themes that emerged from the discussions with Gabriel and discuss how his life themes and policy themes are related.

Life Themes

The close analysis of Gabriel's story revealed five core themes: (a) relationship with his parents, (b) a fighting nature, (c) "swerve and dodge," (d) fitting in, and (e) excused behavior. Each theme played a role in building the foundation for Gabriel's life and work.

Relationship with parents. Gabriel's familial relationships laid the foundation for his life and, later, his work. His parents divorced when he was a young boy, which left Gabriel angry and feeling abandoned by his father. Gabriel lived most of his life with his mother, with whom

he felt unsafe and insecure. He struggled to feel accepted by his mother's White family and felt animosity toward his father for not integrating him and his siblings into his father's large Hispanic family.

Gabriel's mother worked long hours, and his father was mostly absent from his life. In an effort to feel belonging in a family, Gabriel profoundly connected with his paternal grandfather, who lived next door. He discussed fond memories of taking long walks with his grandfather and trying to emulate his father and grandfather's native Spanish language.

It was clear from our conversations that, although Gabriel's relationship with his family had been strained and complex over the years, family was of utmost importance to him. Above all, he would protect his family. For example, he chose to leave the state to attend college as a way to protect himself and his family from the life-threatening situations his aggressive nature had caused. The lack of connection with his cousins and extended family members on his father's side of the family presented a void in Gabriel's life that he expressed much angst and anger over. His discussion about how he got in a fight with someone whom he later found out was his cousin highlighted these emotions. Although they were enemies at the time, Gabriel would have set differences aside to have a bond with his cousin during his childhood.

Gabriel's father being in the public eye created a shroud of secrecy within the family. Gabriel's mother aimed at protecting him and his siblings from his father's very public life. The dangers surrounding his father's life created an ever-present, looming fear in Gabriel. The insecurity, fear, and secrecy throughout his childhood created in him a mistrust of the people in his life. These family dynamics made way for his suspicion of people and their intentions in all facets of his later life, including his lobbying work.

Fighting nature. As Gabriel's life story unfolded, it became clear that his anger toward his father for leaving the family, and the insecurity Gabriel felt with his mother ignited a fighter spirit within him, which became central to his character. Although this trait started as a way to defend his identity as a Hispanic and not be racialized as a "White boy," Gabriel later used physical fighting to position himself as someone to fear and "someone who shouldn't be messed with." He found personal power by resolving issues with his peers through fighting. This fighter spirit, if not managed, could have burned out of control and ruined his life. This was evident when his brother's life was threatened when he was mistaken for being Gabriel.

Fighting was a way of life in Gabriel's community. He understood fighting as the way everything was resolved in his life. With fighting as his survival mechanism, Gabriel became the fiercest and, along with his brother, the most feared fighter amongst his peer group. Fighting became normal for him as he fought his way through life with a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to things he believes in. The story of when a supervisor called him an Apache exemplifies this pattern. Although he found the supervisor's reference to a stereotype of an indigenous group insensitive, Gabriel was proud to be known as someone with such determination in the face of adversity.

"Swerve and dodge." Just as a skilled boxer can calculate when to swerve and dodge a deadly blow, so did Gabriel have the foresight and perception that helped him to avoid dangerous and deadly situations. In many instances, Gabriel made decisions that prevented him from being in terrible situations. One such example was the story about the party where his friends nearly murdered some of his enemies. Several times in his life he made decisions that otherwise, if he had not had the foresight, or as he called it, "street smarts," would have sent his life down a completely different path. A few key decisions such as this marked his life and allowed him to

avoid some of the circumstances that his peers ended up in (i.e., drugs, guns, extreme violence, prison, and death).

It was not clear from his comments that Gabriel understood his experience as one of having been privileged enough to have the opportunities he did, which allowed him to escape from a destructive path. However, he did understand the predetermined path of his peers whose lives took a very different turn from his. Gabriel pointed out that the young boy, Manuel, with whom he got into his first fight, never had a chance to meet his fullest potential. Gabriel also revealed his thoughts that society had a predetermined destiny for many of the youth he grew up with, particularly immigrant youth. Although he could not provide a critical analysis of systematic oppression of undocumented immigrant youth such as his friend Manuel, he knew that their lives were situated at a disadvantage, and that they never had the opportunity to escape a life of crime and violence.

Fitting in. Whether in his family, within the peer groups at schools, at the community centers he went to as a child, or during his college years in a fraternity or in the residence halls, Gabriel struggled to fit in and feel included as part of a group identification. As a child, his fighting nature made him feared and revered as the guy you never wanted to piss off. His reputation earned him respect from his peers and a strong network of loyal friends. Along the way, though, his reputation did not serve him well. His aggressiveness was not welcomed in the college environment, and Gabriel had to find a new way to demonstrate his leadership. He accomplished this shift by taking on leadership positions in his fraternity. His behavior changed significantly, and he became a much more subdued person to fit in with his friends during college. Additionally during college, he was faced with the need to please multiple groups that did not fully accept him. His experiences navigating these groups with varying interests prepared

him to be effective as a lobbyist at a large research institution. His role as a lobbyist was part politician, part administrator, part staff member, and part legislative advisor to multiple sectors of the institutions and politicians from opposing political views.

Excused behavior. Although Gabriel mistrusted most everyone around him and felt that he had been treated unjustly in many situations, he also was keen to rationalize and excuse people's behavior. For example, when he discussed the way he had been treated and threatened with violence by his mother's Anglo family, he said, "They were nice people; they were just White." When he discussed how his father never taught him Spanish, he explained how badly his father's generation had been treated for speaking Spanish, and that he wanted better for his children. When he discussed the negative and bigoted behavior of his fraternity brothers, he defended that they didn't think they were being racist—they were just being jerks, and that's what guys do. When he discussed policy makers who did not support some of his institution's initiatives, he explained that their positions were just politics, and that they had constituents to answer to.

Consequently, this rationalization of others' behavior has proved to be useful in Gabriel's being able to effectively lobby for initiatives. Moreover, as the result of his defense mechanism of both distrusting people and rationalizing their behavior, Gabriel developed a thick skin and did not take things as personal attacks. According to him, this combined perspective was positive for his work environment where he trusted very few people, but it was detrimental to his personal life and relationships. For example, the suspicion he had about people's motives prevented him from having fully loving relationships with his family and the people he dated.

The five themes outlined above emerged from the global impression Gabriel's personal narrative created. Gabriel did not have one critical incident that was central to his narrative;

however, his narrative illuminated several different phases in his life that were critical to his identity. His relationships with his parents, his fighting nature, his ability to swerve and dodge situations, his struggle to fit in, and his inclination to excuse behavior were present throughout his life. These five themes represent the underpinnings for Gabriel's work as a lobbyist for higher education and his policy discussions for undocumented-student access.

Policy Themes

I used dialogic/performance analysis to unpack Gabriel's policy discussion about undocumented-student access. The dialogic/performance approach was useful in helping me to understand how Gabriel constructed a lobbyist self-identity and an identity for undocumented students, and the role he described for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in policy advocacy on behalf of undocumented students.

Lobbyist self-identity. Throughout the discussions and interview process, it was obvious to me that Gabriel struggled much of his life as he navigated his multiple identities in various settings—for example, his racial and ethnic identity; his identity as his father's son and his mother's son; and his identities as a sibling, cousin, and friend. Gabriel also tried to make it clear that he was a defensive fighter throughout his life. On several occasions he pointed out that he was not the person who went out looking for a fight or a conflict, although he never backed down from a fight. His narrative tells the story of a fighter with the persistence and determination to win any political battle.

Over time, Gabriel grew to see how fighting and an aggressive nature were detrimental to people around him. Through his personal narrative, he aimed to communicate how he sought opportunities to be a teacher and a mentor to the people around him, and whom he believed to be misguided. This description was also how he characterized his role as a lobbyist. Just as he did

during his youth between his families and between various peer groups, Gabriel had become a mediator who embraced multiple sides of an issue. He also characterized himself as effective in bringing people along on a policy issue.

One of the biggest challenges Gabriel expressed about his role as a government-relations officer was the need to set priorities for his work. Beyond the institutional priorities, he needed to prioritize his time and energy to accomplish institutional goals. Doing this meant that he often needed to prioritize institutional funding over social policies that had little financial impact to the institution. However, he downplayed this need for self-preservation in his job with an emphasis on how his commitment and persistence worked in his favor. As a result, he never felt as though he was making concessions; rather, he was a compromiser and mediator willing to make incremental change.

Identity construction for undocumented students. I initiated the policy conversation by asking Gabriel to imagine he had the directive to create the perfect policy that would address access to higher education for undocumented students. His first reaction was to provide an example of a personal experience he had had advocating for an undocumented student. Gabriel described the student as high-achieving with a bright future. He expressed confusion and a sense of injustice when he told the story of how the graduate student was pulled over by airport police for speeding and eventually was deported. He explained that the student was now in a foreign country with no family and unable to finish his degree. Gabriel also drew upon his childhood experiences with Mexican kids in his community. He had close friendships with many Mexican children, and he suspected that they also were undocumented students. He expressed awareness of the discrimination and limited opportunities his Mexican friends had, compared to his experience.

Although Gabriel was aware that his state permits undocumented students to attend institutes of higher education at in-state rates and receive state funding, provided they have graduated from a public school in the state, he expressed uncertainty about policies specific to graduate school and naturalization. He never used the word *illegal* to refer to undocumented students, and, knowing my background working with undocumented students, he deferred to my knowledge about undocumented students and the relevant policies.

Gabriel clearly supported the idea that, if undocumented students were in the state and permitted to attend institutions of higher education, the law should also allow them admittance to graduate or professional schools, provide a means for them to gain occupation-specific licensure, permit them to practice in their professions, and offer them eligibility for citizenship. Although he seemed unclear about the details, he made a convincing case for the injustice of educating a population without providing a bridge to a career because of their immigration status. Gabriel focused on the intrinsic value and social justice in the culture educating undocumented students. He did not use economic benefits to the state and country as a rationale for supporting undocumented students' access, which is often the premise of common public-policy discourse on the topic.

Identity or role construction of HSIs. Through our coconstruction of a policy discussion about undocumented-student access, I asked Gabriel what he thought the role of HSIs should be in advocating for policies that maintain or increase higher-education access for undocumented students. Without hesitation, he said that the leading HSIs have an obligation to take the lead on the issue. Institutions such as his, which have opened their doors and funding sources to undocumented students, and despite inaction from the federal government, should make it a priority to share the stories of success and to advocate for such policies.

Gabriel also discussed the need for the institution to reach beyond the institutional constituents and policy makers and bring the communities along in the advocacy role. He pointed out that many people in his state do not believe that undocumented immigrants should have the same opportunities to access our public institutions; in his mind, it was critical to educate the general population, who would influence policy makers. Gabriel saw his role as a government-relations officer as broad enough that he could influence public opinion on the issue of undocumented students.

Conclusion

Gabriel's life themes are ever present in his policy discussion about access to higher education for undocumented students. Gabriel drew upon his personal relationships with people and his fighter spirit during our discussions. Interestingly, the work that he expressed his institution should do on undocumented-student access was not evident from the background material I used for this analysis. It is my suspicion that his passionate comments about being a strong advocate for undocumented students was his way of trying to fit in with what he perceived to be my position on and interest in the issue.

CHAPTER 6: JOSEPH, THE MENTOR

Joseph's life story is one of mentorship and loving relationships. The following narrative outlines my global impression of Joseph's life, with a focus on his formative life experiences and discussions about his work: (a) becoming a mentor; (b) experiencing racism; (c) supporting students; (d) discussing policy for DREAMers; and (e) supporting the DREAM Act. A holistic-content analysis of the themes that emerged from his personal narrative follows. The chapter concludes with a dialogic/performance analysis of a coconstructed policy discussion with Joseph specific to access to higher education for undocumented students. I have created pseudonyms for all names, cities, states, institutions, organizations, and other identifiable information to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Becoming a Mentor

Joseph grew up in a rural farming community near the US/Mexico border and identified his race and ethnicity as "Hispanic, of Mexican descent." He attended a small, rural school in his community. Joseph and his siblings were the first generation in his family to attend college, and Joseph was the first person in his family to complete college. He had two older siblings who attended, but they did not complete college before him. Being a first-generation college student was a salient part of Joseph's identity, and it inspired him to volunteer his time as a mentor to other Hispanic students at his institution:

There's a lot of first-generation students [at the university]. I know that the students struggle, and the struggle is with not knowing how the system works, and it's difficult to navigate. When I first came to college... I mean, my brother had been here, but he's so much older than me. He's 10 years older than me, so he was already gone. My sister had come, but she kind of had her own life. So it was me, on my own, trying to figure out the process and trying to work through everything. I just felt that it was important to tell you [that I am a first-generation college student] because it is a struggle for first-generation students, and one of the things that I see now is that there is a large attempt to try to help

out the first-generation students. For example, there's the CAMP¹⁴ program, which is a great program. I wish that a lot of the programs that are here today were there when I was going to school. I think it would have made things a lot easier because it was a challenge. It was one of these things where I had to find out on my own. It was difficult. And today there's all kinds of programs. So when I hear about the first-generation students, I try to help them out as much as I can.

Joseph's maternal grandfather came to the United States from Mexico, as a bracero, an agricultural worker in the Bracero Program. In the mid-20th century, the Bracero Program was a US guest-worker program that summoned documented and undocumented Mexican immigrants to fulfill the labor needs of the country (Portes, 1978). His grandfather later became a naturalized US citizen. Joseph described his mother as "a domestic engineer" in addition to her work in the family farming business.

Joseph's paternal family was from Moraga, where he grew up and currently lives and works. His paternal grandfather was also a farm laborer, and his father became a part-time mechanic. While Joseph was growing up, his parents continued to work on a family farm and also worked a street-side produce stand. The family farm welcomed immigrant and migrant farm-worker families for seasonal work. Joseph recalled meeting a woman who attributed the success in her life to his mother. When the woman approached Joseph, he did not know who she was.

I was trying to remember in my past. She called me by my nickname, and that kind of gave me the timeframe of when this person knew me from. I was still trying to figure out who it was. She says, "I've got a story to tell you. Nobody really knows anything about this." She's about my age, and she says, "Your mom had made a big difference in my life, with what she did." That's when I realized who it was. They were undocumented. They had come here, and my mom had basically done everything to help them get into school; and this young lady had—I call her young 'cause she's my age, OK? So she told me about all of the things that she had done in her life. She had gotten married; she had gotten, I think, a bachelor's of some sort; and she said, "If it wasn't for your mom that came out and took the time to get us all in school and run us through that process, I

¹⁴ The College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) is a federal grant that provides academic and financial support for first-generation, migrant farm workers.

probably wouldn't be here today." And now she's a citizen, paying her taxes, and doing a lot of great things. She just came up to me, and I didn't know who she was in person; and then after getting to talk to her... She'd done all of these neat and exciting things. Here she is, and she's working on campus.

Through our discussion Joseph realized the extent to which his family supported immigrant farm workers who had crossed the border to work. Additionally, he recognized the probability that his family members were undocumented at one point, as well:

When I was that age, I didn't notice any difference. When we lived on the farm, we'd always have the same people every year that would be coming across the border; and some would work out in the fields. Every year they'd come by, and they'd stop. We'd feed them and stuff. We asked them what it was that they needed and let them know that they could stop at our house. In fact, before I was born, my brother was named after one of the young men that used to come every year. He became like a brother. So from a family standpoint, we've always had a thing about helping the undocumented workers. I bet you my grandfather who came through in the Bracero... I'm sure, before the Bracero Program, he probably came by illegally, as well.

Joseph's family had long been a refuge for workers and families crossing the US/Mexico border in search of a better life than what they had in Mexico. Joseph's family raised him in an environment that embraced newcomers, and some of the people his family helped attributed their life's success to the resources they received from Joseph's family. At first, our discussions about his life experiences did not surface this family legacy of helping undocumented immigrants. I learned about the stories from his time on the farm through our later discussions about undocumented students.

Experiencing Racism

During his undergraduate program, Joseph attended an internship program with a government agency in another state. He had never lived outside of his community before this internship in the southern United States. When I asked him about the first time he experienced racism or racial inequities, he described three experiences he had while he was on relocation for the internship. The first two memories were of when he was at a restaurant in the town where he

was interning. The third was in reference to discriminatory practices at his workplace. Joseph described the first scene:

The first time that I witnessed that [racism] is when I moved to [a state in the southern United States] after I graduated. I had a job with the [federal agency] and I remember going to a restaurant. This was back in the late '80s. I walked in—I was there with an Anglo individual—and I walked in the door, and it said “Blacks on one side, Whites on the other.” I was kind of taken back from it because I thought all that was over with. At the time, I was probably in my early '20s. It was kind of strange because I walked in the door and saw this sign... I couldn't believe that that was still happening. And it was a small community in [a state in the southern United States]; but I just, I couldn't believe it... It was kind of odd. I was thinking to myself, “Well, where do I sit?” [laughs] At first I thought it was a joke, but then I realized it wasn't a joke. So I just followed the lead of the person that I was sitting with.

Before going away for his internship, Joseph had never witnessed blatant racism or segregation of this kind in his hometown.

The second experience of racism Joseph recalled was also in a restaurant. This time, he was alone at a restaurant in a large city.

I've actually been in a restaurant again—this was in [a large metropolitan city in the southern United States]. I sat down to eat, and everybody else around me got waited on and served. I continually waited, and I even asked, “I haven't been waited on.” Then I started noticing I was the only person of color in the room at that time, and I ended up leaving the restaurant because I never got served. The thing that I couldn't believe—I didn't think it was happening anymore because where I grew up in here in Moraga. I'd never seen it before. Then I go to another place, and I wasn't expecting to see it. And then all of a sudden I see a sign, and it's so visible and so blatant.

His third experience with racism was related to Joseph's employment with a federal-government agency, and he was feeling overlooked for a promotion he felt had been promised to him. Joseph was a part of an academic program that provided him a federal-government intern position while he completed his degree.

I started there as a GS7.¹⁵ I was promised that within the year I would have my GS9, and that was part of my reason for taking the job. I had been there for about nine months, and then there was this other guy who came in—Anglo. He came in about three or four

¹⁵ The GS system is the pay grade scale used by the federal government.

months after I did. So this individual comes in, started two, three months later than me, and within two to three months, he already had his GS9. When I found out, I started asking questions. So that's when I decided that this job was no longer for me.

Joseph said he was deceived by the organization about the benefits of the program and stipulations of his employment; however, his account of the story alluded to his belief that he was a victim of racial discrimination on the job. He felt that his employers had violated his perception of fairness and honesty. This occurrence in his job was the driving force that made him move back home following his internship.

Although these experiences during his internship and position with the federal government influenced him to return to Moraga, Joseph did not understand them as significant to his worldview or work:

Well, I don't think it really had a major impact on what I did or what I ended up doing. But it did have an impact on me moving back for the reason that... I mean, I felt that I had been promised something, and then when I see somebody else come in and get their GS9 right away. And I thought, "OK, so where am I?" I spent my first, probably two months working in the mail room, which that kind of told me something. And I was asking for other stuff to do. I was thinking, "So, is this going to be my job?" It was kind of strange because the two guys that worked in the mail room, they were both Hispanic. I guess they were trying to warn me about it: "You need to go out and ask about your GS9 because if you don't, you're not going to get it." So I think they experienced some of the same things that I had in the job.

Joseph took a position working in the mailroom with the expectation that he would be moved to a higher-pay-grade position where he could use his educational background in statistics. The men in the mailroom were older gentlemen who grew up in the rural southern town and, contrary to Joseph, were not on a professional career path. The men were long-term employees in the mailroom and cautioned Joseph of the discriminatory practices within the organization. They encouraged him to speak up for what he deserved in the workplace and warned him that, if he did not speak up for himself, he would not achieve parity in his job.

Supporting Students

Joseph's upbringing was integral to his becoming a mentor to students. Helping students to navigate the university system, regardless of their immigration status, seemed to come naturally to Joseph. He gave an example of a young lady who had been referred to him by a state legislator. The young lady was a top academic scholar from a local school district, and she was undocumented.

I was personally involved in assisting them [undocumented students] with some of the issues that they were having on campus. One, for example, I had one student that, because of her status, being undocumented, she was having trouble trying to get a job. She didn't have anything to do, so that made it difficult to stay in school. But we were able to find some other forms, other types of financial assistance to help her. I actually maintained my contact with her, and I was disappointed but happy at the same time because she ended up meeting a young man from Palo Vista. She transferred up to Palo Vista University¹⁶ and I come to find out recently within the last year that she got her degree. She got married and is doing really well, and it was neat to see her because I actually saw her at a legislative reception. She came up and thanked me for everything that I had done, and it just made me feel good.

Joseph gave of his work and personal time to assist students with the university and financial-aid application process, and to help them maintain good academic standing. Additionally, he encouraged his government-relations staff to volunteer with the student-support programs in the same way. Volunteering as a mentor to students was beyond the scope of work for a government-relations officer; however, Joseph found it to be complementary to that work. He explained how engaging with the programs and students helped him to be a better advocate for funding for these programs.

I learn a little bit more about the programs that we have here on campus. When there's times that maybe those programs need some type of financial support, I know about the programs. And if I hear of something that's coming from either state or federal [sources], I make sure to let them [the students] know that there's an opportunity [and] that they

¹⁶ A pseudonym for a Hispanic-serving research university. This university is a peer institution in the same state as Joseph's university.

might want to apply. In fact, our CAMP grant just recently got renewed for another 5 years, and I played a role in trying to get support for it.

Joseph pointed to the strong ethical standards he espouses in his lobbying work. His family experiences were the source of his ethics, and he has continued to promote these ethics in his job. He described his ethics this way:

There's the one thing that really sticks out to me first, and this is one thing I also tell my staff, is that ethics is really important to me. In the world that we live in, people think that lobbyists and others are unethical. For me, drawing that line between right and wrong is important, and making sure that everything that we do is ethical, is within whatever rules that we have to comply with. And I think a lot of that's driven through my background. My mom always told me a phrase that... It actually came from my grandfather: "*la mentira dura hasta que la*—the truth comes out; the lies will last until the truth comes out." So that's one of the things that I always think about. And it's something my grandpa would always tell my mom, and of course, my mom told me. So, to me, that's important.

It was clear that Joseph called on the lessons of his mother and grandfather to make ethical decisions in his work. He defined his ethics as following the rules and being honest.

When I asked if he had ever been placed in an ethical dilemma, Joseph interpreted the question to mean that someone asked him to lie or do something illegal:

I've never really been in a situation where I've been asked to do anything unethical. But I think the way that I would react to it would be that I probably wouldn't do it. I'd probably send a memo back saying, you know, "Here's X, Y, and Z, and here's the issues." I'd put it down in writing because that's how strongly I feel about my ethics. I've never really been put in that situation. Not even when it's been in the gray area. But I think that's the way I would probably react to it. It's important for me. To me, the reputation you develop is important; and if you start doing something that's a little bit shady, then, you know, word gets around. This is a small state and people are going to wonder, "OK; well, do I hire this guy, because, well, I heard this." Ethics are important, and that's something that I think was instilled in me by my parents.

Joseph reiterated the important role his family played in the development of his ethical compass. This compass had guided him through his work as a lobbyist and was made visible by the students (documented and undocumented) who attributed much of their success to his

support and guidance. Moreover, he did not show hesitation in helping and supporting undocumented students at his institution to access financial resources and support programs.

Policy Discussion for DREAMers

Joseph stated that he had never had to advise his president about a policy position on the DREAM Act because the presidents he has served have always been very knowledgeable and supportive of the legislation. He provided a synopsis of how he might approach the discussion if it ever arose:

I think, first of all, I'm more of a fact finder. So the way I operate is I go out and try to find out all the facts; and I think there's a lot of facts to support a policy like this, given the fact that we're so close to the border. Two, we probably already have a number of [undocumented] students here already. Three is that our law, like for example on our state funding, does not distinguish whether or not you are a legal citizen. All it requires is that you graduated from a [State] high school. I think there's some facts that we'd probably be able to get from the Bordertown¹⁷ area. They would have the facts behind it to show that there's people that are... there's individuals that are in school and they live in Mexico. But the first thing I would do is get all the facts out, support for the policy position. I strongly believe that there are a number of students that are undocumented that are already going to this campus. The students are already here, whether we like it or not. And they are trying to do something to better themselves and the entire nation. I mean, there's these students that are trying to get a higher-education degree; of course, they're going to want to do something.

As a way to communicate his support for the DREAM Act and DREAM-like policies, Joseph also reflected on a story he heard about a student from his university who died while serving in the US military. It was later discovered that the man was an undocumented immigrant and had never gained his US citizenship.

It was really interesting to find out, one of my previous supervisors was doing a project on World War II. At the height of action there was one particular person, an individual that had died, and he served our country. He died while serving our country, and he later found out that that person was undocumented; but he found out he was already... he was a student here at Moraga University.¹⁸ And I mean that was back in the '40s.

¹⁷ A pseudonym for a local town on the US/Mexico border where young people and families cross the border daily to attend school and work.

¹⁸ A pseudonym for a research university in the western United States.

Not only did Joseph come from a family legacy of providing refuge for undocumented immigrants, but he also highlighted a story that demonstrated how the institution he worked for had a similar legacy of educating undocumented students.

Through our discussions, Joseph identified three key changes he would make to support undocumented students if he were asked to create a policy to address undocumented-student access: (1) provide citizenship for children whose parents have been naturalized; (2) create an accelerated citizenship process for students educated in the United States; and (3) change policies that require people to return to their birth country during the naturalization process. All these elements would have benefited the soldier who died in WWII and the students Joseph has helped during his career. He wove personal experiences with students throughout our policy discussion:

For one, I have seen several cases where the parents have actually gotten their citizenship, which... I don't know how this happens, but I've seen a few cases like this one young lady, that the parents, or one of the parents, somehow had their legal status; and they were living here in the US, but then the kids weren't [citizens]. I don't know if this has changed or not; but one of the things that I would do is that, if there is a parent that is already here that has a legal status, or even a family member... For example, she had a sister that was born here; I mean, I would figure out a way to speed up the process. Two is if the students have already gone through our entire public school system in the US... I mean, come on, let's speed up the process to get them their citizenship. I'm finding out it's a very common situation that happens in Moraga. In fact, you've got a lot of kids that catch the bus in Bordertown, because kids are coming across the border from Mexico because they're US citizens. That's one of the things that I'd probably work on.

Joseph reflected again on the students he had helped in the past with financial assistance:

When I was trying to figure out the other part of the financial assistance that I've given to students I got to know—I forget the name of the organization, but there was an organization in the state that works with undocumented workers. I got to meet them through some work that I had been doing; and I put this young lady and some of the others in contact with them, to assist them with trying to speed up their citizenship process. But basically that's what I would do, is try to create a policy that would speed that up.

In reference to current immigration policies, which require persons to return to their birth countries to complete the naturalization process, Joseph said,

I know of a young man that got his engineering degree, a top academic scholar, graduated I think in the top 5%, but he ended up having to go back to Mexico to work until I think he finally got his citizenship. It was one of these situations where a lot of the family was already here in the US. I think that's one of the other things I'd probably change, if I would be able to change that legally, like from a policy standpoint. But I think it's stupid.

Joseph was the point of contact for several students who entered his institution. State legislators referred undocumented students to Joseph for assistance with the application process and support with navigating the university. I asked if the resources for the application process were obvious to an undocumented student. Joseph replied,

It's not. I don't think it's obvious, but, I mean, there's Chicano programs. I know that they do a lot of stuff for students. This particular student, I'm not sure if she would have known where the resources were for her to go; and the reason that I got involved is because I was made aware of the situation by a legislator who was concerned. I'm not sure if the student would have actually finished or been able to finish. Yeah, I'm not sure if there is something, like, advertised? My feeling is that there's probably a lot of folks on this campus that would be ready and willing to assist undocumented students.

Although Joseph believed that there were many people on his campus ready to assist with the specific needs of undocumented students, he felt that students were fearful of being identified as undocumented because they accessed particular a service or program:

I think it really comes down to a lot of the students being afraid to go to a place without getting in trouble. I think part of it is the way the students might feel if they go to a place that's really well advertised, and where all these undocumented students go for services. The students may not want to go because they might feel like they're a target. But from an institutional standpoint, I couldn't tell you one way or the other as to why undocumented-student support is not advertised.

Joseph described how his ideal policy would address some of the challenges undocumented students face. He called on his personal experiences with students he has supported to articulate necessary changes to current immigration and naturalization policies and procedures. Although Joseph suspected that there were already a number of undocumented

students attending Moraga University and most of the people in the institution were supportive allies for these students, the procedures and resources for undocumented students are not evident on the campus. Even top academic scholars have called on state policy makers and Joseph to assist them with navigating the university. Joseph also needed to put effort behind uncovering and clarifying the resources and processes for the undocumented students he helped, because the resources were not clear to him either. Additionally, Joseph did not stop at campus resources to support students. He made efforts to connect students with a community-based, immigrant-rights organization to assist the students with obtaining citizenship and other resources.

Supporting the DREAM Act

Joseph was not in his current position as government-relations officer when the state passed legislation that widened access for undocumented students. The revised law allows qualified undocumented students to be eligible for state grants, state scholarships, and in-state tuition, thus treating undocumented students the same as other state resident students. Consequently, Joseph could not speak to the actual discussions about the legislation and its impact on student access to his university.

Joseph said that he had never been involved in any administrative discussions that debated the institution's support for the federal DREAM Act. "Part of the major reason is the state has already taken a position on that; so how could you not support it?" He said he had never run into barriers at his institution while trying to access funding and other support for students. I asked Joseph what he would say to someone who had a purely resistant attitude toward assisting undocumented students, and he responded,

I guess I'd ask them "Why not?" I just don't know what the [problem would be] if the state's willing to bend the rules, or not bend the rules; but to say that our state funding¹⁹ is not discriminatory, then why should our policies be discriminatory? I mean, the state's already set that precedent, so I don't think we would be violating anything.

Joseph took the position of student advocate when I framed the question as one of his facing general resistance to access for undocumented students. His approach changed when I provided a scenario that used language such as "these students are here illegally and do not qualify for these opportunities."

OK; for that type of thing, I would not push to bend the rules because of the legal issues that are involved. I would not want to jeopardize the university from that standpoint. But from a scholarship standpoint, I don't see what the issues are. I'm pretty black and white when it comes to legal issues and the institution.

On a related topic, Joseph's state has attempted to revoke driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants. Although this was not directly related to college admissions, it had a significant impact on undocumented students' ability to access college or a college education. Specifically, students without a state-issued identification card run into barriers during the application, registration, and proof-of-state-residency processes. In addition, they experience limitations with safe transportation options to attend classes and engage in extracurricular activities. Although Joseph felt that comprehensive immigration reform and citizenship was an important advocacy area for the institution, he did not support taking a position on the driver's-license issue.

There has never been a discussion on the driver's-license issue. From my standpoint, from a government relations standpoint, I probably would not get into that discussion. I don't see it as one of these issues that's directly related to higher ed, like the DREAM Act. Here's how I look at it: From a government relations standpoint, I have to sit down and prioritize which issues and which battles that we're going to take on. Even [with] all the issues that we have to attend to, it's not something an institution of higher ed would

¹⁹ To protect the confidentiality of the participant, I use "state funding" as a broad term that includes the state scholarship program and other forms of state financial aid.

probably get into directly. It just becomes a balance of the availability of time and what issues are we really going to take on.

Joseph explained two categories of legislative issues he needs to prioritize in his lobbying and advocacy work: (a) funding issues and (b) policy issues. These issues are not evenly addressed in his work. He explained, “It varies from year to year. For example, at the state level, I would say about 80% of my time focuses on finance-related activities, and 20% is probably related to policy-related activities. It might even be less than 20%.” Joseph described the issues he considered policy areas:

Financial aid—for example, the state funding, the retirement issue for the employees, although you could talk about that being about both money and policy. But there’s a lot of policy that’s going into that. There’s been some issues with the way research-funding scholarships might be directed. Again, that’s related to both finance and policy. I’m trying to think though... There’s been some tax-related issues; but again, where you got the mixture of finance and policy related... I really can’t think of anything off the top of my head without going back and looking at my list.

Joseph said that the Federal DREAM Act was always a legislative priority on the policy side of the issues, and the university took a strong supportive position.

If I remember correctly—I need to go back and look, but if I recall correctly, I believe the Board of Regents passed a resolution supporting the DREAM Act. And that came up because the administration asked the Regents to support it. The Regents just really got behind it. Yeah, a strong statement in support of it. When we met with our state delegation,²⁰ it’s something that we expressed our support for. I think, when it did come up, it was probably ranked just as high as any of our other legislative priorities. There’s two different things. A lot of our legislative priorities in past years have been in regards to legislative earmarks for funding; so there’s always this funding component, and then there’s the policy component. So I think, in terms of policy, it’s probably at... close to the top of the list.

Joseph described his institution as a strong supporter of the federal DREAM Act and other state initiatives to support undocumented-student access. Although funding and finance

²⁰ State delegation refers to the US congressional delegation for the state.

were a priority in his work, Joseph described how the access issues for undocumented students have been addressed through the administration and the governing board.

During our discussion in his office, ornate with family photos, Joseph expressed some fatigue from the government-relations work. “It’s like I always say, ‘I haven’t quite figured out what I want to do when I grow up yet.’ But in my second career, I probably wouldn’t be doing this.” Joseph is looking forward to adopting his hobby in photography as his second career—a world away from the duties of a higher-education lobbyist and government-relations officer.

Analysis

In an effort to understand how Joseph’s formative life experiences had influenced his policy discussions about access to higher education for undocumented students, I conducted two analyses: (a) a holistic-content analysis to outline the emergent life themes; and (b) a dialogic/performance analysis to highlight how he had constructed his lobbyist identity, an identity for DREAMers, and a policy-advocacy role for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

Life Themes

Several themes emerged from Joseph’s personal narrative: (a) family legacy of benevolence; (b) value of mentoring; and (c) naiveté about racism. Each theme played a role in building the foundation for Joseph’s life and work.

Family legacy of benevolence. Through our discussion about his work and the plight of undocumented students, Joseph first talked about examples of personal relationships with students at his institution. However, as our discussion progressed, he told a story about how he ran into a woman from his past who attributed the survival of her family and her success to Joseph’s mother. This story sparked memories for him about his family. Joseph’s family owned a farm near the US-Mexico border. His family welcomed immigrants as they crossed the border

looking for work and a better life in the United States. His family not only housed and fed the families, but his mother also assisted with enrolling the children in school and helping them navigate the school system.

The family tradition of welcoming and assisting newcomers, many of them undocumented, to the country was a common occurrence in Joseph's life—so much so that he did not often think about the incidents. Our discussion spurred memories and stories from his family about close relationships with some of the people they welcomed. Throughout our discussions, it became evident to both Joseph and me that the way he interacted with students and the ethical approach he took toward his work were rooted in the lessons he had learned from his parents and grandparents.

Value of mentoring. Joseph believed that mentoring was an important tool to support and reach students who had a similar, first-generation-in-college experience to his. He wished that he had had someone to support him who could relate to his experience while he had been in college. As a result, Joseph was volunteering to be a mentor through student-support programs.

From the way he referenced his mother in the discussion of ethics and the support she gave to migrant farm workers, his mother was a mentor to Joseph. She modeled the supportive relationships that Joseph has with students. As previously noted, in many ways Joseph's mentoring activities with students were much like the help his family had given to undocumented immigrants when they crossed the border. Joseph related to the students' experiences, showed compassion, connected them with resources, and hoped for their success. Mentoring and working directly with students was not a part of his job description as a government-relations officer. He took this responsibility upon himself to mentor students, and he encouraged the staff he supervised to do the same. Joseph's connection with the students and the student-support

programs also gave him insight to the program activities and needs, which allowed him to be a better advocate.

Additionally, when asked about how he would counsel a university president on the DREAM Act and undocumented-student access, Joseph also approached this scenario as a mentor. He outlined how he would mentor his president by gathering the facts and information about the issue, so he could present them and provide guidance to the president, should the opportunity arise.

Naiveté about racism. Joseph said he had not experienced nor witnessed racism while he was growing up in Moraga. He said he did not experience or witness racism until he was away from Moraga during college for an internship. However, there were other socioeconomic dynamics in Moraga and throughout his life, which he discussed without a critical perspective. From his parents taking in families who were crossing the borders, to his recognizing the need for special advocates to assist students with navigating the general educational system and higher education in particular as an undocumented students, Joseph discussed these as mere facts and did not understand them to be related to institutionalized, structural, or economic racism. I inferred from our discussion that if the racism was not printed on a sign and clearly in violation of a law, then Joseph did not view the dynamics to be racially discriminatory or biased. Additionally, he did not understand his mother's actions of supporting undocumented families, nor his mentoring and guidance to undocumented students as acts of resistance to the social structure that limits accessibility and resources to students under the laws in his state.

Policy Themes

I used dialogic/performance analysis to unpack Joseph's policy discussion about undocumented-student access. Based on the dialogic/performance analysis of our discussions, I

outline how Joseph constructed (a) his lobbyist identity, (b) an identity for undocumented students, and (c) an advocacy role for HSIs in undocumented-student access.

Lobbyist identity. Three elements emerged as aspects of Joseph’s lobbyist identity in our discussions: being (a) highly ethical; (b) known as the “go-to” guy for legislators working with undocumented students; and (c) viewed as more than just a lobbyist. Joseph called on the teachings of his family to emphasize the strong ethics he held in his work. He portrayed himself as a rule follower and pointed to state laws as his ethical boundaries. He made clear that, regardless of the impacts of law on undocumented students, he was never willing to support anything that would appear to be in violation of state law or that involved being dishonest.

Joseph told a story about an undocumented student referred to him by a state legislator. The legislator asked Joseph to take care of this top, academic scholar while she attended his institution. Joseph sought out funding and other financial support because she could not legally work in the United States and did not have enough money to cover her living expenses. He framed himself as a hero for this young lady who was cleaning houses and working other odd jobs to make money. He used this story and other stories about student referrals and their success to point out his trustworthiness and to frame himself as the “go-to guy” for legislators looking for assistance with a student.

Joseph used stories about students to construct an identity inclusive of him as a mentor and student advocate; he even spent time discussing his passion for photography. He spoke much more about his relationships with current and previous students than he did about his work as a lobbyist. It seemed that this relationship aspect was where he was most passionate and was what reflected the work he wanted to be known for.

Identity for undocumented students. Again, Joseph used stories about personal relationships with current and previous students to construct an identity for undocumented students. He described many undocumented students as highly talented, top scholars who were highly decorated with awards and honors. His description created a “star” image of undocumented students, which excluded the majority of average and struggling undocumented students from the conversation. Joseph was fully aware of the complications of obtaining citizenship for undocumented students, and he gave examples of when completing the citizenship process had been extremely difficult for some students. He also expressed a feeling of frustration from seeing the immigration process unfairly deport some students and separate families in the process.

Additionally, the identity Joseph constructed for undocumented students included their eagerness to be citizens. He did not discuss why citizenship was so important to them, other than to mention their ability to pay taxes. This, however, is not the only benefit that becoming a citizen affords undocumented immigrants. Citizenship is an equalizer between them and their peers in terms of social status; it removes the shroud of fear of deportation and separation from their families; and it provides opportunities for them to work legally in the United States, and to excel and advance as professionals. Joseph did not discuss any of these elements of opportunity as a part of undocumented students’ identity.

Advocacy role for HSIs. Joseph’s portrayal of the role of HSIs was much more focused on service and support of undocumented students than it was focused on advocacy for social policy changes. Joseph expressed his views that what is currently in place in his state meets many of the needs of undocumented students in terms of access, and that the HSIs should be advocates to maintain the current access. However, the policy role he believes the HSIs should

play did not include actively advocating in other states or on the federal level to address access and a pathway to citizenship for undocumented students. He did not deem advocacy necessary beyond what the institution had already done (e.g., informing the congressional delegation that the Board of Regents had passed a resolution in support of the DREAM Act).

Conclusion

Joseph's personal narrative highlighted the influential role that his family and upbringing on the farm had played in how he related to students, the ethical approach he took to his work, and what he viewed as the role of HSIs in advocating for undocumented-student access. His respectful and orthodox approach to the issue of undocumented students was directly related to how he was raised by his hard-working farming family: He would never hesitate to assist someone in need; however, he would stop short of addressing the blatant racial discrimination and segregation of people of color in a restaurant. Although he disagreed with the signage and treatment of people of color in the South, his cultural and ethical upbringing prevented him from challenging the discrimination. As a result, he either followed the rules, followed the lead of the Anglo who led him, or removed himself from the situation. The same was true for his level of engagement with the undocumented-student access issue.

CHAPTER 7: ROBERT, THE PACIFIST

Robert was born and raised in the capital city of Cañon.²¹ His parents moved to Cañon as children during the Great Depression in the 1930s and attended junior high and high school there. When Robert's grandparents originally settled in Cañon, it was much a smaller community. As he described it, the demographics and socioeconomic status of residents in the city have changed considerably during Robert's lifetime, to the tourist-heavy and bustling city it is today:

I also went to the public schools here in Cañon. At that time, it was a smaller community and I think less affluent than it's become over the last forty or fifty years. But my experience was basically positive going through the public school system. I graduated from Cañon High School here in town.

Robert, a middle-aged Anglo, described the Cañon of his childhood as a majority Hispanic community. Despite being among the racial minority in his community, Robert had a good experience growing up in Cañon and relating to the other children in his community:

I am Anglo, and most of the kids I went to school with were primarily Hispanic, although not exclusively. I never learned to speak Spanish fluently, but I always got along well with almost all of the kids around back in that time... I've always been kind of a friendly person, friendly with everyone basically; so I did get along pretty well with kids from various ethnic backgrounds and had friends who were Hispanic as well as Anglo, and still do. Some of them I've known since I was a kid.

Robert's kind and gentle demeanor allowed him to establish a diverse network of friends, many of whom he continues to consider friends. Although Robert did not recall witnessing incidents of racism or racial tension during his childhood, he was cognizant of the racial and socioeconomic disparities in his community.

I was probably generally aware that there was a group of students, some Hispanic students, who were from very poor surroundings and who struggled in school. They didn't do well and needed extra help. By the time I got to junior high school, there were

²¹ Cañon is a pseudonym for the capital city of a state west of the Mississippi River.

some gangs in some of the schools, and those tended to be mostly Hispanic groups from Cañon.

During his time in junior high school, a math teacher took an interest in Robert and his academic development. This was the first experience he regarded as having a formative impact on his life and career path in education:

I had a math teacher in junior high school who I developed a great admiration for. He was just an excellent teacher, and he planted the seed, I think, of working in the education field. I've kind of always held teachers and that gentleman in particular in high regard based on that early experience in junior high school.

Although Cañon was predominantly Hispanic and Robert established many friendships with people from diverse backgrounds, he did not recall any specific occasions during which race and racism were at the forefront of the experience. The aim of our discussion was specific to my developing an understanding of the formative experiences about race and racism in Robert's life; however, other than this fond recollection of a junior-high teacher, Robert could not recall other significant experiences in his life. He said, "I'm trying to think back even earlier in terms of anything in particular; it's... [long pause] ...nothing's coming to mind." Additionally, he did not provide insights into how race and racism had touched his life and connected to his work as a lobbyist.

The College Years

Robert took a traditional path through college. He attended the flagship research university in his state straight out of high school, took from 15 to 18 credit hours per semester, and graduated in 4 years with his bachelor's degree. He was in college during the Vietnam War, and at the height of the civil-rights movement and student activism on his campus. He described his engagement with the sociopolitical dynamics on his campus as follows:

Basically, during the Vietnam era, I was actually pretty much an antiwar person. During that era I became... well, I still am, I think, a fairly liberal-oriented person in terms of my

political and international views. Actually, somewhat of a pacifist, I was resisting to the Vietnam War and still have a hard time with military sorts of things; so that was definitely formative. In a broad political and social sense, I think that era [was formative], as it was for a lot of people.

The years of 1969 and 1970 represented the height of student activism on Robert's college campus. Robert was a college senior at the time, and he recalled when the National Guard came to the campus to subdue the student sit-ins and protests. The interaction between the students and the National Guard resulted in one student dead and several injured. Robert was acquainted with one of the student involved in the confrontation:

In fact, I know one of the students that was actually stabbed. I wasn't on campus at the time that actually happened; that was during my senior year, I believe, if my memory serves me right. That was probably in the spring of 1970. My mind is a little foggy there, but basically the Guard tried to clear the area around the campus, the Student Union Building; and this gentleman, also from here in Cañon, got stabbed in his leg by a bayonet and had a bunch of stitches. Our graduation was sort of messed up that year. They kind of just canceled the last few weeks of school. So my college graduation turned out to be kind of a mess. [laughing]

Robert recalled how conflict between students and the National Guard put a damper on graduation that year. This time in history was also at the apex of student activism for equal access, the creation of ethnic-studies programs, and the development of student-support programs on college campuses across the country. During Robert's college years, the programs were in their infancy.

Well, at Palo Vista University²² during that era there were definitely black and Hispanic groups being formed. I was not really involved with any of that, other than being generally aware. My recollection is [that] at that point it was primarily extracurricular. I don't think any of it had been built into the university administrative structure in the way that happened in the years that followed. There may have been a Black student center, I don't remember for sure; but mostly what I remember is the extracurricular, student-government kind of things rather than actual service units on campus for those populations... I saw a need for those kind of programs, and thinking back to my experiences in grade school and junior high and so forth, I was aware of the real struggles some students had because of language barriers and lack of role models at home. I

²² A pseudonym for a public research institution, west of the Mississippi River.

certainly couldn't have articulated things at that point; but I was sympathetic, basically, for that kind of help for some students.

The activism surrounding Robert during his college years impacted his political persuasions and worldview. Although he was a self-proclaimed pacifist in the movement, Robert was sympathetic to the social-justice efforts around college access and support. He was philosophically supportive of programs and services particular to supporting students of color, despite the fact that those options were not designed to serve him as an Anglo male at the university.

Professional Career

Following his undergraduate studies, Robert moved out of state for graduate school. He completed his master's degree in finance and worked for a hospital while he completed his graduate program. He met his wife and got married before he moved back home to Cañon. He did not get involved in government-relations work or higher education until later on in his career. An internship with state government ignited his professional career.

I was not engaged in government relations earlier, although some of the things I did I guess had elements to them. Well, my very first job in this state government was in 1975. I was an administrative aide in the office of the State Lieutenant Governor. I was hired initially under a federal temporary-jobs program—a 3-month temporary job, but it ended up that I got put on a regular slot. I did community meetings or ombudsman kind of work in that office, dealing with individual citizen's problems with government agencies. In a way, that was kind of community relations or government relations, not lobbying per se, but dealing with people's problems, trying to explain the way the government works to people, and that sort of thing.

Robert described the types of issues local residents asked him to address through his role in state government. He acknowledged that he was often unable to address the issues people were dealing with in the community because of his position, office, and the nature of the requests. However, he was sympathetic to the challenges people of color and people living in

poverty who were seeking help from the government faced. He described the constituent interactions:

There were all kinds of folks, many people dealing with issues who would come to that office, dealing or wanting help with weird things, like probation and parole. They wanted to get their cousin out of prison; or some wanted help with Social Security, which is not a state program. So lots of people came wanting help with stuff we couldn't really deal with in a state government agency. But many of them were minorities... I think in the majority of those cases they were issues related to poverty.

Robert spent 3 years working in the ombudsman role at the State Capitol. Because of the location of his job, he became well acquainted with staffs and functions of the legislative branch of state government. He applied for and was hired as an analyst for the finance agency within the state legislature. His primary duty was to analyze state-agency budgets. After 2 years in the position, his assignments became focused on budgets and financing for public and higher education.

Robert spent a total of 8 years as a budget analyst for the legislature, primarily focused on higher education, before he moved to the executive agency that oversaw higher education. While he worked in the executive agency, he focused on the 2-year-college funding formula and eventually became the Deputy Director. After several years, Moraga University²³ recruited him to serve as the institution's budget director. Robert served Moraga University, managing departmental and program budgets for 2 years. However, after having worked on state-level financing and budgets, he did not believe the detailed work as a budget officer was a good fit for his skills and desired career path. Because of the lack of personal satisfaction with his position at Moraga University, Robert decided to seek employment at another 4-year institution. He worked

²³ A pseudonym for a 4-year research university and HSI/HACU member.

as the Vice President for Business for 7 years at the University of Northfield.²⁴ He described his role there:

During the time I was at Northfield, one of my roles as the business vice president there was government relations. In fact, one of the reasons I was hired for that job is because I had worked for both the state legislature and the higher-education commission. So I was up here [Cañon] during legislative sessions and essentially was the institution's budget and finance representative—essentially a semi-lobbying role.

Robert's primary role as the Vice President for Business was to secure funding for the university. He described the University of Northfield as a "modest sized" institution that enrolled approximately 4,000 students during that time. Because of the relatively small size of the institution, it did not have the capacity to hire long-term contract lobbyists or to establish a government-relations office. As a result, Robert worked closely with the president and the institution's public-relations person to conduct all government-relations duties on behalf of the university. There was additional support from a professional contract lobbyist during the legislative session. Although the legislative team's main priority was to secure funding, Robert described the social issues the institutions addressed while he worked for the University of Northfield:

Well, the primary one would be student financial-aid issues, which is another form of finance but more directly impacting the student population than the institution, although important to the institution, as well. We were very supportive of the [state scholarship program]. There were also some specialized scholarship programs that impacted Northfield. Since Northfield is right on the state border, and our neighboring state had a policy where their institutions were allowed to admit our students at in-state tuition rates, we developed an equivalent policy. If you lived within, I think it's 100 miles or so of the state border, you could attend at resident tuition rates. I wasn't directly involved with the legislative enactment of that program, but one of our area state legislators carried that bill on behalf of Northfield.

Robert pointed out that, as a result of the policy design, Moraga University was the largest beneficiary of the Northfield scholarship program because of its close proximity to a large

²⁴ A pseudonym for a public, 4-year, comprehensive university.

city in a neighboring state. Robert said that the scholarship program became “a political football” once the state could no longer sustain the growth of the program. Eventually, enrollment caps were put in place to limit the cost of the program. Other than financial-aid legislation, Robert was not involved in any social-policy lobbying while he worked for Northfield.

Following more than a decade working for 4-year universities across the state, Robert returned to Cañon and worked intermittently on a contract basis for the state government. A major assignment during this period was for him to assist the executive higher-education agency through a gubernatorial transition and resulting reorganization.

It was a massive staff turnover, and I was recruited to step in and kind of help keep the ship [executive higher-education agency] afloat for a period of time. But I also did some work for the legislature and for the state Department of Finance and a couple of other entities. That was from ‘03 to ‘06. And in 2006 I was hired to be the director of the community colleges group as a full-time employee.

Before Robert took the position representing the community colleges, the organization had comprised all 2-year institutions in the state, including the 2-year branch campuses of the 4-year institutions. But the stark differences in governance, structure, and finance between the independent colleges and 2-year branch campuses drove the organization to split into two distinct groups. Robert’s position was as the first director to oversee the government-relations work of the independent community-college consortia. The association provided an organized way for community colleges to engage in unified government-relations work on behalf of the 2-year institutions. The group worked on a number of legislative initiatives, most of which related to institutional finance. Not long after, Robert took the leadership position, and, according to him, “the bottom fell out of the economy.” Within the first 2 years of being in the position, he was dealing with a weakened economy, rapidly expanding institutions as individuals sought to improve their job skills, and major hits to higher-education funding. More than 50% of the

higher-education institutions Robert worked for and throughout the state were Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and enrolled a high proportion of low-income students of color. He explained how he highlighted these demographics during his lobbying work:

In making our case for as much state support as they could afford to give us, which was actually less and less and less every year, we certainly emphasized the fact that our institutions were the primary providers of educational opportunity to students from minority groups in our state. We emphasized we really were far less expensive than 4-year institutions or primary institutions, and were really the best investment the state could make in terms of preparing people for jobs, which was and is to this day a desperate need for all of our state citizens, but certainly for Hispanics. So the policy focus was certainly fiscally oriented, but with the message being that it was a way to support the needs of our less-educated, less-well-off citizens... So it was preserving access for as many students as we could even though funding was being cut.

Robert explained how the 4-year research institutions and the 2-year community colleges were at odds and competing for a shrinking pot of state dollars:

It's a competitive environment, and you know there is never as much money to go around as any of the players would like to see. There were some actually pretty intense discussions within the higher-ed community, between 2-year institutions and 4-year institutions, about allocating resources. We at the community-college level strongly made the case that the most important thing for the state to do was to preserve access for the students that we served at our institutions. Where our colleagues at the universities basically touted or made the case that it was really the research-university mission that ought to be first in priority to the state because that's where we get the really high-paying jobs of the future brought in.

Through our discussion, Robert highlighted how the changing economy pitted higher-education institutions against one another in the hopes of securing state funds. The debate was about which institutional mission would be the wisest investment for the future of the state: retooling displaced workers and meeting the basic education needs of the state, or developing research programs and hiring high-paid workers. Robert summarized, "the lack of money really does raise some interesting policy dilemmas within the higher-ed environment."

Policy Discussion for DREAMers About Undocumented Students

I coconstructed a policy discussion with Robert about undocumented-student access. The following topic areas emerged from our conversations: (a) postsecondary education for undocumented students; (b) financial subsidy issues; (c) the DREAM Act; (d) driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants; (e) reduction in funding of nondiscrimination waiver; and (f) undocumented-student policy perspectives.

Postsecondary Education For Undocumented Students

Robert worked for state government during the time that the state passed a nondiscrimination education law, which widened access to postsecondary education for undocumented students. Although Robert was present and working on higher-education funding, he was not directly involved in the discussions and debates around the policy. Robert did recall the controversy and the work of the local immigrant-rights organization that initiated the legislation:

I was kind of tangentially in the higher-ed system. I was doing some consulting work through the state executive higher-education department, mostly on budget and finance, of course, which is my background. So I was around during the legislative discussions when that legislation was passed. But it was not my responsibility to be directly involved in those discussions; so it was secondary, I guess, or tangential.

Robert reiterated that his role within the higher-education department was financial. He did, however, recall the debates and discussions at the Capitol:

My recollection is that it was somewhat controversial. There were strong advocates. I can't remember the name of the woman who runs [the grassroots organization]. I thought she was extremely articulate and effective in carrying the case of allowing the undocumented students to have residency for tuition purposes at our institutions. I do recall seeing her make presentations a couple of times in front of legislative committees. I don't remember any particular players per se, but there was a degree of reticence among the conservative factions of the legislature over whether that was appropriate public policy. There were a number of student groups that were organized and brought to the capital. I thought it was almost a model campaign for getting legislative change enacted. Nothing works like a case study of students that are in that situation, coming and making

a presentation to a legislative committee; and there were a couple of those that I think really made an impact on legislators as that was discussed.

Robert recalled the arguments opposing the legislation and pointed to the precedents set for access to education for undocumented students in the public school system:

I think the argument [against the policy] was essentially just one that nonresidents, nonlegal residents, should not have access to public benefits of any kind. And I don't remember how that was described relative to the K-through-12 students because that's been less of a concern over time than college tuition and college subsidy has been.

Robert distinguished between access to public school and to higher education for undocumented students, based on previous judicial actions that set legal precedents. He also described how students living in Mexico cross the border daily to attend public schools in the United States. "That probably doesn't happen as much now with the crackdown on the border, and the drug wars, and all that stuff. But it may; I don't know."

Financial Subsidy Issues

Robert pointed to the financial aspects of the debate over the nondiscrimination legislation. In his view, the high rate at which the state funds public higher education was central to the discussion about whether or not to support undocumented students:

The issue from the finance side is that the state has, for a number of years, had very low public-college tuition, among the lowest in the country. And that's been a matter of explicit state policy for a generation or more, which means that the cost of operating the colleges and universities rests heavily on state government, not on the students who are attending; and so the issue became whether the state had a legal obligation or maybe even a moral obligation to provide a subsidy—a healthy subsidy, say 75% of the cost, which is a round figure, to provide a college education to nonresident students.

Robert said that people who opposed the initiative compared subsidizing undocumented students in higher education to subsidizing any out-of-state student. He again pointed to the constitutional regulations that support educating undocumented students in the K-through-12 system, and the lack of similar regulations for higher education.

... which the issue with the cost of college is different than with the K-through-12 system where there's constitutional clauses that talk about a free and appropriate public education for through high school; but that part of legal status doesn't apply quite so directly to higher ed. So I think the policy issue is whether the state should subsidize nonlegal residents of the state.

Robert continued to describe the argument from contesters of the access legislation, emphasizing the focus on state dollars supporting undocumented students by providing in-state tuition rates, and then most likely paying the tuition through the state scholarship:

And kind of another wrinkle that's come up in that regard is that—I remember some folks raising this at the time this was debated in the legislature... is if we're going to provide essentially a tuition subsidy to undocumented immigrants, essentially we'll pay the majority of their cost of going to college. Why don't we do that for a student that lives in a neighboring state, who is an American citizen? Why would we give a higher status financially to undocumented immigrants than we do to US citizens from other states? And that was kind of a big policy discussion.

Opponents to the legislation felt strongly against subsidizing the cost of higher education for undocumented students. The opposition aimed at framing the discourse about the legislation as giving special privileges of a state subsidy to undocumented students, which was not afforded to other US citizens. Robert described the successful argument from the proponents of the access legislation:

I think where that came down is that these were [state] residents. They were undocumented; they were not US citizens, but they were graduates of [state] public high schools, and I think that argument was ultimately persuasive that accorded them or should accord them this right or benefit. And there was also... I think there's a good sort of economic-development argument that you could make that, if we've got these students here in our state and in our country, and for our economy to grow and prosper, they should be as well educated as they possibly can.

The Dream Act

Robert was unfamiliar with the federal DREAM Act. When I asked if he had ever worked on the DREAM Act in any of his positions, he said, “Meriah, to be real candid, I did not follow and am really frankly not all that familiar with the particulars of the federal act. I know it covers

some other territory that I couldn't describe, the details and all." Robert's role was explicitly focused on state government relations and state finance. Although he did think that one large community college in the association may have contracted with federal lobbyists. He said that most of the colleges were members of the American Association of Community Colleges, from which they would receive lobbying services, bulletins, and newsletters, including legal briefs regarding federal legislation. "But my impression is their active involvement at the national level is pretty nominal."

Driver's License Issue

On another issue, driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants have become a target of the state administration in [State]. The governor aimed at revoking and prohibiting state identification cards for undocumented immigrants, thus denying them access to personal transportation and services that required a state-issued ID. Robert said that this was never a topic of conversation for the community colleges in the association.

Well, the driver's license issue, to my knowledge, really wasn't... community colleges weren't engaged in that. I don't recall any discussions within our community-college organization about that particular issue in terms of how it might affect community-college students, or that sort of thing.

Funding Cut for Nondiscrimination Waiver

Robert was frank about the discussions regarding the cut in funding by the state legislature for the nondiscrimination waiver during the past legislative session. The nondiscrimination waiver provided a state subsidy for undocumented students admitted to the university under the state nondiscrimination law. This was a subsidy to the institutions for every student admitted under the nondiscrimination policy. The subsidy covered the difference between the out-of-state tuition costs and the in-state tuition costs for students who were provided state residency for tuition purposes. The subsidy was in addition to the full-tuition

scholarship award that the state provided to every qualified high-school graduate who attended a state college or university (now including undocumented students under the nondiscrimination policy). Robert described how the elimination of the waiver disproportionately impacted one particular institution, Moraga Community College (MCC):²⁵

Basically, all the institutions just let those students in, and they didn't classify them on their books as getting a tuition waiver, where MCC put them on a waiver if they did not have all their documentation. And then they kept them there. They didn't insist on students coming back the next semester or the next week to provide the paperwork; they just classified them as having this waiver forever. So it made it look like there was this enormous number of students that were in that classification, when many of them could have provided the documentation at some point; but MCC's procedures didn't have a way to capture that.

As a result of the state not funding the waiver, Robert said it cost MCC nearly three million dollars in state support. The discussion of this waiver was a highly contentious issue because of the disproportionate impact on MCC. All of the institutions had to find the money in their budgets to cover the cost of the waiver not being funded. The state funding formula has nearly twenty different subsidies, which waive part of the cost for particular student populations. Robert explained the targeting of this particular waiver:

The fact that this one waiver was targeted was, I think, really very unfortunate, and it had to do again with MCC. And I don't think MCC was blameless; I think procedurally they were doing some things that they could have handled differently that would not have raised this issue as such a big flag as it became. I guess it's accurate to say it impacted many institutions, but I believe something like 90% or more of the total impact was all at MCC. The impact on other institutions was miniscule in comparison to MCC.

The discussion about the nondiscrimination waiver was focused on one particular community college and its institutional procedures around using the waivers for qualified students. Ultimately, the state believed the community college was abusing the waiver and costing the state a significant amount of money. Robert explained that targeting this particular

²⁵ A pseudonym for the largest public community college in Robert's state. The community college was also a member of the association.

waiver was an issue of finance and budgeting for the state and not an intentional target on nondiscrimination or undocumented students.

I don't think it was anti undocumented students so much as it was an anti-MCC issue because they had been growing so fast; and the way they were classifying these students made it appear that there was a major expense to the state that really I don't think should have been even in question at that point because the legal issue had I think been pretty much resolved a couple years earlier with that legislation.

Although there were many other places where the state could have chosen to target cuts besides the nondiscrimination waiver, Robert agreed that, beyond its being a financial decision, the choice to cut the nondiscrimination waiver was probably seen by constituency groups as the path of least resistance:

I think it's probably accurate to assume that, when times are tough, it's [those individuals who are] the least able to defend themselves that tend to bear more of the impact in society, not just in higher ed, but in government programs of all types... While it's unfortunate, I think we as, especially, folks that work in the public-policy arena need to be as cognizant as they can about what's really likely to result from various decisions that are made to limit funding or reduce funding for programs and services.

Ultimately, the state did not fund the waiver, and the institutions had to deal with the impact of the deficit on the operations within the institutions. Robert indicated that in most cases the financial hit was insignificant; it was MCC that needed to go back and make some policy and procedural changes to prevent any future misuses of the waiver.

Policy Perspectives on Undocumented Students

I asked Robert to describe a policy he would propose to address undocumented-student access if he were given the task and opportunity. Although he pointed to the growing pressures on increasingly limited financial resources in higher education as a limitation to increasing access for undocumented students, he expressed that the current policies of his state are sufficient:

Well, actually, I personally think the state's got it pretty close to right the way we've got it now. The challenge is that there are always limits on public resources; and so even the most liberal immigration-friendly folks I think understand that you just can't provide resident tuition to all comers... You can't realistically expect the state to subsidize postsecondary education for all American citizens, and you probably can't afford as a state—we're stretched pretty thin already—to provide tuition subsidy to all undocumented immigrants, regardless of where they live. So I think the steps that have been taken in terms of providing that benefit to students, undocumented students who are graduates of public high schools in the state, puts those students on the same footing as other native-born students, essentially. And I think that's an appropriate place to draw the line.

The current policy in Robert's state allows undocumented students to attend a public institution and affords them all of the same state benefits as other in-state students receive.

Robert had major concerns about the financial sustainability for higher education throughout the country, and the impact that rising costs may have on low-income and undocumented students:

I do have concerns... We're struggling to sustain our public postsecondary system, in part because our cost to students is as low as it is. So I think there's going to be increasing pressure to either change the way we deliver significantly, and/or increase the cost to students, which will have serious implications for low-income students of all origins to partake of higher ed. So we may over time be addressing some issues, even with this policy that we have, which I think is not bad. Financial-aid issues are still going to be an issue and probably will become even a bigger challenge in the future.

When asked to defend the policy, Robert described why he thought it was unreasonable to deport undocumented immigrants or ask people to self-deport. He explained why it would be in everyone's best interest to create and maintain access for undocumented students:

To me, that seems to be cutting off your nose to spite your face. If these folks are here... I don't know the numbers—13 million or something like that undocumented immigrants in the United States. If they're here, and if they're not going to be deported, and we are a nation of immigrants, all of us immigrants, it makes best sense to me from any perspective to educate, train, support, integrate all of those folks into our society. Otherwise, I think we're causing more trouble for ourselves than makes any sense.

In general, Robert thought the institutions in the state demonstrated a high value for access through their support for student financial aid and other student-support programs and

services. He also thought the official designation as a HSI was insignificant and should be the priority of all the institutions in the state:

Because almost all institutions in the state meet that criteria, I've not personally placed a lot of stock in that term as meaning anything much. I think all of our institutions—we're a majority-minority state—I think all of our institutions are Hispanic-serving and need to be Hispanic-serving. That really shouldn't be even an issue at one level, in terms of our institutions. If you're asking whether our institutions in some respect need to step up to the plate a little bit more in terms of supporting Hispanic students in particular... I don't know. I guess I don't know that we've dropped the ball in that respect, but there's always a lot more that can be done.

When asked specifically about the graduation and transfer rates of students at 2-year institutions, Robert emphasized the need in this regard for a reexamination of how 2-year institutions are measured and what they're measured by. He indicated that the majority of these students are in search of job skills. Before he led the association, the position he assumed had included an emphasis on federal lobbying on behalf of the 2-year colleges. But when Robert took the position, the role was scaled back from the all-encompassing government-relations and lobbying initiatives; the community-college leaders directed that the association place an emphasis on state-funding policy. The association worked closely with its partners and legislators to make the case for the state to invest in job skills and in preparing people for the local workforce, and to steer clear of other social policies such as undocumented-student access issues.

Analysis

In an effort to understand how Robert's formative life experiences influenced his policy discussions about access to higher education for undocumented students, I conducted two analyses: (a) a holistic-content analysis to outline the emergent life themes; and (b) a dialogic/performance analysis to highlight how he constructed his lobbyist identity, an identity for DREAMers, and a policy advocacy role for HSIs.

Life Themes

Several life themes emerged from Robert's personal narrative: (a) being a pacifist/passive; (b) addressing privilege; and (c) using a hands-off approach. Each theme played a role in building the foundation for Robert's life and work.

Being a pacifist/passive. Challenging social dynamics surrounded Robert throughout most of his life. During his upbringing in Cañon, Robert witnessed underserved Hispanic students in the school system who were in need of supplemental help and support to be successful. Robert was in college during the Vietnam War and civil-rights movement; both had a drastic impact on his college campus, and he identified himself as a liberal. Later, while he served in a state higher-education agency a state version of the DREAM Act, which prohibited discrimination against applicants on the basis of immigration status for college admission, tuition, and funding. Throughout all of these times of upheaval and change, Robert stood witness to the conflicts and debates. Although he was supportive of the antiwar movement, services for students of color, and access to higher education for undocumented students, he remained passive and did not use his position and access to high-level officials to influence the discussions. Robert consistently occupied positions of power and influence in state government and higher education, yet he never advocated for policies beyond the scope of his financial duties, behavior that he recognized could have made an impact and helped to create institutional and social change for underserved students. This awareness was evident when he consistently steered the conversation toward finance and away from students and the social dynamic, about which he was less familiar. Robert's pacifism (a form of resistance) during his formative years had evolved into passivism (avoidance and lack of engagement) in relation to social issues.

Addressing privilege. Robert is a White male who grew up in a predominantly Hispanic community and attended school with many Hispanic students. Although economic segregation and lack of resources in the Hispanic community were apparent to him when he was growing up, he could not recall ever being privy to racial conflicts or racism. He did mention that there were gangs within the Hispanic community. They tended to be focused on fighting each other, however, and he was never witness to any of the dynamics amongst the gangs. Robert equated racial tensions and racism with violence, a view he demonstrated through his reference to the gangs.

During our discussion, Robert never acknowledged experiences or approached the discussion of racial prejudice or bigotry in his life. Additionally, he did not describe the limited opportunities for Hispanics he grew up with as a result of institutionalized racism and oppression. Consequently, his light discussion about the limited resources, many needs, and dismal educational outcomes for Hispanic students was not accompanied by a critical analysis of the social dynamics regarding structural or institutionalized racism. The statements he made were framed as “a matter of fact,” and he did not approach the discussions with a sense of responsibility.

Robert’s race afforded him the privilege to avoid the topic and not have to address the needs of undocumented students. Robert did not have life experience that tied him to undocumented students, and the HIS designation of many of the institutions he represents was not a strong enough mechanism to link his lobbying efforts to undocumented-student access.

Using a hands-off approach. Robert’s narrative carried a running theme of his being hands-off in his approach to educational work. The focus on finances in all of his positions allowed him to avoid direct interaction with and accountability to the population most impacted

by his work. This pattern was evident when he acknowledged that the work he did as the leader of the community college association was not as “in the trenches” as some of his counterparts within the institutions. However, that was not the only time in his career when there was considerable distance between his work and those impacted. Robert admitted that, even when he had worked within an institution as the Vice President of Finance, he did not have contact with students because his role was purely financial. The same was true when he was working for the state higher-education agency. The difference there was that he was in a state agency during the time of the local DREAM legislation. Robert’s finance role allowed him to be merely a passive observer of the debates that would directly impact the institutions and undocumented students in the state. There were financial implications for the state and higher education because of the DREAM-related legislation; nevertheless, Robert was hands-off on the issue. Because he was a pacifist throughout his formative years, it is not surprising that he would not be “in the trenches”—addressing social policy issues—during his professional career. Additionally, he was clear about his limited knowledge of the DREAM Act, and his role in finance made it such that great involvement with that policy issue was not within the scope of his work.

Policy Themes

I used dialogic/performance analysis to examine Robert’s policy discussion about undocumented-student access. Through the analysis of our discussions, I outline how Robert constructed (a) his lobbyist identity, (b) an identity for undocumented students, and (c) an advocacy role for HSIs relative to undocumented-student access.

Lobbyist self-identity. First, through our discussions, Robert worked to construct a liberal, supporter, lobbyist identity. He qualified his identity as a supporter when he described himself as a passive supporter of the anti-Vietnam War and civil-rights movements during his

college years. He also demonstrated this stance in the passive role he took throughout his professional career as a higher-education representative.

Second, financial duties were central to Robert's lobbyist self-identity. He continually emphasized the financial focus of his position and duties. The financial emphasis was partially because of his interests and skills, but it was reinforced by the request of the community-college leaders whom he represented through the association.

This reporting structure relates to the third component of Robert's lobbyist identity: powerless. Robert continually referred to his job description and the boundaries set by the community college presidents to rationalize his inaction on social-policy issues that impact students, and undocumented students in particular. He gave his perception that he was bound by his job description and had little to no influence beyond the finance arena.

Identity construction for undocumented students. Robert described undocumented students as a population of students who were raised in this country and educated in the local school system. He believed that these students should have educational opportunities equal to their domestic-born counterparts, particularly in terms of college access and tuition.

Robert was privy to many of the controversial discussions at the state level about the policy that secured access for undocumented students in his state. He was familiar with the local community organization that led the fight to achieve the standing policy. He also knew of the advocates, and he characterized the undocumented-student movement in his state as a well-organized and strong effort. He described the tactic of bringing students to the State Capitol to address legislators and make the case for the legislation as powerful and persuasive.

Conversely, from a financial perspective (which was his primary lens), Robert communicated a limit to his willingness to be a supporter of undocumented students. Robert also

expressed a need to address institutional capacity when he said, “We can’t afford to subsidize everyone’s education” and compared educating undocumented students to subsidizing higher education for other US citizens from out of state. He was supportive of the concept of educational access for undocumented students; however, this support extended only to the point beyond which the access would have potential negative impacts on higher-education financial aspects. This point of his comments positioned undocumented students as a financial burden to institutions and to the state—a burden that the state is less obligated to support than a similar one for domestic-born students.

Identity or role for HSIs in policy advocacy. Robert expressed his belief that addressing broad issues such as job-skills development and funding for community colleges was sufficient to meet the needs of Hispanic and other undocumented students. He said that the fact that the majority of people of color attending college are enrolled in 2-year vocational, technical, or community colleges was how the association worked to make the case for the state investing larger dollars into 2-year institutions. This view was highlighted when Robert emphasized the need for a reexamination of the measurement criteria used for funding 2-year institutions, indicating that the majority of students are in search of job skills. This perspective about 2-year colleges, particularly HSIs, sends the message that the Hispanic population is best served through job skills and job training, which creates limited opportunity for them to attain 4-year and advanced degrees.

Robert emphasized that the current “resident-for-tuition-purposes” policy in his state was sufficient to meet the needs of undocumented students. Although he was not well versed in the details of the federal DREAM Act, he never mentioned the need for anyone to address

comprehensive immigration policy, the naturalization process, work visas, or licensure for those students who are obtaining job skills and associate degrees in the 2-year institutions.

CHAPTER 8: COMPOSITE ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study was to describe the formative life experiences concerning race and racism that inform lobbyists' discussions of access to higher education for undocumented students, and to understand how lobbyists make sense of their role in this timely discourse through their identity construction of self, of undocumented students, and of the institutions for which they work. The three participants in this study had starkly different backgrounds and approaches to their lobbying work on behalf of their institutions. I cocreated a personal narrative and provided an individual holistic-content analysis and a dialogic performance analysis for each participant in chapters 5 (Gabriel—The Fighter), 6 (Joseph—The Mentor), and 7 (Robert—The Pacifist). In this chapter, I present a composite analysis of the three participants in the narrative case study that used college-access policies for undocumented students as the central focus to examine how the participants' life stories regarding race and racism related to their policy discussions. The narrative case study provides insight into the relationship between the individual formative life experiences (Alder, 1964; Adler, 1923; Adler, 1931; Burhn & Last, 1982; Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979) of three lobbyists for Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU)-member institutions and how those lobbyists advocate on behalf of their respective institutions for undocumented students.

Composite Analysis

The following composite analysis provides a synthesis of the individual participant analyses for the purpose of identifying similar and contrasting aspects among the three participants. The composite analysis consists of four distinct sections. First, I provide a brief description of each participant. Second, I provide an analysis of the common themes within and among the three participant findings. The assessment of common themes highlights the

similarities between Gabriel and Joseph's narratives, while it brings to light how strikingly different Robert's experiences were. Third, I provide a description of discrepant case analysis and draw upon the common-themes section to illustrate how Robert emerged as a discrepant case (Merriam, 2009) in this study. Fourth, I use the context of the life themes to analyze each policy-maker's performance in an effort to understand how he approached the issue of access for undocumented students.

Participant Descriptions

Each participant had distinctive experiences during his upbringing that influenced his identity construction of self, the identity he constructed of undocumented students, and his perception of the role of the institution in policy advocacy. The individual narrative of each participant provides insight into the formative life experiences during his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood that presented varying degrees of relevance and influence on each respective participant's work as a lobbyist for higher education. The following table provides a brief description of each participant and the themes that emerged and developed (I analyzed these themes in chapters 5, 6, and 7):

Table 8

Participant Analysis

| | Participants | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Gabriel | Joseph | Robert |
| Lobbyist Type | Institution staff/ administrator | Institution staff/ administrator | Retired director, state assoc. of 10 community colleges (CCs) |
| Institution Types* | Research university, very high research activity | Research university, high research activity | All assoc. member colleges are associate’s public |
| Reporting Structure | To EVP for advancement | To university president | To respective CC presidents |
| HSI Status (2010–2011)** | 39.6% Hispanic enrollment | 47.2% Hispanic enrollment | 8 HSIs and 1 emerging HSI |
| HACU Membership | Member institution | Member institution | 5 member institutions |
| Self-Sociocultural Identification | “Coyote”—Hispanic/Anglo | Hispanic, Mexican descent | Anglo |
| Life Themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with his parents • A fighting nature • “Swerve and dodge” • Fitting in • Excused behavior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family legacy of benevolence • Value of mentoring • Naiveté about racism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a pacifist/passive • Addressing privilege • Using a hands-off approach |
| Policy Performance Analysis | | | |
| Lobbyist Self-Identity | Loyal fighter and teacher | Ethical mentor | Obedient, passive supporter |
| Identity Construction of Undocumented Students | Based on relationships with students. Top scholars deserve higher education. | Based on relationships with students. Top scholars deserve higher education. | No personal relationships with students. Students deserve an education. The state needs to subsidize these students. |
| HSI Identity/Role Construction | Teaches and advocates for undocumented students; tells their success stories. | Actively supports undocumented students and politically issues. | Functions within existing legislation. Two-year HSI institutions essential to job-skill and educational programs. |

* Institution type based on the 2012 Carnegie classifications (<http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/>) ** (Excelencia in Education, 2011)

Table 1 outlines the characteristics of each participant based on the data I gathered from participant interviews, material documents, and Internet research. The institution type provides a description of the institution(s) each participant lobbied for and represented, and the lobbyist type describes the nature of the participant's position with the institution(s). The reporting structure gives a glimpse at the placement of each participant in relation to his institution(s) and his relative decision-making power. The table also provides the details about the institutions' Hispanic student enrollment and its level of formal engagement with HACU. Second, the table outlines the data from each participant regarding the sociocultural constructs with which he identified, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender; the themes that emerged from his life story; and the identities he constructed for himself, for undocumented students, and for the respective Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) through his policy performance. Following are expanded descriptions of each participant included in Table 1.

Gabriel—the fighter. Gabriel is a government-relations officer at a research university with very high research activity Carnegie classification²⁶ and a 39.6% Hispanic student enrollment (Excelencia in Education, 2011). Gabriel reported to the university's Executive Vice President for Advancement. His institution was a highly active HACU-member institution that also participated on the governing board. Gabriel identified himself as a “coyote” because he was both Hispanic and Anglo. Five themes emerged from the narrative about his formative life experiences: (a) relationship with his parents, (b) a fighting nature, (c) “swerve and dodge,” (d) fitting in, and (e) excused behavior (I have provided an in-depth description of each of the themes in chapter 5). Through his discussion of policy for undocumented students, Gabriel constructed a lobbyist identity as a loyal fighter and teacher. He constructed an identity for

²⁶ The Carnegie Foundation classifies higher education institutions based on a set of institutional attributes and behaviors (Carnegie Foundation, 2013).

undocumented students based on his relationships with students. He described them as top academic scholars who are highly deserving of higher education. Moreover, Gabriel expressed that the role of HSIs should be that of teacher and advocate for undocumented students. He asserted that the HSIs should be telling the outstanding stories of successful undocumented students to persuade people across the state to support undocumented-student access policies.

Joseph—the mentor. Joseph was a government-relations officer at a research university with high research activity Carnegie classification with a 47.2% Hispanic student enrollment (Excelencia in Education, 2011). Joseph reported directly to the university president. His institution was a highly active HACU-member institution that also participated on the governing board. Joseph identified himself as Hispanic of Mexican descent. Three themes emerged from the narrative about his formative life experiences: (a) family legacy of benevolence; (b) value of mentoring; and (c) naiveté about racism (I have provided an in-depth description of each of these themes in chapter 6). Through his discussion of policy for undocumented students, Joseph constructed a lobbyist identity of being an ethical mentor. He constructed an identity for undocumented students based on his relationships with students. He described them as top academic scholars deserving of higher education. Additionally, he expressed that the role of HSIs should be to support undocumented students once they have arrived in the institution, and to passively support politicized undocumented-student issues.

Robert —the pacifist. Robert was a recently retired director for an association of public community colleges in his state. While he was leading the association, Robert was responsible for the government-relation functions (i.e, lobbying) on behalf of all the institutions. The association had 10 member institutions, eight of which were HSIs and one of which was an emerging HSI; the institutions had Hispanic student enrollments ranging from 24.4% to 79.7%

(Excelencia in Education, 2011). Five of the institutions Robert represented were also HACU members, some with high engagement with the organization. Robert reported directly to the presidents of the member institutions. He identified himself as Anglo. Three themes emerged from the narrative about his formative life experiences: (a) being a pacifist/passive; (b) addressing privilege; and (c) using a hands-off approach (I have provided an in-depth description of each of the themes in chapter 8). Through his discussion of policy for undocumented students, Robert constructed a lobbyist identity for himself as an obedient pacifist and supporter. He did not have personal relationships with undocumented students; however, the identity he constructed for undocumented students was that of children who were raised in the United States, deserving of an education, and who represented an additional category of students the state needs to subsidize. Furthermore, he expressed that existing legislation was sufficient for undocumented students. He avoided discussing the specific role of HSIs in advocating for undocumented-student policies. He also characterized 2-year institutions, as providers of job-skills training and adult, basic-education programs, as central to serving Hispanic students and communities effectively.

Common Themes

The three participants all grew up in the same state, which has a large Hispanic population. However, each participant had a distinct individual experience growing up. Gabriel's urban experience bred mistrust and violence. Joseph's rural, agricultural experience was draped in a strong family network that instilled in him an empathetic approach to working with people, and with immigrants in particular. Robert's was a small-town experience in which racial dynamics and racism in his community were not emphasized. In the following section, I outline the common themes among the participants and the resulting position of Robert as a discrepant

case in the study (discussed in more detail later in this chapter). Based on the results of my analysis, I first describe the commonalities among the three participants—namely, their work focus on finance and their institutional limitations. Then I examine the commonalities between Gabriel and Joseph (e.g., family backgrounds, relationships with students, and mentoring and teaching roles).

All participants—work focus on finance. It was clear from the discussions that the central focus of work for the participants was to secure funding and, through the legislative process, diminish any negative financial impacts for their institutions. Although Gabriel did not specifically say that these items were his priority, it was evident from our discussions about his work, an overview of the institution’s legislative priorities, and the reporting structure for his position. Joseph specifically said that approximately 80% of his work was focused on finance; however, the remaining 20% pertained to issues such as financial aid and other issues that also had financial implications for the institution. Robert was most clearly wedded to financial issues as a lobbyist, at the direction of the institution presidents to whom he reported.

All participants—institutional limitations to supporting undocumented-student issues. The data I gathered in the case study alluded to institutional structures, priorities, and funding processes as barriers to advocacy for undocumented students. All participants expressed the need to prioritize institution issues and interests as part of their lobbying role. Each participant discussed how his role required him to prioritize lobbying efforts to the economic benefit of the institution by securing funding and prioritizing institutional finance. Most often, anything that had a financial impact on the institution was prioritized in the participants’ lobbying activities. Gabriel and Joseph pointed to time and resources as examples of the institutional constraints within their offices that limited their lobbying; yet they both made efforts

to work with students, which was not a part of their government-relations responsibilities. Limited resources (i.e., time and staffing) influenced the number of initiatives and the degree to which their offices could take the lead on an initiative at any given time.

Although the Board of Regents and presidents at Gabriel and Joseph's institutions signed resolutions and letters of support for the federal DREAM Act, undocumented-student issues had never been placed at the forefront of the institutions' legislative priorities. The institutions' respective documents of support were given to the US Congress for consideration during legislative hearings, and Gabriel and Joseph each communicated that support to the state's congressional delegation. However, they noted that documents and resolutions prepared in 2010²⁷ had not been revisited since nor acted upon through lobbying initiatives.

None of the members of Robert's association had submitted letters of support for the DREAM Act. Additionally, the presidents had decided to limit the association's lobbying role to state funding. Moreover, when Robert served in the state executive higher-education agency, he and the institutions of higher education in the state remained silent while the state considered the issue of college access for undocumented students— and all this, despite the financial implications for the institutions (e.g., increased tuition, enrollment, and state-formula funding as a result of increased access for undocumented students).

Gabriel and Joseph—family. Gabriel and Joseph grew up in Hispanic families within largely Hispanic communities. Although their experiences conveyed quite different relational dynamics, Gabriel and Joseph both gravitated to discussions about their families and formative experiences they had had as a result of their family upbringing. The individual analysis in chapter 5 highlights how Gabriel's most influential family dynamics were not typically positive

²⁷ I chose not to cite these material documents to maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

experiences; however, they proved to be the dominant influences on his professional lobbyist identity. The analysis in chapter 6 illustrates how Joseph had many positive experiences with his family, which emerged as foundational to how he approached his work as a lobbyist.

Gabriel and Joseph—students. Gabriel and Joseph found meaningful ways to connect with students, either through participating in a formal mentoring program, employing students, or providing student-internship opportunities in their offices. Both participants discussed undocumented-student policy based on their personal relationships with undocumented students at their institutions. Each served as a point of contact for undocumented students who were dealing with deportation issues that presented barriers to degree completion. In both cases, the men played an important advocacy role between students, administrators, and policy makers. For example, a state legislator referred an undocumented student to Joseph, who was successful in providing assistance with access to resources for the student; Gabriel worked closely with legislators to find options and was able to get letters of support for a student who was deported because of the student's immigration status.

Gabriel and Joseph—mentoring and teaching. Closely related to the student theme above, both Gabriel and Joseph gave examples of how they used the privilege of their positions and access to decision makers to mentor and teach people about legislative issues and political strategy; they accomplished this by connecting people, particularly students, to resources and influential people. They both gave examples of their approaches to lobbying and government-relations work that mirrored how they worked with students. They explained and taught administrators at their institutions the legislative process and, likewise, taught legislators about their institutions' processes, values, and priorities.

The common theme of mentoring and teaching highlights an opportunity to discuss an alternative interpretation of the term coyote. Although Gabriel used this term to describe his racial and ethnic identity, it also describes a guide who assists undocumented immigrants with crossing the US/Mexico border. Although coyotes are a controversial element of the immigration narrative in the United States and Mexico because of immigrant profiteering and the violence against immigrants in the process, the concept of a coyote who guides people through a foreign system offers an interesting parallel for Latinos in higher education. Similar to how a coyote guides border crossers through an alternative route into the United States, Gabriel and Joseph guide some undocumented students to alternative routes and resources within their institutions.

The coyote, as a systems navigator, concept could apply to both Latino case-study participants (Gabriel and Joseph). Specifically, when Gabriel worked with the federal congressional delegation to get a deported student returned to the United States, and when Joseph connected undocumented students with alternatives to employment to support their academic careers, the activities of both reflect the role of a coyote. Both used their position and political capital to help undocumented students navigate the foreign higher-education institutions.

Framing the Discrepant Case

On the surface of the data, there were similarities among all participants. All three men grew up in predominantly Hispanic communities and represented HSIs in a state that permits undocumented students to be admitted to postsecondary institutions at in-state tuition rates, and to apply for and receive state financial aid. Joseph, a first-generation Mexican American, lived near the US-Mexico border and considered himself Hispanic. Gabriel was biracial and biethnic, White and Hispanic. He identified himself with the term coyote and Hispanic. Robert, a retired

White male, identified himself as Anglo. All participants currently worked or previously had worked for HSIs in their hometowns and home state.

A comparative process emerged as a result of determining the lobbyist type, institution type, and racial and ethnic make-up of the case participants. Through the data-analysis process, Robert emerged as a discrepant case. Merriam (2009) described the discrepant or negative case as emergent data that contradicts the original findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Silverman, 1993). The data from the discrepant case contradict the original notion and assumption that lobbyists for HACU-member HSIs are inclined to advocate for undocumented-student access in policy discussions. For example, although Robert was familiar with the state's efforts to support undocumented students, he did not play the role of an advocate in the policy discussion because he felt the current policy was sufficient; and he displayed a hands-off approach to social policy. The literature about lobbyists for higher education points to the important role they play in advocating for policy, developing policy (Brumfield et al., 2009; Brown, 1985; Burkum, 2010; Child, 1997; Key, 1993; Murphy, 2001; Ortega, 2012; Thelin, 2004; Thompson, 2002; Pusser & Wolcott, 2006), and guiding administrators through the policy-making process on behalf of the institutions; it does not, however, discuss moral and ethical responsibilities in that guidance. Robert was willing to discuss undocumented advocacy only in relation to finance and funding. Although he was supportive of the idea of undocumented-student access, the fact that he approached the discussion from a funding paradigm severely limited his ability to advocate for undocumented students. The privilege he had of having avoided racial discrimination and issues during his formative years additionally limited his perspective on undocumented-student access.

The data in chapters 5, 6, and 7 highlights the structural issues and limitations of institutional government-relations work when that work is marked by a heavy emphasis on finance and budget policies. Although government-relations work involves addressing any policy that may impact the institutions, the ultimate objectives for Gabriel, Joseph, and Robert were to secure state and federal funding through the legislative process. Their narratives highlight how the racial/ethnic background and racialized experiences of the lobbyists either prohibited them from moving (in the case of Robert), or empowered them to move (in the cases of Gabriel and Joseph) beyond the job description to become advocates for undocumented students. Despite each one's emphasis on the economic benefit to the institutions, Gabriel and Joseph, given their Hispanic backgrounds, were less able to avoid the policy discussions about undocumented students. Unlike Robert, Gabriel and Joseph's formative life experiences made it difficult for them to avoid discussing undocumented-student access.

When compared to Gabriel and Joseph, Robert as a discrepant case thus illuminates several interesting points: (a) his disconnection from the student population as an association lobbyist; (b) the limitations of one association lobbyist's ability to address social policy if an issue had arisen; and (c) the potential for race, ethnicity, and formative experiences concerning race and racism to influence the engagement of a lobbyist for higher education on an issue as controversial as access for undocumented students.

Although Robert was enthusiastic about his work as a lobbyist for institutions of higher education, his work did not emerge as deeply personal and ardent for him, as their work seemed to be for Gabriel and Joseph. Additionally, Robert's discussion lacked a student experience to contextualize his work. He spoke generally about 2-year students as nontraditional students interested in developing applied skills for the workforce, but he never spoke of a personal story

about experiences with students or tangible examples of students who were directly or indirectly impacted by his work.

Robert, as a representative of an association of institutions, was not in a position to address broad social-policy issues. The member-institution presidents limited his scope of work to include only finance and funding. The presidents wanted Robert to focus solely on state funding for the institutions, and he was comfortable with this role. From his discussion of his work, it was not clear what would have happened if Robert had initiated a focus on undocumented-student issues as a priority for the member institutions, or how the presidents would have received such action. I can only speculate that, because of their emphasis on finance for his role, they would not have been receptive to such action; and that they would have seen his action as beyond the scope of the associations' work unless Robert was able to make a compelling financial argument for increased access for undocumented students.

The survey responses suggest that the lobbyists with a personal investment and interest in undocumented-student issues influenced the engagement of their universities in such issues. The case-study participant data also support this notion. The Latino lobbyists (Gabriel and Joseph) found no way to escape discussing racialized family and societal dynamics that influenced their lives. In contrast, Robert did not have a point of reference for a discussion about equity, parity, fairness, or justice for undocumented students in higher education. My many attempts to initiate a critical discussion about his life and upbringing were unsuccessful. Robert's family dynamics, race, and cultural upbringing did not emerge as a theme in any part of the data; nor did these aspects appear to be influencing factors in Robert's lobbying work.

To consider Roberts narrative and policy discussion as a discrepant case contradicts the original notion and assumption that lobbyists for HACU-member HSIs are inclined to advocate

for undocumented-student access in policy discussions. Void of prejudice, discrimination, and internalized oppression, Robert's racial privilege brings light to the high impact of Gabriel and Joseph's racialized formative life experiences on the policy discussion. Because Robert's life was void of racialized experiences, his work and policy discussion about undocumented students lack a personal connection and critical perspective about the topic of undocumented-student access.

Performance Analysis

In chapter 4, I described how the dialogic-performance-analysis technique (Riessman, 2008) allowed me to coconstruct a policy discussion about undocumented students using the participants' dialogue. This approach allowed for an analysis of participants' policy positions as they related to the public-immigration discourse. The technique highlighted how core incidents in the participants' lives influenced their language and perspectives on the issue. It was essential that I as the researcher minimize my influence on the discussion to be able to capture an unguided policy discussion. This analysis process also illustrated how the participants constructed self-identities as lobbyists and their respective identities for undocumented students, and how they discussed what they believed to be the advocacy role of HSIs.

Lobbyist self-identity construction. One of the main functions of a lobbyist is to influence the decisions of legislators and other policy makers regarding legislation and policies that impact the institution they represent. The role of a government-relations officer or lobbyist is to take the priorities of the various institutional stakeholders (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff) and package those priorities in a way that can be marketed and "sold" to legislators (Brown, 1985; Murphy, 2001). Most often, this package results in a sale of an idea, which in turn results

in a financial benefit to the institution (Pusser & Wolcott, 2006). One component of this “packaging” is the lobbyist persona.

The three participants had distinct personas they created for themselves through their policy discussions. Gabriel was adamant about being perceived as trustworthy and loyal as a lobbyist, saying “your reputation is everything,” and “I’m the most loyal fighter you’ve got.” Joseph was most concerned with being ethical and abiding by existing legal boundaries in his lobbying. This was evident when he admittedly supported two sides of a policy issue. During the study’s member-checking process, Robert was highly concerned with the way his speech appeared on the written page. For example, even though his name was replaced with a pseudonym and the text would be adjusted for clarity in future drafts, he was concerned with coming across as clear, accurate, articulate, and eloquent.

In the State Capitol, where there are rules of order and parliamentary procedures, both Gabriel and Joseph aimed to convey the political image of being well-informed, diplomatic extensions of their universities. They portrayed this image through their clean-shaven faces, short hairstyles, ironed shirts and ties, the institutional pin on their jacket lapels, and the use of pens complete with their institutions’ logos while they took notes on their institutional-pad folios. These exterior characteristics gave them the credibility to move through the State Capitol and navigate the political landscape at the highest levels of state government.

I suspect that Robert would have been similar to Gabriel and Joseph in the outward portrayal of his lobbyist identity when he was still working. In contrast to Gabriel and Joseph, though, Robert was relaxed and casual in his postretirement activities. Our discussions took place at the institution that housed his previous office. Although he was retired and no longer in the position of influence, Robert was comfortable floating from office to office in the institution,

where he was greeted with warm welcomes and stories about what he had missed in his time away.

During the discussions about undocumented students, I analyzed the way in which the participants described and referred to undocumented students, to illustrate how they constructed their identities of those students. Both Gabriel and Joseph based their discussions on personal relationships with undocumented people from their pasts and undocumented students in their institutions. Both had been good gatekeepers for select undocumented students at their institutions by providing access to policy makers and financial resources. These were select undocumented students because they were students referred to Gabriel and Joseph by policy makers or administrators in the students' time of need.

In addition to their self-identification as Hispanic, the experiences Gabriel and Joseph had had with undocumented immigrants in their respective lives before their lobbying activities opened them to opportunities to connect with undocumented students in their work. However, the undocumented immigrants they had worked with in their roles as university lobbyists were not the farmer workers or gang members of their pasts. Their contact with undocumented students at their institutions was with high-achieving "star" students, and these experiences became their frame of reference for discussing the student population as a policy target.

Conversely, Robert did not have personal or professional relationships with the undocumented immigrants as a point of reference from which he could discuss undocumented students. Interestingly, when he discussed undocumented students, he did not reference individual academic abilities or other achievements to construct "star" images of these students, as Gabriel and Robert did through their discussions. Instead, Robert spoke generally about the presence of undocumented students in public education, and he had a more altruistic notion

about their access to higher education. A lack of personal identification with the undocumented-student community and a fiscal approach to the policy discussion limited his advocacy beyond the current access policies and steered the conversation toward his concerns about adequate state funding to subsidize undocumented students in higher education.

Each participant had a unique approach to characterizing the role of HSIs in policy advocacy for undocumented-student advocacy. We can draw parallels drawn from each participant's life themes. Gabriel's approach embodied the loyal-fighter spirit by promoting an active role in educating various constituents about student documents, and the importance of advocating for undocumented-student access to higher education. He expressed that HSIs should be leading the fight on the students' behalf in the state. Similarly, Joseph's approach was to support the students, once they had arrived to the institution, through mentoring and support programs. Much like the perspective evident in the global impression that emerged from his personal narrative, Joseph felt that HSIs should serve students within the current boundaries and access policies that exist. Additionally, he believed that HSIs should be quiet supporters of undocumented-access policies, so as not to complicate other institutional priorities. Last, Robert's hands-off approach was reflected in his lack of concern for access to higher education by undocumented students as he pointed to sufficient existing policies and the provision of job training as the best means to support Hispanic students.

Conclusion

This composite analysis describes the common themes among the study participant's experiences, highlights the similarities between the Latino lobbyists, and features the emergent discrepant case. The discrepant case assisted me in identifying a relationship between

individuals' formative life experiences with race and racism and their unique approach to policy discussions about access to higher education for undocumented students.

As I had expected, the participants' perspectives in their policy discussions about undocumented students paralleled their respective life stories. The data revealed that their lobbyist identity constructions, their constructions of undocumented-student identities, and their beliefs about the role of HSIs in their discussions were largely influenced by their formative life experiences with race and racism.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION

My professional experiences include working to support undocumented students and families to help them navigate the educational system and access public higher education at a 4-year research institution and at community colleges. During that time, I, along with a community of staff, faculty, and students, have advocated for policy changes within the postsecondary institutions, and at the state and federal levels, that would improve access for undocumented students (DREAMers). The political advocacy I have been a part of has been derived from and driven by passionate people within the institutions and the surrounding community; there has been very little support and advocacy from leaders at the higher education institutions.

It took several years of political advocacy work from undocumented students and allies before the administration at the 4-year institution acknowledged the issue of undocumented-student access. Then the president of the university signed a letter, the board of regents issued a resolution, and the student government issued a resolution in support of undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act. Given the role of government-relations officers and lobbyists of this particular institution, however, it was unclear whether the support in the form of a letter and resolution translated into more than a hands-off approach and extended to political advocacy and legislative priorities for the institution.

Through my further investigation and exposure to the world of higher-education government relations, it became apparent to me that support for DREAMers is not a part of the higher education institutions' policy agendas, which center predominantly on funding and capital outlay for the institutions. In the institutions with which I was associated I discovered that policy advocacy for undocumented-student access to higher education is relegated to national higher-education associations, particularly HACU, where institution administrators could be one of

many and shielded from any political backlash. These institutions support undocumented-student access only to the extent that it appeases campus and community advocates, and they have taken a hands-off approach to the policy issue.

My experience with undocumented-student access-policy advocacy raised two burning questions: Is this hands-off approach to the policy issue common at other HACU-member HSIs? and How do institutional lobbyists understand and approach the discussion about undocumented-student access? To pursue these questions further, I conducted both a descriptive, online survey of HACU member-institution lobbyists regarding their knowledge of the federal DREAM Act, college access for undocumented students, and undocumented-student initiatives in their states, and a case study. The case study focused on three lobbyists who represented HSIs, to closely examine their formative life experiences and to explore how those experiences influenced how they understood and represented undocumented-student issues in a policy discussion.

This is the first study to highlight HSI lobbyists to examine the issue of undocumented-student access to higher education. The study focused on illustrating how knowledgeable the lobbyists were about undocumented-student access, what informed the lobbyists' policy discussions, and how active the lobbyists were in advocating for undocumented-student issues. I drew upon descriptive and substantive representation theories from the political-science literature as a framework for this survey and case study. In this chapter, I discuss the concept of representation in the context of HSIs and the findings from the survey and case study. I outline the findings for each portion of the study, speak to the literature, point out the implications from this study, and provide recommendations for more effective approaches to the issue by its various stakeholders.

Discussion of Representation

Although descriptive and substantive representation theories (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Hero & Tolbert, 1995; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Sanchez & Morin, 2011) primarily focus on representation by elected officials, these approaches provide lenses through which we can view the results of this survey, and they inform the case study. Descriptive representation theory argues that race influences the relationship between political representatives and constituents, and thus having political representatives of the same race in communities of color will result in increased political engagement by and tangible gains for those communities (Barreto, 2010; Gay, 2002; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Sanchez & Morin, 2011). Additionally, descriptive representation suggests that political representatives (i.e. elected and appointed officials) from a particular racial and ethnic community will result in increased responsiveness and political representation of constituent issues through policy advocacy within that community (Cannon, 1999; Gay, 2002; Lubin, 1997). I looked for evidence of descriptive representation from the Latino lobbyists in the study, and from HSIs in general.

Substantive representation theory is in a similar conceptual stream as descriptive representation. Substantive representation is reflected in policy outcomes that benefit a particular constituency or community as a result of political representation (Hero & Tolbert, 1995). Findings in the literature about substantive representation suggest that descriptive representation does not always result in beneficial policies for a community; and elected officials, regardless of race, may or may not represent the central issues of the constituency group. I looked for evidence of substantive representation among White lobbyists in the current study.

Both descriptive and substantive representation literature emphasize the impact of political representation on the engagement of constituents and how constituents feel about

government. For the purpose of this study, I was most interested in how the racial makeup of policy advocates, specifically HSI lobbyists, did and did not result in policy advocacy for undocumented students by those lobbyists. I used descriptive and substantive representation at several different levels: (a) institutional representation; (b) individual lobbyist support; and (c) individual lobbyist advocacy. At the institutional level, I assumed that (considering the high level of political activity by higher-education institutions) HSIs would be policy advocates for undocumented-student access because of the saliency of the issue with Hispanic students and communities. At the individual level, I assumed that the lobbyists (as political representatives of HSIs) would support undocumented students and be advocates in their lobbying work for undocumented-student access.

The roles of higher-education lobbyists are multifaceted, and the political environments they navigate are complex. This study is much more nuanced than just descriptive and substantive representation analysis would provide; however, these theories provide a framework within which we can understand the representation and advocacy of the HSI lobbyists specific to undocumented-student access policies. Informed by descriptive and substantive representation, I argue that, although the constituents (i.e., faculty, staff, and students) these lobbyists represent do not elect institutional lobbyists, the lobbyists play an important policy-making role on the behalf of these constituents. As a result of this policy-making role, the lobbyists become proxies for the representation of Hispanic student issues at HSIs. I expected that descriptive representation would hold true in the case of Latino lobbyists who represent HSIs. Similar to predicted outcomes for descriptive representation, substantive representation applied to these lobbyists would suggest that White lobbyists at HSIs and EHSIs would be equivalent advocates for Hispanic students' issues. In summary, descriptive and substantive representation together

suggest that Latino/Hispanic and non-Latino/Hispanic policy advocates would (a) represent interests specific to HSIs and EHSIs, (b) be informed advocates about undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act, and (c) advocate for undocumented-student access.

In addition to descriptive and substantive representation, I explored beyond the formative life experiences that inform lobbyists' representation of Hispanic student issues. I suspected that Latino lobbyists would bring racialized formative life experiences that would influence how they would represent controversial policy issues such as undocumented-student access and immigration that affect the Latino student population. I make this argument in the discussion of the case-study findings.

Discussion of the Survey

To explore how individual institution lobbyists racially self-identify and how they understand undocumented-student access, I conducted a survey of government-relations officers at HACU-member public, 4-year HSIs and EHIs. Findings revealed that nine out of the 17 participants described their racial and ethnic identity as Latino/Hispanic. I also included two biracial (Hispanic and White) participants in the Latino/Hispanic category, for a total of 11 Hispanic/Latino participants (64.6%).

In general, the survey results demonstrated a lack of institutional commitment to undocumented-student access, and thus a lack in HSIs of descriptive representation for undocumented-student issues; however, closer interpretation of the findings reveals much more. The findings from the survey point to the limited presence of both descriptive and substantive representation by individual lobbyists on the issue of undocumented-student access. A large percentage of the participants either did not respond to questions that would demonstrate their knowledge base through a policy discussion about undocumented-student access, or they

responded, “I don’t know” (see tables 4 through 7 in chapter 4). However, the responses of those participants who did demonstrate awareness and advocacy indicated the presence of descriptive and substantive representation relative to the issue. The findings highlight how personal interest and motivation was most salient for those who were knowledgeable and advocated for the issue (see Table 6 in chapter 4). This result was true for lobbyists who identified as Latino, White, and Hispanic and White. This outcome suggests that representation on the issue of undocumented-student access, in this case, was both descriptive and substantive.

The findings also highlight that the two lobbyists in the survey who had learned about the DREAM Act from HACU also self-identified as Latino or Hispanic. I argue that this relationship between their race and the source of their knowledge about the DREAM Act may also be as a result of their personal interest to be engaged in the activities and functions of HACU, whose legislative agendas cover many other topics and issues pertinent to HSIs (HACU, 2012b) to the extent that a lobbyist would also need the personal interest to seek out specific knowledge about undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act through HACU. The survey extends to the case study, which highlights the formative life experiences of three lobbyists. The case study provides insight into the lobbyists’ personal interests and motivations for advocacy of undocumented-student access policies. The survey results served as a context for the case study and provided background information that informed emergent questions in the interview process.

Discussion of the Case Study

In this research study, I extended the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation to a case study of three HSI lobbyists to explore closely how racialized formative life experiences informed their policy discussions about undocumented-student access. Two Latino/Hispanic and one White/Anglo lobbyist emerged as participants for this study. I used their

individual life narratives and policy discussions to dig beneath the surface of descriptive and substantive representation. Holistic content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998) and dialogic/performance analysis (Riessman, 2008) illuminated the relationship between each participant's formative life experiences and his policy discussions about access for undocumented students.

The findings revealed that the Latino lobbyists (Gabriel and Joseph) brought racialized formative life experiences to their lobbying work. Specifically, their formative life experiences influenced how they engaged with controversial policy issues that affected the Latino student population, such as undocumented-student access and immigration. Conversely, in the instance of the White lobbyist (Robert), the findings revealed a lack of racialized formative life experiences and also a lack of engagement with undocumented-student issues. In the following section, I discuss the findings from the case study as they relate to descriptive and substantive representation.

HSI Lobbying and Representation

Of the three participants, Gabriel was the staunchest advocate for undocumented students in his policy discussion. His fighter identity stemmed from his racialized formative life experiences with his family and peers and was reflected in how he advocated for undocumented students. Interestingly, his advocacy was present within the confines of his sense of duty to serve and protect the interests of the university, which did not allow room for undocumented-student access to be a leading legislative priority in his work.

Gabriel's racial and ethnic identity as coyote, the son of a Hispanic father and a White mother, presented an interesting dimension to Gabriel's narrative. The findings revealed that the racial context of his family dynamics pushed him to identify closely with his Hispanic family

and community, which thus influenced his advocacy language in his policy discussion. Based on the findings from a pilot study (briefly discussed in chapter 4), I suspect that Gabriel's family dynamics, particularly the anger and animosity he felt for his father as a child, could have pushed him to gravitate toward identifying more closely with his White heritage. If that was the case, the findings from Robert's narrative and policy discussion (chapter 7) suggest that Gabriel's policy discussion about undocumented students may have been different if he was viewing the issue from a White racialized lens.

There is an alternative interpretation here of the term coyote. Although Gabriel used this term to describe his racial and ethnic identity, it also describes a guide who assists undocumented immigrants with crossing the US/Mexico border. Although coyotes are a controversial element of the immigration narrative in the United States and Mexico because of immigrant profiteering and the violence against immigrants in the process, the concept of a coyote who guides people through a foreign system offers an interesting parallel for Latinos in higher education. Similar to how a coyote guides border crossers through an alternative route into the United States, Gabriel guides undocumented students to alternative routes and resources within their institutions.

The coyote concept could apply to both Latino case-study participants (Gabriel and Joseph). Specifically, when Gabriel worked with the federal congressional delegation to get a deported student returned to the United States, and when Joseph connected undocumented students with alternatives to employment to support their academic career, the activities of both reflect the role of a coyote. Both used their position and political capital to help undocumented students navigate the foreign higher-education institutions.

Joseph's narrative revealed a family history of assisting undocumented immigrants to integrate into the United States. A woman whose family Joseph's family helped when she was a

newly arrived immigrant child brought the legacy of his family to his attention. Joseph commented that this event was not something he ever really thought much about. Joseph had a homogeneous Hispanic/Latino upbringing, and assisting immigrants who were crossing the border was a common occurrence on his family farm. Therefore, he did not understand the experience as racialized or formative. But one does not need to recognize an experience as racialized to experience the effects of racism. As immigrants, Joseph's family experienced the struggles first hand of being newly arrived, undocumented settlers exploited for their labor. The assistance they provided to other migrating families was weighed down by the racialized context of US immigration, school, and labor policies.

Gabriel and Joseph's policy discussions revealed how they individually constructed "star" identities for undocumented students. They described the undocumented students they had interactions with in a fashion that idolized the students and held all undocumented students to an exceptionally high standard of academic ability and character. I examined all three participants' policy discussions, and only Robert did not portray this image of undocumented students. He described undocumented students as a population that needed to be treated justly and equally in the postsecondary setting.

I would argue that the construction of a "star" student image is evidence of interest convergence (Alemán and Alemán, 2010). Interest convergence is one of the six central tenets of critical race theory (CRT) (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Delgado and Stefancic, 1998; Delgado, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000). Interest convergence, first discussed by Bell (1980), states that the interests of people of color for racial justice will be accommodated to the extent that doing so continues to benefit the White majority and upper class. Internalized oppression of people of color adds to the complexity of interest convergence. People of color become convinced of the

rationale of the power structure and consequently become perpetrators of the oppressive structure (Olivas, 1989). “By internalizing negative stereotypes, we take action that is harmful to ourselves as well as to other Latinos” (Padilla, 2001, p. 63). In this way, interest convergence suggests that Gabriel and Joseph felt they needed a justification for advocating for undocumented students; and so they constructed the “star” identity for undocumented students in their policy discussions. Meanwhile, part of the privilege of being White is that one is assumed to be unbiased (McIntosh, 2003). In this case, Robert’s race presumes his support for undocumented-student access is unbiased; hence, he does not need the star-student identity to justify his support.

Formative life experiences are uniquely personal to individuals, and the intention of this study was not to compare the formative life experiences of the participants. However, the formative life experiences Gabriel and Joseph had throughout their lives were not experiences they created or chose but were occurrences that happened to them as children. Furthermore, understanding how each participant chose to react to his experiences was central to my ability to develop the parallels between the participants’ respective formative life experiences and his policy discussion. Gabriel and Joseph instead could have buried their formative life experiences and shaped an alternative sociopolitical identity that would have limited the extent to which they would advocate for and assist undocumented students (Padilla, 2001).

Considering that Robert is White and selected to represent HSIs and EHSIs, I approached his narrative and policy discussion using a substantive-representative lens. Because he was a government-relations professional representing several HSIs, I expected that Robert would (a) represent interests specific to HSIs and EHSIs, (b) demonstrate advocacy, and (c) possess a well-informed perspective about undocumented-student access and the DREAM Act.

The findings from Robert's narrative and policy discussion revealed that he had little to no awareness of racial dynamics during his formative years. Although he was supportive of the existing access policies for undocumented students in his state, his privileged experiences in a predominantly Hispanic community limited his ability to express support for expanded access policies for undocumented students. To understand the impact of these absent experiences, it is helpful here to look at some of the key findings that identified Robert as a discrepant case (Merriam, 2009). For example, he did not have a Latino immigrant family or community experience, as both Gabriel and Joseph had and used as a frame of reference as they discussed the need for a pathway to citizenship as a component of college access. Additionally, findings showed that Robert's lack of personal relationships with undocumented students hindered his ability to speak about the student experience in relation to existing policies. As a result, Robert believed that current policies related to access to higher education were sufficient and there was no need to address access issues further.

Through our exchange, Robert revealed how his member colleges used student enrollment as a political tool to obtain and secure funding; yet his lobbying activities and advocacy—by order of the institutions—was limited to funding, and thus excluded any social policies that would affect the student population. Robert expressed that he personally believed undocumented students should be able to attend postsecondary institutions; however, this was where his substantive representation stopped. He pointed to his lack of advocacy for and engagement with the undocumented-student issues when he said, “but it was not my responsibility to be directly involved in those discussions.”

Although the main lobbying responsibility of all of the participants was financial, Robert was able to focus solely on finances both because he was Anglo and because he had a relational

distance from students. Undocumented students were never referred to Robert for support as they were referred to Gabriel and Joseph. Gabriel and Joseph had similar job roles and professional responsibilities at their institutions; however, it seemed that, because they were Latinos, people seemed to make the connection more easily with them on behalf of the students in need. Gabriel and Joseph also felt a sense of responsibility to support expanding the ranks of undocumented students because of their upbringing and formative life experiences. Gabriel's responses evolved from a young age as a result of his witnessing how racial discrimination and institutional structures often predetermined the destiny for undocumented students. Joseph was less driven by racism and discrimination and more driven by the giving nature of his family and his family history with assisting undocumented and migrant workers throughout his childhood. Neither Gabriel nor Joseph had the ability or desire to ignore, overlook, or disengage from discussing and assisting undocumented students because of their formative life experiences. In contrast, Robert's life was lacking similar experiences that would have given him the insight to be supportive of widening undocumented-student access.

The descriptive- and substantive-representation frameworks provide effective lenses through which to examine the support and advocacy of the HSI lobbyists in this study. If Gabriel, Joseph, and Robert had taken the survey, they would have emerged as supporters of undocumented-student access. In the case studies, they all communicated support for undocumented-student access; however, Gabriel and Joseph additionally supported expanding undocumented-student access policies to include a pathway to citizenship. None of the participants indicated that he took an active role in making undocumented-student access a central legislative priority for his institution. Moreover, Gabriel and Joseph pointed to HACU as responsible for their advocacy work on the issue.

The study findings support the notions of descriptive representation and point to evidence of limited substantive representation in Gabriel, Joseph, and Robert's policy discussion; however, this representation is in the form of verbal support and does not include political advocacy on the issue. This distinction poses interesting questions: (a) When does advocacy for the interests of Latino students become the responsibility of HSI institutions that enroll a large majority of the Latino student population and a considerable number of undocumented students? (b) If the sole purpose of HSI-associated lobbyists is to work on funding and finance issues, then who is responsible and accountable for social policies such as undocumented-student access that have a significant impact on Latino students?

The Performance

Finally, the dialogic/performance between the participants and me played a role in how the conversation unfolded. Just as Riessman (2008) and Bahktin and Holquist (1981) suggested that the performance between people in social and historical context emerges through dialogue, so was that true in the interaction between the participants and me, as I explain in the following content. I had previous professional relationships with Gabriel and Joseph as the result of interactions at HACU conferences and events. Consequently, we had established some trust between us, and my interactions with them differed from my interactions with Robert.

Gabriel knew that I grew up in the Los Angeles area, that I self-identify as Chicana, and that I was familiar enough with his community to understand some of the community, cultural, and racial dynamics he described from his childhood. Upon review of the transcript, I realized he had used a lot of "you knows" and shortened thoughts. I also had noticed this during our discussions.

As I reflected about my interactions with Gabriel, I realized that our racial self-identities were similar and the common sociopolitical context of our experiences allowed for us to communicate without complete thoughts and through cultural cues. For example, Gabriel associated me with the Hispanic culture and community. When he described his racial self-identity, he used a the following language to connect with me: “and, you know, we referred to back then as our *Hispanic* or *Spanish* or *Chicano*, *Chicana*, whatever.” He then stated, “that’s the term we grew up using, was *Hispanic*,” as if to qualify why he was not using *Chicano*.

My previous interactions with Joseph had also informed the way Joseph interacted with me. He knew I also was familiar with the sociopolitical context of his rural border community. Although there were not as many incomplete thoughts in the transcripts, there were still cultural cues in the dialogue between us. For example, there was an unspoken religious undercurrent in his conversation about ethics and morality in his work, which he related to his parents and grandparents. Also, in a postinterview exchange, Joseph initiated a conversation about how and why he did not identify with the term *Chicano*. He explained that he saw it as derogatory and confrontational.

Both Gabriel and Joseph drew on their previous interactions with me in the government-relations realm and my position as an undocumented-student advocate, which they witnessed through HACU. Although Gabriel wanted me to see him as a Chicano who did not use the term because of his familial history of not identifying with the word, Joseph wanted me to see him as not Chicano, not radical and confrontational (which is how he interpreted the term).

Conversely, I did not know Robert prior to this study, except by name. My first interaction with him was a cold call, and I used my professional relationships and experience to build rapport with him and establish myself as trustworthy. Interestingly, when it came time for

member-checking, I provided each participant with his individual narrative and policy discussion, which I used in chapters 4, 5, and 6. Unlike the other two participants, Robert thoroughly read his narrative and provided edits on typos and clarity about what he was saying. I believe this feedback came partially from his concern about how he might be perceived, but also from his lack of trust that I might not fully understand or might have misinterpreted what he was saying.

Conclusions

This study revealed interesting relationships between the formative life experiences and lobbyist policy discussions on a controversial policy issue that impacts Hispanic students. This research is significant because the racialized experiences of lobbyists have never before been explored in an effort to analyze advocacy and identity construction in policy discussions. The findings of this study have implications for HSI and EHSI leaders, HACU, and undocumented students.

HSI and EHSI Leaders

Latinos are the fastest-growing population in the United States, and their population is growing just as fast in higher education (Excelencia in Education, 2006). Although many higher-education institutions have focused on Latino student success initiatives in the institutional values through curriculum changes, programs, and services, undocumented-student access and immigration policies are examples of the social-policy decisions made at the state and federal levels that the growing number of HSIs have not emphasized. Higher education continues to exist as a public good (Pusser, 2006), and in that role it must consider how administrative actions such as lobbying and government relations impact Latino student issues. Furthermore, policies that impact the diverse Latino student population require HSIs to rethink and adapt the way they

approach lobbying to more closely reflect the issues that impact Latino students and their success.

The anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican rhetoric permeates the immigration debate in the United States, and higher-education institutions, particularly HSIs, are not immune to the impacts of the racialized immigration debate. HSIs must recognize how the formative life experiences individuals bring to their work influence discourse and the construction of student identities in policy discussions. This research challenges HSIs and EHSIs to consider what it means to be “Hispanic serving” in relation to policy advocacy. Are the institutional policies, practices, and procedures reflective of the needs of the student population? What impact does the absence of undocumented-student issues from legislative priorities have on the student population at an HSI?

HACU

The number of Latino students enrolling in higher-education institutions is growing, which in turn is creating an increasing number of HSIs and EHSIs. Over the past decade, HACU has been the leading higher-education association of HSIs EHSIs that has advocated for the federal DREAM Act to widen access and opportunities for undocumented students while providing a pathway to citizenship (HACU, 2011).

According to the findings in this study, HACU was an important source of information for the participating lobbyists on the issue of undocumented-student access. It was evident that, without the advocacy of HACU, there would have been little to no action from their employer institutions to support undocumented-student access policies. Organizations such as HACU continue to play an important role in developing an advocacy agenda among HSIs and EHSIs

that reflects the needs of the Latino student population; however, there is a lack of accountability for those institutions that remain silent in the interest of financial benefit to them.

Students

It is clear that the big losers in the DREAM Act debate are undocumented students themselves. Whether they are students who have spent a lifetime of hard work in the US educational system and earned a college degree yet are prohibited from beginning their professional careers, graduate students who are pulled over for speeding and deported as a result of being undocumented, students whose tuition forces them to work full time to pay for school because financial aid is inaccessible, or students who are denied access to higher education altogether, these individuals are directly impacted by the failure of federal adoption of the DREAM Act to date. They deserve to be heard, and student profiles such as these are central to the policy discussion that also needs to be heard.

Drawing evidence and examples from their connections and established relationships are examples of ways for HSI lobbyists to personalize these issues for policy makers. The current face of the immigration issue has become narcoterrorists taking advantage of weak border security, Mexican drug cartels' drug and human trafficking, and other criminals seeking to threaten security and the workforce for all Americans. More student and family voices and experiences must be added to this narrative, so that policy makers can hear their experiences on a broad national platform.

A major challenge is that undocumented immigrants currently are not voting constituents of elected officials, which presents limitations to this growing community's political value. To date, there have been few political ramifications for Congressional members' inaction on the DREAM Act. Furthermore, there has been little incentive for HACU-member institutions and

HSIs to be stronger, more visible advocates on the issue. Additionally, the current state of public funding for higher education presents more reasons for institutions not to engage in advocacy for the DREAM Act (e.g., the threat of such advocacy harms their political relationships and access to funding).

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, I present several recommendations for institutional leaders, lobbyists, and government-relations officers; HACU; undocumented students; and educational scholars. The following recommendations consider the important role that HSIs play in policy advocacy for Hispano/Latino student issues, and how each sector of the institution is a stakeholder in student access.

HSI & EHSI Leaders

Leaders at HSIs and EHSIs need additional skills and tools to understand how they can best represent and discuss Latino students and Latino student issues within the administration. Central to this recommendation is for leaders to use the knowledge they gain to consider the formative life experiences that lobbyists bring to their work during the hiring and firing process for those lobbyists. It would be to the advantage of the leadership to engage with organizations such as HACU that can provide historical information and the context of issues pertinent to Latino students. Finally, it is important for leaders to think beyond funding and finances to inform their positions on social policies that impact students at HSIs, and thus improve Latino student success.

HSI and EHSI Lobbyists and Government-Relations Officers

The current study demonstrates how lobbyists and government-relations officers are proxies for public policy representation for students. This reality is particularly important for

HSIs, which deal with highly politicized issues such as undocumented-student access. HSI lobbyists must (a) consider how formative life experiences inform personal biases and influence policy discussions; (b) make time to connect with students from diverse backgrounds and ask for their input about how to construct an identity for students in policy discussions; (c) specifically ask Latino students about the barriers they experience in accessing and succeeding at their institutions and in higher education generally; and (d) integrate these students' stories and experiences into their policy discussions so they represent those student well.

HACU

It is critical that HACU create high-impact opportunities for HSI and EHSI presidents and key administrators to develop a knowledge base in the historical and racialized context of Latino student issues. The organization must consider ways to elevate the importance that HSI and EHSI leaders have in policy discussions and the continued struggle to increase Latino student success. HACU can encourage leaders to be policy advocates for Latino students, and undocumented students in particular, in their administrative and lobbying practices on their campuses, in their states, and in national policy discussions.

Undocumented Students

No one can represent undocumented-student issues better than the students themselves. I encourage undocumented students to engage in critical policy discussions with administrators and lobbyists on their campuses. Over the past several years, students have been coming out of the shadows of secrecy and identifying themselves as undocumented students, or DREAMers, in their efforts to draw attention to undocumented-student access and immigration reform. However, these interactions with campus administrators and lobbyists can happen without students disclosing their immigration status, and by their establishing a coalition of allies to work

with. It is important that DREAMers access people who can influence the construction of an undocumented-student identity in policy discussions.

Educational Scholars

The current literature lacks research that explores how educational leaders articulate student issues and frame policy discussions about marginalized student populations. As higher-education institutions aim to improve educational outcomes for students of color and students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, it will be important for participants to understand how students and student interests are represented in policy discussions. Using a CRT lens may prove useful to them as they analyze policy discourse and may provide a context from which to examine how leaders perpetuate racial stereotypes of undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, future research can draw on Latino critical race theory (LatCrit) to explore how Latino lobbyists at HSIs do and do not generate counternarratives for Latino students and undocumented students in a policy discussion.

At HSIs, we should also examine how stated values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are compromised by the need to obtain funding. We must further consider how the social contract (Douglass, 2007) between higher education and the public manifests at the growing number of “minority-serving institutions” (MSIs).

Central to this conversation is my belief that we must capture undocumented-student voices in ways that can inform policy discussions. Given that students, and particularly undocumented students, are often absent from policy discussions between HSI administrators and policy makers, we need to examine the impacts of student-identity construction, particularly the star-student effect, on students and policy decisions. Last, we can use dialogic/performance

analysis to investigate how elements of sex, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and self-efficacy are present in higher-education policy discussions.

The amount of research that has been generated about undocumented students in higher education speaks to the importance of this issue. The areas for future research are limitless, given that there are sure to be future state and federal initiatives to address undocumented-student access and comprehensive immigration reform. Finally, the initiatives and issues that are consistently missing from legislative priorities often say much more about an institution's values than what the organization actually outlines as a priority.

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APPENDIX

Email Survey Cover Letter and Statement of Informed Consent

April 16, 2012

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University in the College and University Leadership area of specialization within the School of Education. I am conducting a research study on how experiences with race and racism influence policy discussions about access to higher education. The title of the project is *Hispanic-Serving Institution Lobbyists: The Influence of Formative Experiences on Access Policy*. I invite you to complete a short online survey. Participation *will require approximately 10 minutes* to complete the survey.

Your university is a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), which is a supporter of undocumented-student access. You are being asked to participate in this survey because of your government-relations and lobbying role. This study is not funded by HACU and is not required as a part of your institutional membership.

This survey will ask about your racial and ethnic background, your position at the university, what you know about college access for undocumented students, and your lobbying activities that pertain to state and federal legislations about undocumented students. Your name and your institution will not be requested as part of the survey. Only the PI and Co-PI will have access to the survey data. *Your answers will never be attributed to you or your institution.*

Although there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge about the government-relations and lobbying behaviors of HACU-member institutions as those behaviors pertain to access for undocumented students.

There are no known risks to you as a participant because these topics are within the scope of your profession. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown risks. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

By taking the survey, you are giving your implied consent to voluntarily participate in this study. *Please click here.*

If you have any questions or are interested in participating in an interview case study on this topic, please contact Meriah Heredia Griego at (505) 369-6344 (Meriah.HerediaGriego@gmail.com), or Dr. Sharon Anderson at (970) 491-6861 (Sharon.anderson@colostate.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.

Sincerely,

Sharon K. Anderson, PhD
Associate Professor

Meriah Heredia Griego
Doctoral Candidate

HACU Member Government Relations Survey

This questionnaire is part of a study about how race and racism affect policy. The questions cover the participant's personal characteristics and information about college access for undocumented students. Your university is a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), which is a supporter of undocumented-student access. You are being asked to participate in this survey because of your government-relations and lobbying role. This study is not funded by HACU and is not required as a part of your institutional membership. Your identity will remain confidential. You have the right not to answer any question. You may stop participating in the study at any time. This survey will take from 5 minutes to 10 minutes to complete.

Job Title:

Sex:

Is your institution a member of HACU?

What is the percentage of Hispanic student enrollment at your institution?

How do you identify and/or describe your race and ethnicity?

Do undocumented students have access to higher education in your state? If yes, please describe the level of access for undocumented students.

Are you familiar with the federal Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act? If yes, briefly explain how you became familiar with the DREAM Act.

Has access to higher education for undocumented students been a state or federal legislative priority for the institution? Please explain.

Please select the position type that best describes your employment with the institution:

University Staff

University Administrator

Contract Lobbyist (Individual or Firm)

Temporary Employee

Other: _____

This concludes the survey. If you are interested in participating in this research as an interview participant, please contact Meriah Heredia Griego at Meriah.HerediaGriego@gmail.com

Thank you for your participation.