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Illinois State University, j.mntngr71374@gmail.com

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ASIAN AMERICANS, LATINOS, AND THE HANA CENTER: SOLIDARITY THROUGH
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION IN NORTHEASTERN CHICAGO

JANETH MONTENEGRO MARQUEZ

71 Pages

This thesis examines how the history of exclusionary immigration laws against Chinese immigrants affected later immigration laws aimed at both new Asian and Latin American immigrants, with a focus on undocumented individuals from both geographic areas in the United States. The HANA Center, a Korean American nonprofit and immigration welcome center, located in Chicago, brings undocumented Asian Americans and Latinos together by creating an environment where the two can work together in their shared fight for immigration reform. Undocumented Latino voices are prominent in discourse around undocumented individuals in the United States, but undocumented Asian Americans are an equally important and often overlooked group. The HANA Center's goal is to give them a voice. I argue that early exclusionary laws create a template for future immigration laws aimed at both Korean immigrants and Latin American immigrants in the 20th century. The HANA Center offers a good snapshot into how Asian Americans and Latinos work together in the fight for immigration reform as an organization with a history of helping both Asian Americans and Latinos. I support this claim through a careful analysis of the HANA Center's online presence, as well as interviews with key individuals from the HANA Center and NAKASEC, a national organization that the HANA Center is affiliated with.

KEYWORDS: Asian Americans, HANA Center, Latinos, Undocumented Immigration

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ORGANIZATION IN NORTHEASTERN CHICAGO

JANETH MONTENEGRO MARQUEZ

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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ORGANIZATION IN NORTHEASTERN CHICAGO

JANETH MONTENEGRO MARQUEZ

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Nobuko Adachi, Chair

Livia Stone

Maura Toro-Morn

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INTRODUCTION: CHICAGO

Chicago's history as a city in the United States is one characterized by deep pockets of segregation. This is not unique to Chicago, many cities all over experience this social phenomenon. But in Chicago, social scientists, from sociologists to historians have documented the city's segregation as it is a social phenomenon reinforced by the layout of the city itself. If you were to drive through the different neighborhoods from the downtown area with its high-rise buildings and shiny exteriors, up towards Northside Chicago where the buildings are old but well-kept, to Westside Chicago, where buildings are still old and a little bit run down, but music fills the streets, and you find murals on the sides of buildings. Then towards Southside Chicago where buildings are less well kept. There are people and ancestries associated with each part of Chicago that are historically and demographically supported. By traveling through these different Chicago neighborhoods, you might come to find out that while segregation is something that characterizes Chicago, there is a lot of community, solidarity and community groups that are collaborating with each other all over the city. My work seeks to address one such community called the HANA Center. This organization is located north of the city's heart in a neighborhood known as Irving Park. The HANA Center is an immigration welcome center as well as a community center that offers services to the Korean American/ Asian American community, the migrant community, as well as to newly arrived immigrants of Chicago.

The HANA Center began as two organizations, the first being Korean American Community Services (KACS) and the Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KARC). The two would then merge to create the HANA Center in 2017. Both organizations have a longstanding history in the community, with KACS being established in 1972 and KARC in

1995. Both arose due to the need of the surrounding Korean American population and the influx of new Korean immigrants that began to populate the surrounding areas, in particular the Albany Park neighborhood (Immigrant Connect n.d). In the 1970s, this neighborhood was home to a robust Korea immigrant community. Korean immigrants made a home for themselves in Chicago after making their way to the U.S. after the Korean War left their country in a dire economic situation along with the passing of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act (Immigrant Connect n.d). Over the years the population of Chicago's unofficial Koreatown slowly decreased, as the Korean community that once lived in the area moved to the suburbs. Today, only some of the shops from that time period remain and as time has passed new immigrant groups have moved into the area, much like the Korean immigrants that came before them.

My thesis focuses on the HANA Center and the work that they do in providing services for immigrants to the surrounding community. My goal is to demonstrate how this organization fosters cross racial and cross ethnic solidarity by way of advocating for immigrant issues. Irving Park is a neighborhood with a longstanding immigrant population, and an emerging new immigrant population. In the 1930s it was a neighborhood that consisted of mostly white residents, many of German, Russian, Swedish, and Polish descent. By 1990 the population of European immigrants decreased, while immigrants from Asia and Latin America increased. These included immigrants from Central and South American, as well as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and Indians (Encyclopedia of Chicago "Irving Park," n.d.). While the HANA Center is located in Irving Park, Albany Park is also important to mention, as it is a neighborhood just north of Irving Park and historically significant in the history of Korean Americans in Chicago.

Albany Park being adjacent to Irving Park shares much of its early demographic makeup, with Germans and Swedes making up much of its early population. After the 1970s, a wave of Asian and Latin American immigration helped to reenergize the neighborhood after many of the middle and upper middle-class residents moved to the suburbs (Encyclopedia of Chicago “Albany Park”, n.d.). This time period was also the year that the Korean American Community Services (KACS) came to be, thus the story of the HANA Center is tied to the early history of Korean immigrants to these two neighborhoods. Today, a new wave of immigrants continues the legacy of Irving Park and by consequence Albany Park, as locations where new immigrants settle. The HANA Center continues to help immigrant populations just as KACS did for the Korean immigrants in the late 1970s. By 1990, Korean, Filipino and Guatemalan immigrants would make up a majority of the residents of the Albany Park neighborhood.

I have always been interested in Asian-Latino solidarity, and so this research explores the HANA Center as specific location whose history has allowed for the co-mingling of Asian immigrant/ Asian American and Latino immigrant groups. The history of the area being once home to a significant Korean immigrant community, then to a Filipino and Indian as well to a Guatemalan, Mexican and Puerto Rican community, makes it a suitable location to explore how these groups interact and work together. The organizations that fused to make the HANA Center, and by extension the HANA Center itself, have a substantial history in the area, so it would make sense for the organization to be known to members of the immigrant community and for immigrants from all over to seek its services.

The HANA Center as an immigration welcome and community center is a space for people to come together. Aside from offering resources to immigrants, the location also offers

spaces for people to come together in different settings. There are community events, English and technology classes, and the HANA Center itself is known for organizing behind certain causes, often through rallies. It is also beneficial that many of the resources the HANA Center offers are in English, Korean, and Spanish. The HANA Center offers new immigrants a variety of resources as well. They offer community education resources, civic engagement opportunities, mental health resources as well as housing services.

This thesis utilizes a qualitative methodology in that I draw on three sources of data. My first source of data includes the HANA Center's website. The website includes information about them as an organization, the resources they offer, who the HANA Center team consists of and how to contact them among other things. I also had the opportunity to visit the HANA Center in person and observe the surroundings and conducted my own ethnographic observations of the organization. In addition, I conducted interviews with key members of the HANA Center Staff as well as that of their partner organizations known as the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC). The individuals chosen for the interview demonstrate different perspectives on the way that solidarity between groups is built.

This thesis contributes to broader Asian and Latino immigration literature that seek to make an argument toward understanding the basis of ethno-racial solidarity between these two immigrant groups. Focusing on the undocumented experience and the way that an organization like the HANA Center makes space for community engagement and conversation, within the historical context of the area in which it resides, allows for an intimate look at the way that ethno-racial solidarity is being created at the community level.

Researcher's Positionality

What is the meaning of doing research about immigration, about immigrant solidarity for an immigrant themselves? I am intrigued about immigration because it is also a part of my story. My voice as a researcher in the field of anthropology is linked to my own experiences within the immigration system as an individual who has Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA. Can I separate my voice from the anthropological template? Is it possible to separate my voice as an anthropologist from my experiences as an immigrant? Is it possible to separate my anthropological voice from that of my immigrant experience?

In Anthropology, there has long been a discussion about who is studied and who gets to do the studying, as well as what does it mean to be an objective observer of the “other.” Historically, anthropologists have been mostly educated individuals from Western countries such as England and the United States, studying those outside of their culture and society. The methods that they used to observe other cultures and societies were engineered in a way to be as “objective” as possible and then shifted in order to better capture the “native’s point of view.” As time has gone by, anthropologists from the West have turned their anthropological gaze onto their own societies and anthropologists from areas that were once the subject of research have also turned their own lenses inward. These “native” anthropologists have advantages and disadvantages in their anthropological methods/work. On the one hand, those who study the culture from which they came from already have access to intimate fountains of knowledge that an outside researcher would have a more difficult or longer time accessing. They are in a better position to understand the dimensions of behavior of their informants through their connections, and they can circumvent the “negotiated reality” that is enacted by the informants when they

speak to academics (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984, 585). However, this intimate knowledge can also come with disadvantages. The connection that “native” anthropologists have with the culture or experience they are studying can obscure their ability to notice things that are usually taken for granted. Due in part because anthropology as a discipline is focused on trying to capture the “native’s point of view”, if non-native anthropologists are tasked with preventing the projection of their own cultural biases and cultural meanings onto the people that they are studying, “native” anthropologists have the perhaps even more difficult job of “distancing” themselves intellectually and emotively from their own cultures (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984, 584). In early conceptualizations of this work, I briefly thought of omitting my intimate connection to this work in an attempt to “distance” myself intellectually from part of the experience I was studying. I did not think that I would have been able to reconcile my experiences with my research. However, the differentiation between “native” and non-native anthropologists, creates an insider-outsider binary that does not capture the undocumented immigrant/ undocumented American experience. My experience as an individual with DACA, a person who migrated from Mexico at an early age, someone who finds themselves in the liminal space of being documented and undocumented will cross boundaries with individuals from other cultures, countries, ethnicities, and races, who experienced similar situations in both similar and diverse ways.

I am a DACA recipient and have experience navigating through parts of the immigration system in the United States. Having DACA means that I was once undocumented. There are hundreds of thousands of individuals in a similar position to that of my own, and there are even more who no longer have the ability to obtain DACA. In wanting to study the way that the HANA Center aids undocumented people, undocumented Asian Americans, recent Asian

immigrants, and both undocumented Latino migrants/immigrants, I am partially drawing upon my own experiences experiencing undocumentedation and immigration. My background differs from the Korean adoptee who found out later in life that their adopted parent neglected to obtain citizenship for them for instance, or from the Filipino migrant who arrived with his family when he was twelve who found out when they were an adult that they were undocumented (Do 2019). But there are also experiences we have in common. I have one foot in and one foot out, I am an outsider in many respects, but I am an insider in many others. My undocumented/ dacomented status, allows me to relate to undocumented and dacomented individuals across cultures, ethnicities, and races through the experiences of DACA, but it will not offer me admittance into various other parts of other individuals experiences.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA, is a program created in 2012 by then President Barak Obama that gave undocumented immigrant children brought to the U.S. before the age of 16 a pathway to be able to attend college with less financial barriers. There is a narrative in the media that Latinos, particularly Mexicans, but now also Central Americans, and South Americans are the ones that are always crossing a border to get into the United States. This narrative has been dug deep into the psyche of a lot of people, to the point that when someone thinks of the word “undocumented” the first image that comes up is a person with tan skin, dark hair, who does manual labor. But the reality of the situation is that the people struggling for a better life down south are not the only ones traveling thousands of miles and making dangerous journeys to reach the United States.

Even now the status of DACA is quite precarious. Ever since the Trump administration when new DACA applications ceased, the future of DACA seemed bleak. I am lucky that I fell

into the parameters to apply for DACA and that my family could afford to apply and to continue to help me apply. But for several reasons that are beyond the scope of this paper, there are many people who were not so lucky, for one reason or another, due to circumstances outside their control, and due to DACA's strict stipulations for who could apply, many would-be DACA recipients are undocumented today. For many activists however, the goal is not Deferred Action, but a pathway to citizenship.

There are millions of undocumented folks in the United States from all over and there are organizations, some large, some small, that make it their mission to help immigrants with whatever they might need help with or direct them to other resources that can better help with their situations. While Latin Americans are the ones most often associated with being undocumented in the United States, they are not the only ones, and crossing the border "illegally" is not the only way to become undocumented. There are many individuals who arrive legally to the United States on visas, visitor's visas are a common one, and stay past the date on which their visas expire. From one day to the next, they become undocumented. For example, there are also those who are adopted from overseas who due to the failings of an adoption agency or the lack of information on the part of the adoptee parents, or both, the adopted child arrives in the United States without proper documentation. They too would be undocumented. There are more complicated cases where parents have the proper documentation to be in the United States, who bring their young children with them, but if they for one reason or another do not fill out the right paperwork allowing the child to obtain residency before they turn 18 then their now adult child is too left in immigration limbo. Even refugees, who one would think would have a more clear-cut case can and do become undocumented. There are many ways to become undocumented, there are people from all over the

world that go through a variety of these experiences, from Koreans, to Canadians, Filipinos, Argentinians, and Romanians, all depending on the political climate.

In the United States, the number of undocumented immigrants is vast, and the experience can often be isolating and lonely, but there are organizations in the United States, such as immigration welcome centers among others, that cater not only to recent immigrants from all over the world, but that have over the years developed resources and a space for undocumented immigrants to obtain information to make their stay in the United States easier. They range from where to obtain food, to legal aid that can help them better understand their specific immigration status, to assistance in filling out important documents. The HANA Center is one such place. Without doubt immigration centers are places where, due to need, people from all over come together in order to seek aid.

This thesis is organized as follows. I will proceed to the literature part of this work, where I will offer a brief overview of Asian and Latino immigration to the United States. Chapter Three addresses immigration advocacy and activism in the United States. Chapter four addresses the HANA Center and the work that I have done at the organization. In conclusion, chapter five offers concluding thoughts and a summary of the arguments.

CHAPTER I: BRIEF HISTORY OF ASIAN AND LATINO MIGRATION IN THE AMERICAS

Asian Immigrants in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central and South America

Asian immigrants made their way to Mexico, Central America, and South America long before they set foot in the U.S., by way of trade routes put in place by colonial powers such as England, France, Spain, and Portugal. The first recorded historical marker of Asian immigrants in the Americas is 1565 and 1580, when a Spanish navigator and friar found a route to New Spain (current-day Mexico) through the Philippines (Lee 2015, 19). Through this route, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and other individuals from South and Southeast Asia, made their way to Mexico (Lee 2015, 20). The journey to the new world was long, and while making it back to their home countries, many also stayed and made a home for themselves on these new lands (Lee 2015, 22).

Between 1838 and 1917 more than 419,000 South Asians “coolies” or indentured servants made their way to West Indian Plantations, on islands that would become Cuba and Puerto Rico to name a few. However, not all were indentured, as was the case with the Chinese coolies later that century in 1847-1874 (Lee 2015, 34,40). Under this system 140,000 Chinese laborers traveled under unregulated conditions to Cuba while in 1849-1947 90,000 more coolies were also sent to Peru (Lee 2015, 34). This ended in in 1876 and 1877 when Spain and China signed a treaty ending all indentured laborer contracts in Peru and then later Cuba with the latter establishing a consulate there to protect their interests.

The 1850’s and 1860’s saw Chinese immigrants also making their way to California (Kitano and Daniels 2001, 21). They were in part influenced by the state’s promise of gold and economic opportunity, but it was not the only reason. Many of these immigrants and migrants

came for China's Guangdong Province, who through a mixture of both domestic economic issues and foreign U.S intervention continued their migration (Lee 2015, 64). The U.S.' need for ever-growing expansion lead to an increased in the need of labor, which helped fuel Chinese migration to the country (Lee 2015, 67). These same conditions also attracted migrant workers from other parts of Asia and many Japanese and Indian migrants followed. For many of them immigration to the United States was voluntary, as they saw the potential to earn a living in places like California, with its promise of gold and the opportunity for jobs in the country's growing infrastructure by way of railroads. Many of the immigrants who made their way to the United States made their homes, established profitable businesses, lucrative trade networks and communities in cities all over the area.

As the population of mainly Chinese immigrants grew and they established businesses and communities and as is the case with most new immigrants to the United States, anti-immigrant sentiments soon followed. Racist and xenophobic ideas about the Chinese as "machine-like" workers and impossible to compete with, led to anti-Chinese laws (Lee 2015, 89). The Page Law of 1875 was the first one that barred Chinese individuals from entering the United States. It was set up as a vice law that sought to prevent the migration of unmarried Chinese women who were trafficked into prostitution and without substantial income (McKee 2019, 41). While this was the reason given, the true intention may have had to do with attempting to prevent the Chinese from making a home for themselves in the area. This was followed by The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 one of the first immigration laws that the United States put into effect explicitly barring a group of people from entering the country. It barred Chinese immigrant laborers from entering the United States for ten years and was subsequently

expanded in 1892 1902 as well as 1907 with the Gentlemen's Agreement pact between the United States and Japan, which barred Japanese immigration to the United States (Kitano & Daniels 2001,12-13). This law, and the racism and xenophobia that inspired it, set into motion similar laws that aimed to exclude immigrants from other parts of East Asia, parts of Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, such as the 1917 Asiatic Barred Zone Act, that banned Asian Indian migration and prohibited the migration of people from all over Asia with only the Philippines and Guam being excluded. The 1924 Immigration Act continued the prohibition altogether by setting an incredibly small quota for the Asian immigrants allowed into the United States (McKee 2019, 40-41; Kitano and Daniels 2001, 13) again with the Philippines as an exception. This law also created an "illegal" status for Mexicans and created the Border Patrol (Fernandez 2012, 86), something that will be important later in this work. The status of the Philippines as a U.S. possession meant that as U.S. nationals they could not be excluded like other Asian populations, therefore the previous bans on Asian immigrants did not affect them in the same way. Nevertheless, anti-Filipino prejudice was rampant, soon they were excluded by the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934. This act succeeded in barring the migration of Filipinos to the U.S. and tied it to the Philippines getting its eventual independence. It also excluded Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian from entering the to the U.S. With this act, the category of Asian was redefined, as Filipinos who were now considered "aliens" whereas before they were considered only U.S. nationals (McKee 2019, 42).

It was not until World War II that any opportunities for naturalization arose, but even then, it was not until the Civil Rights Era that immigration restrictions relaxed for immigrants from Asia (McKee 2019 42-43). Many of the sentiments that inspired these laws remain today in

laws that limit the immigration of individuals that come from parts of the world like Mexico, Central and South America, as well as the Middle East. The Chinese Exclusion Act, however, would go on to influence public views of Latin American and Asian immigration as a whole. The exclusionary laws that prevented Chinese immigrant laborers from entering the United States lead to the first undocumented immigrants (Lee 2015,192).

It should be noted that the experience of the Philippines as a U.S. colony made their early experiences as immigrants quite different to that of other Asian immigrants. They could not be excluded for being suspected foreigners, nevertheless, this changed when the Philippines gained independence. Just how the banning of Chinese immigration into the United States lead to Chinese immigrants finding other ways to enter, so too did laws banning Japanese individuals lead to them entering the U.S. by any means possible, which included entering undocumented through Mexico. Early Japanese migration to the United States consisted of young men who planned to return to Japan eventually, but that over time settled down and brought their families with them. Japanese immigrants also made their way to other countries including Australia, Fiji, the Philippines, Mexico, Peru, and Canada through private Japanese emigration companies that sent laborers to these countries (Lee 2015, 109, 111). In the United States, anti-Japanese sentiment followed the successful campaign to restrict Chinese immigration. Sentiments towards the Japanese were similar to those of the Chinese, seeing them as threats to white workers. Japan as a nation with its modern industries and powerful military was considered to be a greater danger to the West and by extension so where the Japanese people (Lee 2015, 124). Even before this, anti-Japanese sentiment was present in the West Coast as part of existing anti-Asian

sentiment due to its history of many early Chinese and Japanese immigrants making these states their home.

Although undocumented Asian immigration is part of the history of North America, it is also its present. Undocumented Asian migration and the presence of undocumented Asian immigrants and Asian Americans did not end when the Chinese Exclusion Acts were repealed. As was the case with undocumented migration from Latin American countries, economic need and the threat of danger move people to leave their homes and head towards one where they hope to find stability and safety. And as is the case with people who are set on making their way to the U.S. at all costs, many of those who seek outside assistance to make their way to the United States end up trafficked as a result. Often, they make the journey themselves, traversing great geographic lengths and oceans, in other scenarios they pay for assistance from “coyotes,” those that help people cross from Mexico to the United States, and “snakeheads,” international smugglers from China (Baiqun and Fong 2000, 65). This is part of the history of undocumented Asian migration to the United States, but it is also one facet of it, as there are multiple ways to become undocumented. Korean adoptees in the latter half of the 20th century, many of whom were taken against the will of the parents also found their way to the United States and ended up in complicated legal situations as foreigners adopted by U.S. citizens who had to obtain citizenship for them. In other cases, people may enter the U.S. via documented means, such as a visitor’s visa and then stay past that visa’s expiration date when they were children and then find out later that they do not have legal status in the United states.

Asian adoptees are also part of the history of Asian immigrants, Asian Americans and of immigration in the United States and they add nuance to the history of undocumented individuals

of Asian origin. Transracial and transnational adoptions have a history that began in the Cold War relationship between South Korea and the United States. The 1953 Refugee Relief Act allowed the adoption of 4,000 orphans, younger than 10 years of age, to be adopted by U.S. citizens (Lee 2015, 268; McKee 2019, 43). The U.S. presence in South Korea led to the birth of bicultural and biracial children between US servicemen and Korean women, the children of these unions, also known as “waifs of war,” were the first to become transnational adoptees of white American families. Over time this type of adoption became a custom in South Korea and celebrated as humanitarian by those in the United States (Lee 2015, 268). Despite this seemingly straightforward view of international adoption between the two nations, the reality proved to be something else as many of the Korean children who were advertised as being orphans did in fact have families. In many cases these children were left at orphanages by parents who saw this as their children’s best chance of survival, other times they were simply taken from their families (Lee 2015, 268-269). Despite the circumstances, many adoptees did grow up happy and adapted to their new homes, but it was not always the case as the idea of adopting children from overseas and giving them a home collided with the realities of international adoption. In 2000, the Child Citizenship Act was passed, which automatically gave citizenship to the foreign children adopted by U.S. families. Legal barriers for adopting foreign children eased, but the responsibility of naturalizing the children fell to the parents. There was a belief among adoption advocates that the parents would not overlook naturalizing their children and that they would be eager to get it done. But the reality was that the adoption agencies did not and could not follow up with families to make sure that they completed the naturalization of the child they adopted (McKee 2019, 45).

While the Child Citizenship Act automatically gave U.S. citizenship to children and was supposed to make adopting children from abroad easier (McKee 2019, 46), the act only applies to children who entered the US on IR-3 and IH-3 Visas. The IR-3 visa is for children from countries that are not part of the Hague Convention, which took place in 1993 with the goal of protecting the interests of children, birth families, and adoptive parents' participation in international adoptions. Those with IH-3 visas come from countries that took part in this convention (USCIS July 2023). This means that the adoption was recognized by the birth country of the adopted child and the United States. Adoptees who received IR-4 and IH-4 visas do not receive citizenship automatically, rather become permanent residents (McKee 2019, 46). Children brought to the U.S. under IR-4 and IH-4 visas enter the United States with the intention of being adopted, were only adopted by one of the parents or were not seen by their adopters prior to being adopted (USCIS April 2023). This act did not benefit the adoptees who had already become legal adults. This was the case for many of the Koreans adopted when they were children before the 2000s who needed their parents to obtain citizenship for them, since they did not automatically become citizens when they were adopted (Sang-Hun 2017). These acts created a series of dire situations for those adopted who did not obtain citizenship through their parents. Lim Sang Keum, the biracial son of an American soldier and a South Korean woman, is one case. He was adopted in the 1970s by an American family who returned him to the adoption agency just a few months after he arrived. Because his adoption was not completed and neither was his naturalization, Lim Sang Keum became undocumented (McKee 2019, 48). In another instance, another international adoptee from South Korea named Phillip Clay at age 8, who was abandoned by his first adoptive family and abused by his second was deported back to South

Korea. Mr. Clay was legally adopted by an American family, but since adoptees were not granted automatic citizenship before 2000, he never became a citizen (Sang-Hun 2017).

There are also various other situations involving the U.S. that allowed for the creation of undocumented individuals. The Vietnamese Babylift Era evacuated approximately 2500-3000 children out of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and flown to the United States, Canada, Europe. These children were evacuated in coordination with adoption agencies ready with potential adopters. Mike Frailey, an adoptee who formed part of the 1975 Vietnamese Babylift-era, states that many of the children taken from their homes failed to get citizenship (McKee 2019, 49). As explained earlier with the case of Korean adoptees, adopting children from abroad creates a complicated situation in which the legal status of the child enters bureaucratic limbo, leaving fate of their legal status to their parents. Parents who often are not knowledgeable about the legal or not status of their adopted child or they neglect to obtain citizenship for their children due to the cost and paperwork needed among other reasons. In other situations, the adopted parents may abandon the adoptees, leaving them completely in the dark about their lack of legal status in the United States or the adoptees lose their new parents before they help them obtain some form of legal status (The New York Times 2017, Los Angeles Times 2016). Either way the story remains the same, transnational adoptees face potential undocumented status and even deportation.

McKee connects the and narratives surrounding Korean adoptees and their experiences as foreign-born children who have the possibility of becoming undocumented national perspectives of other undocumented children in the United States (2019, 51-57). Adoptee parents and their families have worked with and pushed their representatives to advocate for “uniting families” and “maintaining families together” with many arguing that adoptees are “already American”

and therefore there need to be better policies to assist them in adoption matters and to prevent adoptees from ending up in situations where they do not have legal status. McKee makes a point that the narratives around adoptee children who might be undocumented and that of children brought across the border by their parents creates the dichotomy between “good” and “bad” undocumented children, with one brought because they were adopted by white American families, through a Christian American industrial complex of adoption and others by foreigners from the global south. Many of the narratives used to raise awareness around the adoptee struggles involve the mention of how they were children who were brought to the United States by Americans often with the intention to “save” them from dangerous situations, therefore making them innocent. A narrative that also fits and is used by advocates for the children that cross the U.S.-Mexico Border. McKee’s arguments noted that the fact that they are children and who brings them to the United States impacts the type of narrative told (ibid.53-54). Other arguments present in McKee’s analysis of some laws advocating for better international adoption laws include using the fact that these international adoptees were brought to the United States by U.S. citizens, legally, and because they grow up with the culture making them part of the “American family” (ibid 54-55). It should be noted that unless children live in relative isolation, they will grow up partaking in American culture. McKee’s takeaway from analyzing these arguments surrounding undocumented adoptees should be studied further because it points to the “American-ness” of these adoptees as conditional and complicated. The experiences of adoptees who found themselves undocumented and who were deported back to a country that they had little to no ties to is an experience nevertheless is a part of their history in the United States that does not get told.

Korean immigrants made their way to the United States at a later period than Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The circumstances of their arrival as refugees of war as well as adoptees give them their own unique perspective to life in the United States. Early Chinese, Japanese as well as other Southeast Asian and South Asian immigrants to the Americas came to the U.S. under different circumstances, each with their own unique relationship to the United States and to each other which affected how they were treated at different points in history. Nevertheless, due to the legacy of early anti-Chinese exclusion, stereotypes around people from the Asian countries that evolved over the years—such as the model minority myth— and an American public who viewed foreigners as a threat, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, as well as other Asian immigrants had to contend with the legacy of xenophobia these early anti-exclusionary laws left in the United States. This history also demonstrates how immigration laws affect the relationship immigrants have to the U.S. immigration process, as undocumented migration from these areas of the world continues till this day, and to each other.

Mexican Immigrant and Migrant History to the United States

In 1821, during the latter end of the Coolie Trade and just a few decades before the California Gold Rush, the lands that would become California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, belonged to the country of Mexico, now independent from Spain. When this land later became part of the United States of America, after the Mexican American war and through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 (The National Archives n.d.), the land and the Mexicans on the land were now incorporated into the United States. The Coolie Trade demonstrates a brief look into the history that Asian immigrants have in Latin America. When Chinese immigrants made their way to California, drawn by the prospect of gold and economic opportunity, and

many were probably interacting with the Mexican population left over from the Treaty of Guadalupe and that land's historical connection to Mexico. One could say that Asians and Latinos in the United States have always been in contact with one another.

The Mexicans who remained on the land would go on to face their own series of discrimination and struggles and their history is integral to the labor rights movements of the 20th century and the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties. Leaders of the time such as Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta of the labor rights movement and the inception of the Chicano Movement in the sixties would become a home for the undocumented rights movements of the latter half of the twentieth century. Leaders of the Civil Rights movement would go on to work with not only those of the Black Power Movement but also those of the burgeoning Asian American Movement as well. Therefore, examples of these coalitions and solidarity movements are also important in the history of these groups working together.

Like Asian immigrants, Latino immigrants were recruited as laborers and although both have extensive and unique histories in the United States, for the purpose of this paper, the history of Latino immigration will focus on that which took place after the 1940s with a brief mention of The 1924 Immigration Law, which is important to both the Asian population and the Latino population in the United States. The 1924 Immigration law put quotas on European immigration, with Northern and Western Europeans receiving larger quotas while Southern and Eastern Europe received smaller ones (Kitano and Daniels 2001, 13). Coincidentally, this act also created the U.S. Border Patrol and cemented Mexicans as "illegal" immigrants (Fernandez 2012, 86). In 1942, the United States organized the recruitment and admittance of 4.6 million temporary Mexican workers in order to which was WWII as the need for labor increased imported foreign

Mexican workers under the Bracero Accord (Durand, Massey and Parrado 1999, 518; Fernandez 2012, 86). The program ended in 1964, but that did not end the importation of foreign labor. U.S. companies continued to employ migrant workers, both documented and undocumented.

The expansion of this global economy by ways such as that of the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) had affects for both the United States and Mexico. NAFTA proved beneficial to few Mexican cities along the border that had closer ties to the United States, while other cities further south suffered economically as they were not prepared to compete in this new market (Durand, Massey and Parrado 1999, 519-520). Meanwhile in the 1970s, U.S. unemployment rose, wages stagnated, and income inequality grew. In areas like California, which had long been a destination for migrant workers from Mexico, the new economic crisis benefitted from influx of undocumented labor (Durand, Massey and Parrado 1999, 520). The subsequent declining economic situation, paired with the increased use of undocumented labor by companies in the United States, paved the road for the use of undocumented migration as a “problem” that needed to be fixed. With undocumented migration now seen as an issue of national security, bills began to be introduced that would try to curb immigration coming from the southern border. The first of these bills is the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986. This bill gave added resources to U.S. Border Patrol for enforcement along the border, it also made it so that the lure of U.S. jobs was reduced by penalizing employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers, long-term undocumented workers were offered amnesty and undocumented agricultural workers were offered a special legalization program. The latter two were put in place to remain on good terms with Latino and civil rights groups and to placate the

states of California and Texas who employed the largest amount of undocumented workers (Durand, Massey and Parrado 521).

The Immigration Reform and Control Act's (IRCA) intended goal aimed at curbing undocumented migration from Mexico, but it backfired. This act led to a new era in Mexican immigration to the United States (Durand, Massey and Parrado 522). The aftermath of this bill and the laws that were put in place after it led a larger amount of Mexican immigrants to enter the United States, and did not prevent new immigrants from coming, but rather prevented them from returning home by making the consequences of crossing the border a second time more dangerous (Durand, Massey and Parrado 524). With this, having at least one legal family member in the United States increased the chance that a spouse, child or relative would make their way across the border undocumented to reunite with their family members. IRCA led to an increased probability of immigrants crossing the border to reunite with their family members (Durand, Massey and Parrado 525). IRCA would then go on to include the Replenishment Agricultural Workers Program (RAW), created to replenish the agricultural workers that had begun to make their way to urban settings. This led to an expansion of the H-2A program which resembled the stipulations of the Bracero Program of the 1940s (Durand, Massey and Parrado 526).

The increased number of Mexican immigrants led to an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment and this sentiment led to an increase in anti-immigrant laws. Two landmark pieces of legislation include the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act also known as the 1996 Immigration Reform Act and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, better known as the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. These two laws

barred non-citizen immigrants as well as undocumented immigrants from receiving any federal or state benefits. It also put in place harsher penalties for people that overstayed their visas or those who entered without inspection (Durand, Massey and Parrado 532). The passage of these laws increased voter mobilization and led people to look more into new strategies towards naturalization. It also led to an increase in pan-ethnic coalition of Latinos and Asians that cut across nationalities (ibid 534). The aftermath of 9/11 only added to the anti-immigrant sentiments already present (Block and Rocha Silva 2011, 168). The president at the time pointed to the weak borders as vulnerable to terrorist attacks with undocumented immigration and border security becoming intertwined. The anti-immigrant and anti-undocumented immigrant policies fed the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment and vice versa (Bloch and Rocha Silva 2011, 171) which will lead to increased anti-immigrant laws that still affect immigration to this day.

The treatment of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans in the early history of the United States, and the subsequent laws that were created to exclude not only them, but other Asian immigrants and Asian Americans, set the precedent for many of the migration laws that came after. While there is no singular immigrant experience, there are those that mirror and converse with each other, that shape and harm people and by laws that make and unmake citizens, adding caveats to their identities and desire to eligibility is something that transcends immigrant groups.

CHAPTER II: ASIAN IMMIGRANTS, ASIAN AMERICANS, LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS AND LATINOS IN CHICAGO

The 1960s Onward: Emerging Coalitions

Before the 1960s Asian American groups organized mostly along ethnic lines. Organizations such as the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and Chinese Worker's Mutual Aid Association (CMWAA) among others, served to advance the needs of their respective populations and did not always get along (Maeda 2010, 30, 37). While there were brief instances of coalition between different racial and ethnic groups before the 1960s, the emerging Civil Rights Movement as well as the presence of 2nd, 3rd generation communities who grew up fully immersed in U.S. society, created an environment more conducive to coalitions, fueled by ideas of solidarity between these Asian Americans and other minoritized groups. In addition, much like the term "Latino and Hispanic," the term "Asian American" was not coined by individuals of Asian descent living in the United States, rather it was bestowed upon them by outsiders or in other cases the U.S. government for purposes of categorization. This panethnic label paints a wide range of people as a monolith, ignoring the differences and complexities of the relationships between each group. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, created circumstances within the country that pushed these different ethnic groups to decide to work together under the Asian American label, seeing it as the ability to gain influence through the power in numbers (Maeda 2010, 39). In the 1960s and the following decades another version of the Asian American model minority stereotype emerged and with it an Asian American Movement with the aim to protest anti-Asian racism, xenophobia, and stereotypes regarding societal views of Asian Americans as a minoritized group living in the United States (Lee 2015,

375; Maeda 2010, 75). It should be noted that that as an incredibly diverse group of people who come from different countries, have their own immigrant histories in the U.S. and speak different languages, their goals did not align, but many also saw power in building a multiethnic coalition would help them fight against racism and its effects (Maeda 2010, 75).

Various instances of coalition for Asian Americans of various ethnicities included cross-identifications with other minoritized groups (Maeda 2010, 79). Some examples of this include the folk group A Grain of Sand, which consisted of JoAnne Nobuko Miyamoto, Chris Ijima, and Charlie Chin (Maeda 2001, 130, 134, 137). They became A Grain of Sand an American folk band where they sang about the experiences of being Asian American, multi-ethnic identity, interracial solidarity, anti-racism, anti-imperialism, and progressive movements (Maeda 2001, 141). Their album “A Grain of Sand,” titled after the name of the band, deals in part with interracial solidarity. Miyamoto, Ijima, and Chin argued that being Asian American should include interracial solidarity with other minority groups, and actively sought to accomplish this. They performed for Asian American groups all around the country, sang in various prominent and multiethnic and racial cities, including Chicago. One of their most notable multiracial collaborations for the band and album is the song “Somos Asiáticos,” in Spanish, which translates to “We Are Asian” which was done in collaboration with Latino artists, most of them Dominican and Puerto Rican (Maeda 2001, 145-147). Despite various Asian American groups working together with Latinos during this period, instances of different Asian American groups working with each other were less common.

The murder of Vincent Chin and the acquittal of those who murdered him in 1982 helped spark the first large-scale pan-Asian American and interracial campaign to call attention to Anti-

Asian hate crimes (Lee 2015, 382). Vincent Chin was a Chinese American, but he was killed by two white men who mistook him for a person of Japanese descent. Anger towards the presence of the Japanese auto industry in the U.S. and the idea that it was their fault fueled the hate crime. The coalition of pan-ethnic and interracial advocates called themselves the American Citizens for Justice (Lee 2015, 382). This group worked to prove to a skeptical public that the killing of Vincent Chin was racially motivated and that despite the model minority myth, Asian Americans face a substantial amount of discrimination. While they eventually managed to get the assailants sentenced, they were eventually acquitted to the disappointment of many (Lee 2015, 383). The history of the eventual panethnic Asian American movement creates a backdrop for the emergence of places like the HANA Center that help not only Korean Americans and other Asian Americans in obtaining the resources they needed.

Asian Immigrants and Asian Americans in Chicago

The Chinese immigrant community has a long history in Chicago. Chinese immigrants came to Chicago in the 1870s. Many first settled in the downtown Loop area but due to rising rents many moved to the South side neighborhood of Chicago (Ling 2018, 1-2). The Chinatown that Chicago is known for today is considered South Chinatown, with the Argyle Street Chinatown, revitalized by ethnic Chinese immigrants from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos is known as North Chinatown, also known as Little Saigon. These immigrants' first stop was South Chinatown, but the neighborhood did not have the resources available to take these immigrants in, so they went north (Ling 2018, 222-223).

Chicago's history of segregating its population into different neighborhoods means that certain neighborhoods are known for the populations that inhabit them, such as Chinatown in

Armour Square and Pilsen in Lower Westside for Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, along with Paseo Boricua in Humboldt Park for Puerto Ricans as I will discuss below. This rich history of different groups creating communities for themselves in the area and the interactions between these groups leads it to becoming a hub for one of the immigrants' rights movements in the United States. The various anti-immigrant laws described in the earlier chapters going back to the 1940s lead to a crescendo in the years leading up to 2006.

Latinos in Chicago

Chicago is it home to a large Mexican immigrant and Mexican American population, but it is also home to a large and significant community of Puerto Ricans in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. Both groups have a long history in the city. The Bracero Accord, which lasted from the 1940s-1960s, brought many Mexican workers to Chicago as contract laborers, at the same time that Puerto Rican contract workers were also making their way to the city also as contract laborers (Fernandez 2012, 23). While most Puerto Ricans gravitated to work on the East Coast of the United States and most Mexican migrants and immigrants made their way to the West and Southwest, the Midwest served as a place of convergence for the two groups.

As was described in the previous section, the Bracero Program, while allowing many Mexican migrants to enter the United States, the complicated nature of immigration and the aftermath of various laws attempting to curb it, led to more undocumented immigration with less avenues to return to their countries of origin. These laws and the subsequent increase in immigrants from Mexico attempting to reunite with their relatives, led to the creation of neighborhoods in Chicago and other cities where these immigrants congregated and created

communities. Places like Hull House located in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago (Fernandez 2012, 64) and Paseo Boricua in Humboldt Park. Historically Puerto Ricans also found homes in the Near West Side and Near North Side. They were drawn to these areas due to relatively cheaper rents and an environment that consisted of racially mixed neighborhoods (Fernandez 2012, 132). The area was also located near factories, railroads, and shipping industries that offered sources of employment (Fernandez 2012, 135).

Mobilization as Advocacy for Immigrants

Asian Americans, Asian immigrants, and Latinos both those born in the U.S. those who immigrated have a substantial but complicated history of working together in the United States. Due to the similar trajectory of immigration, the only jobs available to them early on were those that involved hard labor, agricultural work, and the like. However, over the years this changed as globalization and the economy changed. No immigrant experience is going to be the same, but the reasons for immigrating to the United States both documented and undocumented, for many over the decades, has involved labor to a certain extent and labor conditions remain important things to fight for many communities (De Genova 2002, 422). California served as the place where a majority of these coalitions occurred, due to the long history of both Asian immigration from China and Japan and Latin American immigration from Mexico and other Central American countries. In 1903, Japanese American and recent Japanese immigrant as well as Mexican Americans and recent Mexican immigrant beet workers founded the Japanese Mexican Labor Association in Oxnard, California and serves as an example of how racial lines were crossed in order to organize around labor (Maeda 2010, 35). Asians and Latinos worked together once more when the Field Workers Union, a collaboration between Filipino and Mexican

workers, was created in 1936 (Maeda 2010, 36). California was one of the central locations for many of these mobilizations, as it was and continues to be the state with the largest number of Asian American/immigrant pop (Chinese, Japanese, Filipino among others) and largest Latino (mainly Mexican immigrant) population. It is possible that in Chicago, during the Civil Rights era, different groups worked together for certain localized causes. These along with other instances of coalition create a line throughout history that is continued by the Immigrant Rights Mobilizations, which brings together people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds to fight for comprehensive immigration reform, undocumented immigrant student rights, and labor rights to name a few. Through the interactions Asian Americans and Latinos had with each other, beginning with mobilizations for labor rights among Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican farmworkers, through the realization that solidarity among those considered minorities in the United States furthered the goals of the Civil Rights Movement, so too would the Immigrant Right's Movement bring people together for common cause. Although the Immigrant Rights Movement had a Latino face, Latinos who had some type of legal status, most of them first, second and third generation U.S. citizens, constituted a big part of the people presence in the Immigrant Right's Marches that took place in Chicago. Latinos were not the only ones who benefitted or would benefit from the legacy of the rights for undocumented workers.

California Assembly Bill 540, California Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

The Immigrant Rights Movement that followed paved the way and was instrumental in the eventual creation of laws that benefitted immigrant youths through and implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also known as DACA. But this triumph was only

possible due to the decades of activism enacted by the Undocumented Immigrant Youth Movement and the push for the implementation of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM Act). In 2010, this movement and the undocumented youth that took part in it, were responsible for pushing California politicians to draft into law an iteration of the DREAM Act called California Assembly Bill 540. This bill allowed undocumented youth the ability to pay in-state rather than the considerably more expensive out of state tuition (Wang and Guarneros 2015, 1). The DREAM Act, the inspiration for the California Dream Act, planned to establish a path to citizenship for the hundreds of thousands of undocumented students in the country. The bill would allow states to charge in-state college tuition and provide a six-year conditional permanent resident status for undocumented students who graduated from U.S. public high schools and enroll in two- or four-year universities. Although there have been various iterations of this bill over the years since 2001, none of them has garnered enough support to be able to become a reality across the country (Gonzalez and Gutierrez 2015, 21). Despite this, advocates for undocumented youth and immigrants overall, continued to advocate for the rights of undocumented people. Places like Los Angeles and Chicago, home to large and expansive immigrant populations, saw the coming together of undocumented immigrants and their allies in order to advocate against laws that would further criminalize undocumented individuals. It was not until 2012, under the Obama administration, that they scored a major victory in the introduction of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival.

The first major piece of legislature that created a national program for undocumented students is called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This act allowed undocumented individuals who came to the United States before they turned sixteen and gives

them temporary protection from deportation the ability to work legally in the U.S. through a permit that needs to be renewed each year (Gonzalez and Gutierrez 2015, 2). In addition, applicants would also be eligible to apply for advanced parole. Advanced parole allows DACA recipients to travel outside the country for a brief period of time for humanitarian, educational or employment purposes and re-enter the U.S. legally (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2022). In order to qualify for DACA undocumented individuals need to have resided in the U.S. since 2007, be physically present in the US since June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request. Further qualifications include entering the U.S. without inspection before June 15th, 2012, or their lawful immigrant status must be expired as of June 15, 2012. Lawful permanent status includes an entry date with any type of visa. A potential applicant would also need to be a graduate from a U.S. High School or have a GED. In addition, they must not be convicted of a felony, any significant misdemeanor, have three or more misdemeanors, and must not pose a threat to national security or public safety in general (Department of Homeland Security 2022). In 2016, the Trump administration attempted to end DACA, but they only managed to prevent any new applications from being filed and temporarily removed DACA recipients' ability to apply for Advanced Parole. For those who applied before 2016, they can continue to renew their DACA and most recently, the ability to obtain advanced parole was reinstated. Over the last couple of years, there have been various lawsuits brought forth against DACA, with lawsuits challenging the lawfulness of the program (National Immigration Law Center 2020). For immigration activists, DACA's precarious status, combined with a realization by many that more needs to be done by the government to give security to undocumented individuals, has led many to shift their efforts to call for a comprehensive immigration reform.

Undocumented Asian Americans

While I have spoken about the way being undocumented has become a stereotype primarily attributed to Latinos and particularly Mexicans, the perception that it is something that only affects the Latino community in the United States is incorrect but also harmful. Stereotypes combined with a larger relative population in the United States makes the undocumented Latino narrative more widely available to the public. This stereotype is not only harmful to Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, but it is also harmful to individuals and communities from other ethnicities and races because it erases their stories from the national conversation, from mainstream news sites, and from being studied in depth. For similar reasons it is harmful to the undocumented Asian American community who are left out of the narrative (Rim 2009, 716).

The story of Tony Choi detailed by a journalist in *The Atlantic* details one such story. This article includes Choi's experiences trying to find resources that would help him pay for college, to detailing concerns he has about his future in the United States and that of his undocumented parents. It also includes more intimate descriptions of nightmares he had of getting dragged away by dark figures (Lim 2013) an allusion to the very real reality of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) entering your house and dragging you away to deport you. Undocumented immigration to the United States is not limited to individuals from Mexico, Central and South America as I demonstrated via the experiences of some Korean adoptees. It affects different communities in unique ways.

Undocumented Asian America have spoken up about the way that their experiences are ignored by wider U.S. society. Kim and Yellow Horse (2018), discusses this in their article "Undocumented Asians, Left in the Shadows", where they describe the ways that Asian

Americans feel left out of the conversation about this topic not only be researchers but also policy makers. A feeling that could be further complicated by the stigma associated with being undocumented (Lim 2013). In some cases of Asian families living within the United States, being undocumented brings shame and is not widely shared even within the closest of communities (Jordan 2019). Undocumented Asian Americans and Asian immigrants are the fastest growing undocumented racial group in the United States (Malik 2015). A substantial number of undocumented Asian immigrants come from over a dozen different countries, some of them being Indian, China, the Philippines, and Korea (Kim and Yellow Horse 2018, 70).

The story of Tony Choi and his experience as an undocumented Korean adoptee, is however just one glimpse into the life of an undocumented Asian American. The circumstances in which different Asian Americans get to the U.S. and how they become undocumented after can vary greatly. The narrative around the model minority myth and the expectation that DACA recipients or “DREAMers” are innocent because they were brought to the United States as children in and of themselves create a narrative that those who are DACA recipients and fit the stereotype of college educated individuals who went on to get good jobs and productive members of society. The narrative that “DREAMers” are somehow more “deserving” also perpetuates the myth of a model minority (Kim and Yellow Horse 2018, 71).

Scholars such as Kathy Rim, a sociologist, have explored this phenomenon of Asian American participation in the Immigrant Rights Movement, in particular the context of the 2006 Immigrant Right’s Movement, taking note of how it is difficult to obtain a series of consistent goal across different Asian American ethnic groups who all have different experiences within the

United states compared to Latinos who tend to be unified by language and media (Rim 2019, 717).

The Immigrant Rights Movement and the push for DACA became known to the general public as an issue of Latinos. As the stereotype goes, Latinos, Mexicans are the ones that are coming across the border illegally. While it is true that Mexicans made up a generous portion of those that applied for DACA and of those that enter the United States are Mexican and from Latin America, they are far from the only ones. As I stated before, there are many ways to become undocumented and the history of undocumented immigration to the United States is not exclusive to individuals from Latin American, no matter what their ethnic origin. The history of anti-immigrant laws that specifically targeted individuals of Asian origin inevitably led to illegal immigration and present circumstances with regards to the U.S. immigration system perpetuate this issue till this day. In the next session I will discuss three individuals from two organizations whose jobs involve giving a voice to and working with undocumented Asian American communities.

CHAPTER III: THE HANA CENTER AND NAKASEC

The HANA Center, located in Chicago's Albany Park is a bit removed from the areas of Chicago I have spoken about in the previous section. It is North of Humboldt Park, the Lower and Near West Side, and it is far North from Armour Square, home of Chicago's Chinatown. However, it is geographically closer to the Edgewater, Lincoln Square and Uptown areas of Little Saigon areas historically known to be homes to incoming Asian immigrants. The HANA Center itself consists of a large brick concrete building, sitting at the calm corner of a residential area but just a few blocks away from a busy intersection. Across it is a large park, where one can find many of the area's inhabitants walking their dogs and chatting with their friends.

My analysis of this organization focuses first on the HANA Center's website, where I will dive into the layout and the type of information it offers. Afterwards I will continue on to the interviews of two key individuals in different but equally important sectors of the organization, and another from a sister organization.

HANA Center Website Analysis

The HANA Center's website serves as one of the organization's first point of contact for potential clients, donors, and anyone else interested in the organization. Therefore, the information presented on this webpage would need to do its best to adequately portray its goals, history, triumphs, and any information on its webpage that potential clients or community members might find interesting or important. It along with word of mouth and to some extents social media presence are important in spreading the word about resources an organization might offer. Although I came across the HANA Center's social media profile first, the website offered a more in depth and detailed description of the type of work that they did. Their social media page

might have offered resources in Spanish due to its connection to other community organizations, but it was only through their website that I was able to see the extent to which they offered resources to a Spanish speaking population.

The HANA Center's webpage consists of a moving banner, with a changing list of events, job opportunities, upcoming workshops, and any financial aid deadlines that anyone seeking aid might want to be aware of. Prominent on the webpage is the phrase in Korean, HANA means "One" the significance of which I will explain later. Underneath is a small paragraph describing the HANA Center's mission statement, expressing the desire to "empower Korean American and multi-ethnic immigrant communities" (The HANA Center, n.d.). Below that, in bold, is where the "Get Support," "Sign Up," and "Get Involved" buttons are. Scroll further down to the bottom of the page, and you find the address of the HANA Center, relevant phone numbers, the "Get Support" and "Donate" buttons once again as well as the organization's social media links, and the option to sign up to their newsletter. The website itself is made up of mostly a white background with yellow, red, navy blue, and yellow accents, all of which are also on the HANA Center's logo. On the upper left-hand side of the top-most part of the website, above a small version of the HANA Center logo, are the language options: English, Korean, and Spanish, each represented by the United States, Korean, and Mexican flag. This was one of the first things that caught my attention when accessing the webpage.

The "History and Community" subheading under the "Who We Are" main tab gives a brief description of the two organizations that merged to become the HANA Center in 2017. One of the informants mentioned the name of the organization as symbolically significant to the goals of the HANA Center as well as a connection to its origins. Both organizations were founded in

the 20th century, and each had a history of serving the Korean immigrant community in the area as the years went on. The “What We Do” heading, has subheadings describing the community workshops offer opportunities to learn English, as well as workshops on immigration issues and resources for fair housing. The other headings are “Home,” “Who We Are,” “Get Involved,” “Newsroom,” and “Donate.” The HANA Center also speaks to and promotes civic engagement and community organization, giving information about the organization’s current and past campaigns as well as explaining the importance of civic participation and the power of advocating for community. The page also includes a video detailing one of the campaigns and a series of rotating images demonstrating these campaigns. The last section on this page discusses the importance of coalition in relation to this civic engagement and community organization and also gives a list of some of the other organizations they partner with. One of these organizations is the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium or NAKASEC. NAKASEC shares many of the same goals as the HANA Center, that is, a goal to expand Korean American grassroots and voting power, develop and support a new generation and support a new generation of youth and immigrant leaders, and solidify as a movement organization (NAKASEC, n.d.). The other subheadings also offer information about immigrant family support, immigration and legal services, senior resources, and youth involvement.

The section “Who We Are” of the HANA Center’s website proved the most important in figuring out the goals of organization, with “Mission & Values” offering a look at the principles the HANA Center wishes to promote and follow. As this part of the website states, the HANA Center strives to “Empower Korean American and multi-ethnic immigrant communities through social services, education, and community organizing...” (The HANA Center, n.d.). Its vision

includes seeing racial, social, and economic justice for people and its values include strengths-based approaches, human rights, togetherness, comprehensive and offerings (The HANA Center, n.d.). Significant to the descriptions of these values include a focus on togetherness, which stresses the sharing of struggle and the need for people to work together. This, in a way, promotes that sense of oneness that the name of the organization also alludes to. While this in and of itself does not demonstrate solidarity and coalition building between inter-ethnic and inter-racial groups, it does point to the intention for this to be the case, making it explicit that it is a goal for the organization. The explicit use of this statement offers an insight into the organization's goals.

The trajectory of the HANA Center, from an organization that began in promoting the rights and interests of an expanding Korean immigrant community in Chicago, to an organization that continues this legacy and also seeks to aid not only other Asian immigrant and Asian American groups, but also immigrant communities from other countries follows Dina Okamoto's model of boundary shifting that Asian American (and Latino) communities experienced living in the United States (2014). Okamoto's work explores the way in which coming to the United States molds the identity formation of Asian immigrant groups, bringing people of different ethnicities, who speak different languages and with extensive histories of animosity towards each other, into one singular category. She, however, focuses more on the creation of panethnicity, in which ethnic groups relax and widen their boundaries to include broader grouping and identity. According to Okamoto, it is when groups start to share a collective history, build identities and institutions across ethnic or cultural boundaries, that panethnicity forms (Okamoto 2014, 2).

Okamoto begins by explaining the durability of ethnic boundaries in the United States before 1968. She points to the ways in which white employers sought to pit Asian and other immigrant groups against each other, utilizing the threat of exclusion and replacement. The existing antagonisms between the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrants to name a few, were detrimental to the creation of cross-ethnic alliances. The exclusion acts of the 19th century only aggravated this already tenuous inter-ethnic relationship. The social changes of the 1960s helped ease these tensions, the history of which I described in an earlier section of this paper and helped pave the way for an Asian American movement (2014, 27). I would also go on to say that along with this, panethnic movements allowed for alliances between Asian Americans and other groups such as Black Americans and Latinos, as can be seen in the HANA Center.

The HANA Center's website content further demonstrates the effects of the panethnic movement that took place after the 1960s in the demographics of their staff members. Many of their staff are Asian American, but not all are Korean American, furthermore, many are also Latino and have in their title "bilingual." One of the reasons this organization caught my attention, primarily had to do with the outright inclusion of a Spanish translation of all of the website's information. While welcome centers such as the HANA Center do not exclude anyone from their services, the direct inclusion of the ability to view the information in Spanish, the presence of the little Mexican flag alluding to the Spanish language, in a sense actively invites Spanish speaking populations. It says to the people who may come across the website that there is the possibility of Spanish speakers at this organization and for recent arrivals this signals that they are welcome to seek assistance in this space.

While I hoped to interview various different staff members of the HANA Center, both Asian American and Latino, I was fortunate enough to speak to two key members of the HANA of this community organization. These two informants offered a wealth of insight about what it means to not only work at an immigration welcome center in Chicago, but also to work at the HANA Center in particular. It was also through them that I had the opportunity to speak to a director at NAKASEC, who also worked in the building, and offered key amounts of information about the activism being enacted to push for the rights of undocumented Asian Americans and Latinos.

Interviews

Informant 1

I had been in contact with this informant whom I will call Lily, via email for a few months or so before I finally managed to meet with her in person. The HANA Center has an option on their website to contact them via an email style messaging system. I input my name, email address, and the topic of my inquiry in a small box followed by an introduction. I did not know who would be responding, but I introduced myself as a graduate student in anthropology who wanted to know about Asian and Latinos working together to advocate for undocumented immigrant rights. I elaborated my request by mentioning how I had looked through their website and noticed that they had a lot of resources in both Korean and Spanish and how it had caught my attention. Lastly, and I believe most importantly, I included that I am a DACA recipient, and I had both personal and academic interest in knowing about the experiences of others who are undocumented/ dacamented. Our email exchange consisted of about thirteen emails, with me

checking back every week or two, at times I wondered if I was going to be able to meet with Lily, but my persistence paid off.

I managed to meet with Lily on March 3rd of this year, sometime in the late morning. Upon entering the HANA Center there was a space to my left that led to another office, but the rest of the entrance hallway opened up to a few tables full of plants. To my right there was a reception area with a woman sitting behind a glass panel, I greeted her and asked for Lily. She came out of an office not too far from the main reception area and I entered a room with four large desks, each with their own monitors. Lily was situated on the desk right of the door. She offered me a chair, I sat, and then she offered me some tea which I took. Our conversation began with her thanking me for making it all the way to Chicago and mentioned that a lot of people contact them, many of them students, seeking the opportunity to interview someone, but that the communication usually trails off. I thanked her for continuing the email correspondence with me, as it had dragged on for a while. From here the interview officially began with her asking me about how I came across the topic of my thesis. This is a question that I would later find to be common among the people that I interviewed. I mentioned to Lily that, growing up was an interesting experience for me, because I found community and friendship among my Asian American peers, but upon finding out about my undocumented status, that felt more like the dividing factor than our different cultures, especially because I was told not to disclose this part of myself. Lily listened attentively as I spent a few minutes trying to explain how these experiences had given rise to my eventual thesis topic.

After my long introduction, I was able to ask her about her experiences and roles at the HANA Center. Lily, an outreach coordinator, told me that she was new to the HANA Center,

only working there for a little more than a year at the time that I interviewed her, but that her job ranged from giving people tours of the building to discussing the history of the organization. I proceeded to ask her about the organization's goals, what do they do for the community. Lily stated that the organization offers social services for immigrants, refugees, and low-income individuals but that their main community are people of color, so Korean Americans, Asian Americans more broadly, Hispanic individuals, and other immigrants. She also stated that fighting for systemic change is a big part of the work that they do. As an organization advocating for immigration policies.

From here the conversation pivoted to discussions about the history of the HANA Center. Lily mentioned that as an organization, the HANA Center has the services immigrants might need when they first arrive, which include, legal, social, and public benefits as well as English language education, as well as other types of education and housing assistance. This is where Lily began telling me about the history of the HANA Center as the amalgamation of two separate organizations which merged in 2017. The first being the Korean Social Service Association, which was built in the 1960s and focused mostly on social services. The second being the Korean Cultural Center, which focused on keeping Korean culture alive and present in the community. Lily stated that one of the reasons the two organizations merged had to do with an understanding that the two organizations would work better as one. That is where the name of the center was born, Hana means "one" in Korean. It is a theme that I would continue to notice as this thesis developed. Lily made a good point when she mentioned that as an organization that advocates for people, she realized how important it is that practical needs are met, and when helping with these needs, is when real change is made. Lily told me about what the organization

does, in and of itself incredibly important, but I wanted to know more about the reasons behind the merging of the two organizations, and what led up to it. She told me that since she is the one who gives the volunteers orientations, this is exactly the type of thing she has to discuss.

After a long pause, Lily stated that The LA Uprising was the reason, the catalyst for the merging of the organizations. It took us conversing more for me to realize that The LA Uprising and The LA Riots were the same thing. The LA Uprising took place primarily in southern Los Angeles California in 1992, at a time where relationships between the city's Black, Latino, Asian American and white population were increasingly full of tension (Tobar 2022). One of the catalysts for the riots included the beating of Rodney King by four Los Angeles police officers. Just a few weeks later, a Korean woman named Soon Ja Du shot and killed Latasha Harlins, a Black teenager. Soon Ja Du was charged with voluntary manslaughter, but given no jail time, it was soon after this that the public learned that the police officers responsible for Rodney King's beating were found not guilty. The occurrence of these two events in tandem, combined with the pre-existing tensions present in the city, led to the Uprising (Dirks, 2022). The aftermath of these events added to the tensions between the Black and Asian American communities, since for many Black Americans, what had happened to King and Harlins, happened to them because they were Black (Dirks, 2022). Kitano and Daniels also add that it demonstrated the ways in which Korean Americans were not seen as "America enough" by the media who reported on the case (129). Lee elaborates on the way that the media had a hand in pitting the two communities against each other, painting the incident as an Asian-Black conflict and pinned them against each other, and as the main focus of the Uprising, but they were not the only group that took part in the riots. The riots brought out in people grievances they already had with the way they were

treated, this goes for both the Korean Americans and Black Americans (Lee 2015, 375). Lily pointed to these uprisings as pivotal in the relationship between Asian Americans and the Black community. Further emphasizing the role of a corrupt police force and policing of the Black people in the area. Lily followed by stating that it was bad Du Soon Ja shot Latasha, that racism played a part, but there were also issues occurring in Los Angeles that were targeting Korean businesses which caused them to react as well. Lily ended by saying that after a while the Korean American community realized that it was better to organize with other communities of color because they had more to lose if they worked against each other. The events of the LA Uprising clearly had an effect on Korean American communities all across the United States, as Lily describes the effect it had on the Korean Americans of Chicago. It is possible that the separation created by Chicago's distance to Los Angeles, combined with Chicago's history of segregating its people, offered the Korean Community in the area to develop their own strategy to creating relationships among the city's populations.

While much of what Lily recounted to me is a quick summary of the events that occurred that day, I got a sense that she pointed to the corruption of Los Angeles within the police department, the pre-established racial animosity on the part of the police, and the tensions between the Black and Asian communities that escalated things. There were tensions but there was also coalition building, the reverberations of what occurred in Los Angeles made their way to Korean American communities across the country, including Chicago. The community there heard about what happened and wanted to do something about it. This event, Lily states, is when Korean Americans started organizing with other communities of color.

Lily continues by introducing the Fix 96 Campaign, she stated that this was a campaign under the Clinton administration that attempted to take away the rights of immigrants. This prompted concerned immigrants from Chicago and get together to start the Cultural Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (KCC) one of the HANA Center's parent organizations. This organization consisted mainly of immigrant youth from low-income backgrounds, but they were the driving force behind advocacy and organizing in the community. Organizations like KCC, according to Lily, were created by first generation Korean Americans as centers to discuss solutions to problems recent arrivals faced in Chicago as well as meet the needs of the community. These needs included: jobs, housing, childcare, and senior housing. Lily stated that the combining of KCC and Korean Social Service Association each with their prominent history of community organizing, made sense to the leaders of both communities and therefore it made sense to be able to provide the community with a holistic experience for immigrants.

Knowing the HANA Center's history proved important in order to contextualize the history of the types of resources that the HANA Center offered. I then proceeded to ask Lily, when the organization made the pivot to helping other communities that were not Korean immigrants or Korean Americans. I wanted to know if there was a particular catalyst, or if the intention was always there, but with time and resources, helping more than just the Korean American and immigrant community was possible. My intention with this question was to see if the HANA Center followed a trajectory put forth by Okamoto in which ethnic organizations open up to other communities once they are able to establish themselves and acquired enough resources to be able to help their own community. Lily explained to me that she thinks there was an intention already present in the creation of the organization. She stated that in the sixties, there

was a wave of Koreans immigrants moving to Chicago, to the area around the HANA Center, near Kimball Ave, but there were other immigrant groups moving to the area as well, and there was a realization that they were helping more than just Korean immigrants, they were helping Hmong, Filipino and other Asian immigrants.

Organizations like the HANA Center welcome new immigrants and try to offer (as many people as possible) whatever resources they can to help make their transition into living in the U.S. as manageable as possible. Access or referral to places that teach English are part of this effort. Therefore, it is reasonable for the HANA Center to offer English classes, information on housing, and other community resources that would attract other immigrants and their communities. Resources for immigrants have only grown as the need has risen, and it is probable that in the initial stages of immigration there are no established sources for any type of assistance. Therefore, immigrants go where they can. Lily continued by mentioning that they are hiring more Spanish-speaking staff, as more Latin American immigrants come to Chicago. This makes sense considering that many immigrants often come with nothing and without knowing anyone. Since there are an increasing amount of Spanish speaking people who need assistance, the need for Spanish speaking caseworkers and organizers are necessary in order to be able to help them fully. Lily also mentioned that the Korean American community in Chicago had moved away from the city center to the suburbs, but the undocumented Korean American community is large, and they too need resources. She follows this by explaining that the sources for undocumented folks that they have are mostly for Spanish-speaking individuals, but there are more undocumented immigrants arriving who need assistance.

Finally, I asked Lily about the importance of connecting to other organizations through social media. I noticed while doing research, the HANA Center's Instagram page follows various other Asian American and immigrant resource accounts and interacts with other organizations by sharing their posts. Social media is often used by organizations as well as activists to spread relevant information and to rally behind certain causes, such as the Citizenship for All Movement among others. It therefore serves as an important resource for organizations like the HANA Center to upkeep and for it to serve as a contact list of other organizations that would also rally behind specific causes. In this case, the HANA Center follows organizations like UndocuBlack, that caters to undocumented Black immigrants, and they hold events together in order to learn about each other's struggles and barriers, one of my interviewees mentioned as such. Similarly, the HANA Center also follows CASA, which is a Latino organization that focuses on advocating for Latino, immigrant, and working-class people in the mid-Atlantic region. These organizations follow and interact with each other, and from what I know about the HANA Center and UndocuBlack, they have had in person workshops.

Informant 2

I became connected with Daniel who works at NAKASEC, thanks to Lily. She had told me during our conversation that NAKASEC had their Chicago office in the same building as the HANA Center, just a floor above and that she could put me in contact with them. I agreed right away and let Lily know that I had attempted to contact someone at NAKASEC previously via email but was unsuccessful. It was soon after that she put me in contact with one of NAKASEC's higher-ups who I will name Irma. Irma and I communicated briefly over email, but after some

scheduling conflicts, she decided to put me in contact with someone who I will call Daniel, who is also a director for NAKASEC.

My conversation with Daniel took place over zoom and after a few technical difficulties, I was able to begin by asking him about NAKASEC's purpose and goals. He stated that NAKASEC is a political home for impacted immigrants, Korean American and Asian American more generally. As an organization they mostly strive for social, economic, and racial justice and they try to prioritize people's voices as well as their leadership and that some of those in with leadership positions are also DACA recipients. Daniel continued by stating that many of those who work at NAKASEC are also DACA recipients and therefore have intimate knowledge about that aspect of the immigrant experience. It was at this point that I realized that it was probable that Lily had confided in Daniel that I too was a DACA recipient looking for ways in which Asian American organizations approached the topic. I followed up by asking if immigrant rights are a big part of what NAKASEC deals with. Daniel followed by stating that immigrant rights are one of the biggest things that they deal with as well as coalition building, leadership building, and building voting power through networking. Daniel explained that NAKASEC is a nationwide organization, of which the HANA Center is a part of. The others are Hamkae Center in Virginia, WooriJuntos in Houston, Woori Center in Philadelphia, and MinKwon Center in New York-New Jersey.

My next question to Daniel had to do with coalition building and how NAKASEC takes part in that. Similarly, I had done preliminary research on the HANA Center, I also perused NAKASEC's website to gather a general idea of the organization's history. I proceeded to ask Daniel about how coalition building happens in NAKASEC. He stated that as an organization

they try to build coalition with organizations that share their values. He gave an example of how in the beginning of 2016 and 2017, they began to build a relationship with UndocuBlack.

UndocuBlack, much like the HANA Center, is an organization that makes it their goal to build community for current and formerly undocumented people of certain backgrounds, the former being for undocumented Black people, while also offering resources and advocacy. Daniel stated that the desire to help undocumented people and to learn from each other was one of the primary goals of this coalition. Together they took part in multiple virtual workshops in both 2018 and 2020, that included wellness training and advocacy. In addition, on the anniversary of the LA Uprising they got together to discuss the history of the event and to make plans so as to not have something like that happen again. Daniel stated that one of the ways they went about doing this was by building network relationships between the Black and Asian American community.

I asked Daniel to speak more on the work that NAKASEC did with UndocuBlack, but more specifically, what went into creating that coalition and how they came together. Daniel stated that the coalition came naturally, because “if you’re undocumented, you know what your struggle is.” He continued by acknowledging the difference in experience that race brings to being undocumented but adds that the struggle of being undocumented can bring people together. He continues by stating that by sharing a struggle, they can better support each other.

I followed up this question by asking Daniel about coalitions with Latino organizations in Chicago specifically. He stated that many of the organizations that they work with are Latino led and they are often the only non-Latino organization in the room. But he also states that there are also a lot of Asian American organizations that are not organizing for immigrant rights. Daniel stated that NAKASEC is part of a coalition called Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)

and out of 40 organizations that are part of that coalition, they are the only Asian American one. He stated that this lack of presence leads NAKASEC as an organization to be overlooked.

I followed up the previous question by also asking Daniel why he thought that Asian American organizations did not organize for immigration issues. He responded by admitting that the same question had crossed his mind. He said that back in 2002-2003 when he was trying to find a way to go to college, it was not easy. He was not able to find any resources in his community that offered assistance for undocumented individuals. Jacob, another one of my informants who I will discuss last, would go on reiterate this experience. Daniel would state that perhaps it was due to a fear of involving oneself in politics, stemming from the experiences in their home countries, that many Asian people did not involve themselves in politics for fear of persecution. Although he did state that with young people, this type of trauma is less pronounced, which leads the descendants of those immigrants to begin to organize. He also stated that it was the conservative mindset that came with some denominations of Christianity that affected people's motivation to organize. Daniel finished his thought by expressing hope in young people's ability to organize for immigrant's rights.

Towards the end of our conversation, we began to pivot more towards the different experience's organizations have depending on where they are located. The organizations in New York City will differ slightly from those in California, which will differ from those in Chicago, but the struggles we all share bring us together. Although we did not get the chance to talk too much about this topic, it makes sense that organizations in different parts of the country, serving communities that have had a different history of interaction than those in Chicago for instance, would approach the topic differently.

Informant 3

While with Lily's interview I got a look into the history of the HANA Center, from its beginnings to the motivations behind its core goals. With this informant who I will call Jacob, who appeared to be considerably young, perhaps in his late twenties or early thirties as I hoped to get a glimpse into how those motivations come to fruition with members of the community. My conversation with Jacob took a different turn than the one I had with Lily. I had a set of questions prepared for both, though they differed in content due to the type of information I wished to obtain from each, my conversation with Jacob was more personal in some ways as he spoke about his reasons for his activism and his experience as an undocumented person. Jacob explained how he was unable to apply for DACA when it was available due to the complicated state of his status and how that affected his worldview. We also discussed each other's backgrounds and how those influenced us and what we did respectively, activism wise and academically.

The first thing that I asked Jacob was about the progression of the organization in who it saw as its main community. He reiterated many of the things Lily said with respect to the HANA Center's history and the community of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants they served. He elaborated on this by talking about how the neighborhood of Korean immigrants that the HANA Center's predecessors served now has less Korean Americans and immigrants and many more people from other communities, among them Salvadorians, Colombians, Mexicans, and Guatemalans. He did say however that these are the people who go to the HANA Center. Therefore, the transition was natural. But he also stated that as an organization they needed to adapt to the needs of the community. And while their mission is still rooted in the Korean

American, Asian American, and multi-ethnic immigrant communities, if they were not present to serve the Asian community, there would not be an organization that would. This is also something Daniel stressed, that is, the importance of having organizations that serve Asian American communities. Jacob added to this by stating that if there is a way to help as many people as possible, then that is the best course of action. The torrential rain occurring at the time served as a good pause and segue to the next question I posed.

Jacob, being an organizer for the HANA Center, was the perfect person to ask about what goes into organizing for a cause. I asked about his experiences organizing for the HANA Center and what kinds of causes they have tackled over the years. Jacob began to work for the organization in 2018, in the midst of the Trump administration. At the time, Jacob stated, the HANA Center had gone from an organization that advocated for comprehensive immigration reform to also fighting for the DREAM Act, as that was the achievable bill people had, that they had been fighting for since 2001. Jacob went on to describe a sentiment that I have seen in other undocumented and DACAmented spaces, that when you fight for the same bill for 20 years, one that has been progressively chipped away at and became less inclusive, it eats at the morale of the people who fight for it. For context, there have been many attempts at getting rid of DACA, including then President Trump's attempt to rescind the program in 2017. Jacob shared with me that when this occurred, the entire organization felt like the DREAM Act was not enough anymore. Now, the fight is Citizenship for All, this is the framework the HANA Center has been working with ever since.

Jacob explains that the loss of DACA as a viable option for undocumented immigrants, combined with growing shift to Citizenship For All, spurred a narrative shift within the HANA

Center. He saw it firsthand, as he joined the HANA Center at around this time, and immediately took part in spreading the new framework. One of the activities he took part in, in order to spread the new message, was a “border to border” bike tour. This event consisted of a group of around fifteen people who biked from Seattle all the way to San Diego. Along the way they met with community-based organizations and allies. Jacob recounted to me that this event got a lot of news coverage and sparked a lot of conversations about coalition building and “a realization that it is not just young people that they serve, and the young people they served aren’t that young anymore.” This is true, as the first wave of DACA recipients are now in their late 20’s and early to mid-thirties. This really cements just how long this fight has been going on for and how it affects more than just the students and young people that DACA originally was meant to help. For Jacob and the HANA Center, Citizenship For All is what is important now.

Jacob also recounted how the Citizenship for All movement has multiple levels in which it takes effect. There is federal, state, local, municipal, county, and various laws and changes can be made in each to help undocumented people. The example Jacob gives is that of the efforts his and other organizations pushed for regarding undocumented peoples over the age of sixty-five and older and then forty-two and older being able to obtain health insurance. Those nineteen and younger are eligible for another type of low-income aid. I should mention that as of the time I write this, the aid for undocumented individuals that are 42 years and older will no longer be available and the aid for those sixty-five and older has been temporarily paused.

Next, I wanted to know how Jacob brought people in his Chicago community together. The HANA Center is an organization that serves a lot of people, of various backgrounds that have various needs, from low-cost health insurance to asylum inquiries. Getting Jacob’s

perspective about his time working with the HANA Center gave me an insight into and fleshed out the descriptions found on the organization's website regarding their history and motivations. It also began to answer my questions about interethnic and interracial solidarity and coalition.

After a brief interruption by torrential spring rain, I proceeded to ask Jacob about how he and by extension the HANA Center as a whole, bring people together from the various backgrounds that the HANA Center serves, to fight for something that will eventually affect them all, in particular immigration issues. Jacob began by stating that they need to identify that there is a need for such services in the organization. That there is a need for organizations to put together social bring service programs and a need for outreach and a conscious understanding of what people's needs are, this he said is what informs the work he and others do at the HANA Center. The needs that arise from their situation as low-income individuals or refugees and undocumented immigrants are due to a larger broken system, and this needs to be recognized. The resources given by the HANA Center, like the social service programs, are the first step, these provide people with their basic needs, but it is organizing and advocacy where getting people together happens and where conversations happen between people. In addition, Jacob also stated that the stories and experiences of the organizers are also important in inspiring people to act, as the experiences of hardships become tangible to people that may not be familiar with them. By sharing their own stories, organizers open up new possibilities for creating change that became available.

Jacob emphasizes that bringing people together through their stories creates an avenue for people to begin to understand each other's experiences, as it helps in humanizing each other. But I also had to ask what happens when people do not want to listen to these stories and continue to

refuse to acknowledge another's experience. Jacob admitted that there are a lot of barriers, but that people had more in common than they realized. The prejudices, internalized racism, homophobia, and the like work against us but they also molded us to be who we are, for better or worse. Jacob stated that it is left to those in positions like his, whose job is to do outreach, to meet people where they are at. So therefore, the best way to get through to people are by talking. He said that is what they do at the HANA Center, they get people together, and they talk. They demonstrate a model of how it works, that they first establish that there are individuals in specific circumstances that exist, like those that are undocumented, and that has its set of struggles associated with it that are very real. And the person that they speak to, if they are also undocumented, they can see that it is an issue that they have in common, and that they understand, perhaps not all of the things that they are going through, but they understand at least some of it. Being able to demonstrate support is also important, as an organization, the HANA Center needs to be able to demonstrate that they can support people in the things that they need. However, Jacob mentions that for him and the organization, the ability to be able to help people improve the material conditions of their lives is the most important. He includes one of the things that they are currently fighting for is to adjust the type of driver's licenses that undocumented people have, which are different than those given to citizens and green card holders in the state of Illinois. The cards are visibly different and serve as a type of visible identifier that the people are not citizens and marks them as other. This is just one example, along with making sure they have stable housing and medical insurance among other necessities.

Despite his emphasis on working together and listening to each other, Jacob recognizes that even though people have similar life experiences, they might still not see eye-to-eye, he

gives the example of Korean people that hold prejudices against non-Koreans and the same thing could be said about any group of people. Working together in a community setting does not mean that they will get along. Nor are they going to immediately recognize that their situations are more similar than different. So, the best thing that can be done is to have conversations and education about topics that are relevant. Jacob points to introducing questions such as, “why do you feel the way you do?” or “Why do you think that?” in order to get to the possible root of why someone might hold those prejudices and hopefully work through them together.

My next question to Jacob had to do with examples of workshops that the HANA Center has either organized or taken part in that has brought the surrounding community together. Jacob mentioned that there is a toolkit that the HANA Center utilizes called the Asian American Racial Justice toolkit, which was created by Asian American serving organizations from across the country. Jacob explained that because there are so many ways of experiencing the world, whether it be through gender, class divisions, disability, sexuality, gender issues, it is all stuff we need to consider when talking to people. Furthermore, because the HANA Center began as an organization that served their surrounding community first, recognizing that there will be people with prejudices based on the list above in the community, and a certain level of understanding will be necessary. Jacob mentioned that in his work he has taken part in conversations where people do not meet eye to eye on a lot of issues, but he stated that at the end of the day, for his organization, the end goal is to ensure that people’s humanity is still being honored. Although he states this became complicated due to different understandings of what is mean to be. However, Jacob mentioned that they do hold bi-weekly meetings, to stay connected with the community.

The following question had to do with the HANA Center's interaction with Latino organizations in the area as well as any type of coalitions and connections they may have. One of the things I asked my informants had to do with how often The HANA Center worked with Latino organizations in the area. What I have come to learn paints a complex web of connections that paint an interesting picture of what it means to be one of the few Asian organizations that serve undocumented Asian Americans. Jacob mentioned that as an organization, the HANA Center is part of multiple coalitions and that this is due in part because of power, the power of people to be exact. Jacob further explained that because immigrants are from all over the world, they work in conjunction with immigrant serving organizations from all across the state. One such organization is the Illinois Coalition for Immigrants and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), where they as an organization serve on their Action Council. The Action Council consists of organizations that take part in grassroots organizing while the organization at large works to offer immigrants distinct types of social and legal services. Jacob went on to say that ICIRR is an organization that serves a multitude of people, and it is one of the largest in the states. I should note that ICIRR has a list of partnering organizations on their webpage, and the HANA Center is one of the few that began and continue to be Asian American centered. A vast majority of the other organizations are either Latino founded or Latino-centric. Therefore, it seems that due to the prevalence of Latino organizations in the area, it benefits the HANA Center to work with them.

I also asked Jacob about something that I had spoken about with Daniel, a director NAKASEC when I interviewed him. I had asked Daniel, what his thoughts were about the representation of Asian-American organizations and the amount of representation in the

Immigrant Rights Movement. The question stemmed from what I learned in Kathy Rim's article. This article was written in 2006, and much has transpired since then, but I wondered if some of the points Rim brought up in her article still felt relevant to organizing for immigrant rights today. Daniel expressed a feeling that Asian American organizations were left out of the immigrant rights movement to an extent. I asked Jacob about his thoughts regarding the idea that Asian American organizations did not have as much representation in the sphere of activism and advocacy in the immigrant rights movement for undocumented individuals.

Jacob began by stating that they just had to work with what they had, in reference to how undocumented Asian Americans are a minority. He stated that because of this, there is less representation and because there are fewer undocumented Asian Americans than undocumented Latinos few people know or understand that that is a reality some Asian Americans face. He followed this by saying that despite this, the HANA Center, and other organizations like it, do their best to make the undocumented Asian American and Asian immigrant experience known, because if they do not, no one will know that that it is a reality the Asian American and immigrant community faces. Jacob follows this by stating that even amongst the Spanish speaking population of undocumented folks, there is at least a media system that talks about them where their issues are discussed. Jacob explains that in his experience, the Korean community does not discuss undocumentedation, that there is a prominent sense of there being at taboo about speaking about one's undocumented status with people and that is why the HANA Center does what they can to make people aware that this is something important to talk about in the Korean community.

I asked Jacob if he could speak more about that taboo. I also asked Daniel about this taboo because it is something I have experienced within my own community to a certain extent. Jacob explained that the model minority myth coupled with the Korean American diasporic experience influenced the taboo associated with undocumented. He further explained that the idea wanting to be perceived as experiencing excellence both on the part of the parent and child, working hard and achieving important things, proved to be incompatible with being undocumented. In this sense, the idea of being undocumented does not fall in line with the model minority myth because people want to be seen as “doing it the right way” and that all that they achieved that by working hard and going through the traditional avenues of upward mobility.

Jacob also mentioned that there is a fear aspect to it as well. He did not elaborate on this, but he did say that this fear aspect is something felt across communities. The fear that comes with being undocumented in many ways has to do with the uncertainty of one’s position within society. There is fear regarding deportation and fears around how one will be perceived and consequently treated. This is all seen with the expectation that disclosing one’s undocumented status can bring nothing good. But Jacob goes on to explain that in his experience being at the HANA Center, disclosing one’s status can lead to community and opportunities that can make life better. Jacob mentioned that you learn things about how to maneuver through the world that can make things easier for you by getting to know others that have been in the same situation for longer, there are also a network of support systems that being vocal about your experience can bring you. To Jacob, again, there is power in the community, and it is a power you only really get from sharing your story and meeting people who care about similar issues, which is how things get done. Choosing whether or not to disclose one’s status is a deeply personal decision for some.

Jacob attested to this with the example he gave of a co-worker of his, who despite the welcoming environment of the HANA Center, he chose for the most part to keep his status to himself, due to him having family members who are openly hostile to undocumented individuals. Jacob stated that scenarios like this make him sad because opening up about these experiences can also offer the ability to create community.

I also wanted to know about those, like me and my family, who are hesitant to disclose their status with people for whatever reason. Jacob affirmed that there are caveats to situations, that there is a lot that goes into whether or not someone is in the position, either physically or mentally to disclose something so personal because while there are more support systems for individuals, the reality is that not everyone will be supportive and there will be situations that prove to be dangerous. Jacob mentioned that one of his coworkers, they do not feel safe disclosing their story because they have family members that are openly hostile towards undocumented individuals and have threatened to call ICE on them. In this way, people are prevented from telling their stories, and Jacob finds that heartbreaking because to him, people telling these stories are what is necessary to push the country to do better.

However, Jacob also follows that by stating that sometimes stories are not enough, because there are so many things that people deserve that they do not have. He is speaking in particular about undocumented individuals because they are the ones that have the most to lose. When it comes to more outspoken forms of demanding rights, such as protests, undocumented people have more to lose from being in a protest where the police get involved. Oftentimes they cannot do much aside from telling their stories or do something protected by free speech,

because the second they go outside those realms, after arrest and imprisonment, deportation becomes a probable outcome.

CONCLUSION

A lot of the historical research present about early Chinese immigration to the Americas, but in particular the United States and their subsequent treatment, offer an insight into the way that future immigration laws have and continue to affect new populations of immigrants that came after. Laws like the Chinese Exclusion Act created environments and stereotypes for not only the Chinese immigrants and their descendants, but also for the Japanese, Indian, Korean, and Filipinos among other groups that immigrated afterwards. While each group's relationship to the United States differed and many groups did not and do not see eye to eye, this did not stop xenophobic sentiments from taking hold in the United States. The legacy of excluding people in would continue in the 20th century, for later groups of immigrants that decide to make their way over to the United States. These laws create their own stereotypes about the people they wish to exclude. The context, time period, and countries of origin of the people might be different, but in many ways the sentiments are the same and the laws created to exclude lead to consequences that broadly resemble each other. The legacy of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the first laws to fully exclude one group of people from the United States, created the nation's first undocumented immigrants and although they would be the first, they would not be the last.

The stereotype of the undocumented Mexican, the undocumented Latino immigrant who comes to the United States to depend on the government and take people's jobs, hurts more groups of people than meets the eye. It hurts the Mexican immigrant community by glossing over the reality of being undocumented in the United States, it makes Mexican Americans who have resided in the U.S. for generations "forever-foreigners" to some extent, and it completely erases the realities of undocumented Americans from other countries such as those from China,

Korea, and the Philippines to name a few. There are organizations that help undocumented individuals and through their hard work, various laws have passed that offer undocumented students the ability to go to college and work legally via Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and the California Dream Act, with many other states creating their own iterations of the latter. Many of those who helped push for these laws were undocumented Mexican Americans, Guatemalan Americans, Chinese Americans Filipino Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and the list goes on. These people undoubtedly worked together to fight for their own rights and for the rights of other undocumented people but the degree to which they worked together in different parts of the country is something that requires further study. Different cities, and the communities of Latinos and Asian Americans in each, are bound to have their own ways of interacting based on the unique history of each group in the area.

Finally, the HANA Center is a specific organization in Chicago, a city with a history of segregated neighborhoods, that no doubt influenced the relationship of its inhabitants to each other. Unlike Los Angeles, in a state known for its history of the cultural intermixing between its Asian American and Asian immigrant population as well as Latino and Latin American population, in schools, neighborhoods and the like. Chicago's Asian American and Latino population existed both together and separate by virtue of its history of segregation. Chicago has a different history of inter-group strife that Los Angeles does and undoubtedly that affects the way its organizations maneuver to help their communities. The history of the HANA Center demonstrates an Asian American organization adapted to the needs of the community it served as the community slowly changed. The HANA Center offers resources to Korean Americans and immigrants, to Asian Americans more broadly, and also to the growing Spanish speaking

population of the neighborhood in which the organization resides. The organization itself, as well as its leaders and allies have considered interactions between groups from other parts of the country and adapted their organization to fit their goals, to continue to be a Korean American organization, to assist undocumented Asian Americans, and to offer help to those that need it. Individuals such as Jacob, Lily and Daniel all spoke to the goals of the organization to help those that needed it and to offer Asian Americans, and undocumented Asian Americans a community they can go to when necessary.

The experience of being undocumented, of having to apply to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals when it was open, of figuring out what to do if you do not qualify, and especially now, for those you never had the opportunity to apply because new enrollment was put on pause by a new presidential administration, all of that creates a community of people that despite their differences whether that be country of origin, language, and ethnicity, it has the capability of bringing them together.

I do not think that I necessarily answered how this organization brings people together, because the issue is more complex. What I discovered was how a few members of one organization, and its partners, hope to be able to bring people together and hope to assist people, through sharing stories and hoping that people recognize the experiences and hardships in each other. Both Daniel and Jacob's perspective and experiences are valuable because they are intimately familiar with the struggles of both the documented and undocumented experience and they have shared their stories with the hope of helping others, But Jacob is just one person and Danile is just one person in their respective organizations. These organizations may also have other individuals who might have similar experiences to them, and each plays a part in

attempting to move towards bringing undocumented people more rights. The topic of this research lends itself to further study, with more participants, spending longer periods of time in each organization and getting in contact with prominent Latino organizations that help undocumented students. The historical background of the history of undocumented immigration in the United States is important for context, but it is also important to see what organizations are doing at the grassroots level. The story of the HANA Center and to a certain extent NAKASEC and the people who work there, and the other organizations they work with, whether that be Latino organizations or not, gives a glimpse into the way coalition movements and instances of solidarity begin to take shape, that is with people getting together and telling their stories.

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