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# Working together: multicultural collaboration in the interfaith immigrant rights movement

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

**WORKING TOGETHER:  
MULTICULTURAL COLLABORATION IN THE INTERFAITH  
IMMIGRANT RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

by

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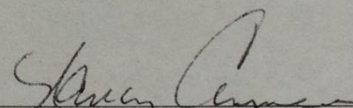
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

2014

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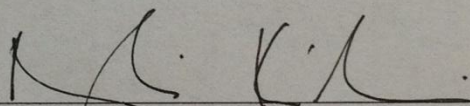
First Reader



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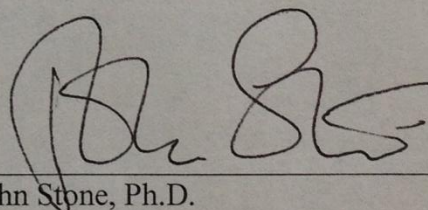
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*for our Beloved Community*  
*and to our little ones, LC&C, you fill the world with joy!*

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Boston University/Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2014

Major Professor: Nancy T. Ammerman, Professor of Sociology

**ABSTRACT**

In 2006, millions of Immigrant Rights Movement (IRM) activists and allies stomped through the streets of cities throughout the United States. Attracting a diverse array of participants, the IRM includes immigrants and non-immigrants and people from varying religious and non-religious traditions. This dissertation focuses on the social cohesion as an element of the collective identity of this multicultural and multi-faith movement. Taking the IRM in San Diego County as a critical case, this study included data from forty-nine extensive formal interviews with movement participants in sixteen organizations, along with countless informal conversations during participant observation in over two hundred activist-organized events from April 2006 until August 2008.

By focusing on movement narratives, frames, and patterns of interaction, this study finds that stories of change, a progressively inclusive moral framework, and what I call "multicultural activist etiquette" serve as unifying mechanisms in the IRM. In stories of change, we hear how activists articulated the right to migrate and advocate for worker rights through shared narratives of agitation and hope-generating stories of collective action. A shared sense of injustice and collectively focused movement goals are

informed by a belief system about how the world ought to operate that is located at the ideological intersection between religious and non-religious. An inclusive and humanitarian moral framework provided the common ground upon which diverse activists organize, but this progressive moral framework was differently legitimated by the diverse religious and non-religious traditions of the activists. They agreed that all people are inherently equal, and everyone ought to care for one another, upholding an emphasis on marginalized immigrants. This over-arching moral framework moved beyond multicultural and multi-faith rhetoric and helped guide and affirm the way activists interacted in meeting spaces. Together, they constructed a code of collaboration, the multicultural activist etiquette, that facilitated equality within organizational processes, in an emotionally and physically secure meeting space, while focusing on productivity toward movement goals. Finally, this study recognizes immigrant activists as "rule-changers," agents of change collaborating to improve their own quality of life in the U.S. It thus offers an alternative to current perspectives on immigrant assimilation into American society.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFSC.....	American Friends Service Committee
BA.....	Border Angels
FCLR.....	Frente Contra Las Redadas
ICWJ.....	Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
IRC.....	San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium
JOB.....	Justice Overcoming Boundaries
NMN.....	No Match Network
NSM.....	New Sanctuary Movement
RRC.....	Raza Rights Coalition
SDF.....	San Diego Friends
SSP.....	Si Se Puede
UDW.....	United Domestic Workers
UHFSD.....	United for a Hate Free San Diego

## Chapter 1 Introduction

An Aztec dancer blows through a conch shell as drums beat rhythmically. Large feathers atop colorful head-pieces gracefully flutter up and down, back and forth in the air, painting it with ruby reds, vibrant blues, greens, yellows, and oranges. One's heartbeat takes on the rhythm of the drums and the pounding of bare feet. Three bilingual, female religious leaders stand together on the altar of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego, the honorable seat of the Bishop. First generation Mexican immigrant, Reverend Mary Moreno-Richardson, is the Director of the Hispanic Ministry for the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego. Second generation Italian immigrant Madre Patricia Andrews-Callori is an Episcopal Priest and leader in Justice Overcoming Boundaries and the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. Rabbi Laurie Coskey is a Reform Jewish Rabbi and Executive Director of the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice. Together, they welcome a church filled with a diverse array of faith leaders, mainstream and alternative media persons, academics, lawyers, artists, church parishioners, and local community activists--all invited to celebrate mass during the regular Spanish-speaking mass services as a peaceful, nonviolent, interfaith, and publicly broadcast protest against the immigration system. Attendees stand in solidarity within the Cathedral pews. They represent many worlds, often widely separate, but they meet harmoniously as one this Sunday morning. The traditional 1:00pm Spanish language mass is now a bilingual affirmation of the New Sanctuary Movement (NSM). Together,

they seek humane and comprehensive immigration reform—a call reverberating beyond this church community and these four walls to the greater public.

The New Sanctuary Movement, part of the larger Immigrant Rights Movement (IRM), was created to serve as a last resort for immigrants threatened with deportation due to their undocumented immigration status.<sup>1</sup> In the post 9/11 context of the U.S., where fear is inflamed and homeland security is top priority, immigration policies are not only restrictive, but have resulted in a backlogged system that is less than realistic for newcomers. Amid growing evidence of rapid globalization that penetrates national boundaries, people are moving across national borders regardless of whether immigration policies can keep up. Today, rather than fleeing the threat of death as a result of political tension, undocumented immigrants follow the demand for labor and family reunification, often risking their lives to flee from places of economic stagnation and decline. They seek a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families in the U.S., but at high costs.

Immigrant rights activists in San Diego County emphatically declare that the current immigration system is broken with unrealistic sanctions that neglect the dignity of each human being. Activists proclaim that while the threat of death may not be immediate for most economic refugees, the human need for survival and family preservation pulsates deeply for the majority of new immigrants. For this reason, activists attempt to provide shelter, spiritual support, education, empowerment,

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<sup>1</sup> Sanctuary has been used for centuries to create a “safe space” in a sacred place, often inside the walls and protection of a church. In the 1980s, many churches committed themselves to provide sanctuary from the

leadership training, and legal and financial resources to immigrants seeking their help, while also organizing to effect social and political change. In an interview, Reverend Mary explained that the New Sanctuary Movement, among other immigrant rights efforts, “shows the church as a *symbol* in this whole immigration issue of *standing up* for the immigrants’ rights.” She went on to say, “I really believe that once it’s over and I’m standing in front of our Lord, He’s going to be saying you’re no longer an American or a Mexican, but you continue to be a Christian, and that’s what you’ll be judged on.”

Poetry and prayers, read by a young girl and by Enrique Morones, Catholic activist and founder of Border Angels nonprofit organization, highlighted the plight of current immigrants during this unconventional mass. Everyone in the pews was then invited to the table and welcomed to participate in open communion, an invitation included in St. Paul’s Spanish Mass bulletin: “*Quienesquiera que sean y dondequiera que estén en el camino de fe, favor de entender que están invitados a recibir y el pan y el vino hecho santo.*” “Whoever you are and where ever you find yourself on your journey of faith, please know you are all invited to receive the bread and wine made holy.” Rabbi Laurie Coskey, whose organization stands by their saying that “All religions believe in justice,” demonstrated her solidarity with the Immigrant Rights Movement, showing that religious people and leaders of distinct faith traditions do in fact work together for immigrant rights. She explained, “The purpose [of the NSM] is really to highlight the fact that immigrants are the backbone of our nation, and that we need to create laws that welcome them rather than push them into the shadows” (Berestein, 2007). This national coalition of IRM activists provides support and often shelter to undocumented

immigrants and makes the stories of those immigrants public in an effort to promote comprehensive and humane immigration reform as part of the larger Immigrant Rights Movement.

The NSM service concluded with an invitation for activists to step onto the altar where they were blessed on their journey with the courage to do what is right and just. Following them, the film crews and journalists documenting the event were invited to approach the altar for a blessing that encouraged their accurate representation of the IRM.

With its remarkable array of religious leaders, symbols, and rituals, this event exemplified both the cultural diversity and the unity of commitment typical of the IRM in San Diego County. This social movement has attracted allies whose differences might normally have kept them apart. There are members from unions, nonreligious community organizations, and an array of faith traditions. In an attempt to create a more welcoming and just community, first and second generation Mexican immigrant activists partnered with nonimmigrant activists in faith-based, interfaith-based, and secular organizations as part of the larger Movement. Allies vary in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, educational levels, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, religious orientation, languages spoken, and political ideologies. Together, they joined forces to emphatically declare that the current immigration system is broken, with unrealistic sanctions that neglect the dignity of each human being. They recognized that the problems of immigrant mobility and acceptance in the U.S. context are largely structural ones that, therefore, necessitate structural solutions. Together, these diverse, collective voices in the IRM believe the current immigration policies are responsible for

gross injustices to humanity -- family separation, deaths along the border, raids and deportations, lack of labor provisions in free trade agreements. The IRM is demanding those policies include humanitarian considerations. For this reason, the primary focus of activists' efforts is mobilized around organizing political actions, educational forums, citizenship and voter registration drives, and meeting with legislators to institutionalize beneficial social and political change for immigrants and their descendents.

Such a social movement presupposes the need for collaboration and coalitions across diverse multicultural groups. However, working together amidst cultural differences has the potential to pose many challenges. Religious differences, for instance, may raise the spectre of attempts at conversion, as well as deeply conflicting moral positions relating to gay marriage, abortion, and other political issues. Furthermore, the controversial and political nature of various immigration policies such as border enforcement, military service as a pathway to legalization, guest worker programs, and providing sanctuary to undocumented immigrants may prevent interfaith and non-religious collaborators from forming coalitions in the movement.<sup>2</sup> That is, some religious organizations may be allies in the overall Immigrant Rights Movement, but they may not be completely supported in formally joining certain movement efforts.

In addition to religious diversity, this movement also includes people from disparate social locations. Activists come from varying socio-economic backgrounds,

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<sup>2</sup> Moreover, large institutions are also faced with their own controversies. For example, even though there were very public Catholic supporters of immigrant rights at the time of this research, the Roman Catholic Church was publicly addressing the numerous accounts of sexual abuse by clergy and did not take a formal position on the New Sanctuary Movement. Rather, they let the individual parishes decide for themselves whether or not to participate without any formal institutional backing.

geographic areas, and different generations, speak different languages, and have varying political persuasions. Additionally, they embody very different personalities—all of which could be fertile ground for conflict, misunderstanding, and self-segregation. However, because of and despite this diversity, they still chose to work together to advance the overall Immigrant Rights Movement.

This dissertation will move to answer questions related to how multicultural, multi-faith, and nonreligious activists form the social cohesion needed for collectively contributing to social change. It will illuminate ways in which internal diversity, especially religious diversity, functions in San Diego's Immigrant Rights Movement. In doing so, it will address the following questions: How do movement stalwarts articulate their movement goals and a unified moral framework amidst cultural diversity? How do their stories of agitation and stories of change draw on and bridge their differences? How do these multicultural and multi-faith activists interact in meeting settings focused on organizing for immigrant rights? How do they collectively accomplish the necessary tasks of any social movement – articulating injustices, setting goals, and organizing for action – when cultural and religious differences are potential obstacles?

### **Literature.**

#### **Social Movements.**

When elites desire political change, they possess an enormous advantage because they have access to valuable networks, monies, titles, and other power-generating resources necessary to effectively influence policymakers and business people in a

relatively efficient manner. They have greater access to other powerful agents and can team up with unlikely allies with similar end goals without investing too much time in long-term relationship-building. Rallying hundreds and thousands of supporters willing to maintain a long-term, even a life-long, commitment to their cause in a national social movement (SM) is not usually required. On the other hand, when members of society with limited access to such resources seek social and political change, they must unite, recruit, organize, maintain membership, appeal to third parties, and strategically pool together their resources in order to reach the negotiation table in a grassroots social movement (McAdam, 1996). As Jessica Nolan of Justice Overcoming Boundaries, an Immigrant Rights Movement respondent in this study, stated in an interview, “We’re all relationship based--that’s what organizing is; it’s based on relationships.” Together, these purposeful relationships and the actions that result from them form the social movement.

A social movement (SM) “is a sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities or cultural codes by a field of actors (organizations and advocacy networks), some of whom employ extra-institutional means of influence” (Gamson & Meyer, 1996, p. 283). Young (2002) defines national social movements similarly as “collective struggles that attempt to impact a national community’s patterns of obligations, interactions, and identifications, and that trigger resistance” (p. 663). This definition purposefully includes “life politics” and also includes challenges to any institution in addition to the government (Young, 2002).<sup>3</sup> A grassroots SM begins from the ground up

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<sup>3</sup> SM “life politics” call for personal and social change concerning “moral, lifestyle, and identity issues” (e.g., temperance, anti-abortion, anti-slavery movements) (Young, 2002, p. 661).

and derives its power from the masses, attempting to influence key decision makers to achieve its goals. The primary focus is usually to target government or private institutions in order to alter either public policy or private or corporate policy (both of which often influence each other).

While resource mobilization theory<sup>4</sup> [RMT] and political process models<sup>5</sup> are useful in their more structural and rational approaches, there is still much left to understand about social movements. According to Davis (2002), "critics have in various ways focused on the [RMT] perspective's failure to engage the cultural and symbolic processes that underlie collective action" (p. 6). In a shift toward a more cultural lens, there has been a greater emphasis placed on collective identity, ideational factors, and the internal, interactional, micro-dynamics of social movements. More than a group of people acting together, social movements also consist of "collectively constructed and shared meanings, interpretations, rituals and identities" (Davis, 2002, p. 8). Identity has been a popular point of research since the 1970s as scholars grew interested in studying identity movements and identity politics of the times (Snow, 2002, p. 264). Such examples "for which identity is accented include the feminist movement, lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender movements, the Black Power movement, [and] the disability rights movement" (Snow, 2002, p. 264).

Melucci (1995) understands collective identity as a processual approach and takes into consideration "the events in which a number of individuals act collectively [and]

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<sup>4</sup> For a fruitful discussion on resource mobilization theory, see McCarthy & Zald, 1977; McCarthy & Zald, 2001; Jenkins, 1983; Klandermans, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed explication of the political process model, see McAdam, 2010.

combine different orientations, involve multiple actors, and implicate a system of opportunities and constraints that shape their relationships" (p. 43). He argues that here, agents collectively construct their identity in relation to their environment through "interaction, negotiation, and the opposition of different orientation" (p. 44). Therefore, he refers to collective identity as "this process of 'constructing' an action system" through a "network of active relationships between the actors, who interact, communicate, influence each other, negotiate, and make decisions" (pp. 44, 45). Even though collective identity is "constructed in interaction with the broader political field, it is an "intra-movement phenomenon," and it should not be "confuse[d] ... with the publicly projected movement identity," argues Fominaya (2010, p. 379).

Moreover, Taylor and Melucci indicate that there is a critical emotional element to the definition of collective identity. In her work on the construction of a politicized collective identity, Taylor (2013) argues that "Social movements work to harness participants' emotions and to transform what might be negative or counterproductive emotions, such as depression, sadness, grief, and anger, into feelings of hope, joy, righteous indignation, efficacy, and group pride that are conducive to the formation of a politicized collective identity" (p. 46). Critical of the common scholarly practice of separating rational meaning and emotions, Melucci (1995) similarly contends, "There is no cognition without feeling and no meaning without emotion... [collective identity] is both cognitively and emotionally framed through active relationships" (p. 45). According to Melucci, "a certain degree of emotional investment, which enables individuals to feel like part of a common unity, is required in the definition of a collective identity" (p. 45).

He describes "Passions and feelings, love and hate, faith and fear" as "part of a body acting collectively, particularly in areas of social life like social movements that are less institutionalized" (p. 45).

Forming a collective identity is no easy task. According to Fominaya (2010), scholars take into account "the importance of activist interactions in which goals and identities are negotiated and internalized" and focus on "central mechanisms in the process of collective identity formation" (p. 380). Such mechanisms include "*boundary work... and maintaining commitment and forging bonds of solidarity* through the shared leadership, organization, ideologies, and rituals... *a shared collective action project...* [and] the importance of shared emotional experiences as a means of fostering and sustaining collective identification and commitment to social movements" (italicized in original p. 380). Similarly, Taylor and Whittier (1992) identified three processes of collective identity formation which also include boundary work, collective reasons for structural positions and shared claims, and a common identity as agents of political change. However, what does this mean for groups composed of members with multiple belongings and therefore, multiple cultural origins, belief systems, and ways of interacting? This study examines the social cohesion, an element of collective identity (Fominaya, 2010), of multicultural, multi-faith, and nonreligious movement activists in the IRM.

According to Snow (2002), "it is also a sociological truism that matters of identity become more problematic and unsettled as societies become more structurally differentiated, fragmented, and culturally pluralistic, loosening in some instances and

shattering in others the cultural and structural moorings to which identities were once anchored, thus giving rise to the construction, extension, negotiation, and challenge of various combinations and permutations of identities (p. 264). For instance, in Slessarev-Jamir's (2011) research on progressive religious activism in the U.S., she recognizes that immigrants and often those living in borderlands "possess multiple identities—those of their home countries and those acquired in the United States" as "people in a prolonged stage of transition" (p. 23) who are living with "limited citizenship rights" (p. 24). She describes borderlands as "places of displacement and marginality; home to many people with multilingual, multicultural identities" and as "dynamic spaces where new hybrid identities are formed because these places are also "in-between spaces, intertwined with the mainstream, dominant society, yet separated from it" (p. 24).

Through her research on Madrid's anti-capitalist network in the Global Justice Movement, Fominaya (2010) contends that the process of collective identity formation is important to all movements, including heterogeneous ones such as the Immigrant Rights Movement. Social scientists like Snow (2002) are discovering the usefulness and relevance of framing processes in diverse social movements. Snow understands that "citizens everywhere are carriers of multiple identities" (p. 266) and offers frames as a solution to bringing people together. He argues that because "most people play various roles and are associated with various social categories... some form of identity alignment work is probably most often necessary to affect mobilization" (p. 267).

The strategic use of *framing processes* is a fundamental tactic in the struggle for policy change and helps in collective identity formation. Framing processes are used in

an effort to meet the demands of each SM hurdle. Frames are conceptual tools employed to strategically *wrap* events, players (e.g., individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions), actions, and situations within a desired context. This is done by attaching particular labeling language and specific imagery in order to generate movement support.<sup>6</sup> Goffman (1974) describes frames as “schemata of interpretation” which help persons “locate, perceive, identify and label” life experiences (p. 21). The intention of *framing* is to inspire favorable reactions, responses, and behaviors from members within the social movement organization (SMO) and stakeholders outside the SMO for the purpose of establishing a collective identity and thus strengthening the movement base and further affecting change (Snow 2004; Snow et al., 1986). Snow, Rochford, Worden, and Benford (1986) argue that “by rendering events or occurrences meaningful, frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective” (p. 464). Moreover, Zald (1996) compares frames to culture by claiming that they both 1) attach meaning to objects and actions and 2) are equally strategically produced. Gamson and Meyer (1996) remind us that frames are negotiated among the collective and are dynamically transformed through constant re-negotiation. And McAdam (1996) emphasizes the vital importance of strategic framing as “the principal weapon available to the movement” (p. 340). Existing in the realm of symbols and meaning, framing

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<sup>6</sup> For example, farmworkers in the United Farmworker Movement may proffer a frame that describes their meager wages and harsh working conditions as a moral injustice that goes against God’s call for humanity and dignity for all people resulting from rich, greedy growers who care more about money than they do about people. This frame calls upon the morality, humanity, and compassion of allies. Growers may advance a counter-frame that describes farmworkers as fortunate to be here in the U.S. and have a job. Or they may attribute the low wages and working conditions to the expenses of trying to keep afloat in a highly competitive industry. The counter-frames attempt to argue that there is no real grievance and point towards the extreme influence of external pressures.

processes can be strengthened by religious language and belief systems which will be discussed in greater length in the next section.

Davis (2002) argues that although framing scholars "have recognized that the framing and alignment processes are fluid and dialectical," frames "have directed minimal attention to the internal movement processes and the situated and negotiated nature of participant engagement and solidarity" (p. 9). He makes a case for narratives and contends that the neglect of narratives as a social practice in social movement literature "is especially surprising because social movements are dominated by stories and storytelling, and narrative goes to the heart of the very cultural and ideational processes these scholars have been addressing, including frames, rhetoric, interpretation, public discourse, movement culture, and collective identity" (p. 4). Moreover, he asserts that narrative analysis helps us understand the processes of identity-building and meaning-making, and it also helps us understand "movement emergence, internal dynamics, and public persuasions" which appear to "get short shrift in movement research" (p. 4.). He explains that to understand an event and its cause "is to locate it within the temporal and relational sequence of a story... Further, once emplotted within a story, the character and function of that event in the development of the entire temporal sequence can be comprehended, and thus the meaning of the event defined" (p. 12). He acknowledges that there is a relationship between stories and the human experience and explains that stories are "cultural scripts that supply guidelines for understanding and action" or "performances that create as well as comment on prior experiences" (p. 11). Davis argues that stories are told for multiple reasons, including to "explain, to exhort, to

persuade--to communicate a perspective on what happened in the very process of telling what happened" (p. 12). In this way, sharing narratives is a social exchange where the process of articulating the past "also project[s] a sense of what will or should happen in the future" (p. 12) while "request[ing] certain responses from their audience" (p. 12). Furthermore, "Through identification and 'cocreation' of a story, the storyteller and reader/listener create a 'we' involving some degree of affective bond and a sense of solidarity: told and retold, 'my story' becomes 'our story'" (p. 19). Stories can, therefore strengthen a collective identity and "also be the basis on which social relationships are organized" (p. 19). For instance, Yukich (2010) found that "ideologies and narratives that encourage interactions with whole, concrete persons that are members of the groups that are 'othered' during boundary work... opened up the possibility for I-Thou relations... [which] represent genuine inclusion and love" (p. 193). Slessarev-Jamir (2011) also argues that "mutual storytelling breaks down the barriers of isolation that normally divide people of varied ethnic and class backgrounds from one another in a large, amorphous, urban space such as Los Angeles" (p. 89). She notes that "networks' intentionality in building relational power becomes crucial to their ability to create a common voice out of diversity" especially in areas with where people are suspicious of those in their communities (p. 89). An important part of this process, according to Slessarev-Jamir (2011), is having a space where diverse leaders can hear one another's stories. It is in these personal interactions that solidarity is created which "enables otherwise isolated, marginalized communities to collectively build the power necessary to confront public authorities as well as corporate executives" (p. 89).

While scholars generally examined collective identity to understand "the creation of collective claims, the recruitment into movements, strategic and tactical decision making, and movement outcomes" (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285) according to Polletta and Jasper, this dissertation will explore social cohesion, an element of collective identity formation (Fominaya, 2010). By analyzing narratives, frames, and behavioral interactions as they relate to the social cohesion of multicultural and multi-faith activists in the IRM, this dissertation addresses questions such as: How are shared narratives and overarching movement frames articulated by a diverse cadre with distinct cultural origins and religious traditions? What do these tell us about movement injustice, collective agency, and movement goals? What themes provide the substance for a common moral framework in a multicultural group? How do multicultural agents interact with one another while collaborating for immigrant rights? In sum, what helps hold diverse activists together in these organizing spaces?

Let us now turn to a discussion of the sociology of religion, as a valuable companion to social movement literature.

### **Religion.**

A great deal of sociological theorizing about social movements has ignored the role of religion, but that is clearly not possible in this case. Smith (1996) provides a helpful sociological definition of religion from which to start:

[Religion is] a system of beliefs and practices oriented toward the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experiences of groups of people are given

meaning and direction... These created meaning-systems are what we sometimes call 'culture,' that is, a social group's conglomeration of shared codes, norms, values, beliefs, and symbols that tell its members what to do with their lives and why. Culture gives life meaning. It orients people to the world they inhabit, providing a sense of direction and purpose... Religion, viewed sociologically, is a particular kind of cultural meaning-system, oriented toward the sacred or supernatural. Religion affords groups of people meaning and direction by providing sets of beliefs and practices grounded... in the divine, the transcendent, the eternal, the holy, the spiritual. (Smith, 1996, p. 5)

This definition functions much like the one Geertz (1966) offered when he pointed to religion as a *cultural system* that provides symbols which help society establish order, renders suffering bearable, and offers guidelines for moral action. Geertz describes religious performances (i.e. rituals) that are both "models *of* what they believe, [and] also models *for* the believing of it" (p. 29). That dual structure means that religion can be used by ruling parties to maintain order, but it can also be used by activists as unconventional forms of moral protest, as a mechanism for meaning-making, and for rendering actions purposefully aligned with a higher power.

Religion can be understood as a powerful meaning system that provides order to an individual life and explanations for suffering (Berger, 1969). Berger argues that, as meaning-makers, we socially construct our world through symbols, such as verbal and nonverbal language. As socially situated beings, everything that we put out, or *externalize*, into the world through our mental and physical efforts becomes *objectivated* as a separate entity from ourselves, over which we no longer have control. The recurring process continues as we *internalize*, or appropriate, our social environment as part of ourselves. We are, then, co-authors of culture, society, norms, meaning, and order

(Berger, 1969). When that order is legitimated through a religious meaning system, lifestyles and social structures can either be held in place or powerfully transformed (Weber, 2002; Weber, 1963). Religiously inspired leaders, such as the charismatic leaders referred to by Weber, who artistically communicate religious theodicies to explain life experiences, can become eloquent framing agents and authors of meaning through the religious interpretations they offer to inspire the masses.

Moreover, religion can provide sacred legitimation and therefore a sense of credibility from a power beyond the material world, including credible explanations for what is wrong in the world (theodicies). For example, the elite may have a “theodicy of good fortune,” legitimizing entitlement to their blessings. The poor may have a “theodicy of misfortune,” believing that they are deserving of their suffering and deferring “spontaneous consent” to the elite (Gramsci, 1971). However, times of high stratification, Weber (1963) argues, create the type of atmosphere through which persons are more likely to believe the Divine is calling them to act in response to injustices (p. 285). This may arouse a theodicy of liberation, where suffering is redefined as an injustice, and God favors action for change. Latin America’s Liberation theology,<sup>7</sup> for instance, perceives theology as contextual, salvation as this-worldly, and the poor as

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<sup>7</sup> Pope John XXIII, during the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65, refocused the Church’s priorities and legitimized the rural poor’s “little tradition.” The “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965” (from the Vatican Archives) recognized the need to balance an other-worldly focus with a this-worldly focus. It also promoted a more egalitarian stance and advocated for the human right to “a decent standard of living, education, and political participation” (Nepstad, 1996, p. 109). Latin American Bishops met in Medellin to discuss how this new Church focus would be articulated in Latin America. They advocated that people should “not be objects but agents of their own history,” “emphasizing the right to participate in the process of social change and to assume their responsibilities in civic and public life” (pp. 109-10).

preferred by God (Nepstad, 1996).<sup>8</sup> This type of belief system can motivate grassroots agency to change one's plight, do what is perceived to be God's will, and fulfill one's mission or purpose in life for the betterment of others and self. Religious activism can be extremely moving and inspiring for many believers. It can be so impressionable that many activists may feel a sense of personal satisfaction in remaining true to their divinely inspired call to live principled lives, *even* if the religious social movement does not accomplish that which it had originally set out. Some believe, if only in a small manner, that they, accompanied by the rest of society, have been changed along the journey.

Karl Marx, of course, saw religion as a socially constructed contributor to the *alienation*<sup>9</sup> and disempowerment of the laborer, hardly a likely contributor to social movement activism. According to McGuire (1987), Marx argued that religion created meaning-satisfying illusions to temporarily appease the suffering of the proletariat while contributing to fatalism and preventing any form of class uprisings (p. 192). Smilde's (1998) work on Venezuelan Pentecostals supports Marx's argument, offering an example of how religious beliefs can inspire quiescence. Smilde researched the dichotomous religious view of life as "living in the world vs. in the way of the Lord" or "living in the flesh vs. in the spirit" (p. 291). His participants generally did not believe in political

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<sup>8</sup> The urban and dominant "great tradition" is used by Nepstad (1996) to describe "orthodox teachings of religious leaders and their elite constituency" (p. 107).

<sup>9</sup> Alienation is a term used by Karl Marx to describe "a structurally imposed breakdown of the 'interconnectedness'" that is an essential part of life (Ritzer, 2000, p. 56). It is an "estrangement from" an aspect of the social world that involves feelings of "powerlessness" and "detachment" (Kohn, 1977, p. 114). Marx once wrote, "The less you express your own life, the greater is your alienated life" (Marx as cited in Hughes, et al., 2003, p. 42). The proletariat feels alienated from his product, the production process, members of his class, the capitalists, himself, and his nature as a human being because of the commodification of labor power and the working conditions forced upon him by the capitalist.

participation because of the sweeping corruption they associated with it. Political rights, according to the Venezuelan Pentecostal respondents, should be gained through the peaceful, appropriate, and orderly channels of authority (Smilde, 1998).

Many twentieth-century theorists posited that modernization would result in the privatization of religion, removing it from the contentious arena of public political action. For instance, Berger (1967) argues that in the modern context of a pluralist society which is "characterized by a market of world views, simultaneously in competition with each other" (p. 9), the once dominant religion becomes relativized with other religions. Religion as a "collective enterprise" (p. 11), dependent upon its *plausibility structure*,<sup>10</sup> becomes questioned in a context of diversity. In other words, the certainty that comes from one's religion transforms into a subjective belief system among other belief systems, rendering society secular. Rather than interpreting the changing dynamic of religion in the modern world as "the shrinking and eventual disappearance of religion" (Luckmann, 1990, p. 132), Luckmann argues that there has been a "profound change in the 'location' of religion in society" from a public expression and widely accepted way of life to retreating into the private realms, a process he defines as religion's privatization (p. 132). The privatization of religion from the public sphere is part of the reason scholars have not paid as much attention to religion in the explanation of social movements. More recently, Casanova (1994) contends that religion, currently recognized as a private aspect of life, has always attempted to come out into the public realm of society, a move he describes as

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<sup>10</sup> Berger (1967) defines a plausibility structure as a "collection of people, procedures, and mental processes geared to the task of keeping a specific definition of reality" (p. 11).

deprivatization. It has often faced, however, various competing structural and institutional constraints which have limited or enabled its deprivatization at different times (Casanova, 1994).

Recent research suggests that “religion” is not a single monolithic social force, nor is it confined to the space within the walls of religious institutions. To understand whether and how religion may play a role in publicly contentious social movements, we must ask about the specific religious ideas and practices that either alienate or empower. Harris (1994) argues that religion may lead to meekness, humility, persons turning the other cheek, and an otherworldly focus that often encourages political apathy. He also acknowledges a different side of religion that facilitates communication, empowerment, leadership, and networking for political issues that are morally perceived (Harris, 1994). In Ammerman’s (1988) research on Fundamentalists, she concludes that one of the church’s roles is “offer[ing] its members opportunities to practice skills for which the larger society gives them neither credit nor opportunity. The larger society judges these people as incapable, but in God’s society power is available to do what needs to be done” (p. 197). Wood (2003) takes note of the current (and recurrent) Islamic Fundamentalist and Christian Right extremes, but also suggests that religion can also act as a progressive advocate “shap[ing] political dynamics” for “greater economic justice” through faith-based community organizing for the low-income, marginalized sectors (p. 387). Religious organizations and structures, belief systems, cultures, and sacred texts have been used to defy unjust authority, the abuse of power, and inhumane living and working conditions in the Sanctuary Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the United

Farmworkers Movement, and the Immigrant Rights Movement among others. Faith-based community organizing is but one of many ways religious institutions have been and continue to be an “organizational resource” for political action (Harris, 1994). Smith (1996) describe these types of organizational resources as “enterprise tools,” namely physical meeting space, fax machines, copy machines, computers, office supplies, internet access, and the like. According to Smith (1996), religious institutions also add religious leaders who “are specialists, formally or informally educated, trained, and experienced in interpersonal communications, group dynamics, and collective-identity construction” who typically “also enjoy influence among their followers, linkages with their colleagues, relative autonomy and flexibility in their daily schedules, and extensive contacts in their broader communities” (pp. 13-14).

Moreover, Ammerman’s (2005) work on American congregations provides evidence for congregational contributions to networks of activism. She describes partnerships between congregations and outside organizations as “strategic alliances” defined by their “connections that allow community organizations to mobilize needed resources and [simultaneously] allow congregations to extend their reach” (p. 163). These alliances are very helpful to community members as well as social movement activists in a context where social movement membership benefits greatly from organizing the organized. In the exchange between congregations and outside organizations, congregations provide a plethora of resources to the community and are likely to contribute multiple forms of support. Ammerman found that community goals for congregational leaders included “serving people in need, seeking basic social change,

defending traditional morality, and bridging cultural religious divisions" (p. 165).

Moving toward these goals, 57% of all congregations in Ammerman's study "have at least one outside organization that uses space in their buildings" (p. 163). Furthermore, monetary contributions "average roughly \$900 per organization per year, and most supplement their monetary contributions with other material goods " (p. 164).

Additionally, 74% "of all congregations report that they send volunteers to help in at least one group" (p. 164), a critical asset to social movements. Although she finds that there are considerably more "ties that facilitate direct human service" than ties with activist organizations, "the newer religious traditions are being drawn into local, national, and international coalitions... aimed at protecting the rights of immigrants and expanding First Amendment rights to include new forms of religious practice" (p. 169). Her study shows that such congregations "most likely to seek out partners who can help them make a difference" are often Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations where they may understand "their mission in terms of changing the injustice of this world" (p. 169). According to Slessarev-Jamir (2011), "It is estimated that congregation-based organizing now exists in at least 180 cities in the United States and involves more than four thousand congregations," making it "the most compelling grassroots response to the negative consequences of urban restructuring and the withdrawal of resources from marginalized communities" (p. 67). Rather than developing all of these resources from scratch, social movement organizations that partner with religious groups can invest more time in building strategies and tactics to advance movement goals (Smith, 1996).

Religious rituals and symbols themselves are also appropriated by activists from cultural behavioral repertoires as creative forms of moral protest. For example, Fields (1982) showed how “watch tower preachers” in southern Africa used conversion, “saving” baptism, religious language of good vs. evil, spiritually-oriented shouting (e.g., Chongo), and New Testament parallels of Armageddon to recruit members into a religiously-inspired injustice frame, enabling them to act in defiance of the current “drought-causing” and “evil-spirit-attracting” colonial authority system. Ganz (2004) experienced the transformation of common prayer vigils into United Farmworker (UFW) Movement organizing meetings and protests, and the use of popular Biblical stories (e.g., David and Goliath) as guidance for strategic action. During pilgrimages of protest, the UFW also carried banners of La Virgen de Guadalupe, the matroness of Mexico. Her presence was a symbol of solidarity and connection with a higher power and continuously assisted them in overcoming fears and adversity in their struggle for *la causa* (a Spanish term for “the cause”) (Ganz, 2004). Young (2002) makes a similar observation about 19<sup>th</sup> century temperance and anti-slavery national social movements. Movement activists used the ritual of public confession to name the sins of the nation and unite in moral fellowship in order to reform individuals and the country. Furthermore, sacred anniversaries that are steeped with deep meaning for members, are opportune moments for activists to apply religious symbols and rituals to events of protest. In the case of the UFW, serious action needed to be taken in 1966 to strengthen the grape boycott. Leaders met at a member’s home in Santa Barbara to engage in a creative process of deciding the most advantageous action: “Why not march.... as Dr. King had

the previous year... Why not march to Sacramento and put the heat on Governor Brown to intervene and get negotiations started... It will be Lent soon, a time for reflection, for penance, for asking forgiveness. Perhaps ours should be a pilgrimage, a 'perigrinacion,' which could arrive at Sacramento on Easter Sunday" (Ganz, 2000, p. 1039). These traditional religious rituals and symbols mixed religious repertoires and social movement repertoires in creative efforts to mobilize moral action.

Many of the social movements described in previous research have been about drawing on religious belief systems stemming from a single religious tradition. A unifying culture with common rituals, norms, language, and belief system, can greatly aid the call for unity and moral action. For example, Levine's (1993) research in *Constructing Culture and Power in Latin America* demonstrates the powerful impact of the Roman Catholic Church on beliefs, community identity, and collective action. He argues that the institutional church, rather than social class, "account[s] for much of the sustained peasant resistance in El Salvador" and "solidarities of community and religion play a key mediating role" (p. 15).

Existing research tells us that religious traditions and institutions have often provided both material and ideological resources to social movements. In addition to these organizational resources, Harris (1994) points to religious psychological resources. Religious beliefs, symbols, rituals, doctrine, and traditions can connect movement activism to the metaphysical world. They not only help provide meeting spaces and resources but also a unifying and motivating ideology for SMOs activists. As we will see, all of this is also true for the Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego. Smith

(1996) claims that a religion or belief system is especially powerful when it is able to promote a “super identity” (p. 18) cross-nationally (even globally) which collectively unifies people across cultural socio-economic, racial and ethnic differences. Shared religious beliefs can supply believers with a “set of fundamental moral standards against which the status quo can be judged” (Smith, 1996, p. 10). Religion “aspires to tell us what, therefore, *should* be, how people *must* live, how the world *ought* to operate” (p. 10). As a result of holding deep religious beliefs and a relationship with the Divine, believers often feel *called* to behave in ways consistent with their religious teachings (Weber, 2002). When people believe that their Divinity is *calling* them to action, many *surrender* whatever is holding them from their spiritual mission and accomplish what might otherwise be recognized as impossible. Believing that one is following the omnipotent Divine can endow movements with a transcendent character that is consequential and powerful. “Divine imperative does not merely raise the stakes of the game; it can, under some conditions, infuse the struggle with non-negotiability, and relativize what might otherwise seem insurmountable. Human preference and choice can be supplanted by divine compulsion” (Smith, 1996, p. 10). This is often due to the revolutionary belief that through God’s will and power all things are possible. A complete redefinition of what was *once* tolerable and what is *now* possible occurs as limitations start to diminish. Berger’s (1969) theory acknowledges that people often act as if they are powerless. “Bad faith... replaces choices with fictitious necessities, leading one to perceive that they have no real choice even though choices are socially constructed” (p. 93). But he also notes that religion may equally be a source for

questioning alienating ideas, introducing a new, de-alienating belief system, and a more empowered understanding of the socially constructed world. For example, members of the UFW Movement allowed their religious faith in God and trust in the religious guidance of their leader, Cesar Chavez, to give them the strength to brave their fears and turn the *impossible* into the *achieved* (Ganz, 2004). In times of doubt, fatigue, and need for behavioral guidance, many farmworkers turned to their Catholic religion by praying, seeking clergy as mediators and advisors (e.g., the California Migrant Ministry), and attending mass and prayer groups.

But that assumes that everyone shares those beliefs. Can religious beliefs and rituals be powerful motivators when there are diverse traditions coming together? Furthermore, non-religious activists hold close their own deeply resonating belief systems. This dissertation asks how groups generate solidarity when they include a diverse set of religious and non-religious people. How is it still possible to draw on those beliefs and still collaborate for social and political change? What happens in meeting spaces when activists come together from distinct religious traditions and cultural backgrounds?

### **Religious Organizations and Immigrants.**

The Immigrant Rights Movement, the subject of this dissertation, not only raises questions about how diverse religious and non-religious actors came together. It also offers an opportunity to observe the participation of immigrants themselves in a movement asserting their place in U.S. society, and it offers an opportunity to ask how

certain belief systems and organizations may especially have made that possible. In the case of the UFW movement, for instance, the interdenominational California Migrant Ministry provided much outreach and support to rural (often Mexican, Catholic immigrant) farmworkers. This “group that had a history of charity work among laborers, was one of the [UFW] association’s early supporters; the ministry loaned Cesar [Chavez] a badly needed mimeograph machine” and encouraged union organizing as the “only way to really support farmworkers” (Ferriss & Sandoval 1997, p. 68). The Migrant Ministry shared its physical and emotional resources, provided communication technology, encouragement, meeting space, religious counsel, and a mediating presence. It also helped sustain the broadly appealing Christian principles that were used to maintain hope, commitment, and a standard of nonviolent protest. Multicultural and multi-faith activists from these types of religious organizations also participate within the IRM.

Empowering grassroots mobilization among the broader, growing and multi-ethnic immigrant population in the U.S. poses significant challenges. Because many new immigrants stand out from the American “status quo” in socio-economic backgrounds, phenotypes, experiences, histories, religious experiences, educational levels, languages, and citizenship status, they do not fit neatly into the racialized boxes that were constructed by the dominant American ideology (Bean & Stevens, 2003).<sup>11</sup> They are often seen as different, foreign, and separate from what is considered “American.” For instance, Kibria (2002) finds that even diverse ethnicities are broadly clumped together,

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<sup>11</sup> Despite the diversity within their own ethnicity, Latinos must pigeon hole themselves into the Black/White racial dichotomy in the US Census (Kibria, 2002).

and second generation Chinese and Korean Americans struggling to position themselves for upward mobility are often labeled under the “foreigner stereotype” (p. 204). Due to their social position, new immigrants, especially undocumented persons, must choose between straight-line assimilation (abandoning their traditional customs and lifestyles), preservation of their culture and religious traditions through the relative insulation of ethnic enclaves, transnational (Morawska 2007) migration to and from their country of origin to the U.S., or some combination and degree of the three.

According to Bean and Stevens (2003), selective assimilation signifies that “racial and ethnic identities are likely to become less constrained than previously presumed and more flexible and dynamic than emphasized by... the straight-line... models” (p. 107). In other words, Latinos are freer to remain within their ethnic enclaves and maintain their cultural beliefs and practices, branch out and assimilate wholeheartedly into the American mainstream, or choose a variation of the two. They are also capable of rejecting the Black and White racial identity in favor of a multi-racial and multicultural category. Rather than completely abandoning the practices and belief system from their homeland, many immigrants choose to adapt to their new environment and preserve what is important to them. Still, the barriers to entry into the White, middle-class American mainstream are nearly impossible for many new immigrants and Americans from various ethnicities to break through. For instance, Jimenez (2008) argues that immigrant replenishment from Mexico contributes to more rigid group boundaries for Mexican

immigrants and later-generations of Mexican Americans in the U.S.<sup>12</sup> Continuous discrimination and nativism may prevent complete incorporation, regardless of immigrants' knowledge of language, education level, employment status, or familiarity with the culture (Bean & Stevens, 2003, pp. 98-99). These boundaries may be crossed, blurred, and shifted according to Alba and Nee (2003, pp. 60-61):

- (1) "Boundary crossing" is when one individual moves from one boundary to another (and back and forth if they so choose) without altering the boundary.
- (2) "Boundary blurring" is when the boundary has become less self-evident (the differences are less noticeable, decreasing, or irrelevant) and has the potential to change the structure of ethnic stratification.
- (3) "Boundary shifting" is where the boundary has moved to include previously excluded groups.

With few places to turn amidst the pressures of the American context, immigrants tend to use their "pre-migration family experiences and ideologies" (Kibria, 2002, p. 22) to seek support and find belonging in this new landscape. In addition to family networks, those pre-migration experiences and ideologies often include religious connections. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008), "Immigrant newcomers in the United States hail predominantly from Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and religion is salient in their lives both before and after migration. Indeed, many immigrants become more, not less, religious in their new destinations... The old model of viewing religion as a

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed explication of the aftermath of outward migration in a sending community in Mexico and the Mexican government's response, see Fitzgerald's (2008) work on a region in Mexico with more than a century of emigration.

facilitator of immigrant assimilation has been replaced by contemporary understandings of religion as an enabler of immigrant incorporation, transnational social life, and ethnic resilience and affirmation” (p. 8).

A large body of recent research has demonstrated the importance of immigrant congregations and other religious communities, both for social support and for cultural preservation. As a result, religious leaders responding to the need of immigrants have, thereby, expanded their responsibilities to include providing community service projects, overnight hospitality to traveling guests, religious counsel to immigrant families (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001), and even support for efforts toward social and political change for immigrants and other marginalized people (Beyerlein & Chaves, 2003; Smith, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). McRoberts (2003), found that churches in Four Corners encourage spiritual activism by inspiring social activism through church services and/or participating in social activism directly. In his work, the definition of church-based activism has been extended to include serving members and nonmembers by organizing protests; providing food pantries and shelters for immigrants and survivors of domestic abuse; and giving immigrants information, money, and resources needed to survive in the U.S. (p. 106). The agency being exercised by immigrants in forming congregations is also seen in the extension of religious organizing into the public arena. Slessarev-Jamir's (2011) research shows that congregation-based organizing has "effectively given power to thousands of marginalized, voiceless people, some of whom are not yet American citizens" while "transform[ing them] into skilled leaders with the ability to organize their congregations into powerful networks that can both confront and collaborate with local,

regional, state, and in some cases, even national political leaders and government officials" (p. 67). For example, Davis, Martinez, and Warner (2010) found that "the Catholic Church played a key role in mobilizing hundreds of thousands of Chicago's Mexican Americans in support of immigrant rights" (p. 80). This march inspired a series of immigrant rights marches that swept the nation in 2006, including the one in San Diego. These scholars show that the local Catholic churches encouraged participation in the march through five ways which include pastors' explicit promotion of the march, clergy's public protest and support for immigrant rights, credible and respected religious leaders, "regular integration of immigration-related concerns into parish activities" (p. 82), and empowerment of citizen and noncitizen Latinos through social and civic involvement.

Moreover, Mora (2013) finds that immigrant congregations also facilitate civic engagement through prayer groups and partnerships with outside organizations. "While prayer groups might provide immigrants with a sense that service is important, and while immigrants might develop skills in their groups, it is often the links that the church cultivates with secular organizations that help to spark broader forms of engagement" (p. 1659). Such outside, civic organizations include a non-profit organization that "offers a regular naturalization workshop for immigrant parishioners" (p. 1659) and an "immigrant rights organization [which] made announcements about upcoming immigrant rights rallies" (p. 1660). Returning to their prayer groups, immigrants then often "discuss the social issues introduced by civic organizations" in these "intimate forums" (p. 1659).

By providing community resources and facilitating civic engagement, immigrant

congregations also help immigrants assert their culture and adapt to their new American landscape. Kurien's (1998) research on Hindu Indian Americans shows us that "Asserting pride in their Hindu Indian heritage has also been their way of claiming a position for themselves at the American multicultural table" (p. 37). She "argued that both [Hindu Indian groups] seem to be using these religious organizations as means to forge ethnic communities and to formulate and articulate their identities as Indian Americans" (p. 59). Similarly, Yang and Ebaugh (2001) find that "Immigrant congregations are no longer just sites for religious worship; they are assuming multiple functions, including both religious and secular classes, provision of social services, recreational centers, and social spaces for civic functions such as voting and citizenship classes" (p. 275).

In a national context of restrictive immigration policies<sup>13</sup> (Zolberg, 2007; Schuck, 2007) and hostility towards immigrants, many immigrants have chosen to act as agents<sup>14</sup> of their own lives and have opted for an alternative route toward upward mobility and immigrant incorporation. Such activists recognize that there are many structural barriers that inhibit mobility, but they have decided to *change* the very system within which their mobility is restricted. The question of how first and second generation immigrants are incorporated into the U.S. political, educational, and social fields has been the subject of

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<sup>13</sup> A useful chronological account of U.S. immigration legislation can be found in the appendix of the comprehensive contribution to immigration literature edited by Waters, Ueda and Marrow (2007) in *The New Americans: A Guide to Immigration Since 1965*.

<sup>14</sup> Collective *agency* occurs when a group realizes its power to act as a group and its potential to alleviate the targeted injustices. Becoming agents (Gamson & Meyer, 1996), usually requires group-confidence, trust, acknowledgement and realization of collective power, desire to change, feeling that the group deserves this change, feeling worthy, strong, and able enough to cause change.

much research and theorizing (Alba & Nee, 2007; Bean & Stevens, 2003; Waldinger, 2007; Lopez & Estrada, 2007; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2007; Foner & Kasinitz, 2007; Perlmann & Waters, 2007; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008).

This dissertation will provide evidence of immigrants behaving as rule-changers organizing for the removal of structural barriers that impede their success and incorporation into the American mainstream, therefore viewing social movement activism as an alternative route to immigrant incorporation.

Research on immigrants' political behavior has focused on the voting patterns and political allegiances of immigrants and their descendants (Ramakrishnan, 2005). This measurement, however, is not helpful in capturing political agency in the undocumented population. Although many immigrants and their descendants do exercise their right to vote, undocumented immigrants and legal residents who are directly affected by immigration policies cannot vote, and many immigrant citizens are not yet registered to vote (Ramakrishnan, 2005). Moreover, a great many legal residents are eligible for citizenship status and voting rights, but have still not applied--a fact I quickly learned after attending several citizenship workshops and voter registration drives in the IRM. Furthermore, some immigrants, including immigrant rights activists who can vote, choose not to for various reasons. One reason voiced by immigrant activists in the IRM was that immigrant activists realize that actions going beyond the voting booths are imperative for structural change. Other activists expressed that they choose not to vote in protest of a system that restricts such rights to certain members of their community.

Contributing to the Immigrant Rights Movement, is therefore, an alternative means of political empowerment and agency for immigrants who are not willing or able to vote.

By examining this new, alternative pathway to immigrant incorporation, I am suggesting that immigrant activists be recognized as the sophisticated and intentional agents they are. They are identifying and questioning the very barriers that prevent them from improving their quality of life as equal members in this American community. They notice the structural limitations imposed upon them when free trade laws encourage the free movement of goods without provisions for the laborer, and when economic structures abroad are rearranged and strain the laborer who is left with few alternatives other than migration. Immigrant activists are aware that there is a strong demand for immigrant labor in the U.S. yet an inadequate immigration system to accommodate or protect immigrant workers. They see that this results in millions of undocumented immigrants and their families living with anxiety in the shadows and working without protections, thus making it nearly impossible to successfully incorporate into the American mainstream. Furthermore, they understand that when public education is largely funded through property taxes, financially struggling communities cannot adequately invest in their children and future generations. When healthcare and retirement are tied to employment, they understand that those working part-time jobs or without legal authorization have a hard time covering their medical bills or funding their senior years. Immigrant activists understand that while all Americans are affected by such laws, lower income documented and undocumented immigrants are hit disproportionately. Rather than merely seeking individual services and assistance,

immigrant activists have united and mobilized with others to actualize structural and political solutions to these social problems. Immigrant and nonimmigrant rights activists understand limited immigrant incorporation as a fundamentally structural problem, and therefore one that necessitates structural solutions institutionalized in the political system.

In this dissertation, I will show how San Diego's Immigrant Rights Movement formed the context in which immigrants named the injustices they faced and united with others as a community of rule-changers organizing for the removal of structural barriers that impede their success and integration into the American mainstream. This will allow us to begin to reconstruct our notion of incorporation and make room for "rule changers," activists mobilizing for social and political change who strive to create a more equal playing field. While some immigrants are living and working within the system, others are also working to change the system so that it better includes them within this American community. I argue that adding "rule-changers" (immigrant rights activism) to such variables as inter-marriage, levels of education, and employment mobility can help us better understand the larger dynamics at play which contribute to and inhibit immigrant incorporation.

### **Multicultural Collaboration.**

The story I tell in this dissertation is one of immigrant rule-changers working together with their nonimmigrant counterparts, all of whom arrive at the organizing table from distinct religious and secular traditions. This phenomenon is possible because we live in an increasingly multicultural national landscape where contemporary SMO leaders

routinely seek the membership and support of diverse allies. For example, members of the IRM included legal professionals, clergy, lay religious leaders, academics, day laborers, artists, previous activists from other social movements, lifelong activists, retired persons, and students -- all with distinct ethnicities, faith traditions, and immigration status. They are “optimistic pluralists” who “do not believe that group-based differences have an implication for cultural membership or form a barrier to a shared national identity” (Edgell & Tranby, 2010, p. 194). Furthermore, they overwhelmingly understand that diversity is a natural consequence of immigration, and they welcome culturally and religiously diverse immigrant activists to the movement in the same way that they want the U.S. to be welcoming.

Research has shown that diversity of SM members can be extremely beneficial to social movements. “Movement constituencies, alliances, and coalitions that cut across social, class, occupational, racial, and ethnic [and national] lines can in some—though not all—cases and ways significantly strengthen a social movement’s chance of success” (Smith, 1996, p. 19). For example, belief systems that promote moral agency coupled with the bridging of groups across diverse cultural boundaries can break through the perceived constraints of individual cultural repertoires and structural limitations by introducing new behavioral repertoires and belief systems through diverse coalition-building. Similarly, Fine (2012) discovered that “if a group includes diverse individuals, the fact that they are collectively engaged can lead to a diversity of friendships, building social capital” (p. 165). Opening the door to a heterogeneous movement membership can contribute to a larger movement base and thus more abundant and varied vital resources

for the movement. Furthermore, Burt (1992) argues that “structural holes,” fashioned by the presence of diverse contacts, are useful in social movements in that they connect non-redundant contacts and, therefore, provide new, rather than redundant information.

Although it can be self-affirming for people to surround themselves with others who are similar to them, Burt states that it does not provide fresh ideas useful for the group. With a more broad and diverse network, new information and new opportunities for success can provide helpful organizational adaptability.

In addition to new information, diverse contacts can mean greater flexibility to be creative (Ganz, 2000, p. 1018).<sup>15</sup> Ganz (2000) proposes that new SMOs which innovatively organize their constituency are in a better position for achieving social change than older organizations who, constricted by their habitual behavioral patterns, fail to see new opportunities to organize. While SMOs can benefit from familiar and traditional processes of organizing, diverse membership brings access to new forms of organization and opens the door to more innovative practices. IRM activists recognize that such networks of diverse allies and sympathizers could add to their power by providing a larger movement base, more abundant and varied resources, and a diversity of ideas.

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<sup>15</sup> Ganz (2000) formed the concept, the “liability of senescence,” to describe the factors that favor new organizations (p. 1018). He found strength in “newness” that allows an organization to be creative and flexible without being trapped in the repetition of an ineffective tradition. The UFW organized creative flexibility in strategy building from the moment of its inception. One example is the organic tactic of the “roving picket lines.” With only 100-200 picketers, the UFW needed more bodies to create an effective strike. “Car caravans of pickets arrived at grape fields waving flags and banners, called the workers out of the fields, and then moved to the next location... With the ‘roving picket line,’ a relatively small core of NFWA [National Farm Worker Association] activists could sustain the strike longer—and with less money—than anyone expected” (p. 1033). As a new organization which had not picketed together before, the UFW was not bound by limiting ideologies of traditional picket line expected behavior.

Research has shown that diversity helps movements, but we do not know exactly how this is actually accomplished or sustained. Nor do we know whether and how that rule extends to religious diversity, since most of what is known in the literature about the contributions of religious organizations to social movements comes from single faith traditions (Beyerlein & Chaves, 2003; Calhoun-Brown, 1999; Fields, 1982; McRoberts, 2003; Nepstad, 1996; Patillo-McCoy, 1998; Smith, 1996; Williams, 2001; Wood, 2003; Young, 2002).

There are, however, exceptions in scholarship which focus on building social cohesion in multicultural or interfaith groups. For instance, Wood (1994) found that a "common religious identity helps people [from varying ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds] form such shared subjective understandings, and thus institutionalize networks, sustain stability, and succeed in the political arena" (p. 409). In her research on progressive religious justice movements in the U.S., Slessarev-Jamir (2011) introduced the notion of "prophetic activism" which she explained is "a religious understanding of politics defined by its inclusiveness" (p. 4) with "the power to create the ethical foundations for solidarity between the politically marginalized and those with privileged access to political power" through religious organizing's ability to "evok[e] humanity's sacred bonds with one another" (p. 7). She also discovered that liberative pedagogies via popular education helped bridge cultural, ethnic, and class divisions between those in marginalized communities within borderlands and those who possess a privileged status through such experiences as trips into the desert along the border. Similarly, Yukich (2013) found it critical for multicultural and multi-faith activists in the New Sanctuary

Movement to learn from one another, and thus discover inclusive interfaith practices to further encourage the much desired multicultural involvement and a "truly religious global culture" (p. 198). For instance, they constructed shared liturgies with traditional and innovative variations of form and content from dominant and minority religious traditions in order to recruit additional activists from minority religious traditions. According to Taylor (2013), the act of protesting together, is one venue in which "challenging groups forge solidarity and construct collective identity" (p. 45). Organizationally, Yukich (2013) and Weldon (2006) showed that having a diverse representation of people and symbols furthered diverse collaboration. Similarly, Roth's research (2008) on a coalition of labor union women and Weldon's work (2006) on the Global Movement Against Gender Violence found that leadership representative of the group (Roth, 2008), in other words, a "commitment to descriptive representation" (Weldon, 2006, p. 56) assists in constructing inclusivity in groups with differences in race and class. In such meeting spaces, Fominaya (2010) found in her research on the Global Justice Movement that it is important to construct a "political arena free of hostility" (p. 399) where "assemblies must be participatory *and* effective in order to generate the feedback loops into latent arenas of social interaction and to generate meaningful activities that give purpose and fulfillment to participants and provide cohesion" (emphasis in original, p. 397). Weldon's (2006) work also made a case for consideration of power dynamics among group members and provided evidence that "the facilitation of separate organization for disadvantaged social groups, and a commitment to building consensus *with* institutionalized dissent [expecting to disagree while moving toward

consensus]" (emphasis in original, p. 56) played key roles in establishing solidarity within groups with diverse membership. Arguing that a shared identity is not necessary for cooperation, Weldon suggested that developing "norms of inclusivity" in organizing spaces helps build successful multicultural cooperation and solidarity within the movement. Similarly, Roth (2008) found that self-organized ethnic committees "allowed these members to develop union feminisms that encompassed rather than ignored their ethnic identity" (p. 218). Although limited, integration took place when such committees merged in the larger organization. In these ways, cross-cultural solidarity was constructed and deepened through ideological, educational, religious, practical, and organizational means. These studies of internal movement diversity provide an important foundation for analysis in this dissertation. The multicultural, interfaith, and non-religious collaboration present in the San Diego Immigrant Rights Movement contributes a valuable addition to the growing literature on how internal diversity coalesces in the movement, while being particularly mindful of how faith-based organizations and progressive belief systems' emphasis on inclusive and humanitarian principles empower and support immigrant groups.<sup>16</sup>

Just as the multiculturalism in social movements tends to reflect the growing diversity in the American cultural landscape, it becomes increasingly important to take into account the multidimensionality of each individual's identity, getting past single-

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<sup>16</sup> There are few examples of research on interracial and interethnic associations (Hochschild, 2007; Lichterman, 1995; Becker, 1998) and immigrant and religious social movements (Yukich, 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008, 2007).

identity politics to better understand the new social movements. The necessity is furthered as we begin to gain a better understanding of the criticality of collective identity in social movement participation and in collectively developing strategies, tactics, means of organizing, and organizational structures. I argue that such a contribution can shed a brighter light on the dynamics of multicultural (which includes interfaith and nonreligious) groups in contemporary social movements and in other settings as well.

This is not a story about the immigration debate, nor is it about anti-immigrant groups. Following in Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2008) footsteps, this dissertation is "based on the assumption that immigrants are not the problem. Rather, the way immigrants are welcomed into the nation is a problem. Looking at how religious [and nonreligious] activists understand the world and what they do to secure the rights of immigrants allows us to imagine new alternatives for the future." (p. 3). The task of this dissertation is similar to the mission of Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2008) research on religious activism for immigrant rights. She describes the story in her book as "an optimistic one of how religion promotes social justice and inclusion, providing an important alternative to the exclusivist nationalism of the times" (p. 5). Rather than being a collection of stories about movement efforts each based on a single religious tradition with a single cultural group, this is a story of how immigrants and non-immigrants from distinct religious traditions and their nonreligious counterparts hold together in a movement for immigrant rights. Little is known of the social processes through which this creative strategic work was done. We can see the presence of religious symbols and resources in a variety of past social movements, but how do immigrant and non-immigrant activists maintain

solidarity when they are part of a community of multiple religious and non-religious people? How is it possible to work together, generate social cohesion, and still draw on those beliefs? How are multicultural movement stalwarts coming together, sharing ideas, and collectively protesting at their planned actions?

### **Methodology**

I chose to come at these questions by way of looking at the Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego County from April 2006 until August 2008. According to the City of San Diego's (2011) public website, "Because of San Diego's proximity to Mexico, the region is becoming increasingly bicultural, and the city is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in the nation." In this large metropolitan area with the fourth largest port<sup>17</sup> in California, "More than 100 languages are spoken by San Diego residents who have come from all parts of the world to live here" (City of San Diego, 2011). San Diego County also has a diverse array of religious influences. According to a 2000 report from the Center for Religion and Civic Culture (n.d.), San Diego County is home to a wide spectrum of religious groups including: Mormon, Southern Baptist Convention, Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Jewish, Baha'i, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, and United Methodist among many others. San Diego County is distinctive in that it shares a border with Mexico, a country with a close relationship with

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<sup>17</sup> The Port of San Diego, "oversees two maritime cargo terminals, two cruise ship terminals, 20 public parks, the Harbor Police Department and the leases of hundreds of tenant and sub tenant businesses around San Diego Bay" (Unified Port of San Diego, n.d.). It is "an economic engine, an environmental steward of San Diego Bay and the surrounding tidelands, and a provider of community services and public safety"(Unified Port of San Diego, n.d.).

the U.S. and a long history of migration. According to the U.S. Border Patrol (2011), the Southwest sector has the largest number of unauthorized immigrant apprehensions, compared to the Northern and Coastal sectors. San Diego is also the location of decades of Chicana/o activism. For instance, Chicana/o activists claimed land in San Diego's Barrio Logan on April 22, 1970 for conversion into a public park, now Chicano Park, rather than allowing it to become the headquarters for the California Highway Patrol, according to Ortiz (2007). Leaders in the action formed the Chicano Park Steering Committee which continues to be active after multiple decades. San Diego also has a large politically conservative population and houses several U.S. Navy and Marine Corps bases. In the 1990s, "The San Diego section of the [U.S.-Mexico] boundary became a platform for politicians, government officials, and political activists in favor of immigration restriction, who were eager to communicate their messages advocating a crackdown," according to Nevins (2002, p. 3). San Diego is, then, both a frontline for immigration and a visible stage for the political debates that surround the question. Those debates hit the streets and the airwaves on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006, when millions of activists took to the streets across the country marching for "immigrants' dignity" and just and humane comprehensive immigration reform while opposing the immigration policies of the proposed H.R. 4437, also known as the Sensenbrenner Bill.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> H.R. 4437 "Criminalizes violations of federal immigration law, including illegal presence, which indirectly shifts the responsibility of immigration enforcement to state and local law authorities" and "Expands the definition of 'aggravated felony' to include smuggling offenses, illegal entry and reentry crimes" among other immigration law enforcement efforts (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.).

It was during the 2006 immigration march in San Diego that I began my research on the Immigrant Rights Movement which continued for two years and four months through the Presidential campaign, ending just before the 2008 Presidential Elections.<sup>19</sup> In that time, I engaged in participant observation; conducted forty-nine in-depth, open-ended, formal interviews; researched news media archives; and received up to date information from various organizations' e-mail networks.<sup>20</sup> The organizations where my work was focused are described in Table 1 located on page 54 at the end of this chapter. These groups represent interfaith, faith-based, and non-religious organizations and coalitions as illustrated in Table 2 found on page 61, with members from varying ethnic, socio-economic, political, and educational backgrounds. Not surprisingly, movement participants also had very different personalities, but their social differences were also striking. They came from different generation cohorts, spoke different languages, and lived in different neighborhoods. Still, these movement activists chose to work together to improve the quality of life of immigrants.

Based on information gained from the media, activists, and local academics familiar with activist efforts, I linked existing movement organizations through informed network sampling and gathered data from what appeared to be the most dominant local activist forces in the IRM in San Diego County. To build a list of local activists, I first

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<sup>19</sup> I brought to this study years of familiarity with San Diego County, professional contacts with persons (i.e., academics, activists, students, university staff) who are connected to immigrant rights networks as well as Spanish-speaking and writing skills.

<sup>20</sup> Of the forty-nine formal interviews, two interviews were not included in the activist identity calculations because the interviewees were not IRM activists. One interviewee was a media person covering an IRM march and another was a Mexican clergy person working at a church in the affected community. While they were not activists, their insights were valuable as they helped develop a better understanding of the IRM in San Diego, instrumental relationships within the movement, and the lack of involvement of local key leaders.

utilized the contacts I made during my four years as an undergraduate student at the University of San Diego (USD) and spoke with members of the USD Trans-Border Institute (TBI) and USD's Center for Community Service-Learning. I attended seminars, conferences, meetings, and lectures at local universities related to immigration where I spoke with local academics researching similar populations and similar issues and asked for their input and referrals. For instance, I met Isidro Ortiz from San Diego State University who was working on a chapter on Chicana/o activism in San Diego County and was an extremely helpful and rich source of valuable information. Furthermore, at my first local conference where I was referred by Charles Pope of USD's TBI, I met Dolores Huerta, Enrique Morones, and Estela De Los Rios, among others. From that meeting, I was provided a list of contacts and was given an invitation to attend an upcoming march. From there, I built contacts and spoke with people who appeared to be informed and connected parties or local event organizers. For example, at the march supported by Border Angels among others, I met several activists from Si Se Puede. I informed them of my role as a researcher and asked if it I could attend their meetings and events. I continued to attend meetings, events, conferences, marches, and actions relevant to my research interests as they arose. I also continued to seek assistance from various local academic research organizations specializing in border issues, immigration, and the Latino/a population. While gaining access in the field, I also inquired about additional prominent organizations working in the IRM, with a particular emphasis on faith-based and interfaith-based organizations. Activists like Enrique Morones, Joan Helland, Jessica Nolan, Maria Arroyo, Estela De Los Rios, Rabbi Laurie Coskey, and

Dean Scott Richardson among others, introduced me to many other valuable contacts. I recall an incident when I was denied access to a closed conference where no media persons were allowed for the New Sanctuary Movement, and Rabbi Laurie turned me around as I was leaving and walked me back in after hearing I was turned away. I imagine most of the access I was granted was due to the support of many activists whom I had initially met, for whom I am thankful. It was during this time that I was also a Guest Scholar at the University of California, San Diego's Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS) under Wayne Cornelius. I remember this information was important to Pedro Rios who respected Cornelius' long term migration studies. I expect that my connection to CCIS was also helpful in establishing credibility and trust in the field among other movement activists as well. From there, I noticed that there were also secular organizations working with and attempting to build partnerships with faith-based organizations. My goal was to allow organization leaders to define the field by referring me to other local immigrant rights organizations. Beginning with a handful of organizations, I witnessed them multiply as they converged with others to form additional coalitions for immigrant rights, totaling the sixteen organizations in this study.

The sixteen organizations chosen have all participated in nonviolent, contentious activities, and they have all collaborated with other organizations whose faith perspectives differ from their own. Five of the organizations were based on a single faith. For example, a single religious institution such as St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, which hosts various immigrant rights related meetings and also hosted the New Sanctuary Movement mass, is included here. Also included here is the American Friends Service

Committee (AFSC) which is a national Quaker-based organization that documents human rights abuses along the U.S.-Mexico border, among other efforts. Eight of the organizations were primarily interfaith-based, most often coalitions of cooperating organizations. Among these was Justice Overcoming Boundaries (JOB), part of the larger Gamaliel Foundation, which organized massive voter registration drives and citizenship applications drives as well as helping implement the massive 2006 immigration march in San Diego. The Immigrant Rights Consortium (IRC) is also included as an interfaith organization. It is made up of distinct faith, labor, community, and legal organizations. The IRC and JOB (refer to the List of Abbreviations on p. xiv), among others, created a broad partnership to devise emergency procedures for better responding to the needs of immigrants based upon data gathered during the 2007 San Diego County wildfires. Finally, three of the organizations included were non-religious. For instance, the United Domestic Workers union, which represents in-home care providers, many of whom are immigrants, is included in this category along with Si Se Puede (SSP) whose membership consists of college students and other community members whose efforts include organizing educational forums, partnering with others to plan annual marches, and documenting grievances of immigrants in the community (see Table 1 and Table 2 for a list and fuller description of the organizations).

It is important to note that all of the sixteen organizations had immigrant and nonimmigrant activist members. Moreover, organizational membership consisted of both religious and nonreligious members regardless of whether or not the organization was secular, interfaith, or faith-based. It is important to note that the individual organizations

were not the focus of this research. Rather, the collective actions, moral framework, and communal stories across organizations were the focus.

During the two years and four months of participant observation, extensive field notes were taken at over two hundred organizing meetings, religious services, press conferences, prayer vigils, educational conferences, marches, and other publicly-accessible events coordinated by the selected organizations. Furthermore, fliers, handouts, booklets, pictures, organization websites, and social movement paraphernalia were gathered and coded according to their corresponding organization and action in order to gain a better understanding of the IRM. During this time, I also paid attention to information gained from news media outlets (e.g., television, radio, internet, books, documentaries, photographs, magazines, etc.) that reflected the efforts of the organizations and corresponding political responses and supplemented data gathered during participant observation.

As a byproduct of participant observation, I engaged in hundreds of informal conversations. These took place with lawyers, students, local academics, community members, researchers, documentary filmmakers, police officers, border patrol officials, anti-immigrant activists, bystanders, and photojournalists among others present—all of whom were aware of my role as a researcher.

Participant observation was complemented by forty-nine formal interviews that were designed to elaborate on the social processes observed directly and gain a richer assessment of interfaith and multicultural collaboration and the meaning behind it. Those chosen for in-depth, formal interviews were persons whose knowledge could supplement

data gathered through public observation. Formal interviews averaging between one to two hours each were transcribed and analyzed. The IRM activists interviewed deeply believe in the work that they do, and they courageously stand together to make public the immigration-related injustices and the movement's corresponding collective efforts in order to be a catalyst for positive change for immigrant rights. It is likely that for these reasons, nearly everyone interviewed chose to use their real names and the real names of their organizations in this research. Furthermore, they understand that their collective actions are part of history in the making, part of true stories of change.

Gender, age, level of education, geography, sexual orientation, and political affiliation were part of the multiculturalism within the IRM, however, immigrant/nonimmigrant and faith-based/interfaith-based/secular identity categories are at the forefront of my research. Focusing on religion and immigration is especially useful, since “a strong majority of Americans across racial and religious lines view both race and religion as a salient source of identity and a basis for community life” (Hartmann, Winchester, Edgell, & Gerteis, 2011, p. 337). Furthermore, these two descriptors were the dominating categories arising in this multi-faith movement for immigrant rights. For the purpose of this dissertation, I refer to respondents as religious if they self-identify as such. Those that consider themselves spiritual and not part of an institutionalized religion considered themselves nonreligious, yet often cited religious roots. They were, therefore, considered nonreligious for the purposes of this study even though people with a personal spirituality and people associated with a particular religion may share a general belief in the metaphysical, sacred world. Episcopal, Quaker, reform

Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, United Church of Christ, Seventh-day Adventist, Nazarene, Rastafarian, personally spiritual, and nonreligious traditions make up the vast majority of activist respondents in this study. Of the 77% of movement respondents that identified as religious, 86% were part of Christian traditions. Of the 62% first and second generation immigrant respondents in this study, 90% were of Mexican origin, probably due to the proximity of San Diego to Mexico and Mexico's long history of migration to the U.S. (Camarillo, 2007).<sup>21</sup> Immigrant and non-immigrant activists in the IRM have roots in nations all around the world, but the respondents in the San Diego County area have roots that are overwhelmingly from Europe and Mexico.<sup>22</sup> To reiterate, having a religious identity or being a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrant mattered in the make-up of activists in the multi-faith Immigrant Rights Movement.

While collecting and analyzing data, I paid close attention to evidence regarding the social cohesion of movement activists while analyzing: (a) the identity and function of each organization, (b) interactions between activists from distinct faith traditions and cultures, (c) the various injustice frames and collective agency frames proffered, (d) narratives shared, (e) commonly held movement goals, (f) nonviolent contentious tactics, and (g) religious messages, beliefs, and resources utilized in the IRM.

Before I continue with an introduction to the findings, please allow me to say a few words about my social location. I was born in San Francisco, CA to second generation

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<sup>21</sup> Moreover, it is important to note that each activist embodied a variation of identity attributes that made categorization challenging while also contributing to the unifying character of the multicultural group.

<sup>22</sup> The IRM is a national social movement with distinct demographics depending upon where it is located in the country. For example, whereas Mexicans are the primary immigrant group in the San Diego County area, they are more of a minority group in New York City area.

Mexican, Catholic immigrants. Their parents, my grandparents, have their own unique migration stories, mostly from a period when the U.S.-Mexico border was a line on the ground, so to speak. My grandparents passed down our family's oral history with various stories of a bicultural and transnational, religiously devout life. Coming from humble origins, they brought with them the values of family ties and faith in God into this multi-faceted new world. My parents accepted those virtues in their own ways. On one afternoon, I remember visiting a friend's home where an inviting bowl of grapes sat in the middle of her kitchen table which I was not allowed to eat because it was during a grape boycott. Visions of the boycott were imprinted on posters taped to local windows as others in the community also showed their solidarity in the movement. I recall sitting at our own kitchen table one morning before school started when my parents announced that the grape boycott was over, and we could now eat the no longer sanctioned fruit. My parents explained the significance of what the UFW movement, Cesar Chavez, and Dolores Huerta have done for farmworkers, most of whom share our Mexican heritage. I remember being fascinated by the concept of a social movement, the collective effervescence of solidarity for something bigger than the individual, and the focused, nonviolent, and courageous efforts for improved working and living conditions by impoverished, immigrant laborers and passionate, committed allies. When I set off to examine the Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego County, I was surprised to discover cross-cultural, interfaith, and secular collaboration, and I was curious to understand the processes by which diverse movement stalwarts cultivate such solidarity.

### **An Introduction to the Findings**

How is it that multicultural and multi-faith IRM activists become a diverse community of rule-changers able to act together? Can religious beliefs and rituals be powerful motivators when there are diverse traditions coming together? How is it still possible to draw on religious and nonreligious beliefs from distinct cultural systems and maintain social cohesion? What occurs within these groups when this diverse collection of individuals come together around the meeting table? How do they behave toward one another and maintain productive solidarity?

In chapter 2, I will argue that goals help hold diverse activists together and that their shared goals overwhelmingly come from a shared sense of injustice. This chapter will illustrate the goals around which IRM activists are organizing by paying attention to their shared narratives of change. It will show that these narratives of change are embedded with stories of agitation and of hope-generating action. By listening to IRM activists' narratives of change, I illustrate how shared movement claims are constructed and serve as a unifying mechanism in the multicultural and multi-faith movement.

Next, I will show that diverse agents of change have constructed an overarching, progressive, inclusive, and humanitarian moral framework located at the intersection of interfaith and non religious belief systems which helps hold them together. Chapter 3 demonstrates the ways moral stalwarts pull from their distinct repertoires of beliefs to articulate this moral common ground upon which movement solidarity is able to thrive. Furthermore, it shows that this common moral framework is also critical to the movement in that it helps define injustices, but it also constructs movement goals around an ideal

vision for how the world ought and ought not to operate.

By looking at patterns of interaction between multicultural activists, chapter 4 argues that a behavioral code, the “multicultural activist etiquette,” helps diverse agents work together and essentially hold together in inclusive, respectful, and productive ways within the intentionally interactive settings of movement meetings. Moreover, it shows that this movement etiquette is consistent with the underlying moral framework of the movement discussed in chapter 3.

Finally, this dissertation will conclude with a discussion of the contributions of this research and the additional questions this study raises.

**TABLE 1: Mission and Efforts of Organizations**

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Description of Mission and Efforts</b>
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), U.S.-Mexico Border Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "works to secure human rights and self-determination for migrants and border communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitating leadership development,</li> <li>• accompanying immigrant communities in their organizing processes,</li> <li>• providing technical support and resources,</li> <li>• and promoting collective action through human rights committees"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other efforts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Human rights training and documentation of human rights abuses...[aimed at] to challeng[ing] systemic abuses by the Border Patrol and other government agencies."</li> <li>○ Awareness building "to build understanding of the immigrant experience"</li> <li>○ and the "foster[ing] [of] cooperation between immigrant communities and potential allies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ i.e., "Project Voice [which] brings together immigrant-led organizations with seasoned policy analysts and advocates, to advocate for workable and attainable immigration policies that are directly responsive to the needs and concerns of the grassroots" (American Friends Service Committee, n.d.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Border Angels (BA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"When I was hungry, who gave me to eat? – when I was thirsty, who gave me to drink?" – Mathew 25:35"</i></li> <li>• "life-saving stations are established throughout the San Diego Mountain areas [along the border region]."</li> <li>• "Winter clothing, food and water are placed in winter storage bins to help decrease negative health results from being exposed to the incredibly freezing temperature changes that exists in the San Diego County"</li> <li>• BA participates in educational forums and meetings with "government dignitaries on the status of weather related deaths and racial-discrimination" (Border Angels, n.d.).</li> </ul>

Catholic <sup>23</sup>	The following three Catholic organizations are consolidated into one under this heading:
<i>Roman Catholic Diocese of SD Office for Social Ministry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "affirms and fosters human life, dignity and rights, promotes justice and peace, and serves as a resource to parishes in responding to people of every culture and status" (The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, n.d.).</li> <li>• Staff members have joined local immigrant rights coalitions such as ICWJ and JOB in support of immigrants in the San Diego area.</li> </ul>
<i>Migrant Mass</i> <sup>24</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local parish conducts mass for migrants living in North San Diego County where well-organized church volunteers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hold potlucks,</li> <li>• provide books for basic English lessons,</li> <li>• administer stress-relieving acupuncture (by a trained professional),</li> <li>• and sell supplies and clothing to keep migrants warm during the cold seasons.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>university employees</i> <sup>25</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University employees bring service-learning and other educational opportunities to university students which include participating in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Migrant Mass and teaching English lessons</li> <li>• attending tours along the border organized with Border Angels as well as organizations in Tijuana, Mexico;</li> <li>• and organizing immigration-related panels, conferences, and educational forums.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Frente Contra Las Redadas (FCLR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspired by a similar Los Angeles coalition, this coalition of interfaith and nonreligious community groups aimed at addressing the widespread raids and deportations in San Diego.</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> Catholic efforts were more dispersed, which is the reason for including the three Catholic organizations within the same header.

<sup>24</sup> While the Migrant Mass was not structured around mobilizing activists for immigrant rights, it was a site connected to such immigrant right activists and a community from which activists learned about the injustices faced by immigrants living in more rural areas.

<sup>25</sup> Although the university is not a social movement organization, it provided a social justice pedagogy and further educational opportunities to broaden the awareness of immigration-related issues and connections to organizations promoting immigrant rights.

<p>Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice (ICWJ)<sup>26</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The mission... is to educate and mobilize religious and faith communities to raise awareness and support actions that sustain workers' lives with dignity, improving wages, benefits, access to quality healthcare, working conditions and a voice on the job." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• " bring[s] the power and energy of the faith community's moral authority to local struggles for worker justice"</li> <li>• "provides a moral framework toward realizing an economy of well-being" (Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice of San Diego County, n.d.)</li> <li>• ICWJ organized the NSM in San Diego and partnered with local unions, including UDW, on numerous campaigns for worker rights.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Justice Overcoming Boundaries (JOB)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "trains community leaders, and helps facilitate campaigns to address local social justice issues" [by] "working with these trained leaders [and] engag[ing] in a 'listening process' to help member groups identify community issues which directly impact their daily lives." Collaborative efforts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Leadership Development"</li> <li>• "Community Organizing"</li> <li>• "Advocacy"</li> <li>• "Civic Participation, [including] ... the areas of Naturalization and Civic Education," voter registration</li> <li>• "Health and Transportation Equity"</li> <li>• and "Fiesta del Sol San Diego," the "largest Latino family festival in the County" (Justice Overcoming Boundaries, n.d.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>May 1st Coalition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Over twenty grassroots organizations have come together to demand the rights of working class communities in San Diego, to denounce deportations and the separation of families" (San Diego May 1st Coalition, n.d.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together, they coordinate an annual march through the streets of San Diego for immigrant rights. They have also organized a fundraiser for local bakers who were affected by a workplace raid and placed in deportation proceedings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>26</sup> They later changed their name to Interfaith Center for Worker Justice of San Diego County.

<p>New Sanctuary Movement (NSM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "a national coalition of interfaith religious leaders and participating congregations, called by our faith to respond actively and publicly to the suffering of our immigrant brothers and sisters residing in the United States...</li> <li>• We witness the violation of [1) livelihood; 2) family unity; and 3) physical and emotional safety] under current immigration policy, particularly in the separation of children from their parents due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids... Therefore I/We Covenant To:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) Take a public, moral stand for immigrants' rights,</li> <li>• 2) Reveal, through education and advocacy, the actual suffering of immigrant workers and families under current and proposed legislation, and</li> <li>• 3) Protect immigrants against hate, workplace discrimination, and unjust deportation" (Interfaith Center for Worker Justice of San Diego County, n.d.).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>No Match Network (NMN)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A No-Match letter "is a written notice issued by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to an employer, usually in response to an employee wage report, advising that the name or Social Security number (SSN) reported by the employer for one or more employees does not 'match' a name or SSN combination reflected in SSA's record" (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.). Although, "the letter cautions employers against taking any adverse employment action against a referenced employee based solely on receipt of the letter, and explicitly states that the letter makes no statement about the referenced employee's immigration status" (The United States Department of Justice, n.d.), many employees have been fired from their jobs after their employer received such letters requesting clarification for the error.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because of this, an interfaith and nonreligious coalition formed to provide support to those affected. Establishing a hotline to address any related questions and provide interested parties with references to legal council are among their efforts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Raza Rights Coalition (LRRC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "an alliance of independent Chicano Mexicano/Raza Latino-Americano organizations and individuals united to defend and elevate the human rights and dignity of our people...</li> <li>• formed...to resist the injustice, racism, exploitative economic interest, oppressive government policies, and violation of our civil and human rights that have been carried out since the occupation and colonization of Northern Mexico by the United States of America in 1848 and in a larger sense since the arrival of European conquerors half a millennia ago" (Raza Rights Coalition, n.d.).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Raza Rights Coalition is a leader in the May 1st Coalition and also conducts educational conferences, marches, rallies, fundraisers, and immigrant-related protests.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serves the Spanish-speaking immigrant community with             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a Spanish mass and</li> <li>• participates in and provides the space for                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NSM protest mass,</li> <li>○ immigrant-related educational forums, and</li> <li>○ meetings for coalitions such as the NMN and the UHFSD.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>San Diego Friends (SDF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "San Diego Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) believes governments should be sensitive and responsive to public protests and human suffering. We favor a guarantee of adequate food, housing, health care, education and employment for all citizens and residents of the country" (San Diego Friends Meeting-Quakers, n.d.).             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Quaker meeting is part of the NSM while members have also joined the ICWJ coalition and are associated with the Quaker-based AFSC among other efforts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium (IRC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "[C]ommunity, faith, labor, and legal organizations have come together ... [and] are pursuing four common goals:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (1) Support comprehensive immigration reform.</li> <li>• (2) Stop...local policies and practices that target and violate the civil and human rights of immigrants.</li> <li>• (3) Educate immigrants about their rights and...resources available to them.</li> <li>• (4) Educate the public..and counter the myths and misstatements made about immigrants" (San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, n.d.).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some of their efforts include Know Your Rights campaigns and coordinating a report on the treatment of undocumented immigrants during the emergencies of the 2007 wildfires in an effort to bring about legislative procedural changes to ensure immigrant safety.</li> </ul>
<p>Si Se Puede (SSP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This grassroots immigrant rights community organization:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conducted immigration-related educational forums,</li> <li>• gathered grievances from immigrants in the community,</li> <li>• demonstrated leadership in the May 1st Coalition,</li> <li>• supported the NSM, and</li> <li>• participated in the movement to make National City a sanctuary city, among other efforts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>United Domestic Workers (UDW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a "labor union ... represent[ing] in-home care providers... who cook, clean, and provide domestic chores and personal care to the elderly, blind and disabled; those who are too sick, frail, or disadvantaged to care for themselves. California provides these services to income-eligible individuals through a program called In Home Supportive Services (IHSS)...designed to be... [an] alternative to the segregation and isolation of the elderly and persons with disabilities in nursing homes or institutions...The IHSS program, in contrast, allows those who need help to survive in their own homes the freedom to choose, hire, train, and direct their personal attendants... [where] tax dollars go directly to the support of the person in need, rather than massive infrastructure and administration" (United Domestic Workers of America, n.d.).</li> </ul>

<p>United for a Hate Free San Diego (UHFSD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In response to the hateful anti-immigrant online postings in the San Diego Union Tribune in regards to an immigrant mother who died in the San Diego County wildfires when trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border, Assemblymember Lori Saldana and her staff partnered with local interfaith and community leaders to address hateful radio talk and hateful actions in the community against immigrants and other targeted groups in the community. Among their efforts was a United for a Hate Free San Diego conference as well as educational presentations during their meetings.</li></ul>
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**TABLE 2: Types of Organizations**

<b>Organization<sup>27</sup></b>	<b>Coalition</b>	<b>Faith-Based</b>	<b>Interfaith-Based</b>	<b>Non-Religious</b>
American Friends Service Committee		X <sup>28</sup>		
Border Angels		X <sup>29</sup>		
Catholic		X		
<i>Roman Catholic Diocese of SD Office for Social Ministry</i>		X		
<i>Migrant Mass</i>		X		
<i>university employees</i>		X		
Frente Contra Las Redadas	X		X <sup>30</sup>	
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice	X		X	
Justice Overcoming Boundaries	X		X	
May 1st Coalition	X		X <sup>31</sup>	
New Sanctuary Movement	X		X	
No Match Network	X		X	
Raza Rights Coalition	X			X
St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral		X		
San Diego Friends		X		
San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium	X		X	
Si Se Puede	O <sup>32</sup>			X
United Domestic Workers				X
United for a Hate Free San Diego	X		X	

<sup>27</sup> It is important to note that each one of these organizations has immigrant, non-immigrant, religious, and non-religious members.

<sup>28</sup> AFSC, while Quaker-based, includes members of varying faith traditions.

<sup>29</sup> Although the mission of Border Angels is following the Biblical verse of Matthew 25, it openly welcomed allies from all religious traditions and non-religious participants.

<sup>30</sup> Faith organizations such as Border Angels were present, however, religious rhetoric was not prominent here.

<sup>31</sup> Religious rhetoric was not prominent here, likely because weekly meetings were held on Sunday mornings, a prime time for many religious services.

<sup>32</sup> There was disagreement as to whether or not SSP was operating as a coalition. When I was in the field, it appeared as though its members were individuals acting as individuals even though some shared membership with other organizations. Later, it became evident to some members that participants that shared membership with an outside organization had been "manipulating" the agenda so as to follow the outside organization's preconceived strategies and direction while giving the illusion that the ideas were organic to SSP. This dilemma was being worked through as I was exiting the field.

## Chapter 2 Movement Goals and Stories of Change

### Introduction

“*El pueblo unido jamás será vencido* (united people will never be defeated!)” reverberates in the bellies and through the voices of the IRM. Activists and supporters march for comprehensive immigration reform chanting the famous song written by Quilapayun and composed by Sergio Ortega. At such events, one quickly notices bold and vibrant hand-printed and professionally made signs suspended atop wooden sticks and raised into the sky declaring “NINGUN SER HUMANO ES ILEGAL (NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL).” Other signs include:

“*Basta las separaciones de familias* (Enough of the separation of families!)”

“We are one community. Do not discriminate in the distribution of services and aid [referencing the San Diego Wildfires].”

“STOP the raids now!”

“Don’t deport parents!”

“*Somos una comunidad* (We are one community!)”

And “*No Olvidados*” (Not forgotten) written on white crosses commemorating the thousands of immigrants that have died trying to cross the U.S./Mexico border.<sup>33</sup>

These cries for justice are responses to harsh immigration policies and practices, according to IRM activists. Some are also examples of the most commonly shared movement goals we will explore in this chapter. They are given voice by activists who represent diverse cultural origins and many different faith traditions. Furthermore, such claims serve as the common interests, according to IRM activists, in which activists’ efforts are invested. In other words, they create a common focus upon which religious and nonreligious moral stalwarts direct their energy, protesting for immigrant rights

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<sup>33</sup> Additional IRM goals include livable wages for immigrants and all workers; comprehensive immigration reform that emphasizes family unity; workers rights included in free trade agreements; cross-cultural bridging; an end to hate talk and hate crimes; an end to No Match Letters; development in Mexico to minimize economic disparities; an end to deaths along the U.S.-Mexico border; spiritual counsel during immigration enforcement; ability of undocumented graduates to work legally; and equal treatment regardless of immigration status to all persons especially during emergencies.

(Immigration Policy Center, 2014). Articulating and acting upon goals are activities in which activist groups routinely engage. Articulated goals in the IRM range in content and fall along the spectrum of general to more specific claims. For example, the Immigrant Rights Consortium (IRC) comprising faith, labor, legal, and community organization representatives collectively decided that their goals are to “(1) Support comprehensive immigration reform. (2) Stop the spread of local policies and practices that target and violate the civil and human rights of immigrants. (3) Educate immigrants about their rights and the legal and other resources available to them. (4) Educate the public about the important contributions of immigrants and counter the myths and misstatements made about immigrants” (San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, n.d.).

David Schmidt, a non-immigrant and religious activist member of Si Se Puede (SSP) declared their points of unity as “full rights for all immigrants, full worker rights.” He explained that Si Se Puede is “against any further militarization of the border” including a fence and against “more technology on the border.” He added, “And we’re against everything that goes along with the raids and deportations, which harms documented and undocumented immigrants.” Schmidt argued that raids and deportations “harm children of immigrants” and are “something that affects the whole country and the whole society, not just people who don’t have papers [proper immigration documents].”

The Raza Rights Coalition (RRC) organizes within the immigrant community around eleven points. The first three listed are: “(1) Full employment with union jobs and decent wages; (2) Quality public education for all our children including Chicano/Raza Studies and Bilingual Education at all levels; [and] (3) Free health care for

all people” (Raza Rights Coalition, n.d.).<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition, which includes RRC and SSP among others, decided their points of unity are, “Stop the raids and deportations. Right to education. Right to migrate, and dignified work for all” at several meetings I attended.

IRM goals cover the spectrum between specific to more general and from seemingly grandiose to more easily attainable.<sup>35</sup> Movement goals also consist of long term and more immediate needs responding to global, national, and/or local struggles. While there have been claims proffered that are not commonly shared,<sup>36</sup> the focus of this chapter is on the unifying aspects of the most widely shared movement goals that consume the vast majority of multicultural and multi-faith activists’ efforts. I often heard these goals, together, included under the broad call for “just and humane comprehensive immigration reform.” Such a statement leaves many specifics ambiguous, nevertheless, the way people talk about their goals helps reveal common notions of injustice and a

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<sup>34</sup> The entire list includes: “(4) Decent affordable housing. (5) Community control of the police and sheriffs. (6) Abolishment of the racist Migra (Border Patrol & ICE) and the immediate demilitarization of the Mexico/U.S. border. (7) End to the importation and promotion of drugs in our communities and barrios. (8) An end to U.S. intervention in Mexico, Latin America and all over the globe. (9) An immediate halt to Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA etc.) and the support for the [Bolivarian Alliance for the People’s of Nuestra América-Commercial Treaty among the People \(ALBA-TCP\)](#). (10) A Clean and Healthy Environment. (11) Social justice and true democracy in México.” (Raza Rights Coalition, n.d.).

<sup>35</sup> In the IRM with a multicultural member base, activists from diverse backgrounds regularly commit long hours at the meeting table (see chapter 4) to uncover shared goals derived from the needs of their affected communities. At times movement goals are constructed by an activist organization prior to inviting others to join their cause. Other times activists come together to respond to an agreed upon injustice and later construct specific goals over a series of meetings.

<sup>36</sup> In most cases, shared goals serve as the focal point of movement efforts and help unite activists around a common purpose. On the contrary, there are times, as in all social movements, when IRM activists do not agree upon goals as they subscribe to a broad spectrum of interests regarding immigrant rights. These interests land anywhere along the conservative to more progressive political continuum. Some of the more controversial movement goals include eradicating the national border wall, eradicating the guest worker program unless it strictly includes worker protections, ending all military recruitment in immigration bills, and not accepting any tradeoffs to full legalization of immigrants.

commitment to agency that fuel the IRM and provides insight into the unity behind diverse membership. Included in a just and humane immigration reform agenda, activists strive for legalization, or the legal right for immigrants to be in the United States, and for a pathway for immigrants to eventually earn citizenship in order to secure these rights as equal members in the American community. They believe that such legalization, giving immigrants the right to legally migrate across borders and live and work in the U.S. with equal rights and protections will end deaths along the border because immigrants would be able to enter the U.S. through safe and less restrictive legal channels.<sup>37</sup> In their articulation of what is unjust, multicultural moral stalwarts of the IRM collectively maintain a tone that is not one of fatalism, but of hope and inspiration for a better life for immigrants. Such an articulation is the first step toward action. A next step is choosing to be a team of protagonists of change by collectively honing efforts around shared claims and transforming commonly held stories of injustice or agitation into hope-generating collective action. In this way, “stories of agitation” become chapters in the larger “narratives of change” which, therefore, include SM injustices and their corresponding collective movement efforts.

This chapter will discuss two of the most prominently shared movement goals, namely attaining the *right to migrate* and *worker rights and protections* for immigrants. Here, I will show how shared movement claims help to unify the diverse constituents of

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<sup>37</sup> Although not cited as such, this goal is consistent with Articles 13.1, 13.2, and 14.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, n.d.). Here, it states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.” It is followed by the notion that, “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” Furthermore, it declares, “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”

the movement—immigrant and nonimmigrant, religious and nonreligious IRM activists—by (a) emerging from shared “stories of agitation” or injustice and (b) providing the focal point around which collective efforts are organized and needed for political change. In doing so, “stories of agitation” become chapters in the larger “narratives of change” which include SM injustices and their corresponding collective movement efforts.

## **Immigrant Rights Movement Goals**

### **Shared Injustice and Righting the Wrongs**

IRM goals are often articulated in response to immigration-related moral assaults.<sup>38</sup> Generally speaking, this sense of injustice is more likely to develop when a group’s sense of “right” and “wrong” contrasts regarding social issues. For the IRM, the particularly burning immigration issues are the ones that affect activists and their loved ones and grossly differ from the way they believe the world ought to function. Within a SM injustice frame, activists redefine once tolerated and accepted grievances, as intolerable, inhumane, and exploitative injustices (Snow & Benford, 1992).

“Mobilization often happens because” either “cultural themes” are colliding or “the realities of behavior are seen to be substantially different than the ideological justifications for the movement” (Zald, 1996, p. 268). People usually use their cultural ideology (e.g., religious, professional, ethnic, socio-economic, familial, etc.) and social context to evaluate the different realms of their own lives and the lives of others. For example, farmworkers may feel wrongly underpaid and unjustly overworked under

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<sup>38</sup> See chapter 3 for a fuller discussion on the movement’s overall moral framework.

dangerous conditions and thus participate in the UFW movement, while agricultural growers believe that they are treating workers decently within the context of a high-pressure, competitive market. In other words, Gamson (1992) argues that in order for a collective injustice frame to exist, there must be a group of people who perceive that what is going on in the world is abnormally problematic.

Although religion may often be utilized by elites to preserve the existing social order, it can also de-legitimize institutional systems and powers and support a case for social and political change. By “relativiz[ing] the taken-for-granted institutional programs” (Berger, 1969, p. 97), the individual and collective are reminded that they are co-authors of this social world—a world which is, in fact, socially constructed, and can therefore, be collectively altered (Berger, 1969). This state of de-alienation may lend itself to the development of a sense of injustice, and a desire to reconstruct social reality so as to no longer accept once tolerated grievances. Smith (1996) agrees that religion can “help to generate and define the grievances that breed disruptive collective activism” through its transcendent motivation (p. 11). By providing its members with a “set of fundamental moral standards against which the status quo can be judged,” religion “aspires to tell us what, therefore, *should* be, how people *must* live, how the world *ought* to operate” (Smith, 1996, p. 10, emphasis in original).

It is important to remember, here, that religion is not the only path through which injustice frames can be tapped or in which movement goals can be defined in terms of

what ought to be.<sup>39</sup> “There are many ways of short-circuiting the connection between the belief that people are being undeservedly wronged by human agents and the emotional response of indignation... [I]njustice frames offer potential hooks to which people can attach their anger over the hardships and indignities that they experience in their daily lives” (Gamson, 1992, p. 36). In the case of the IRM, activists often hold Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dolores Huerta, Gandhi, and local veteran activists like Roberto Martinez as role models. They referenced human rights and worker rights frameworks, the United States Constitution, and religious roots and influences even when they did not identify as religious persons.

After activists collectively recognize a social injustice as an intolerable wrong with a more humane and dignified alternative, they begin to assess what can be done about it. Here, a shift happens from a diagnostic frame’s primary focus on the problem to a prognostic frame’s focus on the solution (Snow & Benford, 1988). This chapter explicates the articulation of movement goals by exposing the harsh lived experiences from whence they came since we can hear movement claims most clearly as people articulate the injustices they see as morally wrong. Communicated as injustice frames through “stories of agitation,” these lived experiences of injustice illustrate the violation of the very moral fabric of how the world ought to operate and the manner by which people ought to be treated according to IRM activists, empathizers, and allies. Agitation is not a passive or fatalistic expression, but a pained and angry cry that carries with it a

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<sup>39</sup> See chapter 3 for the ways in which religious and nonreligious, immigrant and non-immigrant activists articulate their shared moral framework—a framework that provides the benchmark for how the world ought and ought not to operate.

demand for change. It is not unlike biblical scholar Brueggemann's (2001) description of the lament psalms as "a Jewish understanding that an adequate relationship with God permits and requires a human voice that will speak out against every wrong perpetrated either on earth or by heaven" (p. 22). Within the Hebrew scripture itself there are texts in which a voice once silent in the face of the enemy becomes "abrasive and insistent," "speak[ing] against the hegemony" and thus "caus[ing] things to change" (pp. 22-23). Brueggemann emphasized, "It is simply astonishing that when the powerless find voice, done at great risk, things must happen differently among the powerful" (p. 23). In his theological and sociological assessment, "Speech turns meaninglessness into meaningfulness" (p. 27) and, therefore, gives existence to a once silent community. Psalm 39 in his assessment is an injustice narrative of agitation in which a community undertakes a "serious theological discourse engaging God but at the same time serious political discourse as well" (p. 31). Religious texts themselves, that is, are resources that can be framed and used both religiously and politically—thus appealing to religious and nonreligious IRM activists.

Narratives are used in this chapter because, as Franzosi (1998) noted, "Narrative texts are packed with sociological information, and a great deal of our empirical evidence is in narrative form" (p. 517). Furthermore, "Narrative analysis has brought out relationships between people—texts do not just index a relation between words and between texts, but between text and social reality" thus "spark[ing] our sociological imagination" and allow[ing] us to get a glimpse of [the] broad social relations" (p. 547). For the diverse IRM, narrative also helps provide a better understanding of the intricacies

involved in claims-articulation among diverse groups of moral stalwarts. Such a multiculturalism, in turn, creates additional “paths of action” through “permitting subjects to identify an external source of the package of beliefs he [she] is being presented with” via a diversity in narratives (Smilde, 2003, p. 321).

Furthermore, Franzozi (1998) and Polletta (2006) would agree that “every story has an evaluative component indicating why it is important to tell” where “larger meaning seems to arise from the events” (Polletta, 2006, P. 10).<sup>40</sup> The audience receives cues on what is morally right and wrong depending on the character’s fates as they are judged by their action (Franzozi, 1998, p. 535; Polletta 2006). According to Franzozi (1998), “Characterization is not direct; we have to infer character from action.” More explicitly, “We feel sorry and we sympathize for victims, while we are repulsed by villains” (p. 535). However, it is important to note, according to Polletta (2006), that victim stories do not always serve the movement’s purposes (p. 111).<sup>41</sup> This chapter will show how IRM activists communicate stories of injustice that fuel agitation and lament but also articulate the shared experiences of hopeful and inspiring collective movement efforts---moving beyond fatalism into more powerful collective agency. Conveying one’s group as both victims and agents of change is no easy task, as Polletta (2006) has argued, and, it can be even more challenging with a multicultural and multi-faith

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<sup>40</sup> In her extensive research on narratives, Polletta (2006) calls attention to the social organization of the narrative, focusing on the role of the storyteller, the reasons behind the storytelling, and the context of storytelling in providing meaning and effectiveness of the narrative in helping disadvantaged groups. This chapter however, focuses on claims articulation and evidence of multicultural collaboration.

<sup>41</sup> Polletta (2006) explained that stories are limited by “institutional and historically specific conventions” for how victims are supposed to “respond to their treatment” and how “audiences are expected to respond emotionally to stories” (p. 111).

movement base. This chapter will show evidence of diverse moral stalwarts doing just that through their articulation of movement goals in the multicultural and multi-faith IRM.

It is important for SM activists to articulate their claims by including what is wrong with the world, what needs to be done, and what they are doing about it. In doing so, they are making their work collectively meaningful and targeting solutions in order to reify common claims. This chapter will show how movement goals help hold multicultural and multi-faith agents together because they are based on a shared sense of immigration-related injustice and provide the target around which collective efforts are organized. This will be accomplished by defining movement goals and showing how shared injustices are articulated and then *transformed* from “stories of agitation” to chapters in overall “narratives of change.” These stories of change illustrate examples of collective agency focused on common IRM claims.

This chapter moves to answer questions related to multiculturalism, religion, and movement goals in the role of social cohesion such as: What is it about movement claims that help hold otherwise disparate agents together? How have IRM activists chosen to articulate injustices and their respective common goals without sharing a common culture or belief system? Moreover, how have these multicultural, religious and nonreligious rule-changers chosen to collectively act upon their shared movement claims?

Informed by immigration-related lived injustices, IRM stalwarts in San Diego County placed two overarching goals on center stage as part of the larger call for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform: the right to migrate and the right to a livable

wage with worker protections. Those larger goals were given voice in stories of injustice, stories that call for (a) safe passage across the border, (b) family unity, (c) the ability to live free from raids and deportations, and (d) rights and protections for all workers. Many other goals were discussed along the way, including the right to equitable education, the right to healthcare, protections against discriminatory speech and hate crimes, and the right to healthy and safe housing and neighborhoods. With that said, however, the shared energy generated across this diverse coalition came from claims about these two basic human rights.<sup>42</sup> Now, let us turn to a more detailed explanation of these shared IRM goals and view evidence of how they reflect a common sense of injustice and provide a common target for collective efforts—thus further generating solidarity among the community of immigrant and non-immigrant rule-changers.

### **Goal #1: The Right to Migrate.**

The collective claim to a right to migrate can be heard in the following stories about the horrors of the current situation. These real life immigration narratives, true stories of agitation, are organized around the more detailed movement goals that include an end to border deaths, an end to raids and deportations, and honoring family unity. Not only do diverse, moral stalwarts of the IRM share these stories of agitation and injustice,

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<sup>42</sup> Goals are further explained by revealing how activists articulate their collective demands as agents of change while using language best suited for legislative reform. Framing movement goals practically as “rights” while also affirming and legitimating them by religious references (as seen in Chapter 3), multicultural activists are able to speak to a broad range of listeners and also enter the realm of political discourse, an arena where such change would occur.

but they have chosen to respond as a single force in correcting the wrongs that have offended their morality and abused their communities.

***End to Border Deaths.***

There is a place in Holtville, CA where Enrique Morones takes groups interested in learning more about the deaths along the U.S.-Mexico border. Morones is a Catholic IRM activist and founder of Border Angels, a nonprofit organization started in 1986 that places water gallons along the border “to save lives” of people crossing the desert. Because San Diego is situated along the U.S.-Mexico border, activists in San Diego County tend to be focused on the breadth and depth of consequences of passage into the U.S. through this border region. Several activist groups like the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), Border Angels (BA), and others opposing the border fence spend much time educating the public about the many deaths and violations of human rights along the border through border tours and legal observation trainings which help volunteers recognize when human rights are being violated.

On one such tour organized by BA, I joined a group of students and documentary filmmakers going to Terrace Park Cemetery, referred to as Holtville Cemetery by Morones. The day we arrived was around Easter Sunday, so many of the graves were lovingly adorned, a common practice in the Latin American tradition. There were plates of food, the deceased’s favorite drinks, stuffed animals, and bright flowers. Because this day was also National Holocaust Remembrance Day, our group prepared Stars of David,

as well as white crosses, out of thin wooden slabs to decorate the resting places of those whose bodies were not identified.

Just beyond the wall of trees was a pauper's grave no one would ever know existed. A stark contrast from the graves we just walked by with green grass and colorful adornments, a dirt field houses roughly five hundred bricks serving as individual head stones marked "John Doe" or "Jane Doe." Although some people whose bodies are buried here are local homeless individuals, most, said Enrique Morones, were unidentified undocumented immigrants of varying ages who have died trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border. A couple of male group members who were filming a documentary noted that this place, this pauper's grave, is "a dirty little secret," referring also to how it is hidden even within the cemetery. They noted that the name change from the immigrants' birth name to "John Doe" or "Jane Doe" is very similar to the experience of immigrants whose names were Americanized at the gates of Ellis Island, "They [immigrants] come to the U.S. and this is what they get," the filmmaker said as we ducked our heads back into Morones' van.

Our group had just finished adorning the simple graves with vibrantly colored plastic flowers, crosses, and Stars of David. We were sad to be reminded that about one third to one half of the pauper's cemetery is empty to allow room to grow. The wind blew fiercely while we were visiting, as though the spirits were trying to speak to us. "What are their names? Who are they?" I wondered. I read the words "*No olvidado*" [Not forgotten] on one of the crosses our group just finished putting up. And yet, the loved ones who might remember do not have the peace that may come with knowing

what happened to them. Furthermore, undocumented family members and friends may not ever be able to visit the grave of their loved one in the U.S. due to current immigration laws.

The wind continued to blow fiercely, whipping everyone's hair into their faces as Morones brought the group together and pointed out the writing on several graves that combined asserts, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment" from the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Morones, wearing a shirt that says "Imagine" on the front and on the back "and the world will live as one" from John Lennon's famous lyrics, has appeared on numerous news venues such as CNN and the O'Reilly Factor sharing the stories of border deaths and has met with various presidents and diplomats of Mexico and the United States including President Barack Obama. On this day, Morones told the group that he writes letters to the parents of children who have died trying to cross the border. He pulled out a letter that a mother wrote him in response to his. Her son was nineteen years old and soon to be getting married. He wanted to go to the U.S. to earn money for his new family. She told him not to go. The letter said that she doesn't know how he died. She couldn't sleep or stop crying. "God gives us the strength to be human... We have to suffer to understand." Morones said he had given a copy of the letter to MANA, a popular music group. The letter, he explained, later became MANA's inspiration for the song "Pobre Juan." That song, like our pilgrimage to the cemetery, raises a lament and tells a story of agitation shared by many families, IRM activists, and allies.

According to statistics collected by the United States Border Patrol (2012), in 1998, the death toll along the U.S.-Mexico border was 263 people. In 2005, it nearly doubled at 492 people. The number of deaths along the border continue to be high after data collected in 2008. For instance, the number of people who have died attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border in 2009 was 420, in 2010 was 365, in 2011 was 375, and in fiscal year 2012, it was 463 deaths (United States Border Patrol, 2012). According to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002), “Early in the Clinton administration (in 1993 and 1994), the INS developed a new border strategy that came to be known as ‘prevention through deterrence’” (p. 93). The goal was to prevent undocumented migration through setting up a less permeable border. “In October of that year [1994] the INS launched” Operation Gatekeeper “along the busiest stretch of the border in San Diego” (p. 93). This immigration prevention strategy “saw the installation of high-intensity floodlights to illuminate the border day and night, as well as an eight-foot steel fence along fourteen miles of border from the Pacific Ocean to the foothills of the Coast Ranges. Border Patrol officers were stationed every few hundred yards behind this formidable wall... [with] a new array of sophisticated hardware (motion detectors, infrared scopes, trip wires)” (Massey, Durand, and Malone, 2002, p. 93). Rather than stopping immigration (Cornelius, 2001), it pushed passage into “remote mountains, high deserts, and raging rivers” (Massey, Durand, and Malone, 2002, pp. 93-94), lead to a "higher rate of permanent settlement among undocumented migrants in the U.S." (Cornelius, 2001, p. 668), and caused a "sharp increase in the number of migrants who die trying to gain entry (p. 669). Similarly, Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008) argued, “President Clinton and Attorney

General Janet Reno[‘s] response to public pressure to do something about illegal immigration from Mexico,” namely Operation Gatekeeper among others, “did not deter illegal migration but did push crossings toward sites in the deserts and mountains, increasing tragic migrant deaths” (p. 11).

Elaine Elliott, Director of Service Learning at the University of San Diego, a local Catholic university, who also attended the border tour with Border Angels, later asked me, “And then how can we deal with the human rights issue that 4,500 migrants [at the time of the interview] have died crossing the border? We’ve done lots of programs trying to draw that and make it more known because people don’t even know that.” A report<sup>43</sup> from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Mexico’s National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) entitled, *Humanitarian Crisis: Migrant Deaths at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (finds “that border deaths have increased despite fewer unauthorized crossings due to the economic downturn” (Jiménez, 2009). In an ACLU article, Keenan, Executive Director of the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties, argued, “The current policies in place on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border have created a humanitarian crisis that has led to the deaths of more than 5,000 people” (American Civil Liberties Union, 2009). He continued, “Because of deadly practices and policies like Operation Gatekeeper, the death toll continues to rise unabated despite the decrease in unauthorized crossings due to economic factors.” The article listed local efforts “in response to government failures to prevent migrant deaths,” as “set[ting] up water stations, desert medical camps, humanitarian-aid patrols and other rescue and recovery

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<sup>43</sup> The report can be found at [www.aclu.org/immigrants/gen/41186pub20091001.html](http://www.aclu.org/immigrants/gen/41186pub20091001.html).

operations in an attempt to save lives along the U.S.-Mexican border area" which, according to the report "have been increasingly met with government opposition and punishment." In the article's conclusion, "The report recommends actions that the U.S. and Mexican governments should take to protect and advance the human right to life of migrants, including: Recognize border crossing deaths as an international humanitarian crisis; Adopt sensible, humane immigration and border policies; Shift more U.S. Border Patrol resources to search and rescue" among others.<sup>44</sup> In addition to the thousands that have died since Operation Gatekeeper has been in effect from 1994 until the present, nearly a thousand people attempting to cross have needed and received rescue annually. For instance, according to U.S. Border Patrol statistics, 1,070 people needed rescue in the 2011 fiscal year between Oct.1 to Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> in addition to the 357 people whose journey was fatally tragic (United States Border Patrol, 2011).

Some activists argue that because Operation Gatekeeper pushes migration into the treacherous mountains, it serves as a Darwinian survival of the fittest challenge for undocumented immigrants and creates a deadly journey for children and the elderly. Some immigrants, like Dario,<sup>45</sup> a local immigrant baker whose workplace was raided by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with slightly more resources and trustworthy contacts are able to bypass the several day, clandestine and life-threatening walk across to the U.S. But even he described his experience crossing the U.S.-Mexico

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<sup>44</sup> Other recommendations include, "Support nongovernmental humanitarian efforts at the border; Direct government agencies to allow humanitarian organizations to do their work to save lives and recover remains; Establish a binational, one-stop resource for rescue and recovery calls and convene all data collecting agencies to develop a uniform system and; Invite international involvement."

<sup>45</sup> His name was changed to for anonymity.

border as “dangerous.” He said, “We were lucky, and we got in a vehicle. There were about thirty people with us, and we crossed quickly. I don’t know how we crossed.” He confessed, “Of course you are afraid, because you never know what is going to happen to your life. There have been times when trucks have overturned.” He asked if I had seen in the news the story “about the person [a mother] that was not able to cross through the mountain? She [was caught in the San Diego wildfires and] burned?<sup>46</sup> And they have found people [in the desert] that have not made it.” Although “we have never walked across...it takes [some people] days to cross.” He explained that immigrants that cannot keep up during the journey of several days through desert and mountains must “stay [behind]... And they [the others in the group journeying north] have to just keep walking because if one gets caught, all get caught. So, that’s why they have found people dead in the desert.” The news account of an immigrant mother who died as a consequence of being caught in the wildfires while attempting to return to the United States where her husband and children were living is one that spread through the circles of activists and both saddened and angered many sympathizers. Stories like hers and Dario’s of the dangers and fatalities of border crossing are heard time and time again in the IRM as reminders of the continuous suffering brought about by restrictive immigration policies and the militarization of the border region.

During his public speaking engagements and on his border tours, Morones usually shares with groups border crossing experiences similar to what Dario spoke about. One

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<sup>46</sup> This is one news story of many that have been shared in the circles of the IRM community in San Diego, and the inspiration for Assemblymember Lori Saldana’s initiative to begin the United for a Hate Free San Diego coalition. The hateful online discussion responses to the news article was her impetus to organize for peaceful speech and tolerance of cultural diversity and sexual orientation.

story he has told on several public speaking occasions is of a father who was committed to finding his daughter's body after she died trying to cross the border. He was determined to give her a proper burial and bring her body home to Mexico. Morones said that the man contacted him for guidance, and he informed the father that it was impossible to find her. "The father tried anyway." During his search, the patriarch found three other female bodies and buried them in Mexico. Defying the odds, he also found his own daughter's body. He brought her back home and was able to bury her at home in Mexico. Morones posed the question many must have been thinking, "Can you imagine being a father, knowing your daughter died and searching for her body? Can you imagine what he must have been going through?" The fact that the father found three additional bodies is one reason Morones believes the death toll along the border is much higher than reported. He argues there are many more bodies unaccounted for along the vast desert and mountainous terrain of the border regions.

Immigrants who decide to cross into the U.S. from Mexico must not only contend with the climate, natural elements, dangerous terrain, and wild animals, but they must also be wary of gangs, their very own *pollero* [also called *coyote*, or border-crossing guide], anti-immigrant militia groups, and the U.S. Border Patrol. While none of the respondents shared stories of abuse about interactions with gangs or their *polleros*,<sup>47</sup> some did talk about interactions with Border Patrol. Joan Helland a San Diego Friend who worked closely with the Quaker organization, AFSC, recalled visiting the Border

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<sup>47</sup> Those who did speak about clandestine border crossings conducted the dangerous trek with polleros who they trusted or who came highly regarded by family or family friends, which may be the reason for not sharing stories of abuse or exploitation by polleros.

Patrol office in San Ysidro. The AFSC offers frequent “legal observer” trainings for volunteers to be skilled in what to look out for in order to ensure that law enforcement officials are operating in a manner that does not abuse the rights of those whom they are arresting or interrogating. On this occasion, they were visiting the Border Patrol office because the, “[Border Patrol] had shot a Mexican man in the back. He was coming across the border. They told him to stop. The border patrol officer felt threatened and somehow this Mexican got a bullet in the back... I mean how threatened do you have to be with a man running away from you?... We protested. We were there.” Enrique Morones and Joan Helland are all too familiar with the injustices along the border; however, they do not wallow in a depressed state or sit bitter at the world. Rather, they united with others to do something about it. Collaborating with others, they inform the larger public about what is occurring, serve as legal observers during interactions with border enforcement officials, and hold such officials accountable for their violations of human rights. They believe that their efforts do make a difference in minimizing the injustices along the border and working toward changing border policies and practices.

The narratives of agitation and injustice of border deaths are dramatically illustrated in *La Posada Sin Fronteras* where they are purposefully redefined as chapters in the larger, hope-generating stories of change. Organized by AFSC, Border Angels, the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, the Catholic Diocese of San Diego’s Office for Social Ministry, as well as other community groups in San Diego and Tijuana, along the U.S.-Mexico border, *La Posada Sin Fronteras* is an annual event that draws on a Latin American Christian Christmas tradition where *la posada* means “lodging” or “dwelling

place,” and *Sin Fronteras* means “without borders.” This bi-national and bilingual religious ritual that takes place along the U.S.-Mexico border wall in both San Diego and Tijuana, juxtaposes the restrictionist reality of immigration with a Biblically-inspired “celebration of the hospitality and welcoming of the stranger found in the original posada story, where Mary and Joseph search for shelter in Bethlehem” for baby Jesus’ birth (American Friends Service Committee, 2010). It has been enacted annually since 1993 along the U.S.-Mexico border at Friendship Park, but not without resistance. On the day that I attended *La Posada Sin Fronteras*, everyone was bundled up because it was chilly and had recently rained. Arguing that the road was flooded and too muddy to drive through, Border Patrol closed the road that leads directly to the site of the event at Friendship Park, leaving participants little choice but to venture on an unplanned hike an hour west through the muddy grassy area and south along the serene beach up to a large, metal border fence that pierces into the ocean. I heard participants say that some people carried a man in a wheel chair and assisted parents with strollers across the muddy terrain so that they, too, could arrive at Friendship Park and participate. Beyond the wetlands and along the beach, a chain-linked fence was extended into the ocean by a larger, more sophisticated barrier. It was at the portion of the wall where the chain link fence separates two nations that the ground was decorated in luminaries and where participants, separated by a border wall, sang together, reenacted Mary and Joseph’s search for a place to stay, and exchanged warm food like tamales, empanadas, and desserts through the cold, metal fence.

Like Morones, Helland, Elliott, and the vast majority of IRM activists, Jamie Gates, supporter and attendee of *La Posada*, advocates against the deaths along the border and for more economic equality. Gates, of the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice (ICWJ) reflected on the problematic triple border fence along the U.S.- Mexico border and used a narrative to equate the U.S.-Mexico border to the socio-ethnic divisions in South Africa. He described the U.S. as “a gated community” keeping people out to protect the wealth within. He went on to say, “You know we don’t put borders around our cities or our states within the U.S. We don’t put triple fences around our neighborhoods although some of us live in gated communities.” He compared the U.S. border to communities in South Africa where he grew up as a “missionary kid.” “It’s remarkable in the transition in the post-apartheid years in South Africa how much the wealthy have begun to fortify their homes. So gated communities have sprung up all over the place where they never were there before because the policing system had protected whites.” He attributed this fortification to “the radical disparity between those who have and those who don’t.” He argued, “So at one level I say security is a function of a community’s harmony... So globally for the U.S., the borders are essentially the gated community right? And so it’s essentially because of the levels of poverty in Mexico... It’s not about security fundamentally. It’s about keeping particular people out, in this case people who have been made poor by U.S. foreign policies like NAFTA.” Gates concluded, “[And] more and more people die going out to the deserts.”

While Gates drew on stories of comparison to illustrate the injustices related to the border, Pedro Rios San Diego Program Director of AFSC, one of the organizations

that helped plan *Las Posadas*, drew upon stories in U.S. history to make similar points. With so many deaths occurring along the border, Rios argued, “the immigration policies are inherently violent as far as how they’ve been institutionalized, especially around the border communities.” He explained that when the border patrol was created in 1924, it “came from a legacy of violence through the war of aggression by the U.S. against Mexico.” According to Rios, “we’re living in a situation in which it’s a more sophisticated level of violence, to the degree that we begin to accept and tolerate the violence and stop questioning it.”

Today, an additional fence has been built and, while friends and loved ones could at one time feel the warmth of one another’s hands through the cold metal, they are no longer allowed to touch one another. Only a certain number of people are permitted to come close to the current barrier while they are closely supervised by Border Patrol agents. Despite this tragedy, the local community of activists continue the *La Posada Sin Fronteras* tradition to commemorate those who have died attempting to cross the dangerous route into the U.S. and bring awareness of the “militarization of the border” and the effects immigration raids and deportations have on the family. It enacts a chapter of immigration injustice that encourages allies to be protagonists of change and co-write a larger story of hope by “speak[ing] out against border policies that force people into treacherous terrains causing their death, as they attempt to enter the United States” (American Friends Service Committee, 2010). Although a Christian tradition, its inclusive nature attracts participants from both sides of the border and from distinct faith

traditions who, together, hold candles, sing songs from distributed pamphlets, and share food after the collective hike to the border wall.<sup>48</sup>

These practices may draw on one tradition, but they have been made inclusive. They do not ask for participants to abandon their current belief systems or to believe in a specific version of a Higher Power of which they are not inclined. Rather, this annual ritual serves a dual purpose, it can further connect people of faith, particularly Christians to God, and connects all participants to the current suffering of immigrants as they knock on the door seeking welcome. People of the Christian faiths can draw on religious symbols and rituals to connect them further to their belief systems and serve as a bridge to their Higher Power. At the same time, agents of other faiths and nonreligious activists can choose to keep in the forefront a this-worldly focus on the current plight of immigrants and the protesting nature of this event. Furthermore, the act of establishing communion across the physical national border fence, through this event, communicates a desire to eliminate barriers that prevent the unity across differences and therefore create a community of multicultural and multi-faith members.

The goal for the right to migrate and an end to border deaths has been articulated through widely shared stories of injustice taking on various forms such as sharing personal testimonies, drawing on international comparisons, and pulling from U.S. history. Such stories of agitation did not end there. Rather, by continuing on with examples of collective action, such stories were transformed into chapters in an overall

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<sup>48</sup> On the walk back to our cars, I recall the shock I felt when young male Border Patrol Agents riding four-wheelers at high speeds across the sandy beach got dangerously close to participants in order to stop them and search their documents.

story of change through the collaboration of agents focused on the human right to safely migrate. IRM agents of change have articulated painful stories of deaths along the border and found ways to convert these narratives of agitation into mere chapters in the overall story of collective agency and hope for the future of immigrants. Similar steps have been made for a moratorium on immigration raids and deportations.

*End to Raids and Deportations.*

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in an article published by the Pew Research Center and authored by Lopez and Gonzalez-Barrera (2013), about 392,000 immigrants from around the world were “removed from the U.S.” in 2011. “Among them, 48% were deported for breaking U.S. laws” while the other 52% were non-criminals. “The Obama Administration has deported more immigrants annually than the George W. Bush Administration” and “deportations of unauthorized immigrants continue at record levels.” Although this article was published after data was collected for this research, the ever-present threat of deportation also shaped the lives immigrants lead during the time of data collection, and the resulting injustices are the subject of shared narratives of agitation aimed at mobilizing collective activism.

Because Carlos,<sup>49</sup> a twenty-six year old farm worker, day laborer, and construction worker from Oaxaca, Mexico lives in the United States without documents, he resides behind the shadows of trees and brush deep in the San Diego County

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<sup>49</sup> His name was changed for anonymity.

canyons.<sup>50</sup> The below poverty level lifestyle of migrant workers in San Diego County is no secret to IRM activists who organize for migrant workers' supplies, food, and services—especially during emergencies like the San Diego Wildfires of 2007. Hearing stories of this lived nightmare spurred many activists to begin their commitment to immigrant rights, while others who were already committed to the movement went full force and continue to share the realities of migrant life today. I, however, was very new to the stories of the life of a migrant worker and the details of this reality, and I was utterly shocked at the harsh living conditions and extreme income disparity I observed for myself. I walked through the canyons where several homes like Carlos', constructed from plastic tarps and slabs of wood, are nearby to large, professionally constructed homes in affluent North San Diego County. His home, he described to me, is “a house of plastic, with little wooden pieces to make a roof.” “We put plastic above so that when it rains, we don't get wet.” Camp-like communities like these have existed in the canyons for many decades.

Many activists in the area are familiar with the story of the Migrant Chapel constructed by local immigrants in partnership with a local Catholic parish which is featured in a documentary film, *The Invisible Chapel*, created by filmmaker John Carlos Frey. This outdoor chapel had stood for over twenty years under a canopy of trees near a stream in a canyon in North San Diego County. There was an altar and wooden church pews where migrants could safely share mass and pray peacefully alongside a local Catholic priest and volunteer parishioners from the community. By the time I visited the

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<sup>50</sup> Carlos' interview was originally in Spanish which I translated to English.

chapel, however, all that was left were the rays of sunshine breaking through the leaves pointing at the stone and wooden ruins of a holy place. Due to local anti-immigrant pressure, the parishioners and immigrants were forced to destroy the altar and the pews and find a new place for the Migrant Mass.<sup>51</sup>

It was at this new location where I first met Carlos, whose first English phrase he wanted to learn during the brief hour-long pre-mass English lesson was, “Can I have some water, please?” Life as a day laborer is unpredictable and hard work. One gets thirsty sweating under the hot, Southern California sun while beautifying the properties of wealthier neighbors. He told me that “there [in the canyons], the life is, one suffers. There is no place to shower, you cannot start a fire, you cannot cook. You cannot prepare food because it is not a house [that we live in]. One suffers... There is a camping stove, it’s very small. Or I go to restaurants. And it is expensive.” Here he said, “I live in fear. Because before, where I lived, a police officer came. And that’s the only thing that I’m afraid of. A police officer was parked near where I live, and he entered and approached me and said, ‘Tell me the truth, where do you live.’ And I, and I told him the truth, that I live there. He said that he would give me the chance to move in three or four days and that I can’t live there anymore.” Stories like Carlos’ were told as narratives of injustice in the movement especially during conversations around hate crimes when undocumented immigrant laborers like Carlos were violently targeted by anti-immigrants and also when

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<sup>51</sup> For a full story of the migrant chapel, see Filmmaker John Carlos Frey’s documentary, the Invisible Chapel, at <http://www.gatekeeperproductions.com/filmsa.html>.

many immigrants like Carlos were discriminated against and too scared to seek the much needed emergency relief during the time of the 2006 San Diego County wildfires.

The fear of police and local law enforcement is very real, especially if they involve the Border Patrol. Narratives related to law enforcement interactions and the anxious anticipation of such interactions were common. Some activists explained that police officers often request Spanish translators from Border Patrol units, a practice not likely to happen in California after the initiation of the Trust Act of 2013.<sup>52</sup> Dario, an undocumented immigrant who worked as a local baker in San Diego, recognized that the community would be much safer and “we would live more in peace” if immigrants felt they could talk to police and report crimes. He said that a lot of immigrants are afraid to talk to the police “because they are afraid that the police will turn them over to immigration... They do not live in peace. They don’t sleep peacefully... [And] if they have a bad neighbor, they don’t report them because they are afraid. If everything were different, people would live more calmly. There would not be resentment toward one’s own police or government.” A story about not being able to sleep peacefully

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<sup>52</sup> “California Gov. Jerry Brown signed the TRUST Act into law” which “prohibits sheriff’s deputies and police officers from complying with requests from immigration authorities to keep people in jail for extra time” which serve as “ICE’s primary tool used to deport immigrants under its Secure Communities program” “— even if they’re in custody for minor crimes,” according to a PBS article written by Jill Replogle (2013). The article, “With TRUST Act, California Blocks Key Deportation Tool,” written on Monday, October 7, 2013, said that ICE’s Secure Communities program “discourages immigrants from reporting crimes and runs contrary to the federal government’s stated mission to focus on deporting serious criminals” (Replogle, 2013). The Trust Act passed in California in 2013 in order for immigrant communities to feel secure in their interactions with the police, and call upon the police when needed, without fear of deportation. “Angela Chan, a bill supporter and senior staff attorney at Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus, estimates that 10,000-20,000 people might avoid deportation because of the new law” (Replogle, 2013). Moreover, “Last week, former Homeland Security Secretary and current University of California president Janet Napolitano told students she supported the TRUST Act” (Replogle, 2013). According to the article, “California is the first state to explicitly prohibit local law enforcement from complying with ICE hold requests” (Replogle, 2013).

dramatically brings to life the fear immigrants live with and challenges those who hear it to recognize the overall fearfulness of one's own law enforcement as an injustice.

Not only does this fear mean that immigrants live without the normal protections of law enforcement, they also live very constricted lives. Dario has lived in the U.S. with his family for seven years.<sup>53</sup> All that he has is in the U.S., "Over there in Mexico, we don't have anything... And it has been very difficult [here]... For example, you are always living with fear of immigration; or there are raids where you live." In the apartment complex where he used to live, "there were always raids and they were always getting people." Every day when his family would leave to go to work or to go to school they would get scared. He described a very hard life for his family and people in his community where "we would hardly ever leave our home. Because of the fear... of Immigration." They, like many immigrants in the same situation, would have to depend on his wife's family member who is a U.S. citizen to run errands for them. "It is very hard [to depend on another person like that] because, well, one suffers, no. It's not like being a person that was born here, that has papers, and that has the confidence and trust to go places. But we would go out sometimes, but always with precautions." Somehow this fear becomes normal, and some immigrants grow accustomed to it. "You are not going to let yourself get paranoid. You try to live as normal as you can. But you can never know when they will come to your home. Someone can turn you in and say that you don't have documents." His is the story of millions of undocumented people in the U.S. who cannot freely come and go to tend to everyday chores, and this too challenges

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<sup>53</sup> Dario's interview was originally in Spanish which I translated to English.

hearers to see the injustice and feel the agitation while creating and deepening the solidarity among those who already do.

In hopes of getting naturalized, Dario, like most undocumented workers, has to be conscientious and always save his pay stubs to prove the length of his stay in the U.S. “In the entire time that I have worked here, I have been saving my pay stubs, thinking about a future in which one day, I may need them for a reference. Or if one day, I fix my status, they will ask me—because we have seen cases in which they have asked our friends for proof that they have lived here.”

The stories about fear of deportation are well-known among the activist community and especially powerful when they remind hearers about the effects on children. Many undocumented children along with U.S. born children of immigrant parents have been raised in the U.S. knowing only the American culture, but they too experience the constant threat of deportation, a fear that can be traumatizing and may lead to depression. For example, Marco Castillo, a young immigrant college graduate under the religiously symbolic protection of sanctuary with the emotional and financial support of religious allies in the NSM, shared his story publicly during the NSM mass discussed in chapter 1. He came to this country when he was a small child and confessed to me, “I don’t know anything else but San Diego. I really don’t. To me, the idea of leaving the country is a foreign idea to me—it doesn’t register. I can’t imagine being anywhere else... I speak Spanish. You know, it’s not the best Spanish, but I speak it a lot better than a lot of people, and I know how to read and write—so, worst case scenario, I think I’m okay, you know, without my family, or whatever. But that’s, oh, it’s something

that I don't even want to think about..." His daily life in the shadows, like all undocumented immigrants, is also permeated with fearful precautions. "I have to go to the bank... where they recognize my face just because I want to avoid all kinds of problems. It just makes this *huge* impact on the way that I live day by day, you know. Um, the way that I drive, where, what routes do I take, you know. How I introduce myself, where I go, what I sign myself up to do—it affects *everything*." Living this way has taken a large toll on him and his sibling. "I'll be disappointed and I'll be depressed for two weeks, but I'll get over it. And that's the way it's always been." On the other hand, "My sister is the total opposite... she'll stay mad, and she'll get sad and depressed. And I've seen what it has done to her. It's made her a quiet person, and it's made her kind of almost detached... I deal with it one step at a time."

Fear and insecurity are sentiments that go beyond the Mexican and other Latin American immigrants coming from the south. Immigrants from around the world and from distinct faith traditions, especially in the post 9/11 context, have similar stories of injustices related to immigration legislation and practices. "The issue of immigration is a big issue in our community, especially after 9/11 when things became more difficult [for] Muslims or Arabs or Middle Eastern people to get their paperwork done," explained Imam Taha Hassane of the ICWJ. "And we have experienced *a lot* of difficulties with the delay of the green card and the citizenship." He described a very good relationship with "all the government agencies, whether [they were] Homeland Security, the FBI, or the law enforcement" however, "whenever we ask about any case, the common answer we get all the time is 'security check, it is out of our hands. It is out in D.C.'"

Immigrants in his community “got stuck here for years and years.” It also upset him that “people here could not fulfill some of their religious duties, especially the pilgrimage.” One of his main concerns was that “it affected the credibility of our government. It affected the trust that [a] citizen should have in his or her own government, in his or her own security agencies.” He could not understand why elderly citizens have been delayed for no apparent reason, all the while, “they have spent a lot of money on lawyers trying to check on their case and they could not do anything.” Because of the backlog, visas expired, thus creating many undocumented immigrants in the Muslim community.

This was especially true, according to Imam Taha, “when the government imposed the registration of Middle Eastern people... Many people disappeared by the way. Many people, they went to register but they didn’t come back [home].” Empathizing from a history of internment in the U.S. concentration camps during World War II, Japanese civil right activists, recalled Imam Taha, “went to L.A. [Los Angeles] downtown, and they asked all the Muslims and the Arabs who [were going] to register themselves to [first]... give them all their information, their name, the others phone number... ‘By 5pm, if you don’t show up, we will contact your family.’ And this was a way to bring them relief.” Today’s immigrants remember and tell the stories of earlier immigrant troubles and partner with others as they frame the injustice that needs to be changed.

For immigration attorney and IRM activist Andrea Guerrero with the Immigrant Rights Consortium (IRC), some stories of injustice stand out in her mind that she says she still can’t get over. “I had to walk a valedictorian through deportation proceedings and I

couldn't do anything to save her." Aside from being an undocumented immigrant, this young girl "had a clean record... and she was valedictorian at her high school. She was the prom queen." Guerrero remembered "begging that she at least be allowed to stay and to go to prom." The young girl "was dirt poor and she was the American Dream. She had fought against all odds to rise above poverty and everything else." Described as "a superstar," the high school student "was rewarded with deportation. There was no discretion in our lives to save her. And I think that one hurt."

The hypocrisy surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border wall angers IRM activists. They recount stories of how Border Patrol agents turn the other way during peak agricultural seasons, allowing undocumented people to enter. During the Border Immersion Program, a retreat to better understand the border dynamics and immigration, Sister Barbara Quinn, a Catholic nun, asked a Border Patrol agent, "If you do these sweeps and you profile people, why don't you go into the fields during harvesting time for flowers?" She informed me that the agent responded very candidly by saying, "We have a policy to turn our glance away from that when it comes time for the harvesting. Because otherwise the commerce would just not work." After sharing this story with me, she emphasized how "the hypocrisy of that beamed. So that kind of thing that comes to the fore is part of what really changes people's thinking about this. We are really using people here in our system and very hypocritical[ly]... And it causes great consternation, great frustration, great anger, and also points the way to where policy change needs to happen." Similarly, Roberto Martinez of AFSC noted that the government also understands that our economy could not function without cheap labor. "In California

there's like a \$30 billion annual agricultural economy... And none of it would exist without farm workers, whether they're legal or illegal." In his personal experience, "Immigrants who have crossed, tell me at my office that when they cross in groups and the border patrol stops it, they ask them, 'Where are you going?' And if they say they're going to L.A. [Los Angeles]... they put them in the van. If they say they're going to north San Diego County to harvest lettuce and strawberries, they say, 'Go ahead.' So it's a political game... They know they're not going to get anybody else to do that work. They know they're not going to get Americans. They already tried it." In 1986 when he was "organizing the farm workers for the amnesty, the regional INS director ordered sweeps of the whole area... and arrested as many farm workers as he could and deport them." They called it "'Operation Jobs' so they could bring in Americans to do the work, and the farm workers... none of them lasted over two weeks... working bent over in the farms in the hot sun for less than minimum wage." He continued, "So the INS and border patrol had to make an agreement with the growers and the racetracks to do a moratorium on raids so that they could get all these farmworkers back and racetrack workers. And they even forced... governor Wilson to sign an agreement that they would not raid the farms any more. So that goes to show you that it's all political."

The many incidents where legal immigrants and U.S. citizens get caught in the web of immigration enforcement are also disconcerting for IRM activists, and part of the stories of agitation discussed within multicultural and mutli-faith activist circles. Joan Helland, a Quaker involved with AFSC and member of ICWJ, heard "lots of stories of abuse" along the border which also happened to people with proper immigration

documents. She shared an incident with me of a woman who came into the AFSC office upset at the humiliation she experienced when crossing into the U.S. Helland remembered hearing the mother say, “I came across the border. I have papers with my child who is nursing.” Apparently, “they didn’t have the baby’s passport or something. And they said, ‘Prove that that’s your baby.’ And she had to prove she was lactating.” Eddie Meyer of United for a Hate Free San Diego (UHFSD) and assistant to Assemblymember Lori Saldana, shared with me a memorable story from his childhood. He was stopped by the Border Patrol as a high school student when he got wet from walking his dog with his skateboard along the beach near the border. His mother also shared with him many stories of being stopped by immigration enforcement, and that was upsetting for him, “I felt that it was wrong for someone to be put in that situation. I mean, here’s my mom who was raising six children. I know that she has legal residence, and she would cross back and forth from bus to bus to be at all our schools. She was the traditional Mexican mom who cared about family, put food on the table, cared about our education... So to see her being treated by people who are supposed to be there to protect [her and the community]” was upsetting.

Living in fear has caused many to become prisoners in their own homes thinking twice about going to the market to get milk, much less taking to the streets to protest their nightmarish conditions. David Schmidt of Si Se Puede (SSP) and the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition “talked to people who were afraid to go to the march because they were afraid the Border Patrol was going to be there. And they were like, ‘What if they have a raid right down at the march?’ Which has never happened yet. And we told people that. But obviously it’s

easy for me to say that; I'm a U.S. citizen. So it's easy for me to go to a march. But people are afraid.”

Although many immigrants are afraid, there are still many others who are courageous, willing, and able to, according to Rabbi Laurie Coskey, “pray with their feet.” For them, stories of agitation do not end there. Rather, immigrants and non-immigrant allies of varying belief systems, together, add chapters to these narratives, chapters that contain collective efforts for change and renewed hope. In doing so, IRM activists choose not to settle for a victim-narrative. Rather, they decide to be agents of change, a community of rule-changers, and collectively organize to remedy the injustices that continue to be lived by many. Through their efforts, IRM stalwarts focus their energy on creating narratives that paint a world where immigrants can live as full and accepted members of society. For instance, after attending the IRM march in 2006 and seeing the “desperation in people’s eyes,” Cynthia Salazar, an IRM activist with JOB, understood the fear that permeated the immigrant community and that motivated her to commit herself to helping gain immigrant rights. This event was the transition where her empathy ignited both agitation and hope, and overcame the demobilizing effects of fear.

Movement activists like Cynthia Salazar, organize for immigrants to be able to securely emerge from hiding with the freedom of domestic and international mobility. These agents of change may differ at times regarding legislative specificities of international mobility such as policy regarding demilitarization of the border, implementing secure borders with higher migration quotas, or removing the international border walls altogether. They articulate goals, however, that secure the fundamental and

historical need for human beings to travel with legal rights, especially when their livelihood and family unity are at stake.

Often, movement claims are inferred through stories of agitation that give accounts of injustice and paint a picture of how the world ought to operate. In addition to providing testimonies of injustices, activists also follow up with a clear articulation of their goals in both public and private organizing settings. This rational-claims making that follows or refers to narratives of injustice are much like what an activist from SSP clearly articulated in reference to movement goals geared toward immigrant mobility, “I want everyone to be legal. I don’t want people who use false documentation to be criminalized... I would like for there to be mobility. I would like for people if they want to live here, they could live here. If they want to go back to their country of origin, they could do that with the freedom that is given to them by being a human being.” This activist does not want people to feel like they have to “uproot [their] entire family” because the only other choice they have is to split up and “leave them behind” and “be away from them forever.”

Another example is provided by Linda Arreola of the Office of Social Ministry of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego who articulates the movement claim to the right to migrate along with more realistic expectations for undocumented immigrants. Arreola says, “We [Catholics influenced by Catholic Social Teaching] usually say that it’s the right to migrate [that] supersedes.” She says this is especially true “if nations enforcing their borders is not done in a humane manner. And especially if it doesn’t benefit the common good.” She reasoned, “I mean we always say, ‘Let’s be realistic. We have

5,000 low skilled worker visas available per year. You're going to tell me that there's only 5,000 people that are needed across the US?' No." She continued, "And so when we start showing those numbers and we start showing what it takes for a person to get in line and apply for their status, and we're saying, 'OK wait a minute... Let's go home and wait in line and don't eat...'. So when we present these things, then they can understand how the system needs to be reworked." Arreola clarified, "the [Catholic] church was never against any of the bills where legalization was offered where there was a penalty. We were just saying the penalty needs to be just. You can't expect a family of four to come up with \$40,000 to pay a fine. Then they're not going to legalize their status unless you let them do it over time."

Choosing to be part of a story of change, multicultural and multi-faith IRM activists not only articulate the injustices they see as wrong, but they also frame their narratives in terms of the actions they have collectively taken. In doing so, they are also implying what they should continue to do while inspiring hope and a deeper social cohesion that comes from collective action. For instance, in 2006, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began a campaign under the name Operation Return to Sender. Its public purpose was to target dangerous criminals for whom warrants were issued. Many undocumented immigrants without criminal records, however, have also been deported in the process. In common practice under the campaign, ICE agents knock on the doors of the immigrants for whom they have a warrant for arrest. Often times, the person for whom the warrant is issued no longer resides in the current residence. Nonetheless, once the door is open, ICE officials often request to enter the home and ask

to see identification. Not knowing their rights, unsuspecting immigrants currently dwelling in the residence often open the door and allow the officials entry. Many times, this results in what is called “collateral damage.” In other words, immigrants currently residing in the home, for whom the warrants are not intended, are asked to show proper immigration documents. If they are not able to provide them, they are arrested and often deported. Anticipating such an occurrence, ICE officials park around the corner with multiple vehicles capable of transporting a large group of immigrants. IRM activists were appalled when they discovered this practice. Speaking in a panel at San Diego State University, Pedro Rios of AFSC explained that Operation Return to Sender has “detained 359 people while 60 are who they were looking for (as of April 24, 2007).” In doing so, he described ICE practices as “working along the margins of the constitution.”

These stories circulated through the network of activists and caused an uproar in the San Diego community. Local religious leaders operating from varying faith traditions, particularly Episcopal, Catholic, Quaker, and Jewish, therefore decided to do something about it. Their decision for collective action in an effort to end the raids and deportations in the community in response to these accounts of injustices show, again, how stories of agitation are transformed into chapters in the larger, inspiring story of change. Dean Scott Richardson and Rabbi Laurie Coskey shared their story of multicultural and interfaith collective action contesting the injustice that had been further dividing families and displacing community members. In his sermon, Dean Scott Richardson gives a “report from the field,” “We're in the offices of ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a wing of the Department of Homeland Security. Getting in

wasn't easy. ICE is pursuing a program, funded by Congress, known as 'Operation Return to Sender.' This operation terrifies the undocumented community. On their behalf, we repeatedly ask for an interview. When it's clear that this isn't forthcoming, we take it up a notch – we wash the feet of the undocumented on Maundy [Holy] Thursday in front of the Federal Building and in front of news cameras from NBC, Fox TV, and Univision.” With an agreement to meet, Dean Scott announced that “the meeting takes place two weeks later.” What began as two adversarial positions between the faith leaders and the immigration enforcement officials, transformed into a delicately thin relationship which resulted in a victorious, unofficial agreement to cease the process of “collateral damage.” According to Dean Scott, the first meetings were challenging. “The director of ICE initially takes a hard line; he tells us about his idyllic Midwestern small town ruined by immigrants.” The interfaith group in response “suggest[s] that the town was ruined by a giant chicken-packing plant paying substandard wages.” The director holds up his law code before the group “to reinforce his right to detain anyone suspected of being in the country without authorization. We fire back, demanding he acknowledge the facts on the ground – even contemplating the deportation of twelve million people causes grievous harm.” After some time building relationships on both sides through extensive meetings and passionate conversations, “then, eventually, everyone calms down.” Dean Scott continued, “The conversation broadens – history, spirituality, political strategy. We learn something about one another.” At this time, the other becomes more familiar, and the people that were once defined as “anti-immigrant positions” become simply *people* with their own pressures and hardships. A relationship

begins to form [between the ICE officials and the multi-faith activists]" as they share their stories connecting them to the issues of immigration and faith. It was "in this enriched context" that the multicultural, interfaith group "made a request." They proffered, "we allow that ICE is obliged to carry out policies mandated by Congress" since the group is already "working to change those." And, they "also suggest that discretion is always possible in every law-enforcement situation; life is full of gray areas." In this spirit, "We ask the director to instruct his officers to resist collateral arrests, [referred to as] mission creep – to remain as focused as possible when in the field and avoid asking people for papers if they are not the specific individuals being sought."

Rabbi Laurie Coskey, who gave the sermon at the NSM mass at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, publicly informed the audience during the sermon that after two meetings with ICE, "We are getting them to focus" on the "legal *and* spiritual prices [of their actions]. [A lot of churches are involved, and] we would like to get ICE to reflect on their own spirituality and community." She recalled Dean Scott saying, "We would have to answer to a voice more demanding than our history." She explained that Dean Scott told the local ICE leaders that God expects us to be holy people by respecting the spark of the Divine in everyone, including immigrants. She confessed that they were unable to stop Operation Return to Sender because it came from Congress. However, "we ask that they be absolutely discerning with one address [specifically for whom there is a warrant, and] stop Mission Creep--stop asking for other's documents [people for whom they did not come specifically]." She said the meetings "[have] been fruitful."

This inspiring narrative illustrated a monumental victory for the IRM in San

Diego County. At a separate mass, Dean Scott identified the interfaith group with Abraham, “engaging power in the service of humanity after sojourning for a good while.” Concluding this portion of his sermon, he described the limits of what he was able to share with the activist community from the confidential conversations with the ICE officials. “Because the conversation is confidential, we can’t tell our friends how the director responded to our request. We can say that we believe life is better now for those who live and serve in San Diego without documents. We can also promise that the conversation with the director and his staff will continue for as long as possible.” He concluded paraphrasing Martin Luther King, Jr. and abolitionist and minister, Theodore Parker’s famous quote, “The arc of history is long but it always bends towards justice, inclusion, and love – unless we disengage. But we don't do that. We don't do that.”

Despite the end of the talks and uncertainty regarding the longevity of the informal agreement, faith leaders held hope that the promise would be kept. Even though there was no policy change for the moratorium of accruing “collateral damage,” influencing a change in immigration enforcement practices through direct dialogue around faith principles was an unprecedented success filled with hope for the future. This, along with other examples of collective efforts, is an empowering point of conversion from shared stories of injustice and agitation to shared stories of change and hope for movement goals through the unifying power of collective agency.

***Right to Family Unity.***

IRM activists do not linger in the fatalistic sadness of the heart-wrenching experience of family separation, but choose to collectively mobilize through shared agitation and hope for family unity. For instance, the articulation of the story of change can be found in immigration attorney, IRC founder and activist Andrea Guerrero's passionate description of the injustice of family separation. Here, she used agitation and hope as the fuel for collective mobilization, "I saw citizens who couldn't immigrate their spouses or children. Citizen children who were being separated from their families. And I just thought, 'This is so morally outrageous; there has to be a way to capture this rage and convert it into some kind of mobilization.'"

In the same vein as the right to migrate, the preservation of family unity is one of the most sacredly held rights sought after in the IRM. This deeply revered and tightly bound relationship is most often protected in a very primal way. Ensuring family unity is a critical challenge immigrants face, and the mobilizing narratives of the movement often recount the injustices of separation and the actions that point toward the hope of unity. Cynthia Salazar of JOB acknowledged the lengths to which family members go to be together and provide a better future for one another, "If you want to see your loved ones, you're going to do whatever it takes for you to have contact with them. Cuban people, they risk their lives to come over... they [not only want to be with loved ones, they also] want something better for their families." Moreover, it is not uncommon for parents to migrate without their children and leave them with grandparents, friends, or extended family in order to earn money to provide a better life for their families, but at great cost to

the family unit. Children desperately seeking to reunite with their parents often attempt the highly dangerous trek to enter the country alone and without documentation.

According to the United States Border Patrol statistics, during the 2008 fiscal year, there were 8,041 apprehensions of unaccompanied children from the age of infancy to 17 years of age (United States Border Patrol, 2012). In 2009, there were 19,668, and by 2012, there were 24,481 apprehensions of unaccompanied children despite the dramatic reduction of overall apprehensions from 1,071,972 in 2006, to 705,005 in 2008, and further to 356,873 in the Southwest Border Sectors in 2012, according to the U.S. Border Patrol (2012).

Often held second only to a higher power, kinship is globally understood and taken for granted as a fundamental part of humanity. For example, according to Article 16.3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the United Nations, “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State” (United Nations, n.d.). However, as a result of current immigration policies, mixed status families, or families with both documented and undocumented members, are unwillingly and even forcefully separated through deportation. Eduardo Orendain, an immigration attorney who works closely with Border Angels, has repeatedly witnessed firsthand the injustice of families torn apart within the legal system. According to Orendain, if “I’m a U.S. citizen [and] if I wanted to petition a sibling of mine from Mexico, it would take fourteen years for that sibling to be able to immigrate under that visa.” He described the process as “unrealistic” and asked, “Why does it need to take that long?” Realizing that “the system is broken in a lot of ways,”

Orendain stated, “the focus should be more on how we can help the people and help the families stay together.” During his interview, he emphasized again and again that the law should be more humane and keep families together. To Orendain, family unity with realistic immigration processes should be top priority. “There’s a lot of people who say, ‘The people who are illegal should just go back and get in line.’ I don’t know what line they’re talking about. And that’s the process that kind of worries me.” He continued, “And I don’t think that there is a fair system of how to give those people a way to legalize...”<sup>54</sup>

Nearly all undocumented immigrants that cannot migrate freely between their host and home countries are separated from loved ones for long periods of time and suffer from missing critical familial milestones. For example, Dario is separated from his parents and extended family while he lives in the U.S. The first time I met Dario was at a fundraiser organized by the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition where activists were working to help fund the legal fees and living expenses of local bakers who were undergoing deportation proceedings after a raid at their workplace. At the fundraiser, Dario told me through tear-filled eyes that he was unable to go to his father’s funeral in Mexico. “It had been seven

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<sup>54</sup> Based on the countless stories he has witnessed firsthand and on his expertise as an immigration attorney, Orendain rationalizes, “There are worse crimes in my view than just entering a country illegally and starting your business, starting to work or starting a family here.” He is “of the opinion that if you’ve been here for a significant amount of time... three years, five years, whatever, and you’ve proven yourself that you’re a working person, you’re not out there causing trouble, and you have the family ties, I don’t see why there wouldn’t be a way that we could give these people the legalization that I think they deserve. And that’s my biggest problem with the system right now...” Orendain explained that if you entered the U.S. without documents and have been living here for many years, “you have a much bigger impact.” “Now you’ve worked. You have family, you have kids who are U.S. citizens... Some of these people own businesses. Some of these people own their own homes...” He concluded, “Waiting fourteen years while a sibling petition [for an immigrant visa in order to become a legal permanent resident with a U.S. Green Card] to me is not reasonable; it’s not just.”

years since we [my wife and I] last saw our family. We only spoke on the phone... it is very hard... you can't see your family, your siblings, your dad, your mom." When he left Mexico in 1997, his father was still alive. Dario reflected, "He died about three years later, and I couldn't go. So, the night that he died, I was so upset because... we could not return... it would have to be clandestinely, we'd have to cross. You know, a lot of people lose their lives [crossing that way]."

Stories of family separation are well-known to activists, many of whom have undocumented family members or are themselves undocumented and know firsthand the feeling of insecurity and fear of deportation. Not only do immigrants leave family outside the U.S., they also risk having to leave family behind in the U.S. if they are caught in an ICE raid or undergo deportation proceedings. For example, in addition to being separated from his family in Mexico for so many years, Dario was also separated from his wife and daughter after his workplace was raided by ICE officials. Following his workplace raid, ICE officials came looking for him at his home while he was out with his wife. When he heard they were searching for him, he told his wife, "Immigration [officials] arrived at the house, and I am going to turn myself in because I am not a criminal." His thirteen year old daughter was home from school that day with her aunt due to a doctor's appointment, and she was present when ICE officials searched through their closets and all of her father's belongings in her home. "[My daughter] was just shocked in the moment... Yes. She saw everything." A female ICE official told Dario she had to put handcuffs on him for security reasons. He said it was fine; he understood. "[My daughter] began to cry... And the woman told my daughter, '*Mija* [my daughter],

don't cry, okay? Your dad will be fine. Right now, I have to take him because we have to ask him more questions. It won't be long until he will be back here with you.' And I told my daughter, '*Mija*, don't cry. Everything will be fine. Don't be afraid. Nothing is going to happen to me.'" Activists from AFSC, Border Angels, RRC, UCSD student activists, and SSP among others in the May 1st Coalition heard Dario's story and those of other immigrant workers in a similar situation. Their stories of agitation provided an impetus to organize a fundraiser and help offset the costs of posting bail and hiring immigration attorneys.

Unlike Dario whose wife and daughter live with him in the U.S. in their own home which they purchased in San Diego, Carlos' work as a day laborer and farmworker is seasonal and unpredictable, thus paying significantly less. Largely for these reasons, his wife and two-year old daughter live in Oaxaca, Mexico while he lives in a makeshift tent in the canyons of North San Diego County. He explained that he wants his family to be together, but "it's not possible because over there [in Mexico] you need money. They pay you less and food is expensive. Clothes are expensive... They pay very little, and it's not enough." Like the story of many day laborers and migrant farmworkers, he misses his family, but will have to work in the U.S. and save money for "about a year and a half" before he can go home to Mexico and visit them. "I have to cross, and it's difficult to return... I'm [chuckles nervously] a little scared. Yes." Real-life stories like Carlos' are well-known in activist circles and heard more frequently in the rural parts of San Diego County where day laborers living below poverty find jobs where agriculture is more prominent. Still, activists in the urban areas are privy to migrant life and are

mindful of the needs of day laborers and farmworkers. I saw this was especially the case during the San Diego County Wildfires when donations were gathered specifically with day laborers and farmworkers in mind. Enrique Morones of Border Angels would also frequent the weekly Migrant Mass in North San Diego County where he would return and report to activists in the City of San Diego any injustice that required their attention or support.

Family separation as a result of immigration policies affects millions of immigrants and their loved ones. The Pew Research Center estimated that “as of March 2012, 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States, down from 12.2 million in 2007 (Passel, Cohn, & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). IRM activists know that many immigrants must wait years in between family visits because the financial costs of migration are so great and the safety risk of crossing clandestinely is so high due to increasing militarization of the border wall and difficulty migrating back and forth. The financial cost and risks of migration have thus kept more migrants in the U.S. for longer periods of time. Nevins’ (2002) research on Operation Gatekeeper explicated, “...the growing difficulty and costs associated with entering the United States led to a decline in a circular migration that characterized Mexico-U.S. migration before 1917. This made it more likely that Mexicans would settle in the United States rather than risk the possibility of not being able to reenter the country” (p. 27). Moreover, according to Massey, Durand, and Malone (2002), the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 which “declared illegal aliens ineligible to receive Social Security benefits and limited their eligibility for educational benefits, even if they had

paid the requisite taxes” “also gave authority to states to limit public assistance to aliens (both legal and illegal) and increased the income threshold required for a legal resident alien to sponsor the immigration of a family member.” In other words, “The latter provision represents another attempt to scale back family immigration: Congress did not expect that many poor immigrant families would be able to meet the new income threshold,” further separating millions of families (p. 95).

Family separation is a devastating experience for immigrants from around the world, including members of the Muslim community. From activists’ stories of injustice arises an articulation of their movement goals. For instance, “People here could not go and visit their families,” said Imam Taha Hassane of ICWJ. “[The post 9/11 immigration restrictions have been] cutting relationships with families.” For him, “the most important thing is not to neglect the humanitarian side.” He explained, “We talk a lot about the family issues about the immigrants who are here legally and they would like to bring their family members, to unite the family. To bring all the members of the family together, living together, enjoying being with the other. So this is something we would like to happen as soon as possible.” According to Imam Taha Hassane, “In many cases of immigration where the family is involved, [that fact] should be taken into consideration more than anything else.”

Estela De Los Rios of IRC and JOB similarly articulated that without the stability of the family unit “ultimately it’s the children that are suffering because they’re traumatized and they’re separated from their families.” The main IRM message for her, arising from commonly understood stories of agitation, is that “immigrants are human as

well. Any other human being should be respected as a human being and the issue of immigration should be a humanitarian issue.” Just as De Los Rios and others advocate for family reunification, so does the Catholic Diocese of San Diego’s Office for Social Ministry. “We were pushing for... family reunification because we felt that made more sense to our people more than anything,” said Linda Arreola who keeps a framed picture on her desk of white crosses along the border wall commemorating the immigrants who have died trying to cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

In another shift from a fatalistic narrative of injustice into a hope-generating story of change and collective agency, an anonymous activist member of SSP articulated the movement goal of family unity and the urgency in collectively meeting the needs of immigrants already separated from their families. This activist posed serious questions regarding the aftermath of raids and deportations for immigrant families and thinks the movement focus needs to go beyond documenting immigration raids and informing the public about the injustices happening in immigrant communities in the U.S. According to this movement member, it is critical to collectively act now to address the urgent needs of immigrants who have already been separated from their families, “What happens to the families once they’re separated? What happens to the families when the mother is taken away and the father is here with five children and they’re all born here and they don’t speak their native language. And what happens to them? What happens to the person that gets sent back to Tijuana and they have nowhere to go? What happens? To me, that’s what’s important. It’s the individual. It’s the person that’s directly being affected by this. It’s the kids that are directly being affected by this.” These questions

communicate a story of desperation, family separation, and feelings of isolation. Within them is a cry to ask the unanswered questions and an urgency to move toward hope through action. Statements like these are used at times as a type of story in meetings that provide a point at which allies can converge and begin the process of collaboration.

At other times, stories take on a more autobiographical form to connect sympathizers to immigrants on a human level in order to achieve legislative reform. In an effort to keep families together and “put a humanitarian face” to the issues of immigration, the national New Sanctuary Movement (NSM) was extended to San Diego County by Rabbi Laurie Coskey and Madre Patricia Andrews-Callori of ICWJ along with local allies. Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson of St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral explained one of the purposes of the NSM is offering relief to undocumented immigrants in need. The NSM offered undocumented immigrants a place to live and financial support (when resources allowed) as well as spiritual and emotional support throughout deportation proceedings and court appearances. According to Madre Patricia, members of a family in sanctuary at the time, whose “home [was] broken into at three or four in the morning” soon after “became anorexic in the fetal position because of the terror.” After being “taken to the immigration prison, children and parents [were] put into separate cells not knowing where each other was.” Today, “they walk around like an amoeba because they can’t be out of each other’s sight. That’s terrorism, and it’s... so wrong and insidious.” Reverend Mary further explained, “They [participants in the NSM] are doing what they can in the idea of a sanctuary movement to make it a safe place to offer [the undocumented immigrants in sanctuary] and also resources as to what they need.”

In addition to “acquir[ing] relief for the families that sought it with ICWJ,” comprehensive immigration reform is “the overarching goal,” said Maria Arroyo a staff member of ICWJ who was the liaison in helping get religious institutions on board with the NSM. David Barrows of SDF and AFSC informed me that the NSM came out of a national coalition designed as “a symbolic movement to give voice to the few. In order to use injustice narratives to shift into stories of change, the NSM aimed at “creat[ing] or bring[ing] a human face to all of this” because “it’s harder to be compassionate” and “we don’t connect it to actual human beings” when “it’s so far away or not tangible,” said Maria Arroyo. Furthermore, Jamie Gates of ICWJ, explained, “it [the NSM] was driven sort of by a state interest or a national interest in bringing this particular way of showing... the holes in the current immigration policies.” Gates described the NSM’s peaceful tactic as a method that “amplify[ies] the problems, like shin[ing] light on the problems by picking a couple of cases in each city and then for churches to sanctuary these families.” The NSM made it possible for people “to hear the stories of the different people in this country, their struggles, their suffering. What their goals are,” said Arroyo. It also showed how many immigrants are “family people, they’re just looking to really create a better life for their family, a better opportunity for their children. And really... it’s the human stories.” The expectation is to help society connect to immigrants and feel a “sense of compassion and empathy. And [realize] you’re just like me, and I’m like you; and we have the same struggles; we’re looking for the same things.” Arroyo wondered aloud, “And how can one come across a story like that and not be compassionate? And not want the best for the family? How can that be? I still don’t understand myself. But

really that was the goal, to bring the stories forward. Bring these faces forward and create that human story, that we're all really a part of; we're all really weaved into."

Rabbi Laurie, similarly informed me that "the New Sanctuary Movement was designed to be part of successful legislative change." Its purpose is "to show real people, really contributing" and "create a life in the light rather than the shadows." Because immigrants are "such a strong part of the fabric of our community," we "need to tell the story of immigrants... So many millions and millions of people are suffering. They are really suffering. I hate that." Furthermore, Reverend Mary stated the NSM "show[s] the church as a *symbol* in this whole immigration issue of *standing up* for the immigrants' rights. Because there's *such* a need. There's so much misunderstanding of what's going on with immigrants in this country. It's just shameful."

Publicly sharing the stories and faces of undocumented immigrants symbolically protected by religious organizations and financially and emotionally supported by them while in sanctuary, the interfaith and multicultural NSM sought to put pressure on Congress while debunking the demonizing myths about undocumented immigrants. Showing, through personal stories, that families and productive members of the community are being treated as criminals and separated from their loved ones, their goals are to preserve family unity and enact comprehensive immigration reform. For instance, during the NSM mass described in chapter 1, a young girl read an emotional poem she wrote about family separation. The poem tells a story that begins at three in the morning. A little girl is abruptly awakened by her father who shouts, "GET UP! WE'RE LEAVING!" "He rushes me into a black van" along with other children, moms, and

grandmas. Then, everyone must rush out of the van. The young girl notices, “The fence is cut open. They hear a siren.” Then a loud voice shouts, “This is the United States Border Patrol!” The young girl glances at her father and notices her “Dad’s eyes” are filled with “fear, disappointment.” Terrified, she rushes through the fence, and with a sigh of relief, is thankful, “Yes, I made it! I’m safe.” But, “then she looks back and realizes, ‘they have taken my dad, my hero, the one who wanted a chance for a better life.’” He tries to reassure her and says, “It’s okay *mija* [my daughter], I’ll be with you every step of the way, and God will guide you.” She replies sadly, “I love you *papi*.”

The effects of sharing personal such narratives of injustice were evident to Maria Arroyo, who recounted the questions that arose after church goers heard the personal story a grandfather told, on behalf of the IRM, during a Catholic church service. He divulged that he is undergoing deportation proceedings, and he is his grandchildren’s caregiver. “And that whole idea that what happens with the grandchildren? Who is going to care for them? What kind of life awaits them if this loving grandparent is turned away from them?” She described the reactions. “And people were responding to his story saying, ‘Hey, I’m a grandparent.’ And they came from different angles. Some of them were saying, ‘I’m a grandparent. I’m retired. I don’t want to think about having to raise children, and here you are.’ And there was one couple [that] said, ‘We’re raising our grandchildren... And can’t imagine being turned away.’”

Marco Castillo, the public face of the NSM in San Diego County, immigrant and college graduate, remembered the favorable response of members of the Minutemen, a vocal anti-immigrant group, after they heard his story. According to Castillo, one

member of the group said, “Oh, no Marco—we want the best for Marco. Marco is like actually the kind of immigrant we *do* want in this country. We hope the best for him and that his situation gets resolved.” Castillo attributes this Minuteman’s change of heart to the fact that he heard his story, “I mean if he heard everybody else’s story, he probably would have thought the same thing, you know. So, [chuckles] I know that there’s power in a message. And that’s the...whole point in the Sanctuary Movement, people’s stories.” He made a point for the power of compassion after making a human connection, “I mean you can argue and argue and argue about immigration reform, and nothing is going to get done. But when you hear that somebody who is very much similar to *you*, who and like your values, is going through something like *this*, it’s bound to turn some heads and change some opinions. And it’s those individuals’ stories that is making a difference... It’s getting *people* to tell their stories.” To Castillo, “that’s the beautiful thing about it. That’s how I see it blooming, the whole NSM... You bring people out of the shadows and people are telling their stories. And people are bound to change their opinion.”

Here, NSM activists are publicly using stories of injustice and agitation to reveal the broken immigration system and fuel collective agency. Such agency is focused on shared movement goals for comprehensive immigration reform that favors family unity and includes worker rights and protections. Let us now turn to a more in-depth discussion of how movement goals related to the employee are articulated through shared injustices and translated into collective efforts for worker rights.

**Goal #2: The Right to a Livable Wage and Worker Protections.**

According to Bean and Stevens (2003), “migrants of all types tend to come more often from countries with which the United States has had prior and continuing relationships (whether primarily political or economic). Within those countries, migration tends to involve more often persons who have family and friends in the United States and persons whose own earnings and whose family’s investments stand to gain the most from the migration” (p. 41). In other words, in addition to seeking family unity, migration has been attributed to the effects of globalization, such as international free trade agreements, and the increased disparities of wealth among nations. Therefore, laborers in developing countries have chosen to migrate, with and without proper documentation, to the U.S. where they believe they could provide for themselves and their family.

However, there are countless stories of workplace abuses for immigrants once in the United States. Many undocumented laborers experience workplace abuses due to their vulnerable immigration status, and those fortunate enough to be backed by a union struggle alongside their legal resident and citizen counterparts for livable wages and adequate health care benefits. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo’s (2008) research on faith-based advocacy in the Immigrant Rights Movement, “The back door of the United States has been opened wide enough for millions of immigrant workers to enter and find employment in the United States, but not wide enough to accommodate them with full rights at the workplace. Instead, economic exploitation, denial of equal opportunities, and the absence of full civil and social rights characterize the experience of many

newcomers” (p. 15). She argued that due to mostly symbolic consequences for employers and without legal oversight, “many undocumented workers remain employed in the United States in subservient positions, with extreme exploitation, low wages, long hours, and dangerous working conditions. Entire industries such as cleaning services, hotels and restaurants, construction, farms and poultry plants, and manufacturing sectors now feature an embedded, institutionalized reliance on undocumented immigrant labor” (p. 10). Because worker exploitation and low wages are a large part of the immigrant experience in the U.S., the second most prominent, shared IRM goal is the right to livable wages and worker protections.

The stories of worker exploitation are documented and shared with activist groups like ICWJ in partnership with local unions such as the UDW. These groups then broadcast the narratives of workplace injustices in campaigns for improved worker contracts. For instance, Gates, a member of ICWJ, referenced their Justice for Janitor’s campaign at a local hospital. He explained the hypocrisy and injustice of the situation in a story that described “this supposed beacon of philanthropy [a]s deeply exploitative to its workers and vehemently against raising their pay even a smidgen. And that to me is hypocritical all the way around.” He informed me of ICWJ’s role as a “truth telling role” and believes that “anybody who is involved in that hypocrisy should be exposed.”

Meanwhile, immigrants in guest worker programs and non-unionized undocumented immigrants do not benefit from the protective securities enjoyed by U.S. citizens or those in a labor union. Working vulnerably, they often experience

exploitation in numerous ways.<sup>55</sup> The harsh living conditions of migrants like Dario are the result of uncertain work and low wages. Such exploitation of farmworker labor has roots in the Bracero Program, a program that several IRM activists cited as the beginning of their family's legacy of migration. The experiences of exploitation while working in the program are part of the IRM activist families' oral history passed down through

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<sup>55</sup>For example, "it is estimated that there are over 3 million migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the United States," who "support[s] the 28 billion dollar fruit and vegetable industry in the U.S" according to the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) (2012). Furthermore, "Eliminating the presence of farmworkers or switching to less labor-intensive crops has been shown to negatively impact productive agricultural regions and significantly reduced the number of jobs available to permanent local residents." According to the NCFH report based on the 2007-2009 National Agriculture Workers Survey (NAWS survey), "48% of farmworkers do not have legal authorization to work in the United States and only 33% are U.S. citizens." With many living below the poverty line, "farmworkers rarely have access to worker's compensation, occupational rehabilitation, or disability compensation benefits." Additionally, "because worker's compensation benefits are state-dependent, agricultural workers are often further challenged by the qualifications and requirements of each individual state." The NCFH included the findings from a 2007 study conducted in the Coachella Valley of California which "concluded that 2% of those surveyed reported having living situations not meant for human habitation (such as the outdoors, cars, trucks, or vans parked in streets or parking lots, or inhabited converted garages). This number increased to 30% amongst respondents who were migratory farmworkers in the same area" (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2012).

Farmworker labor is "[r]anked as one of the most dangerous industries in the nation" due to "reported injuries [which] involve exposure to the elements, [with] symptoms associated with pesticide exposure in both parents and children, [and] farm equipment injuries and heat stress" according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as cited by the NCFH's factsheet. Farmworker labor even includes children "working in agriculture as early as age 7, 8 or 9 for a few hours at a time, and by ages 11 or 12, they were out of school and working full time" according to the 2010 Human Rights Watch report also referenced in the NCFH factsheet (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2012). The Human Rights Watch Report, "Fields of Peril: Child Labor in US Agriculture," can be found at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2010/05/05/fields-peril-0>.

In a 2010 article by Human Rights Watch entitled, "US Child Farmworkers Dangerous Lives: End Legal Double-Standard that Fails to Protect Children Working in Agriculture" and based on the aforementioned report, researchers found that "Children, like many adult farmworkers, typically earn far less than minimum wage, and their pay is often further cut because employers underreport hours and force them to spend their own money on tools, gloves, and drinking water that their employers should provide by law." According to the article, "Children risk pesticide poisoning, serious injury, and heat illness. They suffer fatalities at more than four times the rate of children working in other jobs." Exploitative employer practices resulted in, "Some [children] work[ing] without even the most basic protective gear, including shoes or gloves. Many told Human Rights Watch that their employers did not provide drinking water, hand-washing facilities, or toilets." Furthermore, "Girls and women in these jobs are exceptionally vulnerable to sexual abuse" (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

For many undocumented female farmworkers with little place to turn, sexual harassment and rape in the fields is a nightmarish reality, with the fields colloquially being referred to as "the green hotel," according to Lowell Bergman's PBS Frontline documentary "Rape in the Fields" (Bergman, 2013).

generations. In Calavita's (1992) research on the Bracero Program, she informed readers, "The Immigration Service and the Departments of State, Labor, and Agriculture, together with the War Manpower Commission, in early 1942 [during the World War II labor shortages] formed a Special Committee on Importation of Mexican Labor, drew up plans for the first installment of Mexican contract labor, signed a bilateral agreement with Mexico, and arranged for the importation of workers, all in the absence of congressional legislation or public debate" (p. 2). Shortly, thereafter, Congress approved of the program which continued until two years after the war and "provided growers, at government expense and under government contract, with an uninterrupted supply of cheap, essentially captive, Mexican workers" (p. 2). During the years of the Bracero Program, the United States disregarded Mexico's political say by bypassing the Mexican recruitment process and extending the program to Texas, an area intentionally excluded by the Mexican government. Employers also "ignored contract provisions they found inconvenient" (p. 24). For instance, hours worked were incorrectly recorded and paid late, while wages, housing, and food fell consistently below the minimum contractual standard. These practices made many immigrants, who were actively recruited in Mexico, feel inferior as workers here, in the U.S. One of the grassroots activists I interviewed said her grandfather felt like a second class citizen without protections. In response, the United Farm Worker (UFW) Movement continues to advocate for farmworker rights. Some of their successes include getting rid of the short-handled hoe, gaining the right to collective bargaining through union representation, and introducing "the first union contracts regulating safety and sanitary conditions in farm labor camps,

banning discrimination in employment and sexual harassment of women workers”

(United Farm Workers, n.d.).

Exploitation of the undocumented population happens at all levels of the workforce. For instance, undocumented immigrants undergo similar workplace abuses such as low wages, absent benefits, and ceilings inhibiting advancement. For example, college graduate, Marco Castillo of the NSM shared his stories of living in the shadows, The valedictorian of his high school class, prom king, and college graduate, he found a way to work and pay taxes. In an interview, he explained to me, “[My boss and I] figured out that if I can get a business tax ID number and be considered a sole proprietorship... To everybody in the store, I’m his employee, and he’s the boss. But between me and him, we know that legally, he’s not my boss... And six months later, I paid all my taxes.” Although Castillo gets the same pay as the other employees, he said, “I don’t get my sick days like everybody else.” He also does not get any worker benefits. “If he wanted to give me, well, I don’t know about dental and vision, but all the 401K, all that stuff, I’m not eligible for. So, I don’t have any kind of health insurance. I don’t get my sick days. I don’t get overtime.” If Castillo gets sick, he loses a day of pay. Compared to his colleagues who get medical benefits, paid sick days and paid vacation, he said, “I don’t get that, you know? So, you know, it really sucks.” In addition to the fundamental matters of pay and benefits, Castillo's ability to pursue his profession is limited. What he yearns for is to be able to reach his full potential and to be guided as an artist by a professional, “I really want to interview at a design firm and work at a design firm where all you focus on is design, and where I have somebody who is a leader in the

design field giving me *direction*... I want to be spoken to like a professional *by* a professional.” Stories of how job prospects are uncertain for many undocumented children that are educated and trained in the United States are heard in circles of young people applying for jobs and even younger applying for college. Marco’s sister was trained as an accountant in the U.S., but has had a difficult time finding employment due to her undocumented status. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have arrived as children have faced or are facing this same plight as they apply to college and search for jobs. Because children that migrate with their families and are trained and educated in the U.S. have a hard time finding employment without a social security card, they are not able to apply what they have studied. Furthermore, not only do they risk deportation on a daily basis, but society is not able to benefit from their training. For this reason, activists in San Diego and around the country have been organizing to pass the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act” (DREAM Act). Young activists, or DREAMers, organizing for the DREAM Act argue, “There are thousands of undocumented immigrant students, brought to this country as young children who have grown up in the U.S., excelled in school, and are American in every sense except for their papers. However, when it comes time to apply for college, many find the door to enrollment effectively shut because they lack legal immigration status.” Furthermore, not eligible for federal financial aid, “They are [also] not eligible for the resident tuition rate at state-supported colleges and universities—even though they may have graduated from their state’s elementary and high schools” (Mora, 2012). The door is also closed to “Other young men and women who wish to join the uniformed military services” (Mora,

2012). This military provision was a contested one in some IRM circles in San Diego County by those in opposition arguing against military recruitment of the more vulnerable undocumented immigrants.

The California DREAM Act was signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2011, three years after this research was conducted. Because activists and members of Congress believe, “These children and young adults are the embodiment of individual merit and achievement,” “members of Congress have introduced legislation to clear a path towards legal immigration status that would allow these students to pursue their education and put their college degrees to good use, or to contribute to this country through military service” (Mora, 2012). Made up of two bills, “Assembly Bill 130 (AB 130), signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on June 25, 2011; and Assembly Bill 131 (AB 131), signed into law by Governor Brown on October 8, 2011,” it permits “those students who are eligible for the non-resident tuition exemption (under Assembly Bill 540, or AB 540), but who are ineligible for federal financial aid” to now have eligibility “to receive grants and scholarships from California State and University sources” (California State University Long Beach, n.d.). In other words, it makes attending college more affordable to undocumented students. Like Marco Castillo and his sister, however, “Even if these students are able to make it through college, they graduate without the legal right to work in this country” (Mora, 2012).

Many stories of injustice told by San Diego IRM activists have been communicated in legal arguments about “worker rights and protections” as noted above and as articulated in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Activists

would concur that “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment” (United Nations, n.d.). IRM goals remain consistent with the declaration that “Everyone has the right to equal pay for equal work” as well as the right to “just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself [and herself] and his [and her] family an existence worthy of human dignity.” Finally, “Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his [and her] interests.” This language of rights is one of the ways activists communicate their movement goals. Undocumented immigrants like Dario and Carlos want to be able to work in the U.S. peacefully and legitimately. When asked what his goal is, Dario said, “the government ought to give people that are here [in the U.S.] a way to work. And [if that were to happen], I think that the economy would grow... Because this country has [grown] from pure immigrants. Italians, Europeans, from everywhere.” Similarly, Carlos responded, “That you give us permission to be here, all of the workers, to work.”

Some movement activists put the injustices experienced by immigrant employees in the United States in a larger narrative of global human rights. This different and complementary form of discourse is necessary to the movement. Refusing to settle for a story of agitation, Justin Akers Chacón of SSP, for instance, has this more global sense of worker rights and advocates for comprehensive legalization for undocumented workers which, he argued, would benefit the majority. “So we can’t address the unequal effects of globalization on all workers as long as we victimize one section of workers and focus our attention on dividing them from society. So I think winning legalization and winning

equality lays the basis for improving the conditions of life for a majority, not just those without papers.” He thinks that the U.S. and Mexico have similar interests, and together “I think we can really push progress forward on a number of fronts.” To Akers Chacón, “It’s a human rights framework first. It’s a worker’s rights framework.”

Similarly, The Raza Rights Coalition (RRC), a coalition comprised predominantly of first and second generation Mexican immigrant individuals and activists like David Schmidt of Si Se Puede, articulate their IRM-related economic goals by reaching back to the roots of migration. They believe that free trade agreements are largely accountable for economic disparities that contribute to undocumented migration. One of the goals of RRC is, “An immediate halt to Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA, CAFTA, FTAA etc.)” Moreover, Schmidt tells a story about neo-liberal capitalism being at the root of undocumented immigration around the world. He explained, “There’s a couple hundred million people without documents in the world right now, and a lot of those people are immigrants because of neo-liberal economics and different economic policies that cause wealth to become more concentrated, not just in a few people’s hands, but in a few country’s hands.” He explained how it “causes wealth to drain more and more out of the Third World into the First World, so people follow that wealth.” Because of these effects, “I think we’re all fighting for the abolition of NAFTA and the removal of the border wall and the free movement of working people,” said Schmidt. Because he sees immigration as “bound up with larger issues” like NAFTA and “trade policies that favor capital over labor,” he, like Akers Chacón, believes, “we can’t have any of that unless we have full legalization.”

The articulation of the movement's narratives of injustice and shared goals often takes place in public rallies, such as the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition's annual march where the workplace stories of agitation and injustice are collectively converted into chapters in the larger, inspiring story of collective agency. The year I attended, we met at San Diego City College where community leaders along with high school and college students joined and participated in a rally with a diverse collection of speakers from the organized coalition. Flags from the United States and around the world were proudly waved as movement members and allies marched for a little over a mile together to Pantoja Park. In Pantoja Park stands a statue of Benito Juarez, President of Mexico in the 1800s who came from humble origins and whose liberal policies supported equality and gave special attention to the indigenous people of Mexico. Here, in Pantoja Park, a truck with a large wooden flatbed was parked on the grass beneath the shade of trees and served as the stage for the culminating rally. A sound system was set up and speakers from the coalition continued to voice their goals. They passionately expressed their demand for "dignified work for all" among other movement claims that included, the right to education, the right to migrate, and stopping the raids and deportations. Among the attendees were mostly college students, high school students, local community activists, and their families. There was also a smaller religious presence with leaders such as Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson<sup>56</sup> who held up an image of La Virgen de Guadalupe as a

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<sup>56</sup> A diversity of opinion exists even within the same organizations depending upon the issues at hand. For instance, a priest from the same parish as Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson also attended the protest, albeit as an anti-immigrant protestor vocalizing his opinion at the corner of Pantoja Park. While his anti-immigrant stance was surprising to Reverend Mary, it is a testament to the critical nature of a unifying moral framework for boundary work (not the focus of this dissertation) in addition to social cohesion, and

protector of immigrants. Local news agencies documented the event while anti-immigrant protestors held up signs and aggressively heckled speakers as they demanded a stop to illegal immigration.<sup>57</sup>

A parallel example of articulation of movement goals and stories of change includes ICWJ's efforts. ICWJ helped organize a Passover Seder and Pilgrimage in the month of April with union members and interfaith leaders as a protest for local janitors in La Jolla. What began with the sharing of bread and juice continued with janitors, most of whom are immigrants, and allies marching from one stop to another along the streets of La Jolla. At each of these destinations along the pilgrimage, janitors and religious leaders of varying faith traditions shared their stories of injustice and change "to support the Janitors' journey from oppression to justice through the Passover Seder ritual and pilgrimage" (Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice of San Diego County, 2008). Along the way they also paused to enact a biblical story and appropriate it for a larger justice goal that can be embraced by multiple faiths similar to La Posada Sin Fronteras. The journey continued as they blew a rams horn, extended bitter herbs, and then parted two long red fabrics symbolizing the Red Sea as Moses once had in leading his people out of Egypt to the Promised Land.

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thus collective identity formation. Although the anonymous male priest may appear to share the same religious tradition as Reverend Mary at face value, the beliefs he chooses to place in the forefront of his cultural toolkit seem to differ from the ones she does. Thus, it is highly unlikely that he agrees with the shared and inclusive moral framework of the movement discussed in chapter 3. If he does agree in theory, he does not practice in the same way as IRM activists do. For instance, IRM activists of his shared Christian faith directly equate the plight of current immigrants to those of the migrants in Biblical stories, however, this priest does not appear to make that connection, and is thus, not an IRM movement activist, ally, or sympathizer.

<sup>57</sup> The local San Diego Police Department kept a relaxed eye on the event, and did not intervene when a Minuteman had to be forcefully removed after rushing the stage where student speakers were talking.

The ICWJ flyer, inviting others to join the Justice for Janitors organized action, exemplifies how multi-cultural and multi-faith movement activists collectively articulate their movement goals through their agreed upon injustices and united, organized efforts. Beginning with a large heading stating “Justice for Janitors,” it followed with an open invitation from ICWJ, “Join us for a Passover Seder and Pilgrimage in the Streets in support of Janitors on Thursday, April 17th!” Then, the notice made evident the local injustice, “In San Diego, too many janitors are forced to choose between food, rent, and medical care.” Quickly following are the collective action and movement goals, “Janitors trying to take a step out of poverty are organizing so together they can call for full-family healthcare coverage in 2008!” A faith-inspired responsibility to justice concluded, “It is important that the faith community serve witness to the struggle of janitors, and stand with them as they stand up for justice in the workplace.”

When activists take their case directly to decision-makers, they again state their goals in narrative terms. Richard Lawrence, a UDW union staff member explained how domestic workers, most of whom are immigrants, were unjustly being offered a \$0.39 raise over three years by the Board of Supervisors. On St. Valentine's Day, a group of activists delivered Valentine books filled with stories and photos of homecare providers to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, utilizing stories to personalize employees and try to achieve movement goals. The message was for representatives to “have a heart” for homecare workers. Together, they met with Supervisor Jacob’s chief of staff, since Supervisor Jacob was unavailable to meet. Giving just enough to be respectful but not too much to be truly helpful, he said, “I put off my next appointment because you

have taken the time to come here.... I am happy to pass along your information.” His perfunctory bureaucratic response was countered by a Catholic nun, who introduced herself as the “treasurer for ICWJ.” She reminded him that “Many workers here take care of the disabled, blind, elderly. As a faith group, we are concerned that they are not getting a just, decent wage. [We understand that] the county does not have the money. [However,] the Federal government will give you the money all back [as a reimbursement].” The Chief of Staff responded, “It is true..., but the history of reimbursements is not a good one.” Rabbi Laurie Coskey followed up, “I am with ICWJ, and today is Valentine’s Day. We are hoping that you will ‘have a heart’ for the workers. [We are] hoping the supervisors will do their best to increase wages. We have seen them improve every time.” A caregiver continued, “I am asking the supervisors to ‘have a heart’ and think of every provider [in the same way] us, moms, have a heart for our children.” Another caregiver of the UDW shared her story of agitation, “I get no sick leave, no vacation pay...Only 3,000 people are allowed to get health insurance. In other counties they all get health insurance. It ends up saving the city a lot more money in the long run.” A reverend with ICWJ followed up by saying, “They [caregivers] get paid \$9.25/hour... county and supervisors exert discretion over a very sizable budget [with a] slush fund. To think that money is available to provide wages to workers doing work, that tears your heart out. [It] is unconscionable.” Rabbi Laurie clarified, “But we’re not negotiating, we’re advocating. We’re a faith people interested in telling personal stories. Person to person, heart to heart.” And then, she handed him a heart-shaped box of chocolates and said, “Here’s chocolates for your wife.” He gratefully accepted and

responded favorably to a request to make time to hear some of the caregiver's personal stories after saying, "I will see what I can do." There are mixed kinds of argumentation found in each of the stories told, from personalizing workers to exposing low-wages and utilizing an international worker rights argument against free trade agreements, but the overall effort is to collectively illustrate people doing good work and to expose the injustice of not being able to work safely or be fairly compensated.

### **Conclusion**

In the IRM with a multicultural member base, activists from diverse backgrounds found focal points around which to collectively organize. Together, they campaign for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform in the way of legalization, the right to migrate, and livable wages and worker protections. Movement goals are often articulated with political language as rights in order to address specific legislative change. But they are also likely to begin with shared stories of injustice and end with examples of collective action. In this process of articulating movement goals, multicultural and multi-faith IRM activists convert stories of agitation into a chapter in the larger narrative of change. For instance, the overall narrative they are constructing includes accounts of dying as they attempt to cross into the United States. This narrative continues by explaining that, once here, most immigrants live in fear of deportation and often undergo employment exploitation while separated from their families. However, activists, as agents of change and co-writers of this larger narrative choose not to stand by while this happens. Instead, they remind one another, allies and sympathizers, that they have been

placing water along the border, organizing border vigils, providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants in the community, marching for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform, conducting legislative meetings, and campaigning for livable wages and worker benefits and protections. In other words, injustices are not the focus, nor are they the end of the story. Rather, they are the birthplace of shared goals and the impetus for collective action generating positive change for immigrants. It is here that the injustice narrative is confronted by hope-generating accounts of collective action for shared claims and thus becomes a chapter in the overall story of change. In this context, immigrant rule-changers along with their non-immigrant counterparts have helped save the lives of immigrants crossing the life-threatening U.S.-Mexico border region, halted the practice of ICE's deportation of "collateral damage" so families are able to stay together, and change the very way employees are compensated for their work by influencing worker contracts. These successes along with the countless hours spent organizing protest events and putting political pressure on legislators laid the groundwork for the passage of the DREAM Act of 2011 which makes college more affordable for undocumented students and the passage of the Trust Act of 2013 which limits police and immigration enforcement interactions. Through these efforts, rule-changers have helped improve the quality of life for immigrants so that they can be productive and valued members of the U.S. community.

Moreover, this chapter provided evidence on how multicultural and multi-faith movement stalwarts articulate movement goals in stories that evoke a shared sense of injustice and call listeners to continue, and in many cases, to join targeted collective

action. In doing so, diverse activists collectively create empowered stories of agency and change while strengthening their social cohesion. Furthermore, this chapter showed how lived experiences help articulate stories of agitation and how diverse IRM activists chose to work together in moving beyond a victim narrative in order to actualize true stories of change. Even when stories of agitation were broadcast in the IRM, they were done conscientiously to attract movement allies and were often followed up with action.

Articulating injustices through stories of agitation helps make activism meaningfully productive for current and future movement participants. For instance, sharing impassioned narratives of injustice for agents of change translates into communicating a potentially mobilizing agitation and lament to members and allies, helping define how the world ought to look, constructing religiously and morally legitimated movement goals, and ultimately articulating them through collective action.<sup>58</sup>

Movement goals also serve as the link between injustices and the way the world should be, all of which help unite multicultural and multi-faith IRM activists. In other words, goals are collectively constructed, concrete expressions of the way the world ought to operate (for a fuller discussion see chapter 3), in direct contrast to those shared injustices. Additionally, collective action is required to actualize shared movement goals. Publicly agreeing upon immigration-related injustices creates a sense of psychological solidarity, while collective efforts towards movement goals add an element of physical solidarity. Both components are aspects of movement goals that behave as unifying mechanisms for multicultural and multi-faith moral stalwarts. In other words, movement

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<sup>58</sup> Please see chapter 3 for a fuller discussion on the IRM shared moral framework.

goals serve as a unifying component for diverse activists by providing the focal point for movement efforts as defined in relation to shared stories of agitation.

In sum, IRM goals are defined by stories of change which include evidence of immigrants acting as rule-changers with their non-immigrant movement members and helping improve the quality of life of immigrants. These stories of change give a compelling account of how lived experiences help articulate shared injustices that inform movement claims and include the collective efforts of IRM activists who choose to move beyond a victim narrative and work together to write in history, true stories of victory. Furthermore, the shared sense of injustice, the common movement goals that serve as the focal point for movement efforts, and the practice of working together for social change contribute to multi-cultural and multi-faith social cohesion in the IRM.

### Chapter 3 The Moral Framework

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world... Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom...”

Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, n.d.)

“All religions believe in justice.”  
Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice

#### Introduction

Back in the pews of St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral during the New Sanctuary Movement Mass, activists and allies sit quietly listening to Rabbi Laurie Coskey’s sermon, which she reads aloud in both English and Spanish. She recalls asking her grandmother about the beautiful young woman in a photo she found. “This is the first time I have told this story in public...” The young woman was a distant relative who was trying to immigrate to the United States amidst the tight immigration quotas during World War II. The young woman’s parents wanted her to marry a distant relative in the U.S. so that she could be safe from the Nazis who were about to arrive at their Greek Island. However, “they felt too poor and didn’t want to force their son to marry a girl they never met... The Nazis [ended up] annihilat[ing] the entire Jewish community [where the young girl lived].” And she died in the concentration camp with the rest of

her family. “Immigration is not a new topic for our government. Immigrants are the foundation of our communities and economy in this country,” she continues.

Referencing the Book of Leviticus, the Holy Scroll 19, a Book of Moses, Rabbi Laurie pronounces, “I do believe it is our moral and ethical obligation as people of God and faith to fight this fight... ‘when a stranger resides with you in your lands, they shall be to you as one of your own citizens.’” Her sermon, informed by her faith and the oppression of her ancestors, clearly declared, “What we want is humane and effective immigration reform.”

Rabbi Laurie Coskey made it clear on camera and before all the men and women in the church pews that the goal of the NSM protest was “humane and effective immigration reform.” Her proclamation is affirmed by her personal history as a member of the Jewish community with experiences of exile. And her movement goal is informed by her humanitarian, religious beliefs that it is a “moral and ethical obligation of people of God and faith” to ensure that immigrants in our land are treated in the same manner as citizens. A guiding framework for her is equality for all, and she grounded that in her Jewish tradition.

The previous chapter explored the most prominent, shared goals in the Immigrant Rights Movement. But what is it about the nature of IRM goals that appeals to immigrant and nonimmigrant activists of distinct faith traditions? What is the framework that provides the common criteria through which injustices are defined? What is the moral framework that helps diverse activists construct common claims by defining the way the world ought to operate? In this chapter, I will pay attention to the way

multicultural and multi-faith IRM stalwarts talk about the larger vision of the common good that animates them and the way that vision draws from both religious and non-religious moral rhetorics. In doing so, this chapter will reveal that diverse activists have been able to stand together upon a shared, progressive, humanitarian moral framework which appeals to immigrant and non-immigrant, religious and nonreligious participants. Together, these resources permeate movement goals, and as we will see in chapter 4, codes of conduct during meetings, while constructing the common ground upon which multicultural and interfaith activists organize in the IRM.

The hardships that immigrants have experienced by risking their lives crossing the border into the U.S. or dying along the way, living in fear of deportation, being separated from their families, and often undergoing workplace abuses and exploitation have all been identified as injustices (see chapter 2) by members of the Immigrant Rights Movement (IRM). Multicultural and multi-faith movement stalwarts name these realities as morally outrageous and grossly offensive to their understanding of what a good and just world looks like. Their criteria for making those moral judgments come from a variety of sources, but one clear guide is the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) which "was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948" in response to the atrocities of the Second World War (United Nations, *History of the Document*, n.d.). With this document, the international community reached consensus in honoring "the supreme value of the human person, a value that did not originate in the decision of a worldly power, but rather in the fact of existing—which gave rise to the inalienable right to live free from want and oppression and to fully

develop one's personality" as stated by Hernán Santa Cruz of Chile who was a member of the drafting sub-Committee (United Nations, *History of the Document*, n.d.). For decades, this document has allowed people across cultures and around the world to address how the human community ought to behave toward one another by providing a common reference for international human rights activists.<sup>59</sup>

One might anticipate that the stories of agitation or lament in the IRM (see chapter 2) and statements of desired immigrant rights (see chapter 2) would be solely situated in this sort of secular human rights framework. However, after taking an analytical step closer, one quickly notices that this is not a homogenous group of activists vying for human rights via secular discourse and purely political rhetoric. Activists in the IRM do not share a common ethnic, socio-economic, national, or religious culture. As important as ideas about universal human rights are, these activists have done more than seek neutral, secular common ground. Beyond these secular frameworks, much of the language legitimating and affirming movement goals is rooted in distinct faith traditions. While a human rights framework provides an overarching theme, it does not ignore the distinct faith traditions from which it stems. The voices representing specific belief systems are visibly present, even placed in the forefront at times, making a case for IRM goals.

In this chapter, I will describe shared, inclusive beliefs that have the affective and moral power to guide multicultural activists' actions. In doing so, I will show how

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<sup>59</sup> Some inspired efforts include organizing to support victims of torture and eliminating child labor, racial and gender discrimination, and violence against women among other efforts (United Nations, *Resources*).

activists from distinct traditions share a certain moral framework that is visible in their vision of a better world for immigrants, one where immigrants are free to travel securely between their home and host countries, work legitimately with rights and protections, and live freely with their family and loved ones -- where injustices are overcome. This chapter will reveal a shared moral framework informed by distinct faith and secular traditions that serves as a measure to recognize such immigration-related injustices and also provide the building blocks for movement goals. Not only does this framework help reveal injustices and influence the focal point for movement efforts, this chapter will show that it also serves as an ideological point of intersection between religious and nonreligious political actors and, therefore provides a common ground that helps to unify multicultural activists from otherwise diverse origins.

### **A Moral Framework**

For grassroots social movements where resources are limited, it is vital for the SMO to maintain and inspire membership while publicly reaching out to potential members and third party supporters with the capabilities to provide additional resources and put pressure on opponents. Accomplishing these tasks often requires SMOs to call upon the moral community through various forms of media (e.g., public, private, nonprofit, air, print, television, internet, word of mouth) at the local, national, and international levels. Appealing to current SM members and potential allies can be achieved through effective communication of an underlying moral framework. In doing so, SM organizers attempt to link the “SMO interpretive frameworks” to the diverse

individual, moral frameworks of the audience and multicultural movement members through *frame alignment* (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). As a method of frame alignment, *frame bridging* occurs when an SMO is able to tap into a previously unconnected and “not currently mobile” group of people with comparable grievances, the potential for compassion, and/or a similar unifying belief system.<sup>60</sup>

Credibility in articulated movement frames is critical in garnering sympathetic allies and maintaining movement membership. Snow and Benford (1992) argue that *empirical credibility* perceived by current movement members and a larger public audience is achieved through “evidential basis for the master frame’s diagnostic [and prognostic] claims” (p. 140). In other words, the audience sympathetically perceives the SMO’s movement message as credible if the SMO appears to have convincing “documentary” evidence pointing to the existence of an immoral, emotionally-charged, and preventable injustice and a reasonable, achievable, and appropriate solution (see chapter 2).<sup>61</sup> Finally, Snow and Benford (1992) go on to assert that when “the frame strikes [an emotional and/or logical] responsive chord in that it rings true with extant beliefs, myths, folktales, and the like,” it may encourage persons to compassionately *relate* to the marginalization communicated by the master frame through such similar moral systems and life experiences (p. 141). In this instance, the movement frame is

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<sup>60</sup> *Frame bridging* “links two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem” (Snow et al., 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Credibility is also enhanced, according to Snow and Benford, when people feel that they (or someone close to them) have been personally and directly wronged by the same injustice expressed in the master frame, suggesting that the frame has achieved *experiential credibility* (see chapter 2).

perceived to have *ideational centrality* or *narrative fidelity* and strong potency.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, by providing its members with a “set of fundamental moral standards against which the status quo can be judged,” belief systems, particularly from religion, serve as a reference and “tell us what, therefore, *should* be, how people *must* live, how the world *ought* to operate” (Smith, 1996, p. 10).

Contemporary SMOs, like the Occupy Movement, the Peace Movement, and the IRM, intentionally seek a diverse movement base. In doing so, they often use “ideational framing with multiple themes” (McAdam, 1996, p. 347) to further achieve frame bridging in more multicultural groups. Using various frames, united with an underlying ideology (so as to make them coherent, consistent, and complementary to one another), can strengthen the *potency*<sup>63</sup> and touch a broader audience. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a master of this tactic “in his unique blending of familiar Christian themes, conventional democratic theory, and the philosophy of nonviolence” (p. 347) during his involvement with the Civil Rights Movement. Through successful articulation of movement frames, he exposed the unjust violence and abuse of power against African Americans and juxtaposed a movement of peaceful activists seeking equal rights. In doing so, he was able to reach religious believers, pacifists, humanitarians, intellectuals, egalitarians, and persons supportive of democratic theory among others (McAdam, 1996). Similarly,

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<sup>62</sup> According to Snow and Benford (1992), in order for a movement master frame to garner the support of its target audience, it should possess (1) diagnostic “attributional orientation,” (2) an elaborate “articulation scope” (i.e. restricted code vs. elaborated linguistic code), and (3) “potency” (i.e. empirical, experiential, and ideational credibility). The *attributional orientation* of master frames is similar to Gamson’s injustice frame, which includes both the “diagnostic function” and the “causality function” (p. 133-155). It is here that the grievance becomes an injustice, and a clear “other” is perceived to be at fault.

<sup>63</sup> Potency, according to Snow and Benford, is affected by how many people the message (i.e., collective action frame) can reach and how deeply the message resonates with the audience (1992).

while many people saw the UFW struggle as a Mexican or immigrant struggle, the UFW brilliantly framed the Union's goals to reach a broader constituency by exposing the injustices in the field while promoting nonviolent tactical responses that respected the dignity of all people even those abusing their power (Ferris & Sandoval, 1997). Activists and allies from many parts of the world related to repeated themes of justice and united in the farm worker's struggle against the violation of the principles of dignity extended to all humanity.

Furthermore, a more diverse collective often results from using widely appealing moral belief systems to package and communicate collective action frames. Appealing to a larger base is often achieved by "amplifying" and "elevating" the social movement (SM) collective action frame's communicated "beliefs" through influential language, making them more powerfully relevant to an audience's moral codes and sense of rationality (Snow et al., 1986). Beliefs, according to Klandermans and Goslinga (1996), lie dormant until they are awakened by familiar and resonating connections. It is, therefore, in the SMO's best strategic interest to ignite the once dormant beliefs in the targeted "sentiment pool" and inspire intense and positive, even exaggerated, beliefs regarding movement efficacy so as to strive for a favorable self-fulfilling prophecy (Gamson & Meyer, 1996). In a pluralist society with a formal separation of church and state, this highly sought-after moral community is not limited to the institutionalized and publicly recognized religious audience. Many people exercise the option of discovering spirituality beyond the walls of institutionalized religion, and also express morality outside the world of spirituality. Partnerships between religious, interfaith, and secular

organizations can aid in the “diffusion of movement activity across different populations,” defined by Snow and Benford (1992) as “ecological scope” (p. 148), thus creating even further diverse collaborations. How have multicultural, interfaith, and nonreligious IRM stalwarts articulated a shared moral framework without a common culture or a shared, religious belief system?

This chapter will show that the multi-faith and multicultural group of activists in the IRM articulate their common moral framework regarding the importance of “equal treatment for all people” and “caring for one another” by reaching into their repertoires of progressive, faith-based teachings that help direct their moral compass. I will also show how these diverse belief systems are understood as incomplete without morally-aligned action. Furthermore, a shared moral framework, I argue, serves as a common ground upon which multicultural and multi-faith activists organize while understanding that working together helps strengthen movement power.

Now, let us turn to the particular streams of morality within the shared, moral framework of multicultural IRM activists.

**Distinct traditions, shared morality:  
The common ground upon which they organize.**

This study identifies two basic moral themes that IRM activists have arrived at via their own distinct religious and nonreligious traditions. Whether these shared moral themes appeal to a common humanity or to divine guidance, the foundational virtues of

equality and caring for others were guiding visions that could supersede nation-state divides and even human laws.

***Theme 1: Equal Treatment for All People.***

Articles 1 and 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provide a compelling statement of the norm of equality. “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... [all human beings are] endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood... All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.” Although multicultural and multi-faith IRM activists would agree with this statement, this particular language was not the most common way San Diego's immigrant rights advocates talked about human equality. Talk about political rights often turned to ideas about human equality based on religious tradition. For example, movement participants like Catholic activist, David Schmidt of SSP and IRC, believes that *all* human beings should be valued and not subjugated to the political and discriminatory definition of the term “illegal.” Activists additionally believe that no one should be deemed less valuable because they are foreign born or more valuable because they are U.S. born and have a high earning potential. To Catholic activist Estela de los Rios, JOB's Immigration Task Force Chair and leader in the IRC, everyone should be respected equally because “God made us all as one. He didn't say you're more valuable than another one, or you're different than another one because of what you look like.”

Equality permeates movement goals and collective efforts, and each of these different groups uses their own traditions to justify and affirm this shared claim. “The utmost, underlying principle,” according to nonreligious activist Justin Akers Chacón of SSP “is equality between peoples and equality between workers.” All movement goals are rooted in the principle of equality. Akers Chacón asked, “What it amounts to is how... much equality are you willing to fight for? Are you willing to fight so that people become half equal? Or are you willing to fight for people to become fully equal? And so I think that’s the principle. And from that flows all the elements, the legalization to give full equality for people who are here; no border wall so that there isn’t inequality between nations. All of those things for me flow out of that concept of equality.” In a similar, nonreligious explanation, Dan Watman, who is sometimes moved to tears when he sees friendships form across borders, believes multicultural activists “are all kind of linked by human rights. And they all kind of feel like we want things to be equal and fair.”

There are activists like Akers Chacón and Watman whose vision of equality is informed by nonreligious principles of international workers rights and human rights, and there are activists whose notion of equality is rooted in their faith traditions. For example, Catholic activist, Schmidt, believes that churches add something existential to the definition of all human beings beyond what people can contribute to the economy or society. He believes that there is a “God-given dignity and value in every human being.” He said, “We define [human beings] as God’s children and as humans, not as immigrants or as citizens of a country, or as workers... You’re defined by your humanity.” In this way, national borders become less relevant and honoring family unity and preserving a

“God-given dignity” take precedence. He gave the churches involved in the IRM much credit for “standing up for the gospel” and “preaching the gospel more than most churches ever do” when they say, “We are defining ourselves as human beings, not as immigrants or legal or illegal or U.S. or Mexican born.” Strikingly similar, Rabbi Laurie Coskey of ICWJ and a reform Jew said simply, “we respect all,” reiterating “that everyone is created in the image of God.” Along the same lines, Estela De Los Rios from JOB and the IRC added, “We’re spiritually all the same, and I believe that we should all be respected the same.” And David Barrows of the Quaker organization, San Diego Friends, acknowledged the Divine in all people by quoting George Fox’s urging to “answer to the God in everybody.”

Elvira Arellano, a Christian single mother who was later deported while in transit after taking Sanctuary in a church in Chicago during the New Sanctuary Movement, believes that God loves all of us equally. Regardless of whether or not you hold a high position or if you are an ordinary person, or how much money you have, “We are all equal,” said Arellano during her visit to the Tijuana, Mexico border.

Moreover, the interfaith presence in the IRM allowed activists who have left their church and of differing faith traditions to adopt from each other. For example, Roberto Martinez of the AFSC who was a practicing Catholic commented on how he doesn’t “practice Quaker” but he “identify[ies] with their philosophy, that life is sacred. All people are sacred.” Likewise, an anonymous activist who was raised Catholic but who no longer considers herself a religious person, still prays, has faith, and is still informed by the messages in her Catholic upbringing. “Remember those lessons you’ve learned as

a kid? You know, *ama a tu proximo* [love your neighbor], and it's like, are you doing that? ... And it's like 'Oh shit, that's right. I'm supposed to love my neighbor.'

[giggles] Like, 'Oh yeah, everyone's equal under the eyes of God.'" Pulling from a human rights framework emphasizing equality, she explained, "I'm thinking from more a humanitarian standpoint. And it's like, 'You're not better than anybody else. You're not more worthy of something because of who you are or what you look like or because of your nationality. You're not. You're a human being.'" To her, equality means, "not to be looked down at because you have an accent. Not to be looked down at because you don't speak English. Not to be looked down at because you weren't born in the U.S. Not to be looked down at because you happen to look different. That to me would be equal. To be treated with the same respect [as] any other citizen of this country would be treated." Feeling that every human being is entitled to the same things, she said she lives her life according to these principles. Quakers, Catholics, humanists, and others listen to each other and sometimes internalize each other's influences regarding the notion of human equality. For instance, activist Michael Bakal of the May 1<sup>st</sup> coalition said his religious roots are Jewish, however, he described his "influences [as] more eclectic." He has "worked a lot with the Muslim community at UCSD." In doing so, he learned "the importance of community." He is also inspired by the works of Gandhi and the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Bakal explained how together, they say "Okay, I'm going to... put God and truth and justice before my own individual desires."

Because IRM activists overwhelmingly envision a world where immigrants are treated equally with dignity and respect, they respond to the current hardships of

immigrants by seeking solutions that will embody that equality. For example, as seen in chapter 2, activists articulate their desired vision of the world pragmatically, as the equal right to migrate across borders, to live freely, and to work in the United States legitimately and with protection against exploitation or the separation of the family unit. Achieving legalization and a pathway to citizenship is the vision of equality translated into a protected right so that immigrants can live productively and securely as equal members of the U.S. community and in accordance with their belief systems.

*Diversity.*

Embedded in the practice of honoring humanity equally is accepting and honoring *all* of humanity in its entirety—in its various colors, shapes, sizes, origins, and beliefs.

Diversity is overwhelmingly and explicitly acknowledged within the moral framework of IRM activists, and this too flows in different ways from the many traditions they bring to the movement. This particular group of people not only accepts diversity, they overwhelmingly welcome it. Activists seek the humility and perspective diversity brings in order to grow as human beings. Honoring diversity has helped Maria Arroyo, Immigration Project Coordinator of ICWJ, become a better Christian, she says. Arroyo believes, “We’re all human beings connected and one action affects us all.” She attributes this belief to what has “driven [her] to be open to learning about other religions and allowing [her] learning of these other religions to help [her] be a better Christian.” Although one may think diversity is important, working in a diverse group with particular views is not an easy task (see chapter 4 regarding the multicultural activist etiquette).

Nonetheless, her understanding that we are all interconnected and our actions affect one another has helped her “to be more patient to different views and say, ‘I need to understand where they’re coming from [even though] I may not agree with it.’”

Similarly, ICWJ member, Imam Taha Hassane of the Muslim tradition explained that “there is wisdom” behind our differences and diverse creation. He explained, “We have to understand that Almighty God has created us as a nation to reach out to other nations... so that we may *know* one another.” He informed me that a Muslim scholar said that to know one another “is not just to introduce yourself to one another. Knowing each other here is to help each other, to extend your help to other communities which are different in faith, culture, background, and this is the wisdom behind our creation.” For Imam Taha Hassane, there is wisdom behind “when almighty God said, ‘I created you and made you into different tribes and nations, different faiths, religions, cultures, color of skin, languages; it’s not haphazard.’” The wisdom, he said, is to “celebrate these diversities, to reach out to others to learn from each other, to teach each other.” The reason behind doing all of this is “to establish a mutual understanding, which leads to a mutual respect, which leads also to living all together in the same society with our differences.” He believes that everyone can and should work together “to establish this mutual understanding and respect” and at the same time, “each one of us has a right to be proud of his own faith and his own identity.” Nonreligious activist, Pedro Rios of AFSC, similarly stated how he is open to people of different faith traditions. “I don’t see it as an impediment in any way, in fact I see it as a virtue and also as a place to learn from in

terms of allowing diversity be a cornerstone for us to understand each other better as human beings.”

Activists like Rev. Curt Fuller and Sister Barbara Quinn also find diversity to be exciting and helpful to one’s personal growth. For example, Reverend Fuller of University City United Church of Christ in San Diego reflected, “I’m probably one of the people that may be a little bit light [in skin tone] than the other people [at the JOB meetings]—That’s a great role to put yourself into because other times it is probably the other way around. You’re in the dominant group. And I think it helps you to understand where people are coming from. It helps you develop as a person.” By doing and seeing more, he believes, he grows personally through his exposure to participants from otherwise foreign communities, “You grow as a person. And as an agency, I think that’s what JOB offers. It’s not anchored to one certain territory; it’s throughout the whole county.”

In a similar way, Sister Barbara Quinn’s “heart goes out, both in great appreciation and desire to get to know people from different settings.” She feels “great compassion for the needs of the poor and outcast.” She went on to describe the benefits of meeting difference, “I think when we meet difference, whether it’s in a people or a different way of thinking or whatever, it has the great gift of stretching us to make our own lives bigger and our hearts deeper. And that’s grace I think. I think it’s a great place to experience what the Gospels try to do.”

These moral stalwarts also encourage diversity in membership in order to better reflect the diversity that exists in the immigrant population and to ultimately achieve

more effectiveness in the movement with additional resources and a larger movement base. Because the “immigrant community is diverse,” Justin Akers Chacón of SSP and the IRC thinks that diversity reflected in the movement is “extremely positive.” He asserted that “any time you can break down distinctions that can basically divide communities, then that’s a positive thing. It’s leading by example.” Jessica Nolan, Community Organizer at JOB went as far as saying, “We don’t want to be homogenous at all.” She declared that they “want to be a multi-ethnic, multi-race, multi-issue, multi-age, intergenerational organization.” While recognizing that “Mexicans are disproportionately impacted by this issue,” Andrea Guerrero, immigration attorney and Chair of IRC, also believes that “the drumbeat of inclusion is louder than the voices” that are promoting homogeneity. “We don’t win if this is just about Mexicans. And we don’t win for the larger community that I hope we’re all trying to help.” Honoring the dignity of every human being in his and her diversity is a goal echoed throughout rallies, marches, and other public protests. IRM activists just like this anonymous participant of the UHFSD, explained how differences were celebrated growing up and are therefore currently appealing, “And so I considered myself fortunate that, the way I was raised, we didn’t look at differences, we celebrated the differences.” In other words, activists are not simply tolerating difference or looking for ways to condemn differences, rather, there is a genuine sense that diversity is a virtue for both personal growth and movement advancement.

Sometimes the acceptance of diversity is premised on belief in an underlying sameness. For example, Rev. Curt Fuller finds it exciting to have “different kinds of

people coming there [together] for a common purpose who you think are different. They aren't really different, but I think that's exciting." According to Sister Barbara Quinn, "there's an illusion that we are different... in very particular, concrete ways. But at the root, we are really sisters and brothers, and that comes home big time." In much the same way, Richard Lawrence, a Rastafarian immigrant from Jamaica and union organizer with UDW, recognized an underlying sameness in the ICWJ forum, "everybody has that higher power so it's a matter of knowing that whether you are calling them Rastafari or child of God, everybody has one. It's a commonality for all of us, that we're all people, human beings." In this way, they simultaneously believe that at the core, people are really not so different. In other words, while activists may appear to be different at the outset, the deep, core moral framework is the same and helps establish a common ground upon which to come together in mutual understanding.

#### *An Interfaith Community.*

Honoring and seeking diversity is not just a matter of cultural or ethnic bridging. It also means valuing an interfaith perspective and community. With many different religious groups involved in seeking immigrant rights, interfaith collaboration is a large part of the Movement. For some people, working in a diversely interfaith setting was a new, yet welcomed experience. Richard Lawrence and Roberto Martinez, a sixth generation Mexican American Catholic native and leader in AFSC, described their first impressions as activists in an interfaith setting. Lawrence recalled his first meeting with ICWJ, "When they all introduced themselves and who they were, they were from all

these different churches and different religions.” He was in disbelief at the multicultural harmony he was witnessing. “I couldn’t believe all these people were actually working together so well and had a lot of respect for each other’s religion and faith.” Lawrence came from the Rastafarian tradition and has “been able to embrace everybody and pray with them;” something that he said has also “been good for [him] as far as [his] own personal growth.” He described successful multicultural events where, “African Americans come to our rallies and meetings, mixed with Vietnamese and Spanish speakers and everybody. And they begin to know each other, exchanging phone numbers and knowing each other by name and becoming friends. So it’s kind of the same thing within the faith. All these people are from different backgrounds that are friends and are working together on a common goal.” From this experience, he has learned “how unified a group could be and how that’s the way our union should be, where all the different races are unified in the fight.” As a result, “we’ve [our union] been mixing pretty good!” Similarly, Roberto Martinez had to “learn to be open to everything.” According to Martinez, “If you’re going to work in the community, you have to be [open] because you work with different people.” Openness requires intentional work and respectful attention to differences.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, IRM stalwarts recognize that there is a greater good in working together in interfaith settings and across diversity. According to Imam Taha Hassane, Director of the Islamic Center of San Diego, the practice of helping one another do good

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<sup>64</sup> For a more detailed account on how multicultural and interfaith communities in the IRM are able to work together see chapter 4 which describes the "multicultural activist etiquette" within meeting spaces.

things doesn't belong to only one religion. Quoting the ICWJ motto he recited, "All religions believe in justice." The way that he understands Islam is "through the teachings of God in the Quran or the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as Muslims, we have to build the bridges." According to Imam Taha, "there are a lot of common issues where we can work all together on." He explained the way he understands his faith, "If I see Reverend Scott [of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral] declaring peace or justice or family values, I cannot remain passive, or isolate myself. I have a calling to my own faith. I have to get involved." He declared, "So justice and peace and all these good concepts, morals, they don't belong to Islam, Christianity, Judaism only, they belong to all of us."

IRM activists include honoring an interfaith community within their moral framework because it also provides assistance and support when one's own faith tradition chooses to remain silent on political issues. Marco Castillo of the NSM is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Castillo informed me of his church's doctrine which states that "they don't get involved in politics." Castillo remembered asking his pastor once "if he was going to announce there was going to be the May Day March." His pastor replied saying they don't really get involved in politics.<sup>65</sup> Realizing he could not turn to his church for help as an undocumented person, he found support in the interfaith community involved in the NSM who were willing and able to assist him and promote his message. He thinks "showing unity is very, a very important thing. There's good

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<sup>65</sup> For a similar discussion, see Ziad W. Munson's work on Right-to-Life movement activists (2009) who often met stagnation from their clergy despite doctrinal support.

people in just about everywhere.” He believes it is amazing that the NSM is “bringing people from *all* types of religions together.” To Castillo, it is especially important at this post 9/11 era when it is “bringing Muslims and Christians and Jewish people together.”

*Open Inclusion.*

Activists not only recognize the underlying importance of equality, they understand it in a context of a diverse community of distinct faith and secular traditions. In doing so, they envision a world where everyone is equally included, and even the stranger is welcomed. Such belief systems are applied within the religious and political realms of activists’ lives. In other words, distinct religious and secular traditions help guide the ways multicultural activists imagine how the U.S. as well as their respective institutions of faith ought to welcome the immigrant, the stranger, as an equal member of the North American community. This stance is most common among the liberal clergy whose theologies downplay boundaries and emphasize openness, but it also resonates with a nonreligious perspective. This theological and principled position largely influences religious and nonreligious members’ politics of inclusion.

From the liberal Jewish tradition, Rabbi Laurie Coskey described her tradition as “an inclusive one.” She reflected, “I’m a liberal Jew... we do not believe we have the only path... I belong to a tradition that is inclusive and open-ended... My tradition is a framework around my life. It is not a path for everyone’s truth.” Recognizing that her religious framework is her own, she remains open and receptive to working with those outside her faith tradition for immigrant rights. Moreover, she, like her fellow IRM

activists, extends this tradition of inclusion to all aspects of her life. She leads the ICWJ campaigns with local unions for livable wages afforded to all workers in addition to her efforts in the NSM for inclusive immigration legislation striving to keep families safely together.

Inclusion is a very important element to the way Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson lives out her faith both inside and outside the church walls. For Reverend Mary, it is a major priority to have open communion in her church, where any visitor can equally share in eating the holy Eucharist as part of the Lord's supper, even if they have not been baptized in the church. "My husband [Dean Scott Richardson] and I both feel that that's a *real* priority for us wherever we go, whatever church we choose to be in that we will always offer open communion. And sometimes it is kind of a controversial thing in our church because not all churches do that." She explained her reasoning for her progressively inclusive practice, "You know, it's food for the journey, and so it is such an important part of the spiritual life." Reverend Mary, the leader of the Spanish Mass at St. Paul's Cathedral, sees herself as a "social worker with a collar" providing a welcoming place of worship open for all those interested. Together, she stood next to Madre Patricia and Rabbi Laurie on the altar leading the NSM worship to put a human face to the immigration debate. In doing so, she welcomed other leaders of distinct faith traditions in her church to join her in asking the U.S. government to do the same for immigrants in our country. Additionally, Reverend Mary hosted the No Match Network's meetings at the Cathedral campus to help meet the needs of immigrant workers and families affected by the new social security no match policy. For Reverend Mary, it is important for the

U.S. to adopt inclusive immigration policies that welcome everyone to the table in much the same way as she believes her church, providing full inclusion of members regardless of sexual orientation or immigration status, should be open to diverse guests.

In a similar way, Madre Patricia's Episcopal faith guides her belief that all people are welcomed and included equally in their diversity. She recounted "one of the phrases [she has] always liked," an image from the Bible that she said, "just drives me." She explained, "God speaks to the prophet [Isaiah] and says, 'All people sit at my table. All people will eat and make merry. All people will come into my house.'" She made special note, "God doesn't say some. God doesn't say a few. All will." Taking it a step further, Madre Patricia showed how the Biblical teachings regarding the way we ought to live our life are still relevant today. Quoting religious texts, she is affirmed in her vision of a better place where all workers earn a livable wage and all children's wellbeing is prioritized, "And where a worker will receive respect and the wages that a worker deserves. And where our children will no longer be bread as fire for war."

Nonreligious IRM activists also include fair and equal inclusion within their moral framework without rooting it in religious language or text. For instance, Pedro Rios, Director of U.S.-Mexico Border Program in San Diego within AFSC also stretches "how we define belonging" in an international way "that transgresses or goes beyond the nation-state definition." While he does not consider himself a religious person or use religious language to assert his position for inclusion per se, he struggles alongside religious and nonreligious moral stalwarts to make the immigration system more inclusive. For nonreligious activists like Pedro Rios, they embody a position of equality

that is more secular in nature and more closely related to Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating, “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” Moreover, faith-based activists would concur with the aforementioned statement as well. The difference in the articulation of an inclusive world for activists of faith like Reverend Mary, Madre Patricia, and Rabbi Laurie, is the more regular usage of religious references to explain fair and equal inclusion. The practice of embracing more progressive virtues like diversity, equality for all people, and an inclusive community further opens the door for diverse collaboration among humanitarian immigrant and nonimmigrant activists from distinct faith and secular cultures.

*Welcoming the Stranger, the Immigrant.*

The notion of “welcoming the stranger” was adopted by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, although Catholics could point to an official pastoral letter on the subject. On November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2000) unanimously approved the popular Pastoral Statement, *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*. Writing, “that communion in a multicultural Church is a true possibility for the new millennium,” the Church made sense of current immigration in light of Biblical teachings and took a public stand for more inclusive and humane immigration legislation as also indicated below.

The call to solidarity can be summed up in Pope John Paul II's Message for World Migration Day 2000: ‘The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted

from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness' (no. 6). We bishops commit ourselves and all the members of our church communities to continue the work of advocacy for laws that respect the human rights of immigrants and preserve the unity of the immigrant family. We encourage the extension of social services, citizenship classes, community organizing efforts that secure improved housing conditions, decent wages, better medical attention, and appropriate educational opportunities for immigrants and refugees. We advocate reform of the 1996 immigration laws that have undermined some basic human rights for immigrants. We join with others of good will in a call for legalization opportunities for the maximum number of undocumented persons, particularly those who have built equities and otherwise contributed to their communities (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000).

In much the same way, many IRM activists point to other holy texts and accounts of religious figures, including Jesus, who were immigrants. Welcoming the stranger, the immigrant, takes on religious significance. Cynthia Salazar explained how Adam and Eve, Noah, and even the people of Israel were displaced and “had to start all over.” Because “people are migrating all the time,” Salazar believes “that’s why God, in Leviticus he said, ‘You shall welcome the stranger and treat him with dignity.’” Applying it to contemporary times, Salazar reasoned, “if God said that to the people of Israel, what is he saying to me now? I need to treat people with dignity no matter who they are. And he’s always teaching in the Bible to welcome strangers. So if an undocumented person is a stranger to me but if their causes are good causes... I’m fighting for the ones that are coming to better their lives, to bring something good to this country.” Jessica Nolan of JOB, an activist who does not consider herself religious, also directed me to the quote, “I will welcome the stranger.” Applying this message from the

Bible to current immigrants in much the same way as Salazar, Nolan said, “In the Bible that was something that was always done. And here we are talking about immigrant rights and the stranger.”

Identifying as a Nazarene Christian at the core with “deep roots in Judaism,” Jamie Gates of ICWJ “traces [his] own story back to the exodus from Egypt,” the stories of Adam and Eve, and the tower of Babel as parts of his identity. He believes that “the people of God, of which [he is] a part, are a nomadic people.” He cited Jeremiah 20:9, “God encourages [“the Hebrew people”] to make homes and plant gardens and have kids and make a home there, but never to hold onto the place too tightly because their home is not in that particular place but is in God. And [it] is in being the right kind of people together.” A self-proclaimed radical who takes his cues from Jesus’ example, Gates reminded me that Abraham, Moses, Ruth, and Jesus were all migrants. “Jesus is someone who has no place to lay his head... And essentially wanders and finds his security not in the particular place or particular race or particular family even, but in this wandering life toward God. Ultimately we’re all migrants.”

For Kent Peters of ICWJ and the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego’s Office of Social Ministry, “Hospitality is part and parcel of being a Christian.” In his explanation, he also referenced the Biblical migration stories of Abraham, Joseph, Jesus, and Mary, “It goes back to our God who dealt with migration from Abraham leaving a comfortable existence moving into new territories from Joseph needing to leave and go into Egypt; the Israelites traveling through the desert trying to find a homeland; Jesus Mary and Joseph leaving after his birth being immigrants.” He continued, “there are all

kinds of policies and laws in the old testament and the new testament for the undocumented, the person out of, away from his home.” Because he “think[s] God has a special heart for someone out of his homeland,” he wondered, “So how could we be a church and be faithful to our roots and not recognize that and somehow try to remedy that?”

Like the majority of activists inspired and guided by their belief systems, Rabbi Laurie Coskey proclaimed, “I feel exhorted in my biblical texts to work with people to move closer to freedom.” She attributed her efforts in the movement to being “driven by [her] Jewish prophetic tradition, the exodus story in the Bible or the Passover holiday we just celebrated.” She divulged, “That is my story,” referencing also “the oppression of workers and exploitation we have to fight in all of our lives.”

IRM activists have drawn on distinct faith traditions and a secular human rights framework to ground their vision of “equal treatment of all people,” a vision that encompasses the appreciation of diversity of cultures and open inclusion for all people including the stranger, the immigrant. Moral stalwarts have pointed to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Ruth, the Prophet Muhammad, the more current worker and human rights philosophies, the understanding of God’s love for everyone equally, and Pastoral Statements emphasizing welcoming the other, equally and openly. There is an interfaith and a multicultural element to this diversity that is not only embraced, but sought after among the diverse activists in the IRM. Such diversity in movement participants is often welcomed because it opens participants to personal growth and an exciting way of being; it reflects the diversity of immigrants in the U.S. and contributes to more resources for

the movement; it is often premised with an underlying core sameness; there is a greater good in working together across differences; and being a part of a diverse movement base leaves more potential for support versus stagnation in one's own community. These messages of equality, diversity, and open inclusion deeply inform IRM activists' vision of a better world, a heaven on earth where immigrants, strangers to a new land, are equally and openly included in the United States with equal rights, worker protections, family unity, and the freedom to securely travel across national boundaries. The second set of themes within the underlying IRM moral framework, to which we will now turn, demonstrates some reasons why IRM activists empathize with the plight of immigrants.

***Theme 2: Caring for One Another.***

For these diverse moral stalwarts, believing in equality also means that they believe in caring for one another, especially in the face of inequality and insecurity, also understood as injustice. For example, for Dean Scott Richardson and many other activists in the IRM, there is an innate value of every human being, and therefore a responsibility to love and care for one another. Articulating his point, Dean Scott referenced his Episcopal teachings and explained, the “heart of the Gospel” is to “love your neighbor.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> He emphasizes a philosophy similar to Ammerman's (1997) Golden Rule Christians characterized by a this-worldly orientation to compassionately meet the needs of others. However, while Golden Rule Christians and religious IRM activists are not interested in converting others, they differ in their interest in activism. IRM activists part with Ammerman's Golden Rule Christians in that they choose to make this world a better place and care for their neighbor through less individual and more social and political routes—namely by making the political system more inclusive for immigrants through comprehensive

For him, the religious community adds an important aspect to the table of the immigration debate. “We need to be there ... to hold up the value of the dignity of every human being. These are not economic units. These are not, you know, prime statistics. These are human beings.” He emphasized that the role of the religious community is “to be involved in the conversation and say it over and over and over again. That at the *heart* of the Gospel is this call to *love your neighbor*.” If the religious community were to pull away from the table, it would not only be an unfaithful move but it would “radically diminish the conversation” according to Dean Richardson.

For Enrique Morones of Border Angels and Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson loving our neighbor is mandated in biblical stories such as the one in Matthew 25, “When I was hungry and you gave me to eat and when I was thirsty, you gave me to drink,” and also “Whatever you do to your neighbor, you’ve done to me.” Reverend Moreno Richardson emphasized, “I really take that to *heart*. That is, you know, kind of uh, my walking papers as far as going out and trying to carry the word of Jesus and serving my neighbor in any way that I can, whatever those needs are.” In a time of divisions between rich and poor, she thinks “it *is* the responsibility of the church to go *out* into the *world* and take care of God’s people.” For faith-based IRM activists, taking care of God’s people means bringing heaven to earth and making sure God’s children are protected and treated fairly.

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immigration reform that provides legalization, family unity, and worker rights and protections.

Compassion for their neighbors motivates Cynthia Salazar, David Schmidt, and Michael Bakal to work to eradicate the suffering caused by the current immigration legislation. Cynthia Salazar remembered the exact moment when she decided to care for the needs of immigrants while she was walking in the immigration march of 2006, “When I saw people there that I knew they were part of the undocumented population. So you see the desperation in their eyes. Or you see the passion, the wanting, why they protested. I remember seeing a guy on crutches walking the whole way. [I saw] people in wheelchairs.” She was shocked at what she saw and described her reaction, “So to me that was like, ‘Whoa, God! There’s a big need for this.’ And so that’s when I started getting involved more in the immigration stuff.”

And Michael Bakal, like many of his activist counterparts, cares for others by learning from the heartbreaks in history. Informed by his Jewish roots, he commemorates Passover and “really take[s] the opportunity to reflect on our roots and to realize that where we come from is slavery.” He drew parallels between the suffering of his ancestors and ending suffering today, “This is where we come from. What are we doing to help others to achieve their own liberation?” His connection to the marginalization of his Jewish ancestors makes him “feel more and more connected to oppressed people throughout the world” while he helps organize for immigrant rights

*Preferential Option for the Poor and Marginalized.*

Moving past simple caring and toward liberation is a virtue deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and the Liberation Theology movement. A "preferential option

for the poor" is a goal adopted both by Catholics and by non-Catholics motivated by human rights principles honoring humanity. These ideas have been opened up to a larger, interfaith and nonreligious audience, allowing them to be affirmed by distinct faith traditions, as well as by secular activists motivated by human rights principles honoring humanity.

Kent Peters and Linda Arreola of the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego's Office of Social Ministry, described the Church's preferential option for the poor. For Arreola, "the great thing about it is that we always go back to the Social Teachings." Aware that this position might irritate more [immigration] restrictionists, Arreola still believes, "We're Catholics first, then we're American." She continued, "Once they [immigrants] enter the Diocese of San Diego, they're our parishioners. They're our fellow human beings." After reiterating Pope John Paul II's words, "In the church no one is a stranger," Arreola said one cannot argue against holding up the "human dignity of the person."

Peters' "general religious call" by which he lives his life is a result of working in the Social Ministry office. He described his call as "a call to somehow have those with more means assist those who are marginalized." Peters further explained that his community is called to be involved "whether [people] are marginalized because of age or disability, or language barrier, or the economy, wherever the marginalization." Similarly, Schmidt told me that, as members of *Si Se Puede*, they care for the needs of immigrants as they "try to be a voice for the voiceless and try to get the voiceless involved in a struggle for their own rights in the field of immigrant communities," a widely accepted

commitment consistent with the practices of alliance-building and self-determination, where the affected community knows best what it needs.

“I resonate really strongly with the option for the poor and vulnerable having lived so long in Latin America and working with community service [at a Catholic institution],” said Elaine Elliott. A missionary child, she also spent much time in Guatemala. Her impressionable experiences in Guatemala and her deeply ingrained Christian beliefs guide her actions. She exclaimed, “Christ was poor and vulnerable, a migrant... He’s kind of like the lower class guy... He’s a horrible victim of not only racism but miscarriage of justice. And I was really touched at this workshop [I attended] by the identification of Christ and his death on the cross with lynching [written] by James Cone in a very beautiful but kind of compelling article called, ‘Strange Fruit.’” Having lived in Guatemala during the massacres where “more than 200,000 people were killed over the course of the 36-year-long civil war that began in 1960 and ended with peace accords in 1996” (Miller, 2011), she remembered that “one of the anthropologists who is a Jesuit priest said, ‘They are markers of Christ’s death. And then the people who are survivors are markers of his resurrection.’” That framework helps Elliott, “He’s [Jesus is] identified with us in this tragic stuff that is going on [especially to the poor and vulnerable] in the world.” To her, “It’s not all about me and my money and my family and my stuff. It’s about us as a community and us being sure that the marginalized are being drawn into opportunity and flourishing.”

Activists Dan Watman and Jamie Gates also share a concern with their fellow activists for those in the margins and, in doing so, they share an opposition to the

construction of the triple border fence. Nonreligious activist, Watman, generally “like[s] to root for the underdog.” Meanwhile, as a dedicated member of the Church of the Nazarene and ICWJ activist, Gates deduced, “So if it’s true that God is working for the sake of the poor, has a special concern for them let’s say, [then] where anyone is working for the sake of the poor, there’s God.” The community of God in which Jamie Gates is a part “has a particular concern for the people in the margins.” According to Gates, “the language in the books of the prophets” includes “the widow, the orphan and the alien amongst us or the stranger.” Interpreting the language for today, “migrants in particular are the strangers amongst us these days. In the nation-state they’re the ones without power, the ones left out of the services, particularly undocumented migrants I interpret as the strangers amongst us.” He described undocumented migrants as “those left without deep family ties, those without the social security systems that support people; they really are marginalized to the degree that our scriptures and our tradition demands special attention to people like the undocumented workers in our midst or the undocumented persons, migrants, whether they’re workers or not.” For Gates, it is important to ask questions like, “how is the world shaping up in regard to the widow, the orphan and the stranger?” Such questions around seeking justice, according to Gates, is a “mission greater than our theological differences” and “form[s] the common ground for us to act on... out of which it [also] builds friendships.”

Many IRM activists referenced the teachings of Liberation Theology, an ecumenical theology that also extends beyond its Catholic roots, as informing and affirming movement goals. For an immigrant, Catholic activist, Maria Arroyo of ICWJ

and the New Sanctuary Movement, Liberation Theology “just really resonated with me, and it makes sense.” She defined it as “taking a scripture [reading] and bringing it to life in terms of how Jesus ministered.” Similar to Watman and Gate’s position, she explained that Jesus “was always there for the underdog, for the oppressed, for the orphan, for the widow, for the tax collectors, all those despised. And that’s where he lived and that’s who he hung out with and who he interacted with and who he advocated for.” Just as Jesus lived in that manner, she continued, “that’s what [Liberation Theology] does. It just kind of highlights again that aspect of Jesus’ ministry and says, ‘Jesus was a proponent of the poor and we’re called to continue to do that.’”

The church insiders predominantly quoted in this section are people who have more access to being articulate about religious ideas and justifications. Nonreligious activists tend to focus more on the practice of caring for one another and cite a human rights or worker rights framework without getting into lengthy discussions about the origins of their belief systems. Nonetheless, religious and nonreligious moral stalwarts understand this practice of caring for one another as a valuable component of the Immigrant Rights Movement’s overall moral framework. In their understanding of this theme, IRM rule-changers place a particular emphasis of care on the vulnerable and marginalized in society who they specifically identify as immigrants in the U.S.

As shown above, IRM agents from distinct faith traditions and belief systems agree upon the shared visions of a world where there is equal treatment for all people and where neighbors care for one another. Furthermore, activists believe that there ought to be a preferential option for the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities with

specific attention given to welcoming the immigrant. When the virtues of equality and open inclusion are violated, causing great insecurity and suffering to immigrants, the complementary virtue of caring for the vulnerable and marginalized is evoked. Agreeing upon this inclusive, humanitarian moral framework, interfaith and nonreligious IRM activists construct a common ground among their diverse movement cadre. This common ground helps unite multicultural activists by providing the materials from which movement goals are built and the foundation upon which diverse activists can collectively organize. This moral framework is imprinted upon the general call for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform. More specifically, it is embedded in the rights for immigrants to securely migrate across national boundaries and to live freely and work securely in the United States with protections and rights equal to those of citizens. This shared moral framework provides the materials from which to build goals by defining how the world ought to be. Furthermore, the violation of their shared vision provides the very reasons for mobilizing. What is additionally striking here, is that distinct, progressive belief systems affirm and inform the aforementioned shared moral framework. These progressive belief systems, for IRM activists, de-emphasize theological boundaries in favor of open inclusion that results in practices such as open communion and political stances that welcome the immigrant with rights and protections. Other progressive aspects include fostering a genuine willingness to adopt ideas from other traditions and focusing on establishing justice and change in this world to alleviate the unnecessary hardships related to immigration. However, a common moral framework remains only a shared vision unless people are willing and able to act in accordance with

it. IRM activists are putting their shared vision into practice in large part because they understand their belief systems as incomplete without action. Let us now turn to the particular ways multicultural movement participants make sense of their belief systems in relation to their identity as agents of change.

*Morally-Aligned Action.*

Elaine Elliot pointed out, “a lot of social movements are about faith... Howard Zinn [an advocate of the Civil Rights Movement said, ‘ [I] didn’t know we’re going to get changes, only that what was happening was wrong’... You have to express your conscience.” Similarly, what is fulfilling for many IRM activists who have internalized their belief system as embedded in their conscience, is a physical expression of those belief systems—choosing to *live* them out in the world in a very personal way, and advocating for righting the world when they are violated. In other words, these moral stalwarts understand their moral framework is incomplete without action. This notion of morally-aligned action departs from the concept of *lived religion* (McGuire, 1987; Ammerman, 1997; Orsi, 1997) where “religion-as-lived is based more on such religious practices than on religious ideas or beliefs,” and is therefore, “not necessarily logically coherent” (McGuire, 2008, p. 15). IRM activists, on the other hand, are making very intentional connections between ideology and action in social ways among multicultural and multi-faith actors. Following are concrete examples of how shared belief systems, which together construct the aforementioned common moral framework within the IRM, are coupled with agency.

For instance, David Schmidt referenced the Lord's Prayer as he illustrated a Christian faith that is active and ought to be focused on bringing heaven to earth. He emphasized that heaven is "not something that exists just in the afterlife." To him, the Kingdom of God "is something that you fight for here on earth. You pray for it here on earth as part of the Lord's Prayer, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth.' " He explained that we do not need to worry about heaven, because it is already in order, "But you want that to exist here on earth." He rationalized that, "because the church and the community is Christ's body, if something doesn't get done, it's not because Christ doesn't want to do it. It's because we didn't do it." To Schmidt, God is involved in everything, including "when people come together and love each other and fight for justice and equality."

Catholic immigrant rights activist and founder of the AFSC US/Mexico Border Program, Roberto Martinez turned his life over to God and let his faith guide him. With Liberation Theology as the basis of his work, he revealed, "I always felt guided by God, or else I couldn't do it." Other activists like Sister Barbara Quinn, Maria Arroyo, Linda Arreola, and Elaine Elliott also reference Liberation Theology, Catholic Social Teaching,<sup>67</sup> and the pastoral letter, "Strangers No Longer Together on the Journey of Hope" as their guides (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003).

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<sup>67</sup> Catholic Social Teaching, derived from Papal, Vatican, and United States Catholic Bishops documents, is based on seven themes including: (1) "Life and Dignity of the Human Person," (2) "Call to Family, Community, and Participation," (3) "Rights and Responsibilities," (4) "Option for the Poor and Vulnerable," (5) "The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers," (6) "Solidarity," and (7) "Care for God's Creation" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, n.d.).

Furthermore, Estela De Los Rios credits the fact that she is Catholic to “why I respect people so much.”

Activists from the Quaker tradition have a long history of a shared activist identity that is based on their pillars of peace, equality, integrity, and stewardship. According to David Barrows of ICWJ, it is important to “live your principles.” Both he and Joan Helland taught me that “Friends have a history with radical equality.” Helland explained, “Because of our history, New Sanctuary was a natural extension of who we are.”

Also identifying with her faith traditions, Rabbi Laurie Coskey described herself as a rabbi who really does engage her life spiritually, “As Jews, we are people of the book, people of the story. We have an obligation to care for others.” And Reverend Curt Fuller described his religious community as “followers of Jesus and his call.” He informed me that “the great mission is to go out and live the Gospel.” Doing so entails “lov[ing] God with all your soul and lov[ing] your neighbor as yourself.”

According to Imam Taha Hassane of ICWJ, “Islam means peace and submission to God and it is a comprehensive way of life. It is not acceptable to believe and not to practice.” In other words, “serving the humanity and providing them with whatever we can afford, is part of our submission to God.” He believes that “God is connecting the faith, itself, with the righteous deeds.” Imam Taha continued, “One of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, he said that whoever believes in God and the day of judgment must honor his guest. Whoever believes in God on the last day, which is the day of judgment, let him be kind to his neighbor.” Pushing for interfaith

collaboration, he concluded, “So, moving from the state of just having the dialogue between people of all different faiths to take action is something that should be highly considered by the people of faith.”

Jessica Noland of JOB and Madre Patricia Andrews-Callori of JOB and ICWJ also made a case for moving beyond dialogue into faith-based action. Jessica Nolan explained, “If there’s a space where some injustice is being done, if you don’t speak out, you’re not necessarily part of the problem, but you’re not really living out your faith beliefs. So we don’t want people to come together and pray for something. We want people to come together and *do* something about what they pray for at home.” For Madre Patricia, an Episcopal priest, “we [priests] call ourselves back to our baptismal vows and say, ‘We will fight for justice; we will speak the Good News; we will fight for dignity and justice for all people.’ But they [many priests] think it’s the people in the four walls. They never understood that church is to be sent out.” She turned to scripture and frustratingly wondered why other clergy members are not acting based on their religious teachings, “Someone went through the entire scripture and counted the times the poor were mentioned. They cut out the phrases, and there was over 2,000! In scripture, when something was mentioned more than three times, it was like, *Ojo!* [Pay Attention!] This is important to God, [therefore] it better be important to you. So, having that knowledge that there are over 2000 times that God’s preference for the poor is mentioned, what makes you turn a deaf ear? What frightens you?!” She understood that in behaving according to one’s theological beliefs, the experience “allows people to get in touch with The Mystery.”

Similarly, Nazarene activist and member of ICWJ, Jamie Gates, is a firm believer that not only should he live out his faith, but so should business owners. He reflected on the behavior of the laity in congregations, and business owners in particular, “We should have a church that is prophetic enough to call its members to create more just structures... [and then] maybe there wouldn’t be as much bleeding if people who say they are Christian and people who say they are just and Jewish and committed to justice, would actually live that out in their business structures.”

Nonreligious persons, by contrast, turned to their own experiences of injustice to explain the deep commitment to equality that motivated them to act. For example, Vicente Rodriguez’s eyes were opened to how people were treated differently after joining the U.S. Marine Corps. Even though inequality was widespread and normalized to many, Rodriguez internally understood, “I’m just as good as anybody else.” Projecting this belief of an equal society onto the plight of immigrants in the U.S., he has dedicated his life for human rights and is now a seasoned activist for immigrant rights. Similarly, Pedro Rios, Director of American Friends Service Committee’s U.S./Mexico Border Program grew up with privileges and gained a higher education that his other family members were unable to share because they were born in Mexico. Realizing the injustice in this, he explained, “[I] committed to returning to my community and my relatives,” in order to share his skills and help improve their quality of life. Despite the fact that such virtues of equality and fairness may not originate from exposure to religious teachings, to Rodriguez and Rios, among other nonreligious IRM activists, they are privileged as logical and moral ways of interacting within the world.

Moral stalwarts with distinct religious and secular origins nevertheless arrived at a common desire to meet the needs of the community. Together, they mobilize to ensure equality and alleviate suffering with immigration legislation that establishes rights and protections for immigrants. As Martinez put it, “to me that was the whole thing--helping people who couldn’t speak for themselves.” When morality is violated (as discussed in chapter 2), activists, like Martinez, whose belief systems are tightly coupled with agency, must do something to make this world as it should be, “And when people come to you and they’re desperate and they’re crying and they’re hurt. You see people hurt, children hurt. I was driven by what I had seen, this kind of abuse.” IRM stalwarts like Martinez know that as part of a grassroots movement, they are more likely to enact social and political change that protects the immigrant community from abuse, neglect, and exploitation so immigrants can thrive as contributors to the U.S. community, by working together in a larger movement base. The next chapter explores the codes of interaction among diverse movement activists by delving into IRM members’ *multicultural activist etiquette* (MAE) which guides multicultural and interfaith collaboration for common movement claims within organizing spaces.

**Conclusion.**

Articulating a common moral framework helps make activism meaningfully, and for people of faith, religiously productive for current and future movement participants in the IRM who reach into their repertoire of belief systems to help them define how the world ought to operate. This exercise is even more critical in a SMO, such as the IRM,

that is made up of activists from diverse cultural origins in need of a common ground upon which to mobilize and in need of a larger movement base to garner additional collective power for the movement.

Collaboration is, of course, essential. A grassroots social movement requires the support of a large movement base in order to be actualized. Therefore, IRM activists recognize that their goals require teamwork. Because movement stalwarts understand that they need each other to garner collective power in order to actualize their goals, they need resonant ways of talking about the movement's goals. Expressing a common moral framework genuinely emphasizing the themes of equality, open inclusion, and caring for others, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, the immigrants, serves to further connect current activists to the IRM and attract additional sympathetic allies. It achieves this connection by deeply resonating with progressive elements of diverse belief systems, both religious and nonreligious. Furthermore, this moral framework provides the shared vision from which movement goals are constructed in contrast to the passionately expressed experiences of injustice that violate the agreed upon sense of morality from which society is measured. Finding ways to articulate goals in meaningful and passionate ways so as to resonate with a diverse audience can serve to maintain the multicultural movement membership and bring additional allies on board, further united through a common target.

IRM goals serve as the focal point around which multicultural activists organize in the Immigrant Rights Movement. Because immigrant and nonimmigrant movement participants overwhelmingly couple their beliefs and movement agency, IRM goals are

largely affirmed and legitimated by the belief systems consistent within their shared moral framework. As demonstrated, such a moral framework consisted of themes rooted in progressive perspectives that emphasize commonly shared humanitarian principles. It also contains the building blocks that collectively construct the common ground for multicultural, religious, and nonreligious moral stalwarts. Therefore, movement goals that are consistent with the humanitarianism and inclusiveness that correspond with the equal treatment for all people and caring for one another serve as powerful unifying mechanisms in the multicultural and interfaith IRM.

As described in chapter 2, these diverse activists, pursue goals that are often strategically framed as “just and humane comprehensive immigration reform.” That, of course, is a phrase that can be filled with many different specific goals and justified on myriad grounds. Holding together a diverse coalition depends on finding both the motivating sense of suffering and injustice that must be addressed and visions of the common good that are grounded in moral and religious traditions. “Humane” has come to refer to a humanitarian perspective that can be grounded in both secular human rights language and in the stories and beliefs of a variety of religious traditions.

“Comprehensive” includes legalization for all immigrants to be able to travel across international borders safely, preserve family unity, work with rights and protections, and live freely without the fear of raids and deportations. These, too, are informed by visions of mutual care, hospitality to strangers, and a preferential option for the poor.

The beliefs that there should be equal treatment of all persons and members of society should care for one another converge for IRM activists in how our society ought

to welcome the stranger, the immigrant. Consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, philosophies associated with worker rights and protections, and elements of Muslim, Jewish, Episcopal, Quaker, Catholic, and Rastafarian religious traditions among others, these beliefs guide the manner in which vulnerable, undocumented immigrants ought to be treated in society. According to multicultural activists in the IRM, immigrants from around the world and of distinct faith traditions possess an innate value as human beings, community members of the human race. These activists who also come from distinct pockets of the world and belief systems spend countless hours and are emotionally invested in advocating for immigrants to safely emerge from the shadows with rights that preserve the dignity, family, and livelihood of immigrants. They see equality and caring for one another manifested in overcoming injustices (see chapter 2) through equal rights including the preservation of the family unit. They also express great concern for the free movement of people between nations with safe passage, the same worker rights and protections as citizens earning a livable wage, and the legalization of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. so they can live openly and legitimately as citizens do. Because these movement goals are consistent with the aforementioned shared humanitarian moral framework, they serve as a common focal point for this diverse movement cadre. Although these rights are often framed as political rights in order to speak directly to immigration legislation, they are often articulated through this shared moral framework that is rooted in distinct, progressive faith traditions. Rather than being glossed over or tucked away, these traditions are regularly in the forefront informing and affirming movement goals.

What is particularly striking is the fact that these religiously and culturally distinct voices unite with their secular counterparts and vocalize the same message, essentially that society ought to treat all people equally and members should care for one another, particularly for those living in the margins. Furthermore, multicultural and multi-faith collaboration also exposes diverse activists to one another's culture and belief systems. In this way, activists influence each other and allow different beliefs and traditions to be more accessible to one another. For example, Catholic Social Teaching shares its emphasis on the "option for the poor and vulnerable" while the Jewish tradition brings forth the Exodus story, Passover, and lessons from the Holocaust. Again, this shared morality, part of an overall human rights framework and rooted in distinct progressive traditions, are echoed in the IRM goals and shape the common ground upon which multicultural and interfaith activists stand. Also emphasizing equality and caring for one another, interfaith and multicultural IRM activists want immigrants, part of the human family, to be treated equally with the same dignity and afforded the same rights as citizens. Through collective agency, IRM activists envision and move toward a world where immigrants, equal to citizens, can also live freely and openly while being able to enjoy their families, travel securely, and work safely while earning a livable wage.

Even though these moral stalwarts think diversity is important, share a common moral framework echoed in shared movement goals, and understand they need each other in order to actualize their goals, it can still be challenging to work together often due to personality differences, conflicting political interests, and competition for funding among other potential points of contention. Movement members, therefore, have developed

strategies for collaborating in a respectful manner that promote equality and security among participants. The following chapter reveals the *multicultural activist etiquette*, a code of conduct consistent with activists' shared, progressive moral framework that fosters equal, respectful, safe, and productive collaboration between ethnically and religiously diverse activists in meeting spaces.

## Chapter 4 Table Manners

### **Introduction.**

Let us return to the vivid NSM mass where red, yellow, green feathers gracefully sway to the rhythm of the drum and to the beat of seeds adorning the ankles of Aztec dancers. They ceremoniously dance down the center aisle of the San Diego Episcopal Cathedral, honoring the four directions and bowing toward the altar initiating the mass, an action that is part of the larger mobilization for just and humane comprehensive immigration reform. Three female religious leaders, two Episcopal priests and a rabbi of the Reform tradition, stand leading an audience of immigrant and nonimmigrant multicultural activists, empathizers, media persons, and researchers of distinct secular and faith traditions who fill the pews. Biblical readings, a sermon remembering the tragedies of the Holocaust, the immigration story of Marco Castillo--an undocumented immigrant college graduate in sanctuary, and a handwritten poem by a child written about an undocumented father separated from his family tell a clear message. They make a plea to learn from the horrors of our past, to live by the teachings of our belief systems, and to collectively demand immigrant rights. Requesting all media persons and activists to step up to the altar, the Dean of the Cathedral blesses each with a prayer to continue their hard work and report on it accurately.

I remember the protest vividly as it transpired seamlessly. Like all of the events I observed in the Immigrant Rights Movement (IRM) in San Diego County over the two years of conducting participant observation, such a protest required much planning and

many hours of preparation.<sup>68</sup> The IRM, like all movements comprises the organization of many people and a variation of perspectives. Not unlike more contemporary social movements, such as the Occupy Wall Street movement and the current International Workers movement, diverse activists from distinct ethnicities and faith traditions make up the IRM. While common goals, shared injustices, collective action, movement narratives, and a shared moral framework rooted in deeply held personal belief systems remain critical unifying mechanisms in the IRM (as explored in chapters 2 and 3), the ways in which multicultural, multi-faith, and nonreligious activists interact with one another within meeting spaces are also a critical mechanism for multicultural collaboration and social cohesion. It is here that the aforementioned unifying mechanisms--common goals, agreed upon injustices, working together, stories of change, and a shared moral framework--come together in very concrete and practical ways. In these spaces, movement agents brainstorm on possible solutions and develop movement goals; invite others to join them; share movement narratives and construct new ones; and collectively negotiate and innovatively strategize actions and events to build awareness, garner media attention and support, and put pressure on those with the capacity to actualize agreed-upon movement goals.<sup>69</sup>

Meetings are essential for the Immigrant Rights Movement. After attending close to two hundred IRM activist meetings in San Diego County over a span of more

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<sup>68</sup> For additional illustrations of collective efforts, please see chapter 2.

<sup>69</sup> It was often easier for activists to collectively decide what they were against as opposed to what they were for, especially when the discussion became more specific. For this reason, actions of protest often took on a defensive nature and focused on changing policies and practices that harmed the immigrant population to create a more welcoming and equal society.

than two years and formally interviewing forty-nine movement participants, it became clear to me that activists spend the vast majority of their time in meetings ranging from one to three hours each. Some meet as often as every week and even more frequently as the date of a protest event approaches. Others meet bimonthly or monthly. The few that do not choose to meet regularly in-person remain in contact through other media, particularly through phone calls, e-mails, mass e-mail lists, and additional online venues that present themselves through technological advances (e.g., Facebook, Skype, G-chat). They collaborate with movement members from their own organizations while also serving as representatives within coalition settings where they partner with additional activist organizations. Quite a few activists hold dual membership, change memberships, and also serve on the boards of other organizations. Some are paid staff members of social justice organizations participating in the IRM while most volunteer their time.

Essential to the pursuit of social progress, these physical and metaphorical spaces are where immigrant and nonimmigrant, movement stalwarts come together to discuss agreed upon immigration-related injustices and strategies to actualize visions of equality and security for immigrants. Within these spaces, they disseminate information on national, state, and local legislation; they learn about the latest injustices, up-to-date strategies, and tactics that have worked for other organizations elsewhere; and they follow-up on their responsibilities to one another in alignment with their responsibilities to the overall advancement of the movement.

Multicultural alliance building is not a small feat. In some SMOs, multicultural collaboration is inhibited by the organizational culture of the movement community

despite intentions to promote diversity (Lichterman, 1995).<sup>70</sup> However, collaboration in diverse groups is possible and continues to be done. Becker's (1998) research on multicultural religious congregations lauds the "genuine accomplishment not to be dismissed" of Good Shepherd Lutheran and City Baptist<sup>2</sup> congregations that became "a public space [that] is both multicultural and where there is real [racial] integration of membership and the organizational power structure" (p. 468). Her findings indicate that "neither congregation stopped at symbolism." Rather, they "include[ed] African American members in positions of leadership and administration" and "encouraged cross-racial fellowship" through "many small groups, with members and leaders recruited across racial lines so that people could get to know one another informally" (p. 468). This "local, civic orientation and a focus on community led these two churches to integrate across not only racial lines, but across other social divisions such as gender, social class, and lifestyle" (p. 468). Similarly, the cadre of activists in the IRM also included ethnic minorities in leadership positions, encouraged cross-racial and cross-religious fellowship, and constructed small groups in meetings spaces. They also practiced additional methods of interaction that embrace diversity, not only in a symbolic manner, but in concrete and practical ways as they collectively and inclusively organized for immigrant rights. In addition to bridging across national origins, gender, social class, and lifestyle, this group of movement stalwarts also connected across faith traditions.

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<sup>70</sup> Lichterman (1995) found that a personalized movement community that focuses on the individual voluntarism rather than institutionalizing a multicultural agenda within a centralized organization that emphasized decisions by consensus stood in the way of multicultural alliance building.

In such a context, meetings serve as vital spaces where allies from distinct backgrounds build connections, membership is strengthened, and relationships are continuously fostered. The collaboration among diverse activists during planning and organizing meetings within the IRM is the focus of this chapter. More specifically, I examine the patterns of conduct that allowed activists from distinct religious and ethnic backgrounds to interact during meetings. What did these patterns look like and what moral code, if any, did they adhere to?

Collaboration within a diverse community is not an easy task. Activists do not have the luxury of assuming everyone shares in one another's cultural framework and worldview. Instead, this kind of movement has to undertake organizational tasks in a particular kind of way. Rather than cursing their differences, activists constructed a code of conduct that upheld the respect of one another's diverse origins and cultures. The multicultural social movement organizations (SMOs) were able to advance their work and foster social cohesion, not just by having clearer or more attainable goals, but also by adopting a particular *way* of working together. Movement participants overwhelmingly respected diversity and most even embraced it (as discussed in chapter 3). Such an awareness, openness, and sensitivity to differences permeated conversations and communal tasks. Meetings could not be conducted without sincere consideration of religious, ethnic, and national differences. As much of a burden as this may appear, agents of change welcomed this internal movement challenge as a necessary practice consistent with the kind of respectful and equal world they wished to achieve through their very movement goals.

This study unveils a behavioral code consistent with a progressive humanitarian moral framework informed by religious and nonreligious traditions (as addressed in chapters 3), promoting equality and security. I refer to this code of conduct that helps hold diverse activists together as the "multicultural activist etiquette" (MAE). One could describe it as the movement cadre's "group style." Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) define group style as "recurrent patterns of interaction that arise from a group's shared assumptions about what constitutes good or adequate participation in the group setting." (p. 737). A group style of multicultural activist etiquette creates a culture of interaction within meeting spaces aimed at maintaining respect for all members and their opinions equally, regardless of differences, in an effort to produce trust-building and productive follow-through toward shared movement goals. What were these patterns of behavior, this activist etiquette, that fostered and enabled collaboration between immigrant and nonimmigrant activists of distinct faith traditions?

### **The Organic "Multicultural Activist Etiquette" within Organizing Spaces.**

#### *Organizing Spaces.*

First, let us address the need for a meeting space. In order to gather and collaborate for change across diverse communities, the IRM activists with limited resources needed space in which to organize. In other words, MAE could not be cultivated and practiced without a space for multicultural and multi-religious agents to come together. Places for organizing or what Gramsci (1971) refers to as "free spaces" are critical for social movements to cultivate leaders, establish an effective system of

organization, and maintain commitment. According to Billings (1990), “free space” (Boyte and Evans, 1986), is a focal point where “organic intellectuals” (Gramsci, 1971) can become leaders. They are places where *organic leaders*<sup>71</sup> (Gramsci, 1971), insiders positioned to mobilize and motivate their peers,<sup>72</sup> are developed from and within the aggrieved group. In these spaces, organic leaders and other activists who are morally outraged by immigration-related injustices can exchange ideas and organize campaigns for change, relatively free from the domination of elites or counter protestors. Civil Rights Movement activists, for instance, used the church as a meeting place to strategize and organize, even conduct a mock “Freedom Vote,” away from the eyes of the segregationists who dominated politics at the time.

Religious institutions have also served as free spaces for activists in the Sanctuary Movement, the New Sanctuary Movement, and the United Farmworkers Movement among others including the Immigrant Rights Movement.<sup>73</sup> “A history of

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<sup>71</sup> An example is Cesar Chavez, an agricultural worker, who later became a leader of the United Farm Workers movement.

<sup>72</sup> These inside organizers are important because they can directly identify with the collective injustices, and they are more likely to gain the trust of the aggrieved. Furthermore, they have the potential to inspire their peers and can directly assist the group to further strive for internal empowerment rather than outward dependency. In the IRM such immigrant organizers have partnered with nonimmigrant organizers in an equal collaboration for immigrant rights.

<sup>73</sup> The extent to which religious organizations can provide that space is often overlooked by secular analysts who mistakenly label religion “non-contentious.” Karen Fields’ study of revivals in colonial Africa demonstrates that it is a mistake to underestimate the secular effects of expressive religious actions like prophecy and prayer (Fields, 1982). In doing so, many have failed to identify the ability of religion to “use its relatively privileged position to help keep alive a remnant of autonomy in civil society, to sustain the voice of resistance, and to prepare the grounds for a broader social-movement opposition once the authoritarian regime begins to relent” (Smith, 1996, p. 21). In other words, in spite of the fact that religion is commonly regarded as a purely private practice confined to the mind of the follower and within designated places of worship, it has proven, at times, to possess political and social revolutionary potential. Religious psychological and organizational resources (Harris, 1994) not conventionally associated with protest or activism are thereby used as forms of and spaces for contention.

disestablishment, protection by the free-exercise clause, and tax-exempt status” (Hartmann, Winchester, Edgell, & Gerteis, 2011, p. 326) has led to free spaces within religious organizations often used by activists for skill-building and social change. According to Warner (1997), religious freedom and the formal separation of church and state in the U.S. have created a free space within religious communities in which socially marginalized persons are able to autonomously organize. He argued that as long as a “subordinated group requires for its emancipation access to financial and social resources, churches in the United States are a convenient and legitimate means of organization” (1997, p. 1069). Religious institutions have also provided leadership opportunities where persons can practice and develop their organizing and leadership skills as public speakers, ministers, and community-service organizers both within the church and within the broader community.

Previous studies have shown us that organizational resources, such as meeting spaces, are necessary to advancing social movement goals (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; McCarthy & Zald, 2001; Jenkins, 1983; Klandermans, 1984) as is true in the IRM. However, we also have to pay attention to *how* the work of the movement gets done within these spaces. This chapter focuses on the organizational processes within the organizing spaces of meeting rooms often provided by religious organizations within the IRM. These meeting spaces were places vital for creating the bridges and bonds within and across various communities (Wood, 2003) necessary for the cohesion that forms the overall movement base. In other words, they were critical for the metamorphosis from a multi-faith and multi-cultural aggregate to a connected, multi-faith and multi-cultural,

organized group and from an organized group to more powerful and unified coalitions of interfaith and secular organizations working toward a common goal. This was accomplished in large part by adhering to the multicultural activist etiquette (MAE) aimed at respectfully building trust in a context of diverse movement participants while focusing on their shared goals. That is, we are not looking at a single religious community serving as a free space to its own members. Rather, this chapter is about the particular kinds of conduct I observed that occurred among religiously diverse immigrant and nonimmigrant activists.

*Multiculturally Organic.*

A key element to MAE is that it was multi-culturally organic, resonating with the inclusive and humanitarian moral framework (discussed in chapter 3) of the multicultural movement cadre. According to social scientists, actions are modeled after person's experiences and exposures.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, Clemens (1996) argues that forms of organization are often selected from familiar and dynamic organizational repertoires.<sup>75</sup> Clemens also notes that it is useful to use these familiar forms of organization for new and different purposes if they are within the boundaries of the negotiated frame.

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<sup>74</sup> Collective actions are primarily influenced by: (1) rationality of means—people act based on what they already know how to do in relation to their goals (Clemens, 1996, p. 226); (2) repertoires of contention—what they know that others have done in similar contentious situations (Zald, 1996, p. 267), (3) culture's 'tool kit' of habits, skills, and styles (Swidler, 1986, p. 273), and (4) internal and external constraints and pressures (e.g., conflict of interests, role conflict, and structural/bureaucratic limitations, and lack of needed resources).

<sup>75</sup> Clemens (1996) describes these as: 1) *normative*—following cultural norms/rules for appropriateness, 2) *practical*—relating to “experiential or cultural knowledge of different models of action,” and 3) *institutional*—coming from familiar institutional templates and “embedded in clusters of [impervious] institutions” (pp. 208-09). Snow, et al. (1986) might add that it also depends upon what we *believe* (i.e. belief amplification) is possible (p. 469).

Similarly, Ganz (2004) asserts that organizations should best reflect and adapt to the strengths, culture, and identity of activist members to more effectively understand their needs and further their goals. In order to “influence the environment,” Ganz adds that social movement organizations should choose creative strategies based upon the organic<sup>76</sup> identity of activists, those that are rooted in the members’ experiences and identity,<sup>77</sup> even if there are limited accessible resources (Ganz, 2000, p. 1044).<sup>78</sup>

This chapter expands upon Ganz’s notion of organic and applies it to a multi-cultural setting. Although “organic” usually describes ideas or practices that naturally originate from a single culture, in this chapter, the concept is broadened to include the moral framework discussed in chapter 3 which developed naturally from a *multicultural* group’s grassroots perspective and was applied to the MAE. It describes practices based on this set of shared progressive themes about being respectful of diversity and trying to improve the quality of life of immigrants. I argue that it naturally originates from the movement’s multicultural, interfaith, and nonreligious activist member base as evidenced in chapter 3. In this way, the term organic usefully encompasses a morality that grows

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<sup>76</sup> The concept “organic” implemented by Ganz (2004) is expanded to mean of or pertaining to the cultural repertoire of the collective.

<sup>77</sup> He advances the notion that framing should be based on internal characteristics, while also considering diverse knowledge from the external domain to maximize creativity and resourcefulness (Ganz, 2004; Ganz, 2000). He suggested that the organizing strategy of allowing a frame to develop naturally from the group’s collective identity (and using the frame creatively) turns out to be more successful than sitting in a room with a drawing board and trying to brainstorm on the most promising external strategy of action (Ganz, 2004).

<sup>78</sup> Ganz (2004, 2000) used a Biblical story of David and Goliath to illustrate his point. The tale of David, Goliath, and the five smooth stones demonstrates how, if used effectively, creative resourcefulness (despite limited resources) embedded in personal experiences, culture, customs, traditions, and belief systems, may successfully triumph over more powerful and abundant external resources. In the story, young David must fight the giant Goliath. David reaches into his pocket where he has five smooth stones. Knowledgeable with slingshots, he uses what he knows as a secret weapon against the giant, and successfully leverages the few resources that he has to miraculously win the battle. Ganz (2000) applies this idea to framing.

out of who the diverse members are and what they are trying to accomplish together. The SMOs in the IRM were able to develop an optimal organizational model that respected the diverse identities of its cadre. In doing so, IRM activists naturally evolved an etiquette consistent with their belief systems that affirmed their collective identity while respecting their uniqueness and value.

*Transcendent Progressive Beliefs.*

Religion has been seen as a source of animating beliefs, but that assumes that everyone shares those beliefs. This chapter asks how groups manage together when they include multiple religious and non-religious people. How is it still possible to draw on those beliefs? Interestingly, the etiquette the IRM activists evolved was built on a foundation of a shared moral framework (see chapter 3), superseding imperfect manmade laws and national lines, that arose from distinct religious and nonreligious traditions. Distinctly religious beliefs and moral principles served as a guide to the harmonious multicultural and multi-faith collaboration that took place within IRM meeting spaces. Contrary to the experience of other liberal SMOs that were not able to integrate diverse members despite the desire for multicultural alliances (Lichterman, 1995), the Immigrant Rights Movement developed a culturally, religiously, and nationally transcendent human rights framework that consistently resonated with the internalized belief systems of both religious and non-religious, immigrant and non-immigrant activists. The transcendent moral framework (further explicated in chapter 3) applied to interpersonal behaviors in meeting spaces was translated into three meeting tasks: (1) All persons will be treated

*equally*, (2) The physical and emotional *security* of all persons will be honored,<sup>79</sup> and (3) *Productivity* against agreed upon injustices and toward collective goals is the priority.

For moral actors, such as these, who have internalized their belief systems, religion (or morals) “cannot be separated from the other practices of everyday life” (Orsi, 1997, p. 6). Diverse agents pull from their repertoires of lived religious and moral experiences to construct a behavioral code that ultimately promotes their shared vision of a better world.

The humanitarian virtues espoused in the shared etiquette shape particular meeting practices ranging from choosing a facilitator for the group to introducing ideas for strategies, events, and tactics. Behaving according to the MAE, therefore, takes on an intentional form of a “lived religion” (Ammerman, 1997, p. 198) for many IRM activists.

In this chapter, I will explore three kinds of practices that make up the “multicultural activist etiquette” (MAE) package. While activists did not refer to this code of conduct by name, it was a combination of socially-constructed organizational practices I observed. This set of practices provided patterns for interaction and decision-making that allowed the movement's transcendent moral framework to be reflected in its internal organization. Specifically, we will now explore how the IRM attempted to (1) ensure *equality* within organizational processes, (2) create a physically and emotionally *secure* meeting and decision-making space, and (3) *productively* move toward and actualize collective movement *goals*. The culturally-diverse activists in the Immigrant Rights Movement accomplished these three tasks through organically-constructed

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<sup>79</sup> (inferring the “caring for one another” theme in Chapter 3)

practices that drew on and respected the diverse cultures and experiences of group members.<sup>80</sup> Although some of the individual practices may have varied, the three functions remained the same. As we will see, MAE was critical to facilitating trust, helping advance movement goals, and sustaining a pool of organizations and activists from which to draw.

### **Part 1 Equality.**

All persons will be treated *equally*.

The first set of practices is aimed at facilitating a culture of equality. Recall the assertion of Justin Akers Chacón, a nonreligious activist for SSP, the secular grassroots community organization made up of immigrant and nonimmigrant college students and local activist leaders, in chapter 3, “Overcoming inequality and segregation is a motivating factor... winning legalization and winning equality lays the basis for improving the conditions of life for a majority, not just those without papers... it’s a human rights framework first. It’s a workers’ rights framework. The utmost, underlying principle is equality between peoples and equality between workers... How much equality are you willing to fight for? ... so that people become half equal? Or... for people to become fully equal?”

Estela De Los Rios, a Christian immigrant activist for JOB and IRC in San Diego, made a similar point in chapter 3, “I believe that everyone... should have the same rights

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<sup>80</sup> Although the practices were not observably multicultural in nature (in other words, one may not be able to successfully disaggregate each component and assign it to a particular culture), they fostered respectful treatment of the diverse members.

regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, whatever it is." She believes that, regardless of differences, God made everyone spiritually the same, and therefore equally deserving of respect.

Estela De Los Rios and Justin Akers Chacón, like other activists in the IRM both find it important to ensure the equal treatment of all people, yet they hold different justifications for their beliefs.<sup>81</sup> Differences between religious and secular people could be an insurmountable challenge in a context where respecting differences is not practiced; however, multicultural activists in the IRM overwhelmingly embrace multiculturalism and practice a code of conduct that focuses on equal inclusion.

Much in the same way in which activists organized for equal rights, dignity, and protections for all immigrants, they worked to create an "equal space" in the movement where all persons are valued. Highly aware and sensitive to larger societal power dynamics, activists were careful to make sure that everyone felt equally included, respected, and heard, *especially* people who are traditionally and currently under-represented and otherwise neglected.

Being inclusive was one way that activists cultivated equality within organizing spaces. To do this, they drew especially on practices common in liberal religious traditions. Even some activists who might be considered conservative when it comes to other political issues such as the right to life debate, brought progressive religious

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<sup>81</sup> Although activists may speak about God while referring to their own belief systems, they do not assume their religion or belief in God is shared. Rather, they overwhelmingly respect each person's unique origins and cultures, hold onto their own, and interpret their individual faith traditions as similarly encouraging them to bridge across cultural differences. Additionally, activists that do not reference any religious beliefs, approach the uniqueness of members of the group in the same way, careful not to impose their faith traditions (or lack thereof) on one another.

practices of inclusion to their movement work. Rabbi Laurie Coskey, by contrast, drew on her identification as a liberal Jew who “belong[s] to a tradition that is inclusive and open-ended.” In much the same way, first generation Mexican immigrant, Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson explained, “Anyone and everyone is invited to that [Eucharistic] table because we really believe that it is Jesus’ dinner table. And we can’t imagine that he would look at someone and say, ‘No, you’re too young’ or ‘No, you’re not married,’ or ‘No, you’re gay,’ or ‘No, you’re of Jewish or Buddhist’ or any of that. That *everyone* would be included in that dinner table.” Such a practice of inclusion is concretely extended to nonreligious activists, as well. I observed nonreligious activists accept the invitation to partake in the Eucharist during a mass that took the form of a protest for immigrant rights, agree to give the homily during a routine Episcopal service, and in turn extend an invitation to others from different ethnicities and religious identities to join them in participating in marches, fundraisers, and rallies for immigrant rights.

The principle of inclusivity was also expressed in the scheduling of meetings. When activist leaders sent out a general “call to action,” they tried to make sure that the time and location were convenient for the diverse constituencies among the activists. Because some lived in Barrio Logan, a Mexican ethnic enclave in San Diego, and others lived in the affluent communities of La Jolla and North San Diego County, efforts were made either to rotate locations or choose a central meeting space, thus fostering attendance among the diverse groups and linking otherwise disparate groups of activists together.

Sensitive to the multitude of personal and professional demands within and outside the movement, activists were conscious of the need to allow for enough time for the arrival of everyone in order to set the stage for a productive meeting with all the decision-makers present. Meeting organizers were sensitive to the reality that the concept of time varies between cultures from an exact point in time (i.e., we must meet at exactly 6:00pm) to more of a range of time (i.e., our meeting will begin somewhere between 6:00pm and 6:15pm). Additionally, many activists held full-time jobs and volunteered<sup>82</sup> in the IRM after work, a reality also taken into consideration when scheduling meetings.

The principle of equality and inclusivity was also expressed in practices of seating arrangements. Seats were almost always arranged in a circular fashion so that everyone at the meeting could be included. Although there may have been a facilitator for the meeting or a director for a more formal organization, a circular seating arrangement communicated a sense of equal participation, equal footing, and equal accountability.

Furthermore, to help ensure that everyone was respectfully introduced and aware of the name and/or the respective organization (if in a coalition meeting) of their neighbors,<sup>83</sup> meetings usually began with a round of introductions, moving from one activist to another around the circle of seats. This practice also supports the aforementioned efforts to accommodate busy schedules and honor differing cultural

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<sup>82</sup> Other full-time IRM activists, some paid staff members and others volunteers, frequently transitioned from one meeting and one campaign to another, often commuting great distances to connect with their wide-spanning network.

<sup>83</sup> Introductions usually consisted of individuals saying their name and what brought them to the organization. In the case of coalitions, activists would state their name and the name of their respective organization.

concepts of time by delaying the meeting start time for about fifteen minutes, giving the opportunity for late arrivals to be the last to introduce themselves while also being present for the substantive part of the meeting.

Furthermore, randomly assigned subgroups were utilized to maximize equal communication in larger meetings. For example, in a coalition comprised of about twenty organizations, some of the meetings included nearly thirty members. The members decided to section off into several small groups to discuss aspects of the agenda. They then returned to the larger group to summarize their progress which was then addressed by the group as a whole. This practice not only promoted equal communication among multicultural members, it also created opportunities for cross-cultural relationship building by randomly uniting diverse participants that may not have otherwise known each other very well.

Equality was also pursued in how meeting agendas were structured. In formal, director-run organizations, agendas were set by the director and board. However, in the more common community organizations and coalitions, agendas were collectively constructed at the end of each meeting for the following meeting. Votes were often taken regarding the inclusion of items as well as the order of discussion. Agendas usually began with a debriefing on the latest happenings during the “updates” section of the agenda to assure that everyone was equally informed and on the same page. And they culminated with announcements, providing the equal opportunity for activists and organization representatives (if in a coalition meeting) to make known their respective struggles, reach out for support, and learn about other events occurring in the area.

When multiple cultures also means multiple languages, principles of equality demand practices that make communication open to all. Perhaps most critically, translators were usually present for non- English or non-Spanish speakers, so as not to exclude anyone based on language proficiencies. Because the overwhelming majority of immigrant activists seemed to be from Mexico or South America, the translators were English and Spanish speakers. Even though some activists may have personally felt insecure and inferior in their bilingual skills, nearly all activists expressed acceptance of a variety of language skills. Only once did I notice language as a point of division. I recall witnessing a seasoned female Mexican immigrant activist chastise a younger Mexican male activist for not speaking their native Spanish language during the meeting. A silent and awkward pause followed, and his friend quietly translated the discussion in English for him. Aside from this isolated incident, great effort was made at all of the meetings to ensure that there was a translator present, even if it was for only one person.

Inclusivity was also practiced through “speech norms” (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003, p. 739) that favored open language, respectful of the diversities that were present and welcoming toward all people. “Your people,” “our people,” statements were not used to refer to an ethnic group or religious group differences. Activists generally used more welcoming language to talk about “our community.” Andrea Guerrero noted the intentional sensitivity in the use of more inclusive language that is practiced in meeting spaces, especially toward groups that are in the minority. She explained, “It’s a challenge, I think, for the Muslim organizations and individuals involved in the consortium, because we [society in general] often talk about immigrants as Mexican, and

because Mexican immigrants are by and large Catholic or Christian, at least, that certainly predominates. But I think the Catholic/Christian folks are sensitive to that and they try to be inclusive in their language.” Although Mexican immigrants seem to be more active in the IRM in San Diego County, there are large efforts at including immigrants from additional countries.

Choosing culturally representative members of the SMO as public speakers for their collective efforts is another way this is accomplished. For example, movement participants were often conscientious in choosing at least one male and at least one female, an immigrant voice, and a religious perspective whenever available to communicate their movement message, best reflect their member base, and resonate with a larger pool of potential sympathizers and allies.

Efforts at equal and inclusive practices also included modes of conducting discussion and deliberation, elevating more subdued activists into opportunities for discovering and asserting their leadership. It was important for activists that all members were heard, specifically activist members who are traditionally marginalized in society. As Gamson (1992) noted, “Most of us, even those with political activist identities, spend most of our time and energy sustaining or own daily lives...” (p. 59). This is especially true for members of the immigrant community who often work long hours and multiple jobs while taking care of family members. Increasingly problematic is the reality that many people are not included in the decision-making processes in government and industry that directly affect their lives (Gamson, 1992, pp. 59-60). Accustomed to accepting laws, rules, policies, procedures, and roles as fixed and timeless social realities,

many find it is easy to live in a state of alienation and overlook the fact that all of these rules are socially constructed (Berger, 1969). However, IRM members decided to make an alternative choice to be agents of change who organize for equality.

Moreover, in organizing spaces for the IRM, the voices and opinions of women, people of color, and documented and undocumented immigrants had to be heard during meeting discussions, a point emphasized by movement activists who were, themselves, white males.

In order to prevent domination by voices that often overpowered public discourse, activists talked in turn (often raising their hands, especially in larger group settings), went around the circle to get everyone's point of view, and often broke off into smaller, more specialized groups for a less intimidating audience. I recall many incidents in which other activists personally asked soft-spoken immigrant women what their thoughts were. At first, caught off guard, such introverted and under-represented participants would respond shyly and self-consciously. I specifically recall witnessing the transformation of a non-English speaking female activist from the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition who courageously spoke in Spanish before media cameras on behalf of the coalition marching for immigrant rights. Just hours before, she was listening quietly to everyone in the meeting give their ideas. The anxiety on her face was evident when her opinions were requested and she was chosen to represent the group, but their attentiveness and confidence called out her leadership.

This practice of promoting unlikely leaders is also seen in the way people of all levels of education were strongly encouraged to speak during planning meetings. Formal

education was clearly important; eighty-seven percent of the activists interviewed indicated having received at least some college experience. But the life experience of the most vulnerable immigrants was critical due to their expertise regarding the needs of the immigrant community to which they belonged. Belinda Zamacona, a first generation Mexican immigrant and activist in the Raza Rights Coalition and contributor to the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition, described this concept as self-determination. She explained, “the whole concept [is] that you need to ... recognize the injustices that are happening in your community. And you need to organize around that, because no one is going to do that for you. Who better than the community itself to know what’s best for that community?” Because of this, organizers usually limited their expertise to the specific community within which they had direct contact. This strategy argues that each community's needs are different, and the affected community, immigrants in the case of the IRM, knows best what those needs are. Because organizations like JOB are about developing leaders, they cannot move forward on an issue “unless [their] member base gets excited about it and feels passionately about it,” explained Jessica Nolan. In other words, the power and passion to reform injustices comes from the mobilized affected community, which, therefore determines the direction of the movement’s efforts as they collaborate with nonimmigrant movement activists.

I often saw first generation Mexican immigrants with limited educational experience attend planning meetings, and they were regularly encouraged to participate. Although many came from more humble backgrounds, immigrants were treated as experts with valuable insights and information regarding their needs and the needs of

their immigrant community—further solidifying their place at the table as vital members within the organizing community of rule-changers. Educated and charismatic orators in the IRM, such as clergy persons or academic activists, often succeeded in persuading the group with complex messages and supporting arguments; however, ideas were also taken seriously from those activists with less expertise in rhetoric, regardless of how simple the message or how much the speaker struggled to deliver it.

For example, a non-English speaking Mexican immigrant mother communicated her anxiety and concern about local police officers and immigration enforcement officials patrolling around nearby elementary schools during pick-up times. Stories were shared of undocumented parents being apprehended when picking their children up from school. As a result, children were kept at home in fear that their family might be separated. This greatly upset activists who heard her story, and they began a campaign to collect testimonies of local residents and their experiences with law enforcement that would later be used to pressure local legislators to end such patrols. On a different occasion, an older female immigrant, a unionized employee of a local university, confidently, yet vulnerably, described in broken English her union's grievances and the injustices related to contract negotiations. In the parish hall where the organization was meeting, her courageous cry for a livable wage was heard. Activists were inspired by her story with a renewed hope of a successful effort as they continued their campaign for improved worker contracts.

Representational channels of communication also provided a mechanism of inclusion in coalition settings. Each organization sent one or more representatives to

contribute to the collective negotiation of ideas, strategies, tactics, goals, organizing, planning, and protest event follow-through. At times, these representatives were given sole discretion to represent their home organization. They reported back to their home organization regularly, thus allowing other members to provide indirect input. Other times, however, representatives were expected to hold off on decision-making until their home organization voted or agreed on each decision. Frequent report backs relaying information back and forth between the home organization and the coalition often delayed the progress of the meeting, but it was important to many activists, nonetheless, because of the resulting full participation of all activists involved.

Equality was pursued in a variety of communication strategies, but it was also embodied in the way meetings were led. Leadership was often voted upon and sometimes rotated. Guerrero provided further insights into how she decided to run the IRC, “It was important to change leadership, so I decided [I wasn't] running for chair. I think if this consortium depends on me, and I'm hit by a bus, then this consortium is not a healthy consortium, it's not going to survive. So there's a new chair [Estela de los Rios]... She's really good at keeping the peace, and people are showing up in force every meeting.” Changing leadership reflects activists' valuing of multiple perspectives and calling forth unlikely leaders, but it also assures that the organization's success does not rest on only one person.

Activists distributed responsibilities in distinctly fair ways that resonated with equality goals. In only a few organizations which were led by formal directors were duties and tasks delegated from the top. Within the vast majority of coalition meetings,

there was virtually no top-down delegation. Facilitators generally guided the group through a collectively agreed-upon agenda, usually decided upon at the end of the previous meeting. Activists self-divided into task-oriented smaller groups based upon both the needs of the event and activists own individual strengths, interests, and resources. Subgroup tasks usually included publicity, press releases, canvassing, logistics, gathering needed resources (e.g., speaker system, stage, posters, fliers), creating the agreed upon agenda, and recruiting speakers.

Decision-making, a critical and fundamental task within organizing meeting spaces, was accomplished by either a democratic vote (rarely, if ever, anonymous) or by consensus of the whole group—depending upon what the group decided was best. Grassroots community organizations comprising primarily immigrants tended to rely more on decisions by consensus of the whole group. In such a setting, activists often went around the circle to bring up and respond to all concerns. In other organizations, members preferred an open democratic vote and longer periods of dialogue where members more frequently debated their positions. Unifying points, who would take the facilitator role, formal codes of meeting, and agreed-upon goals were decided in these ways. Regardless of how they chose to make future decisions, movement members expended great efforts to ensure that all members were equally heard so as to construct optimal solutions toward immigrant rights in a fair and equal way.

**Part 2 Security.**

The *physical and emotional security* of all persons will be honored.

The physical and psychological security of all people is another beacon guiding the direction of movement goals in the Immigrant Rights Movement and additionally shaping the behavioral culture in meeting spaces. Multicultural, interfaith, and nonreligious activists strategically collaborate in order for undocumented immigrants to be able to securely emerge from their fearful and vulnerable hidden status. Inferring the second humanitarian theme of the movement's overall moral framework discussed in chapter 3, establishing security for participants is a way that activists are caring for one another, especially for the most vulnerable. Collectively, multicultural and multi-faith agents seek rights and legal protections for immigrants to work, raise their families, drive their cars, and leave their homes safely, without the fear looming around every corner that they would be deported and separated from their family, home, and communities. Through such legalization, activists believe that immigrants would be better protected against workplace and law enforcement abuses, while also being able to live as fully-incorporated members of society with inalienable rights.

Marco Castillo, a first generation Mexican immigrant and Seventh-day Adventist, claimed, "I've never had any security whatsoever," due to his undocumented immigration status in the U.S. However, after their introduction in the IRM's New Sanctuary Movement, Marco and Joan Helland have forged a nurturing friendship. When he was terribly ill and had nowhere to go due to his limited funds and lack of health insurance, she provided him with a list of health clinics he could visit. Marco reflected gratefully, "I

thanked her and, I mean, when somebody cares about your health and cares about your spirituality, I mean that's a full package... and I think that sense of security is what really... is the biggest reward out of anything.”

A female grassroots activist, who comes from the Catholic tradition but does not currently consider herself religious, described security as, “not fearing when you're stepping out the door that you're going to get taken away. There's a store that is two blocks away, they [Border Patrol] would raid that store 6:00, 6:30 in the morning. Or on their way back, when the mothers were dropping off their kids to school, they would round everybody up, it didn't matter who was legal or who wasn't.”

A second generation immigrant Christian mother explained, “We talk to children all the time about how fortunate they are... [because] they do not have to worry if they have a place to sleep tonight, if their parents are going to be deported, if they will be deported, you know, all this stuff. And those are fears that I couldn't possibly comprehend, because I've never lived that type of fear, and I believe that others shouldn't have to.” She continued, “Nationally, there's been a number of Latino ministry congregations where people are too afraid to go to church. At one point they were full, but no longer, which is horrible. *It is so unfair.* We are trying to make people comfortable and help them to have *hope.*”

Dean Scott Richardson, a nonimmigrant IRM activist of faith, concurred regarding the “vulnerability of the Hispanic congregation” within his church, “With the Hispanic congregation. It's different because they *really* are living it out. They are really vulnerable. They don't want to sit and talk about it in kind of an academic, theoretical

way. They want to talk to an immigration attorney; they want to know what their rights are; they want to know how to deal with this; they want to know where the trouble is. They are trying to manage this thing in a very real, direct way that impacts them.”

Establishing security for immigrants is at the heart of the Immigrant Rights Movement's goals. Consistent with this vision of a more secure, larger society, they were conscious of constructing a “safe organizing space” for vulnerable, diverse activists to strategize about how to establish immigrant rights. In such spaces, IRM activists followed patterns of behavior geared toward making sure that their undocumented colleagues were safe from apprehension and that all participants felt respected, protected, and comfortable during collective planning and organizing.

Physical safety for undocumented members was most often accomplished by not requesting disclosure of legal status and by voting upon the guest list to meetings and events. In order to give undocumented immigrant activists control over their own safety, organizations communally decided whether to invite reporters to meetings or whether to close the meetings to the public. For example, activists in the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition organized a fundraiser to assist local immigrant bakers who incurred legal fees due to a raid at their workplace. During the planning meeting, movement members and the affected bakers decided against inviting media persons to publicize this event. They expected the event would attract many undocumented families and wanted the families to feel safe while enjoying the festivities secure from media attention.

In addition to practices that protected physical security, activists also engaged in behaviors designed to protect the psychological or emotional wellbeing of multicultural

and multi-religious activists. One way this was accomplished was by being conscientious of preserving the public face of each participant (Goffman, 1959; Cupach & Metts, 1994), making sure each activist felt respected. Just as certain communication techniques were used to establish equality, other modes of communication were used to establish psychological security. This was especially important during brainstorming sessions, when ideas and identities threatened to become intertwined. For example, most activists practiced facework (Goffman, 1959), by being careful not to quickly dismiss ideas and thus preserving and respecting the dignity of one another's public image. Instead, they would find some value in proposed ideas by opening with a few pros and then explaining the more convincing counterpoints in a way that separated the idea from the person. In this way, members were more inclined to participate and share their thoughts and suggestions. The times when these practices were ignored stand out as harsh examples typical of a few repeat offenders. The majority mindfully managed to prevent hurt feelings and relationship rifts, and were careful to turn an idea down diplomatically. On potentially divisive topics, it became especially important for activists to listen patiently and explain themselves carefully.

The goal of protecting the dignity of each participant was also pursued through practices of respectful address. Participants avoided the more offensive term "illegals" and referred to immigrants without the proper legal documentation as "undocumented" or "unauthorized" immigrants. I repeatedly heard movement members (including non-Spanish, English speakers) call fellow activists (from their own organization and from other activist organizations) brother, sister, señor (Mr.), señora (Ms.), Don (reverential

way of referring to a male elder), Doña (reverential way of referring to a female elder) , and compadres or comadres (endearing masculine and feminine terms in Spanish to mean closer than a friend, godparent, protector, or benefactor).

Emotional safety in the interfaith context was accomplished by avoiding proselytizing. Faith-based members steered clear of trying to convert one another or their nonreligious peers. If conversion did come up, it was only in jest. When speaking of religious leaders from other faiths, it was usually done in a reverential manner. I recall a surprising moment, when a female Episcopal priest encouraged a Catholic woman to convert to Judaism because it was “such a beautiful tradition” and the religion of the woman’s spouse.

Religious activists worked hard to make sure people of other faiths and nonreligious participants felt comfortable, welcomed, and respected in their uniqueness. “Indeed, secular anxiety about public religious discourse tends to emanate from concerns about conservative religious voices, seen as advancing a policy agenda that runs counter to liberal democratic values” (Braunstein, 2012, p. 111). “Recently, however, progressive religious advocates [have been] working to wrest the moral monopoly from the Religious Right,” according to Braunstein (2012, p. 111), and proffer a more open and inclusive collective identity (Lichterman, 2005; Yukich, 2013; Yukich, 2010). Braunstein (2012) notes that intentionally inclusive social activists face challenges similar to the ones I observed. “Not only must they cultivate a broad-based moral voice that allows them to speak across different faith communities, but they must do so in a way that does not alienate their secular liberal partners, many of which are generally

uncomfortable with public religious discourse (p. 111). Not only did they avoid obvious proselytizing, they worried that religious language, belief systems, and rituals could be seen as threatening, divisive, or simply uncomfortable. They, therefore, developed practices designed to protect the religious (and non-religious) traditions of their diverse coalitions. Such efforts in the IRM took the form of more universal prayer language during meetings and an invitation to pray only if one felt comfortable doing so.

Prayer times were also predictable. For the most part, prayer occurred only if the meetings were led by a religious leader or organization, or if the meeting was located at the site of a religious organization. Moreover, they were also predictable in that they happened in the beginning and conclusion of meetings and often included in the meeting agenda. In Lichterman's words, "participants mark[ed] off a potentially religious scene from previous or following scenes, with explicit signals" (Lichterman, 2012, p. 20). Therefore, prayer was expected and anticipated in certain settings rather than others, rarely coming as a surprise to activists—an especially useful cue for secular members.

Multicultural and religiously diverse members did, at times, however, feel a sense of threat or discomfort by religious language used, exposing the work that still needs to be done in making those of non-religious belief systems feel safely included. For Joan Helland, a Quaker with San Diego Friends and an activist in ICWJ the thought of a higher being, or God is, "just [is] an extra concept that doesn't add anything. The best parts... [are that] we're stronger and more effective and more human when we work together and produce something that makes the world a better place. And that's magical." She acknowledged that ICWJ meetings have opening and closing prayers.

“Sometimes [a reverend] comes and we all have to stand around and touch each other and [in] some kind of an evangelical way to pray.” These kinds of prayers made some activists, like Helland, feel uncomfortable at times “because they put names on [a higher being]. But sometimes there’s a sense of ‘God is on our side.’ And I just find that... I mean the other side gets to say the same thing. That’s just a whole concept I’m not comfortable with.”

Religious activists generally gave extra care in prayer and reflection language to be accommodating and nonthreatening to nonreligious members and those of differing faiths even though it fell short at times. For instance, religious activists prayed to God during opening or closing meeting prayer using the more inclusive and accepted term “God” rather than “Jesus” in order to better, although not entirely, make activists feel more comfortable from Islamic, Jewish, Rastafarian, and Christian traditions. Despite these efforts, atheists, agnostics, and spiritual activists without any specific religious affiliation still felt discomfort at times, exposing the safety and inclusive work that still lies ahead.

Perhaps more effective than inclusive prayer language in helping create a secure meeting space was the sheer effort at building warm personal relationship lines across religious difference. Despite their religious discomfort and through their collective efforts, Helland and others were able to contribute to a nurturing, comfortable, and secure environment, focusing on the people with whom they connect in addition to their shared goals. “But they’re also really warm, beautiful people. Madre Patricia calls me her precious one! How could you not [feel comfortable]?! I mean my mother doesn’t call me

her precious one! And Rabbi Laurie is very warm. She's nice to be around. It's a nice place to be. And that motivates me and makes it easy to be there. And [the fact that] they do pray and whatever in their own words, they try real hard to do interfaith prayers. They call on God by all the names [He's] known by. They're nice people." For Helland, the effort and intention to be inclusive, non-offensive, and kind spoke volumes. It was enough to make her feel welcomed and committed to working together to improve the lives of immigrants.<sup>84</sup>

During times when activists fell short of practicing the MAE, individuals, like Helland, took it upon themselves to do the multicultural bonding and bridging work (Wood, 2003) and keep focused on the goals and positive takeaways, including the relationships they have made and new ways of connecting with a higher power. For instance, in an opening prayer during an interfaith meeting, some religious leaders sometimes forgot to use more inclusive language and publicly prayed in a manner specific to his/her own religious tradition. During such incidents, others present later

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<sup>84</sup> Similarly, Jessica Nolan a non-immigrant IRM activist with JOB, recalls her transformation from an initial discomfort with interfaith activism to a strong desire to work with people of different faith traditions. Nolan's only reference to religion was through her Protestant grandmother's Presbyterian church. After watching her grandmother "crying because she thought we would die because we didn't pray. Or go to hell," Nolan admits she was "just entirely turned off" by religion. As an applicant for an organizer position with JOB, she agreed to go on a weeklong training retreat in Chicago, "I was instantly terrified. Somehow I had not read between the lines that they were a faith-based organization. I just saw 'organizing in justice'... Before I knew it, I'm sitting next to rabbis and bishops and imams and lay people and I was just like, 'What the heck did I get myself into? This is horrible! What do I do? And [with] all these religious people?' And I was nervous." But her first one-on-one conversation with a lesbian female pastor began the eye-opening dialogue, "'You're lesbian?? Do they know? What's going on?' And she's like, 'Jessica a lot of people are out. You can do that now.'" This experience taught her that she was "actually closed-minded when it came to what are people of faith. But also I think it's added a lot to the way that I see people... I think it totally is [a spiritual and religious thing] that I'm now more open to all people just because I myself have learned... [and] it's exciting to see people put their faith into action. And I think there's so much more power there, when...people feel *called* to do it. How much more powerful does that make it?"

privately reminded such religious leaders to be more inclusive. Even though a seemingly dominant religious language may have made activists feel uncomfortable, some chose to view interfaith and interethnic communities as an educational opportunity, a chance to broaden their world views, a task made easier after warm personal relationship lines were established. For Helland, “the best part was at the launch of the New Sanctuary [Movement], the last religious leader to speak, there were twelve: two imams, lots of Protestants, three rabbis, but the last one was a rabbi. And she said a prayer in Hebrew and then blew a ram’s horn. That kind of prayer I could get into!... I was standing close to her... And she takes this really deep breath, and then lets loose on this ram’s horn. And it was beautiful. So I have experienced lots more ways of praying.”

### **Part 3 Goal-Oriented.**

*Productivity* against agreed upon injustices and *toward collective goals* is the priority.

The primary reason activists in the IRM join together is to create positive change for immigrants. As noted in chapter 2, movement goals are articulated most often as equal rights for immigrants in order for them to live securely (physically and emotionally safe) as equal members of society with the ability to migrate freely, earn a living wage with worker protections, and preserve family unity.<sup>85</sup> For example, recall that the IRC,

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<sup>85</sup> Other IRM goals include livable wages for immigrants and all workers; comprehensive immigration reform that emphasizes family unity; workers rights included in free trade agreements; cross-cultural bridging; an end to hate talk and hate crimes; an end to No Match Letters; development in Mexico to minimize economic disparities; an end to deaths along the U.S.-Mexico border; spiritual counsel during

comprised of faith, labor, legal, and community organization representatives collectively decided that their goals are to, “(1) Support comprehensive immigration reform. (2) Stop the spread of local policies and practices that target and violate the civil and human rights of immigrants. (3) Educate immigrants about their rights and the legal and other resources available to them. (4) Educate the public about the important contributions of immigrants and counter the myths and misstatements made about immigrants” (San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium, n.d.).

With much to be done, heterogeneous or homogenous social movement coalitions that are perceived as unproductive have a very short life-span, especially when composed of busy participants and modestly resourced organizations. A sense of progress is, therefore, crucial in social movements, even when the ultimate goals seem elusive. Activists in the Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego employed a variety of practices to stay focused on goals<sup>86</sup> and, therefore, on “group bonds”<sup>87</sup> (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003, p. 739). These practices were not only about getting work done, but also about reinforcing a culture in which accomplishment is perceived and celebrated.

Progress can be perceived in a number of ways. Some definitions include: (1) recruiting key organizations and leaders to join a coalition; (2) producing a successful event with a large turnout; (3) enticing media coverage and projecting the movement’s

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immigration enforcement; ability of undocumented graduates to work legally; and equal treatment regardless of immigration status to all persons during emergencies.

<sup>86</sup> It should be noted here that progress, in the shape of comprehensive immigration reform, international worker rights, and equitable healthcare, housing and education, among others, was the ultimate goal. However, as long as activists were productively working towards progress and goals were realistically within a stretched arms length, that was generally enough to satisfy the “productivity requirement.”

<sup>87</sup> Group bonds are defined by Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) as “a group’s assumptions about what members’ mutual responsibilities should be while in the group context” (p. 739).

message to a larger public; or (4) a clear victory in a new policy or practice favoring immigrants. In a simpler way, it can also mean collectively moving smoothly from one meeting decision and topic on the agenda to another, rather than speaking in circles and feeling as though nothing has been decided upon.

During meetings, having a clear agenda helped keep members focused on the tasks at hand. Agendas were often ordered with the most urgent topics at the beginning since there were times when meetings would run over with the last items on the agenda being rolled over to the following meeting. More structured groups established a rough time limit per agenda item. Topics initiated out of order were quickly tabled for a later time by agenda-focused facilitators. Goal-focused practices during meetings required participants to be as clear about what was not on the agenda as about what was. Oftentimes, the initial agenda was created by the organizations that sent out the call to action, with subsequent agendas resulting as the product of the collective. Within the framework of the agenda, activists spoke in turn on topics specifically listed in the agreed-upon agenda, with space at the end for miscellaneous information and plugs for individual organizations' efforts and events. Focusing on accomplishing goals also meant paying attention to allotted meeting time. Ideally, the agenda was designed to take one to two hours. If the discussions were expected to go over, the group decided whether they wished to table the remaining agenda points for the next meeting, address them via e-mail if possible, or stay to finish the topics for the day. To stay on task, participants reserved less relevant or less important questions until after the meeting or for the following one.

In an effort to stay focused on agreed upon movement goals, meeting facilitators deflected less relevant controversial topics while also maintaining the unity of the group. Even though IRM activists shared a general vision of immigrant rights in the U.S., they parted ways when it came to other political and social issues and even political party allegiances. To avoid distraction from movement goals, abortion, the death penalty, religious conversion, and gay marriage remained outside the door when IRM activists gathered to create their organizing space. Activists from varying faith perspectives and immigrant backgrounds consciously focused on the specific immigration topics at hand while other controversial topics of discussion were neglected altogether to prevent irrelevant conflict. If a deviating topic came up, the facilitator would quickly and briefly state in some fashion, “That is not what we are talking about right now,” and refocus the discussion.

In between meetings, a sense of progress was fostered through e-mail updates, reminders, agendas, meeting minutes and even social gatherings. Mass SMO e-mails quickly disseminated information and announced upcoming IRM events, but also communicated that goals are being pursued. Furthermore, in person social gatherings (e.g., happy hours, soccer games, *carne asadas* or barbeques, church functions, dinners, fundraisers, fairs, and festivals) among activists not only developed friendships and build relationships, but also allowed participants to informally discuss meeting agendas, and thus reinforce a sense of progress.

The etiquette that shaped meeting practices around efficient productivity also shaped organizing practices between meetings. Efforts were made to limit e-mails on the

mass activists e-mail list to the issue at hand. Correspondences between one or two people (that did not need the input of the entire listserv) were encouraged to be kept private and not broadcasted across the entire mass e-mail mailing. In this way, e-mail inboxes were not overwhelmed with countless, irrelevant messages that would counter productivity and encourage many to unsubscribe. Even though some participants preferred complete transparency and welcomed less relevant e-mails in order to stay informed on all the happenings, few wanted their inbox saturated.

Some movement practices simply followed common organizing principles of dividing the labor and holding participants accountable. During meetings, subgroups were created around specific tasks to help ensure accountability and follow-through. In such small groups, activists tended to gravitate toward their strengths, regardless of their immigration status or religious affiliation, and offered their assistance based on the appropriateness of the resources to which they had access. For example, activists with media connections and prior experience creating a press release would be in charge of contacting the local media. After the subgroups did their work, the larger group reconvened to discuss the progress and plans of the subgroups, focusing practices that reflected their themes of inclusion and equality into productive ways. At the following meeting, representatives went around in a circle and updated the group on the status of their subcommittee goals.<sup>88</sup> This public session of accountability encouraged follow-through. IRM activists did not want to return having fallen short of said responsibilities.

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<sup>88</sup> A frequent task was for activists to solicit the support of movement sympathizers and other activists. Faith-based activists would often tap into their religious network to increase the base of supporters.

Interestingly enough, the report-back section of the agenda during planning meetings was generally the only mechanism used to “put people on the spot” and ensure public accountability. Probably because forging and maintaining positive professional relationships was key to activists who relied on coalitions to advance their movement goals, they were constantly conscious of facework and let a simple awkward pause follow an announcement that a task was not fulfilled. Over time, activists learned who was dependable and reliable and who was less so which helped leaders adjust their expectations and factored into alliance-building decisions.

Goal-focused practices were also present in the breach. In cases when participants repeatedly failed to follow-through on assigned tasks, others grumbled to the side, in the “backstage” (Goffman, 1959; Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003), to a fellow confidant about a lack of trustworthiness and dependability. Committed leaders did not appreciate the extra effort required to make up for whatever tasks were neglected. After hearing stories of this happening, I asked a core organizer what they did to recover from this dilemma. This particular organization created a group of core leaders who essentially filled in the blanks and did the clean-up work behind the scenes. This tactic served a triple purpose. First, it helped ensure a smooth event in which all requirements were fulfilled. Second, it communicated to core activists which individuals and which organizations were dependable (or not) so as to better inform potential, future collaboration. Finally, it allowed unreliable activists to publically save face (a task needing continuous attention) in case collaboration with their organization was required in the future. In such situations, precautions would be taken the next time around where

additional accountability measures would be put in place to secure follow through (e.g., keeping closer tabs or working with a different representative with a reputation for being more dependable).

The physical environment of the meeting space also contributed to meeting progress. Resource-rich venues primarily came from St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral and local universities, while other organizations converted coffee shops, community centers, and local restaurants into organizing spaces. When hosts were able, they provided seats for everyone, a table to meet around, and a cool room, quiet enough to be able to hear everyone comfortably and focus on the topics at hand. Refreshments were an unexpected and appreciated luxury, particularly during meetings that took place during dinner time or ones lasting more than two hours, also aiding in the focus of the movement members on movement issues rather than the more immediate needs of nourishment. Several coalitions, such as the NMN,<sup>89</sup> were able to hold meetings around a large wooden table in a comfortable room within a local church while pleasantly enjoying the generous display of coffee and cookies. By contrast, the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition used its local contacts to establish their meeting place at a large, nearby restaurant. While there was plenty of space, there was also the obvious pressure to order food—creating dual expectations for the meeting -- as activists planning an event and as restaurant patrons supporting a local business. Often activists chose not to purchase anything because of the extra expense,

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<sup>89</sup> One such coalition was created to confront the disbursement of No Match letters sent by the Social Security Administration officials to businesses when employee's social security numbers did not match employees' names. As argued by IRM activists, such mismatches could be a result of a number of reasons aside from assuming someone has falsely used a social security number due to unauthorized immigration status. Some of these reasons include having: incomplete information, name changes, double last names, usage of middle name as primary name, and typographical errors.

they were not hungry, or they were solely focused on the meeting. Although activists were thankful to have a place large enough to meet, the noise made it difficult for the large group to hear one another clearly, and servers asking to take food and drink orders, although gracious, interrupted organizing discussions. Due to these external distractions to meeting productivity, the coalition rotated meeting spaces and has maintained their cohesion over multiple years.

A goal-focused culture is not only permeated by practices encouraging meeting productivity, it is also embedded with practices highlighting participant contributions. Activists demonstrated their commitment to the coalition and to the overall movement by offering up their strengths, and the movement reinforced their loyalty by publicly acknowledging those contributions. In addition, movement coalitions needed careful adjudication to make sure credit was distributed equitably and advantageously.

Assigning credit for achievements and contributions was often negotiated from the outset. Credit in achieving progress was sometimes important to an organization's grant applications and overall funding base, but it was also essential for preserving relationships among valuable allies. There were times when credit for contribution became a heated matter of contention, redirecting groups' efforts away from the reasons they chose to collaborate in the first place. For instance, when a coalition collectively decided to use its broader name for an event, relationships were strained when an individual organization took the credit as the pioneer for the entire effort. Likewise, it was also contested when a coalition used its over-arching coalition name while an individual organization within the coalition did a large proportion of the work for the

event but was not specifically acknowledged. Because such encounters could unravel the relationship between allies, open communication and even rotating representatives were needed at times to reach reconciliation and maintain social cohesion. Moreover, deciding credit allocation in advance was an essential conflict-preventative, and therefore, productive practice. Some decided to grant credit to the larger coalition by name, and others to each individual organization that made up the coalition, regardless of how much work each organization actually contributed, and still others credited both.

Goal-focused practices also included a balance of coalition tasks with expressions of reciprocating support for the specific activities of member organizations. Because coalitions respond to urgent needs, are frequently formed, and can be short-lived, it is important for allies to support one another in each organization's struggles and efforts. An allotted time at the end of each agenda allowed participant organizations to request support in their own mobilizing efforts. Activists greatly appreciated and remembered when fellow stalwarts from neighboring organizations followed through and supported them in an event or action. This reciprocity increased the likelihood the cycle of support would continue and added to the pool of potential coalition partnerships.

## **Conclusion**

IRM participants from distinct cultures overwhelmingly understood that they needed to work together to achieve their shared goals (see chapter 3). They also knew that they needed to do so in a manner that respected their unique identities while staying productively focused on their agreed upon claims, processes that required a particular

sensitivity to differences and intentionality in organizational inclusion in addition to the regular responsibilities of mobilization and protest. This was largely accomplished by adhering to practices that were consistent with activists' shared organic beliefs relating to equality and security for all persons. Growing out of their distinct faith-based and secular human rights traditions, this moral framework then shaped both movement goals and the multicultural activist etiquette that guided their work together. MAE includes meeting processes that ensure participants are treated equally in a physically and emotionally secure environment as they organize toward the very movement goals that promote such equality and security for immigrants.

Organizing among multicultural, immigrant and nonimmigrant, faith-based and nonreligious participants could be a difficult task. It required an awareness of the needs of diverse cultural subgroups within the IRM's expanding network of activists as well as to the expectations of distinct activist organizations so as to build trust through recurring interactions and therefore maintain cohesion for future collaboration (Fine, 2012; Van Overwalle & Heylighen, 2006).

When MAE was maintained, mutual respect, trust, and productivity toward movement goals were enhanced while members simultaneously developed leadership and organizing skills. The practice of equal inclusion in a secure environment helped multicultural, faith-based, and nonreligious activists maintain mutual respect for one another, and in turn, feel respected and valuable, thus strengthening the social cohesion among multicultural and multi-faith activists and increasing the likelihood of future collaboration on shared movement goals. This commitment to equality and security while productively

focusing on common movement claims cultivated trust upon which professional relationships and personal friendships formed, strengthening the IRM movement base. Such a cohesive network of movement organizers, what in fact makes up the social movement (Diani, 1992), is a necessary asset in a grassroots movement where power is generated from the quantity of movement members and the quality of their contributions and commitment. When MAE was ignored, it jeopardized trust, caused rifts among activists and between organizations, and diverted energy onto recovering from injured relationships—all of which took the focus off of movement goals and weakened the movement base, thus affecting the power to cause the desired change. Multi-cultural and multi-faith activists recognize that internal conflict undermines collective power and therefore impedes success, serving as a reminder to movement members to abide by the spoken and unspoken rules of the multicultural activist etiquette. Most activists have seen or heard stories about how productivity and trust were undermined when decision-making practices were violated or communication was disrespectful, defensive, or patronizing. In contrast, an “organizing meeting space” that promoted equality, security, and progress toward movement goals was understood as a boon to success. Largely because of this, movement members overwhelmingly cultivated a culture of mutually respectful professionalism toward neighboring activist organizations, in spite of personality differences and other types of conflict.

Furthermore, activists practicing equal inclusion in a secure space benefited from the ideas proffered by equal participation, particularly from the rarely communicated ideas originating from people traditionally marginalized by society such as immigrant

women and non-English speakers. By practicing MAE, activists were provided additional opportunities to develop as more skillful and empowered agents of change. Over time, more timid and unassuming immigrant activists grew more assertive and confident in their roles. They realized that their voices could be heard, and more importantly, that their opinions were eagerly sought after to help make a difference in their communities.

In such a context where multicultural movement members with shared movement goals feel safe and equally valuable, activists are able to be more productive and focus on strategizing and developing movement tactics toward their common claims. The multicultural, faith-based, and nonreligious IRM participants operating within the framework of MAE are, therefore, able to use their collective energy to focus on movement goals while simultaneously knowing that they are creating the reality within meeting organizing spaces they wish to achieve in society at large. Furthermore, IRM activists nurtured relationships with other activists within and across SMOs, thus helping overcome potentially demobilizing conflicts and solidifying the movement base. Not only were working relationships developed, activists often formed close friendships and even romantic relationships from professional movement connections.

Beneficial outcomes to the MAE continue beyond current organizing efforts. In grassroots social movements where power is leveraged and originates from the masses, maintaining a healthy pool of organized and committed allies is critical. Therefore, cultivating positive and productive working relationships through codes of conduct that are geared at productivity and respecting the dignity and value of each member equally

not only helps current movement efforts, but also plants the seeds for future collaboration.

In sum, activists from distinct ethnic and religious origins found common ground upon which to sit around the table, organizing for immigrant rights. Their shared belief that all people, specifically immigrants, should have equal rights and protections, informed not only the goals for the IRM (as discussed in chapters 2 and 3), but also the ways diverse activists ought to be working together in meeting organizing spaces. Because meeting processes were encoded with the collectively shared, humanitarian moral framework emphasizing equality and security that comes from caring for one another, MAE was by and large an *internalized* process of organizing that resonated with immigrants and non-immigrants, people of faith and non-religious people alike. Practicing MAE helped facilitate trust, advance movement goals, encourage respectful cross-cultural and interfaith collaboration and relationship building, and sustain a pool of activists and organizations from which to draw in order to gain equal rights and protections for immigrants, thus serving as an important unifying mechanism in the Immigrant Rights Movement.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

Nonreligious activist, Justin Akers Chacón of the secular Si Se Puede organization, Dean Scott Richardson and first generation immigrant Reverend Mary Moreno Richardson of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, and first generation immigrant Belinda Zamacona of the secular Raza Rights Coalition are all morally outraged by the immigration policies that result in family separation, fearful living under the radar of immigration enforcement officials, deaths along the border, and worker exploitation. These moral stalwarts, like many others in the IRM activist network, adhere to distinct religious and nonreligious belief systems and originate from unique cultural origins. With such a diverse collection of moral rule-changers, activists were able to cultivate solidarity in a multicultural and multi-faith context while also fulfilling the challenges all movements face in mobilizing support and productively collaborating for movement goals.

This story is premised on the notion that these multicultural and multi-faith activists recognize that they need each other. They understand that they need to work together to successfully contest existing immigration policies and create a new reality where strangers are welcomed with equal rights and protections. The story told here focused on how they *hold together* after realizing they need one another, and it showed immigrant activists as co-authors in a community of rule-changers working to change the very rules that dictate how they must live their lives and by which they are judged. This dissertation provides examples of how such agents are questioning and changing the very barriers that prevent them from improving their quality of life as equal members in this

American community. Moreover, it introduces immigrant agency as an alternative pathway to immigrant incorporation and recognizes immigrants as the sophisticated and intentional agents they are. In this way, I argued that we can better understand immigrant incorporation by adding *rule-changers* (immigrant rights activism) to such variables as inter-marriage, levels of education, and employment mobility.

This story also demonstrated that in an increasingly diverse American cultural landscape it also becomes increasingly important to move past single-identity politics and take into account the multidimensionality of each individual's identity to better understand the new social movements. Despite the growing literature on faith-based organizations that empower and support immigrant groups, research on interfaith and secular collaboration, especially in a multicultural context, is grossly neglected. Because what we know about religious organizations' contributions to social movements predominantly comes from single faith traditions (Beyerlein & Chaves, 2003; Calhoun-Brown, 1999; Fields, 1982; McRoberts, 2003; Nepstad, 1996; Patillo-McCoy, 1998; Smith, 1996; Williams, 2001; Wood, 2003; Young, 2002), this dissertation ventured to ask how immigrant and non-immigrant activists manage when they are part of a community of multiple religious and non-religious people. How is it possible to work together and still draw on those beliefs? Can religious beliefs and rituals be powerful motivators when there are diverse traditions coming together? How are multicultural movement stalwarts interacting, sharing ideas, and collectively protesting at their planned actions?

The purpose of this dissertation was to shed a brighter light on the dynamics of such multicultural, interfaith and nonreligious collaboration by focusing on the social cohesion of such groups, an aspect of collective identity, in a contemporary social movement and to show how immigrants act as rule-changers in accord with their non-immigrant counterparts. Taking the Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego as a critical case, this study included data from forty-nine extensive formal interviews with movement participants in sixteen organizations and countless informal conversations during participant observation in over two-hundred meetings, protests, rallies, forums, and activist-organized events, from 2006 to 2008. Based on the data, I provided evidence for immigrants acting as rule-changers along with their non-immigrant counterparts and argued that social cohesion was made possible by (a) shared movement goals that were articulated through stories of change; (b) an underlying moral framework based on progressive inclusive, humanitarian themes; and (c) the multicultural activist etiquette that targeted productivity toward movement goals pursued in ways that were consistent with the movement's moral framework. Moreover, I showed that activists articulate their connection to the movement, to one another, and to immigrants by vocalizing their religious and non-religious belief systems and sharing their personal and distinct stories to advance the movement.

In chapter 2, we learned about the claims for which activists are organizing. By listening to multicultural and multi-faith activists' articulate stories of change, we recognized their lament in their moving accounts of injustices related to deaths along the border, living fearfully in the shadows, the separation of families, and worker

exploitation. Stories told by people from diverse standpoints provided a common framing of issues of injustice. We observed, as well, how stories of agitation were transformed into chapters in the larger hope-generating narratives of change where injustices are converted into shared movement goals. Here, activists vocalized the right to migrate, the right to family unity, an end to the deaths along the border, worker rights and protections, and a moratorium on raids and deportations. It is at this point that shared injustices which make movement goals necessary become evident; and the collective action, around which movement goals are focused, further unify otherwise disparate IRM activists. In other words, this chapter showed that diverse activists unite around shared injustices and work together to make things right in the world, thus strengthening group solidarity. Through their efforts, rule-changers were able to change the rules within worker contracts, halt the "collateral damage" experienced from Operation Return to Sender, register hundreds of citizens to vote, help hundreds of legal residents with their citizenship applications, educate thousands to know their rights and understand the plight of immigrants, change the way undocumented immigrants are received during emergencies such as in the San Diego wildfires, and lay the ground work for the California Dream Act of 2011 and the Trust Act of 2013—all of which positively affect the quality of life of immigrants in the U.S. Diverse moral stalwarts found common cause and movement effectiveness in stories of change, which further brought them together.

What provides the criteria by which the world ought to operate? Is there an ideological intersection, or overarching moral framework in the cause they are pursuing?

Coming from distinct cultural locations, we saw in chapter 3 that the San Diego IRM was guided by progressive, inclusive, and humanitarian themes that were informed and legitimated by distinct religious and nonreligious beliefs. This chapter showed that IRM activists from distinct cultural, religious, and secular origins in San Diego County believe all people are equal and everyone ought to care for one another, especially for those that are marginalized in society, particularly immigrants. Activists reaching into their distinct cultural repertoires to inform and affirm their moral framework appeared to arrive at the same point, a point that serves as a common ground and a mechanism for social cohesion among culturally distinct participants. This study documents an instance of Habermas' (2006) argument regarding religion in the public sphere of a pluralist society. More specifically, this research demonstrates that activists of faith use religious language based on a "religiously grounded concept of justice" which "tells them what is politically correct or incorrect" (p. 8) while many nonreligious activists are "prepared to learn from religion, but [generally] remain[s] agnostic in the process" (p. 17) and thus "secular citizens exhibit a mentality that is no less demanding than the corresponding mentality of their religious counterparts" (p. 18). In a reciprocal relationship, such nonreligious agents of change also contribute their own secular belief systems related to human rights, equality, and inclusion to the multicultural and multi-faith IRM among religious counterparts who are also prepared to learn from them. In this case, however, coalitions of multicultural and multi-faith activists are using both religious *and* secular rhetoric to engage legislators and potential sympathizers in the political arena for immigrant rights. Furthermore, the moral framework discussed in chapter 3 provides the criteria for

defining shared injustices and constructing common movement claims. By knowing how the world ought to operate and how people ought to treat one another, injustices are recognized, and goals are constructed based upon common visions for a better world.

Furthermore, I argued that this moral framework understood as incomplete without action does not remain as faith-inspired rhetoric, interfaith dialogue, or prayer without follow through. Rather, it helped guide and affirm the very way multicultural and multi-faith stalwarts interact within meeting spaces. In chapter 4, I introduced the *multicultural activist etiquette* whose patterns of interaction within meeting spaces were consistent with the movement's overall moral framework discussed in chapter 3. After observing nearly two hundred planning meetings within the movement for immigrant rights in San Diego County, I discovered certain patterns of behavior multicultural activists practiced at every meeting which generated more productive meetings and more positive working relationships among immigrant and non-immigrant activists of varying faith perspectives. In addition to the ordinary tasks in meetings geared around planning events and mobilizing constituents, this organizational code of conduct included three overarching guidelines for meetings which helped facilitate more harmonious multicultural collaboration: (1) ensuring *equality* within organizational processes, (2) creating a physically and emotionally *secure* meeting and decision-making space, and (3) *productively* moving toward and actualizing collective movement *goals*.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Equality, in this section, referred to codes of conduct related to: participation, communication (assuring all are heard and all can hear) and decision-making (leadership, points of unity, credit disbursement).

In the context of a social movement where activists are extremely conscious of power dynamics and external forces trying to counter their movement, collectively constructed modes of operation complemented their ideal organizing spaces and movement ideology. Multicultural activists in the IRM decided not to impose an impersonal template on their method of organizing. Rather, with a sense of ownership and empowerment in the very organizing structure in which they operated, they organized around their own rules of meeting tailored to satisfy their own specific needs and the needs of their communities. This code of conduct promoted respectfulness of the diversity of each member, a sensitivity to power dynamics, and productive focus on movement goals. In this way, this physical and metaphorical space helped build trust among activists of distinct origins. By continually building trust among culturally and religiously diverse agents within organizations and across coalitions, multicultural activists are better positioned to sustain the pool of immigrant rights organizations and additional activists from which to choose when seeking to garner support for movement goals, thus advancing the movement. Practicing this interpersonal code, IRM activists continuously develop an organizing space that reflects the societal reality they wish to create.

In these organizing spaces, collective actions were planned which include the May 1<sup>st</sup> Coalition's efforts in organizing immigrant rights marches and raising financial support for the local immigrant families of bakers who suffered a workplace raid. Through continued collaboration, they also worked with local university students to draft university legislation demanding a safe and free educational space secure from

Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids. Others such as JOB, registered hundreds to vote and helped over a thousand immigrants register for citizenship status.

Organizations like ICWJ and UDW successfully campaigned for improved worker contracts. Most of these coalitions continue to meet years later.

To reiterate, the meeting organizing space, therefore, served as a microcosm of a shared vision of an equal and secure place for immigrants *and* reflected the identities of immigrant and non-immigrant activists belonging to various faiths and beliefs. In sum, how multicultural agents in the IRM chose to conduct their meetings grew out of who they were and what they were trying to accomplish together for immigrant rights.

The form of religion that was most prominent in the IRM was one characterized by progressive, humanitarian beliefs. These beliefs were able to form an underlying moral framework and resonate across religions and into the hearts and minds of nonreligious agents of change due to their: (a) de-emphasis on theological boundaries in favor of open inclusion, (b) a genuine willingness to adopt ideas from other traditions, and (c) a focus on establishing justice and change in this world to alleviate the unnecessary hardships related to immigration. This study, therefore, contributes insight into the processes that help establish an interfaith, secular, and multicultural solidarity between diverse activists from faith-based, secular, and interfaith organizations in the IRM to the growing literature on faith-based organizations that assist and affirm immigrants' equal and valuable place in the U.S. As Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008) noted, "The pendulum of religious activism in the United States is swinging from right to left... toward support for progressive policies to end human suffering and inequalities" (p. 5).

Due to the high visibility of the Religious Right and conservative politics related to abortion, gay marriage, and sexuality, many do not associate religion and religious institutions with “progressive peace and justice causes, such as ending the war in Iraq or solving poverty and homelessness” or “expand[ing] and protect[ing] the labor, civil, and migration rights of newcomers” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008, p. 6). However, theirs is the story I have told. I have argued that these very belief systems have not only opened the door to interfaith collaboration, but have affirmed and guided collaboration among activists of distinct cultural and religious traditions including nonreligious agents of change for immigrant rights.

For religious activists, the movement’s moral framework rooted in religiously inclusive beliefs made claims that transcended the existing realities of imperfect, human-made immigration legislation, allowing them to hold the law of the land accountable to a higher power. In addition to providing a certain transcendent awareness of a Divine law for religious activists, this moral framework articulated a secular sanctity of humanity for nonreligious activists that also supersedes human-made laws and national boundaries which appear to fall short. Both religious and nonreligious belief systems supported this definition of justice. Drawing on multidimensional identities, this shared moral framework influenced what is deemed unjust, specific movement goals, collective nonviolent methods of protest, and the construction of a “multicultural activist etiquette”—all of which help hold the mosaic of movement members together.

By constructing and applying organizational and ideological unifying mechanisms, multicultural and multi-faith activists were able to work together to ensure

equality, security, and progress toward movement goals both inside and outside meeting spaces. In doing so, they cultivated trust, fostered relationships among diverse members, and thus added to the potential pool of future coalition-partners needed to advance shared movement goals. These practices communicated a level of sophistication and commitment to organizing in a professional and productive way that stayed true to the inclusive and humanitarian elements of their unique belief systems and distinct cultural origin.

As sociologists attempting to better understand immigrants, incorporation, religion, and social movements, it is imperative for us to focus our efforts on a multicultural understanding of group dynamics. I argued that sociologists studying religion, as well as those studying social movements, would benefit greatly from paying attention to the internal diversity of the groups they study. Shared identity is complicated by diversity within and among people and groups. However, the challenges of studying the multidimensionality of identity of individuals in groups, moving beyond single identity politics, need not be a deterrent; rather, it can be seen as an open field with its own benefits and shortcomings, assets and limitations, awaiting to be better understood. I have argued that attention to multicultural communication and collaboration will also better reflect the national landscape and the reality addressed in this dissertation.

This project has analyzed the mechanisms through which multicultural collaboration was enacted across sixteen organizations in San Diego County. It has pointed to progressive belief systems that mattered in the inclusiveness of this multicultural social movement. These distinct religious and nonreligious traditions were

able to find points of intersection so as to form the basis of a common moral framework. Multiple traditions provided narratives from which hearers could move toward an overall moral framework that helped define common injustices against which to unite and corresponding goals around which to focus collective efforts. Moreover, this common moral ground also influenced the very interpersonal interactions around the organizing table. These practices further united moral stalwarts with distinct cultural and religious origins and maintained the focus on immigrant rights.

That leaves open the question of whether such multicultural and multi-faith solidarity is possible among religious fundamentalists and political extremists. Are there particular forms of religious and political beliefs that would make common narrative and moral ground impossible? Likewise, are there organizational contexts or kinds of common action that would not facilitate the “etiquette” described here or the collaboration achieved by this movement? Might similar findings be evident at the workplace or in the academic arena, or might other mechanisms for diverse collaboration be at play?

Returning to the context of social movements, there is still much more that remains to be understood as additional questions arise from this research. For instance, this project found that activists articulate agreed upon stories of agitation and illustrate accounts of collective efforts in stories of change. This suggests further questions about the other types of narratives that may anchor activists to each other and to common movement goals. It was striking in this dissertation that narratives of change, as well as movement actions, often included various religious symbols and rituals from different

religious origins. We need additional research on how such religious identifiers can coexist and how they can travel outside their official sacred homes.

Many new questions arise. This research took place on the cusp of the social media revolution, and future work will need to pay attention to how blogs, Facebook, Twitter, mass e-mail lists and the like affect movement solidarity and organizational processes. Religion and immigration status were the primary forms of internal diversity treated in this study, however, other factors affect member integration, as well, such as educational backgrounds, and the presence of women, students, and veteran activists. Just as IRM activists are welcoming one another and organizing together for the U.S. to be as welcoming to immigrants, we too, as researchers must incorporate the multiple perspectives and voices of the diverse individuals that make up our national landscape. Such questions encourage further exploration into the dynamics of social cohesion among culturally distinct members and promotes scholarship that considers the multidimensionality of agents, topics which have become increasingly relevant in our multifaceted and further interconnected world.

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**CURRICULUM VITAE**  
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**EDUCATION:**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 2003 to Present | Post-Bachelor's Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology, <i>Boston University</i><br>Specialization: Sociology of Religion, Social Movements, and Immigration  |
| 2007 to Present | Institutional Review Board Approval for Dissertation Research: "Ecumenical Civic Engagement: Interfaith-Based Mobilization within the Nonviolent Immigrant Rights Movement in San Diego County," <i>Boston University</i> |
| 2007 to 2008    | Guest Scholar at the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, <i>University of California, San Diego</i>   |
| 2007            | Dissertation Prospectus Approved, <i>Boston University</i>  |
| 2007            | Critical Essay Approved, <i>Boston University</i>   |
| 2005            | Coursework Requirements Completed, <i>Boston University</i>   |
| 2005            | Language Requirement Fulfilled, <i>Boston University</i><br>Overall GPA: 3.80   |
| 1997 to 2001    | B.A., Business Administration, <i>University of San Diego</i><br><i>Major:</i> Business Administration<br><i>Minor:</i> Speech Communication<br>Overall GPA: 3.90   |
| 1999            | Study Abroad, <i>Madrid, Spain</i>  |

**ACADEMIC POSITIONS AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE:**

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2012 | Senior Teaching Fellow, Sociology of the Workplace, Department of Sociology, <i>Boston University</i>                             |
| 2008 | Guest Lecturer for David Fitzgerald, Migration and the Law<br>Department of Sociology, <i>University of California, San Diego</i> |
| 2008 | Guest Lecturer for John Stone, Intro. to Ethnic, Race, and Minority Relations, Department of Sociology, <i>Boston University</i>  |
| 2008 | Instructor, Social Problems<br>Department of Sociology and Social Work, <i>Point Loma Nazarene University</i>                     |
| 2005 | Instructor, Introduction to Sociology   |

- 2005 Department of Sociology, *Boston University*  
Teaching Assistant for Carolyn Bond  
Introduction to Sociology
- 2004 Department of Sociology, *Boston University*  
Teaching Assistant for Daniel Monti  
Introduction to Sociology: The Community  
Department of Sociology, *Boston University*

#### **AWARDS AND HONORS:**

- 2013 Graduate Scholarship, \$2,755, *Boston University*
- 2012 Graduate Scholarship, \$2,755, *Boston University*
- 2012 Senior Teaching Fellow, \$9,640, *Boston University*
- 2011 Eastern Sociological Association Travel Grant
- 2009 to 2010 Professor Albert Morris Travel Grant, *Boston University*
- 2008 to 2009 Professor Albert Morris Scholarship, *Boston University*
- 2005 to 2006 GRS Graduate Scholarship, \$1400, *Boston University*
- 2004 to 2005 GRS Teaching Fellow Scholarship, \$30,162, *Boston University*
- 2004 to 2005 GRS Teaching Fellow Stipend, \$14,500, *Boston University*
- 2003 to 2004 Professor Albert Morris Scholarship, \$25,000,  
*Boston University*
- 1997 to 2001 Provost Scholarship for Full Tuition, *University of San Diego*
- 2001 Departmental Honors in Business Administration, *University of San Diego*
- 2001 Beta Gamma Sigma, National Business Honors Fraternity,  
*University of San Diego*
- 2001 Kappa Gamma Pi, National Catholic Honors Society, *University of San Diego*
- 2001 Student Servant Leader Award, University Special Award,  
University Ministry, *University of San Diego*
- 2000 Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and  
Colleges, *University of San Diego*
- 1998 Highest Academic Average in the Freshman Class, *University of San Diego*

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

- Forthcoming Meeting Etiquette: Solidarity in the Interfaith and Multicultural Immigrant Rights Movement. In Ruth Braunstein, Todd Nicholas Fuist, & Rhys H. Williams (Eds.), *Progressive Religion in the United States: Remapping the Political Landscape*.

**PAPER PRESENTATIONS:**

- 2014 (Forthcoming) "Meeting Etiquette: Solidarity in the Interfaith and Multicultural Immigrant Rights Movement," *American Sociological Association and the Association for the Sociology of Religion Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 "Transcendent Visions: Unifying Movement Goals in the Interfaith Immigrant Rights Movement," *Sociology for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting*, Phoenix, Arizona
- 2012 "Tales from the Table: Activist Etiquette in the Multicultural Immigrant Rights Movement," *Harvard Migration and Immigrant Incorporation Workshop*, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- 2012 "Anchoring Narratives: Multicultural Collaboration in the Immigrant Rights Movement," *Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting*, New York, New York
- 2010 "Be the Change You Want to See: Activist Etiquette in the Interfaith Immigrant Rights Movement," *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting*, Baltimore, Maryland
- 2010 "Transcendent Values: Coalition Building in the Immigrant Rights Movement," *Latin American Studies Association Congress*, Toronto, Ontario CANADA
- 2009 "A Burning Issue: Motivating Factors for Religious and Secular Activists in the Immigrant Rights Movement," *Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO
- 2008 "Work in Progress: A Burning Issue: Motivating Factors for Religious and Secular Activists in the Immigrant Rights Movement," *University of California, San Diego's Center for Comparative Immigration Studies*, San Diego, CA

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP:**

- 2012 Eastern Sociological Society  
 2010 Latin American Studies Association  
 2008 to Present Society for the Scientific Study of Religion  
 2007 to Present American Academy of Religion

2008 to 2008            Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, *University of California, San Diego*  
 2005 to Present        American Sociological Association  
 2003 to Present        Migration and Immigrant Incorporation Workshop (MII), *Harvard University*

**RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS:**

Sociology of Religion	Political Sociology
Immigration	Social Problems/Solutions
Social Movements	Race, Class and Gender Relations
Latino/a Sociology	Cultural Sociology
Health	Social Psychology
Sociology of the Workplace	Qualitative Research Methods

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