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# The Boundaries of Safety: The Sanctuary Movement in the Inland Empire

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**THE BOUNDARIES OF SAFETY:  
THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT IN THE INLAND EMPIRE**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Cecilia I. Vasquez

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

September 2021

Department of Anthropology

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**THE BOUNDARIES OF SAFETY:  
THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT IN THE INLAND EMPIRE**

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Cecilia I. Vasquez

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## **DEDICATION**

To my Mami, Papi, & ñañas who instilled the values of compassion & community.

To my Abuelitas and Abuelito who inspire me everyday.

To my partner Andrew who is my rock.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As the daughter and granddaughter of immigrants, my dissertation is inspired by my family and our stories of migration. Most in particular my research is in honor of my maternal grandmother, Abue Luz. Her life was cut all too short, but her journey, life, and our time together have made a lasting impact on me. Because of her, I am committed to education, social justice and equity. Te amo.

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## ABSTRACT

### **The Boundaries of Safety: The Sanctuary Movement in the Inland Empire**

September 2021

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The Trump administration for many represented drastic ideological shift in American values, and for others he embodied a social threat to their lives. In response, many cities, counties, states, and schools proclaimed themselves Sanctuaries to protect their undocumented immigrant community members. The term evokes images of churches operating as a place of refuge with impenetrable walls. The declaration of Sanctuary provided an illusion of boundaries and a sense of safety. This dissertation interrogates the meanings of sanctuary and how the Inland Empire in Southern California, implemented and created sanctuary. By analyzing the California Values Act and working alongside organizers in the Inland Empire, this research identifies barriers in developing sanctuary in this region. The epicenter of the research and sanctuary organizing is and was Adelanto Detention Facility, the largest for-profit facility on the west coast. Ultimately, the research affirms the need for an abolitionist sanctuary, a movement that is intersectional with Black Lives Matter, end of policing, and the abolition of all forms of incarceration. Without an intersectional movement, justice for immigrants is unattainable because of the immigration systems entanglement with other oppressive systems that marginalize a vast array of social communities in the US.



Building on the literature of migration studies, this research unveils the pervasiveness of the good and criminal immigrant binary in the California Values Act, the process of accessing citizenship while in detention, and even in pro-immigrant organizing. This binary is one of the key narratives that needs to be transformed in order to achieve justice for immigrants. This research builds on theoretical frameworks on citizenship and community-engaged research.

This dissertation answers the research question of the implementation and practice of sanctuary utilizing community-based research methods to investigate sanctuary in the Inland Empire. I worked alongside the leading grassroots organizations that developed, trained, and coordinated sanctuary practices for the region. Through participant-observation, interviews with activists and previously detained individuals, and community projects; I saw first-hand the barriers and resiliency of communities advocating for immigrant rights and walked alongside those directly impacted by detention. The culmination of these methods offered a deep analysis of the existing structures and personal experiences of sanctuary in the region.

From the engaged research, my research partners and I identified the need for the immigrant community to tell their personal stories of migration to challenge anti-immigrant narratives in the region. The project was designed to reinforce belonging and community. With research partners, we organized a 10-week art project with immigrant mothers in Pomona, where they were able to write poetry and make tin-art in developing and processing their stories of migration. This project was an example and practice in developing sanctuary. As the research found, sanctuary in practice, are the ways communities can come together to create spaces where people can be their whole selves.

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## **CHAPTER 1: THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT & THE INLAND EMPIRE**

I remember vividly where I was when I learned Trump had become President of the United States. I was 3000 miles away from home, living in Amherst, Massachusetts while pursuing my graduate education. Being on the East Coast, I went to bed seeing Hillary Clinton in the lead, and woke up to the news that Trump had won. A powerful sense of loneliness and helplessness overwhelmed me. I could not seek comfort from my family in California due to distance and time zone differences. I felt concern for the safety of my family and friends. We were all just walking into a fog of uncertainty.

While the election of Trump was troubling, I also want to be cautious of portraying his election as remarkable. Rosa and Bonilla (2017) argue that by treating Trump as an anomaly, we ignore the white supremacist history of the US that led to his election. By treating Trump as an anomaly, we ignore how white supremacy exists in the everyday. All Trump really did was bring the everyday white supremacy to the forefront.

Immigrant rights organizations had been bracing themselves for the Trump win outcome and strategizing on how to protect advancements in immigrant rights. The lingering question was: How much power and authority did Trump have? Were the checks and balances within the US government substantial enough to thwart Trump's anti-immigrant agenda? Could Trump further streamline deportation and increase apprehensions?

Immigrant rights organizations responded to Trump's threats by advocating for sanctuary. Many cities, counties, states, and schools proclaimed themselves sanctuaries, a place where immigrants could feel safe and welcomed by their surrounding community. The declaration of Sanctuary provided an illusion of boundaries and a sense of safety for

undocumented immigrants. The concept of sanctuary felt so elusive, and I wanted to understand what it meant in practice.

I felt an urgency to leave Massachusetts and return home to California to be with my loved ones and community in the Inland Empire. I wanted to know what sanctuary would look like there. The Inland Empire is a conservative pocket in California; I grew up hearing a lot of hate speech toward immigrants. I witnessed hate speech toward my own mother. I knew implementing sanctuary would be an uphill battle. In 2018, I finally was able to return home to see how sanctuary practices were unraveling in the community. This watershed political moment led me to my research question, “*How is sanctuary implemented and practiced in the Inland Empire?*”.

### **Sanctuary and Organizing Framework**

The concept of sanctuary is a religious tradition, with different faith groups having their own rules and frameworks that influenced law and order in their societies. Throughout medieval Europe, the practice of sanctuary defied the authority of the state by believing the authority of the divine was greater than that of the state (Rabben 2016, Paik 2020). In response the state developed a rhetoric that sanctuary practices were a disruption to justice and allowed wrongdoers to evade persecution (Paik 2019). Sanctuary is an interrogation of justice, questioning what justice is. Is what the state offers as justice truly just? Sanctuary in form becomes an intervention to combat state injustice.

In the US, the social political histories and experiences of Black people has shaped the modern sanctuary movement and frameworks on citizenship (Golden & McConnel 1986, Paik 2016, Loyd 2019). For example, the Underground Railroad is an early example of sanctuary practices in the US that interrogated justice. In opposition to

slavery, networks of congregations and individuals helped create safe passage for Black people escaping the violence of slavery and captivity. Today, Black communities continue to fight for recognition of their humanity through social movements like the Black Lives Matter movement. The US construct of citizenship and belonging has been defined in opposition to Black and Indigenous identities from the beginning of colonization. Calling back to Rosa and Bonilla's criticism of the Trump anomaly, the US was founded upon and entrenched in upholding the project of white supremacy. Étienne Balibar argues, "Racism sees itself as an 'integral' nationalism, which only has meaning (and chances of success) if it is based on the integrity of the nation, integrity both towards the outside and on the inside" (1991: 51). Sanctuary within the Underground Railroad offers an intervention and begins to shed light on the interconnectedness between Black experiences and how they shape immigration today.

The 1980s Sanctuary Movement in the US carried forth the sanctuary tradition, offering refuge to Central Americans seeking asylum from various civil war conflicts. This movement was grounded in faith-based activism, where church congregations proclaimed themselves sanctuary spaces. The network of sanctuary congregations would transport, house, advocate, and educate refugees to help them assimilate into US culture. This method saw challenges in many spaces due to a combination of refugees resisting the imposition of American culture by their host families and the lack of collaboration with refugees in organizing the movement (Lorentzen 1991). Despite the network of sanctuary congregations, in the US during this time only 20% of Central American asylum seekers were successful (Rabben 2016). Today, these percentages for Central Americans remain relatively unchanged (TRAC Immigration 2020). From this wave of



sanctuary, a legislative form sanctuary began. In 1989, the city of San Francisco passed the first Sanctuary Ordinance for the state. The Ordinance outlined that city resources and funds would not be used to assist in the apprehension of undocumented immigrants living in their community unless required by state or federal law (City and County of San Francisco 1989). This would lay down the foundation for sanctuary in 2016.

In 2006, sanctuary came back into public discourse with the “New Sanctuary Movement.” Under the Bush administration, raids and apprehensions were increasing in communities and workspaces; in response, congregations opened their doors to protect immigrants from deportation (Ridgely 2008). The New Sanctuary Movements work continued within interfaith congregations, many of which were a part of 1980s movement (Ham 2009).

The Trump presidency resurged the Sanctuary Movement due to a rise in violence against immigrants in the US. Through his words and policies, Trump antagonized the immigrant communities. Unlike the 1980s Sanctuary Movement that was largely mobilized by interfaith communities, this new wave found its way to schools, cities, and states. In California, this has manifested as the “California Values Act.”

### **Background on the California Values Act & Inland Empire**

#### *California Values Act*

The California Values Act (SB54) brings to light again the tension between sanctuary and justice. Justice within this context is the state’s ability to enact authority over those with a criminal history. In 2017, California was one of eleven states that enacted statewide sanctuary legislation. SB54 disallows local law enforcement in assisting or acting on behalf of Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the

apprehension or detention of undocumented people. While the law discourages law enforcement in assisting in ICE apprehensions, the bill does not outline accountability measures or an enforceable standard protocol for law enforcement to adhere to, allowing law enforcement to develop its own practice (California Values Act 2017).

As the bill climbed its way through various committees, immigrants with criminal convictions were excluded from the sanctuary policy. As highlighted in the historical background of sanctuary, sanctuary has consistently been enacted in opposition to state powers. The state adopting sanctuary practices is at odds with the project of the state to uphold white supremacy. The exclusion of “criminal immigrants” highlights how the state can continue its white supremacist agenda, as the construct of criminality is highly racialized (Anjel-Ajani 2002, Lytle Hernandez 2017, Burch 2021, Davidson 2021). By not creating a comprehensive policy that includes immigrants with criminal convictions, the policy fails as an intervention. The “criminal immigrant” is a prominent narrative throughout this research. Criminality is a big part of how discourse on belonging and exclusion is constructed.

Despite SB54 lacking as a comprehensive intervention to anti-immigrant policies, it did receive plenty of backlash. In 2018, US Attorney Jeff Sessions filed a lawsuit against California because of the enactment of the California Values Act. Sessions referred to California politicians as “radical extremists” (Kopan 2018). Sessions claimed that California’s sanctuary law was unconstitutional and went beyond state jurisdiction (Lind

2018). Yucaipa and Upland, both cities in the Inland Empire, joined the lawsuit (Holder 2018).

Despite the lawsuit, in 2018 a federal judge upheld the California Values Act. The



*FigureError! No text of specified style in document. 1.1: Map of the Inland Empire (Maps of the World 2020).*

Inland Empire found itself in a state of precarity. The state government was pushing for sanctuary, but the local and federal government stood in opposition. This created a conflict between federal, state, and local authority.

The federal government, which provides some funding to local law enforcement, threatened to withdraw funds and still required reporting on ICE collaboration (Victoria 2017). Local law enforcement already had a long-standing history of collaborating with

ICE in the region (Gonzales 2014), and expressed disappointment in the passing of SB54. Sheriff McMahon of San Bernardino stated, “Those that are wanted by ICE, detained in our facilities, are dangerous criminals. It’s much safer for everybody involved if we could hand off that inmate to the custody of ICE, and they could continue through that process” (Victoria 2017). Sheriff Stan Sniff of Riverside County called the bill "bad law and even worse public policy" (Plevin 2017). These statements made by Sheriffs of San Bernardino and Riverside expose how they view immigrants and criminality as interchangeable. SB54 stipulates that law enforcement is able to assist in the apprehension of immigrants with criminal convictions; what law enforcement is not allowed to do is apprehend people for being undocumented, which it had previously practiced (Gonzales 2014). This therefore exposed the structural anti-immigrant beliefs and practices of the region’s Sheriff’s Departments.

Though the Sheriff’s Departments of San Bernardino, Riverside, and the San Bernardino Police Department state they are complying with California’s sanctuary law, there are loopholes that have been exploited. One way law enforcement has been able to cooperate with ICE is by making inmate release dates public information (Mancina 2019). By publishing release dates of inmates online to the public, ICE can track and apprehend immigrants upon release. This practice does not count as “police to ICE” transfer as law enforcement is not directly communicating or coordinating with ICE. Apprehensions also continue through warrants. If ICE issues a warrant for an individual with a criminal conviction, local law enforcement is then able to cooperate and work alongside ICE. The actions of law enforcement demonstrate how SB54 lacks as an

intervention to anti-immigrant policies and how anti-immigrant beliefs are systemic in governmental institutions.

### *The Inland Empire*

The name “Inland Empire” was chosen to foreshadow the growth of industry as the region boomed in the twentieth century as Los Angelenos were being pushed east (Center for Social Innovation 2018). Today, big corporations like Walmart, Amazon, Target, UPS, and FedEx have built their large warehouses in the region (Gonzales 2014). Many of the job opportunities offered to the local community are warehouse positions, these corporations go as far to recruit students from local high schools to work in these large warehouses, thereby creating a school to warehouse pipeline. With this context, the choice of “Empire” in the region’s name seems to foreshadow the exploitation of the local labor force by big corporations.

The Inland Empire is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area in the nation, comparable in population to the San Francisco Bay Area (Center for Social Innovation 2020). The “State of Immigration in the Inland Empire” reports a total of 4.5 million people living in the Inland Empire (Center for Social Innovation 2018). Of this population, 972,476 are immigrants, with 505,917 being undocumented (Center for Social Innovation 2018). While the Inland Empire is comparable in population size to the Bay Area, there are two key differences. One, while the population sizes are similar, the geographical spatial difference is stark. While the Bay Area comprises roughly 6,900 sq ft, the Inland Empire is 27,000 sq ft. Two, there is a vast disparity in state funding between the two regions (Center for Social Innovation 2020). The San Francisco Bay Area receives \$289 per resident, whereas the Inland Empire receive \$26 per resident (Center for Social

Innovation 2020). This leaves service of the latter severely underfunded with little room for nonprofits to grow. To further illustrate the disparity, during my fieldwork the Inland Empire had only two dedicated organizers that led what I define as “sanctuary organizing” for the entire region. The rest of the organizing work relies heavily on volunteers.

### **Grassroot Sanctuary Organizing**

Two key nonprofits servicing this region in the capacity of sanctuary services are Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI) and the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ). In the summer of 2018, I began working with Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, as they have a long-standing history of engaging and developing sanctuary practices for the Inland Empire and San Francisco Bay Area.

Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity is a statewide organization that works with faith-based organizations on the abolition of prisons, jails, and detention facilities. IM4HI has been a leader of the California Sanctuary Movement for 15+ years in the San Francisco Bay Area, and since 2014 it has been organizing in the Inland Empire. In the Inland Empire, the scope of organizing focuses on Adelanto Detention Facility.

Adelanto Detention Facility is the largest for-profit detention facility on the West Coast and is owned by GEO Group Inc. GEO is an international company that oversees correctional, detention, and community reentry services. GEO enters contracts with the US federal government to subsidize the cost of incarceration. The facility itself sits in the city of Adelanto; the city is nestled in the high desert landscape. Adelanto Detention Facility came to be the epicenter of my research. As I early highlighted earlier, sanctuary is an intervention state power; those who are most vulnerable in the anti-immigrant

landscape are those with past criminal convictions. Those who were carved out of the California Values Act found themselves inside Adelanto Detention Facility. For these reasons, local organizing supports those inside Adelanto Detention Facility, making the facility a space for community-based sanctuary interventions.

During my time with IM4HI, I worked closely with the regional organizer for the Inland Empire, Hilda Cruz. Hilda Cruz has over twenty years of experience organizing in the Inland Empire. She was one of the people that helped create the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice and was also key in developing the San Bernardino Arch Diocese's immigration services program. Finally, she was one of the lead organizers who fought against the opening of Adelanto Detention Facility and continues to be one of the lead organizers in shutting it down. Through her work at IM4HI, Hilda continues to fight for the facility's closure and leads campaigns for the release of those inside. Hilda is a regional powerhouse and resource for learning about the history and climate of grassroots organizing in the region. She has been a leader in creating the sanctuary culture and practices for the Inland Empire. Through Hilda and IM4HI, I participated in sanctuary actions, trainings, and rapid response work, which I detail more in later chapters.

Working with Hilda, I learned IM4HI language and practices surrounding sanctuary. IM4HI's four methods of sanctuary are: advocacy, accompaniment, networks of protection, and housing hospitality. Advocacy refers to political action that fights for the well-being of immigrant communities; examples are: vigils, lobbying visits, and demonstrations. Accompaniment is walking alongside someone facing detention or deportation; the individual or team assists in finding resources and social support by visiting the directly impacted person. Networks of protection are groups that direct

fundraising efforts for bonds, pack the courts for immigration cases, and hold local politicians accountable for upholding sanctuary laws. Finally, housing hospitality is the offering of short-term housing for recently released immigrants. Collectively, the pieces of sanctuary are a holistic way of advocating for the safety of detained and recently released immigrants. In my research, I group sanctuary practices into two separate categories, short-term and long-term sanctuary, as ways of measuring the impact of community-based sanctuary interventions. Community-based sanctuaries should be understood as sites of resistance. I will detail this in later chapters.

Overall, my research found that state sanctuary was ill-equipped in its ability to offer sanctuary to the undocumented community in the Inland Empire and California at large. The idea of state sanctioned sanctuary is a site of inner turmoil by nature, as sanctuary as an intervention is at odds with the state's agenda to uphold white supremacy. They are incommensurable. I argue that sanctuary was practiced and implemented at the community level and later go into detail of sanctuary interventions.

In designing my research, I drew heavily from the work of Maya Berry et al. (2017) and I approach my research through the praxis of "fugitive anthropology." Fugitive anthropology prioritizes the political; it is a research process that is reflexive, critical, and co-creates liberatory spaces (Berry et.al 2017). A fugitive anthropologist contextualizes themselves within their research, counteracting the practice of scholars as by-standers in fieldwork. Fugitive anthropology separates itself from other forms of activist scholarship in that it centers margins. Centering the margins draws from black feminist and women of color scholarship that analyzes the nuance of being a scholar working in their communities (Collins 1986, Alcalde 2007, Anderson-Levy 2010,



Anzaldúa 2012, Berry et al. 2014). Centering the margins also speaks to the interventions that can occur at the margins of society. The term fugitive, drawing from an Afrarealism framework, highlights the “coterminous phenomena: democracy as a boundary defining freedom through captivity, and maroon philosophy at the borders reimagining freedom through flight” (James 2013:124). Cordis argues that the fugitive figure is a site “outside of the confines of the legible, a politic that has resonance for Indigenous resurgence that privileges the refusal to be knowable, or at the very least, fully capturable within the confines of settler paradigms” (2019). It is at these margins that reimagined liberation and community alternatives to the state present themselves. Within my research, the margins are the sanctuary interventions and varying negotiations that the community was able to create.

A fugitive anthropological praxis is one that goes beyond deconstructing systems and pushes scholars to think about the ways they can contribute to social change, justice, and decolonization. Within my own research, this entailed being a functioning participant in the field. I was not apolitical or unbiased. I approached my research as a pro-immigrant and prison abolitionist. I worked alongside community partners on releases and shutdown campaigns for Adelanto Detention Facility. While my research studies community-based sanctuary interventions, I also collaborated with partners to further strategize sanctuary interventions. With partners, we explored the ways we could create transformative spaces that work toward sanctuary and liberation.

### **Research Roadmap**

My research on the Sanctuary Movement in the Inland Empire explores sanctuary practices at the government and community levels. Sanctuary as an intervention and the

state are at odds, and I utilize frameworks of citizenship and criminality to highlight this tension. In overcoming this tension, I argue the necessity of abolition and decolonization. I situate sanctuary practices within short-term and long-term sanctuary, and how they are situated in the long-term goal of abolition and decolonization.

In Chapter 2, I share the theoretical frameworks and literature I am building from in understanding my fieldwork. I unpack the meaning of empire-nation (Jung 2011) and its relationship to citizenship (Brandzel 2016, Cacho 2012). The US as an empire-nation strives to uphold white supremacy by creating a hierarchy amongst those living within its confines. Citizenship becomes a tool of stratification and criminality a discourse for shaping belonging and exclusion. I divulge the ways policies weaponize criminality to enact violence against and exclusion of immigrants. I highlight that fugitive anthropology and abolitionist sanctuary offer interventions in challenging power and facilitating change.

In Chapter 3, I map out my research methodology. I begin this chapter by positioning myself in the field as an activist-engaged scholar (Hale 2006) rooted in the practice of fugitive anthropology (Berry et al. 2014). I map out my research methodology and identify the ontology, standpoint, epistemology, axiology of my research, My methods of research are functioning participation (Zinn 1979), community-project and semi-structured interviews. Methods in data analysis are critical discourse analysis, embodied writing, and narrative inquiry. These methods allowed me to be deeply grounded in the research and build deep relationships with activists, as well as analyze my own positionality within my research.

In Chapter 4, I analyze constructs of sanctuary. I further interrogate the California Values Act and how it upholds the criminal immigrant binary. I begin by sharing and analyzing language in the California Values Act. I share data from interviews on how my research partners understand political versus personal sanctuary. I share themes that arose from this data. From the definitions of personal sanctuary, I define and introduce the concepts of short-term and long-term sanctuary and the ways these sanctuary practices act as interventions.

In Chapter 5, I explore auto-ethnographic data that highlights key locations of sanctuary practices as interventions. I analyze moments within these sites that speak to sanctuary as a practice within the Inland Empire. The California Values Act (SB54) was designed to make public spaces feel safe to the undocumented community; I examine how sanctuary is negotiated in these various places. Key spaces are the Riverside Board of Supervisor Meeting, temporary shelters created by the community for families recently released by ICE, and Adelanto Detention Facility. I situate each site within short-term and long-term sanctuary. These are spaces that offer or contradict ideas of sanctuary in the community.

In Chapter 6 and 7, I dive into the stories of two individuals who were detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility. Their stories exemplify how the empire-state stratifies and creates factions with immigrants experiencing detention. For both, I was one of the lead responders for their sanctuary teams. Chapter 6 will focus on the story of Goku, he was raised in the US and apprehended by ICE due to a DUI conviction. I will highlight the logics of the empire-state shaped his experience and necrosubjugation.

In Chapter 7, I focus on the story of Soli, who is an asylum seeker who was detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility. I unpack the ways criminalization and sanctuary impacted his case for asylum. I will also explore how discourses on belonging and sanctuary differed between Goku and Soli. Both stories demonstrate the nuances and exclusivity of Sanctuary. They also represent two key demographics of people held inside Adelanto Detention Facility: asylum seekers and people who were apprehended by ICE due to criminal convictions. Their stories are key in understanding the breadth and shortcomings of political sanctuary, as they are the people who are carved out. Their stories show the depth of the empire-state logic of domination. Their stories demonstrate places of dismantlement to create belonging.

In Chapter 8, I conclude by detailing a community art project's process of development and facilitation. I situate myself within the community-art project and in sanctuary. I explain how the community-art project is part of long-term sanctuary work. I close by naming the theoretical and methodological contributions my research offers to the field of anthropology, and the necessary direction for immigration studies in the US.

Drawing on these research data, I highlight the pervasiveness of the empire-state, and the various methods of stratification and creating exclusion. The strategies entail colonialism, coloniality, necrosubjugation, the criminal immigrant binary, and death worlds. The only resolution to overcoming this issue is coalitional work with prison abolitionists. This research can also serve as a model for fugitive anthropological research, and the ways community partners and researchers can collaborate on social justice. I discuss this point in greater detail in my conclusion. Finally, I hope my research

demonstrates the importance of scholars being political in their research design and fieldwork. Now is the time to step away from apolitical research.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORY ON THE EMPIRE-STATE, CITIZENSHIP, AND BELONGING**

Sanctuary as a practice should be thought of as an intervention. With that framing in mind, I want to recognize that an intervention is not a solution to a problem. An intervention is an action working to improve a situation. Therefore, the practice of sanctuary is not a resolution, but a stepping-stone. Often in public discourses of immigration, access to citizenship is depicted as a solution or a destination. In this chapter, I define the US empire-state. The US empire-state operates in colonial logics that create meanings of belonging and differentiation. I explore how citizenship and criminality contribute to social constructs of belonging. I then share research studies that highlight how citizenship and criminality are used to stratify populations through US immigration policies. I close in response to Fanon's reflections on the need to decolonize and introduce Naomi Paik's framework of an abolitionist sanctuary.

### **US Empire and Belonging**

Jung describes the US empire-state as a space encompassing different degrees of sovereignty. The varying degrees of sovereignty create stratified tiers of belonging and membership (2011: 3). The defining difference between an empire-state and nation-state is that a nation-state assumes "horizontal citizenship" (Jung 2011: 3). An empire-state

uses the two defining dimensions of colonialism: “the hierarchical differentiation of spaces and people” (2011: 2). Examples of stratified belonging and differing degrees of sovereignty in the US can be seen in the experiences of Indigenous peoples, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean to name a few.

The duality of colonialism, according to Jung, is reminiscent of Walter Mignolo’s framing of colonialism and coloniality. Mignolo names these attributes specifying colonialism as a location or site, whereas coloniality refers to a logic of domination (2005). In my research, I focus on the ways coloniality weaponizes racialization to stratify immigrants. Jung links the experiences of the colonized and racial subjugation within an empire-state when he states “racial domination of colonized peoples does not happen in isolation from that of noncolonized peoples, and vice versa. Though qualitatively different, they are intimately and intricately linked” (2011: 10). The empire-state links these experiences through white supremacy. The stratification of belonging is defined through white supremacy and the violence that enforces domination.

Achille Mbembe argues violence enforces social order, stratification, and subjugation. The empire-state uses violence to continue projects of both colonialism and coloniality. Achille Mbembe makes the argument: “Civil peace in the West thus depends in large part on inflicting violence far away, on lighting up centers of atrocities, and on the fiefdom wars and other massacres that accompany the establishment of strongholds and trading posts around the four corners of the planet” (2019: 19). Therefore, violence is a means of expanding territories and capital. Through acts of war, state policing, and legislation, violence and domination persevere.

Violence is also used to stratify populations. Fanon highlights the process of defining the colonized in asserting: “It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject” (1963: 2). The process of defining the colonized extends to other subjugated communities in the empire-state. The colonizer’s process of defining is the process of othering (Said 1978, Spivak 1988, Minh-ha 1989), which is critical to constructs of citizenship and belonging. Citizenship are tools of domination that serve the empire-state, presenting belonging as a possibility. On the relationship between colonialism, citizenship, and belonging, Tuck and Yang write: “We are referring to the colonial pathways that are usually described as ‘immigration’ and how the refugee/immigrant/migrant is invited to be a settler in some scenarios, given the appropriate investment in whiteness, or is made an illegal, criminal presence in other scenarios” (2012: 17). Belonging is never guaranteed, but there are ways to perform proximity whiteness and white supremacy that can lead to a false sense of inclusion. Citizenship is one way the empire-state presents belonging as a possibility, despite inclusivity being the anti-thesis of the empire-state. Citizenship operates with coloniality as a means of stratifying and dominating populations within the US empire-state.

Amy Brandzel claims citizenship as “aspirational” because the idea of citizenship is a normativizing project. Brandzel further explains citizenship as, “a project that regulates and disciplines the social body to produce model identities and hegemonic knowledge claims. Moreover, it is a violent exclusionary operation, one that relies upon and reproduces a multipronged, gatekeeping apparatus that works to create, retain, and imbue citizenship with meaning at the direct expense of the noncitizen” (2016, 5).

This framework of citizenship goes beyond citizenship relating to birth origin and encompasses the capacity at which an individual can engage and be protected by the empire-state. It determines which people, bodies, and identities are afforded inclusion and who will continually be excluded (Lorde 1984, Spivak 1988, Cacho 2014, Brandzel 2016, Perez 2012, Khabeer 2017, Diaz-Barriga & Dorsey 2020). Lisa Marie Cacho writes, “Value is ascribed through explicitly or implicitly disavowing relationships to the already devalued and disciplined categories of deviance and non-normativity” (2012, 148). In the US, then, value is ascribed to whiteness and heteronormativity (Brandzel 2016). Within the US empire-state, whiteness is inscribed with virtue. Citizenship within the context of immigration creates the expectation of the performance of the “good immigrant” in order to belong and be deemed “valuable,” but as mentioned, performance does not guarantee belonging. The institutionalization of the criminal immigrant within US immigration policies ensures exclusion. The US immigration policies embed immigrants in deviancy (Angel-Ajani 2005: 6, Cacho 2012). Deviancy and citizenship are seen as incommensurable. In the following section, I will highlight some of the ways the criminalization of immigrants is institutionalized within the US empire-state as part of the project of stratification that emphasizes disbelonging.

### ***Unpacking the Stratification of Immigrants within the US Empire-State***

In this section, I map out literature on the criminal immigrant and how it is situated within the US empire-state.

Global migration is a product of US empire-state actions. The US is complicit in the displacement of peoples and communities globally as part of the project of the empire-state. In the US empire-state, territories are considered disposable, exploited



toward the goal of building power and capital (Jung 2011: 2). In Latin America, the US has funded civil wars throughout Central America by providing military and economic aid (Quesada 2008, Quigley 2011, Wiltberger 2014). Trade agreements like the North American Free-Trade Act bankrupted small farms in Mexico and left many unemployed due to the US's underhanded strategy of selling corn far below any number local farmers could offer and afford (Chavez 1998, Chang 2000, Kingsolver 2001, Guarnaccia et al. 2005, De Leon 2016, Paik, 2020). So many people have been forced to migrate because of US involvement abroad, and when immigrants arrive to the US, the US takes no culpability or recognition of their role in their displacement. Therefore, immigrants enter a system of stratification defined by those that displaced them. The US portrays migration as an individual choice, ignoring their role in mobilizing globalization, capitalism, and colonization. The US empire-state has global influence in the stratification and displacement of people and their access to resources.

As people are displaced and migrate to the US, they enter the system of stratification largely as an expendable workforce. Migrants are exploited for their labor and treated as disposable (Chavez 1992, Chang 2000, Holmes 2013, Mata 2014). As invaluable as migrants are to US power and economy, they are denied belonging. Pathways to citizenship are limited, and even if citizenship is obtained this does not guarantee belonging. The criminalization of immigrants is one way that immigrants are denied belonging and access to citizenship.

The institutionalization of the criminal immigrant is found in legislation. As Naomi Paik argues, "Crime occurs when someone breaks the law. It is a product of the law, which means that it is a product of political choices made under specific historical

conditions” (2020: 13). These historical conditions are the building of the US empire-state. The criminalization of immigrants exists within a web of immigration-specific policies that incriminate immigrants and intertwines with the policing and incarceration of racial communities within the empire-state. There is no such thing as a homogenous immigrant experience. Black immigrants have to navigate anti-blackness on both sides of the US-Mexico border on top of navigating immigration policies (Angel-Ajani 2005). Indigenous people migrating to the US from Central America still experience discrimination from non-Indigenous Central Americans within their migratory experience (Addosi et al., 2018). Coloniality is messy in the ways it weaves and co-mingles stratification through citizenship, colonialism, and racial dominance. Immigration is nuanced and messy when we talk about belonging because there is no blanket experience for immigrants. Though the immigrant experience is nuanced due to ethnic, gender, indigeneity, and racial identities, here I will focus more broadly of the institutionalization of the immigrant as criminal, specifically how the stratification and exclusion of immigrants within the empire-state is manifested through immigration policies. This section will highlight the structures that enable violence against immigrants as a result of US empire-state agendas.

### **US Immigration Policies of Criminalization**

Within the US and globally, immigrants are viewed as people whom citizens must be protected from. The influx of immigrants at the US-Mexico border is treated as a state of emergency not because the people there need aid but because these people pose a supposed threat to public safety (Chavez 2008, Ticktin 2016). The framework of the immigrant as a threat creates systemic processes to enact violence against immigrants.

The continued criminalization of immigrants is one site where we see policies escalate in their forms of violence in the name of defending the US empire-state (Agamben & Atell 2005, Gonzales 2014).

In this section, I will highlight the frameworks of *legal civil war* and *necropolitics* as methods and logics of violence against immigrants in defense of the empire-state. In the second half, I cite immigration scholars who explore their research sites through the lens of empire-state violence.

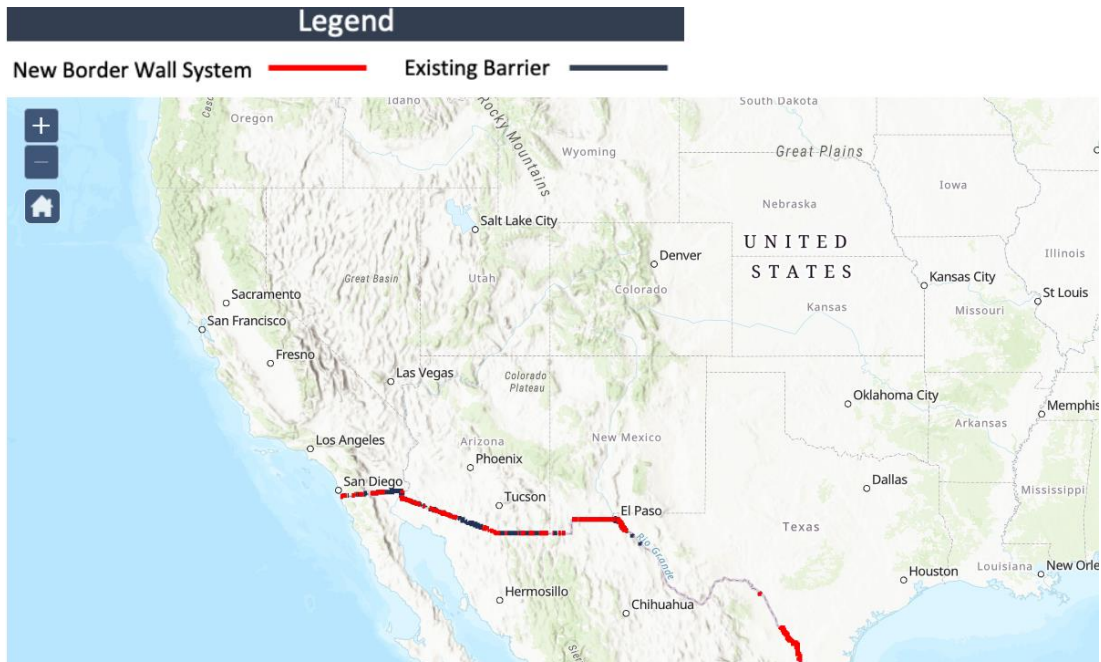
### *In Defense of the Empire*

Agamben identifies the legal civil war as a strategy of the empire-state to enact violence against immigrants. The legal civil war allows “for the physical elimination not only of the political adversaries but of the entire categories of the citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system” (2005: 2). The political adversary of the US empire-state is the subjugated, as they pose a threat to white supremacy. As Fanon has highlighted, “deep down the colonized subject acknowledges no authority. He is dominated but not domesticated” (1963: 16). The subjugated and colonized of the US empire-state will always pose a threat to empire. This is a site where policies become a landscape of enabling violence. With immigrants existing within systems of criminality and as a threat to the empire-state, the state creates discourses that permit violence against an imaginary threat. Leo Chavez expands on the idea of the “Latino threat” being grounded in the historical anti-immigrant agenda of the US. Chavez writes, “In their day, each discourse of threat targeted particular immigrant groups and their children. Each was pervasive and defined by “truths” about the threats posed by immigrants that, in hindsight, were unjustified or never materialized in the long run of history” (2013: 3).

I understand the US' anti-immigrant tactics and systems as an engagement of necropolitics, a "contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death" that create death worlds. (Membre 2003: 39-40). The US empire-state can only exist through the death of the other, the death of the other is sacrificial for continuing empire (Membre 2003). The survival of capitalism is an example of the way lives are sacrificed in fields (Chavez 1998, Zavella 2011, Holmes 2013) to preserve capital (Foucault 1978: 138). To defend the empire, the US builds walls, barriers, and escalates militarization to keep out the other, the immigrant, out. Immigrants are placed in detention without end, family separation is exercised, and concentration camps were re-established. Immigrants exist in the in-between space of life and death (Membre 2003). Gilberto Rosas defines this experience as necro-subjugation (2019: 305). In the following section I explore the in-between life and death space immigrants occupy at the US-Mexico border. I will highlight research on *Prevention Through Deterrence*, deportation, and death at the border.

## *Immigration Sites*

The US sanctioned an immigration policy known as Prevention Through Deterrence, which should be understood as an example of a legal civil war, as it is a means of eliminating the other through policy. The structure of the Prevention Through



*Figure.2.1: Map of Border Wall Construction (US Customs & Border Patrol 2021).*

Deterrence (PTD) was implemented in the 1990s under the Clinton administration. PTD deliberately funnels migrants through the Sonoran Desert, with the intent that the treacherous environment will deter migrants from crossing (De Leon 2012, 2015). The US side of Sonoran Desert spans across California and Arizona, with more deaths occurring in Arizona than California. PTD utilizes the environment to subject migrants to harsh conditions. To this point, no wall has existed in the Sonoran Desert, though there are plans, battles, and negotiations still occurring (Díaz-Barrigo and Dorsey 2020).

The strategy of deterrence is designed to deflect blame and accountability from the US and fault migrants for subjecting themselves to these harsh conditions which lead

to many hundreds to thousands of deaths annually. This policy is also an example of necropolitics, as the policy facilitates the deaths of immigrants to preserve empire. Dr. Wendy Brown argues that borders and walls become a site of intensified violence and increase criminal activity; they are militarized sites and symbols of nationalism (2010, McGuire 2013). On borders, Membe writes, “Borders are no longer sites to be crossed but lines that separate...Many are those encountering them now meet their ends or, when not simple victims of shipwrecks or electrocution, are deported” (2019: 3). The physical site of borders is a site of violence, where the power of empire is at full force.

Deportation is a strategy of stratification and exclusion; this is accomplished through targeted legislation to incriminate immigrants, another example of legal civil war. Criminality in itself is highly stigmatized in the US. In 1996, US Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, which streamlined the deportation process and expanded criminal offenses that would create a barrier in accessing citizenship (Chavez 2013: 8). We see the criminal immigrant framework in Operation Streamline. Operation Streamline is a “coordinated program of immigration enforcement and criminal prosecution that is characterized by *en masse* plea agreements for immigration offenders who have illegally entered the United States, a misdemeanor offense. Those with previous convictions of criminal offenses can be charged with illegal reentry, which is an aggravated felony if combined with other charges.” (Slack et al. 2015). Operation Streamline allows individuals to avoid serving jail time and instead be sent back “home,” but what is not disclosed to many is that by signing the paperwork they are relinquishing their ability to obtain citizenship. The blocking of pathways to citizenship is the empire-state exercising colonialism and coloniality. Deborah Boehm

explains that the act of deportation is “both ‘alienation’ as estrangement and a kind of ‘alienation’ through which one becomes legally categorized as such” (2016: 28). The act of deportation is a means of disrupting any sense of belonging and safety. The expansion of criminality within legislation is another way immigrants are stratified within the US empire-state.

The political and legislative elimination of immigrants is an example of necropolitics (Membre 2019). The US utilizes policies and environments that have murdered thousands of immigrants, with Prevention Through Deterrence serving as a prime example. Elimination can also be seen within detention facilities.

During the Trump Administration the immigration industrial complex was strengthened and expanded. Golash-Boza defines the immigrant industrial complex as the intersection of interests between public and private sectors that benefit from the incarceration of immigrants and the propagation of “illegal immigrant” rhetoric (2009). The two most prominent for-profit facilities overseeing immigrant incarceration are The GEO Group Inc. & CoreCivic. In 2016, for-profit facilities made up 81% of detention beds in the US under the Trump administration, and we have seen this number increase due to orders for expanding facilities and increasing detention quotas in for-profit contracts (Detention Watch Network 2016). These facilities maximize their income by increasing populations while decreasing per-person costs. Slack and Martinez further highlight the exploitive nature of for-profit detention facilities:

“Rather than merely deporting the surplus labor force in times of economic downturn, systematic criminalization and incarceration ensures excess undocumented labor is economically exploited to its full potential before being removed. Detention facilities have become sites of capital extraction beyond the surplus value of labor, ultimately extending to the commodification of the imprisoned body, especially in its extreme form with the exponential growth of

for-profit private prisons” (2015). Criminalizing immigrants is profitable for the empire-state’s economy and demonstrates the ways the US empire runs on exploitive labor. The cycle of undocumented labor, detention, and deportation creates a vulnerable and exploitable workforce. At all three stages, private and public entities are financially benefitting from the in-between space of immigrants (i.e., between life and death).

### **Colonial Wound and Abolitionist Sanctuary**

To go full circle, I want to bring back the idea of sanctuary as an intervention. In the construct of the empire-state, it is evident how pervasive the system is in its domination. To undo the US empire-state is to undo colonialism and coloniality. Fanon argues that decolonization “sets out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda of total disorder” (1963: 2). Though Fanon, in this statement, is critical of this framing of decolonization, I do not view it negatively. As the empire-state has defined the world as we know it, to decolonize is a process of reimagining the world. As Fanon highlights, decolonization is an encounter between antagonistic forces that “owe their singularity to the kind of reification secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation” (1963: 2). By stepping into the margins of empire and the colonial encounter, we stand at the cusp of possibilities, a space that is created and defined by those most vulnerable and serves as a site of healing.

Tihwai-Smith writes that the research process is “expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate” (2012: 130). The healing we are addressing is the colonial wound. Walter D. Mignolo defines the colonial wound as the “physical and/or psychological...consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciations of those who assign standards of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify” (2005:



8). The colonial wound comprises all those existing in the margins and those identities that stand in opposition to the US empire-state.

Naomi Paik identifies an abolitionist sanctuary as a decolonial intervention (2020:

5). An abolitionist sanctuary recognizes the intersection of immigration with mass incarceration and also sees the interlocking oppression of marginalized bodies and social movements. Working at these sites of intersections is a process of healing and mending, a site of hope.

I look back on the famous words of Audre Lorde, “For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.” By knowing and understanding the interlocking history produced by the empire-state, we can more clearly see the need for abolition.

In the following chapter I will introduce the praxis of fugitive anthropology, which is a form of research striving for abolition and decolonial futures. The process of a fugitive anthropological praxis is a response to disassembling empire and creating a site to imagine possible futures.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & ACTIVIST ENGAGED RESEARCH**

As a scholar, I engage in research that aligns in the pursuit of abolition.

Abolition of policing, incarceration, and structures of stratification, such as the empire-state. In terms of researching the sanctuary movement in the Inland Empire, this entailed a process of understanding the landscape of sanctuary practices. By identifying the structures of sanctuary, I was able to work alongside partners to identify places of growth.

For these reasons I engage in the praxis of fugitive anthropology. Maya Berry et al. describes *fugitive anthropology* as, “A rethinking of the contours of the political in co-creating spaces of liberation and transformation. Activist research that does not pursue

epistemological decolonization will, inevitably reproduce the very hierarchies of power that it seeks to help dismantle” (2014: 539). Fugitive anthropology asks scholars to be critical of all stages of knowledge production. Similarly, Linda Tihiwai Smith pushes scholarship to evaluate forms of disseminating knowledge, how are we bringing our research findings back to the community and sharing knowledge. Researchers must be intentional with their research process, a process striving toward decolonial futures (Hale 2006, Atalay 2012, Tihiwai-Smith 2012, Tuck & Yang 2012, Berry et al 2014).

The fugitive anthropologist is engaging in research that stands in opposition to colonial and elitist tradition of academia. Undoing this tradition, requires fugitive anthropologists to ask and reflect on the relationships between the scholar and the communities they work alongside. Fugitive anthropology is an intervention for feminist scholars of color to situate themselves in their research and partnerships. Practicing methods such as auto-ethnography is an exercise of accountability. Revisiting experiences and situating ourselves within research.

Fugitive anthropology is also invested in research as the peripheries. Research at the peripheries is an exploration of creating systems outside of the empire-state, or systems that combat it. Both the scholar and community partners are situated as fugitives. The collaboration provides space for dialogue and action. Within the context of my research, fugitive refers to the grassroots activist, volunteer, and directly impacted person. In the context of my research, directly impacted refers to a person who has been impacted by detention. Overall, fugitive anthropology pushes us to think of the long-term goal and purpose of academic pursuits. I identify fugitive anthropology as my ontological approach in my research methodology.

In this chapter I will map out my methodology. Walter and Anderson define methodology as “the theoretical lens or worldview through which research is understood, designed, and conducted” (2013:42). Walter and Anderson argue the key philosophical tenets of methodology are standpoint, epistemology (what I did), axiology (implications of the research), and ontology (research lens) (2013: 46). These tenets compose the research standpoint. As I started this chapter mapping the ontology of my research (fugitive anthropology), I will move forward exploring the other elements of research: standpoint, epistemology, then concluding with axiology.

I begin my sharing my standpoint, or situating myself, within my research. Situating myself is part of my epistemology, as I used the method of embodied writing throughout my dissertation. Though I have the sections organized as ontology, standpoint, epistemology, and axiology these concepts are interconnected. These elements help guide the structure of this chapter, they are not entirely rigid categories.

### **Standpoint: Making Sense of Being white Latina, First-Generation Daughter, and Activist**

A fugitive anthropological methodology requires that the scholar situate themselves within research. The practice of situating ourselves’ in experience is not limited to academia. In Latinx activist tradition this practice is known as *testimonio*. Testimonio is an “artistic form and methodology to create politicized understandings of identity and community” (Latina Feminist Group 2001). Testimonio serves as a tool of empowerment, a method to document silenced histories. Testimonio is a practice of telling counternarratives. Counternarratives have been used as tools to challenge master narratives (Corey 1998). With counternarratives, individuals become disruptions to

normative ideologies. Deriving from the testimonio tradition is the practice of embodied writing, the method I use throughout my research to situate myself.

Embodied writing brings the experience of the body into writing, the “geographies of selves” (Anzaldúa 2015: 69). The geography of the selves should be understood as, “our bodies interact with internal and external, real and virtual, past and present environments, people, and objects around us, we weave, and are woven into, our identities” (Anzaldúa 2015:69). Embodied writing is a reflection on myself and how my body navigates research and partnerships. Exploring power dynamics between myself and research partners and my body in different spaces, this is also known as “conceptualizing reality”. Ange Marie Hancock defines “conceptualizing reality” as a practice that recognizes that, “one is neither purely an oppressor nor purely oppressed” (Hancock 2016).

I am intentionally using “embodied writing” in-order to center the self in these spaces. I can speak to what I witnessed, and do not want to superimpose or assume experiences of people I did not interview. Often within academia, Critical Race Theory (CRT) methods are undermined as too subjective, lacking data, and too political (Duncan 2006). Solorzano and Yosso respond to this argument stating, “...it is crucial to focus on the intersections of oppression because storytelling is racialized, gendered, and classed, and these stories affect racialized, gendered, and classed communities” (2002). In utilizing embodied writing as a method, I am challenging power structures and dynamics. Archibald encourages an Indigenous philosophy of holism which refers to “the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical realms to form a whole healthy person” (2008:11).

As a scholar, I do not want to write myself out of the space, I am not a bystander. I want to acknowledge how fieldwork can be emotionally taxing. Researchers cannot shed or separate ourselves from the field, we come whole. In centering the body in storytelling, we can link our experiences to our bodies' visceral reactions. Our mind and body operate together, not separately. Soyini Madison writes about embodied writing as, "Here the words live under your tongue. Theory in this terrain is yours, it is all yours, because now you remember how it was given to you, sometimes with affection and sometimes forced down your throat with shouts or a switch. This theory makes body contact. Bodies that most often look like yours. You realize you are part of two locations and more: both sides of the wall and the in-betweens" (1999: 110). Embodied writing acknowledges the ways that hegemonic knowledge can feel unnatural to those who live on the margins. Embodied writing provides a means to reflect on the body, and to situate ourselves within/out theory.

As a white Latina scholar, I embody both the oppressor and oppressed. With that in mind, my social dynamics vary in different spaces and interactions, these power dynamics are not static (Berry et al. 2014). In the tradition of testimonio, I will situate myself within immigration, the Inland Empire, and academia.

### *My Genealogy*

My name is Cecilia Vasquez, and I am the first in my family to be born in the US. My parents and grandparents carry stories of migration. Some have been shared with me and others will be carried by my family members alone. My mami (mother), though she has been documented for over thirty years now, is still hyperaware of Border Patrol cars. Every time we drive to see my sister in San Diego, my mom looks and points out the

Border Patrol checkpoint nestled within the 15 freeway in Murrieta, California. When she first came to the US, she had to keep an eye out for Immigration and Natural Services (INS), ICE's predecessor, at bus stops on her way to high school. Her eyes are trained to spot them.

My family has faced adversity in the US, but in their home countries they were not the most vulnerable populations. In their homelands of Ecuador and Mexico, both my parents' families were arguably middle class. My papi's (father) family owned a large ranch that my bisabuelo (great grandfather) was able to purchase through his work in the Bracero Program. On my mami's side, everyone attended private school, and her grandmother was the first to receive a college degree as a seamstress. They both had cultural and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). All this capital they were able to carry with them, to a degree, to the US, and these forms of capital offered pathways to improve their economic capital in the States.

It's a fallacy to imagine that all immigrants are building their lives from the same place, because, as my family demonstrates, that is not always the case. Some have tools they bring with them, like education, mannerisms, and cultural capital that serves them well in making the socioeconomic jump to middle class quicker. I do not think my family is miraculous for being able to make this jump from my abuelitos' (grandparents) generation to my parents.

In academia, I am constantly asked what adversities I faced getting to a PhD program. People hear that my parents are immigrants, and they impose stereotypes upon me. My papi did not work two jobs, my mami was not a seamstress. My papi is a systems engineer and my mami has worked in different sectors of social service. Getting a

Bachelor's degree was expected, getting a Master's was desirable. When people hear I am first-generation and Latina in graduate school, they see someone who beat the odds, but the truth is there weren't as many obstacles in my way compared to others with the same label of "first-generation."

I am a privileged individual due to my proximity to whiteness, meaning that the color of my skin provides me privileges that my darker-skinned relatives and community do not receive. In conducting my research in the Inland Empire with undocumented immigrants, I came in aware of how I would be received. I grew up there. I knew my recognition as Latina would vary from person to person. Sometimes I am immediately recognized as Latina, other times as "ethnically ambiguous." Growing up I was constantly told, "You don't look Mexican, but you don't quite look white. What are you?"

The immigrant community I work alongside I view as a diasporic community in relationship to myself. I have not lived their experiences, but I was raised with the social and cultural contexts that allow understanding. With many partners, we share cultural community grounded in Mexican heritage. The cultural community granted community access but did not guarantee it. My gender and age were at times barriers. Patricia Zavella reinforces this notion in her article "Feminist Insider Dilemmas" writing, "Moreover, without 'marking' the social location of the ethnographer and informants—their status based on class, race, ethnicity, sexual preferences, or other relevant attributes—we cannot judge whether and how the ethnographer indeed has more power and privilege than those being researched" (Zavella 1993). At different times my age put me in the position of



student. My age and gender also designated me as someone who needed to be protected from painful stories of migration, exposed only to those with a “happy ending.”

My age and gender were also policed anytime I went to Adelanto Detention Facility. What was deemed appropriate for me to wear varied. My white blouse was an issue to male guards telling me the shirt was revealing and inappropriate; I could feel their eyes looking through me. I noticed female guards said nothing on other occasions. My shirt was within the dress code guidelines of the facilities but was read differently by different people. I am never fully insider or outsider. As Berry et al. put it, “the field travels with and within our bodies” (2017: 540).

#### *Accomplice Scholar*

Though I culturally identify and exist within a diaspora with many of the people I work alongside, I do not view myself existing in the same experience as them. I situate myself within activist scholarship, a tenet of fugitive anthropology. Charles Hale defines activist scholarship as a “political alignment with an organized group of people in struggle and allows dialogue with them to shape each phase of the process, from conception of the research topic to data collection to verification and dissemination of the results” (2006: 97). My activism is shaped by the practice of being an accomplice. Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz defines being an accomplice as:

“The invitation to complicity, rather than allyship, asks us to acknowledge that what distinguishes legality from illegality, innocence from criminality, is a matter of power. Laws are policy decisions made by people in power; they are not neutral moral decrees, much less instruments of radical liberation” (2018: 36).

In my research, I am an accomplice to Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity. Alongside this grassroots organization, I organized protests and vigils and co-facilitated

trainings in supporting people detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility. I also personally supported people living in detention. I am emotionally invested in the work because of my diasporic connection to immigration. I care because immigrants are constantly denied human rights and continue to be exploited and treated as disposable.

The methods I utilized in my research are a product of my life experiences and politics. I am a Latina, first-generation immigrant daughter, and I am an activist. Making my research community-based is a reflection of my own positionality as a white Latina and accomplice scholar. Working collaboratively allows me to learn from those experiences that are different from my own. Together, we can use our life experiences to create social change.

In the following section, I lay out my research epistemology. I discuss the methods of functioning-participation, community-based projects, and semi-structured interviews.

### **Epistemology: Research Methods of Collaboration**

The question my research asks is “How is Sanctuary practiced and implemented in the Inland Empire”. In answering this question, I utilized methods such as: functioning participation, community-based project, and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis methods I utilize are the already introduced embodied writing, critical discourse analysis, and narrative inquiry. In this section, I outline the method and its contributions to answering my research question. I situate the methods within the process of fugitive anthropology.

### *Functioning Participation*

In working alongside community partners, I operated as a *functioning participant*. A functioning participant acts as a tool and resource in their fieldwork rather than an observer (Zinn 1979). Functioning participation weaves being an accomplice into research versus an ally who is participating, thereby centering action in the research compared to observing from a distance (Ryder 2021). In line with fugitive anthropology, activist research pushes scholars to contextualize ourselves within our fieldwork and the impact of research objectives. By commencing my research as a functioning participant, I had the opportunity to listen and follow the lead of my research partners, always remaining cognizant of myself in various spaces. This framing and method of functioning participation provided space to receive firsthand understanding of sanctuary practices in the Inland Empire.

As a functioning participant I worked closely with Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI), a grassroots organization. IM4HI is a statewide faith-rooted organization that addresses the intersection of mass incarceration and immigration. Their long-term goal is the abolition of both systems. Though the organization already had a history of being reputable and had earned community trust, I still had to demonstrate this commitment to partners. Community-based organizational partners can benefit research, as they have knowledge of community needs (Atalay 2012: 113). Functioning participation assisted in demonstrating this to community partners, and to this day I still continue to work with these partners. In building this relationship, we were able to develop a reciprocal relationship.

In working with IM4HI, I took fieldnotes on the various experiences I had working with this organization. The only exception were fieldnotes from my visitations with the men inside Adelanto Detention Facility, due to IRB. I will discuss IRB protocol at the end of this chapter. In the Inland Empire, the primary issue was immigrant detention. Most of the organizing efforts were directed toward shutting down the facility, increasing releases, and holding law enforcement and politicians accountable.

As a functioning participant, I engaged in both advocacy and sanctuary practices alongside IM4HI. Sanctuary practices took the form of finding housing for individuals released from detention, training congregations on accompanying people in detention and post-release, and leadership training for recently released people. This work brought me inside Adelanto Detention Facility often. I regularly drove the 45-minute trip to the High Desert region where Adelanto Detention Facility is located; upon arrival, I would wait anywhere between one to three hours to visit individuals I was accompanying. I would advocate for their release by speaking with the consulate on their behalf or by writing letters speaking to their character for court hearings. I would attend their court hearings to demonstrate to judges that these individuals had a community behind them. IRB permitted me to take field notes on the court cases, as these spaces are open to the public.

In advocacy, I assisted in organizing when asked to. I helped organize vigils in front of Adelanto Detention Facility and co-organized a conference for students at the Claremont Colleges. As a functioning participant, I was able to help build capacity for the work. Considering Hilda is a one-person team servicing this vast region, she relies

heavily on volunteers to help get the job done. Being able to partner with Hilda helped alleviate some of the stressors of her work; she expressed this sentiment on multiple occasions. Even as a two-person team, the work was immense and overwhelming. As a functioning participant, I was able to immerse myself into the work that provided insight into the struggles of organizing.

Building this level of investment in the work is a priority in activist engaged research. Researchers should work to make an impact where we can. Research is personal, and I do not view this as a hindrance. Being able to create authentic relationships with community partners and mobilize the movement is an asset. It could be argued that I could have come to the same research conclusions without being as immersive, but from an ethical standpoint, I do not believe our communities can afford for researchers to engage in research that is extractive. This is what it means to be an accomplice in research, to lay ourselves on the line alongside partners (Gomber-Muñoz 2018).

Functioning participation was the first step in my fieldwork. Community projects and interviews came toward the end of my research. I wanted to make sure the interview questions and projects were well informed and thoughtful. The questions needed to be meaningful beyond my own research endeavors. In several cases my experience as a functioning participant led me to develop new research questions. For example, one question that I added to interviews based on what I learned and experienced through fieldwork was about activist burnout. One of the women I worked alongside at the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice had passed away due to health complications related to stress. She was in her thirties. A few months before she passed

away, we had a conversation about her struggle with burnout. She expressed the conflicting experience of being exhausted from working around the clock, but also feeling the urgency to keep working at this pace due to community needs. The idea of rest came with heavy guilt, but she also felt pride for everything she had been able to accomplish in serving the community. She posed the question so many of us ask ourselves: “If I don’t do it, who will?” From her passing, I found it important to ask how activists are caring for themselves and managing the stress of work, adding the layer that many of the lead activists in the region are DACA recipients (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) who also come from mixed-status households. By working alongside the organizers, I experienced the overwhelming stress of the labor, but recognized the different stakes in immigrant justice advocacy.

Toward the end of fieldwork, I developed a community-based project alongside community partners. What I mean by a community-based project is a space where we (myself and research partners) could respond to research findings. In my research, this entailed a community art class series that bridged understanding between different generations of immigration. This community project became its own sanctuary practice. Carrying these out at the end of my fieldwork provided me with time to think through the process of the projects. It took time to develop trust and understanding of community needs, both essential aspects of community-based work (Behrman 2011, Atalay 2012, Osterweil 2013, Ryder 2021). We wanted to develop a project that worked toward long-term commitments and did not create a situation in which I was the linchpin for its continuation (Atalay 2012: 142). Taking this time allowed space to identify appropriate partners and projects to take on.

In the following section, I will share the process of the developing the community-based project, followed by my protocol for semi-structured interviews.

### *Community-Based Project*

In my fieldwork I helped facilitate a community-art project. This project was part of my initial project design and was kept due to IM4HI's interest in creating a program like this for some time. I emphasize the point of the interest in the project being mutual because part of community-based research is centering community goals and interest (Appadurai 2006, Alcalde 2007, Atalay 2012: 59, Hale 2012, Tihiwai-Smith 2012, Berry et al. 2014). There were also changes I had to make to the structure of the fieldwork. In the following section, I will share how these projects were structured and respond to research questions. I will also share challenges I faced in the field regarding methods and research structure.

This was a project I had hoped to make happen from the early stages of my research. As an artist myself, I have appreciation and deep understanding on the ways that art speaks to experience in generative ways. Elena, IM4HI regional organizer, was very excited about this project, as she had been longing to create an artistic space for immigrant women in the Inland Empire. From Elena's years of organizing, she witnessed the struggles immigrants in the Inland Empire (documented and undocumented) experience in sharing their stories. In the Latinx community, especially in older generations, we are not supposed to speak of the hardships (Anzaldúa 2012: 75). From my own familial experiences, I see this prevalent in my Abuelito's (grandfather's) generation. My co-facilitators for the art project were Elena and Maria.

We also partnered with another community-based organization, Uncommon Good, to organize this community art project.

The idea of a community-art project came from the community partners who use art in their activism. Art and Chicana activism are entwined. Historically, Chicana artists are not only called to produce art for the community, but with the community (Jackson 2009, Anzaldúa 2015). Combining art with narrative is important because with narrative is the possibility to explore and reflect on changing notions of identity, politics, and community (Rosaldo 1993). Through two in person strategizing meetings with co-facilitators we developed the community project. In these meetings we identified the “purpose, outcome, and process”, also known as the POP model (Gass 2013.) This method is used by IM4HI to identify clear and measurable goals for projects the organization takes on. We elected to use poetry as a means of exploring migration stories, for four reasons. One reason was cultural as *testimonio* is seen across Latin America, meaning there was cultural familiarity. The second reason is that poetry is a more succinct form of storytelling and communicating experience. The third was time constraints, we felt a poem would be completed within the allotted time we had. Finally, Maria (co-facilitator) is a poet who has had work published in both English and Spanish and a Spanish literature instructor at local community colleges in the region. We had the time, tools, and resources to offer this project to the community.

We worked with 30 Latinas, ranging from age 30-60. They are mothers and grandmothers, who had a longing to write. We met every Friday for 10 weeks for two hours, where we explored various formats of poetry. I worked alongside Elena and Maria in leading and organizing the class. Being 26 years old at the time, these women



are elders, this was a space where proximity was negotiated (Zavella 1993). For many, I resembled their children due to my upbringing in the US and life experience. As they are elders, it was my place to listen versus respond. So I listened, and Maria led.

The writing was focused on stories related to migration and living in the US. We left it open for several reasons. For my own research it provides space to gain further ethnographic insight to community experiences. For Elena, it helped women own their stories and feel empowered by their experiences. Processing the journey in a space with other women, reinforced community, and shared experience. As rich as the data might have been had I structured the program to solely address my research interests and questions, it would not have created as welcoming or felt as safe. It takes time to build trust and rapport. Instead, we let the women set the pace and guide interest.

Even with this structure and the women having the choice to tell their stories, the women struggled with tending to their wounds from migration. The co-facilitators and I met and decided to introduce *hojalata*, as an alternative art form for days they did not want to write. *Hojalata* is an artform that uses tin foil as the medium of creating art. In this art style you can use a pen or a blending stump, like my Abuelita (grandmother) did, to carve into the tin to create indents. This art style was popularized in Mexico due to the availability and accessibility of tin foil.

The women who found turmoil in storytelling were combatting memories and a culture of silence. In Latinx cultural circles, especially older generations, women are taught to stay quiet. Anzaldua shares sayings like “En boca cerrada no entran moscas/flyes don’t enter a closed mouth” to illustrate the cultural value (Morruga & Anzaldua 2015: 76). There is a long list of insults toward women who talk too much

across various Spanish speaking cultures such as: *chismosa* (gossiper), *hocicona* (big mouth), *chillona* (crybaby), and *metiche* (nosy). Hojalata provided the women the space to choose when they wanted to write or talk about their stories. As Anzaldua explains art and writing as, “Words are blades of grass pushing past the obstacles, sprouting on the page; the spirit of the words moving in the body is as concrete as flesh and as palpable” (Anzaldua 2012: 93). Writing and creation are landscapes of ourselves, the act of writing trauma is physically taxing on the body. Despite the experience being taxing, this is something the women wanted to explore. Everyone just operated at a different pace and hojalata allows that.

At the conclusion of the project, we printed their poetry, and each woman received a book with everyone’s collective work. On the day of the book release, we threw a party where the women who wanted to read their poetry could perform their work. In their presentation you could see the pain but also a pride and strength. The women’s community-based art project provided insight into one of the ways we can create sanctuary spaces in our communities. I will address this later in the dissertation.

Carolyn Nordstrom posed a reflection to ethnographic scholars working with partners living with trauma: “To ‘not ask’ can imply that acknowledging the pain, the unjustness, is worse than living it” (2004: 242). I first read Nordstrom’s “Tomorrow of Violence” chapter in graduate school, and this line had a lasting impression on me. It is an question of ethics and accountability of the researcher working in sites of trauma. As anthropologists and ethnographers, uplifting stories and raising awareness is important work. As was seen in the community-based art project, immigrant women were able to combat a culture of silence and share their stories. Cordis calls on a retelling of these

histories as a part of working toward collective liberation: “By attending to the body and spatial orderings in relations to the land, we may discover new horizons of possibilities that do not equate with settler logics and relationality, such that seemingly disparate experiences of subjection can be brought into dialogue to inform a new political ontology” (2011: 10). Sharing stories and retelling becomes critical as we move toward coalition and liberation; the need to see the intersections, bonds, and parallels between those subjugated by US empire-state is paramount. I also hold that as researchers we must strive to do more in supporting our research partners.

### *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Toward the end of my fieldwork, I began conducting semi-structured interviews. The people I interviewed are key activists who were a part of developing the immigrant rights activist culture in the Inland Empire. I interviewed activists and volunteers that shaped and organized the regional sanctuary practices. I interviewed one of the students who conducted her own fieldwork, under my supervision, for an undergraduate course at the Claremont Colleges. I interviewed one of the active faith leaders in the region. I also interviewed two men who were detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility, who I worked closely with post-release. I was able to interview one of the men who was released from Adelanto over Zoom and recorded the meeting. I received verbal permission from the other to share his story based on the field notes I had collected from court hearings and informal phone conversations held for clarification purposes. All interviews lasted between 60-90 minutes. My IRB agreement permits me to ascertain verbal consent with vulnerable populations. In my research, vulnerable refers to undocumented immigrants.

The interview questions were predetermined. My interview protocol was semi-structured and separated into three sections. The first section of questions is a biographical sketch of the individuals, seeking to understand their perceived relation to the region and immigration. I asked questions about how they understood their role in the immigration social movement. I asked clarifying questions about how they identified within the movement: “activist, organizer, or ally,” which was a hot topic of debate I had learned in my fieldwork. From my research, I found these words carry different meanings, and it provided deeper insight into the ways the individuals view themselves in relationship to the work in the region. I also asked a question about how other facets of their identity that may have not been named inform their work in the region.

The second section of the protocol moved into meanings of sanctuary. I asked individuals to name their personal definitions and political understandings of sanctuary. I asked everyone to discuss the discrepancies between the two. This section also addressed policing of immigrant communities in the Inland Empire. The activists are well positioned to address this question as they are first responders; they are who the community reaches out to in these circumstances. For those directly impacted, this spoke to their personal experiences with these ideologies.

The final section varied depending on if individuals were undocumented or activists. Though some of the activists are DACA recipients, the questions for the undocumented population were reserved for those who lived in detention. This specification came later once I had been working in the field and understood the different ways the community structures sanctuary practices.

For those that lived in detention, the questions were focused on frameworks of safety, as this is the primary purpose of the California Values Act: to maintain community trust and safety. For those in the movement, the questions focused on comparing the immigration landscape from the Obama administration to Trump administration. In public discourse, Trump was treated as an anomaly, and interviewing activists who worked in both eras helped clarify the differences and similarities between the previous and current administrations at the time.

In closing the protocol, I offered space for the interviewee to share information they felt was pertinent to what I was researching and make closing statements. These interviews allowed me to acquire biographical data on the region but also examine the relationship between meaning and practice, as well as the meaning of activism, sanctuary, and end goals. I was able to hear in their words the way community needs are addressed, and I have fieldnotes that complement these statements.

I was only able to interview men who were detained, because this was the population that IM4HI was working with at the time. Our organizing on the inside of the facility is reliant on people referring and recommending us to others on the inside. Since the facility separates people by gender, it presented a challenge in connecting with people across genders inside the facility.

In total I interviewed 10 individuals, nine formal and one informal. Ten interviews felt sufficient for my research, as I was able to interview the key organizers shaping sanctuary practices of the region. These organizers operated the shelters, coordinated visitations for volunteers, and organized the vigils and protests surrounding Adelanto Detention Facility. Many of the organizers were also DACA recipients or at

one point undocumented, therefore these interviews would speak to the experience of living undocumented in the region. At the time of my research, there was no one else to interview in reference to organizers.

Many volunteers had varying schedules that made it difficult to schedule a time to meet, and a lot of the volunteers were inconsistent in their meeting attendance. This inconsistency made it difficult to track them down. I therefore interviewed some of the more active volunteers. I also want to highlight many of the activists themselves also engaged in similar work as the volunteers, so this created an overlap between the categories.

Finally, for those who experienced detention, I only wanted to interview people I had a personal relationship with. It would otherwise feel extractive to interview strangers on their experience of detention. I was unable to interview everyone I accompanied due to loss of contact due to deportation or leaving the Inland Empire region. As a result of all these reasons, I interviewed in total 10 people. Below is a chart of the participant, their titles, and pseudonyms for reference.

**Figure 3.1**

<b>Participant Number</b>	<b>Role</b> organizer, volunteer, directly impacted	<b>Pseudonym</b>
P-01	Organizer	Maria
P-02	Organizer	Elena
P-03	Organizer	Francisco
P-04	Volunteer	Rose

P-05	Organizer	Hugo
P-06	Organizer	Miguel
P-07	Directly Impacted	Soli
P-08	Volunteer	Jordan
P-09	Volunteer	Tilly
P-10	Directly Impacted	Goku

I did not interview politicians and law enforcement, because this did not align with the fugitive anthropology ontology. Law enforcement and politicians are actors of the empire-state, and from newspaper articles and media interviews their political stances are clearly anti-immigrant. Working with these groups could have jeopardized the safety of my research partners. Though I did not interview politicians, I did attend meetings with politicians and have field notes on those encounters that capture the ways even pro-immigrant politicians of the region position themselves.

*Data Analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis, Embodied Writing, and Narrative Inquiry*

In analyzing the data collected from functioning participation, the community-based project, and interviews; I utilize the analysis methods of critical discourse analysis, embodied writing, and narrative inquiry.

In order to analyze data on SB 54 language; I utilize critical discourse analysis (CDA) as outlined as Norman Fairclough. CDA highlights the ways that language contributes to the domination of some people over others (Fairclough 2015). Via CDA, I will analyze: 1) the parameters of jurisdiction of power over the undocumented community, (2) the word choices and ways undocumented is defined (illegal & alien

versus undocumented), 3) the ways criminality is framed (Fairclough 2015). Critical discourse analysis is a means of mapping the power of language, and with this method of analysis I am able to identify the power dynamics within the California Values Act.

Throughout my dissertation, I will weave embodied writing to talk about myself in relationship to space. Earlier in the chapter I discussed the important of situating researchers in relationship to research. Throughout this dissertation, I continue to situate myself in relationship to people, moments, and spaces. In Chapter 5, I use embodied writing to explore three key sites of sanctuary. These are important sites and moments that reflect the sanctuary practices of the region. They shed light on the tensions and negotiations of community-built sanctuary. These sites of sanctuary within short-term and long-term sanctuary. I also explore their relationship with the empire-state. In Chapter 6, 7, and 8, I use embodied writing to share ethnographic data and reflect on my relationships to Goku, Soli, and the people involved in the community-based project. Through embodied writing, I situate myself and experiences conducting research.

Finally in analyzing interview data and stories I utilize the method of narrative inquiry, which centers the lived experience as theory. Where embodied writing centers my experience, narrative inquiry centers the stories of others. With interview data, I strive to center and bring the individual's voice to the forefront. I utilize narrative inquiry; to engage in storytelling for those who asked me to uplift their experiences. In understanding their experience, I practice a *three-dimensional inquiry space* which is, "along temporal dimensions, personal-social dimensions, and with place" (Clandinin & Connelly: 129). The three-dimensional approach provides a sense of landscape and



negotiations taking place. The negotiations are between individuals, social structures, and situating ourselves. I use narrative inquiry in telling the stories of Soli and Goku in Chapters 7 and 8. Narrative inquiry allows me to explore their relationships to their experiences navigating the US immigration system and to the empire-state.

In designing my epistemology there were negotiations and ethical questions I needed to ask myself. In the following section I share the ethical questions I faced in research design.

### **IRB and Negotiations in Research**

In designing my IRB protocol, there were ethical questions that arose regarding how I wanted to proceed with my research. There were concessions and refusals I had to make, and in this section, I reflect on the ways IRB helped shape my research. In this section, I discuss the ways I negotiated research plans based on IRB guidelines.

Initially, when I designed my research, I was planning on interviewing politicians and law enforcement. In my IRB protocol I had set out to interview 25 individuals; this group of people were broken down to categories of activists, undocumented (directly impacted by sanctuary policies), law enforcement, and politicians. At the time my research was going to examine how law enforcement adapted the California Values Act into their manuals and practices and compare this to the lived experiences of undocumented people in the region. After conducting my preliminary fieldwork, I changed my scope to explore how the community was creating sanctuary practices versus understanding the state's implementation. This shift occurred because my method of functioning-participation found that the state's sanctuary legislation had little impact on the community. There were many news articles, media

interviews, research (Mancina 2019), and reports (Asian American Law Caucus 2019) that highlighted how law enforcement and politicians did little to alter the anti-immigrant climate in the Inland Empire. My preliminary research found that the community was building the sanctuary infrastructure for the community outside the scope of the California Values Act.

I also had to define and negotiate undocumented experiences. My research led me to highlight the experiences of people who were detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility, people who would not “benefit” from the California Values Act. I refer to this group as “directly impacted by detention.” Having such a specific scope presented research limitations. First, I only wanted to interview individuals that I had personally accompanied in sanctuary practices. I did this because I did not want to have a solely extractive relationship with this population. The primary focus of the relationship was organizing for and connecting these individuals to the necessary resources for release. I did not want to step into individuals’ lives post-release, ask them to process their traumatic experience, then simply leave. As a functioning participant that had been accompanying them, I supported detained individuals during their time in Adelanto and supported their post-release work as well. Having a relationship prior to the interview allowed me to have background on their experience, so I had a better sense of the questions to ask individuals. This was a practice of reciprocity and assured my research structure benefited research partners (Tihwai-Smith 2012).

Secondly, IRB constrained me from interviewing people while they were still detained inside Adelanto Detention Facility. This is because they are categorized as a prisoner population, and as they are under the jurisdiction of Immigration Customs and

Enforcement, this would require me to gain permission for interviews from the detention facility directly. As I was concerned with the possibility of retaliation against individuals I interviewed, flagging myself as a researcher in the space, and having interviews used against individuals in their immigration court hearings, I felt it was best for the safety of the individuals, and my own, to not go this route. IRB did permit me to write about my experience within the facility, what I saw, and document immigration court proceedings, as this is a public space. This process presented challenges, because there were people I accompanied that I was unable to follow up with due to deportation, or because they had left the Inland Empire and were no longer accessible.

I also was not always able to get contact information from people post-release, because visitors are unable to bring anything with them. I could not bring my phone, purse, pencil, paper, or anything on my body. I was searched and scanned prior to moving into the visitation space. There were even guidelines on dress code, where I was not allowed to wear sandals or shirts that might appear transparent; shoulders had to be covered, and clothing had to fall below the knee. I also want to highlight that Adelanto is in the middle of the high desert, where in the summer the average outside temperature easily surpasses 100 degrees. If I wanted to get an email address or phone number, myself or the person I was visiting had to ask the permission of the guard on duty during visitation, and it was at the guard's discretion whether they would allow us to exchange this information. The guard also had to be the one to write down the information. All of this made it challenging to stay connected post-release, and highlights the ways that detention facilities are, by design, meant to keep people on the inside isolated and alone.

Though the number of interviewed individuals “directly impacted” by detention number is low, I also want to shed light on the fact that many of the activists I worked with are directly impacted by sanctuary policies themselves. As previously mentioned, three of the activists interviewed were DACA recipients at the time of fieldwork. The anti-immigrant policies and practices in the community also threatened their sense of safety and security. Overall, the ten people interviewed provide a snapshot and cross-section of the people involved in the sanctuary work in the Inland Empire.

These are just some of the challenges and negotiations I had to make in conducting my research. In the future, I hope to interview more women who have been impacted by detention and find better ways to stay connected to individuals post-release.

### **Axiology: Implications of Sanctuary Research**

As scholars, we must interrogate systems of power, extending this practice to the examination of the benefactors of research (Haraway 1988, Hale 2001, Hale 2008, Berry et al 2014,). Academic pursuit cannot be the end goal of the work we produce. As researchers, we should be thinking about how our research impacts our partners; specifically, in the context of this research, we must consider the ways scholars can use their access to resources, privilege, and research methods to mobilize an abolitionist sanctuary and decolonial future.

In developing my research, I strived to create research that served the needs of my community partners. I had informal conversations early on with organizers and people living in detention on what I could do for them with my research. The organizers hoped the research would bring more attention to the Inland Empire. This region is

understudied and underfunded, and they believed having research to cite when applying for grants or when speaking to politicians would be helpful.

The people I supported living in detention wanted to bring attention to the injustices occurring inside Adelanto Detention Facility. They wanted their frustration of the US immigration system to be heard. For them, I share the stories of two men I accompanied to shed light on the barriers and hoops immigrants are forced to navigate in their fight to stay in the US.

Part of the research design also included a community-based art project designed to respond to issues we (myself and community partners) encountered in the field. The community-based project was an exercise in building community structures of support. IM4HI had been wanting to organize a community art project, and by collaborating, I was able to use my research funds to fund the project. This first run of the program allowed us to understand the costs of such a project, so that IM4HI could budget for the project in the future. This is a practical way scholars can support community development. In 2021, two years later, the community art project continues. IM4HI and Uncommon Good continue to work together to offer immigrant mothers the opportunity to create art exploring their personal experiences and have important dialogues on the state of immigration today.

Overall, this research design explores community resiliency within the issue of immigration and the possibilities of community building between scholars and grassroots organizations. This research demonstrates the possibilities of a fugitive anthropological practice.

## **CHAPTER 4: SANCTUARY FOR WHOM: DATA ON THE CALIFORNIA VALUES ACT AND SANCTUARY PRACTICES**

I returned home to the Inland Empire in April 2018 to engage in community-based research. I felt so awkward. In writing a grant or prospectus, it feels easy to write yourself into your home community, demonstrating a tethering to a place for your audience. Saying I was returning home to “work with my community” on a personal level felt strange, because I had not permanently lived in the Inland Empire for over five years. I had been away since undergraduate school and most of my adult life. My mami and I would get into arguments about the word “home.” While I was away, I would refer to where I lived as “home,” and she would correct me by saying, “home is wherever I am.” To my mami, home is not tied as much to a physical space but to people. This line of thinking left me feeling unsettled. I questioned my own belonging and relationship to the

Inland Empire. These complex feelings felt like I had to prove my belonging and dedication, that this research was more than just a steppingstone in my career. I felt this pressure both while wrestling with imposter syndrome in the academic sphere and while proving my dedication to activists. As I was researching belonging within the Sanctuary Movement in the Inland Empire, I was navigating my own sense of belonging.

In designing the research and starting my fieldwork, I was unsure what I was going to find, experience, or do. Like any good anthropologist, I kept myself open and ready for whatever would come my way. I did not know what sanctuary was going to look like or what organizers were doing. I also questioned what my role in the work would look like. Early on, I situated myself as an accomplice in this work. My sense of duty for immigrant justice stems from the previous generations of my family, all of whom are now documented. My passion for the work stems from historical memory and a passion for social justice. Today, I still identify myself as an accomplice in this work. I still am working toward situating and embracing myself in this social movement. I am using my privileges and resources to help mobilize a movement. I am not a leader, but a partner listening to the needs and direction of those most directly impacted by immigration policies.

As an accomplice wanting to use my resources and privileges of being a scholar to benefit my diasporic immigrant and Inland Empire community, I wanted to understand the implications of the California Values Act in the Inland Empire. I desired to know if organizers, activists, and undocumented populations felt shifts in strategies used against immigrants in the region. I wanted to understand their ideas of sanctuary in the political

and personal spheres. I was interested in seeing how discourses and constructions of belonging presented themselves.

In this chapter, I focus on two forms of data: my analysis of the California Values Act and interviews with 10 people who identify as organizers, volunteers, and directly impacted. I share background and data analysis of the California Value Act. I then share data from interviews on political and personal experiences and definitions of sanctuary. By weaving these interviews together, I derived my definitions of short-term and long-term sanctuary. A short-term sanctuary is grounded in what is practiced, whereas a long-term sanctuary speaks to future aspirations of what it could be. In closing, my research falls in line with my mami's theory that people tie us to spaces rather than the opposite. Sanctuary exists in the actions of people and is not guaranteed spatially.

### **Data: Political versus Personal Sanctuary**

The leading research question of this dissertation is, "*How is sanctuary implemented and practiced in the Inland Empire?*" This dissertation wrestles with the relationship between the political and personal. The goal of the organizing was to create inclusivity for all immigrants. The "all" is contentious in a society where "immigrant" is synonymous with "outsider." There are many words used to strip humanity from immigrants: alien, criminal, public threat. In my fieldwork, the criminalization of immigrants was the most prominent discourse of exclusion. This discourse is pervasive in policies, including the California Values Act (SB54) but is even applied when determining aid. As Miriam Ticktin has highlighted, US "humanitarian" policies in aiding immigrants and refugees create a scale of worth on human value and life (2016).



The Inland Empire does not have endless resources to aid every immigrant, and so there are negotiations that have to be made. In investigating meanings of sanctuary, we see how the policy is limiting, the ideals grand, and how somewhere in-between the practice of sanctuary exists.

### **Politics and the California Values Act**

In this section, I will focus primarily on two aspects: California Values Act (SB54) and interview data. I utilize Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in understanding data on SB54, interview transcripts, and embodied writing to share and analyze data from my fieldwork that focus on sanctuary sites. Via CDA, I will analyze: 1) the parameters of jurisdiction of power over the undocumented community, (2) the word choices and ways undocumented is defined (illegal & alien versus undocumented), and 3) the ways criminality is framed (Fairclough 2015).

#### *California Values Act: Jurisdiction*

When the California Values Act was initially introduced in December 2016, the policy was fairly inclusive. The language of the bill outlined that the state was not to use resources to act on on behalf or in assistance of ICE (California Values Act 2017). The legislation is framed to change policing practices, stating:

“Existing law provides that when there is reason to believe that a person arrested for a violation of specified controlled substance provisions may not be a citizen of the United States, the arresting agency shall notify the appropriate agency of the United States having charge of deportation matters. This bill would repeal those provisions. This bill would, among other things and subject to exceptions, prohibit state and local law enforcement agencies, including school police and security departments, from using money or personnel to investigate, interrogate, detain, detect, or arrest persons for immigration enforcement purposes, as specified, and would, subject to exceptions, proscribe other activities or conduct in connection with immigration enforcement by law enforcement agencies.” (California Values Act 2017)

Chapter 17.25 amendment of the bill outlines that the intention of the bill is to uphold all people living within California as being a part of the same community and foster a relationship of trust between California's immigrant community and local agencies (California Values Act 2017). As the bill progressed through the different committees, amendments were added that created pathways for law enforcement to collaborate with ICE. These amendments allowed law enforcement to "cooperate with immigration authorities only if doing so would not violate any federal, state, or local law" (California Values Act 2017). SB54 outlines that people who fall into a very long list of crimes are excepted from protection (this list can be found in APPENDIX A).

The list of offenses are very comprehensive, ranging from offenses like driving under the influence, car accidents that result in injury and/or death, ownership of firearms, drug possession/selling, and domestic violence (California Values Act 2017). There are also time limits for exceptions: "The individual has been convicted within the past five years of a misdemeanor for a crime that is punishable as either a misdemeanor or a felony for, or has been convicted within the last 15 years of a felony for, any of the following offenses..." (California Values Act 2017). With these amendments and exceptions, SB54 was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on October 5, 2017, almost a year after being introduced.

Regarding oversight and implementation, the legislation underestimates the entanglement of law enforcement and ICE relationships. In the circumstances where law enforcement does work with ICE, they are required to file a report on the number of cases of which the department collaborated with ICE. Law enforcement is discouraged from practicing direct transfers and has exploited loopholes to enable collaboration (Asian

American Law Caucus et. al. 2019). For example, prisons have made release dates public information that is accessible to anyone, including ICE.

The Attorney General had until October 2018 to publish a policy guideline for earlier listed institutions to implement in working with the undocumented community in accordance with SB54. October 2018 marked two years into the Trump administration and one year after the legislation went into effect. My experience as an activist and researcher demonstrates that the legislative process moves slowly, but ICE acts fast.

Within this lapse of time, much of my fieldwork had already taken place. Within this lapse of time, so many people went unprotected. Though the *Turning the Golden State into Sanctuary State* found a 41% drop in ICE arrests at jails in California following the passage of the California Values Act, they also found the many ways law enforcement undermines, ignores, and exploits loopholes to continue its collaboration with ICE (2019). Even after the publishing of the Attorney General's policy, organizers felt little change in the organizing landscape, as highlighted in my interview data. I think it is also important to point out that the Attorney General's policies serve as a guideline versus a mandate. As the US Department of Justice highlights, "It [Justice Manual] is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any rights, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any matter civil or criminal" (US Department of Justice 2018). The implementation of sanctuary is challenging; even cities like San Francisco, which have sanctuary policies dating back to 1989, struggle with overseeing collaboration between law enforcement and ICE (Mancina 2019).

Making immigrants with criminal convictions the exception and allowing law enforcement discretion in the implementation of SB54 adherence offers few opportunities

for intervention by local communities in the Inland Empire. With sheriff and police departments that have a history of being anti-immigrant, the Inland Empire sets a rocky foundation for trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement.

*California Values Act: Word Choice & Framing of Immigrants*

Unlike federal immigration policy, the California Values Act uses the term “immigrant” rather than “alien.” Despite improved language in reference to immigrants, the bill still operates in the framework of the good/criminal immigrant binary. The amended chapter reads:

“Immigrants are valuable and essential members of the California community. Almost one in three Californians is foreign born and one in two children in California has at least one immigrant parent.” (California Values Act 2017)

This statement posits California as a state with a large immigrant population. It is an inclusive and community-driven statement. It recognizes immigrants as being integral and of value to California communities. Though immigrants make up a large portion of the California community, this belonging is limited to immigrants who do not pose a threat to safety. As discussed earlier in the theory chapter, the criminal immigrant narrative serves as a means of stratification that exists within a web of policies that police and incriminate immigrants. While the legislation names immigrants as being a part of the community, it also makes exclusions that contribute to the web of systemic entanglement immigrants face. The legislation reads:

“This chapter seeks to ensure effective policing, to protect the safety, well-being, and constitutional rights of the people of California, and to direct the state’s limited resources to matters of greatest concern to state and local governments.” (California Values Act 2017)

The legislation is not seeking to end the policing of immigrants in full; it only seeks to discourage it. SB54 seeks to enforce safety and community but also has long

sections outlining exceptions to belonging to the community. Those who are the exceptions are not offered a form of safety; in fact, they are sent to for-profit detention facilities that have a history of violence against those they incarcerate. The nature of the bill operates under the ideology that “good immigrants” deserve sanctuary whereas “criminal immigrants” are disposable. The systems immigrants with criminal convictions must navigate force them to constantly exist in a life and death space (necro-subjugation). As they move through systems such as the prison-industrial complex, detention facilities, and deportation, they exist in a cycle of dispossession.

Overall, SB54 does nothing to challenge the criminal immigrant discourse. Though it does not use the dehumanizing language of “alien,” it misses the nuances of immigrant experiences and the web of systems they navigate. The bill does not challenge federal policies or the empire-state and offers little intervention. In order to create a comprehensive immigration policy, policies need to address the systemic issues immigrants face. Pem Davidson Buck suggests centering prisons when addressing systems of governance. Buck writes, “prisons are not marginal or extreme; they are, instead, central to the functioning of the society in which we live. And that means that the governance that prisons deliver affects all of us, every day, no matter how far we may think ourselves from either the inside or the outside of prison walls” (2021: 1). In the case of immigrants, this serves as a threat to stay low and remain unnoticed. For immigrants, a single conviction can lead to deportation. Without interrogating the ways legislation creates and reproduces criminalization of marginalized communities, including immigrants, just immigration cannot occur.

## **Interview Data: Disentangling Political and Personal Sanctuary**

In interviews with research partners, the disparity between the personal aspirations and political realities of sanctuary offered via SB54 were more evident. I was able to ask nine of the interviewees about their political and personal understanding of sanctuary. In this section, I will share the political and personal ideologies of sanctuary from my research partners, identifying themes and ruptures of frameworks of sanctuary. Throughout, there are constructs of safety rooted in community building. In the political sanctuary, there is what organizers and the directly impacted witnessed and experienced after SB54 was implemented. Across the board, there is disillusionment with the SB54 being deemed a success and perceiving the legislation as falling short of community needs. Perspectives of personal sanctuary highlight the construct grassroots sanctuary is built upon. I categorize personal sanctuary into two categories, short-term sanctuary and long-term sanctuary, which speak to the ways the community responds to sanctuary needs and desires. Short-term sanctuary addresses immediate needs and performs emergency response work. Long-term sanctuary operates at a slower pace as it works toward long-term goals of abolition.

Political sanctuary should be understood as what organizers saw in practice post-implementing SB54. Interviewees shed light on the ways the act offered security to immigrants as well as its shortcomings. One outcome of SB54 was a visible tension of community belonging; this refers to the ways safety is felt and managed by immigrants. Furthermore, organizers largely felt the policy did nothing to hold law enforcement accountable.

## *Community Belonging: Negotiating Safety*

One of the themes participants touched on was the relationship between sanctuary and community. Prior to the SB54, Elena (organizer) expressed how barrios operated as a form of sanctuary for immigrants. Barrios provided immigrants with protection from people who they perceived would likely report them to ICE. Elena stated:

“We have pockets of people from El Salvador, because within their community they find that sanctuary. So, by California passing SB54, I think it broadens that up. It allows for us to interconnect and also not fear, because literally I mean I've seen some immigrants who fear white people because they are viewed as, you know, this white guy can potentially come in, call ICE on us or create something that will incriminate us and [we] will end up in a bad place. And so, I think with the passing of the California Values Act, that kind of stops but yet in saying that the passing has also allowed us to really look at those pockets within California that are very anti-immigrant. You know we have Murrieta, we have some parts of OC, some parts of the high desert. You know, that are very anti-immigrant. And we've seen more and more of that now in Upland.” (Elena)

Elena identifies how ethnic communities (barrios) can be a refuge for immigrants, the community being within the people versus the place. While barrios can offer a sense of safety, there are city spaces that are less safe to travel in for immigrants. These differences have been identified as “white spaces,” highlighting the ways white heteronormative spaces threaten a sense of safety for immigrants. It is also worth noting that the regions and cities Elena named are places that are known as “white communities” and associated with being more affluent. The passing of SB54 and the Trump presidency exacerbated racial tensions and emboldened racist and anti-immigrant people. The cities Elena names are places that signed onto Jeff Sessions lawsuit against SB54 or can otherwise be described as activist battleground sites. For example, in Murrieta, anti-immigrant protesters shut down the 15 freeway to block the entry of a migrant caravan

that was passing through. While SB54 is meant to be a statement of the belonging of immigrants, it also created large ruptures within the Inland Empire.

While there was a rise in anti-immigrant action, that does not mean that SB54 was a complete failure. Hugo (organizer) identifies how the immigrant community felt empowered by the California Values Act, stating:

“I think the other part of it that's important is that the community then, because of the, you know, was such a controversial law and it was so, um, it was in the news often the community then really understood what it meant, and people called the hotline, like the Rapid Response Hotline.” (Hugo)

Hugo recognizes how SB54 did make an impact on immigrants recognizing their rights. Hugo attributes this success to news media coverage on SB54. Between protests and the Jeff Sessions lawsuit, the bill was made very visible to the public. With all the publicity of the bill in the news, Spanish news in particular, the community really grasped and understood their rights. This success was measured by the increase of Rapid Response reporting and how callers were identifying SB54 violations. This was a big step toward community empowerment.

With the increased media attention on the bill and explicit racist acts, there were other political shifts occurring within the Inland Empire. Maria (organizer) shared:

“God I want to say that I haven't seen a lot of a lot of change on how things are done but I do know that there's a lot more consciousness amongst the residents in the area. And I also can say that there have been friends of mine who used to be against it. And by sharing with them, and by inviting them to be part of the work that I've done, they have changed their opinion towards that.” (Maria)

SB54 created a tension within the Inland Empire, that created key lines of division spatially and politically. Spatially, SB54 highlighted boundary lines around certain cities that were vocally anti-immigrant. I would argue that SB54 did not increase a sense of safety but created more vigilance in navigating space. Barrios have a history of being sites



of refuge and safety for immigrants, and SB54 contributes nothing to this. Rather, SB54 brought to light cities where immigrants needed to be more vigilant. This vigilance is also seen in the increased use of the Rapid Response Hotline. Politically, there was a visible divide between pro- and anti-immigrant supporters. At almost every protest and townhall we went to, anti-immigrant protesters were present. While there were larger numbers of anti-immigrant protesters than in the past, there were also more people getting involved in the immigrant rights movement.

### *Law Enforcement and Transparency*

These polarizing politics created lines of belonging in spaces and with people. Despite the community feeling more empowered and the growing number of pro-immigrant supporters, the political backdrop was still quite bleak. Many organizers were frustrated with SB54, feeling it did little to nothing for the immigrant community. Miguel (organizer) summarizes the shortcoming quite well, stating:

“The California Values Act and how people define sanctuary, I feel like it's actually a very limiting way of labeling sanctuary, especially in terms of like, policy because pretty much what it's saying is that the government is just not going to share any resources or be involved. I feel like it's the bottom line. Like the lowest standard that you can put in a place in which they're just saying, ‘Oh, we don't want to be involved.’ So I think, I mean obviously we're looking into the California Values Act. That meant there was no collaboration between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement agencies and to be more technical like they weren't allowed to be in the local jails, they weren't allowed to share information.” (Miguel).

Miguel describes SB54 as the bare minimum, stating the bill lacks any language that indicates proactive action and should be understood as inaction, where law enforcement functions largely the same way with the exception of being able to work freely with ICE. Overall, there was concern over law enforcement acting in accordance with SB54. In response, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department launched a

community partners program. Participation in the program was by invitation only and involved monthly meetings. During the meetings, community organizations would watch presentations, go on tours, and ask the department representative questions. Elena participated in these meetings and shares their experience:

“There’s a lot of conversations between organizations, and the police departments, about them training their officers to learn about these new laws that have been set in place so that they are more respectful of the Latino community and respect the fact that they should no longer be working and collaborating with ICE. But I think it’ll be a while before we see it where we want to see it.” (Elena)

Miguel, who also participated in the relationship building program with the sheriff’s department, shared a similar perspective to Elena: that the program and action on part of SB54 lacked substance:

“I think that was the biggest issue that I encountered when I was running [lead], the local police department says that, “Yeah, we’ll follow SB54,” but they weren’t really training their officers. There was no training, they didn’t even bother to change their police manual to reflect the changes that were had so it’s like it goes back to the implementation piece.” (Miguel)

Organizers even named instances where they saw undermining and refusal to comply. Hugo shared the vocal resistance of Sheriff McMahon who leads the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department:

“Sheriff McMahon from San Bernardino actually went and met with the [Trump] administration and was colluding on ways to actually find ways to continue to collaborate, right, and soon after, you know, I mean it took a year right but we passed SB54, and it went into effect.” (Hugo).

Sherriff McMahon has a history of being anti-immigrant and a proponent of collaborating with ICE. The passing of SB54 is not an impenetrable shield, as my research partners and myself have highlighted. During interviews, partners would share stories of times SB54 was undermined by local law enforcement:

“In Corona when there was the SB54 violation. That was documented, right, that was like, police officer pulls over someone, calls backup, backups the Spanish speaking [officer]. Spanish speaker [officer] asks, “Do you have papers? No? let me call Border Patrol.” And I’m going to hold you until they get here”. Whoa right like you’re like damn, like all that like it’s all written down [in the police report] like, you know, with no shame. And then us like exposing it and the police departments, the city council like hey we want to meet with you want to meet with you. And we’re like, no, we’re gonna see. We’re not gonna be with you.” (Hugo)

From the perspective of my research partners and from what they had documented, law enforcement had done little to nothing to build their confidence. Even with the department’s community program, partners found the experience quite superficial. Organizers were longing for accountability and transparency. They wanted more from SB54 and law enforcement.

Many organizers felt that excluding immigrants with criminal charges stripped away the potential of SB54. Hugo shared:

“I mean they was doing things during SB54 there was a carve outs right where we put there was a decision made in Sacramento. That left out you know people that had committed certain crimes. And essentially what we're saying there is, you know, is that we don't believe in second chances for a segment of the population right. Where there's only a few people that do deserve second chances, because they have status and others don't, should not deserve a second chance. And this is where you know what we talk about people that even have fought for this country right and are getting deported because they didn't get afforded the second chance some other people have. I think everyone deserves the second change, I believe that that this system that we have is designed so that people that have gone through the system once end up in that system again and then end up there forever, and by making concessions when we're passing legislation as immigrant rights organizations, we're upholding the system that's already broken, and we're saying, it's fine.” (Hugo)

Hugo makes the point that immigrants are not granted second chances if they commit a crime. Within immigrant advocacy, this is referred to as a double punishment, where immigrants serve time in prison and then are transferred into ICE custody for

deportation. Miguel discusses the prison-to-ICE pipeline as one of the ways these systems are entangled:

“I feel like if there was one thing that I would change to SB54, it’s definitely the carve outs of the folks who can be transferred to ICE based on criminal history. So that would be the first thing and I think the second thing is, even though there is technically an agency which is the Attorney General that oversees implementation, there hasn’t been really any follow up, or there haven’t been repercussions for people who have violated SB54.” (Miguel).

In Hugo and Elena’s comments, neither are making calls for abolishment. They themselves are not challenging the criminal narrative, but rather the prison-to-ICE pipeline. Though there is less critique of prisons overall, all the organizers are against detention. Those living in detention are exploited by big corporations, similar to those incarcerated in prisons. Francisco (organizer) shares data on detention from 2018 (my time in the field):

“That with or without SB54, you know that's gonna continue to grow and continue to like, you know, detain people at you know \$120 a day for six months or longer and you know those profits, which our taxes go to the pockets of really rich international corporations that, you know, are benefitting off the misery of human beings.” (Francisco)

There is distrust and disillusionment across the board on SB54’s ability to protect and serve immigrant communities. Without addressing the prison industrial complex and challenging ideology on criminality, SB54 presents a challenge to comprehensive immigration reform. While progress is limited without working at this intersection, many organizers have faith in the power of organizing. Francisco shares the power of communities then and now; as to date, we have yet to see substantial change between Trump and the Biden administration’s immigration policies and procedures.

“We always need to be prepared for fighting for our people and being vigilant and ultimately this is something that we always talk about with, you know, my team my staff, the coalition, ultimately what's going to save us and protect us is when

we're dealing with our community. And we're looking at communication and we're supporting each other, that's ultimately that's going to save us. And I've seen far more, you know, deportations being stopped because XYZ person had a whole community behind them.” (Francisco)

Francisco is speaking to sanctuary practices led by the community. As highlighted by interviewees to this point, SB54 failed in several ways to protect undocumented immigrant communities. The success of sanctuary practices was not a result of policy but by the actions taken by local activists and immigrants advocating for themselves. The criminalization of immigrants is a huge barrier to comprehensive change. Even immigrant justice organizers fell victim to using the criminal immigrant narrative. While the region is building organizing power, the movement could be strengthened by building more coalition with abolition movements.

In the following section I will review data on personal understandings of sanctuary. I categorize personal understanding as short-term and long-term sanctuary practices.

### **Short-term Sanctuary**

When I asked partners what personal sanctuary meant to them, I received two different types of responses. One was grounded in what they practiced, while the other spoke to future aspirations of what they believed it could be. I define these categories as short-term and long-term sanctuary.

In the short-term sanctuary, the participants are speaking to an emergency response sanctuary. This is a sanctuary where an asylum seeker needs housing post-release from detention as they are moving to their final destination. This is where the community and organizers create housing and support networks that helps the individual

transition into being independent. While individuals are in sanctuary housing, teams assist them in finding sustainable work, building deeper community relationships, and eventually securing affordable housing. The research partners who focused on short-term sanctuary were in the midst of or just finished housing asylum seekers.

As three participants focused on housing, they all emphasized that this is a temporary solution and strategy to meet an immediate need. Elena expanded stating:

“Sanctuary is a place where people who are in distress can come and find refuge, find a place to rest, feel safe to recompose and to ask for help...So if I am going to practice sanctuary, I am going to make sure that I have a house that is welcoming, a house that allows for people in crisis to come in a house that will allow them to rest to renew themselves. And I'm also going to go out and advocate for them.” (Elena)

Elena uses the term “crisis” in describing the need for temporary housing for those recently released from detention, bringing further to light the urgency and rapid response needed in these situations. In particular, Elena and Francisco were a part of a rapid response event that occurred in late 2019 when mass releases were occurring of families held at the US-Mexico border. They were both part of coordinating and receiving buses full of asylum seekers being dropped off at a San Bernardino church by Border Patrol. This was a crisis that the community and organizers had to quickly respond to. Many organizers felt that this was a deliberate crisis the US government attempted to create in retaliation to California being a sanctuary state. Though the numbers were overwhelming, organizers managed to assure every single person had a place to sleep and support in getting to their next destination. Francisco described his response to the crisis:

“I got to house about 25 of them in my apartment. And you know, some would stay four nights and some would stay for two nights. Essentially what I would house, we would have other people take them in too, but it seems like forever.

People would come crash with me on any given night and then we'd try to get them like either bus or sometimes be there to get an airplane so I would just like drive to the bus station, or I would drive them to Ontario airport or LAX and drop them off and, and every person that I dropped off they were just so nice I was just like, and I try to keep my boundaries and my distance but I was like can I just give you a hug it was just like, and I will be like, yes you give me a hug and we just hug it out of the airport and like let me know when you get to your destination." (Francisco)

The number of people dropped off in late 2019 was large and happened sporadically with short notice. As Francisco expressed, this was an emotional experience for the activists who were working around the clock during this roughly two-week period. For these two individuals, the short-term sanctuary they had provided was at the forefront of their minds. Even within a short-term sanctuary there are long-term commitments felt by sanctuary providers. Rose (volunteer) shares:

"It's all about resistance to what is trying to be thrust upon us all over. Right? And we're going to resist, and we're providing sanctuary for those that are the most vulnerable. Well, it's only 3, really only three and it's interesting, sanctuary continues even though they're not in your home anymore, because they, you become it's almost not even maybe sanctuary is not the word but you become like an extended family member, and they call you and ask for advice and they can help you with this or that." (Rose)

Rose is a little different from Elena and Francisco, because Rose sponsored individuals who were held at the US-Mexico border. Sponsorship means the US government releases the asylum seeker into the care and supervision of a citizen. This is a financial and legal commitment on the part of the sponsor. If the sponsor is housing the asylum seeker, a housing commitment can last anywhere from 3 months to a year, with the goal to help the individual transition into independence. Rose expands on the commitment of sponsors, because they serve as a resource in navigating the US terrain. In short-term sanctuary, there are clear themes of refuge, shelter, and companionship. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity refers to this form of sanctuary as

“accompaniment.” Accompaniment is walking through the process of immigration alongside the immigrant experiencing it. The sanctuary provider may offer housing and will help facilitate opportunities for asylum seekers to build deeper relationships in the community. In all three examples, a short-term sanctuary practice is grounded in transition. Whether it is helping busloads of individuals figure out their next steps or welcoming people recently released from Adelanto, these sanctuary-providers are helping them transition to life outside of direct supervision by ICE or US Border Patrol.

### **Long Term Sanctuary**

The other interviewees spoke to a more long-term vision of sanctuary. In the long-term vision, there are more inclusive aspirations. This grouping of statements is more philosophical in nature, whereas the short-term is more practical. Maria broadened the scope of sanctuary, stating:

“[It’s] a safe and sacred place where anywhere, any person can come and just feel comfortable. That, I think just saying that is too short of a definition. Because I feel that sanctuary can just be being there for someone, to listen to their story and give them comfort, because if someone feels safe telling you a story, that’s sanctuary for that person at that moment, and just visiting someone in jail or in a detention center, it’s part of that sanctuary. I think the one definition is too short. Because I think that sanctuary is composed of many different pieces.” (Maria)

Maria frames a philosophy in sanctuary work that another interviewee builds upon. There is a longing to build sanctuary that is inclusive. Maria still touches on accompaniment, highlighting the value of visiting people living in detention, but also makes a point to identify how listening to people’s experience has value in sanctuary practice. Jordan (volunteer) builds on Maria’s definition, stating the value of being present for another person:

“And what I’ve come to realize is the sanctuary is really a sanctuary of your heart. That it’s really, it’s really that it’s an internal space. It’s that internal place where



we feel connection to the Most High, where we experience the awareness of the Most High. And in that space, being in the present moment. Like if you just think about it right now, just being present here with you in this moment. Not thinking about anything else. But just focusing on the breath.” (Jordan)

Jordan believes a sanctuary practice should be grounded in being able to be present for the individual being supported. Listening and presence are a part of the process of offering welcoming and community. Other interviewees also identified the need for intersectional sanctuary. Miguel describes this type of sanctuary as:

“a place where any person, any marginalized person, will not just live but also thrive, which means that there wouldn't be like any fear of persecution because of identity. Meaning that will be resources for that person to be able to go ahead and live a healthy life with their family.” (Miguel)

Miguel speaks to a desire to create an inclusive sanctuary that affirms belonging that is deeper than the issue of immigration. Hugo emphasizes a sanctuary practice that prioritizes LGBTQ+ immigrants, this being one example of many identities and experiences that exist within immigration.

“I think it comes back to like the safe, creating safe spaces. And I think it goes back to again like creating a space where people can come in with other identities, right, their full identity and be able to just walk up right where we don't, where we don't see... also think sanctuary to me is a space where people can challenge each other, where we can challenge our ideas, where we can grow together.” (Hugo)

For Hugo, sanctuary is tied to other political identities and sense of safety in those communities. If we are to provide sanctuary, it has to also honor the well-being of LGBTQ+ immigrants; we must consider the ways in which communities can create space for individuals who face marginalization for various facets of their identity. Tilly (volunteer) states the needs to create space for healing in sanctuary, and the trauma stemming from the experiences immigrants face in the US:

“A sanctuary sort of provides a space to heal from a lot of that, provides a space to talk through those things, provides the very basic necessities that I would say is sort of like ground, a lot of the work that I wish to accomplish, which is like, mainly just like the basic tenants of like, food, housing, health care, and education, which for me, I think, you know, everyone should have access to, regardless of, you know, any, like, basically anything, so, like, I think of sanctuary as a place where we're sort of seeking those things.” (Tilly)

Throughout all these interviews, the long-term vision of sanctuary involves equity and access. Sanctuary as a personal philosophy is grounded in care and being present for another individual. Sanctuary is a space that promotes inclusion and belonging in the face of adversity. During my fieldwork, I witnessed how quickly organizers and volunteers opened up their homes to immigrants in need, people they just met. The individuals we would help get released from Adelanto Detention Facility were willing and ready to pay it forward by advocating for others inside to be released. This level of dedication to those in the movement was visible throughout the organizing of sanctuary. While short-term sanctuary speaks to an emergency response, and what we would traditionally envision when thinking of sanctuary, long-term sanctuary speaks to the different areas that need to be addressed in actualizing an inclusive sanctuary. In long-term sanctuary, advocacy plays a large role in working to combat oppressive social structures.

Concluding this chapter, it feels clear that the California Values Act lacked any substantial reform for immigrants. In my interviews with organizers and volunteers, no one expressed witnessing a difference in policing practices of immigrants. The organizers that attended the community building meetings with law enforcement expressed feeling upset after leaving the meetings. Miguel expressed that law enforcement was unwilling to be held accountable for not following SB54. From interviews, volunteers and organizers cited the ways they had responded to emergency needs. Each of them found that SB54

fell short of the needs of the community, which is why they needed to engage in short-term sanctuary practices. If anything, what was seen and experienced was community resiliency.

Organizers noticed that the immigrant community was more vigilant and empowered to hold officers accountable for SB54 violations. The local Rapid Response Hotline was getting more and more calls than prior to SB54's implementation. More people joined the movement and got involved in local organizing. It is this community that showed up to meet the urgent needs of immigrants and who developed sanctuary practices. While SB54 does not address systemic issues immigrants face in the community, my research did discover the ways that the community makes up for governmental shortcomings. In the following chapter, I explore the landscape of sanctuary in the Inland Empire, highlighting key sites of action created and negotiated by the community.

## **CHAPTER 5: LANDSCAPE OF SANCTUARY**

I use the term “landscape” to emphasize the ways the Inland Empire has been culturally shaped by people, both insiders and outsiders. The sites of sanctuary shape the overall landscape of sanctuary in the region. These sites are places where people have been able to practice sanctuary as well as places of contestation. These were all places where the communities came together to negotiate belonging. I begin this chapter with embodied writing, further exploring my relationship to space and organizing in the region. I later share ethnographic data and analyze through embodied writing the sanctuary sites of the Riverside Board of Supervisors meeting, regional immigration

shelters, and Adelanto Detention Facility. I situate these experiences and sites within short-term and long-term sanctuary and explore different sites' relationships to the empire-state.

### **Research Beginnings**

In June 2018, my research and partnership with IM4HI commenced. I threw myself into sanctuary movement organizing. Prior to this research, I had attended and helped plan a few protests on campus at the University of Massachusetts, but despite these experiences, I felt like an imposter. I had only been living in California again for two months, and it felt like such a shock to the body to jump right into movement building in a place I was trying to get comfortable calling home. While I was raised in the Inland Empire and my family still lives there, it felt like an imposition to insert myself so quickly into regional organizing.

Despite the inner turmoil I was navigating, Elena welcomed me with open arms. She was ready to receive any help she could get. I felt driven to prove myself to her and other organizers that I was here to stay and help. I said yes to almost anything they asked of me; imposter in me would not allow me to say no. Immediately, I found myself travelling all over Southern California. It was as if I was rocket-launched into organizing.

I started by making weekly trips to Adelanto Detention Facility, which is nestled in the high desert. Adelanto is the epicenter of the sanctuary organizing, as this is where people who are apprehended by ICE are sent. The facility also housed many asylum seekers from all over the world.

I travelled to the San Diego region of the US-Mexican border for the “World Without Walls” event, where faith leaders and activists sang songs of liberation while a

militarized Border Patrol watched us with rifles in hand. I travelled deep into the Coachella Valley (part of the Inland Empire) to shelters welcoming recently released families from the border.

I travelled across the vast region of the Inland Empire to engage in sanctuary practices and assist in organizing. All the travelling further challenged my personal relationship to the Inland Empire. There was a portion of the Inland Empire that I lived my day-to-day life in, and then there was the two-hour drive to far off cities in the region that felt like a different world. The landscape of the Inland Empire feels disjointed, especially when driving end-to-end of the region takes 3-4 hours to accomplish. Yet, we are still considered one community.

In this chapter, I situate the sanctuary sites within short-term and long-term sanctuary practices. I also contextualize the practices within the empire-state. I utilize embodied writing to share and analyze autoethnographic data.

### **Sites of Sanctuary**

The three spaces I will focus on are: the Riverside County Board of Supervisors meeting, immigrant reception shelters in the Inland Empire, and Adelanto Detention Facility. I chose these sites because they are representative of the work I did with IM4HI. I share ethnographic data from a very specific Riverside County Board of Supervisors meeting. This meeting highlights the community tensions that activists of the region navigate. I attended many town halls, Board of Supervisor meetings, and sit-down meetings with politicians. Overall, the Riverside Board of Supervisors meeting best exemplifies the community negotiations at length. I also share ethnographic data from a specific day at the immigrant shelter, in order to highlight the day-to-day work of the site.

Finally, I share an overview of Adelanto Detention Facility, as I will later in the dissertation share stories of specific individuals I accompanied. I share the data through embodied writing. These spaces signify moments in places I frequented. I will share the ways these spaces intersect with previously discussed forms of sanctuary, short-term and long-term, and the California Values Act.

*Riverside County Board of Supervisors Meeting*

As I have previously stated, I am Latina who went home to become an accomplice for my community with all the complexities that carries. Having grown up in this landscape, I am aware of the anti-immigrant sentiments of the region. Throughout my fieldwork, I stayed in constant concern for the safety of my partners and myself. This concern was not unfounded given recent events like the Charlottesville car attack, the violence at the anti-Muslim rally in San Bernardino (Nelson 2017), and the continued excessive force used by law enforcement throughout the US against communities of color. Every time I left the house for a protest or town hall meeting, the thought crossed my mind of what the environment would be like. Though I am thankful I never experienced or witnessed these more extreme forms of violence, this does not mean I did not enter hostile spaces.

The Riverside Board of Supervisors meeting was one of many town hall meetings I had attended during research, and this particular board meeting fully displays the tension and obstacles existing in developing any semblance of sanctuary. This Board of Supervisors meeting was covering the TRUTH Act, which is a policy that works in tandem with the California Values Act. The TRUTH Act asserts the public's right to transparency regarding the access that local governments may provide to federal

immigration agents. The act had already been enacted by the governor, but the board was offering a public forum to discuss the matter. While writing and re-reading my ethnographic notes from the meeting, I became overwhelmed with a feeling of hopelessness I felt that day. For as many people that came out in support of immigrants in the community, there were just as many that came out in opposition.

It was December 11, 2018. I drove out to downtown Riverside, one of the metropolitan areas of the Inland Empire. The meeting started at 1:00PM, and when I walked in the room it was as if someone had painted a line down the middle of the chamber. The audience was sitting in clusters. The anti-immigrant group looked like they were wearing the American flag. There were “Make America Great Again” hats, hats with the American flag, and some that read “Vietnam Veteran.” Multiple people brought and held the American flag in the chamber. People had made custom t-shirts. The shirts had different faces, but the text was the same across: “A stolen life by an illegal alien”. These shirts had the faces of people who had been killed by an undocumented immigrants in the US. The back of the shirts told the story of the victim, and reinforced

undocumented immigrants as being synonymous with criminalization. They carried banners with the same formula as the shirts.

Alongside the anti-immigrant protesters was a representative, Arthur Schaper from the anti-LGBTQ organization, “Mass Resistance.” Schaper is from the city of



*Figure 6.1: Anti-immigrant protesters marching with banner around the room*

Torrance, a beach city two hours away in Los Angeles County. Since Riverside and San Bernardino are battleground counties, conservatives from outside the region, even as far as Arizona, often come to local town halls to take up seats and prevent residents from speaking to their representatives. This tactic became the norm following Trump’s election. For these reasons, pro-immigrant organizers have been trying to pack the chambers, instructing us to come hours early to secure seats for residents.

On the other side of the aisle were partners of the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ). In stark contrast to the anti-immigrant protesters, we were dressed in



business attire, as we were told to come dressed professionally. Some carried pro-TRUTH Act posters, but largely we did not carry symbols of protest (banners and shirts). The division could be seen as much as it was felt. Walking down the aisle to my seat, I could feel eyes watching me, seeing where I would sit. I was in business professional attire, so my presence was innocuous. Elena waved to me; she had saved me a seat next to her.

The anti-immigrant group's strategy was quite clear: incite agitation. Between the pro- and anti-immigrant groups, I also noted an ethnic difference. While many of the anti-immigrant protesters were white, almost all the pro-immigrant activists in attendance were Latinx and immigrants. The anti-immigrant protesters wanted to get a reaction out of our group so they could use our anger to fuel their argument that immigrants are dangerous. This scenario had already played out in other protest spaces. The philosophy carried out was that of Michelle Obama: "When they go low, we go high," for better or worse.

Before the floor could even be opened to the audience for public comments, someone from the anti-immigrant group hit one of the members of the Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ). In response to this incident, the representative from the Riverside Sheriff's Department threatened to kick everyone out if agitation continued. I was stunned that the individual was allowed to stay after the altercation. The response of the sheriff on duty was to give a warning to everyone in attendance to behave. I thought to myself that school children get harsher punishment than that for hitting another person.

After two hours, at 3PM, public comments for the TRUTH Act started. Board member Kevin Jeffries, a Republican representing the 1<sup>st</sup> district in Riverside County, led

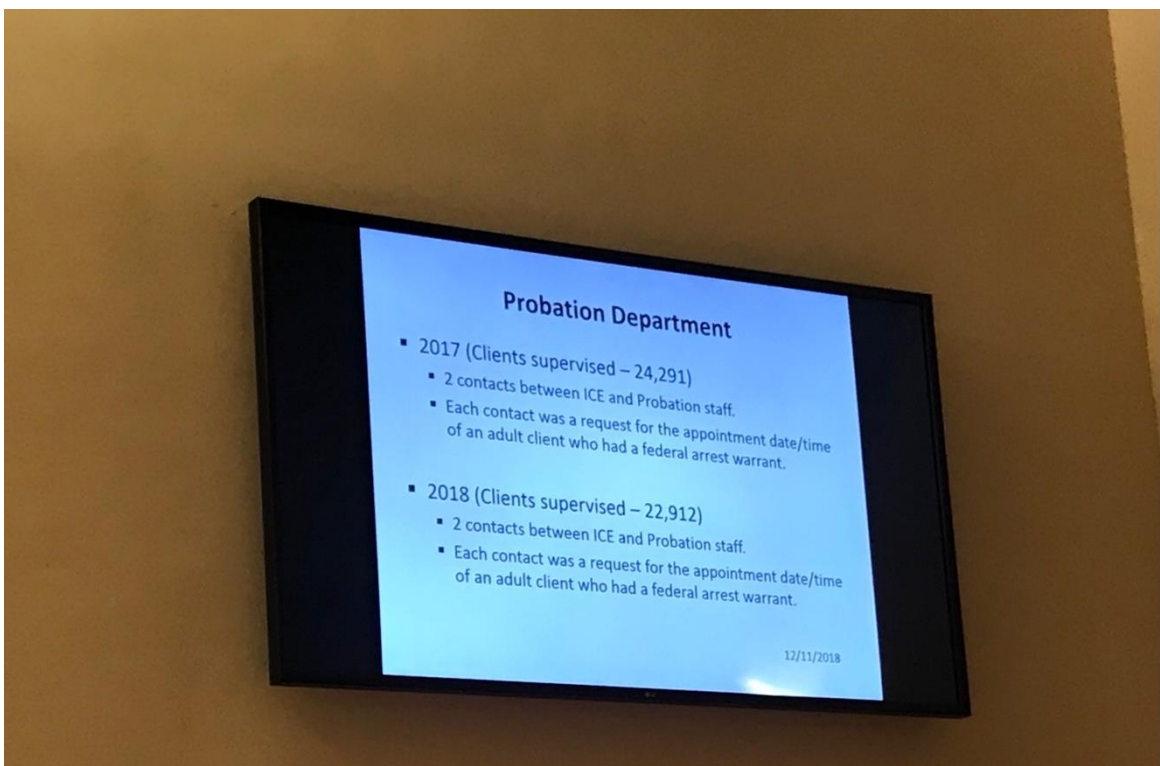
the discussion. Before opening the floor, he stated he wanted minimal reading from written papers, and wanted to be directly addressed; each speaker would have only two minutes. At the time, Republican board member John Tavaglione spoke on decorum for the process of giving public comments. Arthur Schaper, of Mass Resistance, responded from the audience to Tavaglione, calling him “Adolf.” Tavaglione cited the “Brown Act” stating to the audience that, “individuals do not have the right to interrupt, interfere, or impair the board’s ability to work forward.” This was not Schaper’s first outburst in the meeting, Schaper had yelled at the board earlier stating, “This is our board meeting, not yours,” after the board notified him that he had exceeded his time limit during an earlier public comment. He had been at the podium upset about a drag story time that had taken place in Riverside.

As we moved into public comments for the TRUTH Act, the agitation strategy continued. Whenever an ICIJ member or partner went up to speak, their speeches were disrupted with “boos” or outburst of mocking laughter. I felt so unsettled by their reactions. The ICIJ earlier told us to not react. We were not allowed to show annoyance, we were instructed not to mock the anti-immigrant protestors the way we would be. ICIJ would look around at us to remind us to stay cool. This instruction was meant to prevent anyone in our group from being a target for arrest by the sheriff or the anti-immigrant protesters. We simply had to sit there and take it.

In the discussion, the California Values Act was a hot topic. In attendance was a representative from the Sheriff and Probation department for Riverside. The representative stated they already shared the data outlined by both the TRUTH Act and the California Values Act, and attested they act in accordance with the guideline of the

California Values Act. They shared that they “do not track ICE notifications, but when they notify ICE there is a process of documentation.” They notify as “permitted by law,” falling under the category of federal/violent crime categories. This representative was soon followed by Chief Probation Officer Ron Miller who shared data from the Riverside department. They shared a slide that showed the number of contacts between ICE and the Probation department, but as previously stated, the reporting only reflects the number of times the Probation department reached out, and not vice versa.

Following the Sheriff and Office of Probation representatives came a mix of pro-



*Figure 6.2: Slide shared by the Probation Office regarding contact with ICE.*

and anti-immigrant speakers. One of the regional ACLU lawyers shared the need to make public spaces like government facilities and community centers welcoming and safe for undocumented people, as this is something the California Values Act was supposed to do.

He expressed that at this time, the community felt unsafe coming to places like this space to speak up for themselves. Later, a Spanish-speaking coalition partner came to speak at the podium and was met with anti-immigrant audience members yelling “learn English” and “speak English.” More coalition partners were able to speak; the theme was strong, with partners advocating for transparency, better partnerships between the Sheriff’s department and immigrant communities, and denouncing deportation. The California Values Act is supposed to combat fear, and yet fear persisted. I considered speaking, but I couldn’t work up the nerve. The imposter syndrome was back. But also, I thought to myself, what would I say that had not already been said?

The anti-immigrant speakers were consistent in their language of othering. All the speakers used derogatory language toward undocumented immigrants, terms like “illegal aliens” and “criminals.” Arthur Schaper went back up again. He applauded ICE for their “excellent job.” He also praised Sheriff Chad Bianco, Riverside County Sheriff, for his work in Riverside, drawing parallels to the Sheriff’s department and Border Patrol. Schaper made the argument that ICE is necessary to tackle issues like “sex and drug trafficking.” The thread of arguments was tying immigrants to a range of crimes. Other anti-immigrant speakers addressed the “stolen life” stories on their shirts, stories of “citizens killed by immigrants.” One person referred to immigrant caravans as “600 criminals on a caravan.” Another person argued undocumented immigrants produce pornography. Many felt the TRUTH Act is “illegal,” stating that immigrants take resources away from “citizens,” like access to college and jobs. One woman said she left the city of Hemet because “illegal immigrants” broke into her home, trying to communicate to the audience that her city is now dangerous.

Some of the anti-immigrant speakers identified themselves as Latino. Their arguments were constructed somewhat differently. As Latinos, they could not make sweeping generalizations about immigrants like the white anti-immigrant protesters. One Latina said that “green cards and legal citizens are legal.” They tried to differentiate themselves from undocumented immigrants and aligned themselves with the white anti-immigrant protesters by performing patriotism, citing their military careers or proclaiming their love for the US. A Latino man said he identified with neither side; instead, he stated that he did not want his child’s face on one of the stolen life t-shirts and that the real concern is only “criminal immigrants.”



*Figure 6.3: Anti-immigrant protester giving a public comment at the Riverside County Board of Supervisors Meeting.*

After an hour of public comments, it closed with one of the anti-immigrant protesters lecturing the Board of Supervisors treatment of Arthur Schaper earlier in the hearing and how the board is here to “serve the people, not illegals.” Schaper screamed, “Brown Act” from the audience. This anti-immigrant protester proceeded to ask

Tavaglione specifically to apologize and show that he sides with them. Tavaglione responded stating, “I am sticking around because of the issue.”

At 4:16PM, the meeting was finally adjourned; everyone was kicked out of the meeting because the “attendees were unruly and not acting in decorum.” We were lumped in and accused of not behaving. The agitation strategy worked, because there were quite a few community members that did not get a chance to speak. Upon leaving, the ICIJ instructed everyone to not walk alone to our cars and adhere to a buddy system. There was fear of harassment and further antagonism. As I walked out with my buddy, I saw the anti-immigrant protesters take a photo all together. One of them yelled, “Let’s get more patriotism in the photo.” They all cheered.

#### *Analysis of Riverside Board of Supervisors Meeting*

I don’t remember if I cried then, but I cried having to relive this. These are the days that you feel the power of the empire-state at full force, its constraints. In referring to the empire-state, I am referring to the ways that the structures that uphold it prevail; the political leaders, law enforcement, and political process itself. These structures stratify the audience and dictate different guidelines of decorum for the opposing sides of immigration.

Starting with the altercation where the anti-immigrant protester hit one of our community, we knew the sheriff was not there to protect us. Rather than reprimand the actor of the violence, the sheriff’s response was a blanket warning to everyone. This statement was presented as if he was treating the audience equally, when in fact the officer’s action was “nonperformative.” Ahmed defines a nonperformative act as, “speech acts that read as if they are performatives, and this “reading” generates its own

effects” (2006:104). The way the officer addressed the issue did not actually address the incident. Law enforcement is there to uphold stratification of those in the space and to maintain the barrier between politicians that carry out legislation and the audience responding to the discussion.

The Board members themselves were also nonperformative. The Board would not reprimand the anti-immigrant protestors for being disruptive. They would talk about decorum, but their responses were general. They maintained a stratification among the audience. By law enforcement and the board representatives not holding the anti-immigrant group accountable, they were enabling white supremacy.

White supremacy in this space was the discourse of belonging. For the anti-immigrant protesters, pro-immigration discourse is equated to being unpatriotic. The clothing with the flag, carrying of the flag, and veteran hats were all ways citizenship and belonging were performed. The anti-immigrant Latinos had to situate themselves differently and used the good and criminal immigrant binary to differentiate themselves from more recent immigrants. Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey raise an interesting argument regarding Latinos and patriotism. They highlight a relationship between Latino patriotic citizenship, stating “at the core of this expression of necrocitizenship, however, the Latinx body still figures prominently—manifest through corporeal sacrifice and willingness to die for a nation” (2020: 78). For the anti-immigrant Latinos, their patriotism is to an empire-state that does not seek to foster their lives; they are expendable in upholding the projects of the empire-state. Even within the anti-immigrant group, there are ways they are stratified amongst themselves.

The stratification of people in the space and the ways the structures of the empire-state enabled it made the anti-immigrant group feel entitled to more speaking time during public comments because they viewed themselves as citizens and patriots. The pro-immigrants, who are immigrants, had their citizenship and belonging interrogated in this space every time they were mocked at the podium. The Latinx pro-immigrant activists were rendered immobile in a lot of ways; the rules they had to abide by were rigid. The mantra of “when they go low, we go high” ended up feeling like, “keep your head down, and only speak when spoken to.”

Fanon writes, “Challenging the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of viewpoints. It is not a discourse on the universal, but the impassioned claim by the colonized that their world is fundamentally different...The colonist is not content with physically limiting the space of the colonized, i.e., with the help of his agents of law and order” (1963: 6). The Board, law enforcement, and anti-immigrant protestors were seeking to maintain white supremacist power via the project of stratification. Fanon’s quote highlights the dynamics of the Board of Supervisors meeting as a space which by design protected the anti-immigrant group. More and more, it became clear that the political sphere was incapable of offering sanctuary or inclusion to immigrants. This meeting was solely an opportunity to allow the community to provide public comments on the TRUST Act, the legislation already passed. There was no voting, yet the space was still highly contentious.

In situating the Board of Supervisors meeting within sanctuary practices, it falls into short-term sanctuary. This is not a site where decolonization or abolition can take place. As seen demonstrated in the retelling of this event, the Board of Supervisors



meeting was designed to protect the empire-state and white supremacy. Long-term change cannot be expected from this space. Despite the actions of the Board, law enforcement, and anti-immigrant group serving to create a hostile space that worked to discourage their presence, the pro-immigrant activists still showed up. As the ACLU lawyer highlighted at the board meeting, government and community spaces are not safe spaces for immigrants. Immigrants do not experience these spaces as sanctuary; these are sites of tension, hostility, and policing. These are spaces where immigrants experience exclusion, and where those who are anti-immigrant view their own actions as patriotic. From my informal conversations with partners, I learned that they show up because if they do not, the anti-immigrant discourse will be the only voice the board hears. The presence of pro-immigrant activists in these spaces is a way of slowing down anti-immigrant policies. For these reasons, it is short-term sanctuary.

Upsettingly enough, this is a normal public hearing for the region. This is what is faced time and time again. These are the tactics of anti-immigrant organizations, politicians, and law enforcement within the Inland Empire. They want us to react, because they want more ammunition. Our politicians want to avoid dealing with immigration and instead maintain the empire-state that empowers them. We show up so they do not forget us, but it does not offer long-term sanctuary. This is a superficial battleground, meaning we do not anticipate or expect for change to happen at these sites, but we also understand that we cannot afford to be absent. A lot of discussion surrounding sanctuary possibilities happens here, but its impact feels marginal at best. The lack of support and the big hurdles we face in the political realm push the community

to take sanctuary into our own hands. Offering grassroots sanctuary was a means of working toward sanctuary for all.

### *Coachella, The Deserted Oases*

Grassroots sanctuary practices were often dictated by the immediate needs of the community. The work at the shelters is an example of short-term sanctuary work, or sanctuary that is an emergency response organized by the community that operates outside of the California Values Act and governmental periphery. Though there were other temporary shelters that popped up during my fieldwork, I am going to focus on the Coachella shelter.

Coachella is a city deep in Riverside County, slow-growing due to the major music festival with the same name. The drive is about two hours from where I live in Fontana. On the car ride, the scenery transitions from populated suburbs to smaller desert communities. Like a lot of the work in the Inland Empire, this drive was a day-long commitment. The day started with me rising in the early morning and coming home in the late evening, largely because there was so much work and support needed from volunteers.

On April 2, 2019, I travelled to Coachella to work at a temporary shelter at a Catholic church. As needed, Catholic Charities coordinated temporary living at churches and facilities for asylum seekers with children who were released by Border Patrol. Throughout late 2018 and early 2019, news media covered stories of children being separated from parents and held in detention camps at the border. Releasing some parents and children to the Catholic Charities was one way the government was able to release immigrants from the detention camps. Border Patrol would drive a bus out to the church

or shelter, and Catholic Charities would cover travel expenses. The families we received at the shelter had been living in detention from a week upwards to a month. The families who had been released had a destination and demonstrated “credible fear” (one requirement for ascertaining asylum) were released and allowed to proceed with their court cases outside of detention.

The families were normally one parent and one child under the age of 18; rarely did we see a complete family unit. All the families I worked with came from Latin America, but not everyone spoke Spanish. There were a few families that spoke Indigenous languages from Guatemala; that day there were several people from the Mam community. The families were brought on a large bus by Border Patrol and left in the care of the facility and volunteers. Though Catholic Charities coordinated with Border Patrol, it was the people who run and volunteer at the church that organized the care. The church used their resources to offer beds, food, and overall facility. Volunteers were critical to this work, because the shelters were understaffed, partly because these shelters were pop-ups where work varied from day to day.

We never could anticipate how many people were coming. Some days 80 people were dropped off, other days 13, and sometimes no one. Border Patrol would simply call Catholic Charities and let them know people were coming. The number was never set in stone, much to the frustration of the facility manager. The families would come and stay one, maybe two nights at the shelter before they would head off on the next leg of their journey. At the shelter, we would review the terms of release to assure families understood their rights and the asylum process. Volunteers would cover the importance of going to ICE check-ins, appearing for their court dates, and answer any remaining

questions they had to the best of our abilities. Following this conversation, we would coordinate safe transport to their destination, and Catholic Charities would cover the cost as well as provide a small stipend to care for themselves as they travelled to their final destination.

I remember being in awe of the Coachella Church that opened their doors. The church was so green and lush in this desert backdrop, it almost felt like a mini desert oasis.



*Figure 6.4: Coachella Church offering temporary shelter.*

I walked onto the church grounds and was immediately swept by volunteers to help organize clothing. The people we welcomed were often wearing the same clothes for weeks. Clothes they traveled the desert in, clothes they continued to wear in detention.

The clothes were often tattered, soles were falling off shoes. Many had not showered in weeks, this is not something Border Patrol made accessible to them. The other volunteers I came with were sent to the kitchen to make sure the food was ready for the families when they arrived. Clothing, showers, and food were the first priority in preparing for their arrival.

Once the families arrived, we would check-in and see who needed medical attention so we could create a waitlist to meet with the doctor on site. We were fortunate to have a mobile doctor could address a wide range of health needs for the parents and children. Most of the children had flu-like symptoms. This is unsurprising, because almost everyone mentioned how cold the detention facility was kept. It was described as an ice box, and they shared how Border Patrol would not provide blankets for people to stay warm. As I helped people find shoes, I noticed how white everyone's feet were. Their feet were calloused, cracked, and some looked infected. Their feet looked like chalk. We were grateful that we had a doctor on site at this shelter. Unfortunately, not every shelter I worked at had a doctor available. The times we did not, we could only provide Tylenol, Vaseline for moisturizing, and other over-the-counter drugs.

When the families arrived this day, we welcomed 13 people. We immediately brought them to pick out clothes. We also gave them hygiene kits that had toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, conditioner, body soap, feminine pads, and deodorant. I remember having to explain how to use deodorant to one of the kids who had never seen it before. I think it is important to note that deodorant is not a standard hygiene product used globally; frankly, not everyone needs it, but that is a different discussion altogether.

As I mentioned, not everyone was a Spanish speaker, as we had a number of people from the Mam Indigenous community. Though the parents and children spoke enough Spanish to hold a conversation, there were a number of words that caused confusion. I remember I was helping a teen travelling with her father, and I was instructed to ask her if she needed a bra. I used the word I learned from my Ecuadorean mother, “brasier.” One of the Mexican volunteers used the term “sostén,” which she also did not recognize. The teen did not know either of the words, but eventually we came to an understanding by miming and over-explaining the clothing. This miscommunication was frequent in the process, because we did not have volunteers who spoke Mam or the



*Figure 6.5: Fountain in the church courtyard.*

other indigenous languages we came across in our work.

Later I sat down with one of the children, we sat by the fountain and waited for the food to be ready. She looked at my skin and commented on how white my skin is, which was not a big deal to me at all, I am fully aware that I am not a brown or even tan Latina. I joked that the sun does not like me as much, because its always burning me. She wanted to

know how I could be Latina and fair-skinned. I shared that my abuelito (grandfather) on my mom’s side was Argentinean, and that my papi (father) is even lighter-skinned than

me and is Mexican. She was shocked by the idea of a “white Mexican.” She kept looking at my skin and then asked me, “¿Tu mami está gordita?” (is your mom fat?), which completely caught me off guard. Though I wanted to burst out laughing because of how bluntly she asked the question, I quickly composed myself to let her know that I did not consider my mami to be “fat.” I asked her about Guatemala and her family. She shared that everyone there was “mas oscuros y gordos” (they are darker skinned and fatter). Her matter-of-fact delivery of these statements kept catching me off guard. She shared that her mother stayed behind with her four siblings; she said her mom was tall and skinny like me. Though, at 5’4”, most people in the US would not consider me tall. Soon after, her dad came so they could eat lunch. When I sat down to lunch, I got to hear more stories from parents. Apparently, this group came through Yuma, Arizona, and were then transported to Tijuana some hundred miles away. Then they were detained and separated from their children for 3-4 days. In the evening, 46 more people came and were dropped off by ICE. The cycle repeated.

#### *Analysis of Coachella Shelter*

This form of short-term sanctuary was a response to the overcrowded detention camps at the border and family separation being carried out by Homeland Security. I cannot speak to exact relationship between Catholic Charities and ICE as this information was kept confidential. Catholic Charities created pathways to help immigrants be released and find safe passage to the next destination, usually to reunite with family or friends. These are emergency situations where community members came together to secure access to food, clothing, hygiene products, showers, and beds for arriving families. This type of short-term sanctuary demonstrates the power and resiliency of community in the



gathering of resources to provide care for others. While it's amazing to see people work together, this type of sanctuary is only a steppingstone for change.

This work is addressing a symptom of the immigration system; it does not entirely challenge, and in some ways enables the continuation of the mistreatment of immigrants. This type of support is humanitarian aid work, where the labor is acting within the contours of ICE & Border Patrol protocol. As mentioned earlier, it is Border Patrol who is bringing the families to the shelters, and there is a level of transparency of practice on both ends as Catholic Charities is required to create reports, though it was unclear to me if the reports were solely for Catholic Charities or would be shared back with Homeland Security. I am sure there is a level of apprehension on the ends of the people being released to the shelter directly from ICE. Though they eventually let their guard down, they did ask questions about what was going on at the shelter.

Overall, the shelters are still operating within the constructs of the empire-state. The shelters, to a degree, are working in partnership with Homeland Security. They are not challenging the system, only alleviating an issue. It is also interesting to reflect on the dynamic between the church and Mam immigrants. The Catholic Church slaughtered Indigenous communities throughout Latin America and the legacy of the Spanish conquest and colonization still impacts Indigenous communities today. Spanish colonization of Latin America by design subjugated Indigenous communities (De La Casas, 1974). Considering the Catholic Church is to blame for the displacement of Indigenous communities in Latin America (among many other places), it feels ironic that Catholic Charities is offering Indigenous migrants refuge. Coloniality continues to play out at the shelter as they also only offer services to Spanish speaking migrants, meaning



Indigenous migrants are at a disadvantage as they may not be able to fully understand the important information being shared with them regarding next steps in their immigration proceedings. This is one way even within immigrant communities that we see stratification, specifically who is accommodated in receiving help and aid and who is excluded.

In sharing the stories of my interactions, I wanted to highlight that as painful of experiences migration and detention are, there are moments of community. When I think of my mami (mother) & abue (nickname for my maternal grandmother) who lived undocumented for a time, I know they do not want to be remembered as tragic characters. For that reason, I do not want to portray directly impacted immigrants in such a way. I want to try and balance the dark with lighter moments. Moments where we forget what is going on around us for a little bit. While the work can be emotionally taxing, there are memories that bring me joy, where laughter was shared and exchanged. I do not want to only focus on the pain, because that reduces the experiences and people. The experiences, the system, and the people are complex.

### *Adelanto Detention Facility*

The system and site I spent a lot of time at during my research was Adelanto Detention Facility. Adelanto Detention Facility is in the high desert region of San Bernardino County. At the time, I lived in Fontana, which sits in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountain Range. To get to the city of Adelanto, I would have to take the Cajon Pass which sits between the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountain Ranges. I would leave my grassy green suburbs and drive into what felt like a desert canyon.

The first time I travelled to Adelanto was June 21, 2018. I ended up getting completely lost. Despite having a GPS to guide me, I was fighting tears trying to get there in time to meet with other volunteers for the first time. I was embarrassed that I was so behind schedule. Prior to fieldwork, I travelled to the high desert to visit my nina (godmother) & nino (godfather) in Apple Valley. On occasion, my sister would have a gymnastics competition in that direction, but I never really explored the region beyond that. The drive to the detention facility was 45-minutes to nowhere.

Driving the Cajon Pass that day felt familiar, but as soon as I exited the freeway I had to rely heavily on my phone navigation. Unlike where I live, which is heavily populated, the High Desert is sparse. There are main roads that get you everywhere you need to go, there are a few smaller, bumpy roads, and there are dirt roads. For people living in the greater Los Angeles area/low desert region of the Inland Empire, dirt roads are not common at all. My first time driving there was also the first time I had ever driven on a long sandy road. I had to do a double take when the GPS was instructing me to turn into an open desert field. Summer just started, and the average temperature was 100+ degrees, so the last thing I wanted was to be stranded by myself in the middle of nowhere. I decided to put all my faith in my phone navigation system. Through trial and error, I eventually arrived at Adelanto Detention Facility.



*Figure 6.6: A dirt road near Adelanto Detention Facility.*

This was the first and last time I found myself taking the dirt backroads; I am still unsure how I managed this pathway. The freeway exit is fifteen minutes from the detention facility, and if I had stayed on the main road, I would have gotten there with a lot less theatrics. Regardless of the bizarre decisions I made that led me on this pathway, I realized then how tucked away this facility is. Being off the main road, it is out of sight and out of mind for locals. For people that live down the mountain and in the greater Los Angeles area, this region is referred to as “the middle of nowhere.” No one goes there unless they have family that lives there.

I share all of this to highlight the environment that surrounds Adelanto Detention Facility and attitudes locals have toward the region. Many of the organizers do not live in the high desert region, and they have to drive up the mountain as well, some from a

farther distance than me. Since I first started my fieldwork in 2018, more organizations are sprawling toward the high desert to build stronger bases and relationships with locals.

When you enter Adelanto, the first step is checking in at the security desk. You are required to let security know who you are visiting by providing an A# (alien number) identifying your relationship to the individual and must hand over a form of government identification. Everyone would receive a locker where purses, phones, and other personal items had to be stored. You are not allowed to carry anything with you during the visit, not even a pencil and paper. We would sit in the waiting room anywhere from 40 minutes



*Figure 6.7: Waiting room inside Adelanto Detention Facility*

to two hours. There were times we sat waiting only to be turned away because visiting hours were ending. Timing was very important, because sometimes they would do a headcount of detainees during visiting hours, which can delay people from being able to visit.

On my first visit, I did not pass the check-in process because of clothing regulations.

The facility has a strict

wardrobe policy that I was unaware of at the time. As I mentioned, the summers in the High Desert are hot. I came wearing comfortable clothing for the weather. I was wearing

a loose dress with chunky straps that fell slightly above my knee, one I would feel comfortable wearing to my grandfather's house. On this visit, I was told I would not be allowed in because I needed to wear clothing that covered my shoulders and knees. Another one of the older volunteers shamed me for not knowing better, and after all the driving I did, I had to go back down the mountain. There were other times that I was almost not admitted. A few times I wore different white button up blouses, and I would be told that my shirt was too sheer and was instructed to cover up with a sweater. I felt my body being policed and sexualized by the guards; I usually only had this issue with male guards.

When it is time to go for the visit, you have to wait for an officer to say the last name of the person you are visiting. You really have to pay attention to names being called, as the guards would sometimes not speak loud enough over the talking going on in the large waiting room. Once you walk up to the officer, you have to be pat down and stand aside until everyone who is visiting someone is processed. Most of the time, I was able to do face-to-face visitation where you can sit a table apart from one another. Other times it was with a soundproof glass divider where we could speak to one another through a phone. Either way, we only had 45 minutes to speak to one another.

During the visit, you are able to chat but are constantly surveilled by a guard. The guard sits at an elevated desk watching you and the handful of other people in the room speaking to friends and loved ones. If you wanted to exchange any information, you'd have to approach the guard on duty and ask them to take down an email or phone number. You might have to translate information to the guard to write down. Then, they hand you the paper at the end of the visit.

When time is up, you grab your things from the locker, return the locker key, and get your IDs returned.

This was a daylong commitment. On court days it could be even longer. The check-in process is the same, except you are taken to a second waiting room to await admittance to the courtroom. On court days, times could be changed constantly. I have been told that an individual's court appointment was at 9AM, and then arrive only to be told it got pushed back to 1PM. In this scenario, you must leave and come back and start the check-in process all over again. Then, when it was finally time for court, you could be in the courtroom for as little as 30 minutes and as long as four hours.

The entire process is physically and emotionally draining. The facility uses many strategies to discourage people from visiting: the drive, waiting period, dress code, time changes, and overall unpredictability of the system. I would come back from visits ready for a nap or a full night's sleep. The requirement of government ID discourages undocumented family members from visiting or even calling loved ones, because they themselves are scared of being apprehended. The long court hearings rarely had positive outcomes; at an ICIJ coalition meeting it was reported that only 10% of immigration cases are granted asylum at Adelanto Detention Facility. I cried driving down the mountain out of frustration too many times to count. The sense of hopelessness is by design.

Those inside the facility feel this twofold. Depression and suicide are prevalent in the facility. In 2018, the office of the Inspector General released a report of their investigation of Adelanto Detention Facilities. During the inspection, fifteen nooses were found, as well as "inadequate" medical care and overly restricted segregation (Office of

Inspector General 2018: 2). During my time organizing, we held several vigils that honored the names of people who had died inside Adelanto Detention Facility over the years. There are people inside who go months without a visit because their loved ones are too scared to enter the building or because they lack connections to the local community. Due to the strategically enforced isolation in the facility, sanctuary practices are imperative.

Sanctuary in this space meant accompanying (walking alongside) an individual through their experience in detention and post-release to varying degrees. Volunteers accompanied individuals through visits, by attending court hearings, and by being a part of their network of support in fighting for release and post-release work.

Visiting people inside was one way to remind individuals that they have a community outside who cares about them and their welfare. When I spoke with Soli, he shared how visitations helped him.

“I remember I told you before while you came and gave me hope by your visit, thank you for that and appreciated you and your organization ‘cause it's feel like it was the first visit for me. Nobody came...But we have to have hope and perseverance and faith...and this is of course my call for everyone. I said it will be end, no matter how long it takes. I don't know the time. I don't know how. But I sure that it will end.”

Soli's words helped make me feel like I was making a difference; his words encouraged me to continue with my research and activism. Soli was inside Adelanto Detention Facility for 18 months. I was the first person to visit him. He said it brought him hope and strength to have visitors. While he created his own community of support inside the facility through his Bible reading group, the people on the outside gave him hope that someday he would leave the facility. Volunteers can visit only one person per

visit, primarily because the process of visitation is time-consuming and the facility's visitation times do not lend themselves for being able to visit more than one person a day.

Court hearings are important to attend as they demonstrate to judges that the individual does have community ties. Often, judges would comment and be impressed by the number of people that would show up for court hearings. We would also provide funds for commissary purchases (store inside prisons and detention facilities) like extra food, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, and other necessities. Other work would involve finding lawyers and ways to pay legal fees and/or bonds. The culmination of these actions were ways we worked to combat detention in the region.

#### *Analysis of Adelanto Detention Facility*

Overall, the sanctuary practice in Adelanto Detention Facility is short-term sanctuary. This work is extremely important as it demonstrates to individuals that there are people outside of their family who care and are fighting for them. Accompaniment helps meet the immediate needs of immigrants living in detention, but accompaniment does not challenge detention. Accompaniment abides by the rules outlined by the facility; the goal is to get people released. As Pem Davidson Buck highlights, prisons are central to organizing and stratifying population (2021). Detention facilities are a part of prison industrial complex. Immigrants who serve time in prison, regardless of status, often find themselves transferred to detention facilities. This is the prison-to-ICE pipeline. The pipeline is a means of stratifying immigrants and enables the good versus criminal immigrant discourse to prevail, as detention facilities are marked as where the "bad immigrants" go. Accompaniment does not disrupt the pipeline or prevent apprehension. Even shutting down the pipeline would not resolve the issue of immigrants being



criminalized, and the prison-industrial system has racialized means of policing communities, including immigrant communities (Burch 2021).

In trying to get people released, volunteers have to organize bond fundraisers. For someone to be released, you must pay a bond, which I have seen as low as \$7,000 and as high as \$80,000, which serves as collateral that the individual will attend all their court hearings. ICE keeps this money if a court appointment is missed, otherwise the money will eventually be returned to whomever paid the bond. This is just one of many ways businesses and government profit from detention.

Despite the challenges of detention, accompaniment can be considered an intervention. Accompaniment works toward getting people out. Getting people out means individuals can share their stories and bring to light the injustices occurring inside the facility. IM4HI finds that storytelling by people who have experienced detention has been one of the most impactful ways to mobilize volunteers into action.

California has taken steps to end detention in the state. In 2019, California passed AB32, a bill that would end for-profit prisons and detention in California. This bill would phase out facilities by 2028 and end contracts in 2020; this was a big win for organizers. Adelanto is one of the facilities that would close as a result of this legislation. Unfortunately, in 2021 we have yet to see any impact from the bill. In fact, the facility has expanded by added 700 beds since the bill passed. Similar to the California Values Act, the legislative wins feel hollow, as organizers have yet to see results. Again, even when pro-immigrant policies pass, nothing happens. The empire-state will never act against its own interests. Politicians and law enforcement will not relinquish the power afforded to them by the empire-state. Their goal is to keep the empire-state operational.

## **Long-Term Sanctuary Building**

Throughout these examples of sites of sanctuary, we the community navigate the obstacles created by the empire-state. Each sanctuary practice falls within short-term sanctuary. The community addresses the immediate and urgent needs of immigrants. This work is important and, in some instances, life-saving for those living in detention. Despite the number of releases and legislation we get passed, none offer a resolution to immigration. In each space there were different ways activists and immigrants were stratified and denied belonging. The activists at the Riverside County Board of Supervisor meetings were told they did not belong by the anti-immigrant group, law enforcement, and politicians. At the shelters, Mam immigrants are not given the same resources as Spanish speaking immigrants. In fact, most of the Inland immigrant infrastructure is designed to serve Spanish and English-speaking immigrants. Currently, the infrastructure does not exist for communities that do not speak these languages. Inside Adelanto Detention Facility, immigrants are framed as criminals and subjected to violence in the facility. Despite reports and lawsuits, the facility's practices have remained unchanged.

Drawing from interview data presented in Chapter 4 on long-term sanctuary, pro-immigrant activists envision a long-term sanctuary to be a world where every person can be their full selves. This entails dismantling systems of stratification and dismantling empire itself.

In order to build toward a long-term sanctuary, we need to dismantle the empire-state system of governance. We must abolish systems of incarceration, including both sides of the prison-to-ICE pipeline. Within our communities, we also need to evaluate the

ways we are complicit in othering, such as having systems that are not inclusive and accessible to all (languages) and systems we partner with that are entrenched in a history (and present) rooted in oppression, like the Catholic Church.

In the following two chapters, I will share the stories of two men who lived in detention inside Adelanto. I share their stories to highlight the different ways immigrants are stratified and the way good-criminal discourse is weaponized to deny belonging. Building a just community means we must be comprehensive in our approach. Through their stories, we can understand more deeply the pervasiveness of empire-state and coloniality.

## CHAPTER 6: CARVED OUT FROM BELONGING

The sanctuary practice of accompaniment is consuming. Accompaniment is a commitment to walk alongside someone in a very trying moment of their life. You need to hold yourself accountable and be present with them. You become invested in their story and well-being. While you may start out as a stranger to them, you become their friend and advocate.

In this chapter, I will be using narrative inquiry, which centers the lived experience as theory. Whereas embodied writing centers my experience, narrative inquiry is a means of telling the story of others. Narrative inquiry entails sharing data “along temporal dimensions, personal-social dimensions, and with place” (Clandinin & Connelly: 129). I explore Goku’s and Soli’s (Chapter 7) experiences through narrative inquiry. Goku is the second person I accompanied. Goku’s mother reached out to IM4HI for help in supporting him however we could. His mother is undocumented and therefore unable to enter Adelanto. Goku and his mother learned about IM4HI through his friends inside Adelanto, as his friends were also being accompanied by IM4HI volunteers. He was given the nickname Goku by these same friends, because he had a visible Dragon Ball Z tattoo and spiky hair reminiscent of the character Goku. Through Goku’s story, I explore how immigrants with a criminal conviction are excluded from belonging as well as the systems they are forced to navigate. His story highlights the need to dismantle carceral systems and empire.

### **Goku**

I was taking the long drive to Adelanto again, this time for a court hearing. This was my first time returning to the detention facility since Jose Juan was deported to

Guatemala. Jose Juan was the first person I had ever accompanied, and though I hoped we would find a way to get him asylum, I do take comfort knowing that we were able to safely coordinate his return home. I had connected him to the Guatemalan Consulate, and with their help he made arrangements for a safe return. Inside Adelanto, Jose Juan was battling depression; drawing was his only outlet in processing the experience. He could no longer handle the captivity anymore. When he arrived in Guatemala, he sent us a WhatsApp message reporting how happy he was to be reunited with family and stated he would not return to the US. It wasn't worth it.

Beginning accompaniment with a new person and with Jose Juan fresh on my mind, I did not know what to expect. I was attending court for someone I had never met; I was about to hear Goku's story for the first time in a court context. All I knew was that Goku was a local; he grew up in the Inland Empire.

On October 15, 2018, I drove to Adelanto for Goku's court hearing. When I arrived, I met up with a few other IM4HI volunteers that came to help pack the court. Less volunteers showed up for this court hearing because Goku was not an asylum seeker. There were some volunteers who only wanted to work with asylum seekers, because they are perceived as victims of unjust immigration policies. This contrasts with immigrants in Adelanto who have a criminal conviction. During the Trump administration, Adelanto Detention Facility had increasingly more asylum seekers than in the past, and this resulted in an increase of volunteers for IM4HI. The California Values Act (SB54) contributed to lower numbers of people apprehended in the communities; those that were in detention were usually direct transfers from prisons or had charges and

convictions (the carve outs). One of the volunteers spoke against the treatment of asylum seekers living in detention and the practice of categorizing them as “illegal.” Rose stated:

“I mean, what would you turn them [asylum seekers] in for, they're following the law, and that's what I keep trying to tell people, people migrating are asking for asylum, that's not illegal. And they put them in a system [of incarceration]. They're not illegal, I've said it over and over again. I see it on TV. These aren't people that are illegal maybe there's a tiny little, you know, population that's trying to get across the border and not going through a legal process, but the vast numbers are legal.

Rose’s statement reflects the sentiments of many IM4HI volunteers who would rather put time and resources into asylum seekers.

I sat down with the volunteers who were there. While we chatted awaiting to be called into the next waiting room for court, Elena and I scanned the room for other people coming to support Goku. When we entered, we saw Joe. Joe is a retired lawyer who was considering coming out of retirement to take on pro-bono immigration cases. Joe was not an immigration attorney, but we had met Joe at a seminar designed to help non-immigration lawyers represent immigrants for bond hearings for people living in detention. At the training, we spoke to Joe about Goku’s case, and Joe was interested in taking it on. Joe agreed to come to Goku’s upcoming bond hearing to learn more about him.

Walking up to Joe, I saw him speaking with people I had not yet met. They were Goku’s fiancé, his fiancé’s mother, and two of his friends. Elena and I introduced ourselves to Goku’s loved ones, and we sat down together waiting to be called into the designated court waiting room.

After twenty minutes, we were called to the security desk to get patted down and scanned. We were then led to the designated court waiting room. This room is long and

narrow with chairs bolted to the walls and ground as well as a few floating chairs. The only windows were on the doors; one faced the hallway toward the different courtrooms and the other faced the hallway back to the entrance. There was also a little service window for the ICE operating office for the facility. The little service window always made people feel uneasy, as we felt like we were being listened to or surveilled; ICE was right there. Above the window was a framed photo of Trump and Pence. Their photos could be seen throughout the facility.

Time dragged in this space since we could not bring our phones, or anything for that matter. It was also one of the few rooms without a television. The front waiting room and even the visitation room had a television, both of which would alternate between playing Fox News or Nickelodeon. But this waiting room felt like limbo. I have sat in that room for as little as 30 minutes, but on this day, I waited for two hours. You sit there not knowing why the court time is being delayed, and the facility provides updates at their convenience only.

Finally, we saw people enter the court hallway in handcuffs. Everyone raised out of their chairs a little bit, hovering over the seat to see if it was their loved one walking into the courtroom. Goku's fiancé confirmed to me that that was Goku; it was finally time. Goku walked into the courtroom handcuffed and in an orange suit. He was about six feet tall with a slim build. Goku had a sleeve and neck tattoos, and all the tattoos were playful and brightly colored.

We were expecting the court hearing to be for bail, but since he was appealing his case, the judge told Goku he needed to resubmit all of his previous paperwork in order to move forward. He was starting the process all over again. The judge gave him clear

instructions, and she seemed like she was trying to help him. The judge instructed Goku to make multiple copies before resubmitting all the paperwork in time for his new court date. Shortly after scheduling the next court date, we were instructed to leave.

The next day, October 16, 2018, I drove back out to Adelanto to introduce myself to Goku. Along with me was one of the students I was working with who was committed to accompanying Goku, as well. The wait was shorter this time, we only waited an hour before being led to the visitation room. We sat at a table with four chairs across from Goku. We were never allowed to sit side by side with the people we visited. It was here that we heard his story for the first time, from his perspective.

### **Goku, Apprehension, and Adelanto**

Goku was on the 91 Freeway driving back from Orange County where he worked as a mason. He had worked late, so the roads were fairly empty. He stopped at an Arco gas station to fill up his tank. An unmarked car pulled up beside him and two men came out of the car. Goku said they weren't dressed like cops. Before he realized it, they tazed him. They tazed him three times. When he woke up, he was handcuffed in a hospital bed with an officer at his side. He did not realize it was ICE until he awoke.

The last thing he remembered before losing consciousness was a conversation between the two men. They were arguing whether to take Goku to the hospital, and luckily the other man relented. In the aftermath of the abduction, Goku's car was left and abandoned at the gas station. Eventually, he was transferred from a Los Angeles jail to Adelanto Detention Facility. His family had gone three days without hearing from him or knowing what had happened to him.



At the time, Goku was 27 years old. We were the same age. He had lived most of his life in the US, and came to the US when he was six from Mexico. He is a skilled mason and had been working in the industry since he was 18. He has a fiancé, family, and friends here that love him. His life literally changed overnight.

When I visited Goku the day after his court hearing, he shared that he had been inside Adelanto for 6 months. Goku shared that he was being harassed by a kitchen guard. Finally, after weeks of being taunted he talked back, and in response the guard broke his nose. Goku was not the first person to share about being harassed by guards, but his story is one of the more severe examples. Despite having his nose broken, he was denied medical attention, put into segregation (this happens when an individual is viewed as a security challenge and is separated from the general population), and changed from an orange jumpsuit to red. He would go in and out of segregation throughout his time in Adelanto, his longest stint being a week. When someone is in segregation, they are handcuffed at all times; the only time an individual is allowed to be unrestrained is when they are sleeping or using the restroom. His water intake was also limited during this period, and visitations could be denied.

Goku suspected the retaliation was due to him translating legal documents for Spanish speakers. Many people inside do not have lawyers and are left to represent themselves. Goku would make himself available to help others file their paperwork, since not all the paperwork was translated for non-English speakers.

### **Back to Court**

Two weeks later, on October 29, 2018, we were back in court for Goku's bond hearing. While we waited for court to begin, his fiancé shared her concern over the

outcome. The judge overseeing the case was known for being hard on individuals with DUI charges, as the judge's husband had been killed by a drunk driver. This was fairly common knowledge among lawyers in the region. Unfortunately for Goku, he had one misdemeanor DUI from 2016 and a recent DUI charge that he was combatting. Misdemeanor DUI charges mean he was driving with an alcohol blood content above .08, and no injuries or collision occurred.

After four hours of waiting, we were let into the courtroom. I was surprised to see Joe representing Goku already, and at the same time I felt a sense of relief. Success rates increase with representation. After we entered and sat down, the bailiff asked Joe to identify the people on the bench. After identifying us, the bailiff asked that Goku's fiancé and future mother-in-law leave the courtroom. I was now sitting alone on the back bench. Goku was having a Rodriguez bond hearing, which outlines that any person who has been held in detention for more than 6 months has the right to a bond hearing for release. To be approved for bond release, you must demonstrate that the plaintiff is not a danger to society or a flight risk.

Throughout the court hearing I kept my head down; it was painful to watch. The prosecutor's first question was for Goku to recount the stories behind his two DUIs. While the 2016 charge was straightforward, the second incident was complex.

Goku recounted that he was returning home after a day of fishing at Huntington Beach for a friend's birthday. Over the course of the trip, he drank two beers. While driving back he was pulled over by California Highway Patrol (CHP). CHP informed Goku he was being pulled over because one of his taillights were out. The officer helped guide him off the freeway so he could wait for a tow truck. While waiting for the tow

truck the officer noticed his friend was drunk. Over the course of 30 minutes, they had him repeatedly take a breathalyzer test, count forward and backwards to 100, and a balance test. CHP proceeded to arrest Goku and placed him in jail. At no point did an officer share what his alcohol blood level was, nor was it documented.

Goku was still battling this second charge and had an upcoming court date. Joe and the judge went back and forth over the second charge. Joe argued the second charge should be discounted, as it was not conclusive. The judge refused to discount the second charge, as he has already had a previous conviction. After 40 minutes, the judge felt there was no need to discuss Goku as a flight risk, as she identified him as a “danger to society,” which is enough to deny a bond release.

I walked out to the courtroom and into the waiting room where Goku’s fiancé and future mother-in-law were waiting. I had to break the news to them. Having to break this news to them was one of the hardest and most painful things I’ve had to do. I still well up with tears thinking of that moment. His fiancé clasped her face crying. I also had to share the news that he was denied voluntary leave (this allows an individual to leave the US within a certain timeframe on your own, rather than under a removal order), because she was not the judge presiding over his immigration case. She was only presiding over his bond hearing. We returned our badges and exchanged a tight hug. I promised to continue to be there for them however I could. I cried driving down the mountain.

The following day, October 30, 2018, I drove back up to visit Goku. I was exhausted and upset from the day before, but I still drove out. Accompaniment work and immigration organizing is very draining. Elena often said, “You spend a decade fighting and giving it your all only to experience incremental changes and wins.” I put my own

feelings aside, because as bad as I felt, I knew Goku bore the burden. As my mom would say to me growing up, I needed “to put muscle in my feelings.” I drove up the mountain.

I was surprised at how empty the waiting room was this day, and I was hopeful that I would get through quickly. When I checked in at the security desk, they already knew I was there to visit Goku. Everything was moving so quickly it felt too good to be true, and it was. I was called back to the security desk and told that I would have to wait two and a half hours to see him, because where he was presently located made him less accessible. I was also told we would have a no-contact visit, something I had not yet experienced. I started to worry about Goku’s safety.

I did not have to wait the full two and a half hours, only an hour and a half. The no-contact visitation room was long and narrow. It looked similar to what you would see in the movies. There were rows of stalls with dividers between spaces for privacy. The chairs were the hard plastic chairs used in grade school, and each stall had one phone. The glass divider was tall and completely soundproof. As a notably loud person, I was impressed that you truly could hear nothing. As I walked down the hall of stalls, I looked for Goku’s face and found him at the very last stall. We were the only ones on either side. Goku was in a red suit this time, and his wrists were noticeably bruised. They put him in segregation again. This time he was put into segregation because he was being accused of smuggling in a tattoo machine. We laughed in disbelief. HOW?! Goku struggled to get ahold of a pencil and paper in the facility, how could he smuggle in a tattoo machine! Goku’s future mother-in-law and fiancé suspect the segregation was a result of him speaking out against the facility.

A person from Human Resources was interviewing people detained inside the facility to investigate abuse and violations inside Adelanto. Human Resources had interviewed Goku and was looking to do a follow-up interview with him, but the guards informed them that Goku had been deported. Goku heard this story from one of his friends who was in the general population (not segregation) at the time of this interaction. We were careful with our words because we feared our conversation was being recorded or listened to through the phones.

When we talked about the previous day's court hearing, Goku shared he was not surprised with the outcome. Apparently, from the beginning, the judge told him that he would not receive bail from her because of his DUIs. We changed the subject and talked about fishing. I shared with him my story about how at eight years old, my cousin and I tried to save a fish's life by taking it out of the water and going to the park ranger for help. Goku shared a story of a time he went fishing with his tio (uncle). His uncle had caught a huge fish, and as he was getting his picture taken to go up on a wall the fish jumped out of his hands and back into the water. The photo captured his uncle's reaction to losing the fish as it leaped back into the water. Six minutes before our time was up, a guard approached him asking him if he wanted to leave so he could make it in time for headcount. He asked me if it was okay, and I let him know I would do whatever he wanted. He expressed annoyance that he had to walk through the facility's Halloween party, but we said good-bye and parted ways.

Three days later, on November 2, 2018, I texted his fiancé and found out Goku was deported to Mexico. She shared that he already had a job lined up as a mason and started working already. Goku was wrestling with the uncertainty of his future and life.

He told his fiancé and girlfriend of nine years to move on with her life without him, as he felt to continue with the relationship would be unfair to her. The last we spoke was brief; he wanted his story told and shared. He gave me verbal permission to share his story and experiences. He is currently rebuilding his life in Guanajuato, Mexico.

### **Analysis & Reflection**

Goku is someone who was carved out of sanctuary and marked a criminal. Throughout his story, there are themes of abuse of authority and ways frameworks of criminality were imposed upon him.

For Goku, Southern California was home. It is where his parents, cousins, friends, and fiancé live. He was a part of the community but excluded by laws and law enforcement. Goku's DUI was a major obstacle in his battle against deportation. He was disqualified from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) because of his DUI charge. Goku also experienced challenges in marrying his longtime girlfriend as a pathway for citizenship. Though his fiancé submitted the marriage petition to the facility, Adelanto said they never received any paperwork and when she attempted to resubmit, she was told she was too late to file the paperwork. ICE was not going to allow them to marry. Finally, Goku's identity was reduced to one DUI conviction and a second charge he was combatting. Law enforcement, the judge overseeing his bond hearing, and the treatment he experienced inside Adelanto is embedded in the projects of the empire-state.

Goku will be the first to admit that his first DUI conviction was a poor decision he learned from. In the case of his second DUI charge, we see an abuse of power by law enforcement. He was not pulled over for reckless driving, but because a taillight issue. Rather than give him a ticket or warning, the officer stayed to "wait" for roadside

assistance with Goku. It was not until they saw that his friend, who was a passenger in the vehicle, was drunk that they decided to do a breathalyzer test on Goku. At no point did the officers inform him of his blood alcohol level; they simply arrested him. Goku never had the opportunity to have his day in court and highlight the police misconduct, yet this second charge was used in immigration court as sufficient evidence to label Goku as a “danger to society.”

So often individuals with criminal charges are viewed as irredeemable. Past mistakes are considered indicative of a person’s entire character. This discourse is key in constructs of power and punishment. Polanco describes this as the *common sense-ness of incarceration*, a product of negotiations between the state, space, and individuals (2015: 202). The common-sense-ness of incarceration creates a discourse that positions the cause of crime as a result of an individual, thereby making the state invisible as a perpetrator of crime. Goku became defined by his DUI charge; because of his first conviction he was already viewed as guilty in his second charge, despite the circumstances of apprehension by law enforcement. Goku is a *necrosubject* (Rosas 2019) two times over; he is undocumented and has a criminal conviction. He already lived in a *death world* (Membe 2003) on the outside of Adelanto, living his life trying to avoid law enforcement, ICE, and the threat of deportation, only to find himself in the death world of detention, not knowing what was to come. The unknown and fear of deportation is one reason so many take their own lives in detention. In detention, each person inside only means more money for GEO, the for-profit company that deals in incarceration contracts with the US government. By reducing the daily costs of housing individuals, for-profit companies profit from each person that is detained each day. The common-sense-ness of

incarceration is dangerous, because it leads people not to question the whys, hows, and implications of incarceration.

The abuse of law enforcement experienced by Goku during his apprehension exists within the common-sense-ness of incarceration framework, because his identity of a necro-subject places all the blame on him. The logic is that Goku “brought the abuse onto himself because of his actions.” Goku was abducted and disappeared without a trace. His mother went three days without hearing from him; his truck was left abandoned at a gas station. He was tazed by the officers three times to the point of requiring hospitalization. This is excessive force and violence by authorities. This is treatment no one is deserving of, yet the framework of Goku being a “criminal immigrant” is used to justify the state’s actions.

Violence against “criminals and immigrants” is often viewed as permissible and necessary due to racial prejudices. This is where it is critical to see the links between the ways communities of color are disproportionately policed and how that links to immigration and incarceration. A cycle of exclusion is perpetuated by these two interlocking systems. By policing immigrant neighborhoods, officers are hunting undocumented immigrants. Once identified, they are put through the carceral system, only to be transferred into ICE custody to await deportation. Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey refer to this as a *constitution-free zone*, which refers to the ways the borderland regions of the US exist in a state of exception (2015: 205). Law enforcement and ICE have a lot of power and authority over immigrants and communities of color. Goku never stood a chance.



Finally, inside Adelanto he was being abused and harassed by guards. There are a number of guards who are vocally anti-immigrant. When I would go and welcome people recently released from Adelanto, they would point out which guards were kind, and which were cruel. Goku is not the only person I worked with who was beaten by facility guards. This has been an ongoing issue. Again, we find people falling into this ideology that violence is permissible against bodies marked as criminal. Goku was continuously placed in segregation by the facility for reasons that were not made clear to him. Because Goku is bilingual, he was able to help translate paperwork and what the guards were saying. Multiple people I worked with stated guards would taunt them inside, yelling at them to “learn English” and “speak to me in English.” From the testimonies, guards and the system at large are not interested in seeing those detained inside reunited with their families or released back into the community. They only seek to enforce death worlds and necrosubjugation. The common-sense-ness of incarceration becomes a logic of domination for those acting on behalf of the state (law enforcement, guards, judges). These systems are not designed to care for individuals nor create pathways of reintegrating them into US communities. The carceral system, and by extension detention, are concerned with wealth and power derived from punishment (Foucault 1995, Buck 2015). The system of incarceration and criminalization are designed to continue exclusion. Being able to see the larger system that organizes individuals is a grounding reminder that this work is not won case by case. Accompaniment as a sanctuary practice can only go so far in supporting individuals; it does not disrupt the system. Despite helping acquire resources and support for Goku, the logic of domination was powerful and difficult to challenge. How does one combat “common-sense?” Goku’s

experience offers a lens into the nuances and linkages between policing, incarceration, and immigration. His story highlights where the dismantling must occur.

### **Aftermath of Accompaniment**

I felt like I failed Goku, and to a degree I still feel this way three years later. Working with Goku felt so different compared to the other people I accompanied. This is someone who was my age and grew up in the same spaces I did. I saw myself, my family, and my friends in him. Growing up we went to the same malls to hang out with friends, enjoyed the same local restaurants, and were familiar with each other's high schools. While our lived experiences were not identical, there was a lot we did share. This felt more personal because of the level of familiarity and left me struggling to continue my research. I could not accompany another person for months following Goku's deportation. I couldn't write, and I wanted to disengage from research.

Goku, like so many others, existed in a state of precarity. So many like him are unsure what release will look like, whether it means staying or leaving the US. When people enter detention, they do not know when they will be released. At no point are they told how long their process might take. The precarity is part of ICE's tactic to push people to their edge so that they sign "self-deportation" papers and, in more extreme cases, commit suicide. Detention is a death world. It is a means of stratification of immigrant populations; you do not want to end up in a place where "bad immigrants" go. This discourse imposes the ideology that if immigrants simply perform heteronormative citizenship, they may be able to avoid the same bleak fate. Coloniality and the empire-state's need to preserve their power takes many forms. Goku's story is only an example of a very complex system of domination. The next case I will be sharing is of Soli, an

asylum-seeker who was inside Adelanto for eighteen months, and his story of survival.

Soli's story offers a different perspective in the ways the empire-state exerts domination.

## CHAPTER 7: ASYLUM & SANCTUARY

Three months had passed since Goku had been deported. I still think about what happened to him after we spoke last. He wanted to move forward with his life and put this experience behind him. After walking alongside Goku, I was not ready to immediately start accompanying another person. I had an aversion to writing, I did not want to deal with my thoughts or feelings. In this moment of grieving, writing felt like the most unnatural act. I was emotionally exhausted, and it took time for me to be in a place where I could accompany someone. I was coping with loss, because I truly believed Goku stood a chance at being released back to his loved ones. I decided to take a few months off.

In these three months, I participated in protests and assisted other volunteers, but I was not in the headspace to provide one-on-one support. Recognizing when we can step up or back in the field is challenging, but it is important that we are showing up for community partners in the right headspace. Another reason to step back from fieldwork is for our own mental health. In academia, we are taught to push through regardless of what is going on around us, and this is a capitalist value that is not concerned with the individual, only their productivity. Being an accomplice, I want to be fully present and intentional in the way I work alongside partners. To get there, I needed to pace myself. When I was ready, I was introduced to Soli, an asylum seeker inside Adelanto.

During my time working in the region, I found that a large number of people inside Adelanto Detention Facility were asylum seekers. The detention of asylum seekers exceeded the jurisdiction of the California Values Act, but local organizing and sanctuary

practices revolved around this population. Hugo shares strategies in how resources are shared across those living in detention:

“We'll find someone to visit them, you know, and as long as they're willing, we'll find someone to listen and support them and we give commissary to folks that reach out to us. It's a lot as you know because then everyone reaches out... We don't look at it as whether you have a crime or not, it's more like, are you just trying to take advantage of this, because you can right? So, we look at it that way. We look at the case overall, and it's more of a decision based on whether we can actually win a case. We still provide support, so like, let's say we get a case where we do the intake. We look at the work that we, meaning our attorneys that we work with, look at the documents. They say there's really nothing we can do to help this person get out of the detention. Unfortunately, it seems like they're probably gonna end up getting deported. And what we find is most times like they already paid an attorney, and now the attorney tells me they may put in the appeals but it's like, yeah, well you can do that, but you're gonna lose the appeal.”  
(Hugo)

Case winnability for immigrants with a criminal conviction, as we saw in Goku's story, is unlikely. Those charged with a misdemeanor and felony face larger hurdles than those seeking asylum. While asylum seekers usually only require an immigration attorney, immigrants with civil charges require one or two lawyers versed in civil and immigration court. This often is more costly and these cases are often considered the more challenging ones to win, meaning the likelihood of pro-bono work is slim. For this reason, more energy is put toward cases that can be won; therefore, asylum seekers receive more support.

Soli's story highlights the ways the US empire-state shaped his necrosubjugation. In this chapter, I utilize narrative inquiry, as I did in the previous chapter, to explore Soli's story and sanctuary practices. Since Soli was released into the community, I was able to formally interview him and utilize direct quotes, something I was unable to do with Goku due to his deportation and overall accessibility. I will close the chapter by further reflecting on themes and differences between Goku's and Soli's experiences. In

direct quotes, I will insert words to help clarify intended meanings from Soli. As he is not a native English speaker, I will only add language to help clarify what Soli is intending to say. He has also read over the chapter to approve language and meaning.

### **Soli's Story**

In May 2018, Soli left Egypt with the hope of seeking asylum in the US. He was 37 years old. Soli is a practicing Christian and was fleeing religious persecution in Egypt, where Christians face violence and hostility from anti-Christian groups. Anti-Christian groups have historical roots, and while the violence occurs at the communal level, the state does nothing to prevent it (Human Rights Watch 2016). Soli was very active at his church. In Egypt, he worked at his congregation creating educational pamphlets, events, and other promotional material. While working at the church, Soli started to receive death and kidnapping threats. The threats first started at his workplace (the church), and over the next year they continued to spread to other parts of his life. He eventually was attacked on the street, leaving him with permanent damage on his right shoulder. Soli resigned from his job at his church and moved in with his mother, but the threats continued. After feeling there was no other alternative, he secured a travel visa to the US. Soli is someone who has been able to travel globally and see many countries without any issue in the past. With the travel visa, he hoped to learn more about the process of asylum in the US.

Soli described the radical change from leaving Egypt and then entering the US: “One night, I was sitting in my bedroom with my passport and a valid visa, and then on the other side, I feel like I'm in prison in my room.” Everything happened very quickly around him.

Upon arriving to Los Angeles Airport (LAX), Soli was immediately apprehended and questioned by Homeland Security. Soli describes the experience in the following passage:

“They didn't let me in and asked me to go back to my country. So, at this moment I told them I am afraid to go back. And from this point we started, everything is turning up and down. And previously, I don't know anything about the detention center and all this world. But they told me that we will not let me go in. And they stay like a couple of hours, like over eight hours of investigation in the airport. And it was very, very hard and they sent me to the detention center, where I spent 18 months inside.”

On May 26, 2018, Soli entered Adelanto Detention Facility handcuffed, legs shackled, and described his chest as bound. He said he felt like a criminal in an English film; to me, the description sounded like Hannibal Lector.

Similar to Goku, Soli experienced abuse inside Adelanto. Soli recounts:

“I fell down from the stairs inside the detention center. One officer while we were getting the breakfast he pushed me to run and he threatened to close the door. Since he closed the door, I was unable to get my meal. So I went like half a day without food and this is the time I don't have money in my account [to buy food] or anything. It was like at 5AM in the morning so I get started running [to avoid the same treatment from the day before] and I collapsed from the stairs and hit my knee and my shoulder and I start suffering and like after a long, long time processes the medical department, like after one year, finally like send me for orthopedic [to get treated for my injury]”

We first met February 17, 2019, as he was approaching his one-year mark of surviving in the facility. He was in a wheelchair. On this first visit, Elena and I traveled together to meet with Soli. At the time, he expressed having lost any sense of freedom and was losing hope of ever leaving. He was leading a Bible group and said he could not support the group. He couldn't speak with hope anymore. He told us that our visit was the first time in a long time that he experienced hope, as he had not had any visitors before us. As we were building an accompaniment team for Soli, he only had one explicit

request: no Muslim visitors. He was still wrestling with his traumatic experiences in Egypt.

On March 19, 2019, I was able to see Soli again. Adelanto Detention Facility was experiencing a measles outbreak, and only people who had been vaccinated were allowed to visit. The facility did not ask for any proof of vaccination and allowed people to enter on their word or at their own risk. Soli had been vaccinated, so he was able to receive visitors. Those who were not vaccinated were isolated and quarantined. I was vaccinated, so I felt comfortable visiting him.

I was visiting Soli because he had been on a hunger strike with 12 others inside Adelanto. Nine of the people were on full hunger strike, meaning there were also refusing water. Their hunger strike was in demand for proper medical attention. Soli described the aftermath of the hunger strike and the medical care in the facility in the following passage:

“I ask for a written report [on my diagnosis], which I never get it was my diagnosis was from about my case and what is the next step? Finally, give me like a little piece of paper, white paper piece without clause or signature and it has like a general [language], but I didn't get anything. And that was in May 2019. And after that I spent like more six months, I get out in November [2019], but I didn't get anything... I'm not saying they do not provide the medical treatment. No they provide, it's not the appropriate medical treatment [I needed] especially and I'm not going for medical or the doctors for sneezing or have flu or have headache or I feel my body is not okay. No, I didn't know that I have some [serious] medical issues.”

During our visit, Soli shared that he had just returned from Lancaster, an hour away, for MRI testing on his body to assess his leg injury. He was told he had cellulitis in his leg. Doctors told him he would need to return for surgery, which never happened.

Soli also shared that he received a deportation order because his asylum case was closed. We strategized trying to figure out next steps. Soli previously had a lawyer, but



this person ended up taking advantage of him. Soli's family at that point had not known he was detained. He did not want his mother worrying about him. The lawyer he had hired ended up calling and telling his family about his situation and tried extorting and threatening Soli's family for more money. This was not the first time I heard about lawyers extorting immigrants in detention. Elena had told me of about "La Fregona" in Texas. "Fregona" is slang for someone who is a "leech," a derogatory word for someone who knows how to manipulate.

In Texas, La Fregona was a lawyer who had the reputation of getting people out of detention. People would pay thousands of dollars for her services. Later, these same people would find out that she was not freeing people but putting them on the fast-track for deportation. Though she was eventually exposed, her punishment was to pay a fine that was not even half the amount of money she made exploiting people in detention. The story of "La Fregona" demonstrates how even finding a good lawyer can be a challenge.

The last time I was able to see Soli in detention was April 19, 2019. I was meeting him with an investigative journalist, a young woman who was the same age as me. She was interested in what was happening inside Adelanto and took any opportunity she could to report on the state of the facility. This interview was approved by Adelanto Detention Facility administrators, and I, by extension, had permission to join the journalist as a translator.

After we notified the front desk of our arrival and business, they informed us that cameras had to be off and inside the camera bag. Our bags were searched thoroughly. We were told we could not use footage of guards' faces. They gave us thirty minutes to set up, speak with Soli, and take down equipment.

It was not long before we were called to the front. We were directed to the visitation room. Unlike previous times, there were a lot of men seated all over the room. It looked like the facility was giving some sort of orientation or meeting with people detained in the facility. There was a crowd of people in orange suits. As we walked past them, we were yelled at. Some asked for help, other asked if we were lawyers, and a few catcalled. It was overwhelming hearing so many people talk to us as we were quickly whisked out of the room. We found ourselves in a conference room with two windows.

We searched the space for cameras or microphones and did not find any. Soli was brought into the room in a wheelchair by a guard. By the time everything was set up, we had 20 minutes to talk to him. We chatted and Soli shared his asylum story and the inadequate medical care he received inside the facility. At the end of the interview, a guard quickly snatched Soli and pulled him away; we couldn't really say goodbye. We then had to rush and pack everything up.

As we debriefed the interview and experience in the waiting room, a man in a suit came out of the office space. It was one of the first times I saw someone in a suit who worked at the facility, with the exception of lawyers. He looked upset. He scolded us and accused us of recording in the waiting room and told us we needed to have everything put away. We realized in the rush of getting out that the camera bag was not completely closed, but the camera was off. The journalist apologized, as we sat there continuing to be scolded. Maybe it was because we were two women in our mid-twenties that he felt comfortable speaking to us so condescendingly. A few days later, Soli's story made the local news and an article was posted on their website.

From this point on, I was unable to visit Soli inside Adelanto. I was reaching the end of my funding and needed to look for work. Though we spoke on the phone a few times and wrote letters, I was running out of steam. By this time, Soli already had a wide network of support that included a Coptic Egyptian priest who would visit him. Though I felt heavy guilt for having to step back, I took comfort knowing that other people could step up.

Soli also had other forms of support he created for himself inside Adelanto Detention Facility. He reflected on what community looked like inside:

“But once I saw as a community I live with as a small community inside the detention a different culture. And they started speaking with other people and asking about your cases and from where they can get help, as I did for myself, maybe like organization or a phone number. And we started making this is a small relationship between each other. And one day I was thinking, right, we need to pray to visit to strengthen our faith and I find the group already exists. And I joined this group and like in two or three months the one who is leading the prayer gets out of the detention and we don’t anymore gather as a as a group. So, in this time, I get the responsibility and the feelings that I need to go forward and ask the people to come again. And from here we started, it’s happened in October 2018. And we started like a small group five or six people, and we do psalms reading the Bible. And sometimes we start eating together. After a prayer, and this group and everyone has something or hard time with family, we need prayer, we pray for him, or he has some court date or something in his case, we are praying for that. And, and this is it was the main thing and the main resource, of our hope and our strength and I’m keeping you [Cecilia] always saying “There will be an end” there will be a story to tell for our family or maybe our future kids.”

Soli’s reflection highlights the ways the experience of detention brings people together. He shared with me that most of the members in the faith group were Spanish speaking, so Soli would learn prayers in Spanish and picked up a little bit of the language in order to communicate with everyone in the group. This speaks to the resiliency and power of community in the face of adversity. Despite language barriers and the physical barriers holding them, they find ways to care for themselves and each other. The faith

reading group was a space Soli and others carved out for themselves to survive Adelanto Detention Facility.

Finally in November 2019, Soli was released on bond. Soli's cousin helped him take out a bail bond that unfortunately was high interest, but Soli could not wait anymore. He needed to get out for his mental and physical health. When I asked Soli about how he was adjusting to his life outside of detention and sanctuary, this is what he shared:

“I heard about sanctuary here, but I didn't experience that much as a benefit from this situation cause, I don't know, if I missed something, I have benefit. Or I can do something, but I don't know what is the way. But I was talking about my stay here in California. And since I get outside the detention as a one who has a court date, so I'm staying legal, and they get out of the detention center since I paid my bill. So I'm totally legal person inside there, but I don't have any rights. First of all, I don't have any ID even from the country or even my passport besides, so it's hard. You cannot open a bank account. You can't obtain a driver's license. You can't work and I know some of this is temporary but... Since I told you before, like the immigration law gives a right to appeal and this appealing process it maybe takes a long time, maybe now a year, two years. So how can a person who can live or survive in life for a year or two years without anything like no ID, I carry on my backpack, like a copy of my release like the bond, the paper like fee for paper, it and nobody asking me for anything. I'm a good person I'm avoiding any trouble but just in case it's happened. You have to explain more or more for someone to understand this. But no one not everyone or not every officer or police officer understand the immigration situation. So I afraid that he told me, Okay, I will take you and we'll find that out later, I will not be in this situation again. I will not be arrested for I didn't do something until he discovers that I'm legal and after that, he said, okay, you can go.”

I am sharing this long piece to emphasize the frustration experienced by Soli as he navigates post-release life. Once released from detention, there are still many other barriers preventing him from moving forward with his life. Soli named challenges like having his passport withheld to prevent him from travelling, being restricted from having a California ID or license, and not being allowed to work. He makes the point of how challenging being prevented from working is, especially considering that asylum court processes can take 1-2 years, sometimes more. How can people sustain themselves for

two years without work? What Soli did not mention is the ankle bracelets recently released people are forced to wear so ICE can track their movements. After being released, they are placed on house arrest for a period of time and charged anywhere from \$5-40 a day for the bracelets. These are the ways precarity continues, and immigrants are forced to find ways to survive through the process.

### **Sanctuary in Detention?**

As previously stated, asylum seekers to a degree exist outside of the jurisdiction of California's sanctuary law. The California Values Act is designed to build trust between undocumented community members and law enforcement, assuring immigrants that law enforcement is not working on behalf of or with ICE. With this understanding of sanctuary, newly arrived asylum seekers do not benefit, since upon entering the US they surrender themselves to the federal government. Within a legal context, asylum and sanctuary have different connotations, but as colloquial words they can be interchangeable. Asylum, similar to sanctuary, means a place of protection and refuge. Yet when Soli landed asking for refuge and protection, he experienced anything but. Soli was interrogated and treated with suspicion; this is a product of the immigration system that forces asylum seekers to prove credible fear of returning to their country of origin. Reflecting on the previously shared understanding of asylum and protection, Soli was not protected; rather, Homeland Security aimed to discern whether Soli was a threat. According to Soli, throughout his journey of seeking asylum, he has never (still to this date) experienced a semblance of sanctuary.

Similar to Goku, Soli is a necrosubject. Soli exists in the death world of detention, where corporations profit from his captivity. Though they are both necrosubjects, there

are different ways they were impacted by the US empire-state. Even prior to Adelanto, Soli's life in Egypt was a death world. He was living only to survive and avoid death as a result of religious persecution. The Egyptian government also practices nonperformativity (Ahmed 2006), in that it claims to value religious freedom but does nothing to create an environment that honors it (Human Rights Watch 2016). Despite this issue being global news, the immigration court has the authority to define and recognize violence as violence. To pass the credible fear test, an asylum seeker requires documented research, news article, and a personal story to make a strong credible fear case. It is on the basis of these components that the judge has the discretion to recognize the individual's fear as credible.

I shared the abuses Soli endured by guards. The detention facility operates within the common-sense-ness logic, in that it is up to the individual to advocate for medical aid or be sure that they eat. It ignores the fact that the guards have the power to prevent people from eating and that individuals cannot access medical care without going through channels of paperwork that the guards supply and coordinate. This is another example of the death world necrosubjects exist in.

Asylum seekers are also less likely to have community ties like those apprehended. It took months for Soli to be able to access a community of support. The remoteness of Adelanto Detention Facility and limited access to phones work to create ruptures in community.

Once Soli was released, he still found himself navigating a death world. Rather than feeling free, he felt constrained. As mentioned earlier, he was unable to work and had no form of identification outside immigration paperwork. Soli was frustrated trying

to figure out how to sustain himself, let alone feel safe. Who can afford to live for two years in the US without an income? This is another way asylum seekers exist in a state of necrosubjugation. They are rendered immobile. The system sets up immigrants to fail from the beginning, forcing them to work under the table and place themselves in vulnerable positions of being exploited by employers (Chang 1999, Chavez 1999, Holmes 2013, Mata 2014). This is made even more insidious by the fact that if an immigrant is employed and working, they are found in violation and can have their application denied. This is but another barrier and violence against immigrants by the US immigration system that is concerned not with offering access but gatekeeping. Only the wealthy have the means of navigating this.

While some volunteers can afford to sustain individuals for a time, part of accompaniment is helping recently released individuals find safe and secure housing and work. The immigration process is messy and filled with barriers, but individuals and communities find ways to circumvent the roadblocks. In the Inland Empire, organizations like the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center protect day laborers from being exploited. One of many services they offer are writing out contracts between day laborers and employers in order to assure day laborers are not being taken advantage of.

The withholding of any form of identification also enables necrosubjugation. The US empire-state holds asylum seekers in captivity, as they are limited in their ability to travel due to not having identification. Soli cannot fly domestically or internationally. He made a point that struck me when he expressed his concern of being stopped by police. Without his passport, and being barred from obtaining a California ID, Soli cannot afford to forget his immigration paperwork. Having met people who were apprehended by

police and transferred to ICE inside Adelanto, he fears officers disregarding his paperwork and being sent back to detention.

This is where the California Values Act becomes relevant and important to asylum seekers, but Soli's concern demonstrates how little faith and trust immigrants have in the system. Soli was concerned with the lack of training law enforcement has concerning US immigration. The California Values Act was supposed to build trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities, but no oversight or consequences were put into place to hold law enforcement accountable (Asian American Law Caucus 2019, Mancina 2019). Through both Soli and Goku's stories, we see the ways immigrants are governed and excluded from belonging. The death worlds they navigate are defined by values of the empire-state.

#### *Community Sanctuary Practices*

Despite the web of oppressive systems Goku and Soli had to navigate, community sanctuary persisted. Though it looked different for them due to their circumstances of detention, their stories shaped community responses. For example, Soli was able to get an accompaniment team. This means he had multiple people offering him accompaniment. For every individual there is a team of support, and Soli had a larger network supporting him than Goku. There are important differences to note as to why they differ. One is that organizational volunteers were less inclined to support Goku because he had a previous criminal conviction, whereas Soli did not. Though we had less volunteers for Goku, the type of support they needed were different as well.

For Goku, we did not need to recruit a team of visitors, because Goku had loved ones, family, and friends that lived locally. Goku needed access to a lawyer and support



in navigating the complicated immigration system, but he had community. Soli, on the other hand, does not have family or loved ones living in the US beyond one cousin who was unable to visit him inside Adelanto. Soli needed a lawyer, fundraising to pay his bond for release, visitation, and spiritual support. Also, as noted in Hugo's quote earlier, there is a limited amount of resources available which forces organizations to be strategic on where resources go. Who gets access to a pro-bono lawyer? Who gets bond fundraising support?

The community of support is not limited to external visitors, and both Goku and Soli created their own networks of support within the detention facility. Soli's Bible reading group played a huge role in grounding him and giving him hope. Goku's support came from the friends he helped complete paperwork who also in turn connected Goku's mother to IM4HI. There is a lot of resource sharing and support inside Adelanto among people living in detention.

Sanctuary practices also include exposing the harsh realities of detention. With Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI), we did this through protests, vigils, and news media. Bringing the reporter to learn about Soli's experience helped bring his story to a wider audience. Media becomes invaluable as serves as a reminder to the public that these issue persist and have not been resolved. Though it brings the immigrant stories to a larger audience, it does come with sacrifices. A general audience is not going to want radical storytelling challenging the construct of criminality, especially in the conservative landscape of the Inland Empire. Soli's story is more palatable for a general audience, because he was an asylum seeker who needed medical treatment, therefore constructed as

a non-threat to the public. Soli's story paints Adelanto Detention Facility as an inhumane space but does not call for the abolition of detention facilities entirely.

Furthermore, while the news media and organizers will work together, their goals are different. Organizers strive to bring visibility to an issue, action, or event. The goal is getting people involved or educating the general public on their work. The news media is more concerned with content that is timely, topical, and of public interest. Sometimes these goals align, and other times they do not. For example, during 2020 many communications organizers had a lot of difficulty getting media coverage that was not pandemic-related. As the Communications Manager for IM4HI, I found there was so much going on that reporters did not need to look for stories as they have in the past. The stories we were able to push through were all pandemic-related. For these reasons, news media is a very limited and slow component of sanctuary practices.

Through their stories, we get insight into the different nuances of accompaniment and sanctuary practices in detention. Sanctuary practices are also not limited to the time an individual is in detention, as there is support that is needed after release. It is also during this time that asylum seekers need tremendous support as they navigate the death world of post-release.

The accompaniment received by Goku and Soli was short-term sanctuary. I was assisting in addressing their immediate needs as best as I could. I tried to find Goku a lawyer, I wrote a character statement for Soli's asylum case, and I visited them both to remind them they have a team behind them. I don't feel like I offered a sanctuary intervention as I was operating under the rules of the detention facility. I think this is why

I felt so hopeless in Goku's case; I knew there was little I could do as I had to abide by the rules of the system.

In order to create change, there needs to be an intervention of the system of incarceration. The carceral system and immigration systems need to be dismantled in order to eradicate the death world of detention. The logics of domination like coloniality, racism, and common-sense-ness need to be challenged and reimaged. It is through imagining a world outside of the empire-state that a decolonial future is tangible.

In my research and conversations with Elena, we wanted to create an intervention to the issues we were finding in sanctuary. We wanted to challenge these logics of domination and systems of stratification. In reflecting on the organizing and volunteers we were working alongside, we wanted to see what issues we needed to address to work toward the future we desired. This thinking started the plans for our community-based art project. In the following chapter, I share how the community-based art project came to be, the issue it addressed, and its outcome.

## CHAPTER 8: TRANSFORMATIVE POSSIBILITIES & SANCTUARY

*“Anthropology is a dialogic project. Ethnographic fieldwork is an immersion in the experiences and voices of interlocutors in the field, which today is widely perceived as a multisensory terrain”* (Panopoulos et al 2020: 427).

Reflecting on the quote above, I think about the investment and commitments scholars make in the field. When I entered the field, I committed to being an accomplice in the grassroots organizing and community building. In the moment, this type of immersion can feel all consuming, especially when the stakes are high. As quickly as we enter the field, the leaving can also come abruptly. This is an ethical question that arises in community-based research, as the goal in community-based work is to be reciprocal, versus exploitive or extractive. In developing a community project with partners, we were thoughtful about creating something ethical and sustainable. A guiding question was asking myself if the community project was solely for the research, or does it align with community goals.

Initially when I designed my research, I anticipated organizing a community-art project that would use the produced artwork as supplemental ethnographic data. As I reflect on the community project, I recognize the power of this space and how it is a part of sanctuary practices, which I explore later in the chapter. Community-based research does not operate linearly, and in sharing my process I am highlighting the messiness within community work. In this chapter I share my autoethnographic data and findings through embodied writing. I will share the process of developing the community art project, the process of conducting the project, and the outcomes of the project. I situate the community-art project as a form of long-term sanctuary and share how it is an intervention in working toward long-term sanctuary. I also situate myself within the community-art project, and my relationship to community partners. Anzaldúa writes,

“Activism is engaging in healing work. It means putting our hands in the dough and not merely thinking or talking about making tortillas. It means creating spaces and times for healing to happen, espacios y tiempos (space and time) to nourish the soul” (Anzaldúa 2015: 90). The classroom that held the community-art project was a space of processing and mending the colonial wound. The community-art class was a space of collective care.

I close this chapter with reflecting on the contributions of the research in understanding the empire-state, death worlds, and constructs of sanctuary. Overall, this research demonstrates how a fugitive anthropology as a methodology can contribute to the future of anthropology.

### **Designing a Community-Based Project in the Inland Empire**

On April 8, 2019, Elena and I sat down at a coffee shop in Rancho Cucamonga to discuss our experience working together and what we had accomplished up to this point. We talked at length about the work surrounding Adelanto. At the time we were collaborating with students at the Claremont Colleges in hosting a community conference on the intersection of immigration and mass incarceration, Adelanto was the central focus of the conference. For the conference we were inviting and talking to IM4HI volunteers about attending, and we were feeling frustrated with the comments and lack of interest from some of our volunteers. Volunteers were being put off by the discussion of mass incarceration, they looked down on “criminal immigrants”.

Hilda shared that in the past she would host dialogues to address these ideological ruptures. She shared an IM4HI teaching resource that assisted in facilitating the dialogues known as the “Root Causes of Migration” handout. This packet offers historical examples as to why people migrated and then provides discussion questions geared toward having

participants to challenge misconceptions of migration and reflect on their personal or families' stories of migration. Hilda shared how this resource was helpful for getting people to think more critically on migration and themselves in relationship to it. She expressed wanting the community-project to mirror this process.

Hilda also started to share how she wanted to increase the number of Latinx volunteers in the organizing. This was desired because a lot of the individuals IM4HI serve are Spanish speaking, and we wanted more volunteers who could help meet the demand for support. This demand weighed heavy on us both. While there are varying reasons as to why people are unable to volunteer, one theme that kept popping up was disassociation. By this I am referring to the ways potential volunteers would differentiate themselves from newly arrived immigrants. This is a way that the discourse of common-sense-ness stratifies populations. It is a way to demonstrating belonging. Some of the Latinx immigrants we tried to recruit to volunteer would argue that if they were able to create a life for themselves in the US without help, why should they help someone else. "It wasn't that hard." This framing is more common in older Latino generations. This generation does not like to talk about their experiences and would rather forget. It is not something you are supposed to talk or ask about. We identified that we needed a project that could bridge these communities.

Elena had shared that her and Maria had been wanting to organize a community-art project for some time. Art in Chicanx activism has a long history, art is made for and with the community in this tradition (Jackson 2009, Anzaldúa 2015). Combining art with narrative is important because with narrative is the possibility to explore and reflect on changing notions of identity, politics, and community (Rosaldo 1993). At the end of

meeting, we used the POP Method (Gass 2013) to figure out the next steps of our project. We identified the Purpose, Outcome, and Process (POP) of the community-art project.

Our purpose was community building between different immigrant generations. We wanted to foster community and dialogue on stories and experiences of migration. The outcome we had was critical consciousness. We wanted our participants to be more aware of issues migrants face today and what is going on inside Adelanto Detention Facility. We wanted this process to lead to an increase of IM4HI volunteers. Finally, the process was going to be through a 10-week series of workshops, with each session lasting two hours. For access to space to hold the classes, Elena reached out to Jose at Uncommon Good to be a project partner. Elena also suggested we invite Maria who is a poet-scholar and organizer, she was well-equipped to lead the sessions. Elena also suggested that all the leaders work with Reny Golden. Reny who is a scholar on the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s lives in Claremont. She has held poetry workshops for immigrant women to explore their stories of migration before. Elena thought we should go through the process with Reny before leading it ourselves. Also, as part of the process, I was going to organize a focus group to engage in a dialogue on sanctuary, immigration, and the criminalization of immigrants to identify topics we might want to cover in the community-art project. Having developed the POP, Elena and I finished up our coffee date and left the café.

First up was our poetry training with Reny. Elena had already invited Maria to join us as co-leader for the workshop. Maria loved the idea and was excited to get started. On April 12, 2019, Elena, Maria, Maria's husband, and I went to learn from Reny. Reny

described the poetry session as a *junta* (gathering) where we are all cooking to provide a meal, and the meal was poetry.

Reny shared some of her experiences and challenges in leading poetry workshops, and from these experiences outlined the structure of a poetry class. Reny shared the importance of recognizing everyone as a poet. In speech we use metaphors and similes all the time, so everyone has the tenets of poetry within them already. The second step was to introduce participants to an open-ended prompt. Reny gave an example prompt of “Write about your journey”. This prompt allows us to interpret journey in multiple ways to foster creativity. The next step is sharing the work with one another. Go around the circle to share ideas of what they are thinking of writing, feedback was words of encouragement only. Art making spaces are not a space for judgement. Then everyone engages in a free write session, and leaders should encourage people to write “crazy”. After the free write, everyone will self-edit. Build, expand, tighten the piece. Reny suggested for the workshop we introduce different forms of poetry from week to week so that participants could have examples of what they can do in poetry. Reny also suggested having one to two rounds of editing before having participants finalize their pieces for publishing.

Going through this process with Reny was a helpful experience. Being able to embody what it felt like to be a student in a writing session, and how we might need to support participants was a useful process.

Following the poetry workshop, we organized a focus group. Maria offered the office of her non-profit to host the event. On May 16, 2019, Elena, Maria, and I held the focus group. It was a complete failure compared to what I had envisioned in my research



design. The focus group was supposed to be composed of people all over the Inland Empire and a space to dialogue and explore the possibilities of the art and activism in the Inland Empire. I was prepared to have juicy conversations on migration and ideas of sanctuary. It failed for a few reasons.

One was because of the location. The Inland Empire does not have a major hub. IM4HI volunteers and partners are spread throughout the Inland Empire, and generally people do not like to leave their area. People from Riverside do not want to go to San Bernardino, and vice versa. Elena has often expressed frustration over volunteers expectations to bring work and services closer to them, especially considering that volunteers are spread out throughout the Inland Empire. They are not localized in a hub.

Second reason was lack of relationship. The two women that came did not know me. There was no relationship between us, why should they share vulnerable stories of migration with me? Relationship building is important, and I carry this lesson with me to this day. It seems obvious, but sometimes we have to recognize our mistakes in hindsight.

Third reason was the questions I asked, they were not inviting questions. Looking back asking these women “How do we embody legislation?” is a weird and laughable question to ask someone. What does that even mean without context?! Though not all the questions were as awkward as this example, the whole process just felt forced for everyone involved. After this focus group, we decided to put the project on a shelf. Elena, Maria, and I left the focus group feeling discouraged. Despite feeling discouraged, I learned a lot of lessons on what to do and what not to do in research and focus groups.

In August, Jose from Uncommon Good reached out to Elena asking if we were still interested in leading a community-art project. Through Uncommon Good, Jose

organizes weekly reading and writing sessions for Latina mothers living in Pomona who want to strengthen their reading and writing skills in Spanish. Jose invited us to host the fall series after Elena shared with him that we had been wanting to organize a community-art project. Uncommon Good provided the space and led recruitment using the IRB approved flyers I had created. Through my university fieldwork grant, I was able to buy art supplies for participants.

The process of designing the classes was a collaborative project. With my co-leaders, we were able to identify an issue we wanted to address (stratification of within immigrant communities), we designed the project, and identified the outcomes we wanted to see from the project. We had bumps along the road (focus group), but we managed to learn from the experience. Elena, Maria, and I all saw the potential that a creative art space could offer to explore narrative. In the following section, I share on the process of developing and facilitating the community-art project, identify themes in art that came from artistic dialogue, and close sharing the outcomes of the project. Situating it with long-term sanctuary work.

### *Process of the Community-Art Project*

On September 13, 2019, we held our first class. We had 30 women in attendance. All the women were Latina immigrants, mothers, and native Spanish speakers. We met every Friday for two hours over the course of 10 weeks. The mothers would join the class shortly after dropping off their children at school. In the first meeting, I introduced my research and the way the collaborative art project would inform it. I shared that their art would inform my understanding of living as an immigrant in the Inland Empire. I shared

that I would not use their names, take photos, or record the classes. From the process, the only thing I would share was the produced art.

After discussing my research, Elena shared her reasons for wanting to work with the women. Elena shared that Latinas are taught not to use their voice due to the ways machismo is ingrained culturally (Zavella 2003: 228, Anzaldua 2012:76). Elena and Maria talked about how poetry was one way for the women to find their voice and explore the power behind their journey as immigrant women. The first exercise the collective took on was naming our matrilineal ancestry. Elena uses this exercise as an ice breaker often as a way of combatting machismo. All the women were asked to name all their female ancestors and keep naming as far back as they could. Many, including myself, could not name beyond two generations. After naming our matrilineal ancestors, we were to thank them for creating us and for being a part of making us who we are. This exercise was a means of introducing ourselves and grounding us in the space. The women chatted after the class and went around saying their good-byes to everyone in the room.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the following week, we did our first writing exercise. That day everyone was going to explore personal stories of migration. The women were seated at tables of 4-6 women. We left it open so that the women could decide what aspect they wanted to focus on. The women could write a story by themselves or as a group to explore shared experiences. These choices were offered because everyone was at different stages of healing and processing their experiences. I sat at a table where the women were writing as a collective.

Everyone around the table took turns sharing their migration story. One woman was brought to the US by their husband who was documented, for them the pain was in

leaving their families and the life they knew. For another woman, the experience of crossing the border was still very vivid, it brought her to tears thinking of it. She was not ready to talk about it, and no one pressed her on it. When she started crying the women surrounded her with hugs and comforting words. The third woman shared that she came to the US with her husband and that they have had a happy life together, she expressed there was nothing more to share beyond that. I shared my mother's story of migration, and why her story matters to me. The women named that my experience was more similar to their children, and in return they reminded me of my mother.

In the group there was such a spectrum of experience, but the common thread they felt was love and strength. Love for the family they miss, the family here, and the community they have made. Their poem reads:

#### **Sueños Porvenir Valores**

“A este país venimos con sueños inmigrante  
buscando un porvenir,  
No olvidando nuestros valores  
y motivadas a seguir.  
Con orgullo de nuestras raíces  
Nos establecemos aquí,  
y aunque son inmigrante  
mis metas puedo cumplir “

#### ***English Translation:***

“We come to this country with immigrant dreams  
looking for a future,  
Not forgetting our values  
and motivated to continue.  
With pride of our roots  
We are immigrants  
With goals and dreams  
Planted here, to succeed”

The love and strength expressed in this poem reflect resiliency. The women recognize the barriers they face systemically the ways they have been displaced from

their home countries and families. This poem is an expression that in the face of adversity and in the pursuit of the “immigrant dream”, they stay true to themselves and their hopes.

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, Maria introduced another poem exercise known as “Calaveritas”, which are poems performed for the Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead). These poems are meant to poke fun at the living and death. Maria suggested to Elena and me that we introduce Calaveritas since it was Day of the Dead. We agreed that it would be a fun exercise, and another way to explore relationships. We also felt that the last few writing sessions had been weighing on some of the women and introducing a lighter form of poetry and storytelling was a much-needed break from migration stories. We recognized that some women were ready to talk about their migration stories, and others were still holding onto the pain, we needed to find a way to balance both. We felt even more strongly about this when one of the women shared with Elena how she was struggling with panic attacks after remembering her story of migration. We needed to offer an alternative project for those who were not ready and did not have the resources to care for their mental health.

While the Calaveritas were a fun breather, Maria suggested we offer a more long-term art form for the women to do. There were days the women might not want to write, and so on these days they could work on the alternative art project. The alternative art project we introduced was hojalatas. Hojalatas are tin art, popular in Mexico. My own Abuelita (grandmother), on my father’s side, would create hojalatas and hang them throughout her home. To this day they still hang on the walls even after she has passed. When I visited her family in Mexico after her passing, my Tía Abuela (great aunt) taught

me how to create it. It made me nostalgic when Maria suggested introducing this style of art for our sessions.

As we moved forward in our final weeks, the women had the freedom of working on their poems or hojalatas. We wanted the women to not feel forced to commit to a project, because we wanted to be sensitive to their feelings and readiness to discuss their stories. From this practice, I encountered a lot of collective care and support between the women. Exchanging words of encouragement, embraces, and laughter.

On the last day of the classes, we created a showcase where the women were invited to share their poetry and art. It was a fiesta (celebration) with food, drinks, music, and performance. Tears and laughter filled the room. Women shared poems poking fun at each other through Calaveritas. Some opened up about motherhood highlighting the sacrifices and challenges they face as immigrant mothers. For the women involved it was cathartic and created a desire to continue writing. Since completing this first run, Elena has continued working with some of the women. Though 2020 made the continuation of the art sessions challenging, now in 2021 they are close to relaunching.

I did not recognize it then, but now I see the ways that my research participated in contributing to sanctuary practices. As identified earlier, the root of sanctuary work is a space and practice where individuals feel safe to be their whole selves. The community-art project became a space where women came to express themselves, their stories, and receive community affirmations. It was an artistic sanctuary of expression.

As a dialogue space women felt comfortable expressing themselves and their experiences. In the poetry the women created the poems fell into three categories: “Yo Soy” (I am) poems, Calaveritas (playful ay of the Dead poems), and poems dedicated to

their children. Across the poems were themes of sacrifice, resiliency, and community. In the following section I share some of the poems as example and ways these themes arose and situate them within a larger conversation of the empire-state.

### *Themes and Dialogues in the Poetry*

The poetry had three prominent themes: sacrifice, resiliency, and community. I share three poems from the different formats to highlight how they connect to these themes. I will close this section contextualizing the themes within conversations of sanctuary and empire.

The first poem I will share is the “Yo Soy” (I Am), while a number of women wrote a “yo soy” poem that describes themselves, this example stood out. The poem is titled “Cuando Me Valla” (When I Got Away), it reads as follows:

#### **Cuando yo me Valla (When I Go Away)**

Cuando yo me valla y ya no esté aquí con Ustedes.  
Cuando ya no respire,  
No hable,  
No oiga,  
No vea sus ojos que adoré con toda mi alma. Cuando el aire ya no roce mis mejillas, ni mi pelo,  
Cuando las estrellas pregunten que fue de mí,  
Cuando con ansias las contaban a todas ellas,  
Cuando mi madre, mi padre, mis hermanos, hijos, y esposo sientan que falta alguien. ¡Qué hay un hueco en la casa!

Hasta entonces, no quiero que nadie esté triste.  
Ni piensen que pudieron haber hecho algo más por mí,  
Quiero que sepan que fui la más feliz del mundo...  
No les hizo Falta hacer nada,  
lo dieron todo por mí,  
así como yo les entregué todo de mí. ¡Cuando yo me valla!  
Griten, bailen que yo estaré aquí.  
Les prometo velar siempre por ustedes ¡Nunca saldrán de mí!  
Por eso, cuando yo me valla los llevo en mi corazón, en mi alma...

y sé que ustedes también a mí.

**Translation:**

When I leave and I am no longer here with you.  
When I no longer breathe  
Do not speak,  
Don't hear,  
Do not see your eyes that I adored with all my soul.  
When the air no longer touches my cheeks,  
nor my hair,  
When the stars ask what happened to me  
When they eagerly counted them all,  
When my mother, my father, my brothers, children, and husband feel that  
someone is missing.  
There is a hole in the house!  
Until then, I don't want anyone to be sad.  
Do not think that they could have done something else for me,  
I want you to know that I was the happiest in the world ...  
They did not need to do anything,  
They gave it all for me,  
just as I gave them all of me.  
When I go away!  
Shout, dance that I'll be here.  
I promise to always watch over you.  
You will never leave me!  
So when I leave I carry them in my heart, in my soul ...  
and I know that you also me.

This poem shares the ways she wants to be remembered in death. She wants to be known as someone who gave her all to her family and loved life full heartedly. Centering her memory in death can feel macabre, but what she is speaking to is her legacy. Who she was, what was left behind, and what continues on (the stars in the sky). One stanza speaks to a sense of loneliness, “when they feel that someone is missing”, can be seen as an allusion for feeling invisible in her home life. The sacrifices she makes for the happiness of others in her household can go unrecognized, despite the recognition of her sacrifice she reassures she lived happily for them. The poem highlights the duality within sacrifice and happiness. Similarly, resilience cannot exist without adversity. These experiences co-exist with one another. Immigrant experiences are complex, and immigrants are more than just their sacrifice.



In the second poem “Para mi Hijo Paul” (For my Son Paul), the mother is writing a letter of love to her son. Similarly, to the previous poem, she speaks of motherly sacrifice. She writes:

**Para mi Hijo Paul (For my Son Paul)**

Todavía recuerdo cuando lo lleve la primera vez a la escuela él estaba muy emocionado me dio un beso y me dijo adiós muy contento. Yo me quede mirando por la ventana no lo quería dejar, por primera vez esa mañana estaba sin él. Sus años escolares pasaron muy rápido y hoy se va a la Universidad con toda la ilusión de formarse una profesión y triunfar en la vida. Se que es su futuro destino, tengo un dejo de melancolía es posible que no vuelva a vivir en mi casa.

Cuando miro su habitación semi vacía y callada, o hay música, ni su presencia que ilumina nuestra familia con su alegría, sus bromas y ocurrencias. Su cama tendida, envidiosamente los posters que para él tienen significado. Realizo que mi hijo se ha independizado. Sabía que tenía que pasar, pero siento un vacío ahora él está caminando su propio camino, tendrá sus triunfos y caídas y yo a la distancia lo apoyaré.

Le doy gracias a Dios por cada momento que disfruto con él.  
Por el amor y las memorias y el regalo de ser mi hijo que guardo en mi corazón.  
¡Ve mi Paul alza tu vuelo! Desarrolla tus maravillosos Dones y talentos.

**English Translation:**

I still remember the first time I brought you to school. You were so excited, you gave me a kiss and happily said goodbye. I watched you from the window, I didn't want to leave you, it was my first time without him. His school years passed by so quickly, and now he attends the university with the dream of becoming a professional and succeed at life. I know it's his future and destiny, yet I still feel melancholy because I know he won't return home.

When I look at his semi-empty and quiet room, or there is music, or his presence that illuminates our family with his joy, his jokes and witticisms. His bed made, enviously the posters that have meaning for him.

I realize that my son has become independent. I knew it had to happen, but I feel an emptiness now he is walking his own path, he will have his triumphs and falls and I will support him from a distance.

I thank God for every moment that I enjoy with him.  
For the love and memories and the gift of being my son that I keep in my heart.  
See my Paul take flight! Develop your wonderful gifts and talents.

In this poem the theme of sacrifice is described as the mother relinquishing her son into adulthood and a life without her. In traditional Latino family structures, a woman's first job is mother (Hurtado 2003). She defines herself in her motherhood, expressing her son as an extension of herself. She sacrifices her own life to support and build his. In navigating the tension of losing a child to adulthood, she expresses feeling blessed for the gift of her son. The sacrifice of motherhood paid off because of who her son has grown to be. A common immigrant experience is coming to the US to offer a better life for their children. This is the reason both sides of my family came to the US, it is why my grandparents brought my parents to the US. With the hope that they can live a better life than they did. Even in this sacrifice there is pleasure. Like the author of this poem, I know my grandparents beam with joy over the accomplishments of my parents. Again the theme of duality arises, sacrifice and happiness.

Finally, the last poem example is a Calaverita. Calaverita's are playful poems, and this one exemplifies the taunting humor I was raised with in Latinx household. The laughing, teasing, and joking at someone else's expense. The poem is as follows:

**Original:**

***Bye Bye Jose***

En la escuela San Juan  
Hoy todo es alegría  
Al buen José Le ha llegado su día  
Elena con trompeta  
Y María la tambora  
Celebrando con la banda  
Que al José le llegó su hora.

**English Translation:**

In the school of San Juan  
The day burst with joy  
For good ole Jose, his day had come  
Elena with her trumpet  
And Maria the drummer

The band celebrates  
For Jose, his hour had come

The poem is teasing Jose, one of the co-leaders of the community-art project, about the joy his death will bring to the author. Though the humor is dark, culturally, it is viewed funny and playful. This humor is part of the tradition of the Calaveritas. From a bird's eye perspective, this poem demonstrates the success of the community-art space. There were a few poems that poked fun at Jose, Elena, and Lupita. Women would also write Calaveritas about other women in the class as well. The poking fun at each other demonstrated trust. This type of humor can only be done with people you are comfortable of familiar with, culturally you do not tease strangers like this. We had evidence of community.

The community-art project was a successful community space. It was a space where stories and experiences were shared. It was a space where women could speak openly about their stories of migration, and we created an environment that fostered it. Situating the community project within the empire-state, the project is a means of combatting stratification across immigrant groups. The sacrifices immigrants are forced to make for family and surviving in the US is a form of necrosubjugation. Their lives exist in this tension, and partly this is why death was a theme in the poetry and in humor. The recognition and bridging the political and spiritual experiences are defined as *conocimiento* (Anzaldúa 2015). Anzaldúa argues that *conocimiento* “leads to awakening, insights, understandings, realizations, courage, and the motivation to engage in concrete ways with the potential to bring us into compassionate interactions” (2015:19). *Conocimiento* is a periphery/fugitive space where change can happen.

Long-term sanctuary is working toward creating an intervention. The community building that occurred in the art project, was a way of traversing immigrant experiences to begin dismantling stratification within the community. Finding there are more similarities in their experiences than differences was helpful. But also for those that were different it was important to foster compassion for others experiences.

Now in 2021, Uncommon Good and IM4HI are about to organize their second iteration of the community-art project. Also, some of the women who participated in the community-art project are now IM4HI volunteers. With research partners, we were able to take steps toward the change we wanted to see in our organizing and community.

In the following section, I try to reconcile and situate myself in the community-art project.

### *Reflections on the Community-Art Project*

Though I intended on utilizing the art to inform my ethnographic research, in hindsight I realized how the space became a form of sanctuary. This realization left me wanting to explore the ways that academia can contribute to creating community spaces, and how this work fit into my own understanding of sanctuary practices. As the previous chapters and reflections on sanctuary practices demonstrate, sanctuary is a space that promotes inclusion and belonging in the face of adversity. I argue that the community-art project was a long-term sanctuary practice. The community-art project provided the women who participated a space to bring their whole selves, to explore their story, and strengthen community ties. With the success of the women feeling in community, I did wrestle with my own belonging in this space. The question that was ringing in the back of

my head was “Am I the right person for this project?” As passionate as I was about the project, I was wrestling with my positionality in the space.

Working with Elena and Maria was integral due to their positionality and proximity to immigration. They are both Latina immigrants and mothers, they have a lot of shared cultural and lived experience with the women who participated. Whereas between myself and the participants existed generational gaps, culturally and by age. Culturally, I identified more with their children and grandchildren. I did not have to help my parents navigate life in the US, as many other first-generation children do. I usually refer to myself as generation 1.5, because my parents were brought to the US as children. They grew up here, and so their experiences are more reflective of first-generation experiences. I feel I am first generation only in name sometimes. This created a cultural divide.

Another cultural difference was our differing relationships to machismo. Elena named early on wanting to work with the women in finding their voice, as women of her generation were raised to be more submissive, indoctrinated into a culture of machismo (Zavella 2003, Anzaldúa 2012). Machismo is a culture that centers and prioritizes men. Toxic masculinity would be the English equivalent of machismo. In the poetry the repercussions of a Machismo culture are seen in the ways women define themselves by family and sacrifice for others. Women are supposed to be passive and silent (Anzaldúa 2012). This is something Elena, Maria, and the other women could relate to more than I could. This was a cultural experience I did not have to live with at home. My mom actively worked to break this cycle with my sisters and me. Though my home life and upbringing were different, I understood culturally what Elena was referring to. I had to

deal with machismo in community spaces, but I was able to step away from it at home. These are the cultural divides I felt.

Within this space, I found myself in the “outside within” status (Collins 1988, Zavella 1993), and my positionality complex. I was a lot younger than most of the women, many of them were old enough to be my mother. All the women were immigrants with varying statuses, whereas I am first/1.5 generation. My experience was more aligned with their children than their own, and all this put me in the status of “mija”. Mija is a combination of the words, “mi hija” which translates to “my daughter”. Mija is a term used in reference to someone younger and carries a familial value, though it is not exclusive to family members. It is a term of endearment. Despite the privileges I have regarding class and education, largely with Latina elders, age carries more weight in relationship to authority and power. I was 26 years old while I was conducting fieldwork, so to them I was still a child. By not being a mother, immigrant, and relatively young; trying to assert authority would only come off as arrogant. Working with Elena and Maria was key in seeing the community art project come to life, because the project needed to be facilitated by women they could relate to. Women who would be viewed as culturally appropriate leaders of the class.

This was an important lesson for me and offers insight into community-based research. I think in academia there is an expectation that community-based research needs to be led by the scholar. Scholars are experts in their field, and it is thought that this expertise will translate to the field. But as was the case in my fieldwork, my academic knowledge did not translate to expertise. Age and experience carry more value than education. I did not fight this, and I do not believe scholars should force themselves into

roles. I took a step back in this field site and organized in the background because that's where I needed to be. I would get resources, help with setting agendas, and spearheaded the publication process. I was not needed and did not belong in the foreground. Though I recognized that this was my role, I did feel like I failed as a community-based scholar.

I thought that because I was not in the front of the classroom, that I was not actually doing community-based research. It was not until later reflection that I realized that I was practicing ethical research. I was acting in accordance with what was needed for the community, versus what I thought was expected of me as an academic scholar. I was finally quieting the imposter's syndrome. In constructing the field site this way, we were able to create a space that has existed since my departure. I was able to help the organizers figure out costs, structure, and outcomes; all important information they need as they grow and develop the program and seek funding. I was helping the community set themselves up for success, success that did not center me. I got to be a part of the community building.

Scholars and researchers should take the time to discern their role in the field and give themselves permission to be in the background. This space was not solely created for my observation, this space was created with strategic goals in mind that went beyond my research. This space was for our participants to explore their stories and experiences, a space designed to empower. These goals meant having leadership that would foster this type of community. Recognizing the goals and community needs, it meant I needed to be decentered (Osterweil 2013, Tihiwai Smith 2014). By having clear goals and outcomes to the community project, being in the background was a logical step for the space to thrive.

I hold that I was and am the right person for this work. Because, yes, I do come from this community and culture, which provides me cultural competency and literacy to know when to step up and step back. But even more importantly, I take the time to reflect on my positionality, role, and listen to my partners. I came in embracing flexibility in the field. This flexibility allowed the field to dictate where my research should go, versus solely being led by preconceived notions, which is what anthropological research is meant to be (Geertz 1973).

## **Conclusion: Death Worlds, Sanctuary, and Moving Toward a Fugitive**

### **Anthropology**

From my research I explored the web of the US empire-state, I explored its logics, systems, and strategies of domination. The US empire-state will never act against its own interests. The empire-state is vested in maintaining colonialism and stratification of space and people (Mignolo 2005, Jung 2011). This necessitates white supremacy and coloniality, which is made evident through racialized policies and violence against Indigenous peoples, Black communities, communities of color, immigrants, and other disenfranchised groups that challenge heteronormativity (Fanon 1979, Membe 2003, Chavez 2008, De Leon 2015, Buck 2021). The policies and violence create hostile spaces known as death worlds (Membe 2003). The death worlds are contexts where necrosubjects (Rosas 2019) are entrenched in violence and death. Membe writes, ‘the lines between resistance and suicide, sacrifice and redemption, martyrdom and freedom are blurred (2003: 40). There is a duality that necrosubjects navigate.

The lines of “resistance and suicide” and “sacrifice and redemption” are dualities that can be seen throughout the research. For example, Soli’s story of his hunger strike



inside Adelanto Detention Facility. His hunger strike was an act of resistance as he fought for medical care. His act of resistance could have led to his death, but also not receiving medical attention could have led to his death. This duality is prevalent inside Adelanto Detention Facility. For the families at the shelter their resistance is crossing the border despite knowing the risk of crossing, death. This duality plagues migrant experiences.

Anzaldua argues these sites of tension are the sites where social justice and transformation can take place, *conocimiento* (Anzaldua 2015). Through processing the pain of the colonial wound, mending can take place (Mignolo 2005, Anzaldua 2015). Conocimiento are peripheral sites, spaces occupied by fugitives, captives, and marginal identities (Collins 1989, Berry et al. 2014, Cordis 2019). The periphery are the systems working (or striving) outside the US empire-state.

Returning to my research question of understanding how sanctuary is created and implemented in the Inland Empire. I found that sanctuary in the political space has very little meaning beyond signaling morals. My research found that sanctuary is created and negotiated by the community. The activists, volunteers, and those directly impacted by immigration policies are the community. Sanctuary is a response to community needs, categorized by short-term and long-term sanctuary. A short-term sanctuary is emergency and rapid response work. It is the work that does not have the luxury to operate outside of the empire-state, because for those being supported, it can be life or death.

The sites of sanctuary practice highlighted in Chapter 5 exemplify short-term sanctuary work at the nexus of life and death. The negotiations made by activists and those directly impacted. People living in detention who live to resist death. They create

communities inside for survival, they put their lives on the line to get their basic needs met. Activists work tirelessly trying to get as many people as they can released, despite having to make concessions due to insufficient resources to address the massive need. People being released from border camps need support and a place to rest after being held captive. In the case of the shelters, to see mass releases, organizations were required to coordinate and work with Homeland Security. Despite this concession, the community proved that they are capable of caring for every immigrant who needed support. The infrastructure is there. Finally, activists have their arm twisted to engage politically, because if they step away the violence against immigrants stands to escalate. Activists advocate for policy reform and do see wins, despite the execution continually falling short of community desires. There is duality in these spaces and experiences. It is in reflecting and *conocimiento* that we are able to identify the shortcomings, successes, and where we need to go.

Long-term sanctuary provides the space to engage in the long-term work. A space where the interventions of empire-state can take place. A place of unworking coloniality and white supremacy, and reimagining community and care. As interview data highlighted, the ideal sanctuary is one where we can be our full selves and thrive.

Naomi Paik suggests the framework of an abolitionist sanctuary as an integral part of dismantling the US empire state (2020). An abolitionist sanctuary recognizes that social movements must be coalitional as experiences are interlocking. Paik centers immigration and carceral systems as the central sites of dismantlement (2020). This is similar to Pem Davidson Buck, who argues the importance of centering the prison industrial complex as they are central in organizing and stratifying populations. The

impact of the carceral system is seen in how detention operates, the prison to ICE pipeline, and in Goku's experience.

In the community-art project with community partners, we were able to explore and engage in long-term sanctuary work. A space to explore the colonial wound (migration and displacement), duality of sacrifice and resiliency, and build community. This was a sanctuary site addressing perceived ruptures in immigrant experiences. In mending the ruptures, we were able to bring more people into the advocacy. With research partners, we are shifting discourses on immigrant experiences.

Theoretically my research further links immigration and incarceration. Though scholars like Golash-Boza (2009), Cacho (2012), Abrego et al. (2017) have identified the parallels and interconnectedness of these systems, I believe future research must dig deeper into this intersection. To distinguish the systems only reinforces the good and criminal immigrant binary, as this binary is rooted in the common-sense-ness of incarceration. In my research I start to weave the two systems and identify their intersecting foundations. The future of immigration is shifting toward further understanding the relationship of these two systems and interrogating the construct of criminality, especially if the scholar seeks abolition. The future of migration research is entwined with carceral studies.

### *Fugitive Futures*

Today we are living in a death world and necrosubjugation. Anthropologists have produced research that uplifts stories of suffering, pain, and resiliency and stopped there (Nordstrom 2004). But as Berry et.al (2014) and Gomberg-Muñoz (2018) argue, anthropologists cannot stand at the sidelines, we must be accomplices to our research

partners. Anthropologists must work alongside their research partners toward transforming our world, working toward abolition and decolonial futures. Being an accomplice is holding yourself accountable in the work, assuring you are working in tandem with partners and practicing reflexivity. Conscious of power dynamics and locating yourself in research and partnerships. This is the future of anthropology.

This research serves as an example of fugitive anthropological research. Fugitive anthropology centers the politics of decolonization. The anthropologists engaging in fugitive anthropology is locating their research in the peripheries of the empire-state. Emphasizing a process and means of creating decolonial futures (Tihiwai Smith 2014, Berry et al. 2014). Methods matters, partnerships are critical. A fugitive anthropology asks anthropologists to write the body into research, locate it within power structures, and move through research accordingly.

My research serves as an example of what fugitive anthropological can look like. It serves as a template for others interested in decolonial work. My research introduces fugitive anthropology as a methodology. It offers examples of how scholars can offer interventions for the community and support the long-term goals of partners. Academic pursuit cannot be the end goal of the work we produce. As researchers, we should be thinking about how our research impacts our partners; specifically, in the context of this research, we must consider the ways scholars can use their access to resources, privilege, and research methods to mobilize an abolitionist sanctuary and decolonial futures.

## APPENDICES

### *A: ACTIVITIES OF EXCLUSION FROM THE CALIFORNIA VALUES ACT*

- (1) The individual has been convicted of a serious or violent felony identified in subdivision (c) of Section 1192.7 of, or subdivision (c) of Section 667.5 of, the Penal Code.
- (2) The individual has been convicted of a felony punishable by imprisonment in the state prison.
- (3) The individual has been convicted within the past five years of a misdemeanor for a crime that is punishable as either a misdemeanor or a felony for, or has been convicted within the last 15 years of a felony for, any of the following offenses:
  - (A) Assault, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 217.1, 220, 240, 241.1, 241.4, 241.7, 244, 244.5, 245, 245.2, 245.3, 245.5, 4500, and 4501 of the Penal Code.
  - (B) Battery, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 242, 243.1, 243.3, 243.4, 243.6, 243.7, 243.9, 273.5, 347, 4501.1, and 4501.5 of the Penal Code.
  - (C) Use of threats, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 71, 76, 139, 140, 422, 601, and 11418.5 of the Penal Code.
  - (D) Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or crimes endangering children, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 266, 266a, 266b, 266c, 266d, 266f, 266g, 266h, 266i, 266j, 267, 269, 288, 288.5, 311.1, 311.3, 311.4, 311.10, 311.11, and 647.6 of the Penal Code.
  - (E) Child abuse or endangerment, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 270, 271, 271a, 273a, 273ab, 273d, 273.4, and 278 of the Penal Code.
  - (F) Burglary, robbery, theft, fraud, forgery, or embezzlement, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 211, 215, 459, 463, 470, 476, 487, 496, 503, 518, 530.5, 532, and 550 of the Penal Code.
  - (G) Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, but only for a conviction that is a felony.
  - (H) Obstruction of justice, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 69, 95, 95.1, 136.1, and 148.10 of the Penal Code.
  - (I) Bribery, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 67, 67.5, 68, 74, 85, 86, 92, 93, 137, 138, and 165 of the Penal Code.
  - (J) Escape, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 107, 109, 110, 4530, 4530.5, 4532, 4533, 4534, 4535, and 4536 of the Penal Code.
  - (K) Unlawful possession or use of a weapon, firearm, explosive device, or weapon of mass destruction, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 171b, 171c, 171d, 246, 246.3, 247, 417, 417.3, 417.6, 417.8, 4574, 11418, 11418.1, 12021.5, 12022, 12022.2, 12022.3, 12022.4, 12022.5, 12022.53, 12022.55, 18745, 18750, and 18755 of, and subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 26100 of, the Penal Code.
  - (L) Possession of an unlawful deadly weapon, under the Deadly Weapons Recodification Act of 2010 (Part 6 (commencing with Section 16000) of the Penal Code).
  - (M) An offense involving the felony possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, or trafficking of controlled substances.
  - (N) Vandalism with prior convictions, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 594.7 of the Penal Code.
  - (O) Gang-related offenses, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 186.22, 186.26, and 186.28 of the Penal Code.

- (P) An attempt, as defined in Section 664 of, or a conspiracy, as defined in Section 182 of, the Penal Code, to commit an offense specified in this section.
- (Q) A crime resulting in death, or involving the personal infliction of great bodily injury, as specified in, but not limited to, subdivision (d) of Section 245.6 of, and Sections 187, 191.5, 192, 192.5, 12022.7, 12022.8, and 12022.9 of, the Penal Code.
- (R) Possession or use of a firearm in the commission of an offense.
- (S) An offense that would require the individual to register as a sex offender pursuant to Section 290, 290.002, or 290.006 of the Penal Code.
- (T) False imprisonment, slavery, and human trafficking, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 181, 210.5, 236, 236.1, and 4503 of the Penal Code.
- (U) Criminal profiteering and money laundering, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 186.2, 186.9, and 186.10 of the Penal Code.
- (V) Torture and mayhem, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 203 of the Penal Code.
- (W) A crime threatening the public safety, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 219, 219.1, 219.2, 247.5, 404, 404.6, 405a, 451, and 11413 of the Penal Code.
- (X) Elder and dependent adult abuse, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 368 of the Penal Code.
- (Y) A hate crime, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 422.55 of the Penal Code.
- (Z) Stalking, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 646.9 of the Penal Code.
- (AA) Soliciting the commission of a crime, as specified in, but not limited to, subdivision (c) of Section 286 of, and Sections 653j and 653.23 of, the Penal Code.
- (AB) An offense committed while on bail or released on his or her own recognizance, as specified in, but not limited to, Section 12022.1 of the Penal Code.
- (AC) Rape, sodomy, oral copulation, or sexual penetration, as specified in, but not limited to, paragraphs (2) and (6) of subdivision (a) of Section 261 of, paragraphs (1) and (4) of subdivision (a) of Section 262 of, Section 264.1 of, subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 286 of, subdivisions (c) and (d) of Section 288a of, and subdivisions (a) and (j) of Section 289 of, the Penal Code.
- (AD) Kidnapping, as specified in, but not limited to, Sections 207, 209, and 209.5 of the Penal Code.
- (AE) A violation of subdivision (c) of Section 20001 of the Vehicle Code.
- (4) The individual is a current registrant on the California Sex and Arson Registry.
- (5) The individual has been convicted of a federal crime that meets the definition of an aggravated felony as set forth in subparagraphs (A) to (P), inclusive, of paragraph (43) of subsection (a) of Section 101 of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. Sec. 1101), or is identified by the United States Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement as the subject of an outstanding federal felony arrest warrant.

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