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Secure Communities: An Immigrant Perspective on Immigration, and Implications on Future Policies

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Political Studies and Cross Cultural Relations

In Spring 2011, I studied abroad in Western Samoa. In March, as one of the program's excursions, I traveled to American Samoa, a territory of the United States. During my stay, my host sister drove me through the area of the island Tutuila that was heavily damaged by an earthquake and tsunami in 2009. While she drove, she described her experience as a U.S National and the implications for herself, her family, and the population of American Samoa. This conversation alongside being able to witness the continuing devastation from the disasters within this U.S. territory convinced me to study how the language of citizenship—both legal and cultural—shapes individuals identities. However, to focus the scope of my thesis, this year I will examine the specific immigration policy of "Secure Communities." Secure Communities is an immigration legislation allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement authority to detain immigrants through local law enforcement. Throughout this year, I will be working with Multicultural BRIDGE, an organization that works to promote diversity and advocate for immigrant rights.



By aligning my studies with BRIDGE, I aim to utilize their preexisting network with immigrants and professionals to collect primary data through interviews, observation, and surveys. By interacting with people who are more aware of their citizenship, I hope to reveal the potential consequences this policy can hold not only immigrants and their families, but also examine the legal implications it holds for immigration and citizenship legislation in future. By establishing this component, my second objective over the course of this year will be to create a workshop, which will occur around late February or early March, to address and inform the Berkshire community about the issues discussed in the written component they

raised themselves. Therefore, allowing my thesis to not only be a text, but a form of reciprocation to both Multicultural BRIDGE and the community for allowing me to include their experiences in my thesis.