

**Is DACA Enough?:
The Effect of DACA on Young Unauthorized Immigrants**

Jessica HyunJeong Lee
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles

Abstract

How do policies influence behavior? Current research on the effect of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (or DACA) is centered on economic and health outcomes. However, as DACA provides greater membership in American society, it is also important to examine its impact on political incorporation. I argue that although DACA has positively and significantly changed the lives of many undocumented young immigrants, it has also become another means of drawing boundary of marginality based on arbitrary and subjective standards. In-depth interviews and an original survey show that while DACA provides greater access to its recipients, it also decreases the recipients' propensity for civic engagement due to heightened social exclusion. Also, regardless of DACA status, undocumented young immigrants are more likely to be engaged in safer political activities. This paper has broad implications for the study of minority civic engagement, as it provides a better understanding of how undocumented immigrants, who do not have access to formal modes of political participation, become politically incorporated.

Introduction

Despite the limited access to formal modes of political participation, undocumented immigrants have exercised their political agency through civic engagement. We have historically seen immigrants mobilize to demonstrate support for a bill, such as the DREAM Act, and rally against anti-immigrant bills, such as H.R. 4437. Currently, there are 10.6 million undocumented immigrants estimated to be in the United States as of 2018 (Warren 2020), majority coming from Latin American countries; yet, in the last 15 years, the Asian undocumented immigrant population has tripled, leading to about 1.7 million Asian American undocumented immigrants as of 2015 (Passel and Cohn 2016). Even though about half of the population is from Mexico, it has been reported that the number of undocumented Asian American group is growing at a faster rate, with the most having come from China, India, and Korea (Ramakrishnan and Shah 2017). Out of the undocumented population in the United States, the largest age cohort is 25 to 34 with 26 percent and 35 to 44 with 25 percent.¹ Individuals from these two age cohorts are individuals who could potentially be the biggest beneficiaries of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (or DACA) program.

There are 1.3 million DACA-eligible young unauthorized immigrants living in the United States and nearly 800,000 of them are currently holding DACA status.² Since the initiation of the program, it has been reported that DACA recipients have experienced significant improvements in their economic and health well-being and that they have also contributed to the economic growth of the nation. These young individuals have grown up, received education, and worked in the United States alongside their U.S.-citizen counterparts. Even though DACA does not provide a permanent lawful status nor a pathway to citizenship, it does provide these young individuals with a more secure space in the society, albeit be liminal. By allowing them to feel that they are more valued in the society, especially in economic means, we must examine if their propensity to engage in civic participation has increased as liminal members of the society. Since President Trump's attempt to rescind the program, it has become more imperative to examine the importance of this program as it can lead to political incorporation of individuals who have historically been in the liminal spaces of politics. The institutional impact of DACA on political incorporation can be assessed by comparing the levels of political incorporation between young unauthorized immigrants in the same age cohort who are eligible and ineligible for the program. This is not only helpful to understand the political impact of DACA but also to better understand if this policy has a mobilization effect for individuals at the margins.

Therefore, I ask: How does DACA shape the experiences of unauthorized young immigrants? Also, how do the varied experiences, if any, influence one's level of political engagement? Additionally, is there any racial variation between Asians and Latinos? Here, the term "young immigrants" refers to people in their twenties and thirties. I examine this population because they have experienced growing up in the United States with or without legal status and they fall under the eligibility criteria based on age. Depending on their experiences with the DACA program and at what age they received DACA status, their political behavior would vary. Therefore, I argue that DACA has created an additional grouping within the undocumented young adult population, further separating those who are considered as deserving from those who are not. The distinction between the two groups is based on the extent to which they have

¹ Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the pooled 2012-16 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

² <https://www.fwd.us/news/daca-facts/>

personally experienced access and/or limitation due to their legal status. DACA-recipients are *more likely* to have experienced both limitations and access and undocumented young immigrants *without* DACA are *more likely* to have experienced limitation but *less* access. The shared common experience within their group shapes their willingness to be politically engaged.

I examine these questions using an original survey on undocumented Asian and Latino young immigrants (N=271). I find that those without DACA are *more likely* to report feeling unsafe for driving and domestic traveling; however, those with DACA are *more likely* to report having experienced discrimination and encounters with immigration enforcement agents. With regards to political behavior, I find that having DACA *increases* one's level of civic engagement but *decreases* if they have faced more negative experiences. Also, in general, undocumented immigrants are *more likely* to engage in safer activities. Lastly, I find that Asian undocumented immigrants are *more likely* to be politically engaged than their Latino counterparts. Therefore, DACA status does not allow for a full political incorporation as it does for economic incorporation as DACA continually leaves its recipients in liminal space. Also, it disaggregates the undocumented immigrant group by completely excluding ineligible individuals based on arbitrarily set eligibility requirements.

First, I review existing scholarship on the effect of 1) DACA and 2) race on experiences and behavior. next, I turn to my analysis of the original survey on Asian and Latino undocumented young immigrants. Through the discussion of how DACA has created additional sub-groups within the undocumented young adult population, I discuss the role of policy intervention as a mechanism for civic engagement amongst undocumented immigrants.

Theories and Hypotheses

DACA

On June 15, 2012, DACA, an executive order which provides temporary relief from deportation and work authorization to eligible young undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children, was signed into law. To be eligible for DACA, unauthorized immigrants have to meet seven criteria: 1) applicants were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012; 2) applicants came to the United States before the age of 16; 3) applicants have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time of application; 4) applicants were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making the request for consideration; 5) applicants had no lawful status on June 15, 2012; 6) applicants are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and 7) applicants have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.³ To prove their eligibility, applicants must submit documentation that are approved by the USCIS, such as passports or birth certificates from an individual's country of origin, school or medical records, tax returns, and bank statements. In addition, applicants must fill out three forms – I-821D, I-765, and I-765WS – along with a filing fee of \$495, updated as of 2020.

Since its creation, approximately 800,000 individuals who have been approved for and benefitted from the program since its creation. As of March 2020, there is an estimate of 643,

³ <https://www.uscis.gov/archive/consideration-of-deferred-action-for-childhood-arrivals-daca>

560 DACA recipients and an estimate of 1,326,000 eligible immigrants in the United States.⁴ The largest share of DACA recipients is estimated to live in California with 183,460 recipients and 395,000 eligible individuals and the next largest share live in Texas with 106,090 recipients and 192,000 eligible individuals, with Illinois, New York, Florida, North Carolina, Arizona, and Georgia trailing behind in order. For DACA recipients and eligible population among the Latino community, the largest population come from Mexico with 517,460 recipients and 836,000 eligible individuals, with El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, and Brazil following in order. Among the Asian community, the largest population come from South Korea with 6,210 recipients and 30,000 eligible individuals, followed by the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China.

Despite the large number of young unauthorized immigrants who have been benefitting from DACA, the program has been under threat since the beginning of the Trump administration. Those in favor of the program, especially the beneficiaries of the program, have argued to keep the program in place for the significant benefits it brings to the beneficiaries and the nation; however, there is dissent regarding the impact on the beneficiaries as well. Scholars have examined the positive impact of DACA by discussing the individual benefits these recipients gain through educational and professional opportunities, increased economic and social mobility, and better health and well-being (Amuedo-Dorantes and Antman 2017; Capps, Fix, and Zong 2017; Gonzales et al. 2019; Patler et al. 2019; Pope 2016; Siemons et al. 2017; Svajlenka 2019; Venkataramani et al. 2017; Wong et al. 2017a). They also highlight the national economic benefits that accrue with having these young individuals in the workforce. However, despite the great benefits the program, as it is not a permanent relief, there are numerous negative impacts and contextual disparities as well (Benuto et al. 2018; Gonzales et al. 2019; Kosnac et al. 2015; Patler et al. 2019; Wong et al. 2018).

Two Sub-groups of Undocumented Young Immigrants

Even without DACA in place, the undocumented community was divided across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines with undocumented Latinos having been racially profiled and targeted more than undocumented Asians. To further complicate the group's marginalization, I argue that DACA has become a new standard that created additional sub-groups within this marginalized community, further dividing already existing disparities. Before DACA was in place, all undocumented youth experienced limitations with respect to educational and professional opportunities, access to healthcare, the ability to travel safely within and outside of the United States, the ability to get a driver's license, and the ability to have a government-issued id. With DACA, those who have been approved have been able to attend a university with financial aid and scholarships, find legal employment, have access to healthcare, travel safely within the United States and even outside with advance parole, legally drive, and have a government-issued id. Even though the DACA program itself only provides temporary relief from deportation and work authorization, the program has led to far-reaching effects as it became a new standard of eligibility criteria in accessing resources. Therefore, depending on the state of residence, workplace, or educational institution, DACA-recipients have been able to drive legally, receive additional financial aid and scholarships, and receive healthcare benefits.

Therefore, DACA has created constructed different categories based on the 'deservingness' by allowing a subgroup of undocumented immigrants to benefit from a piece of

⁴ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>

legislation (Nicholls 2013). The undocumented youth population is divided by whether or not an individual has DACA and the group of DACA recipients are divided further based on at what “stage in their transition to adulthood” an individual received DACA (Gonzales et al. 2018). I expand on this idea to argue that DACA has created additional groupings based on a new standard of deservingness within the undocumented community. I present that DACA has created two different sub-groups of DACA-recipients and undocumented youth without DACA. More specifically, I argue that this new categorization leads individuals to have shared common experiences which then further shape their willingness to be politically engaged. Although DACA has significantly and positively affected the lives of many undocumented youth, it has also established another boundary of marginality based on arbitrary and subjective standards, influencing level of political incorporation of individuals affected.

DACA and Experiences

Lived experiences of undocumented immigrants vary by DACA statuses. The Migration Policy Institute estimates there to be about 1.2 million eligible young undocumented immigrants and about 600,000 active DACA recipients in the United States as of 2022 (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools 2022). As discussed, there is a disparity in life outcomes between undocumented immigrants and their documented and U.S.-born counterparts as undocumented immigrants lack access to resources and opportunities. DACA grants its recipients with temporary relief from deportation, renewable work permits, and temporary Social Security numbers. Additionally, depending on the state of their residence, DACA recipients also have the ability to get driver’s licenses, qualify for in-state tuition and other financial aid, and access to healthcare. And with the government-issued identification cards, they are also able to safely travel within the United States and even outside of the United States with advance parole. Therefore, studies show improvements in access to resources and improvements and life outcomes among undocumented immigrants with DACA. Of all the benefits, education has been found as the greatest benefit for DACA recipients (Benuto et al. 2018; Casas, Benuto, and Newlands 2021). In order for individuals to be eligible for DACA, they need to have either graduated from high school or earned a GED. And with the help of DACA, they have not only advanced to higher education but have also been able to stay in school and finish more easily as they can legally work and qualify for financial aid (Casas, Benuto, and Newlands 2021). In the 2017 National DACA Study, Wong reports that 45 percent of the study respondents are currently in school and among those, 72 percent are pursuing a bachelor’s degree or higher (Wong et al. 2017). Additionally, among the respondents that are currently in school, 94 percent report pursuing educational opportunities they were previously not able to before being granted DACA status (Wong et al. 2017). DACA recipients have also been able to pursue professional aspirations in addition to educational aspirations. The 2017 National DACA Study finds that 91 percent of respondents are currently employed and 93 percent of respondents 25 years old or more are currently employed (Wong et al. 2017). Not only are they simply employed, young undocumented immigrants with DACA are able to work at a job with better pay and working conditions, that better fits their educational and training background, and that better fits their long-term career goals (Wong et al. 2017). With their improved educational and career options, DACA recipients report of having an increase in their job earnings, opening their first bank account, obtaining their first credit card, and purchasing their first car and/or home (Gonzales, Terriquez, and Ruszczyk 2014; Wong et al. 2017). Access to healthcare is one limitation

undocumented immigrants face; however, with DACA status, undocumented immigrants with DACA are able to have greater access to healthcare as well. Therefore, DACA recipients are found to experience fewer barriers to discrimination in healthcare than undocumented immigrants (Benuto et al. 2018; Woofter and Sudhinaraset 2022).

However, studies also highlight how DACA recipients still face limitations due to the temporary nature of the policy, the lack of access to pathways to citizenship or permanent legal status, and the variations in state immigration policies. States have different immigration policies because there isn't a comprehensive federal immigration reform. One way this is manifested is through educational opportunities provided to undocumented immigrants. In more immigrant-friendly states, young undocumented immigrants with DACA qualify for in-state tuition and state-level financial aid. However, in more hostile states, young undocumented immigrants with DACA do not have additional benefits in comparison to young undocumented immigrants without DACA. In a comparative study between DACA recipients in Massachusetts, an immigrant-friendly state, and North Carolina, a more hostile state, scholars find that DACA recipients in Massachusetts feel "more legitimacy" and "more optimistic in their abilities to redirect their life pathways" after receiving DACA statuses while DACA recipients in North Carolina continue to feel like "outsiders" as state policies continue "to impede mobility pathways even after the passage of DACA" (Cebulko and Silver 2016). Additionally, young undocumented immigrants with DACA have been found to still face limitations in educational and career options. They remain ineligible for some professional programs such as medical schools and career opportunities such as federal jobs (Kuczewski and Brubaker 2014). Furthermore, young undocumented immigrants with DACA continue to face barriers in access to healthcare. In a study of DACA-eligible Latinos in California, scholars find that DACA recipients remain excluded from the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion and Health Care Exchanges and also face barriers to healthcare due to "cost, limited intergenerational knowledge about the health care system, and mistrust of providers caused by discrimination and deportation" (Raymond-Flesch et al. 2014).

In general, existing studies have shown how DACA has provided its recipients with greater access to resources and opportunities. However, we lack understanding in whether their lived experiences have positively improved in areas of perceived and experienced discrimination. Therefore, this chapter seeks to examine if there exist any differences in the levels of discriminatory experiences between young undocumented immigrants with and without DACA.

DACA and Civic Engagement

Existing literature argues that undocumented youth are more likely to be politically engaged because they have witnessed political mobilization resulting in positive legislative outcome and have benefitted from various policies that worked in their favor. Many have witnessed the immigrant rights movements such as 2006 immigration protests against H.R. 4437. They have been able to receive public education with the help of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982. And some have been able to receive temporary relief of deportation and work authorization through the DACA program since 2012. DACA has been found to increase levels of political engagement amongst DACA recipients. Research based on a national experimental survey of 1,050 DACA recipients in 41 states and the District of Columbia finds that DACA recipients have become more politically engaged and are "ready to mobilize" as they believe that "their actions can bring about change" (Wong et al. 2018). Additionally,

Escudero argues that undocumented youth have occupied a unique social and legal positioning with the help of their intersectional social movement identities which allows them to engage in political activism alongside other political activists from marginalized communities (Escudero 2020).

Research tells us that DACA-recipients are more politically active than those without DACA. Therefore, I expect to find undocumented young immigrants *with DACA to be more likely* to be politically engaged. Furthermore, I explore the driving force behind this relationship and argue that this relationship is driven by lived experiences. Based on their lived experiences and experiences with the DACA program, I argue that their level of political engagement would vary. There are different perspectives and findings in examining the relationship between lived experiences and levels of political engagement. Research shows that experiences of discrimination, encounters with the immigration enforcement, and fear of deportation positively influences nonelectoral participation (Maginot 2021). However, another research find that undocumented students' level of political engagement is shaped by perceptions of immigration policy context where perceived discrimination and threat to family are positively associated with political engagement while social exclusion is negatively associated (Rosales, Enriquez, and Nájera 2021). Therefore, current research suggests that DACA recipients would have higher level of political engagement as they have benefitted from DACA, an immigration policy that provided them with temporary relief for deportation. And individuals without DACA have experienced hostile policies and more negative lived experiences. Therefore, existing studies would suggest that undocumented immigrants without DACA would be less likely to be politically engaged as they have unique risks that discourage their participation.

Sense of Safety and Behavior

Restrictive and hostile immigration policies and law enforcement practices in the United States “create a climate of fear for undocumented individuals, their families, and their communities” (Fleming, Novak, and Lopez 2019). The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the reorganization of U.S. immigration enforcement post-9/11 has changed the landscape of criminalization and deportation of immigrants in the United States. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was created after 9/11, increasing the number of deportations from 70,000 in 1996 to 200,000 in 2003 (Fleming, Novak, and Lopez 2019). The immigration law enforcement uses workplace raids and police checkpoints as means to arrest and detain immigrants without papers. Under the Trump presidency, immigration enforcement was expanded, increasing the number of arrests made within the country by ICE officers and the number of workplace raids (Fleming, Novak, and Lopez 2019; Pierce 2019). With federalism, there are varying degrees of localized immigration control undocumented immigrants have to navigate in their city, county, or state of residence as well (Provine et al. 2016). Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, live under the fear of deportation with this heightened level of criminalization in the United States.

In addition to immigration policies and the actions taken by immigration enforcement, undocumented immigrants are threatened due to discriminatory and anti-immigrant rhetoric and actions by political elites, media, and the public (Fleming, Novak, and Lopez 2019). Many politicians and media outlets use dehumanizing language towards immigrant communities, shaping public opinion toward this population. Immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, experience discrimination in their workplaces, schools, neighborhoods. Therefore,

they may not feel safe in their daily lives when they go to different places, such as work, school, neighborhood park, and supermarket. They are constantly living with a heightened sense of fear and deportation, preventing them from engaging in certain behaviors and leading them to avoid certain spaces.

The threats of immigration enforcement and anti-immigration sentiment have “produced a climate of fear that imbues everyday activities, like working, driving, or even residing in one’s home, with a risk of apprehension, detention or deportation, and ultimately separation from the people they love” (Fleming, Novak, and Lopez 2019). Even DACA recipients who have temporary relief from deportation report of having persisting fear of deportation as their “personal and social spheres were at times disrupted by hostile and exclusionary contests” leaving them vulnerable (Gonzales, Brant, and Roth 2020). And the sense of legitimacy within the state and national boundaries is found to vary based on the level of hostility or acceptance towards immigrants in their home states (Cebulko and Silver 2016; Gonzales, Brant, and Roth 2020). Therefore, I

Overall, literature on the relationship between DACA and behavior show that undocumented immigrants with DACA are more likely to be politically engaged but all undocumented immigrants have some degree of threat and fear that discourage them from engaging in some behaviors, especially if it leaves them vulnerable to potential encounters with the immigration law enforcement. Therefore, I hypothesize that DACA provides its recipients with liminal sense of safety, leading all undocumented immigrants to prefer engaging in safer behaviors than riskier behaviors regardless of their DACA status.

Racialized Experiences

History and research have shown how Asian Americans and Latinos have commonly been disadvantaged in the United States due to their racial identities and immigrant status. Additionally, illegality leaves undocumented Asians and Latinos vulnerable to further marginalization within the already marginalized communities. Furthermore, the lived experiences of young undocumented immigrants also vary based on their racial and ethnic identity because immigration issue has been racialized as a Latino issue in the United States. For this dissertation, I will be focusing on two largest immigrant groups – young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. Based on analysis by the Migration Policy Institute in 2019, there are about 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States and about 75 percent of them are from Mexico, Central America, and South America and about 15% of them are from Asia (Profile of the Unauthorized Population: United States 2019). Among DACA recipients, about 10 percent are Asians and about 90 percent are Latinos with about 79 percent coming from Mexico (Hooker and Fix 2014; López and Krogstad 2017). With Latinos making up a large share of the undocumented population, Latino immigrants have been constructed as threats to the nation by political and media elites (Reny and Manzano 2016).

Research finds that negative attitudes towards undocumented immigration is highly correlated to one’s racism towards Latinos and negative attitudes towards legal Mexican Americans (Cowan, Martinez, and Mendiola 1997). Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to live in low-income neighborhoods and Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to be living in mid- to high-income neighborhoods and/or attending 4-year universities or working in an office job. Latino undocumented immigrants are also more likely to report having experienced being racially profiled and targeted than their Asian counterparts.

These may lead an individual to believe that the experiences of living as an undocumented immigrant is not as difficult for Asian undocumented immigrants. While it is true that they may not have had traumatic experiences such as having crossed the border at a young age, having someone they personally know being deported, or having to constantly live under the fear of deportation, this undocumented identity comes as a double-edged sword to Asian undocumented immigrants. Because Asian undocumented immigrants can hide behind their ascriptive identity and their legal statuses will not be revealed until they personally reveal their status, there are ramifications that hurt their community in return. With the Asian undocumented immigrant community being less visible and smaller in number, it is more stigmatized within the Asian American community, further preventing Asian undocumented immigrants from feeling safe in revealing their status even within their close-knit community. Additionally, it is difficult for Asian undocumented immigrants to have a similar level of sense of belonging to the undocumented immigrant population in comparison to their Latino counterparts. Also, there may exist a greater barrier for an Asian undocumented immigrant to overcome for them to feel comfortable and safe to not only to reveal their identity to their close-knit community but also in public settings, such as rallies and public hearings. Esther Cho (2019) identifies this experience of young Asian undocumented immigrants as “invisible illegality” where race shields young Asian undocumented immigrants from “the precarious nature of their immigration status” while also excluding them from a collective identity of illegality that leaves them with an “intensified feelings of shame and a sense of isolation both within their ethno-racial community and the broader undocumented community” (Cho 2019). This chapter will further explore the similarities and differences in experiences with discrimination and fear of deportation levels among young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants.

Racial Variation in Immigrant Rights Activism

Studies have broadly examined immigrant rights movements from the 2000s. Scholars have explored the reasons that explain why immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, are able to come out of the shadows and engage in protests. Ramírez (2015) shows that immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, and their allies have come out to the streets in response to imminent legislative threat as an act of reactive mobilization; however, much of mobilization was a form of proactive mobilization with the help of federal- and state-level institutional framework that helped Latinos to mobilize and exert their political agency. The author also argues that there is a great level of temporal and geographic variation and that the motivation and the effect of mobilization is highly context-dependent (Ramírez 2015). Additionally, in the examination of these immigrant rights rallies from 2000s, researchers have looked to immigrant rights movements and have studied the effect of Spanish-language media in cultivating Latino identity, covering issues of immigration, and mobilizing people around the issues salient to their communities (Zepeda-Millán 2017). Scholars have also found that Asian ethnic media has helped the Asian American population assimilate and gain mobility in the United States. Zhou and Cai have found that “Chinese language media not only connects immigrants to their host society, but also serves as a road map for the first generations to incorporate into American society by promoting the mobility goals of home ownership, entrepreneurship, and educational achievement” .

Even though existing studies clarify what drives immigrants to engage in immigrant rights movements, their focus on the Latino community prevents us from having a

comprehensive understanding of immigrant rights movements as it is not inclusive of all populations that are affected, such as Asian and Black undocumented immigrants and immigrants who are not able to benefit from any federal or state assistance. There are studies that specifically examine Asian American activism in immigrant rights movements. Okamoto and Ebert (2010) acknowledge that Asian American scholars have imposed biased attention towards electoral participation and citizenship acquisition in the study of immigrant political incorporation and that research must expand to looking at civic engagements of immigrant communities. Through the examination of 200 immigrant protests in 52 metropolitan areas across the United States, the authors find that greater access to formal political and economic incorporation both hinder and facilitate immigrant organizing with threats and segregation encouraging immigrant protests (Okamoto and Ebert 2010). They show that under the conditions where political opportunities and resources exist and when group boundaries between immigrants and natives are heightened, immigrants, or Asian American immigrants, are motivated to organize into protests as their shared minority status and collective goals are highlighted.

When comparing rates of participation amongst Latinos and Asian Americans, research find that the two groups are affected by similar factors despite a huge socioeconomic gap. Lien finds that for both groups, higher acculturation rate increases participation, higher levels of attachment to homeland culture does not necessarily decrease participation, and levels of group consciousness or group identification to being an American ethnic minority increases nonvoting participation (Lien 1994). This study also shows that Asian Americans are not significantly affected by the sense of being alienated but that Mexicans are positively affected, implying the difference between the two groups in how they may response to threat or being marginalized (Lien 1994). Also, discourse on Asian undocumented immigrants describe them as “inherently silent” as they are shaped by their culture of shame (Chan 2010; Gonzales 2009; Lachica Buenavista 2018). However, this is a simplistic and limited view of the wide range of experiences Asian undocumented immigrant community shares. Therefore, I will examine how Asian undocumented immigrants behave politically in response to their sense of threat or sense of belonging in the United States.

As we can see in existing literature, it appears that Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants are motivated by similar yet different factors in participating in immigrant rights activism. However, it does seem that Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to be affected by threat and their status as undocumented immigrants. Therefore, the review of this set of literature suggest that Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to participate in protests and be engaged in civic activities in comparison to Asian undocumented immigrants.

Racial Variation in Sense of Safety and Behavior

“Citizenship appears embodied in skin color serving as an indicator of illegal status” (Romero 2006). Latino immigrants, especially Mexican Americans, become targets of “insults, questions, unnecessary stops, and searches” (Romero 2006). Due to this racial profiling in immigration law enforcement, Latino undocumented immigrants do not feel safe in their day-to-day activities and avoid situations where they can potentially encounter police officers and ICE agents. Scholars find that fear of deportation decreases level of attention to politics but increases frequency of discussion on political issues for Latinos in the Rio Grande Valley (Altema McNeely, Kim, and Kim 2022). These Latinos reside in the U.S.-Mexico border region with

heightened level of hostility towards immigrants, especially Mexican immigrants. This study illuminates how one's racial or ethnic background shapes the level of threat and fear they exhibit, further influencing their level of political engagement.

Scholars also look to the extent Asian undocumented immigrants have been impacted by their sense of fear and threat. A study on undocumented Asian Americans finds that Asian undocumented immigrants also express "anxieties about getting caught, detained, and removed from the life they and their families had established" in the United States and believe that "there were no safe spaces" (Lachica Buenavista 2018). This sense of fear shaped their daily lives as they develop strategies to avoid being detected as an undocumented immigrant. Some of the interview respondents shared that they "constantly surveyed their surroundings, determined exit strategies, and traveled with friends who are documented" (Lachica Buenavista 2018). As we can see, both Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants are aware of immigrant policing and are impacted by the atmosphere of fear.

Overall, literature suggests both the motivation and hesitancy behind political engagement among Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. Latinos may be more likely to be racially profiled, discouraging them from being in spaces that lead to potential hostile confrontations with the immigration law enforcement. However, Latinos may be more driven by sense of threat to act in resilience and Asians may be encouraged to stay hidden. In this chapter, I will be further exploring racial variation in behavior – political and non-political – between Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants as there is a significant gap in our understanding of how Asian undocumented immigrants and to test if the implications of current literature will hold true.

Research Design

I test my hypotheses with an original survey that I conducted from June to July 2022 with 271 self-identified undocumented Asian (N=115) and Latino (N=156) young immigrants. I conducted the survey through Qualtrics, a trusted survey software platform and followed prior work and screened respondents for age group, racial group, and immigration status. More specifically, I asked for age to make sure that participants are between the ages 18-41 so that it fits into the age eligibility criteria for DACA, I screened to only include Asian and Latino respondents, and I asked to confirm and self-report if they are currently undocumented which encompasses all those who are DACA recipients, DACA qualified, and/or DACA ineligible. Following prior work (Woofter and Sudhinaraset 2022), I include validation items later in the survey to further check one's undocumented status through set of knowledge and eligibility items regarding DACA. These screening questions and validation checks dropped the sample size from 350 to 271.

After screening for eligibility, participants (Ps) were then asked to provide consent for continuing to participate in the survey. Following consent, Ps answered a battery of demographic items to help characterize the sample (i.e., race, gender, place of residence, political ideology, education, income). To measure their willingness to be civically engaged, I use a battery of civic activities – 1) discussing politics with family and friends, 2) contacting an elected representative or a government official in the U.S., 3) signing a petition regarding an issue or problem that concerns them, and 4) attending a protest, march, demonstration, or rally. The participants were asked to answer these four Yes or No questions: 1) Have you ever discussed politics with family and friends?; 2) Have you ever contacted an elected representative or a government official in

the U.S. in any way – such as through writing a letter, emailing, calling, or in person – about a policy or issue you care about?; 3) Have you ever signed a petition regarding an issue or problem that concerns you?; and 4) Have you ever attended a protest march, demonstration, or rally? These questions were coded as binary variables, so I used binary logistical regression. I also measure their sense of safety in engaging in day-to-day activities with respect to mobility through two measures – 1) feeling safe to drive and 2) feeling safe to travel domestically. In the survey, the participants are asked to indicate, on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being never to 10 being all the time, how often they feel safe to 1) drive and 2) travel within the continental United States. They were coded in a scale from 1 to 5 so I used basic linear regression models.

Variables

I rank all six dependent variables – four measures for civic engagement activities and two measures for day-to-day activities – in a spectrum from safe to risky behaviors. I consider discussing politics with family and friends to be the safest activity out of the six activities because there is a level of trust among family and friends and undocumented immigrants would feel safe discussing sensitive matters with them. Contacting an elected representative or a government official in the U.S. is considered to be slightly riskier than discussing politics with family and friends because they are interacting with a government official who they may not be able to trust; however, it is still considered as a safe activity as they do not have to reveal their identity. Next in the spectrum is signing a petition regarding an issue or problem that concerns them. I rank this to be riskier than the previous two activities because they have to reveal their identity by writing down their names that is most likely to be recorded. However, I do not believe it to be as risky as attending a protest because signing a petition does not necessarily require a face-to-face interaction and does not require an encounter with the law enforcement. The next three activities are considered to be relatively risky activities as engaging in these activities all lead to potential encounters with the law enforcement. Driving is one of these three activities. There is a risk of being stopped by police officers or being stopped at a checkpoint while driving; therefore, undocumented immigrants may choose not to risk running into such encounters. Even if someone has a valid driver's license, they may want to avoid such situations because there is a possibility of police officers wrongly detaining people even with papers. Therefore, undocumented immigrants may not feel safe driving, especially near the U.S.-Mexico border, as expressed by some of the participants in my in-depth interviews. Similarly, traveling within the United States by air is considered as a risky activity, even riskier than driving. Travelers are required to present their identification – a valid driver's license or a passport – when they pass through the TSA checkpoint; therefore, undocumented immigrants may choose not to travel by air if they would rather choose not to be in these situations so that they can avoid any potential altercations. Lastly, I argue that attending a protest march, demonstration, or rally is the riskiest activity out of the six activities because participants may be viewed as undocumented immigrants by simply being present in these spaces and many undocumented immigrants may not feel comfortable revealing their immigration status in a public space. Additionally, these events sometimes become more violent and contested than the organizers originally intended them to be, so there is a possibility of the participants being arrested or detained. Furthermore, ICE agents and police officers are known to be present in these spaces, sometimes hiding their identities. I explore how having DACA status changes one's sense of safety in engaging in these six activities, so I use a binary variable of DACA status and race as

the independent variable. All the models also include age, gender, college education, and employment as control variables as well.

Sample

Out of 271 survey respondents, 52 currently hold valid DACA status and 200 do not (are waiting for their application to go through, have been denied, or have never applied). There were 19 respondents who did not respond to this question. Respondents with DACA in the sample are slightly younger than respondents without DACA. This may be reflective of the broader undocumented immigrant population as DACA respondents are the younger undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children. Also, undocumented immigrants needed to arrive in the United States before reaching their 16th birthday to be eligible for DACA. Therefore, I find my respondents with DACA to have arrived in the United States at an average age of 11.52 whereas respondents without DACA to have arrived at an average age of 16.5. However, an average age of 16.5 among a group of 200 people suggests that there must be a sizeable share within non-DACA group that arrived in the United States before their 16th birthday but do not qualify for DACA for other unknown reasons. Hence, it opens the discussion to start questioning the viability of characterizing and categorizing Dreamers as the younger share of the undocumented immigrant population and the arbitrariness of 16 as the cutoff line for age requirement for DACA.

For other demographic variables, there is a slightly larger share of males in the non-DACA group (64 percent) compared to the DACA group (62 percent). Respondents with DACA in the sample are slightly more likely to have higher educational attainment with 13.77 years of education than respondents without DACA in the sample with 13.61 years of education but the difference is very minor. The slight difference is understandable because individuals need to be currently enrolled in school, graduated, or obtained GED to be eligible for DACA and many studies have shown that DACA recipients have been able to pursue higher education with the help of DACA (Casas, Benuto, and Newlands 2021; Wong et al. 2017b). However, with such negligible difference I observe in the sample, I am led to question, once again, the common characterization and description of the DACAmented population being more highly educated and “deserving” of relief from deportation and legal residence, albeit temporary, in the United States. Based on the characterization of the sample, I find that individuals without DACA are just as much likely to pursue higher education despite their ineligibility for financial aid. One explanation for this possibility is because the sample is based in California, an immigrant-friendly state, which provides opportunities and access to higher education for undocumented immigrants. In California, AB 540 allows undocumented immigrants to qualify for in-state tuition for state colleges and universities as long as they have attended a California high school for three or more years and have graduated or have received the equivalent, such as a GED. Therefore, it may be more difficult to observe any variation in levels of educational attainment between undocumented immigrants with and without DACA in immigrant-friendly states such as California. On the other hand, I observe variation in employment status between undocumented immigrants with and without DACA statuses. There is a higher share of employed individuals in the DACA sample (84 percent) than in the non-DACA sample (79 percent). This variation is expected as DACA provides undocumented immigrants with legal employment authorization, allowing its recipients to pursue professional opportunities and legally join the workforce. For

years of having held their DACA status, majority of the respondents have had DACA for more than 1 year at 69 percent.

Overall, there are more males in the sample, DACA recipients are more likely to be employed, and DACA recipients arrived in the United States at a much younger age. Based on these descriptions of the sample, I include age, age of arrival, gender, college education, employment, and race as control variables in my regression analysis to account for any imbalance across different groups in the sample. From the description of the entire sample, I can once again confirm that DACA provides young undocumented immigrants with access to resources and opportunities, especially when it comes to career and professional opportunities. In this chapter, I will expand on this finding of variation by DACA to examine to what extent DACA shapes one's lived experiences as an undocumented immigrant in the United States.

Now, I look at the racial demographic make-up of the sample. Out of 271 survey respondents, 115 are self-identified Asians and 156 are self-identified Latinos. Latinos in the sample are slightly older than the Asians in the sample with the mean age of Latinos in the sample being 26.5 and Asians in the sample being 26.18; however, the difference is very negligible. I find Latinos in the sample to have arrived in the United States at a slightly older age at the age of 16 than Asians in the sample who have arrived at the age of 15. However, the difference here is very minimal as well. For gender, the Asian sample has a greater share of males than the Latino sample. 66 percent of Asians in the sample are males whereas 60 percent of Latinos in the sample are males.

The Asian sample has a larger share that has higher levels of educational attainment as well. The mean year of education is 14 years for Asians in the sample whereas the mean year of education is 13 for Latinos in the sample. There is also a larger share of Asians in the sample being employed than the Latinos in the sample. 90 percent of Asians in the sample are reported to be currently employed and 73 percent of Latinos in the sample are reported to be currently employed. This suggests that young Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to have access to educational and professional resources and opportunities than their Latino counterparts. The same pattern is found for DACA status with the Asian sample having a larger share of DACA holders than their Latino counterparts. 23 percent of Asians in the sample currently hold DACA statuses while 77 percent of Asians in the sample do not. On the other hand, 19 percent of Latinos in the sample have been approved of their DACA statuses while 81 percent of Latinos in the sample have not. This adds more weight to the inference that young Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to have access to resources and opportunities. Asian undocumented immigrants in the sample are more likely to have arrived at a younger age and more likely to have higher educational attainment levels, so the Asian undocumented population may be more likely to be eligible for DACA statuses. Another explanation is that regardless of one's eligibility, young Asian undocumented immigrants may be more willing to apply for DACA as they are less likely to be fearful of revealing their or their family members' undocumented status. I will explore racial variation in one's level of deportation threat in this chapter. Even though there is a larger share of DACA holders among the Asian sample, among DACA recipients, Latinos are more likely to have held their DACA statuses for a longer period of time than their Asian counterparts. 71 percent of Latino DACA recipients have had DACA for more than 1 year whereas 67 percent of Asian DACA recipients have had DACA for more than 1 year. This may imply that most of Latino DACA recipients are individuals who have had DACA since its reception and have been renewing ever since. On the other hand, there may be a larger population among the Asian undocumented population that become eligible for DACA as they

gain their eligible status through age (become at least 15 years old) or educational requirement (currently enrolled in school, obtained GED, or be an honorary discharged U.S. veteran). This variation in the characteristic also implies that Asian undocumented immigrants may continue to be more likely to access these benefits than their Latino counterparts as a greater share of the Asian undocumented sample are able to become first time applicants and increase their share of DACA holders.

Overall, Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to have arrived in the United States at a younger age, more likely to have higher educational attainment levels. Also, there is a greater share of males, individuals who are employed, and individuals with DACA statuses in the Asian sample than the Latino sample. Based on these characteristics of the sample, I include age, age of arrival, gender, college education, employment, and DACA status as control variables in my regression models. From these characteristics, I can confirm that young Asian undocumented immigrants appear to benefit from these resources and opportunities more than their Latino counterparts. In this chapter, I will explore one’s vulnerability to systemic discrimination and racism as one of the potential explanations for this racial variation.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Sample in the Survey

	Total (N=271)	Asians (N=115)	Latinos (N=156)	DACA (N=52)	Non-DACA (N=200)
Mean Age	26.36	26.18	26.5	25.9	26.58
Male	62.50%	66.38%	59.62%	61.54%	64.00%
Mean Year of Education	13.69	14.31	13.22	13.77	13.61
Employed	80.08%	89.62%	73.10%	84.31%	79.00%
Mean Age of Arrival	15.47	14.79	15.96	11.52	16.5
DACA	20.63%	22.64%			
Non-DACA	79.37%	77.36%			
>1 year of DACA	30.77%	33.33%	28.57%	30.77%	
1-10 years of DACA	69.23%	66.67%	71.43%	69.23%	

Role of DACA on Experiences and Behavior

Descriptive Statistics

Here, I present descriptive statistics of the relationship between DACA and negative lived experiences of young undocumented immigrants. First, DACA recipients appear to have

higher rates in experiencing discrimination and interactions with immigration enforcement. DACA recipients have an increased access to economic and social opportunities and protection from deportation; therefore, I predicted that DACA recipients would also be less likely to experience discrimination as well. However, as shown in Table 2, DACA recipients are actually found to be *more likely* to have experienced negative experiences due to legal status. In particular, DACA recipients are more likely to have been discriminated against, know someone who has experienced immigration raids, and know someone who has gone through deportation proceedings. 82 percent of respondents with DACA report of having experienced discrimination whereas 74 percent of respondents without DACA report of having experienced discrimination. 65 percent of respondents with DACA report knowing someone who has experienced immigration raid whereas 54 percent of respondents without DACA report knowing someone who has experienced immigration raid. 69 percent of respondents with DACA report knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings whereas 53 percent of respondents without DACA report knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings.

These are unexpected findings as existing studies and in-depth interviews suggest that undocumented immigrants without DACA are more likely to be vulnerable to discriminatory behavior towards undocumented immigrants. One plausible explanation can be that undocumented immigrants with DACA are more likely to be more willing to be part of spaces with other undocumented immigrants and remain in the network of undocumented immigrants as they are more open to revealing their own legal status. Therefore, they may be more likely to come to know of other undocumented immigrants who have experienced immigration raid and/or gone through deportation proceedings.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on DACA Status and Experiences with Discrimination and Immigration Enforcement

	Discriminated	Raid – personal	Raid – others	Deportation - personal	Deportation - others
DACA					
DACA (N=52)	82%	39%	65%	37%	69%
Non-DACA (N=200)	74%	39%	54%	36%	53%

I also explore the relationship between DACA and behavior of young undocumented immigrants. Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics of this relationship. I find that both young undocumented immigrants with DACA and without DACA are highly likely to be discuss politics with family and friends, which is considered as the safest activity. Contacting representative and signing petitions appear to be something DACA recipients are more willing to engage in than individuals without DACA. These may confirm that DACA recipients are more likely to perform duties as members of the society as they feel not only accepted as a member of the society but also safer interacting with government officials with their temporary relief status. Also, individuals with DACA are reported to feel safer to drive and to travel domestically than individuals without DACA. This finding is expected and logical because DACA recipients have access to driver’s license and are also able to apply for real ID and be protected from deportation. However, the magnitude of both activities is relatively low (35 percent for feeling safe to drive and 49 percent for feeling safe to travel), suggesting that undocumented immigrants do not feel

comfortable encountering police officers or TSA agents even with a valid driver’s license and a temporary relief status. For attending protests, which is considered as riskiest behavior, I find that even though DACA recipients are more likely to participate than individuals without DACA, both groups are less likely to engage in this particular civic activity in comparison to other types of civic engagement. This confirms the expectations that regardless of DACA status, young undocumented immigrants are less likely to engage in risky behaviors because they do not feel comfortable and safe being in public spaces that has the risk of potentially revealing their immigration statuses.

Table 3. Engagement in Safe to Risky Activities by DACA Status

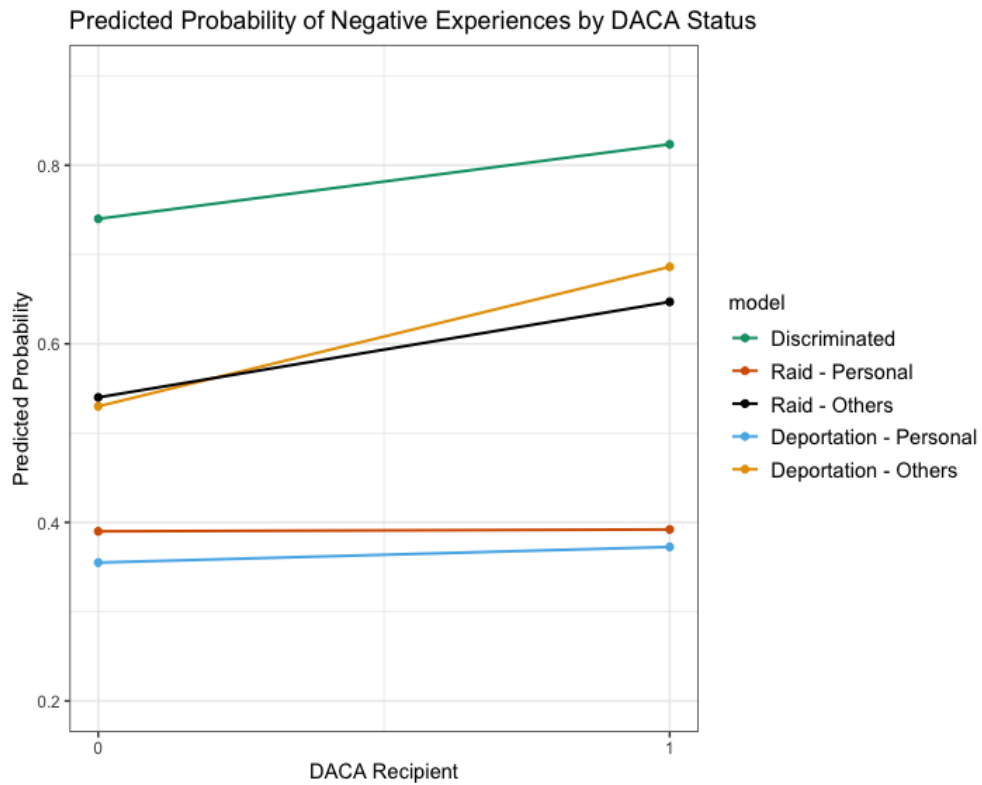
	Discuss politics	Contact reps	Sign petitions	Safe to drive	Safe to travel	Attend protests
DACA	87%	83%	71%	35%	49%	54%
Non-DACA	80%	44%	54%	20%	26%	45%

Results

I test the relationship between DACA and experiences with discrimination and immigration enforcement. The survey items for experiences with discrimination and immigration enforcement – 1) having experienced discrimination, 2) having personally experienced immigration raid, 3) knowing someone who has experienced immigration raid, 4) having personally gone through deportation proceedings, and 5) knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings – are binary variables. Therefore, the regression models I run here are all logistic regressions. I test the relationship between DACA status, which is also a binary variable, and each of the five dependent variables in five separate models. I include race, age, age of arrival, gender, college education, and employment status in all the models. In Figure 1, I show predicted probability of having had one of the negative experiences based on their DACA status. The full model can be found in Appendix A.

I find DACA recipients in the survey sample to be more likely to have had negative experiences across the board with various types of discrimination and I am confident of the relationship for DACA recipients who know someone who has gone through deportation proceedings. The descriptive and regression results display the effect of DACA on levels of discriminatory experiences in the opposite way than my prediction. The results show that although DACA provides its recipients with greater access to resources and opportunities in educational and career options, it does not protect its recipients from discriminatory practices. One explanation for this surprising result could be that young undocumented immigrants are more likely to be open about their immigration statuses as they are temporarily protected from deportation, leaving them more vulnerable to discrimination. Young undocumented immigrants with DACA may also be more likely to know of someone who have experienced immigration raid or who have gone through deportation proceedings because they may be more willing to open up about their status and be more likely to be within the social networks of undocumented immigrants, such as immigrant-serving community organizations or campus resource centers. This explains why DACA recipients are fearful of their family members being deported. It is logical for one to be concerned for their family members without protection from deportation if they are more likely to know of someone who has gone through deportation proceedings.

Figure 1. Effect of DACA on Lived Experiences



I now turn to discussing the results of regression analysis of the relationship between DACA status and levels of engagement in risky and safe behaviors. As shown in Table 4 and Figure 2 (results for the full models can be found in Appendix B), DACA recipients are found to be more willing to engage in riskier activities than individuals without DACA. Table 4 shows the results for linear regression models for the relationship between DACA and engagement in day-to-day activities – driving and traveling domestically. For driving and traveling within the United States, I find that undocumented immigrants with DACA are more likely to feel safe as suggested by descriptive statistics of the sample. This confirms that having a valid driver’s license and temporary relief from deportation leads DACA recipients to feel safer driving and traveling because they face a smaller risk encountering the law enforcement in comparison to undocumented immigrants without DACA. For those without DACA, they are constantly under the fear of being asked to show their papers by police officers, ICE agents, or TSA agents; therefore, they may not feel safe engaging in behaviors that have the potential of encountering these officers. There is an interesting gender relationship here. I find that female undocumented immigrants are more likely to feel safe driving and traveling domestically. This finding aligns with our existing understanding that male individuals are more likely to be targeted for detention and arrests by the law enforcement (Golash-Boza 2015; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013).

Table 4. Effect of DACA on Sense of Safety for Day-to-Day Activities

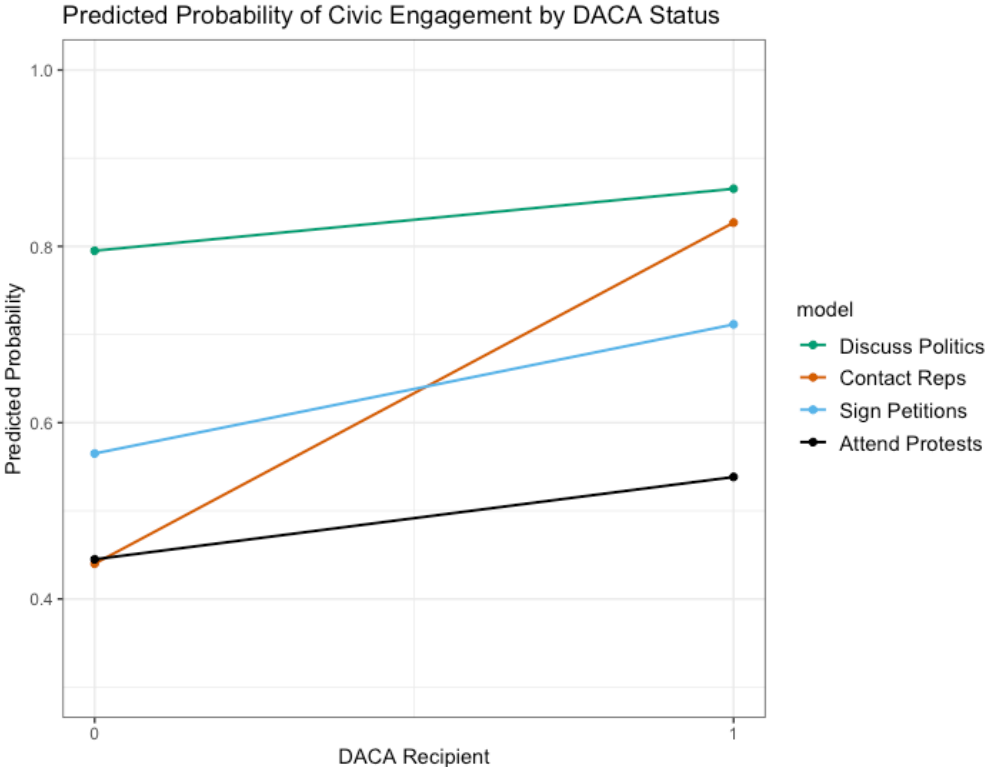
The Effect of DACA on Sense of Safety

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Drive (1-5)	Domestic travel (1-5)
	(1)	(2)
DACA	0.285* (0.163)	0.586*** (0.159)
Latino	0.104 (0.137)	-0.190 (0.134)
Age	0.007 (0.014)	0.012 (0.014)
Female	0.326** (0.137)	0.354*** (0.133)
College	0.250* (0.144)	0.061 (0.140)
Employed	0.055 (0.171)	-0.276* (0.167)
Constant	2.244*** (0.237)	2.810*** (0.230)
Observations	250	250
R ²	0.051	0.093
Adjusted R ²	0.027	0.070
Residual Std. Error (df = 243)	1.036	1.008
F Statistic (df = 6; 243)	2.158**	4.142***
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

When I examine the effect of having DACA on civic engagement levels (results shown in Figure 2 and Appendix B) through a logistic regression, I find that undocumented immigrants with DACA are more likely to engage in all four activities; however, I only find statistically significant relationship to contacting representatives and signing petitions. Discussing politics with family and friends may be considered as safe activity for both undocumented immigrants with and without DACA; therefore, I may not be uncovering any statistically significant relationship for engaging in this particular behavior by DACA status. On the other hand, I may not be seeing a statistically significant relationship between DACA status and attending protests because both undocumented immigrants with and without DACA may fear revealing their immigration status in public spaces and potentially being confronted with ICE agents or police officers in contested spaces. Therefore, undocumented immigrants with DACA may be more willing to perform their civic duties by contacting elected officials and signing petitions as these two require minimum risk. These findings imply that having DACA does not necessarily increase one's propensity to be civically engaged and that DACA may potentially not provide enough protection for DACA recipients.

There are some noteworthy covariate relationships. I find that undocumented immigrants who have attained at least a bachelor’s degree are less likely to contact elected officials or sign petitions. This aligns with current understanding of the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational attainment levels and non-voting political participation (Verba and Nie 1972). Even for undocumented immigrants, it appears that individuals with lower levels of education are more likely to engage in civic participation than individuals with higher levels of education. This was revealed in the qualitative data where interviewees discussed how they used to be heavily involved in protesting and organizing but they became less involved as they got busier with graduate schools, professional schools, and jobs.

Figure 2. Effect of DACA on Civic Engagement Levels



The quantitative analysis show that having DACA status does increase one’s sense of safety in engaging in certain activities, such as driving, traveling within the United States, contacting representatives, and signing petitions. However, the magnitude of the difference between those with and without DACA is minimal for most of these activities and these activities are considered to be relatively safe or mainly due to legal difference. Contacting elected officials and signing petitions are perceived to be relatively low-risk civic activities undocumented immigrants can participate in without having to worry too much about being arrested or detained for participating. DACA recipients should feel more safe driving and traveling within the United States because they are granted with legal access to these activities but with such access, the magnitude of the effect is minimal. Overall, I find that regardless of one’s DACA status, young undocumented immigrants are more likely to engage in safer activities such as discussing politics with family and friends rather than riskier activities such as

attending protests. These findings shed light on noteworthy patterns in how DACA shapes one’s sense of safety and behavior patterns.

Role of Race on Experiences and Behavior

Descriptive Statistics

I now turn to exploring the role race has on shaping lived experiences and behavior of young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. I first present descriptive statistics of the relationship between race negative lived experiences of young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. I find that young Asian undocumented immigrants are shown to have higher rates of experiencing discrimination and negative experiences with immigration enforcement. Even though I predicted that young Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to be vulnerable to negative experiences due to racialization of the immigration issue as a Latino issue, my survey shows a different pattern. I actually find that young Latino undocumented immigrants in the sample are less likely to have had negative experiences than young Asian undocumented immigrants in the sample as shown in Table 5. Asian respondents are more likely to report having negative experiences across the board – having been discriminated against, having direct and indirect experiences with immigration raids, and having direct and indirect experiences with deportation proceedings. The differences seem to be greater for knowing someone who has experienced immigration raid, having personally gone through deportation proceedings, and knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings. 63 percent of Asian respondents report knowing someone who has experienced immigration raids whereas 51 percent of Latino respondents report knowing someone who has experienced immigration raids. 46 percent of Asian respondents report having personally gone through deportation proceedings whereas 28 percent of Asian respondents report having personally gone through deportation proceedings. Lastly, 65 percent of Asian respondents report knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings while 50 percent of Latino respondents report knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings.

These are unexpected findings as existing studies and in-depth interviews suggest that young Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to be vulnerable to discriminatory behavior towards undocumented immigrants and racial profiling by immigration enforcement. One plausible explanation for high level of discrimination that Asian respondents reported in the survey is that the survey was conducted at the height of anti-Asian hate sentiment and crime during Covid-19. Therefore, the rate of experienced discrimination among the Asian sample in my survey might have been higher than if I were to have conducted the survey pre-pandemic. For experiences with deportation, it may be higher for Asian respondents than one would expect because we are not as aware of deportation and detention of Southeast Asian refugees. Our expectations for one’s experiences with immigration enforcement may also be influenced by our biases shaped by rhetoric from political elites and media.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics on Race and Experiences with Discrimination and Immigration Enforcement

	Discriminated	Raid – personal	Raid – others	Deportation - personal	Deportation - others
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Race						
Asian (N=116)	79%	42%	63%	46%	65%	
Latino (N=156)	73%	37%	51%	28%	50%	

I present descriptive statistics of the sample’s engagement levels by race in Table 6. I find minimal racial variation in the levels of engagement across most activities between young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to sign petitions and feel safe traveling domestically than Latino undocumented immigrants. This finding is expected based on the findings from Chapter 4 on the racial variation for levels of fear of deportation. Because Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to be fearful of deportation than Asian undocumented immigrants, they are also less likely to feel safe traveling domestically as they may have to risk being in a vulnerable situation when traveling. Even though minimal, the variation confirms the expectations that young Latino undocumented immigrants are less likely to engage in riskier activities than their Asian counterparts.

Table 6. Engagement in Safe to Risky Activities by Race

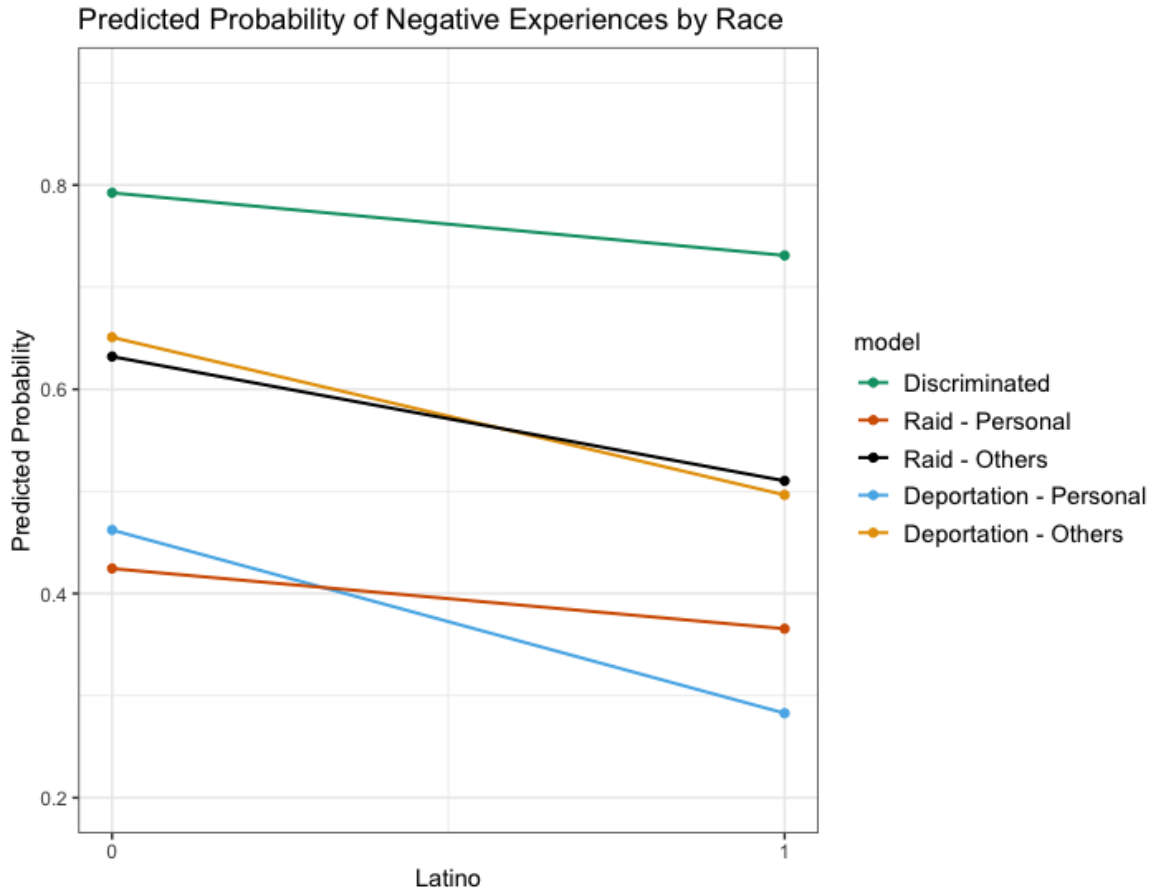
	Discuss politics	Contact reps	Sign petitions	Safe to drive	Safe to travel	Attend protests
Asians	83%	52%	58%	23%	33%	47%
Latinos	80%	53%	52%	23%	28%	45%

Results

I now examine how race shapes one’s experiences with the likelihood of having negative experiences due to legal status. In five separate models, I test the relationship between race and one’s negative lived experiences with age, age of arrival, gender, college education, employment status, and DACA status included as control variables. Figure 3 shows predicted probability of having had one of the experiences with discrimination or immigration enforcement based on their racial category. The full regression results can be found in Appendix C.

The patterns from descriptive statistics are confirmed through the regression analysis results. I find that young Latino undocumented immigrants in the sample are *less likely* to have negative lived experiences caused by their legal status and we are confident of the relationship for young Latino undocumented immigrants being *less likely* to report having personally gone through deportation proceedings and knowing someone who has gone through deportation proceedings. This may be reasoned with several factors. First, Asian immigrants are more likely to fall out of status than crossing the border; therefore, they may be easier to identify once they fall out of status as their applications for change of status will be denied. Second, it may be more likely that Asian immigrants are detained but not actually deported as they receive second chances whereas Latino immigrants are not given a second chance but deported if they are detained. Lastly, this finding may be unique to my sample due to recruitment bias.

Figure 3. Effect of Race on Lived Experiences



The analysis of the Young Asian and Latino Undocumented Immigrants Survey shows that young Asian undocumented immigrants are more likely to have personally gone through deportation proceedings and to know someone who has gone through deportation proceedings. It is logical to predict that individuals who are more likely to have had negative experiences with immigration raid to have higher levels of deportation threat.

I move on discussing the findings for regression analysis of the relationship between race and one’s propensity for engaging in various activities. I present the relationship between race and sense of safety for driving and traveling within the United States in Table 7. This is a basic linear model as the independent variables are in a scale from 1-4. I find that young Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to feel safe driving but less likely to feel safe traveling domestically than young Asian undocumented immigrants. However, both of these relationships are not statistically significant. Even though regression coefficients are statistically insignificant, the direction of the coefficient for predicting one’s sense of safety for domestic travel is confirmed through my qualitative data. Young Latino undocumented immigrants have discussed their fear of traveling outside of the city of Los Angeles, the county of Los Angeles, or anywhere near the U.S.-Mexico border because they do not want to risk being racially profiled for stops by police officers or at the San Diego checkpoint. However, young Asian undocumented immigrants in my in-depth interviews discuss how they do not perceive domestic travel to be as risky as international travel, especially if they have DACA. This racial difference may be due to the fact that immigration issue is racialized, and Latino immigrants are more

likely to be criminalized, making traveling riskier for Latino undocumented immigrants than their Asian counterparts.

Table 7. Effect of Race on Sense of Safety for Day-to-Day Activities

The Effect of Race on Sense of Safety		
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Drive (1-5)	Domestic travel (1-5)
	(1)	(2)
Latino	0.104 (0.137)	-0.190 (0.134)
Age	0.007 (0.014)	0.012 (0.014)
Female	0.326** (0.137)	0.354*** (0.133)
College	0.250* (0.144)	0.061 (0.140)
Employed	0.055 (0.171)	-0.276* (0.167)
DACA	0.285* (0.163)	0.586*** (0.159)
Constant	2.244*** (0.237)	2.810*** (0.230)
Observations	250	250
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Adjusted R ²	0.027	0.070
Residual Std. Error (df = 243)	1.036	1.008
F Statistic (df = 6; 243)	2.158**	4.142***
<i>Note:</i>	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

Table 8 shows the regression results for the relationship between race and levels of civic engagement. The four non-voting activities are coded as binary variables, so these models are logistic regression models. I find that young Latino undocumented immigrants are more likely to discuss politics with family and friends than young Asian undocumented immigrants. In contrast, young Latino undocumented immigrants are less likely to contact elected officials, sign petitions, and attend protests than young Asian undocumented immigrants. However, the relationships for all four activities are not statistically significant. Even though all the findings are statistically insignificant, it may be due to the small sample size; therefore, it begs for further exploration in the role race plays in influencing one's political behavior. At the same time, it may be statically

insignificant, because the racial variation for behavior is inconsistent, as suggested by the discrepancy between what is implied through existing research and my qualitative in-depth interviews.

Table 8. Effect of Race on Civic Engagement Levels

The Effect of Race on Civic Engagement				
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Discuss politics (0,1)	Contact reps (0,1)	Sign petitions (0,1)	Attend protests (0,1)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Latino	0.080 (0.357)	-0.042 (0.290)	-0.360 (0.278)	-0.010 (0.271)
Age	-0.067* (0.037)	-0.016 (0.030)	0.002 (0.029)	0.032 (0.029)
Female	-0.139 (0.344)	0.590** (0.288)	0.057 (0.276)	-0.701** (0.275)
College	0.092 (0.365)	-0.823*** (0.309)	-0.746** (0.301)	-0.350 (0.283)
Employed	0.885** (0.396)	0.600 (0.365)	-0.094 (0.349)	0.105 (0.340)
DACA	0.553 (0.477)	1.971*** (0.418)	0.736** (0.351)	0.470 (0.325)
Constant	1.280** (0.584)	-0.226 (0.500)	1.015** (0.490)	-0.118 (0.466)
Observations	251	251	251	251
Log Likelihood	-115.524	-152.931	-162.948	-167.663
Akaike Inf. Crit.	245.048	319.862	339.895	349.327

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Overall, I find that there is not a statistically significant racial variation in predicting one’s sense of safety and willingness to engage in various activities – both political and non-political. Young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants are found to engage in all six activities at very similar rates. These null findings may suggest that regardless of one’s racial category, all young Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants.

Conclusion

DACA has been considered as a policy intervention that has significantly and positively changed the lives of many undocumented young immigrants. However, I show that it has also become another means of drawing boundary of marginality based on arbitrary and subjective standards. Depending on their experiences with the DACA program, individuals have different levels of political engagement. I find that those with DACA are *more likely* to be politically engaged; however, in general, undocumented immigrants are *more likely* to participate in *less*

risky behaviors. Therefore, it shows that although DACA does allow individuals to feel safer and more willing to engage in political activities, they feel less inclined to perform their civic duties as their membership in the society is once again denied and they still feel unsafe in the American polity with more risky behaviors. This implies that DACA status does not allow for a full political incorporation as it does for economic incorporation. It may be explained by the fact that DACA is only a temporary relief which does not lead to a pathway to citizenship and that it does not grant them the right to vote. Lastly, I find that even though Asian undocumented immigrants are *more likely* to report having experienced discrimination and limitations due to their legal status and they are more civically engaged. This finding is partially deviating from existing research that argues that Latinos are more likely to be politically engaged and taking the space in immigrant rights movements. Therefore, it suggests for further research in examining racial variation in identity attachment levels, political attitudes, and political behavior between Asian and Latino undocumented young immigrants.

Therefore, DACA is not enough for all the affected parties. For DACA recipients, it does not provide enough protection as they continually feel excluded and remain in uncertain and liminal space. As a result, we do not see the effect of DACA being as significant for levels of political incorporation as it is for economic and social incorporation. For individuals without DACA, it is definitely not an inclusive enough policy; therefore, they would benefit from a policy that would include more undocumented young immigrants as its beneficiaries. DACA also has overreaching effects beyond its policy scope as it has now separated and disaggregated the undocumented young immigrant population and widened the gap between the two groups based on economic and social access, in addition to some political access, based on arbitrary and subjective standards.

However, some of the findings should be interpreted with some caution due to several limitations. First, the sample size is relatively small; therefore, some of the correlations that I find must be taken with caution. However, the findings offer an important insight in examining this particular population as a first step. Second, the recruitment method biases the sample towards individuals who are more politically active at baseline. Due to the undocumented immigrant population being a hard-to-reach population, I made the decision to recruit the participants for the original survey through community and school organizations. Therefore, those who are on the listserv for these organizations are, on the baseline, more likely to be politically active than those who are not affiliated with any organization. Hence, the findings regarding one's level of political engagement must be interpreted with caution. Yet, not all those who are affiliated with these organizations can be generalized as being politically active, especially for more risky behaviors. Therefore, I can expect to find heterogeneity within the sample that has been recruited through these organizations and snowball sampling.

Regardless of the limitations, this paper has broad implications for the study of minority political engagement, as it provides a better understanding of this population that we do not know much about. We now have a better understanding that DACA does not have as significantly positive impact it has in improving political incorporation of undocumented young immigrants compared to its economic and health impacts, confirming the prevalent argument that DACA is not enough for the undocumented young adult population. However, scholars and activists can more strategically and effectively mobilize these individuals. Additionally, I will build on this analysis by also looking at the role identities play. I expect one's lived experiences to shape their level of attachment to the undocumented identity which have further influence on their political attitudes and behavior. This would add an additional complex layer of

heterogeneity within the two sub-groups of undocumented young immigrants as individuals would perceive differently of their membership in the undocumented community depending on their experiences with the DACA program. Going further, the theories that were used to evaluate the impact of DACA can be applied to analyze the effect of other institutional interventions and immigration policies as well.

Appendix

Appendix A. Full Model: The Effect of DACA on Experiences with Discrimination and Immigration Enforcement (Young Asian and Latino Undocumented Immigrant Survey)

The Effect of DACA on Experiences					
<i>Dependent variable:</i>					
	Discriminated (0,1)	Raid - Personal (0,1)	Raid - Know someone (0,1)	Deportation - Personal (0,1)	Deportation - Know someone (0,1)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
DACA	0.639 (0.433)	0.202 (0.354)	0.589* (0.355)	0.124 (0.353)	0.767** (0.373)
Latino	-0.386 (0.322)	-0.327 (0.281)	-0.591** (0.277)	-0.851*** (0.284)	-0.702** (0.284)
Age	0.022 (0.033)	0.028 (0.030)	0.025 (0.029)	0.009 (0.030)	-0.019 (0.030)
Age of Arrival	0.015 (0.024)	0.036* (0.021)	0.019 (0.020)	0.014 (0.021)	0.008 (0.021)
Female	-0.812*** (0.306)	-0.568** (0.288)	-0.412 (0.272)	-0.549* (0.292)	-0.923*** (0.279)
College	-0.096 (0.338)	-0.742** (0.290)	-0.372 (0.290)	-0.320 (0.295)	-0.392 (0.300)
Employed	-0.503 (0.417)	0.283 (0.360)	-0.265 (0.345)	-0.220 (0.356)	-0.495 (0.358)
Constant	1.631** (0.650)	-0.673 (0.576)	0.568 (0.554)	0.130 (0.573)	1.564*** (0.581)
Observations	251	251	251	251	251
Log Likelihood	-133.067	-159.153	-165.799	-156.477	-159.128
Akaike Inf. Crit.	282.134	334.306	347.598	328.955	334.256

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Appendix B. Full Model: Engagement in Safe to Risky Activities by DACA Status (Asian and Latino Undocumented Young Immigrants Survey)

The Effect of DACA on Civic Engagement

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Discuss politics (0,1)	Contact reps (0,1)	Sign petitions (0,1)	Attend protests (0,1)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
DACA	0.553 (0.477)	1.971*** (0.418)	0.736** (0.351)	0.470 (0.325)
Latino	0.080 (0.357)	-0.042 (0.290)	-0.360 (0.278)	-0.010 (0.271)
Age	-0.067* (0.037)	-0.016 (0.030)	0.002 (0.029)	0.032 (0.029)
Female	-0.139 (0.344)	0.590** (0.288)	0.057 (0.276)	-0.701** (0.275)
College	0.092 (0.365)	-0.823*** (0.309)	-0.746** (0.301)	-0.350 (0.283)
Employed	0.885** (0.396)	0.600 (0.365)	-0.094 (0.349)	0.105 (0.340)
Constant	1.280** (0.584)	-0.226 (0.500)	1.015** (0.490)	-0.118 (0.466)
Observations	251	251	251	251
Log Likelihood	-115.524	-152.931	-162.948	-167.663
Akaike Inf. Crit.	245.048	319.862	339.895	349.327

Note:

* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Appendix C. Full Model: The Effect of Race on Experiences with Discrimination and Immigration Enforcement (Young Asian and Latino Undocumented Immigrant Survey)

The Effect of Race on Experiences

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>				
	Discriminated (0,1)	Raid - Personal (0,1)	Raid - Know someone (0,1)	Deportation - Personal (0,1)	Deportation - Know someone (0,1)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Latino	-0.386 (0.322)	-0.327 (0.281)	-0.591** (0.277)	-0.851*** (0.284)	-0.702** (0.284)
Age	0.022 (0.033)	0.028 (0.030)	0.025 (0.029)	0.009 (0.030)	-0.019 (0.030)
Age of Arrival	0.015 (0.024)	0.036* (0.021)	0.019 (0.020)	0.014 (0.021)	0.008 (0.021)
Female	-0.812*** (0.306)	-0.568** (0.288)	-0.412 (0.272)	-0.549* (0.292)	-0.923*** (0.279)
College	-0.096 (0.338)	-0.742** (0.290)	-0.372 (0.290)	-0.320 (0.295)	-0.392 (0.300)
Employed	-0.503 (0.417)	0.283 (0.360)	-0.265 (0.345)	-0.220 (0.356)	-0.495 (0.358)
DACA	0.639 (0.433)	0.202 (0.354)	0.589* (0.355)	0.124 (0.353)	0.767** (0.373)
Constant	1.631** (0.650)	-0.673 (0.576)	0.568 (0.554)	0.130 (0.573)	1.564*** (0.581)
Observations	251	251	251	251	251
Log Likelihood	-133.067	-159.153	-165.799	-156.477	-159.128
Akaike Inf. Crit.	282.134	334.306	347.598	328.955	334.256

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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