

No More DACA? AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE UNDER THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Alyssa Alvarez
FAU College of Arts and Letters



RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the potential eradication of DACA during the Trump administration affect unauthorized immigrants living in the United States?

What is DACA?

- The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, better known as DACA, is a program that provides temporary relief from deportation as well as legal work authorization for eligible unauthorized youth in the United States (Garcia & Wong 1)
- In September of 2012, the Obama administration began to allow individuals that entered the countries as minors the opportunity of deferred action from deportations and work permits through DACA. (Garcia & Wong 1)
- It has entirely shifted the lives of the nearly half a million that have received deferred action, giving these young people the hope in the American dream, and the possibility of attending college, driving a car legally, and getting a better-paying job. (Garcia & Wong 1)
- In 2014, the motion for covering additional immigrants under the act was blocked by the courts, and as of 2018, President Trump plans on disbanding DACA as well as the DREAM act, changing the lives of millions who have shaped America for us.



Introduction

- The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) created a new categorization of temporary agricultural workers and provided for the legalization of these workers as well as established a visa waiver program allowing the admission of nonimmigrants without visas in special cases. These specific changes led to a flux of 2.7 million undocumented immigrants, changing migration patterns and encouraging unauthorized migrant settlements (Gonzales, Terriquez, and Rusczyk 7).
- Due to this, the U.S. has an unprecedented number of children without a legal status and is currently facing the effects. Americans citizens and leaders alike have debated the solution to this supposed problem.

"What do we do with these 'illegal' citizens who only know the U.S. as their home and English as their home language?" Is it justifiable to deport them back to a country these unauthorized youths have no knowledge of? Is it just as fair to imprison them in their only known country with zero rights and chances of equal opportunity?"

- This literature review allows us to connect prior research involving factors that help or hinder DACA applicants from applying as well as the impact DACA can have on an unauthorized immigrant in relation with the effect of our current political administration on the future of the program.

Methods

- This research examines the benefits and limitations of DACA, the emotional and mental effects of being an "illegal" immigrant, and the political views of the U.S. administration that will threaten the lives of many.
- This literature reviews data analyzes from a multitude of research studies regarding the topic of DACA and the effects of not acquiring approval for deferred action.
- Data is taken from a compilation of surveys and interviews from unauthorized immigrants across the United States.
- Researchers obtained all possible data using the USCIS form I-821, the DACA application, including age, sex, and country of birth of applicants, as well as approval and denial decisions for every applicant.
- Survey data collection was taken from the National Undocumented Research Project (NURP), the first national survey of DACA recipients.

Political Context

- During President Trump's 2016 campaign, he "declared war against Mexican immigrants", stereotyping them as rapists and criminals (Mae 16).
- He declared his mission to build a wall, paid for by Mexico and issued a deportation task force to rid approximately 11 million undocumented "bad hombres" from the U.S. (Mae 16).
- Trump has also targeted the Muslim population, making it a goal during his presidency to ban Muslims or people from countries with large Muslim populations from the U.S.
- The first step in making immigrants worst nightmare his best dreams is unraveling Obama's legacy on U.S. Immigration: DACA.
 - Eradicating the DACA program would affect 750000 undocumented youth who are now able to attend college, work legally, and carry out their lives (Mae 16).
- Nativism = Trump's values and beliefs show characteristics of only protecting the interests of the native-born which is this case white Americans. His political goals are ones to perpetrate immigrants, claiming it is for the betterment of America (Mae 16).
- Protectionism = the theory of shielding a country's domestic industries from foreign completion by taxing imports.
 - "Trump aims to put protectionism—"immigration" twinned with "unfair trade" (especially from Mexico and China)—at the center of a strategy to stoke the resentment of white working-class and lower-middle-class people left behind by globalization" (Mae 16).
- President Trump can technically cancel this program at any point due to his executive power as the president (Mae 19). Trump had announced his removal of DACA in September of 2017 but, as of March 2018, he has remained still.
- DACA recipients are "highly visible and appealing to the public on account of their youth, [with] the innocence of their undocumented status, and their aspirations for education, jobs, and careers" (Mae 18).
- These "dreamers" are seen warmly in the eyes of both republicans and democrats. Trump's removal of DACA could be politically threatening.
- In this new political environment, one can expect more immigration raids of workplaces and farms as well as more surveillance of minority-filled communities.



Factors that Affect DACA Application Rates

Extensive Application Process

- Applicants must have arrived in the U.S before the age of 16 and have documented proof of the fact.
- They must have been under 31 years old as of August 15th 2012 when the program started.
- Applicants must have also remained inside the U.S. for five consecutive years. Additionally, applicants must have a high school diploma, its equivalent, or be currently enrolled in high school ("Consideration of DACA").
- Having documented evidence of being in the U.S. before the age of 16 or remaining in the U.S. for at least 5 consecutive years can be difficult for some individuals and already prevent them from getting deferred ("Consideration of DACA").

Stagnant Approval Process

- The application process for the DACA program is extensive and the filing period after the application is completed can take up to 9 months (After Filing I-821D).
- The applicant must fill out a total of three forms as well apply separately for a social security number, driver's license, bank account, and etc. (Gonzales et al. 10). After an unauthorized individual submits his or her application, it will take around six to eight weeks till their biometrics appointment takes place: a screening to take fingerprints, photographs, signature, and other identification items ("After Filing I-821D").
- This appointment does not guarantee an individual approval for DACA. Adjudication for becoming a DACA recipient can take up to two more months. After, if the individual is actually approved, then the individual can finally submit their application for employment authorization, which can take up to three months to receive. In total, the process for becoming a DACA recipient with a working permit, not including a driver's license and bank account, takes almost a year. Going through this lengthy process does not guarantee applicants DACA approval and may potential deter many eligible youths from applying ("After Filing I-821D").

Emotional and Societal Effects of Educational Outcast on Unauthorized Immigrants

Assimilation Theory

- This theory envisions a process in which an immigrant minority loses its individual and group-based cultural attributes to blend into the dominant core population (Garcia & Wong 4).
- College is now a cultural norm (Buriaciga 8) and as that becomes more and more deep-rooted in American society, immigrants have a bigger burden of educational expectations.
- These youths' parents sacrificed all they had for a better life in America and these kids carry their parents' dreams upon their shoulders. Most of them intended to do well in their K-12 schooling and attend college in hopes of leaving behind a legacy for their family and presenting their families with better living conditions. It is usually around high school when these students want jobs, driver's licenses, and apply for college when they are made no the reality of their legal status: this is known as "the process of learning to be illegal" (Buriaciga 11).

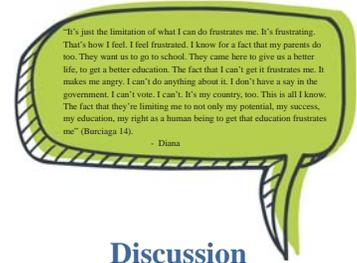
Socio-economical Impact

- Labor market trajectories for these undocumented young adults show diminishing returns after high school and convergence to a low-wage job market; this is due to structural barriers to attend college and stay in college all four years.
- Dreams of getting into college through scholarships and/or government loans have disappeared and the barriers presented to these people are frustrating, ultimately leading to a socio-emotional impact.

Importance of Educational Belonging

- The impediments for getting a college education on unauthorized immigrants have led to a lack of educational belonging (Buriaciga 4). Buriaciga identifies her conception of education belonging:
- Educational belonging is important to highlight as undocumented young adults who have grown up in the United States, have developed values, identities, and aspirations that are influenced by being "American" but are influenced by the practical reality of growing up "illegally" and without a pathway to citizenship (Buriaciga 4).

Words from an Unauthorized Immigrant



Discussion

- The experiences of undocumented American immigrants are an important part in paving the way for change in the United States' immigration policy.
- Factors including the DACA application and approval process, socio-emotional elements, feelings of assimilation in society, as well as the lack of educational belonging effects the mindset and emotional state of these young unauthorized individuals.
- These immigrants were finally given a chance of a betterment of life through the DACA program, relieving some of the stresses of being undocumented in America.
- After five years of DACA, a program giving around 800,000 applicants a newly found opportunity and future in America, it is now at risk for termination due to President Trump.
- The discontinuation of this program can lead to unemployment for over 700,000 immigrants and threaten the hope millions of unauthorized immigrants had before the sharp change in the U.S. political administration.

Future Research

- This literature review uses data analyses from researchers who did not have widespread sample sizes of undocumented individuals from all over the country.
- In the future, I propose a possible research project to conduct in-depth studies of successful applicants to the DACA program to further explore the issue, not only pertaining to states with a high eligible DACA population.
- These studies would include face-to-face interviews as a core part of the research. In situations like these, it is necessary to hear individual's personal experiences in order to better understand the issues. However, since it is also important to have a well-rounded depiction of immigrants all over the country surveys would be used and sent to a sample size of 200 in order to acknowledge the different views of undocumented individuals geographically.
- It is also pivotal to develop a greater sense of understanding and knowledge of these unauthorized immigrants in this shift in political environments during the Trump Administration.
- Therefore, interviews and surveys to observe the effects of today's political climate on undocumented immigrants will also be evaluated for future research.

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