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One Step In and One Step Out:

The Lived Experience of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in

Latin American Studies

by

Hillary Sue Kosnac

Committee in charge:

Professor Wayne Cornelius, Chair
Professor Tom K. Wong, Co-Chair
Professor Kevin Lewis

2014

The Thesis of Hillary Sue Kosnac is approved, and is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Co-Chair

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2014

EPIGRAPH

Like I remember like when I did the driver's test, I got a 100 […] on the test…. I studied like crazy and then I had a lady behind me in the line and she said, 'Wow, you know, this is the third time I took the test,' she said, 'And I've never, ever gotten a perfect score.' And, it was that moment […] it kinda like hit me, I was like, "No difference. This lady and me. No difference." You know, I got a 100. She's taken the test three times, had the privilege and never even cared to study probably or study well and I couldn't believe it, you know, there was no difference. *I guess what I'm trying to say is if we were measuring ways to hand out documents, I would have gotten it and she wouldn't.*

David, a 25-year-old DACA recipient

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ACA	Affordable Care Act
CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CCLC	Casa Cornelia Law Center
CIR	Comprehensive Immigration Reform
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DAN	Dreamer Assistance Network
DREAM Act	Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act
E4FC	Educators for Fair Consideration
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
MMFRP	Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program
NACARA	Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act
N-P-B	Nam-Powers-Boyd
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the 55 DACA applicants who were willing to share their stories with me and the other researchers participating in the Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program (MMFRP). Thank you for your time and willingness to share a part of your life with us. Your stories left me inspired and driven to continue to work in the area of immigration policy.

I would also like to thank Casa Cornelia Law Center and the Dreamer Assistance Network—specifically Elizabeth Camarena and Daniel Alfaro—for their assistance in recruiting individuals to participate in this study and for their willingness to be interviewed as well. It was a wonderful experience to witness your commitment to the immigrant community in San Diego.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Andrés Albarrán, Isabella Blasi, Karla Díaz, Reyna Guzmán, Sahil Mehta, Monserrat Palacios and Christa Thurston. Together we comprised the DACA thematic group within the 2013-2014 MMFRP. Without their interviewing and transcription assistance, much of this work would have been impossible. I further am indebted to Camila Gavin, Gerardo Hernandez, Sarah Maciel, Yarazel Mejorado, Roberto Nelson, Andrés Nuncio Zuñigá and Maria Ruiz for their additional help with transcription. Without this support, my thesis would very much be a work in progress.

I undoubtedly am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with the members of my committee: Wayne Cornelius, Tom Wong and Kevin Lewis. From his unwavering encouragement even in the face of continued challenges to reading my overly wordy

drafts, Wayne Cornelius has been instrumental in the preparation of this thesis. It has been a privilege to work with someone who is not only very knowledgeable in the area of immigration policy but also tireless in ensuring his students succeed. I would also like to thank Tom Wong for his countless hours of advice and guidance. He is proof that one's work can transcend the realm of academia and have real policy impact—something I very much admire. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Kevin Lewis, who is probably the most supportive professor a student could be fortunate enough to have. His consistent positive attitude, humility and willingness to be available to his students are traits for which I am undeniably grateful.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my husband, Bret—who spent our *entire* first year of marriage serving as a sounding board for thesis ideas and a shoulder to lean on when all my plans fell through…multiple times. Bret's positivity and sense of humor somehow made even the most difficult days bearable. It is not an exaggeration to say that he truly deserves an honorary Master's degree given his new-found and slightly-forced knowledge of DACA, immigration policy and quantitative analysis.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

One Step In and One Step Out:

The Lived Experience of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program

by

Hillary Sue Kosnac

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California, San Diego, 2014

Professor Wayne Cornelius, Chair
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Professor Kevin Lewis

After over a decade of congressional stalemate on the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, the Obama administration announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in the summer of 2012. A form of prosecutorial discretion, DACA offers certain undocumented youth a two-year reprieve from deportation, employment authorization and, in some states like California,

a driver's license. Nevertheless, because DACA does not provide a pathway to citizenship or even legal permanent residency, its recipients straddle a line of inclusion and exclusion. Utilizing data gathered from semi-structured interviews with 54 DACA recipients in San Diego County, the following study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the lived experience of individuals with DACA in terms of economic integration, education and sense of belonging. In each area, I seek to identify the factors that help to explain the differences in life experiences after DACA among the program's recipients. While I find that many DACA recipients are generally experiencing positive economic, educational and existential outcomes, individuals with DACA continue to face challenges in these three areas as well, largely due to the liminally legal nature of the program. As the Obama administration contemplates additional executive action in this area, I conclude with policy recommendations aimed at improving DACA and the lives of those who currently live "one step in and one step out."

Introduction

As I sat with Cristina[1] at her college campus on her last day of undergraduate classes, she explained her perspective on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. "I don't want crumbs," she told me, "I want the whole cake." Cristina's words reflect how DACA provides what Menjívar and Kanstroom (2014:11) described as a "fuzzy" status—one in which individuals are not fully included in the United States but yet are not fully excluded either. DACA recipients straddle this line of inclusion and exclusion, as they receive some rights (e.g., employment authorization) and protection from deportation but are not granted a pathway to citizenship or even legal permanent residency. In other words, individuals with DACA live in a gray area between the black and white categories of "legal" and "illegal," "documented" and "undocumented."

While a majority of the literature focuses on these dichotomous status classifications, there is a growing literature on individuals who live in a world that is in-between (see, for example, Cebulko 2014; Chavez 2014; Menjívar 2006; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014). Given the importance of legal status in one's incorporation and life opportunities (Abrego 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010; Gonzales 2008), it has been argued that liminally legal statuses "constitut[e] new axes of stratification" (Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014:7). In fact, Menjívar and Kanstroom (2014:11) specifically referred to DACA (and other forms of prosecutorial discretion) as "a legal action that creates a

[1] All names of DACA applicants have been changed to maintain confidentiality and protect their privacy.

separate class of individuals in society" because it provides a precarious status between inclusion and exclusion.

The following study contributes to this literature on liminal legality by examining the lived experiences of a sample of DACA recipients in San Diego County. Consistent with Abrego's (2011:340) caution against assuming a "monolithic undocumented experience," this study seeks to identify the factors that help to explain the differences in life experiences after DACA amongst the program's recipients in terms of economic integration, education and sense of belonging. I also aim to determine the ways in which DACA serves as a form of stratification by detailing the obstacles and challenges DACA recipients face. Before beginning a study on the DACA program, however, it is important to understand its history. The next section describes how DACA emerged after over a decade of stagnation on comprehensive immigration reform (CIR).

THE EMERGENCE OF DACA

Immigration reform is undoubtedly a contentious issue. From border security to the number of visas allotted to different categories of individuals, it is difficult, and at times seemingly impossible, for lawmakers to approve and implement legislation related to immigration. One of the most disputed issues in CIR debates is the legalization of the 11 to 12 million undocumented immigrants who are currently living in the shadows of the United States.

Throughout the past decade, CIR proposals have been met with fluctuating congressional support and consistent barriers to passage and implementation. One such proposal is the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, commonly referred to as the DREAM Act. In brief, the DREAM Act has provisions for legal

permanent residency and a path to citizenship for individuals who were brought to the United States under the age of 16 and either obtained a college degree or served in the armed services. Legislation like the DREAM Act, which solely focuses on the legalization of unauthorized young people, has received more widespread congressional support than broader legalization programs.

Despite almost annual reintroductions of DREAM Act legislation over the past decade, the Act has not been able to pass Congress. The DREAM Act was first introduced in the Senate and the House in 2001 with both Democratic and Republican co-sponsors. Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Representatives Howard Berman (D-CA) and Chris Cannon (R-UT) were the first co-sponsors; however, bipartisan support has remained generally consistent over the years despite varying co-sponsors. The bill has been put to a vote numerous times and has passed the Senate Judiciary Committee twice in 2003-2004 and in 2006. More recently in 2010, the DREAM Act (H.R. 5281) was passed in the House (216-198). Nevertheless, it fell five votes short of the 60 needed to advance past Republican opposition in the Senate (Immigration Policy Center 2011a:5). Opposition to the DREAM Act largely stems from being considered an "amnesty" for law-breakers.

In light of congressional impasse on CIR and the DREAM Act more specifically, the Obama administration began encouraging a particular approach to immigration enforcement efforts. The Morton Memo, issued in June 2011 by John Morton, former Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), is an example of an early proclamation of this approach. This memo laid out loosely-defined priorities for immigration officers "to ensure that the agency's immigration enforcement resources are

focused on the agency's enforcement priorities" (American Immigration Council 2011:para. 1).

In short, the Morton Memo noted that due to limited resources officers should focus on the removal of only the most serious offenders, that is, those who pose threats to national security, public safety and border security. This is a practice known as prosecutorial discretion. Prosecutorial discretion, not uncommon in the history of immigration law enforcement, is the ability for a law enforcement agency or officer (i.e., ICE officers or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers) to determine how to pursue a particular case (Immigration Policy Center 2011b).

Just over two years after the Morton Memo was issued, Janet Napolitano, in her former role as the Secretary of Homeland Security, released another memorandum which announced another form of prosecutorial discretion—DACA. That same day, President Barack Obama addressed the nation and explained that because of Congress' inability to pass the DREAM Act, his administration was undertaking new action to "mend our nation's immigration policy, to make it more fair, more efficient, and more just—specifically for certain young people sometimes called 'Dreamers'" (White House, Office of the Press Secretary 2012: para. 1).[2] Accordingly, DACA has been referred to as "DREAM Act lite"—a nod to DACA's emergence in light of the aforementioned failure of Congress to pass the DREAM Act. While both the DREAM Act and DACA focus on relief for those immigrants who arrived in the United States during their youth, DACA

[2] As of this writing, President Obama announced on June 30, 2014 he would take further executive action by the end of summer 2014, pending recommendations from Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and Attorney General Eric Holder. Nevertheless, in early September, Obama delayed executive action on immigration until after the November 2014 mid-term elections.

only affords those approved with a temporary, two-year stay of deportation and employment authorization. Table 1 below provides a more nuanced description of the similarities and differences in the requirements and benefits of DACA and the DREAM Act.[3]

As evidenced in Table 1, in order to qualify for deferred action under DACA, applicants must meet strict age, education and continuous U.S. residency requirements. It is estimated that approximately two million young people meet at least some if not all of these requirements. Utilizing estimates from the Immigration Policy Center (2012)[4], research has reported a little over 1.7 million potential DACA beneficiaries (Singer and Svajlenka 2013; Wong et al. 2013). Batalova et al. (2014) utilized updated estimates[5] to report roughly 2.1 million potentially-eligible youth. Importantly, in both cases, these figures are based on current age, age of entry into the United States and educational attainment. Because of a lack of data on certain eligibility requirements, these estimates do not take into account those who may be excluded from DACA as a result of residency requirements or criminal background (Batalova et al. 2014:6; Wong et al. 2013:10). Consequently, these figures could be an overestimation of the potentially eligible population. Batalova et al. (2014:6), however, noted the possibility for underestimation as

[3] The requirements and benefits are based upon information from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (2014a) "Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)" and "Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act" (S.744), the most recent bill which includes the DREAM Act.
[4] Rob Paral and Associates used figures from the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010. For detailed information about this methodology, see the Immigration Policy Center's (2012:12) report, "Who and Where the DREAMers Are, Revised Estimates: A Demographic Profile of Immigrants Who Might Benefit from the Obama Administration's Deferred Action Initiative."
[5] In Batalova et al. (2014), James Bachmeier utilized the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the 2012 ACS. For his detailed methodology, see Batalova et al. (2014:25).

the figures do not account for individuals who have enrolled in adult education or training programs.

Table 1: A Comparison of DACA and DREAM Act

	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	**Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act**
Requirements	Individuals must… -Be younger than 31 as of June 15, 2012 -Have arrived in the United States before the age of 16 -Have been physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012 -Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007 -Be at least 15 years old at the time of application (or be in removal proceedings/have a removal order if younger than 15) -Be a high school graduate (or have obtained a GED), be currently enrolled in high school (or in a GED program) or have served honorably in the military -Have not committed a felony, serious misdemeanor, three or more misdemeanors or pose a threat to national security	DREAMers would apply for status as "registered provisional immigrants" (RPI) but would be placed on an "accelerated track" toward residency. To qualify for RPI, individuals must… -Have been physically present in the United States on or before December 31, 2011 -Have continuously resided in the United States since December 31, 2011 -Be physically in the United States the date on which the individual submits the application -Have not committed a felony, an aggravated felony, three or more misdemeanors or pose a threat to national security To be considered for the "accelerated track" to residency, individuals must… -Have arrived in the United States before the age 16 -Be a high school graduate of a U.S. high school or have obtained a GED -Have earned a college degree or have completed at least 2 years of a bachelor's degree or higher in the United States (and remains in good standing) or have served for at least four years in the military
Benefits	-Temporary (two-year) relief from deportation (can be renewed) -Employment Authorization -Social Security Number -Driver's License (in some states)	-A path to legal permanent residency and eventually citizenship: -After 5 years of RPI status, individuals can apply for Lawful Permanent Residence (a green card). -Upon receiving their green card, individuals may apply immediately for citizenship.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (2014b), 712,064 individuals have submitted an initial request for DACA, of which 675,476 have

been accepted.[6] On their face, these statistics may suggest a low turnout rate given the estimate of roughly two million potential beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the estimate of those who are potentially eligible for DACA also includes individuals who were not immediately eligible at the time of DACA's commencement but could become eligible in the future. Batalova et al. (2014:7) estimated that only around 1.2 million individuals (58 percent) were immediately eligible to apply for DACA.

Batalova et al. (2014) divided the remaining, potentially-eligible persons (42 percent) into two groups: children under the age of 15 and individuals who did not meet the education requirement. Children under 15 who could potentially be eligible must stay in school or obtain a high school degree or GED in order to remain eligible. Batalova et al. (2014:7) reported that this group accounts for 473,000 potential applicants (22 percent). For those ineligible because of education, obtaining a high school diploma, general education degree (GED) or other qualifying training is a significant obstacle, especially among older individuals who may be the head of household and have dependents for whom they must provide. She reported that this group accounts for 426,000 potential beneficiaries (20 percent) (Batalova et al. 2014:7). Again, because of a lack of data on certain eligibility requirements, these figures could be an over- or underestimation of potential beneficiaries.

As of June 2014, the approval rate for DACA was 85.9 percent (580,859 of 675,476 accepted applications).[7] This does not mean that a quarter of all applicants are denied. Quite the contrary, only 3.5 percent of accepted DACA applications (23,881)

[6] These statistics represent applications as of June 30, 2014, which USCIS published on August 19, 2014.
[7] The approval rate for all requests received is 81.6 percent.

have been denied, while the rest remain pending. The numbers suggest, however, that although the daily rate applications is slowing down,[8] the rate of denials is increasing. USCIS (2014b) reported that 11,138 DACA applications were denied in 2013. As of this writing, 12,743 initial applications have been denied in the 2014 fiscal year. If this rate is consistent through the rest of the 2014 fiscal year, USCIS will deny approximately 17,000 DACA applications. The increase in denials could be a result of the adjudication of complicated cases that were pending in prior years. It could also signal that individuals with more complex cases chose to hold off on applying during the early stages of DACA application. Because USCIS does not release the reasons for denial, however, it is impossible to say with any certainty the cause of the increase in denials.

DATA AND METHODS

The following study utilizes information gathered from fieldwork conducted between April and June 2014. During this period, I and members of a larger group of researchers participating in the Mexican Migration Field Research and Training Program (MMFRP) conducted semi-structured interviews with 54 individuals who were approved for DACA status.[9] We utilized snowball sampling and recruited interviewees mainly through two prominent organizations in San Diego that offered legal assistance to persons applying for DACA in 2012 and 2013. Casa Cornelia Law Center (CCLC) is a pro-bono, public interest law firm in San Diego. The Dreamer Assistance Network (DAN) is a consortium of local organizations in San Diego County providing clinic-style legal

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[8] USCIS (2014b) reported that in 2012 they accepted an average of 4,763 applications each day. This number steeply declined in 2013 with only 1,704 applications accepted daily. The number further dropped in the year-to-date with an average of 510 accepted, initial applications daily.

[9] We also interviewed one individual who was pending for DACA at the time of the interview and two representatives of local organizations that assisted individuals in applying for DACA. I conducted 37 of the 57 total interviews.

assistance to individuals.[10] Elizabeth Camarena, Associate Director of Legal Programs at CCLC, estimated that CCLC was able to assist roughly 200 individuals with their DACA applications. Daniel Alfaro, convener for the DAN, estimated the DAN helped 700 individuals submit their applications.[11]

Recognizing Taylor and Bodgan's (1998) concern that snowball sampling can restrict variation among respondents, we supplemented the sample of CCLC and DAN clients using additional recruitment methods. For example, after each interview, we asked participants in our study to help connect us with friends and family members who also had submitted a DACA application. We also reached out to individuals with DACA status whom we knew personally and individuals active in the immigrant community who could help connect us further. In addition, we purposively attempted to vary the *types* of individuals in our sample in terms of gender, age and length of time with DACA status.

Nevertheless, the majority of our respondents were recruited through CCLC (47.2 percent) and the DAN (34.0 percent). Consequently, I do not claim that my findings are generalizable to all individuals with DACA, or even to all DACA recipients in San Diego County. But, these findings provide general insight into the lived experiences of individuals with DACA and can provide a starting point for additional research in this area.

DACA recipients had the option of selecting the date, time and location of the interview. The semi-structured interviews covered a variety of topics related to the

[10] The Dreamer Assistance Network (DAN) sprung up seemingly overnight in 2012 in response to the need for DACA services. Daniel Alfaro explained they utilized a model that worked for processing naturalization applications (the San Diego Naturalization Collaborative) to create the DAN and were able to hold a DACA informational forum two days after Obama's announcement in June of 2012.
[11] Alfaro further estimated the DAN has assessed at least 1,400 individuals for DACA eligibility and has provided information to around 10,000 individuals through their informational sessions.

application process, life after receiving DACA status and the decision to renew DACA status in the future. The interviews ranged from a half hour to just over two hours. All interviewees except for one chose to have the interview conducted in English rather than Spanish. This reflects the high level of English proficiency among persons in our sample, with nine out of ten respondents indicating they speak English well. However, sometimes the language of the interviews would turn into a hybrid of English and Spanish—much like their reported language use at home or with friends.

Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and coded to facilitate the data analysis. Following Taylor and Bogdan's (1998:142-150) recommendations, I continuously reread the data (field notes, transcripts and completed questionnaires) and recorded my ideas in order to identify emergent themes. These themes formed the basis of my hypotheses regarding the factors related to the aspects of lived experience under study (i.e., economic integration, education and sense of belonging). I then operationalized these themes and other variables found in prior research to be related to economic integration, education and sense of belonging. I utilized Stata to conduct quantitative analysis (bivariate analysis and multivariate regression) when applicable.

With regard to qualitative analysis, transcriptions were grouped and re-grouped depending on the dependent variable I was examining. For example, regarding the decision to return to school, I grouped all individuals who had returned to school and created a separate group of those who made the decision not to return to school. I then excerpted the relevant parts of the interview and linked them to the appropriate analysis group. I examined these excerpts and created a coding system to help illuminate the emergent themes regarding the decision to return to school. A similar process was

followed with regard to economic integration and sense of belonging. The results of these methods are presented in Chapters 1 through 3.

The organization of this thesis is as follows. In Chapters 1 through 3, I explore the lived experience of DACA recipients living in San Diego. For the purposes of this analysis, I examine three aspects of lived experience: economic integration, education and sense of belonging. For each subsection, I first explore the prior literature in that area. I then conduct quantitative analysis to identify the factors that help to explain the life changes one has (or has not) experienced since receiving DACA status. I supplement each quantitative analysis with a qualitative exploration that serves two purposes. First, the qualitative analysis provides a more nuanced picture of one's life after receiving DACA status. Second, the qualitative analysis helps to reveal the barriers that DACA recipients continue to confront as a result of their liminally legal position. I conclude with policy recommendations informed by my quantitative and qualitative analyses (Chapter 4).

Chapter 1:
Economic Integration

And now, after I graduated, I was just like, 'I can't work. I can't do anything.' Most of my friends were like, you know, getting jobs and all of those things. So, I kind of felt like I was on pause…. I jumped on [DACA] right away and it's crazy how it transformed my life. Like the first job that I applied for I got it….Now the only fear that I have is that I know I have an expiration date. And I know I have a really good job and that's just like always in the back of my head.

-Luz, a 29-year-old female,
on securing her dream job since receiving DACA

Abrego (2006:226) has argued that "segmented assimilation theory predicts that without … legitimate structural paths, undocumented youth will remain in the lower segments of the economy…. A more positive context of reception, through legalization, must be established to increase their life chances in this country." Although DACA is not a legalization program, it has provided employment authorization—albeit temporary—to almost 600,000 applicants since beginning to accept applications in August of 2012. In other words, DACA recipients are now likely experiencing a more positive context of reception compared to their previous status.[12] Despite a more positive context of reception, this does not necessarily mean that each individual is benefitting from DACA in the same way. As was mentioned in the introduction, Abrego (2011:340) asserted there is not a "monolithic undocumented experience." Consequently, in the following section I seek to identify the factors that affect an individual's economic integration after receiving DACA. I examine economic integration in terms of increased financial independence, occupational mobility and the difference in one's occupational status score before and

[12] Abrego (2006:226) argued "…undocumented immigrants face the worst possible context of reception because their status keeps them from incorporating legally, if not socially, in to the institutions of this country. The lack of legitimate paths toward higher education and professionalization establishes bleak futures for undocumented youth."

after receiving DACA status. First, I use quantitative analysis to test hypotheses generated from my qualitative analysis and from prior research in the field of economic integration. Then I supplement this exploration with qualitative analysis to provide a more nuanced description of DACA recipients' economic integration and the continued economic challenges they confront.

FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

One measure of economic integration is increased earnings or what I refer to as increased financial independence. It is intuitive that as a result of having work authorization for the first time, DACA recipients will likely experience this increased financial independence simply through being brought into the formal economy. But, one must ask: *What factors predict increased financial independence among individuals with DACA?* Based on qualitative interviews, my main hypothesis is that *individuals who indicated they have gotten their first job or moved jobs since receiving DACA are more likely to report increased financial independence*. This hypothesis is consistent with prior research on wage growth. For example, Topel and Ward (1992:474) found that in the first ten years of labor market participation, one third of wage growth could be attributed to changing one's job. Despite Topel and Ward's (1992) research being focused generally on "young men" and not immigrants or newly legalized immigrants, given the information gained from our qualitative interviews, I postulate that job changing activity will be an important predictor of increased financial independence among DACA recipients.

Topel and Ward (1992) emphasized that their aforementioned finding should call into question a standard model of human capital theory. Human capital theory predicts

that employers seek out those who are most qualified for a given job (Becker 1975). Commonly, human capital is measured by educational attainment. In their study of the effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark (2002:613) noted that a legalization program allowed those who were previously unauthorized—and thus effectively barred from formal employment—the ability to maximize the returns to their human capital for the first time. For example, in her exploration of another legalization program, the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA), Kaushal (2006:645) found that individuals with at least a high school degree benefited more in terms of earnings compared to those without a diploma. As a result, a second hypothesis is that *individuals with higher educational attainment will be more likely to report increased financial independence*.

While it is intuitive that individuals with higher levels of education may earn more money, I do not believe that there will be a significant relationship between education and increased financial independence because the dependent variable is binary.[13] Simply gaining work authorization likely increases the financial independence of persons with all levels of education as they are brought out of the shadows of the informal economy. Previous research consistently supports the assertion that wages among authorized workers are higher than those without employment authorization (Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 2002; Rivera-Batiz 1999).

Another factor that prior research has found to be predictive of an increase in wages is previous work experience. Phillips and Massey (1999) found that for undocumented immigrants after IRCA prior labor market experience in Mexico was

[13] To measure financial independence, we asked individuals in our sample, "Have you earned more money that has allowed you to become more financially independent [since receiving DACA]?"

positively associated with wage level. Although Phillips and Massey (1999) considered prior work experience a form of social capital, Hall, Greenman and Farkas (2010) included work experience as a measure of human capital in their modeling of wages, finding that both educational level and work experience positively influenced starting wages. Specifically, the starting wages for undocumented Mexican males increased by .9 percent with each year of experience in the labor market and by 1.1 percent for documented Mexican males (Hall et al. 2010:503). It follows that a third hypothesis is that *individuals with labor market experience before receiving DACA are more likely to indicate increased financial independence since receiving DACA.* However, given the binary nature of the outcome variable, I again predict that those with and without prior labor market experience will experience increased financial independence simply as a result of the work authorization DACA provides.

At the same time, it will be important to account for a core set of demographic variables that previous research has determined to be related to increased economic integration, such as: age (Bohon 2001), years in the United States (Bohon 2005; 2001), age at arrival (Hall et al. 2010) and gender (Aguilera 2004; Amuedo-Dorantes, Bansak and Raphael 2007; Hall et al. 2010; Cobb-Clark and Kossoudji 1999). Importantly, I also will account for a measure of belonging as a predictor for the measures of economic integration. This allows for an examination of the relationship between the different strands of the lived experience that serve the basis of this study: economic, education and existential.

Bivariate Analysis

Generally, individuals in our sample reported overall economic gains after receiving DACA status. Among our sample of 54 DACA recipients living in San Diego County, 72.2 percent indicated they received their first job or a new job since receiving DACA, while 69.4 percent reported an increase in financial independence. This percentage was much lower among individuals in high school—with 36.3 percent indicating a change in employment and the same percentage indicating increased financial independence. Because individuals in high school are unique in that they are often dependents of their parents, I excluded them from the sample as I examined financial independence. Among this modified sample, 81.4 percent indicated a change in employment and 78.9 percent indicated increased financial independence. Table 1.1 below reports the difference-in-means by financial independence and the summary statistics for the sample.

The variable of interest is “first job/moved jobs” because I hypothesize that persons who have experienced a change in employment will be more likely to indicate increased financial independence. Ninety percent of interviewees who reported increased financial independence had gotten their first job, compared to fifty percent of individuals who did not experience this financial independence. Accordingly, there is a significant bivariate relationship between job changing activity and increased financial independence after receiving DACA among individuals in our sample ($p = .010$). This bivariate relationship offers preliminary support for the hypothesis of the influence of change in employment on one’s financial independence. In fact, change in employment was the

only variable to have a significant bivariate relationship with the dependent variable of financial independence.

Table 1.1: Financial Independence Difference-in-Means and Summary Statistics[14]

		Difference in Means		*Summary Statistics*				
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	**# Obs**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
More Financially Independent (Yes=1)				.789	38	.413	0	1
First Job/Moved Jobs (Yes=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.9 .5	**.010**	.814	43	.394	0	1
Educational Level	Yes=1 No=0	1.933 1.750	.485	1.977	43	.707	0	4
Worked before DACA (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.423 .5	.702	.436	39	.502	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.3 .375	.685	.302	43	.465	0	1
Age	Yes=1 No=0	23.1 22.3	.580	23.2	43	3.9	18	32
Age at Arrival	Yes=1 No=0	6.0 6.5	.845	6.2	43	4.1	.25	15
Years in US	Yes=1 No=0	17.1 15.9	.571	17.0	43	5.2	6	27
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.767 .750	.922	.744	43	.441	0	1

To test the other hypotheses that educational attainment and prior work experience are key factors in predicting financial independence, I also examined the

[14] Due to a revision in the survey, not all respondents were asked about increased financial independence (38 out of 43).

bivariate relationship between these variables and financial independence. The average educational level of individuals reporting increased financial independence was 1.933 compared to 1.750 among those who did not.[15] Accordingly, there is no significant bivariate relationship between educational level and financial independence (p = .485). I also found no statistically significant relationship between prior work experience and financial independence (p = .702) to support the hypothesis that those who worked before DACA are more likely to report financial independence.

Through my examination of demographic variables such as gender, age, age at arrival and years in the United States, I found no significant relationships with increased financial independence. Again, having more formal economic opportunities because of work authorization is likely to increase financial independence across all sectors of individuals, irrespective of demographic differences. However, because there was not a comparison group I cannot definitively say that work authorization trumps all other characteristics that may influence financial independence. As with the demographic variables, there was not a significant relationship between sense of belonging in the United States and increased financial independence (p = .922), as those who experienced increased financial independence and those who have not reported roughly similar levels of belonging, 76.7 percent and 75.0 percent, respectively.

Multivariate Analysis

Although there was a significant relationship between job changing activity and financial independence at a bivariate level, I conducted a multivariate analysis to

[15] Educational level is an ordinal variable where 0= Less than High School Graduate, 1=High School Graduate, 2=Some College, 3=College Graduate, 4=Some Graduate School.

determine if this relationship continues to exist when controlling for other factors. Table 1.2 presents the correlation matrix used as a preliminary check for potential multicollinearity between the independent variables. Given that years in the United States is the difference between age and age at arrival, it is intuitive that they are highly correlated and need to be analyzed separately in order to prevent multicollinearity.

Table 1.2: Financial Independence Correlation Matrix[16]

	Gender	Age	Age at Arrival	Years in US	Ed. Level	First Job/ Moved Jobs	Work Before DACA	Sense of Belong-ing
Gender	1.00							
Age	-0.04	1.00						
Age at Arrival	0.02	0.15	1.00					
Years in US	-0.05	**0.63**	**-0.68**	1.00				
Ed. Level	-0.12	0.03	0.10	-0.06	1.00			
First Job/ Moved Jobs	-0.08	-0.28	-0.19	-0.06	0.24	1.00		
Work Before DACA	0.25	**0.42**	-0.00	0.34	-0.07	-0.32	1.00	
Sense of Belong-ing	-0.08	0.05	-0.30	0.28	-0.10	-0.14	-0.13	1.00

[16] Bolded values represent a correlation level that requires separate analysis (0.40 or greater or -0.40 or lesser).

Table 1.3 below presents the results of the multivariate analysis. Models 1 and 2 look at the relationship between a core set of demographic variables and financial independence. Model 3 looks at the relationship between an increased sense of belonging and financial independence. Finally, Model 4 looks at the effect of my variable of interest, change in employment, and work experience before DACA (the third hypothesis).

Table 1.3: Financial Independence Multivariate Analysis

	Model 1	***Model 2***	***Model 3***	***Model 4***
Gender (Male =1)	-.264 (.851)	-.262 (.851)	---	---
Age	.068 (.109)	---	---	---
Age at Arrival	-.032 (.098)	---	---	---
Years in US	---	.048 (.077)	---	---
Educational Level	.460 (.632)	.463 (.630)	---	---
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	---	---	.091 (.924)	---
First Job/ Moved Jobs (Yes=1)	---	---	---	**2.15 ** (1.015)**
Worked Before DACA (Yes=1)	---	---	---	.304 (.962)
Constant	-.779 (2.79)	-.238 (1.88)	1.253 (.802)	-.506 (1.035)
N	38	38	38	34

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** significant at the .01 level. ** significant at the .05 level. * significant at the .10 level.

The results of Model 4 are consistent with the hypothesis that individuals who have gotten their first job or moved jobs are more likely to indicate increased financial independence. The multivariate analysis shows there is a statistically significant positive relationship between change in employment and the dependent variable ($p = .034$). Change in employment is the only significant predictor of financial independence—a finding foreshadowed in the bivariate analysis. I found no support for the hypothesis of the influence of human capital (i.e., educational attainment) and prior work experience.

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

In addition to increased financial independence, I also wanted to examine economic integration in terms of upward occupational mobility. One way to do this is to look at the occupational attainment of individuals before DACA and compare this to their occupational attainment after DACA. Like previous studies looking at occupational attainment (see, for example, Bohon 2005), I utilized the Nam-Powers-Boyd (N-P-B) occupational scores. N-P-B occupational status scores are based on the 2000 census and range from 1-100.[17] Beginning in the 1950s, the Census Bureau developed occupational status scores aimed at "reflect[ing] the average education and income of incumbents of each detailed occupation" (Nam and Boyd 2004:330). Importantly, these scores represent an average for a given occupation and do not "apply to the particular person to whom the score was assigned but rather to the typical person in that occupation" (Nam and Boyd 2004:330). For Bohon's (2005:254) purposes, she utilized the N-P-B scores as a measure

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[17] A score of a 1 corresponds to employment as counter attendants in cafeterias, concession stands and coffee shops, while a 100 corresponds to occupations like dentists, physicians and surgeons (Nam and Boyd 2004). For purposes of this study, I coded those not working as a 0.

of a "general level of living." I aim to do the same, given I deem other measures of mobility (e.g., 2013 income) to be insufficient for DACA recipients in our sample.[18]

Because individuals with DACA now have work authorization, it is intuitive that their economic lives will be greatly enhanced. Examining IRCA, Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark (2000:95) found that "Legal status, itself, creates a whole new set of opportunities and, on average, these workers are employed in occupations that are higher up the occupational ladder." As was mentioned previously, however, one cannot generalize the experience of individuals with DACA. Consequently, the following section seeks to identify the factors that matter most with regard to the upward occupational mobility of DACA recipients. My research question is two-fold. First, I seek to explore basic occupational mobility: *What factors predict upward occupational mobility after receiving DACA?* Going one step further, I examine the amount of occupational mobility individuals with DACA have experienced: *What factors predict a larger change in occupational mobility after receiving DACA?*

As was mentioned above, human capital theory has been dominant in the literature on the occupational attainment of natives and immigrants (Hall et al. 2010; Kaushal 2006; Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 2002). In light of this prior research, my hypothesis is that *higher educational attainment is positively related to occupational mobility after receiving DACA.* As Frum (2007:83) has put it:

> Arguably, the ticket to social and economic mobility has increasingly become a college degree, with college graduates' average annual earnings almost double those of high school graduates and nearly three times those of high school drop-

[18] We asked respondents about their income in 2013. Many respondents indicated receiving little income in 2013, attributing this to the length of time they had spent with DACA status. For example, some individuals only worked in their current job for one or two months in 2013. As a result, the amount indicated for income is not representative of their socioeconomic status in their current job.

> outs. While in 1982 the Supreme Court sought to prevent the creation of an underclass of undocumented individuals by assuring access to free public K-12 education, the new educational 'ticket to the middle class' may well be a college degree.

Accordingly, I believe that individuals with more education will now be employed in jobs with higher N-P-B scores compared to those with less education. However, because the first dependent variable is binary,[19] it could be that individuals will experience an increase in occupational mobility simply as a result of work authorization and being brought into the formal economy—as I found with increased financial independence. Nevertheless, I maintain that educational attainment *will* be an influential factor in determining the amount of increased occupational mobility, the second dependent variable.

While the above hypothesis emphasizes the role of human capital in one's occupational mobility, prior research has also highlighted the role of social capital. Bohon (2005:262) found that marital status (classified as a form of social capital) was positively related to N-P-B scores. As was mentioned, Phillips and Massey (1999) classified previous labor market experience as a form of social capital as well. Consequently, a second hypothesis is that, as opposed to measures of human capital, *measures of social capital like marital status and prior work experience are significantly related to increased occupational mobility.* In addition to social capital, and as with financial independence, prior research has indicated that other demographic variables also can play a role in one's occupational mobility, such as: age, years in the United States, age at arrival and gender.

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[19] For my analysis of occupational mobility as a binary outcome, a 1 indicates any increase on the N-P-B scale pre- to post-DACA and a 0 indicates either no change or a decrease.

Bivariate Analysis

To explore the economic integration of DACA recipients through a slightly different lens, I conducted a bivariate analysis of experiencing upward occupational mobility since receiving DACA status. Among individuals who are not currently in high school, 70.3 percent have experienced upward occupational mobility since receiving DACA. Then I examined the change in occupational status score as a continuous outcome, where the dependent variable is measured as the difference between an individual's N-P-B occupational status score before and after DACA. The average change in N-P-B score among our interviewees was 18 points. Table 1.4 presents the difference-in-means by upward occupational mobility (binary outcome) and summary statistics for the sample.

My variable of interest, educational level, was measured on an ordinal scale from 0 to 4, representing did not graduate high school[20], high school graduate, some college, college graduate and some graduate school. Drawing on human capital theory, I hypothesized that those with higher educational attainment would be more likely to indicate upward occupational mobility because they are able to seek out jobs in the formal sector that "require or reward education credentials" as a result of work authorization through DACA (Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark 2002:618). Nevertheless, the average educational level of individuals who have experienced upward occupational mobility is 2.1, compared to 2.0 among those who have not. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that education does not have an effect on one's occupational mobility ($p = .623$).

[20] Our analysis did not include individuals who are currently in high school but rather those who did not finish.

Table 1.4: Occupational Mobility Difference-in-Means and Summary Statistics

		Difference in Means		*Summary Statistics*				
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	**# Obs**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Occupational Mobility (Yes=1)				.703	37	.463	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.231 .455	.174	.302	43	.465	0	1
Age	Yes=1 No=0	22.0 25.3	**.019**	23.2	43	3.9	18	32
Age at Arrival	Yes=1 No=0	5.6 7.8	.143	6.2	43	4.1	.25	15
Years in US	Yes=1 No=0	16.4 17.5	.522	17.0	43	5.2	6	27
Education Level	Yes=1 No=0	2.1 2.0	.623	1.977	43	.707	0	4
Married (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.115 .273	.235	.163	43	.374	0	1
Worked before DACA (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.269 .818	**.002**	.436	39	.502	0	1
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.731 .818	.571	.744	43	.441	0	1

To test the hypothesis that social capital is influential in one’s occupational mobility, I examined the bivariate relationship between marital status and prior work experience on one’s occupational mobility. While I found no statistically significant relationship between marital status and occupational mobility (p = .235), I did note a

significant relationship between prior work experience and occupational mobility (p = .002).

Although prior research has found that labor market experience is a positive predictor of an immigrant's wages after legalization (Hall et al. 2010), among DACA recipients in this sample there is actually a negative relationship between working before DACA and occupational mobility. Among those indicating upward occupational mobility, 26.9 percent worked before DACA. Comparatively, among those who have not experienced upward occupational mobility, 81.8 percent worked before DACA. A possible explanation is that it is easier to report upward occupational mobility if one has never worked (i.e., starting from a baseline of 0). To further examine this relationship, I will include prior work experience as an independent variable in the multivariate analysis of the difference in occupational status scores.

Among the demographic variables, age was the only significant predictor of upward occupational mobility. Individuals who reported upward mobility since receiving DACA were younger (22.0 years old) compared to those who have not experienced upward mobility (25.3 years old). This three year difference in age was statistically significant at the .05 level (p = .019). It could be that individuals who are older have experienced more difficulty with finding a new job because of the amount of time they have been out of school. At the same time, it could be that older individuals have more familial responsibilities that prevent them from pursuing additional work.

To provide a more nuanced explanation of occupational mobility, I conducted a bivariate analysis of a second measure of occupational mobility: change in one's occupational status score. Again, I hypothesized that educational level would be a

significant predictor of the difference in one's N-P-B score. Table 1.5 presents the regression coefficients of this bivariate analysis.

Table 1.5: Occupational Mobility Bivariate Analysis

	Coefficient		**Coefficient**
Gender (Male =1)	-11.125 (8.471)	Education Level	**12.076** (5.628)**
Age	.477 (1.002)	Married (Yes=1)	9.296 (10.263)
Age at Arrival	-.237 (.950)	Worked Before DACA (Yes=1)	**-15.9** (7.544)**
Years in US	.473 (.799)	Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	-11.144 (9.131)

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** significant at the .01 level. ** significant at the .05 level. * significant at the .10 level.

Although education was not a significant predictor in the analysis of the binary measure of occupational mobility, I did find education level to be a significant predictor of the change in one's occupational status score. The regression coefficient signals that a one-unit increase in one's education level (i.e., moving from high school graduate to some college or moving from some college to college graduate) increases one's occupational status score by roughly 12 points (p = .040). Consistent with the bivariate analysis of the binary measure of occupational mobility, prior work experience before DACA is a significant negative predictor of change in one's N-P-B score. Again, because those who did not work before DACA are starting from a baseline of 0, they are likely experiencing greater gains than those who were working already and subsequently had a higher starting point.

Multivariate Analysis

To determine if the relationships noted above exist when controlling for other factors, I conducted a multivariate analysis. Table 1.6 presents the correlation matrix between the independent variables used.

Table 1.6: Occupational Mobility Correlation Matrix

	Gender	Age	Age at Arrival	Years in US	Ed. Level	Marital Status	Work Before DACA	Sense of Belonging
Gender	1.00							
Age	-0.04	1.00						
Age at Arrival	0.02	0.15	1.00					
Years in US	-0.05	**0.63**	**-0.68**	1.00				
Ed. Level	-0.12	0.03	0.10	-0.06	1.00			
Marital Status	-0.02	**0.48**	-0.04	0.38	-0.35	1.00		
Work Before DACA	0.25	**0.42**	-0.00	0.34	-0.07	0.13	1.00	
Sense of Belong-ing	-0.08	0.05	-0.30	0.28	-0.10	0.26	-0.13	1.00

As noted previously, years in the US—a function of age and age at arrival—must be analyzed separately because of potential multicollinearity. Table 1.6 also shows that prior

work experience and marital status are correlated with age (r = 0.42 and 0.48, respectively).

Table 1.7 presents the results of the multivariate logistic regression analysis for upward occupational mobility (binary outcome). Models 1 and 2 examine the relationship between a core set of demographic variables and occupational mobility. As was hinted during the bivariate analysis, Model 1 shows that age was a significant negative predictor of occupational mobility. In Model 3, even with the inclusion of sense of belonging, age continued to be significantly and negatively related to occupational mobility. Importantly, in both Models 1 and 2 educational level, the variable of interest, is not significantly related to upward occupational mobility among individuals in our sample. Again, this is likely a result of the binary nature of our dependent variable which does not measure how much upward mobility an individual has experienced. Model 4 includes age (because of its significance in previous models) and variables representing the hypotheses of the importance of social capital (marital status and prior work experience). As noted above, marital status and prior work experience were both correlated with age. Nevertheless, because of the theoretical significance of these variables, I included them together in Model 4. However, a test for collinearity shows multicollinearity exists. I then conducted a series of likelihood ratio tests among nested models for Model 4. Model 4 is only statistically different when prior work experience is removed. Removing age or marital status from the analysis does not significantly change the model. As a result, Model 4—and its variants—provide evidence of the negative relationship between prior work experience and occupational mobility.

Table 1.7: Occupational Mobility (Binary) Multivariate Analysis

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender (Male =1)	-1.451 (.918)	-.971 (.779)	---	---
Age	**-.235** (.119)**	---	**-.220** (.101)**	-.129 (.127)
Age at Arrival	-.122 (.102)	---	---	---
Years in US	---	-.044 (.076)	---	---
Education Level	.275 (.666)	.146 (.598)	---	---
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	---	---	-.526 (.937)	---
Married (Yes = 1)	---	---	---	-.100 (1.152)
Worked Before DACA (Yes=1)	---	---	---	**-2.133** (.946)**
Constant	**7.138** (3.279)**	1.629 (1.925)	**6.425** (2.561)**	**5.093* (2.872)**
N	37	37	37	37

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** significant at the .01 level. ** significant at the .05 level. * significant at the .10 level.

I then performed an ordinary least squares (OLS) multivariate regression using the continuous dependent variable of change in occupational status scores before and after DACA. Table 1.8 presents the results of this analysis. Consistent with my

hypothesis, educational attainment is significantly and positively associated with change in occupational status score across each model in the analysis.

Table 1.8: Occupational Mobility (Continuous) Multivariate Analysis

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Gender (Male =1)	-8.612 (8.482)	-8.591 (8.339)	---	---
Age	.536 (.998)	---	---	---
Age at Arrival	-.673 (.950)	---	---	---
Years in US	---	.609 (.758)	---	---
Education Level	**11.304* (5.904)**	**11.225* (5.766)**	**11.307* (5.682)**	**14.386*** (5.267)**
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	---	---	-8.752 (8.818)	---
Married (Yes = 1)	---	---	---	**22.178** (9.310)**
Worked Before DACA (Yes=1)	---	---	---	**-17.861** (6.931)**
Constant	-10.850 (25.185)	-12.759 (18.594)	1.434 (14.893)	-8.247 (12.395)
N	34	34	34	34

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** significant at the .01 level. ** significant at the .05 level. * significant at the .10 level.

I found that both measures of the hypotheses regarding social capital (marital status and prior work experience) were also significantly associated with the amount of

occupational mobility. As foreshadowed in the bivariate analysis, prior work experience is negatively associated with the difference in occupational mobility.

These findings do not mean that individuals who worked before DACA are penalized for their work experience. It simply means that individuals who did not work before DACA experienced greater gains in relation to their baseline of 0 compared to those who had higher occupational status scores before DACA. Two simple bivariate tests support this assertion. The average gain in occupational status scores among those who worked before DACA was 9 points compared to 24.9 points among those who did not work before DACA ($p = .043$). Nevertheless, despite greater gains, when looking at the N-P-B scores after receiving DACA, those who worked before DACA maintained a higher average score than those who did not work before DACA, 31 and 24.9 respectively ($p = .471$). In other words, one's current occupational status score is not influenced negatively by previous work experience.

Summary

The analyses reported in this section provide evidence to support the idea that generally DACA has increased the economic integration of its recipients. Importantly, the individuals in this sample do not constitute a random sample and consequently these results are not necessarily generalizable to larger populations of DACA recipients. Nevertheless, the methods used here help to illuminate the patterns within this sample and perhaps offer insight into the broader population of DACAmented persons.

After excluding individuals still in high school, a majority of individuals in the sample reported increased economic incorporation, with 78.9 percent reporting increased financial independence and 70.3 percent experiencing upward occupational mobility.

DACA recipients in our sample gained an average of 18 points on the N-P-B occupational status scale. After controlling for a variety of demographic variables, job changing activity was the only significant predictor of increased financial independence after receiving DACA. This finding supports the idea that individuals across the board are experiencing the benefits of DACA in terms of economic integration.

Perhaps it is not surprising that those who did not work before DACA are experiencing the greatest gains in occupational mobility, since their baseline N-P-B score was lower than those who were already employed. Despite the analyses showing that there are no systematic differences between individuals who benefit economically from DACA in terms of gender, age at arrival or years in the United States, higher educational attainment is a significant, positive predictor of the amount of benefit—the change in occupational status scores. Additionally, bivariate analysis suggests that age may have a negative relationship with upward occupational mobility. It could be that older individuals face more difficulty in the labor market because of the amount of time they have spent out of school. It also is possible that older individuals have certain familial responsibilities that influence their pursuit of employment.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

While quantitative analysis provides support for a general sense of economic benefit, further exploration of the qualitative interview data provides an additional layer to understanding the economic experiences of DACA recipients. Among individuals who are not currently in high school, a large majority (81.4 percent) of our sample reported a change in employment—either securing their first job or moving to a new job. Given the importance of job switching activity in one's financial independence (as noted in the

previous section), one must ask, *what explains why others have not experienced a change in employment?*

For some individuals the need to maintain a flexible schedule either because of school or familial constraints was an important consideration in maintaining previous employment. David, a 25-year-old male who planned to enroll in a master's program in the fall of 2014, described his situation as follows: "Now, here's the thing, the reason why I'm still there, and I told myself I was gonna get out as soon as I got DACA, is because they accommodated my schedule for school." Given the store where he works is open seven days each week, he is able to work on the weekends and still go to school on weekdays. At the same time, David has experienced an increase in his wages which he directly attributes to receiving DACA:

> This year I made more money than any other actually…I think it's just my outlook in life, you know…when you're a commission salesman you have to be happy and feel kinda, you know, like feel good about yourself and feel good about what you're doing so like I started kinda seeing myself as equal to everybody else—like clients and stuff like that.

Consequently, DACA has influenced his economic incorporation in terms of financial independence despite not seeking new employment.

Interestingly, this increased financial independence after receiving DACA could also influence one's decision to maintain previous employment. For example, Rosa, a 31-year-old female, attends school full-time and also works full-time cleaning houses. Although she plans to transition to a new job by the end of the year, the ability to earn more money had led her not to pursue different employment at the time of our interview. She attributed her ability to get more work to having employment authorization through

DACA. Like David, Rosa has experienced increased economic mobility as a result of DACA despite not changing employment.

While our interviewee David explains that flexibility in employment was a necessity due to school, Daniela described how being a mother to two young children influenced her decision to keep her previous job in janitorial services. Early in the interview she expressed the need for flexibility in her schedule so she can stay at home and care for her young son given the expensive cost of daycare. Her work schedule facilitates being able to watch her son during the day while her husband is at work. Despite not switching jobs, Daniela credited DACA with being able to keep her job because the company she worked for began using E-Verify, an Internet platform that allows employers to determine the employment authorization of their employees. Again, although she has not changed jobs, DACA has influenced Daniela's employment by providing her with the work authorization necessary to maintain her previous job.

At first blush, given the large majority of individuals in the sample experiencing positive economic outcomes, quantitative analysis may mask the difficulties that DACA recipients face in the labor market. Many interviewees who had experienced a change in employment described waiting months before being able to find a job. For example, Julia noted it took her seven months to secure a job after receiving DACA. César experienced a similar situation and after the inability to find a job for many months, he decided to enroll in courses to earn his real estate license. Elia described that it took her nine months to obtain a job after receiving DACA, which she credited to lack of experience, "I was 20 years old with no experience with jobs and they were like, 'Well, what have you been doing for five years?'" Like Elia, some of our respondents related to us that they were

unable to even gain experience through volunteer positions before receiving DACA because some organizations require a Social Security number to volunteer.

Considering these respondents' retrospective reflections, it is likely that time with DACA indeed has an influence on one's economic integration. However, in our sample, we only interviewed six individuals who had DACA for less than a year. As a result, based on qualitative evidence, it is likely that among a larger sample with more variation, the amount of time with DACA would be a statistically significant predictor of an individual's job changing activity and subsequent increase in financial independence.

At the same time, the aforementioned difficulties in obtaining employment highlight the liminally legal position in which individuals with DACA still find themselves. Despite now having authorization to work, vestiges of their past undocumented status continue to play a role in their present situation. As was previously mentioned, many individuals with DACA were legally barred from gaining the experience necessary to set themselves up for success in the job market. This is not to say that DACAmented individuals cannot be successful. However, those with DACA face an additional layer of challenges in their job search that others with permanent status do not confront.

Additionally, this intuitively hints at a difference in the way that individuals who receive DACA when they are younger (i.e., still in high school) will experience the benefits of DACA compared to those who are older. For many undocumented individuals the limitations of their undocumented status become salient in high school—for example, when they turn 16 and are unable to get a driver's license or find employment in the formal sector. As a result, they do not necessarily gain certain types of skills or

experience. Their inability to find what they deem to be meaningful work after college graduation also can deter them from pursuing higher education.

Those who have received DACA during this formative period in their lives, however, will face a markedly different context—they can work and therefore build their skill set for future employment. With the possibility of meaningful employment in the future because of work authorization, they do not face the same deterrents in their pursuit of higher education. The same line of thinking was postulated by Abrego (2006:222), noting that immigration status "can play a crucial role in the lives of students if they are not able to regularize prior to high school or soon after." Longitudinal research is needed to explore the differences in experiences of those who received DACA status prior to high school graduation compared to those who received DACA years after graduation.

While the quantitative analysis focused on individuals experiencing upward occupational mobility and increased financial independence, it is important to note that this was not every individual's experience in our sample. Jaime, a 21-year-old male studying criminal science at a local four-year university, falls into the latter category. After receiving DACA in the summer of 2013, Jaime was able to secure employment in retail by December. Despite now having work authorization, Jaime noted that his income actually has decreased. Before working in retail, Jaime worked in construction and was paid under the table. This decrease in wages is particularly difficult for him as there was an issue with his name on his DACA application which caused him to have to pay the $465 application fee twice. Despite using some of his scholarship money to help him pay the fee, Jaime described that even at the time of our interview (more than six months after

receiving DACA) he has not been able to recover financially. Consequently, the wage decrease he is experiencing is particularly troublesome.

Nevertheless, given Jaime's future aspirations to work with a government agency, the ability to work legally helped to relieve the tension he felt previously with regard to working with fake documentation. Jaime felt securing employment in this manner could negatively affect his future job prospects. He considered being authorized to work as one of the biggest changes in his life since receiving DACA and one that he hopes to maintain through renewal. When asked the most important factor in his decision to renew his DACA status, Jaime stated:

> Because if I don't [renew] then I'll just be just like before. And I don't want to destroy my possibilities… if by not getting [DACA] and then working at some job and then getting caught. I prefer getting DACA and keeping it safe.

As can be noted, Jaime's decision to renew is not based on immediate economic mobility but rather on his long-term economic opportunities.

Like Jaime, Eva expressed that her expectations for employment after DACA were not met. A senior in high school with plans to study business, Eva was working in janitorial services and at a local spa before receiving DACA. Now, working in food service, Eva noted that she earned a higher wage per hour at her prior jobs. Despite not making as much money as she had previously, Eva noted that the biggest change to her life has been securing an "official job", explaining, "It was a pretty good feeling when I was filling out the W-2 forms. It was a good feeling signing my name." Both Eva and Jaime's cases demonstrate that although some individuals with DACA are not experiencing an increase in wages, they still see the benefit in work authorization, as it

allows them to feel that they are doing things "the right way"—a consistent theme expressed by respondents in our sample.

At the same time it is important to note that this limited occupational mobility in terms of a new job or increased wages can have an influence on an individual's intent to renew a temporary status. Given the first wave of DACA renewal has just started, there is no prior research examining the renewal decision-making process. However, other countries like Spain and Italy have implemented temporary legalizations from which a comparison can be made. The OECD Secretariat (2000:63) found that despite obtaining legal status as a result of amnesties in Spain and Italy in the 1990s, some migrants were "slip[ping] back into illegality." For example, in 1994 roughly three-fourths of those who benefited from Spain's amnesty in 1991 maintained a valid permit. Similarly, the OECD Secretariat (2000:63-64) reported that in Italy more than 300,000 migrants were either unable or chose not to renew their permits between 1991 and 1994.

The literature notes the importance of various factors in an individual's decision-making about renewing his/her permit, such as: the type of status offered to the individual and the processes or procedures related to renewal. More specifically, however, the OECD Secretariat (2000) highlighted the role of limited occupational mobility and wages as central in the decision to renew. Although, the OECD Secretariat (2000) found many newly-legalized migrants had obtained a new or different job, these migrants did not always experience upward mobility as they continued to lack certain education and skills. With this in mind, there seemed to be more benefits in the underground economy, prompting some of them to fall back into the shadows by choosing not to renew their status.

There is cause for concern as some of our respondents highlighted that they struggled to find employment given their lack of experience and certain skills. Nevertheless, individuals like Eva, Jaime, David, Rosa, Daniela, Julia and César evidence that the case for DACA renewal may be different than that of Spain and Italy—as other factors beyond immediate economic mobility could weigh more heavily in individuals' decision-making processes. While this area is beyond the scope of this study, future research on DACA renewal should consider the importance of economic mobility in the renewal decision-making process.

As I noted above, some individuals have faced difficulty obtaining a job because of limited work experience or have chosen to maintain previous employment because of personal circumstances. Some individuals, however, described confronting obstacles precisely because of the legally liminal nature of DACA. One limitation for individuals with DACA is that they are generally barred from applying to jobs with certain government agencies. According to the United States Office of Personnel Management (2013:para. 1), "Only United States citizens and nationals may be appointed in the competitive civil service"; however, certain non-citizens may be employed through specific exemptions. On its face, this may seem like an insignificant limitation. Nevertheless, to someone whose educational trajectory leads him/her to this sector, it is a seemingly insurmountable obstacle. Such is the case of Jaime, the individual studying criminal science mentioned previously. Jaime, in his third year of his undergraduate degree, hopes to work for a government agency after graduation. However, these hopes are tempered by the limitations of his immigration status:

> I can’t [work for a government agency] because most of the jobs require you to be a [legal permanent] resident….It’s going to be difficult once I apply. Like I tried to volunteer or inter[n] for juvenile hall, but one of the requirements is that you have to be resident.

As a result, Jaime is unable to apply for jobs in his field of study and is effectively barred from gaining skills as an intern or a volunteer in his desired profession as well. This economic limitation has spilled over into his sense of belonging. When asked if he feels like he belongs more in the United States since receiving DACA, he was unable to directly answer the question, noting he does feel more secure. He continued, “...I don’t feel like, uh, complete. I still can’t apply to certain things that I want to do.” Although some respondents in our sample indicated the work authorization they have received through DACA has led them to feel more a part of the United States, Jaime does not feel the same sense of incorporation as a result of the limits stemming from the liminal legality of DACA.

Another obstacle that individuals in our sample faced regarding employment after DACA was employers’ responses to the temporariness of the program. While by law employers are not allowed to treat individuals differently because of their immigration status,[21] this is not always borne out in practice. Elia, who previously described her difficulty in finding work because of her limited experience, also indicated that DACA’s temporary nature was an obstacle to employment:

> It was a struggle when I was applying for jobs because it was something like, ‘Well, that’s cool and all that you can work now, but like, what happens in two years? What if you advance in the company and then you just have to leave? What if you can’t renew your permit? What’s going to happen then?’ That was a

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[21] There is an anti-discrimination provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) that protects individuals from citizenship status discrimination. The INA includes those who are granted temporary residence in the category of protected individuals (United States Department of Justice n.d.).

> struggle, having to explain to people and to be like, 'Well, I can work right now. I'm willing to give it all my effort…'

As can be noted, Elia worried employers viewed her differently because of the liminality of her legal status.

This concern is common among individuals with DACA, as evidenced by its inclusion in a Frequently Asked Questions report published by Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC). In this report, Berger et al. (2014) provided an answer to the question about the necessity to disclose the temporary nature of DACA to employers during the application process. Berger et al. (2014:13) advised, "You only need to show that you are authorized to work. You do not need to disclose your immigration status." When asked if she had to reveal that she had DACA in the application process, however, Elia explained that there is a section on the employment form in which you classify yourself as either a citizen or if you have some type of permit.[22] It was here that she felt she had to explain DACA to employers, "That's when I had to be like, 'Oh, well, it's a two year program; I do have to renew. However, I can promise you that I'll stay until 2015. You know that you have me until then.'"

While Elia noted that her previous employer was fine with the temporary nature of her work authorization because of her part-time status, she has faced certain challenges with her current employer—in terms of health insurance and the potential to transfer to be near her fiancé who lives in Washington. Regarding health insurance she explained that

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[22] In the most recent version of the I-9 Form for Employment Eligibility Verification (updated March 8, 2013), an individual must classify him/herself as a citizen, a noncitizen national, a lawful permanent resident or as "an alien authorized to work". Importantly, individuals in this category are then asked to write down their employment authorization expiration date, if applicable. For a copy of the form, go to: http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/form/i-9.pdf

her employer was not willing to "make the investment", telling her, "Maybe we should wait to see if you're going to be able to renew it and see what's going on with that because what would be the point?" Elia's situation highlights that because DACA is a temporary program, its recipients may face unfair treatment from employers in terms of hiring and providing benefits.

Although not directly aligned to economic integration, analysis of the qualitative interviews also suggests that obtaining health insurance is a financial difficulty for DACA recipients. Although individuals with DACA are eligible for health insurance through their employers in some cases, they are ineligible to purchase insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to the National Immigration Law Center (2013), a revision to the ACA by the Obama administration in August 2012 barred DACA recipients from certain health insurance options. Importantly, this revision only affected individuals with DACA, as persons with other types of deferred action have more affordable insurance options available to them. In other words, "[DACA recipients] will be treated as though they are undocumented, even though they are otherwise considered lawfully present and are eligible for a work permit and a Social Security number" (National Immigration Law Center 2013:1-2).

Among our sample less than half (35.8 percent)[23] currently had health insurance, reflecting the lack of affordable options. Of those with health insurance, employment was the most common way to obtain health insurance (36.8 percent), with Medi-Cal as the second most common form of insurance (26.3 percent).[24] Given limited access to health

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[23] 58.5 percent of individuals in the sample did not have health insurance and 5.7 percent were unsure.
[24] Some individuals clarified that they only had a type of restricted Medi-Cal. Restricted Medi-Cal provides some coverage for pregnancy-related care and emergency situations. Consequently, this type of insurance is

insurance, some individuals described having to make difficult decisions about health care. For example, although David is eligible to purchase health insurance through his employer, he explained the tension between paying for insurance and paying for his education, "I need the extra cash to pay for school….I feel like as bad as it sounds I can kinda like waive health [insurance] for now, just a little bit, for like a couple years, and pay [for] school."

This inaccessibility of health insurance puts DACA recipients in a vulnerable position in which they are forced to confront illnesses and injuries with limited or no access to health care coverage. Roughly a third of the individuals in our study indicated they have been unable to obtain treatment when they needed it within the past year, while almost another ten percent indicated not getting the care they needed at some other point in the past. Individuals in our sample reported not seeking immediate or continued treatment for seizures, stomach ulcers, back pain, migraines, asthma, gall bladder problems and food allergies, among others.

DACA recipients who have been able to obtain health insurance emphasized its importance in their lives. Elisa, a 19-year-old female, described how before receiving health insurance through her university, she suffered from abdominal pain. Despite being in excruciating pain, she explained, "I had to suck it up because we're broke. I didn't have money… we didn't have the money to go to another clinic that was like $100 just to see you and $100 for the tests." After receiving health insurance, Elisa was able to see a doctor who diagnosed her symptoms as an issue with her gall bladder and worked with

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woefully inadequate for most health needs. Additionally, individuals who have this restricted Medi-Cal and have experienced emergencies related to us that they still have ended up with thousands of dollars of medical debt despite this "coverage".

her to help decrease the pain. Even individuals like Rodrigo, who did not have a previous illness or injury, explained the relief he feels with having insurance through his employer, “Now I feel safe. I mean, before I didn’t have any insurance so I’m like, ‘Oh, if I get sick I will have to pay a big amount of money.’ But, now I feel protected.”

Luz, who also obtained health insurance from her employer, emphasized that health insurance is one of the main considerations in her decision to renew her DACA status. Luz was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis almost ten years ago. Before receiving DACA, she employed a variety of strategies to help get the care she needed for her illness, including enrolling in experimental trials in order to get her prescriptions. Now, with her health insurance, she is able to get her bi-weekly treatments at an affordable price. Given the relief and well-being health insurance has provided Elisa, Rodrigo and Luz, it is unfortunate that not all DACA recipients are afforded the same access.

Summary

While the quantitative analysis painted a relatively positive picture of the upward mobility of individuals with DACA, qualitative analysis provides a more nuanced understanding. Time constraints due to educational and familial responsibilities may help to explain why some individuals have not sought out different employment since receiving DACA. At the same time, the ability to earn increased wages could also play a role in the decision to maintain previous employment. Qualitative analysis also indicates that many individuals in our sample struggled to find a job, frequently taking several months to secure employment. Some individuals attributed this to a lack of experience. Many individuals with DACA were previously barred from obtaining internships and

volunteer work which would facilitate gaining the experience necessary to set themselves up for success in the job market. In other words, recipients' experiences before DACA continue to play a role in their present.

On a related note, individuals with DACA are still not eligible for certain internship and employment opportunities. For those whose educational preparation has been targeted to a specific sector (e.g., governmental work), DACA does not provide them with the authorization necessary to gain employment or experience in this area. Qualitative analysis reveals that even when a person is not barred from applying to a specific job, the temporary nature of his/her DACA status may serve as a hurdle to securing employment or benefits once employed. Because persons with DACA are excluded from the ACA, oftentimes their only option is to obtain health insurance through an employer. Accordingly, their restricted access to health insurance is another financial obstacle DACA recipients must face.

Finally, the qualitative analysis shows that while the majority of our interviewees have experienced an increase in income since receiving DACA, some actually have experienced a decrease. This is particularly disconcerting in light of research on countries that have enacted similar legalizations. Prior research has found that a lack of upward mobility resulted in individuals choosing not to renew their permit. Nevertheless, persons in our sample who have not yet experienced upward economic mobility still indicate intent to renew. Future research is needed to determine if the economic integration of individuals with DACA will influence their decision-making with regard to renewal.

Chapter 2:
Education

…Before everything in DACA I feel like a few windows would open, now with DACA…
I feel that it's not just one; it's almost like having all the doors opened.
-Rosa, a 31-year-old student,
on the way her belief in accomplishing
her educational goals changed after DACA

Individuals with DACA have a unique educational context. A landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1982, 30 years to the day of the announcement of DACA, provided undocumented individuals the right to a public education in grades K-12. *Plyler v. Doe* found a 1975 Texas law permitting the denial of undocumented students into public schools to be unconstitutional. Referring to the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Court asserted that the protections afforded to "persons within [the State's] jurisdiction" included more than just citizens and that without the opportunity for education, undocumented youth would be permanently disadvantaged (*Plyler v. Doe* 1982). As a result, undocumented youth have grown up with the same rights and access to education as their citizen peers—until they reach college. Abrego (2006:220-221) explained, "Up until [high school graduation], their social and economic experiences—and therefore their incorporation processes—have been very similar to those of their documented peers in both their neighborhoods and their schools."

However, it is upon high school graduation where undocumented individuals are faced with trying to overcome the prohibitive cost of higher education and confronting the reality that despite attaining this education they will be barred from employment upon graduation. It is precisely these circumstances that are reflected in the low rates of higher educational attainment for undocumented youth. Passel and Cohn (2009) found that

among undocumented high school graduates aged 18 to 24, 49 percent were attending college or had attended college, compared to 71 percent of their U.S.-born peers. This percentage likely has increased as more states have adopted in-state tuition and scholarship policies for undocumented students, resulting in greater educational accessibility.

Greater access to higher education for undocumented youth in California was facilitated by the ratification of the California Dream Act in 2011.[25] The California Dream Act (Assembly Bill 130 and Assembly Bill 131) built upon the foundation of Assembly Bill 540 (AB540) which allowed certain residents of California irrespective of their immigration status to qualify for in-state tuition (Abrego 2008). Nevertheless, given students were not eligible for any additional aid under AB540, Abrego (2008) found that the cost of attending a four-year university was prohibitive for many undocumented students. According to the California Student Aid Commission (n.d.), the California Dream Act expands AB540 by extending state-level financial aid and scholarship eligibility to undocumented residents of California who wish to attend a private or public university in California. It is likely that with these additional resources for financing a college education, there is increased access to higher education for individuals in California.

In contrast to work authorization’s direct influence on economic integration, at first glance DACA does not offer any immediate educational benefits. Individuals with DACA are still ineligible for federal financial aid. Nevertheless, education was a

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[25] Kaushal (2008:789) found that in states with in-state tuition policies for undocumented students, there is a 31 percent increase in college enrollment, a 37 percent increase in the number of individuals with some level of higher education and a 33 percent increase of Mexican youth earning a college degree.

prevalent theme throughout our interviews. Consequently, DACA's influence on education-related decisions and experiences merits exploration. The following section seeks to identify the factors that affect a person's decision to return to school after receiving DACA and the likelihood that they will be in school currently. First, I utilize quantitative analysis to test hypotheses generated from the qualitative interviews and from previous literature on educational re-entry and attainment. I supplement this exploration with qualitative analysis to provide a more fine-grained exploration of the factors that go into a DACA recipient's educational decision-making.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

The first question to be answered is: *What factors influence a DACA recipient to return to school?* As was mentioned above, financing higher education has been a long-standing challenge for undocumented youth. Over one-quarter of our total sample indicated that DACA has benefited them educationally because they are now able to get a job that will help them to finance further education. The main hypothesis is that *individuals who have experienced an increase in financial independence are more likely to have returned to school compared to those who have not experienced economic gains.* This increased financial independence will increase DACA recipients' ability to overcome the traditional, economic obstacles to higher education.

At the same time, this upward mobility could have the opposite effect. In her study of women who return to school after time in the work force, Felmlee (1988:34) found that:

> …women have higher rates of quitting a job to attend school full time when the wages in the jobs at which they are working are low…. In addition, for white

> women, but not for black women, the lower the prestige of the job, the greater the likelihood that these women will leave employment for schooling.

By extension of this theory, individuals who earn higher wages and have more "prestigious" jobs would be less likely to return to school. Although the Nam-Powers-Boyd (N-P-B) occupational status scores do not measure prestige, these scores can be used as a proxy. Accordingly, a second hypothesis is that *individuals with higher occupational status scores after receiving DACA will be less likely to have returned to school*. As a result, financial independence may make higher education more affordable, but securing a job with greater economic benefits may dissuade individuals from taking advantage of further study.

Previous research also indicates a temporal dimension to enrolling in higher education. In her study of the effect of in-state tuition policies on higher education enrollment and educational attainment, Kaushal (2008) found that increased exposure to the policy was positively related to college enrollment and higher levels of educational attainment.[26] Accordingly, a third hypothesis is that *individuals who have had DACA for a longer period of time are more likely to have returned to school*. As was noted in the section on economic integration, securing employment after receiving DACA oftentimes took months. Consistent with the hypothesis regarding the role of increased financial independence on the decision to return, it could be that the length of time before returning to school is related to the length of time that an individual spends looking for a job in order to finance higher education.

[26] Kaushal (2008:783) documented "A one-year increase in exposure to the policy increased enrollment by 0.7 percentage points, the proportion with at least a high school diploma by 1.8 percentage points, the proportion with at least some college education by 1.2 percentage points, and the proportion with an associate or higher degree by 0.4 percentage points. All the four coefficients are statistically significant."

Pursuant to the goal of identifying the differences in experiences of DACA recipients, I will account for the same core set of demographic variables utilized in the previous chapter. Previous educational research has determined the following variables to be influential in either educational attainment or re-entry: gender (Felmlee 1988), age (Felmlee 1988), years in the United States (Hirschman 1996) and age at arrival in the United States (Landale, Oropesa and Llanes 1998). Additionally, I will account for a measure of sense of belonging as a predictor for returning to school.

Bivariate Analysis

Among our sample of 54 DACA recipients, it is important to note that almost 60 percent of our respondents were attending school before receiving DACA status. To examine the factors that go into a DACAmented individual's decision to return to school, I excluded these individuals from the sample, resulting in 22 interviewees who were not attending school before receiving DACA. Roughly 40 percent of these individuals reported returning to school after receiving DACA.[27] This rate of return is not necessarily generalizable; differences could be a result of the small sample size or because students in California have greater access to higher education in light of the California Dream Act, compared to students living in states that do not offer any support to undocumented youth pursuing higher education. At the same time, it is necessary to ask what factors help to explain educational re-entry among the DACA recipients in our sample who experience a similar state-level educational context of reception. Table 2.1 presents the results of the bivariate analysis aimed at determining these factors.

[27] This proportion is slightly higher than Wong and Valdivia's (2014) finding that about 23 percent of DACA recipients have returned to school.

Table 2.1: Returned to School Difference-in-Means and Summary Statistics

		Difference in Means		***Summary Statistics***				
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	**# Obs**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Returned to School (Yes=1)				.409	22	.503	0	1
Gender (Male =1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.222 .462	.251	.364	22	.492	0	1
Age	Yes = 1 No = 0	23.9 24.4	.788	24.2	22	4.1	18	32
Age at Arrival	Yes = 1 No = 0	6.2 5.1	.551	5.6	22	3.9	.25	15
Years in US	Yes = 1 No = 0	17.7 19.3	.556	18.6	22	5.8	6	27
Financially Independent (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	1 .818	.202	.895	19	.315	0	1
Occupational Status Score	Yes=1 No=0	30.1 38.5	.498	35.3	21	26.5	0	92
Time with DACA	Yes = 1 No = 0	15.9 16.0	.942	16.0	21	3.7	6	19
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.889 .846	.774	.864	22	.351	0	1

The variable of interest was increased financial independence as I hypothesized that individuals who have experienced increased income would be able to overcome some of the financial barriers that have plagued undocumented youth in their pursuit of higher education. I found that among individuals who have returned to school all have experienced an increase in financial independence, whereas 81.8 percent who have not returned to school reported increased financial independence ($p = .202$). Although there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that financial independence has no

influence on one's decision to return to school, it is possible that our small sample size is masking the effect of this variable and that among a larger sample this variable would serve as a statistically significant predictor of returning to school.

To test the other hypotheses regarding the influence of occupational status score and time with DACA on educational re-entry, I also examined the bivariate relationship between these variables and whether one chose to return to school. As prior research predicted, individuals who did not return to school had a higher occupational status score compared to those who had returned to school, 38.5 and 30.1, respectively. This difference, however, is not statistically significant (p = .498). Additionally, I found no statistically significant relationship between time with DACA and returning to school. It is possible that time with DACA does have an influence on returning to school. In the entire sample, however, we only interviewed six individuals who had DACA for less than a year—only two of which remained in the sample after excluding those already in school. It is likely that among a larger sample with more variation, the amount of time with DACA could have more of an influence on if one has decided to return to school. Furthermore, I found no significant bivariate relationship between any of the core demographic variables and the decision to return to school. As was previously mentioned, it could be that a relationship does exist, but our small sample size is influencing the statistical power to detect the relationship.

Further examination of the data reveals that among those who did not return to school (13 individuals), five have concrete plans to return in the upcoming months. For example, Lupita and Isabel have already applied to return to school, while Isela just took the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) with plans to apply to medical school in

the near future. By including them in the group of those who have not returned to school, valuable information is lost because these individuals *have* made the decision to return to school. With this in mind, 63.6 percent of individuals not in school before DACA have made the decision to return to school—evidenced by actually returning to school or indicating concrete plans to return. As a result, I conducted the bivariate analysis again to include those who have made the decision to return to school and have taken steps to return. Table 2.2 presents a side-by-side comparison of the bivariate analyses for the two groups.

Table 2.2: Comparison of Returned to School Bivariate Analyses

Difference in Means: Returned to School				***Difference in Means: Decision to Return***	
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	***p*-value**
Gender (Male =1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.222 .462	.251	.285 .5	.315
Age	Yes = 1 No = 0	23.9 24.4	.788	23.4 25.6	.220
Age at Arrival	Yes = 1 No = 0	6.2 5.1	.551	4.9 6.7	.297
Years in US	Yes = 1 No = 0	17.7 19.3	.556	18.5 18.9	.868
Financially Independent (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	1 .818	.202	.917 .857	.683
Occupational Status Score	Yes=1 No=0	30.1 38.5	.498	29.6 44.5	.219
Time with DACA	Yes = 1 No = 0	15.9 16.0	.942	15.4 16.9	.381
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.889 .846	.774	.857 .875	.907

Importantly, while in the first returned to school analysis, financial independence was of borderline significance (p = .202), when I included individuals who have taken steps to return to school as well, this significance level dropped considerably (p = .683). Two other differences are worth noting. First, the second analysis provides some evidence that age may be negatively associated with educational re-entry. For example, the average age of a person who has not returned to school is 25.6 years old compared to 23.4 years old among those who have returned to school (p = .220). This finding is in line with prior research that has found age to be a negative predictor of educational re-entry (Felmlee 1988). Again, although there is not sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that age does not play a role in educational decision-making, it is possible that among a larger sample there may be a statistically significant relationship between age and educational re-entry.

The second salient difference is with regard to the occupational status score. Among individuals who have not yet made the decision to return to school, their average occupational status score is 44.5. Those who have made the decision to return have an occupational status score of 29.6—a difference of roughly 15 points (p = .219). Although there is not sufficient statistical significance to reject the null hypothesis, this is likely due to our small sample size. Consequently, this finding merits continued exploration in future research on the educational decision-making of individuals with DACA status.

CURRENTLY IN SCHOOL

While it is important to consider those who were out of school before DACA and made the decision to return, it is also important to examine the experiences of DACA recipients who are currently in college—irrespective of their previous enrollment. The

hypotheses behind the factors that explain if a person is currently in school largely mirror the hypotheses about returning to school. As in the exploration of educational re-entry, my central hypothesis is that *individuals who indicated increased financial independence will be more likely to be currently in school*. Given that individuals with DACA are still ineligible to receive federal financial aid, it is often up to them to finance their education. Consequently, increased financial independence may allow them to do so.

While I believe that increased financial independence after DACA helps to facilitate enrollment in higher education, this increased financial independence also could serve as a reason that an individual does not continue on with his/her education. One interviewee expressed to us that given DACA's "expiration date," she finds it more important to work instead of attending school in order to save up money in case she is unable to renew DACA. Accordingly, another hypothesis could be that *individuals with a higher occupational status score may be less likely to indicate they are currently in school*. As N-P-B scores represent a "general level of living" (Bohon 2005:254), it could be that those with a higher level of living wish to maintain that level instead of going back to school in light of the uncertainty of DACA's future.

Finally, consistent with the returned to school model, I will include a variable accounting for an individual's time with DACA to test the hypothesis that *individuals who have had DACA for a greater period of time are more likely to be currently in school.* In alignment to prior models, I will also account for the core set of demographic variables and sense of belonging.

Bivariate Analysis

Excluding those who are currently in high school (11 individuals), 58.1 percent of our sample is currently attending post-secondary school (*n*= 43). Educational interests vary, as our interviewees reported majors in sociology, political science, social work, engineering, computer science and criminal justice, among others. Table 2.3 presents the results of the bivariate analysis. The variable of interest was financial independence as I hypothesized increased financial independence would facilitate continuing or beginning to finance educational expenses. The bivariate analysis does not support this hypothesis, however, since a larger proportion of individuals not in school reported increased financial independence compared to those who are currently enrolled, 87.5 percent and 72.7 percent, respectively (p = .270). It could be that individuals who were in school before receiving DACA are less likely to have experienced increased financial independence due to their time constraints related to school.

Variables representing the other hypotheses—occupational status score and time with DACA—were both of borderline significance. DACA recipients not currently in school indicated a higher N-P-B score compared to those currently enrolled, 34.3 and 22.2, respectively (p = .125). This seems to support the hypothesis that individuals in jobs that represent a higher socioeconomic status may choose to forgo schooling or leave schooling after they have started. However, it is also likely, given the previously demonstrated relationship between occupational status score and education, that persons who have graduated have higher occupational status scores[28] and are less likely to be in school currently because they have completed an undergraduate degree. Further

[28] The average N-P-B score of college graduates in our sample is 50.9 compared to 22.4 for individuals with some college education (p = .004).

supporting this idea, of the seven college graduates in our sample, only one is currently in school.

Table 2.3: College Enrollment Difference-in-Means and Summary Statistics

		Difference in Means		***Summary Statistics***				
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	**# Obs**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Currently in School (Yes=1)				.581	43	.499	0	1
Gender (Male =1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.240 .389	.294	.302	43	.465	0	1
Age	Yes = 1 No = 0	22 24.8	**.018**	23.2	43	3.9	18	32
Age at Arrival	Yes = 1 No = 0	6.3 6.0	.853	6.2	43	4.1	.25	15
Years in US	Yes = 1 No = 0	15.7 18.7	**.059**	17.0	43	5.2	6	27
Financially Independent (Yes=1)	Yes=1 No=0	.727 .875	.270	.789	38	.413	0	1
Occupational Status Score	Yes=1 No=0	22.3 34.3	.125	27.4	40	24.3	0	92
Time with DACA	Yes = 1 No = 0	14.2 16.2	.112	15.1	40	4.0	3	20
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.680 .833	.256	.744	43	.441	0	1

Contrary to prior research (Kaushal 2008) and the hypothesis regarding the influence of time with DACA status, individuals who are currently enrolled in school have had DACA status for a shorter period of time (14.2 months) compared to those who are not enrolled (16.2 months) (p = .112).

I did find a significant bivariate relationship between two of the core demographic variables and college enrollment. Both age and years in the United States are negatively associated with current college enrollment. With regard to age, the average age of individuals currently in school was 22 years old, compared to almost 25 years old for those out of school (p = .018). Again, it could be that individuals who are older have already graduated—making it less likely for them to be enrolled during the time of our interviews. At the same time, older individuals may have additional familial responsibilities that hinder enrollment.

Given prior research has found that educational attainment is positively related to years in the United States (Landale, Oropesa and Llanes 1998), it may be surprising that those enrolled in school average 15.7 years in the United States compared to 18.7 years for those not in school (p = .059). Nevertheless, because length of time in the United States is a function of age, the same explanation could be possible. Those who are older, and thus potentially have spent more time in the United States, could have graduated already or have added familial responsibilities that influence college enrollment.

Multivariate Analysis

To see if the significant bivariate relationships hold when accounting for other variables, I conducted a multivariate analysis. Table 2.4 presents the correlation matrix used as a preliminary check for potential multicollinearity between the independent variables. As was noted previously, given years in the United States is calculated from age and age at arrival, they are highly correlated and will be analyzed in two separate models. Additionally, the variable of occupational status score (represented by OSS in Table 2.4) is also positively correlated with years in the United States.

Table 2.4: College Enrollment Correlation Matrix

	Gender	Age	Age at Arrival	Years in US	Financial Independence	OSS	Time with DACA	Sense of Belonging
Gender	1.00							
Age	-0.04	1.00						
Age at Arrival	0.02	0.15	1.0					
Years in US	-0.05	**0.63**	**-0.68**	1.0				
Financial Independence	-0.07	0.09	-0.03	0.09	1.0			
OSS	0.09	0.37	-0.22	**0.45**	0.37	1.0		
Time with DACA	0.22	0.12	-0.12	0.19	0.17	0.25	1.0	
Sense of Belonging	-0.08	0.05	-0.30	0.28	-0.02	-0.08	0.05	1.00

Table 2.5 presents the results of the multivariate analysis. Consistent with the first chapter on economic integration, Models 1 and 2 examine the relationship between demographic variables and the likelihood an individual is currently enrolled in school. Because age and years in the United States were both significant predictors of being currently in school in the first models, Models 3 and 4 look at the relationship between a sense of belonging and school enrollment while accounting for these temporal variables. Finally, Models 5 and 6 look at the relationship between the variable of interest (increased financial independence) and the other hypotheses (occupational status score

and time with DACA). Because age is correlated with occupational status score, I conducted separate analyses to prevent multicollinearity.

Table 2.5: College Enrollment Multivariate Analysis

	Model 1	*Model 2*	*Model 3*	*Model 4*	*Model 5*	*Model 6*
Gender (Male =1)	-.940 (.740)	-.846 .718	---	---	---	---
Age	**-.232** (.099)**	---	**-.205** (.094)**	---	**-.178* (.103)**	---
Age at Arrival	.051 (.084)	---	---	---	---	---
Years in US	---	**-.131* (.069)**	---	-.112 (.069)	---	---
Sense of Belonging (Yes=1)	---	---	-.818 (.794)	-.542 (.803)	---	---
Financial Independence (Yes=1)	---	---	---	---	-.563 (1.103)	-.045 (1.235)
Occupational Status Score	---	---	---	---	---	-.021 (.018)
Time with DACA	---	---	---	---	-.236 (.146)	-.213 (.141)
Constant	**5.723** (2.366)**	**2.841** (1.288)**	**5.707** (2.302)**	**2.681** (1.281)**	**8.579 (3.555)**	4.168 (2.686)
N	43	43	43	43	35	32

Standard errors in parentheses.
***significant at the .01 level. **significant at the .05 level. *significant at the .10 level.

While years in the United States was a significant negative predictor in Model 2, the relationship disappeared when I accounted for sense of belonging in Model 4. Age

was a significant negative predictor of current college enrollment in all models in which it was included (Models 1, 3 and 5). I did not find a statistically significant relationship between current enrollment and the variable of interest (financial independence) or the variables for the other hypotheses (occupational status scores and time with DACA).

As has been discussed, older individuals may be less likely to be currently in school for a variety of reasons. On one hand, older individuals may be more likely to have completed their degree and consequently are less likely to be in school. On the other hand, individuals who are older who have not yet completed their degree may have additional responsibilities that play a role in their decision to return to school. Such is the case of Daniela, a 31-year-old female in our sample, who plans to return to school to earn a teaching credential as soon as her young son is old enough to go to school.

Summary

The analyses presented above sought to explore the factors related to DACA recipients' decisions to return to school or current college enrollment. With regard to educational re-entry, I excluded individuals enrolled in school prior to receiving DACA—resulting in only 22 individuals remaining in the sample. Among these individuals, 40.9 percent returned to school after receiving DACA. There is some preliminary evidence to support the hypothesis that increased financial independence will increase the likelihood that an individual will have returned to school (p = .202). Likely due to the small sample size, however, I did not find any significant bivariate relationships among the independent variables and the dependent variable of returning to school.

I then combined individuals who returned to school with those who had taken concrete steps to return to school in the near future. Again, I did not find any statistically significant bivariate relationships between the independent variables and returning to school. However, the inclusion of this new group resulted in age and occupational status score increasing in significance (p = .220 and .219, respectively) and financial independence decreasing in significance.

I also found that age was a significant negative predictor of an individual's current enrollment in school.[29] It could be that older individuals are more likely to have completed their post-secondary schooling and as a result are less likely to be in school. At the same time, older individuals may have additional responsibilities that serve as a barrier for their continued education. Importantly, as a result of the limitations previously mentioned, these quantitative results are not generalizable to individuals with DACA more broadly. While these analyses help to illuminate preliminary educational trends among DACA recipients, additional quantitative research among a larger sample is necessary.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Although DACA does not provide any direct educational benefit, two education-related themes emerged from the qualitative interviews: DACA has helped its recipients to be able to afford college and it has increased their investment in their education. Despite these benefits, DACA recipients in this study still highlighted the limitations on their education and future as a result of the liminal legality of DACA, such as ineligibility for financial aid and uncertainty over the future of the program.

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[29] The related measure of years in the United States was inconsistently significant across models.

For individuals who were not in school before DACA and returned after receiving DACA status, many reported that work authorization gave them the resources needed to finance their college education. Carmen explained this indirect relationship when she recounted the most important reason for her decision to apply for DACA, "Because I really wanted to continue my education and to do that I knew I wanted to get a job and a lot of the jobs now actually require E-verify and things like that so that was my motivation." Carmen now works as an office manager at a church in addition to studying for her Master's of Divinity. She plans to continue her education and obtain a doctorate in clinical psychology. Despite her belief that she could reach these educational goals without DACA, the ability to secure employment because of her work authorization through DACA facilitates this process.

Soledad echoed Carmen's experience in her pursuit of a degree in business management. A 28-year-old wife and mother, Soledad had been out of the classroom for many years, waiting roughly ten years for the processing of a change-of-legal status petition filed through a relative. With the work permit she obtained through DACA, she has been able to finance her return to school. Like Carmen, Soledad explained that DACA has helped to speed up the process of working toward the goals and dreams she has always had. Alejandra, also a 28-year-old female, emphasized that DACA has allowed her not only to return to school but also to change her perspective on her future opportunities. She explained that employment allows her to finance an education—an education that without DACA she could not afford.

While slightly over a quarter of individuals mentioned the ability to get a job helped them finance their education, a similar percentage also mentioned the ability to get

financial aid. Nevertheless, respondents in our sample evidenced confusion over the connection between DACA and financial aid. A few individuals confounded DACA and the California Dream Act. Ana, a junior in high school, mentioned that the ability to receive in-state tuition was one of the principal reasons she applied for DACA. Rafael, a computer science student, when asked if DACA has changed the way he perceives his future opportunities, responded:

> Yes, because I feel like if I didn't have any financial help from my state grant I might not have been able to like keep going with school. I might of probably just dropped out and tried to do something, like under the table.

The state grant Rafael referred to is the Cal Grant for which individuals do not have to be recipients of DACA to receive—but rather they must meet the eligibility requirements for the California Dream Act.[30] Brisa, a psychology student, evidenced the same confusion when she mentioned that DACA helped her to be able to attend a four-year university because of the Cal Grant. When asked if she needed to have DACA to be eligible for the grant, she responded, "Kind of. It kind of all like snowballed all together."

Other individuals in our sample explained that with a Social Security number they were eligible for more scholarships. With regard to these scholarships—and not state grants or in-state tuition—it could be that the Social Security number through DACA is in fact increasing the number of scholarships for which these youth are eligible and thus increasing financial accessibility of higher education in that manner. At the same time,

[30] Requirements include: attended a high school in California for a minimum of three years, graduated from a high school in California (or the equivalent) and are/will be attending a California college or university. Individuals also must meet other Cal Grant eligibility criteria not related to legal status (California Student Aid Commission n.d.).

this could also be a point of confusion as the California Dream Act also allows certain undocumented youth to be eligible for private scholarships.[31]

Some interviewees, however, evidenced a clear understanding of the differences between the California Dream Act and DACA. For example, when asked if DACA met his educational expectations, Felipe, a current junior with plans to pursue a PhD., stated, “No, because DACA doesn’t do anything as far as education. What does do something is the California Dream Act which came before [DACA].” Future research is needed with regard to the outreach efforts of organizations and institutions in disseminating information about the myriad of higher education laws and policies in California. Increased outreach would likely help to clear up these misconceptions—just as informational sessions about applying for DACA helped to dispel the community’s fears about DACA.

In addition to helping to finance higher education, almost 20 percent of our interviewees indicated that work authorization positively influenced their investment in their education. Before receiving DACA and the work authorization it provides, undocumented individuals were ineligible for formal employment despite their educational attainment. Even those who had worked tirelessly to get through college were barred from employment in the formal economy because of their immigration status. This reality led individuals in our sample to drop out of higher education. For example, one interviewee, Elias, withdrew before he had completed his first year of higher education because of concerns regarding his future opportunities. Now with DACA status, he plans

[31] A comparison chart of the educational benefits that individuals with different immigration statuses may receive evidences no differences between a California DACA recipient and an undocumented individual who did not receive DACA in California (Educators for Fair Consideration 2014).

to return in the fall of 2014 to study social work. Maria, a 29-year-old who had completed two years of fashion design school before abandoning her studies, explained how the ability to work with DACA has changed her perceptions of pursuing higher education:

> I could major in something and actually feel like I would be able to get a job afterwards. That's why I stopped going to college, because I was like, 'Why am I going to finish this? I can't get a job.'

Coupled with the financial obstacles to attending school in the first place, the lack of future employment prospects drove individuals like Elias and Maria not to continue their education.

Even those who did not withdraw from school expressed how work authorization through DACA has increased their educational motivation and focus on school. Rafael, the computer science major mentioned previously, explained his feelings regarding his education before and after DACA:

> My attitude towards getting my education before [DACA] was that 'Oh, without immigration reform I'm not gonna be able to do anything with my life.' With DACA I guess my attitude has changed. I wasn't too thrilled to go to college [before DACA].

David expressed a similar sentiment, describing his attitude toward school knowing that he would be unable to find employment after graduation. He explained he felt like he was just going to school "to have something to do." Since receiving DACA, however, he will have completed his undergraduate degree in sociology and has plans to enroll this fall in a master's program in applied sociology.

The prospect of future employment also positively influenced those pursuing higher education for the first time. Carla, an 18-year-old female who has been in the United States since she was three years old, is a first year student at a local four-year

university. Before DACA, however, she thought she would have to move away from her family and return to Mexico to be able to accomplish her educational goals:

> [DACA's] made it easier for me to get into college. Hopefully if it continues, I'll be able to accomplish my goals and be able to work after I graduate so yes, it has really impacted the way I see myself in the future. Before DACA, I was kind of like, 'Oh, I kind of want to go back to Mexico just so I can study there and actually work there.' Because I was like, 'Okay, what if I go to college and graduate, I'm not even going to be able to work?' But I got DACA, I can work and that's motivating me to continue here and study here …. If DACA continues, I'll be able to work, which is the ultimate goal.

Carla stressed that without DACA status and the employment authorization it provides, graduating from college would be "useless."

Sal, an 18-year-old senior in high school with plans for studies in the medical field, noted that DACA led him to believe that he actually could meet his educational goals. Sal emphasized that when he was younger he did not realize the limitations to his future because of his immigration status, but as he grew up he realized the lack of work authorization would be an insurmountable obstacle, even with a college degree. He explained that this realization, "kinda brought me down. Now that I have DACA that's motivating me to like do good in school and actually get a good job." Like Carla and Sal, many individuals in our sample reported feeling depressed or worried about their future educational options as a result of being barred from employment. Nevertheless, the work authorization provided through DACA has helped to ease these concerns, increasing the motivation and investment of DACAmented youth in their education, whether they were already in college, out of college or prospective college students at the time they received DACA status.

Despite employment authorization through DACA, financing higher education is still difficult. DACAmented youth remain ineligible for federal financial aid. Nina, a third year student at a local four-year university, pointed out that while education is now more financially accessible, it is still not affordable for her. Soledad, mentioned above, was unable to qualify for the California Dream Act because she did not meet the requirement of attending a California high school for three years. As a result, she pays non-resident tuition at a local community college—almost $900 for one class, the equivalent of one month's rent for her family. To deal with this financial burden, Soledad only takes one class a semester.

Another reported strategy to confront these high costs was to alternate between full-time work and going to school. For example, Elia, who eventually stopped attending a local community college due to the cost, would work as much as she could for a full semester and would save up the money to be able to take a few classes the next semester. However, this educational stopping and starting became too much and she decided to leave her program. Nevertheless, she plans to enroll at a different community college in the fall of 2014. To Tomás, a 19-year-old business major, his ineligibility for more financial aid is an indicator of his continued difference from others around him. He mentioned that his expectations for education after receiving DACA were not completely met because compared to what peers with full legal status are receiving, he receives a minimal amount of financial aid.

A further indicator of the continued financial inaccessibility of higher education among many DACAmented youths is the fact that more DACA recipients whom we interviewed have enrolled in a community college rather than a four-year university.

Seven of the nine interviewees who have returned to school since receiving DACA have gone to a local community college, and four of the five individuals with plans to return are planning to enroll (or have enrolled) in a community college. Prior research on educational attainment of undocumented youth has found that even with supportive policies like AB540, "attendance at a four-year college is rarely an option" due to the high cost of tuition (Abrego 2008:719; Abrego 2006; Abrego and Gonzales 2010). Our interviews also suggest that financial considerations not only play a large role in going to school or returning to school but also in where one enrolls.

While increased financial resources helped to facilitate many individuals' educational attainment, because DACA is a temporary program, some chose to focus on building their savings instead. Luz, a 29-year-old female, who graduated with a B.A. in business management from a local four-year university, mentioned that she would eventually like to return to school to further herself and her education. At the moment, however, due to the cost of education *and* the temporary nature of DACA, she explained that she wants to focus on working full-time and saving as much money as she can. When asked if there were any barriers that she continues to face, Luz replied:

> One of the barriers would be like planning for my future….The whole purpose [of DACA] is so you can go to school and all that too, but at the same time because you have an expiration date, you want to be able to save up as much money as you can now.

Bernardo, a 21-year-old business owner and high school graduate, also pointed to his focus on work as the reason he has not continued his education despite his desire to do so. Since receiving DACA status, he has started a landscaping company to which he devotes his time.

Work considerations were not the only factor DACA recipients had to weigh when making their decision to return to school. Some interviewees reported familial constraints that led them not to pursue additional education at this point in time. Pedro, a 23-year-old male, explained that the reason he applied to DACA initially was because he wanted to continue his education. The school he wished to attend did not accept individuals without Social Security numbers and directed him to a local community college that did not have the major he wanted. Accordingly, Pedro saw DACA as the opportunity for which he had been waiting. Nevertheless, since receiving DACA he feels that he cannot return to school because he needs to focus on work in order to provide for his sister and parents. He noted that although his expectations for education have not yet been met, he believes they will be in the future.

The temporariness of DACA also prompted a few individuals in our sample to cite continued concerns about being able to complete their studies. For example, Isela, the 23-year-old college graduate who had just taken the MCAT, reported that DACA has changed her belief that she will be able to attend medical school. Nevertheless, when she thinks about her future, she still expressed some concerns:

> It's still a little burdensome just because it [must be renewed] every two years. Maybe I'll be halfway through medical school when there are no more renewals. There's still that stress…. it becomes a 'live by the moment' kind of life.

It is precisely in the context of planning for higher education that the idea of an expiration date becomes salient.

For Belén, who received DACA only three months before our interview, her expiration date is already on her mind. Although she has the goal of continuing her education to get a bachelor's degree in social work, she indicated that she is only 50

percent confident that she can achieve this goal. When asked to explain the reasoning behind this percentage, she emphasized her uncertainty over what would happen in two years. Kaushal (2008:774) highlighted that "the decision to invest in human capital (for example, college education) depends on net returns from such investments." Although we encountered this perspective among only a few of our interviewees, it is possible that uncertainty over the returns to their investment in higher education because of their temporary status will dissuade more individuals with DACA status from seeking or continuing higher education.

Summary

Three important themes emerged from the qualitative analysis regarding DACA and education. First, our interviewees expressed that DACA has provided them with increased resources to finance higher education. Many individuals indicated they were now able to work, which has provided them with the additional funds needed to overcome the financial barriers to higher education. At the same time, some interviewees had chosen to focus on working rather than on returning to school (or going to school in the first place) in order to fully take advantage of their employment authorization and save for their future. Many individuals in our sample also believed they are now eligible for more financial aid with DACA. This confusion surrounding the specific benefits that DACA recipients could receive for educational advancement was a major theme of our interviews—highlighting the need for more community outreach in this area.

In addition to increased financial resources that DACA recipients could use to finance their education, DACA also influenced our respondents' willingness to invest more of their income and energy in educational advancement. Before DACA, even if an

individual graduated from college, they were barred from "legal" employment. These circumstances negatively affected those in school and those who planned to attend. However, with the ability to work in one's field of interest after graduation, many respondents reported increased investment, motivation and focus on their education.

The last theme that surfaced in our qualitative interviews was the persisting difficulty that DACAmented youth faced with regard to financial aid. Because they remain ineligible for federal financial aid, many individuals in our sample indicated that a four-year university was not a realistic option for them. Furthermore, their ineligibility for federal aid further distinguishes them from their fully documented peers—making them aware that despite the benefits of DACA, the playing field is still unequal. Another educational limitation for DACA recipients is the difficulty of planning for their future given the uncertainty surrounding the DACA renewal process and the continuance of the program itself, which has been under constant partisan attack since it was first unveiled by the Obama administration.

Chapter 3:
Sense of Belonging

[DACA] makes me [fit in] more….Like, all my friends got a driver's license. I can get a driver's license too. I could get a job with no problem.
-Cristian, a 19-year-old high school graduate,
on the biggest change to his life since receiving DACA

Examining the political incorporation of immigrants, Bloemraad (2013) explained that public policies offer material and symbolic resources which influence an immigrant's political integration. She noted that "…by targeting some groups over others, governments generate symbolic resources and create normative boundaries around the type of people we help—the insiders—and those outside the community of care" (Bloemraad 2013:196). Being considered an "insider" helps to communicate a sense of belonging and membership. By extension, one could postulate that DACA communicates to eligible individuals an enhanced sense of belonging in the United States.

Nevertheless, in her analysis of the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act (S.744), Enchautegui (2013) posited that a temporary status is detrimental to one's sense of belonging. With both of these assertions in mind one must ask: *Does DACA, an example of a temporary status, have an influence on one's level of belonging?* While the previous sections have examined the factors that influence the economic and educational changes in one's life since receiving DACA status, in the following section I aim to identify the factors that affect DACA recipients' sense of belonging using quantitative analysis. I then utilize qualitative analysis to further reveal the influence of DACA status on a person's feeling of belonging in the United States.

BELONGING

The guiding question for this exploration of belonging is: *What factors predict an increased sense of belonging among DACA recipients?* Cristian's words at the beginning of this section illustrate a common theme among interviewees indicating an increased sense of belonging since receiving DACA status; they are able to do more day-to-day things from which they were previously barred. Abrego and Gonzales (2010:145) found that for undocumented youth "routine tasks and social events, such as buying cell phones, establishing credit, applying for library or movie rental cards, and even going to R-rated movies or bars, become extremely complicated." Similarly, Mendoza (2013:437) emphasized the importance of these daily activities in forging one's sense of belonging in the host country, explaining that in contrast to the emotional ties of an immigrant to their home country, one's sense of belonging in the host country is instrumental rather than emotional. Accordingly, from getting a driver's license to obtaining a credit card for the first time, the benefits individuals receive through DACA allow them to feel more at ease.

For Cristian, the ability to do these day-to-day activities allow him to feel like he fits in. For example, because he has been able to get a driver's license like his friends, he noted a feeling of normalcy has been the biggest change to his life since receiving DACA status. Thus, my main hypothesis is that *individuals who have experienced more changes in their daily life since receiving DACA are more likely to indicate an increased sense of belonging*. Through getting a driver's license, opening a bank account or obtaining a credit card, the differences between individuals with DACA and their peers are reduced, prompting them to feel an increased sense of belonging. At the same time, it is important

to consider other hypotheses from prior research on belonging, such as the effects of employment and age at arrival.

An individual's employment is an integral component of his/her identity. The Social Issues Research Centre (2007:40) aptly noted that "These days, the question 'Where do you work?' has in many ways become shorthand for 'Who are you?'" Research on immigrants' sense of belonging also has noted the importance of an individual's employment. Roberman (2013) highlighted that for Jewish immigrants in Germany, work is an important factor in the construction of their identities and sense of belonging. Although there are key differences between the population in Roberman's (2013) study and undocumented youth living in the United States (namely, legal status), each group suffers from unequal opportunity in the labor market. While Jewish immigrants in Germany have work authorization, Roberman (2013:16) described their marginalization:

> Constrained and disadvantaged in terms of equal access to normative job positions, the immigrants are pushed into acting within the blurred zones of the new realities of work and its emerging forms: self-employment, part-time and temporary work, volunteering and community service.

Similarly, before receiving DACA status, individuals within this study were forced into nonstandard employment because they lacked work authorization. Roberman (2013:16) argued that nonstandard work causes an "ongoing unsettledness" which "impedes the development of an immigrant's sense of belonging in the host state and society." Consistent with Roberman's finding, a second hypothesis is that *individuals who have received their first job or moved jobs since receiving DACA will be more likely to report they have experienced an increase in their sense of belonging*. It could be that individuals

with DACA feel like they are now able to contribute more to the United States, given their work authorization.

Age at arrival also has been found to explain differences in immigrants' sense of belonging. In examining the claims-making activities of undocumented individuals, Abrego (2008) found a marked difference between the sense of belonging of first generation immigrants and those belonging to the 1.5 generation.[32] Although all individuals in this study are considered part of the 1.5 generation, the variation in their ages at migration also could lead to differences in their sense of belonging because of prior experiences in Mexico. As mentioned previously, Mendoza (2013) argued that first generation immigrants experience emotional ties to their homeland as a result of time spent there before migrating. For an individual who came to the United States at a very young age, it is likely that the same emotional connection to the homeland is not present. Thus, a third hypothesis emerges: *Individuals who arrived in the United States at a younger age will be more likely to indicate an increased sense of belonging after receiving DACA*. At the same time, it could be that individuals who arrived at a very young age are more likely to have already felt like they belonged in the United States and therefore will not indicate any increase in their sense of belonging.

Bivariate Analysis

Among our sample of 54 DACA recipients, almost a quarter of individuals said they felt like they fully belonged before DACA. On average, individuals reporting prior belonging immigrated around the age of five and had spent almost 17 years of their lives in the United States. Almost 80 percent indicated at least some level of higher education

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[32] The 1.5 generation refers to those who immigrated in their youth.

and 23 percent were college graduates. To determine the factors behind an increased sense of belonging among DACA recipients, I excluded these individuals from our sample. Of those remaining, a majority (60 percent) indicated an increased sense of belonging from their baseline level before DACA. Table 3.1 reports the difference-in-means by increased sense of belonging and the summary statistics for the sample.

To measure sense of belonging, we asked individuals in our sample, “Some individuals say that since receiving DACA they feel like they belong more in the United States. Others say their feeling of belonging hasn’t changed. How do you feel? Why?” The variable of interest, changes in daily life, was measured by what I call a “day-to-day index,” comprised of an individual’s response on three items—if the individual had (1) gotten a driver’s license or state identification card, (2) opened a bank account and (3) obtained a credit card. Although I hypothesized that more changes in one’s daily life would be positively associated with an increased sense of belonging, the average score on the day-to-day index was 1.833 among those who reported an increased sense of belonging since receiving DACA compared to 1.625 among those who did not. Accordingly, there is no significant bivariate relationship between changes in one’s daily life and an increased sense of belonging after DACA among individuals in our sample ($p = .480$).

To test the hypotheses that employment and age at arrival are key factors in predicting an increased feeling of belonging, I also examined the bivariate relationship between these variables and one’s sense of belonging. Among individuals who felt an increased sense of belonging, 62.5 percent indicated a change in employment since receiving DACA, while 75 percent of individuals who did not report an increased sense

of belonging had secured new employment. Again, there is no significant bivariate relationship between change in employment and increased feelings of belonging (p = .408). I also found no statistically significant support for the hypothesis that those who arrived in the United States at an earlier age were more likely to indicate increased sense of belonging.

Table 3.1: Belonging Difference-in-Means and Summary Statistics

		Difference in Means		***Summary Statistics***				
		Mean	***p*-value**	**Mean**	**# Obs**	**Std. Dev.**	**Min**	**Max**
Sense of Belonging (Increase=1)				.6	40	.496	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.333 .313	.890	.341	41	.480	0	1
Age	Yes = 1 No = 0	22.9 21.3	.258	22.1	41	4.4	16	32
Age at Arrival	Yes = 1 No = 0	5.4 7.2	.203	6.1	41	4.1	1	15
Years in US	Yes = 1 No = 0	17.4 14.1	**.038**	16	41	5	6	27
Educational Level	Yes = 1 No = 0	1.583 1.438	.661	1.487	41	1.028	0	4
Day-to-Day Index (0-3)	Yes = 1 No = 0	1.833 1.625	.480	1.731	41	.895	0	3
First Job/ Moved Jobs (Yes=1)	Yes = 1 No = 0	.625 .75	.408	.659	41	.480	0	1

Nevertheless, the bivariate analysis hints that age at arrival may play a role at predicting increased belonging among a larger sample size. The average age at arrival for those

reporting an increase in belonging is 5.4 years compared to 7.2 who indicated no change in their feelings of belonging (p = .203).

In addition to our variable of interest and variables of theoretical importance, I also examined the core set of demographic variables utilized in prior models.[33] When examining the bivariate relationships between these variables and a reported increase in belonging, a significant pattern emerges in terms of years spent in the United States. Those who indicated an increased sense of belonging after receiving DACA have spent on average 17.4 years in the United States—approximately three years greater than individuals who indicated no increase in belonging (p = .038).

This finding provides evidence of a temporal dimension to belonging. In a departure from prior research, this finding suggests that it may not necessarily be the age at which one arrives in the United States that influences belonging but rather continued life experience in the United States that plays a role. Because there is not a comparison group of individuals without DACA in this study, it could be that an increase in belonging is solely a function of more years in the United States and is not related to receiving DACA. However, among those who indicated prior belonging, there was not a significant relationship between years in the United States and already reporting a sense of belonging (p = .630). Continued research beyond the scope of this study is needed to further tease out the exact relationship between years in the United States, receiving DACA and an increase in one's sense of belonging.

[33] In prior models, I utilized age at arrival as one of these core demographic variables, but for this analysis it served as one of the variables representing a hypothesis.

Multivariate Analysis

Although there was no significant bivariate relationship between the variable of interest, changes in daily life, and an increased sense of belonging, I conducted a multivariate analysis to determine if a relationship exists when controlling for other factors. Table 3.2 presents the correlation matrix between the independent variables used.

Table 3.2: Belonging Correlation Matrix

	Gender	Age	Age at Arrival	Years in US	Ed. Level	Day-to-Day Index	First Job/ Moved Jobs
Gender	1.00						
Age	-0.09	1.00					
Age at Arrival	0.07	0.31	1.00				
Years in US	-0.14	**0.63**	**-0.55**	1.00			
Ed. Level	-0.24	**0.41**	0.22	0.18	1.00		
Day-to-Day Index	-0.07	0.27	-0.08	0.30	0.04	1.00	
First Job/ Moved Jobs	-.13	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.40	0.31	1.00

Given that years in the United States is a function of age and age at arrival, they need to be analyzed in separate models to prevent multicollinearity. The same is true for educational level and age.

Table 3.3 presents the results of the multivariate analysis. Models 1 and 2 examine the relationship between demographic variables and an increase in one's sense of belonging. Models 3 and 4 account for the variable of interest (day-to-day changes) and the second hypothesis (change in employment), while also controlling for statistically significant variables from the demographic analysis (Models 1 and 2).

Table 3.3: Belonging Multivariate Analysis

	Model 1	***Model 2***	***Model 3***	***Model 4***
Gender (Male=1)	.309 (.742)	.331 (.754)	---	---
Age	.156 (.095)	---	---	---
Age at Arrival	**-.164* (.094)**	---	-.097 (.082)	---
Years in US	---	**.158** (.081)**	---	**.150* (.082)**
Education Level	---	.054 (.342)	---	**---**
Day-to-Day Index	---	---	.368 (.410)	.210 (.432)
First Job/Moved Jobs (Yes=1)	---	---	-.802 (.782)	-.789 (.816)
Constant	-2.078 (1.932)	**-2.261* (1.375)**	.929 (.977)	-1.762 (1.375)
N	40	40	40	40

Standard errors in parentheses.
*** significant at the .01 level. ** significant at the .05 level. * significant at the .10 level.

Although there was no significant bivariate relationship between age at arrival and an increased sense of belonging, when I account for gender and age, age at arrival is significantly related to an increased sense of belonging in Model 1. This finding seems to offer preliminary support for the hypothesis that individuals arriving in the United States at a younger age are more likely to indicate an increased sense of belonging. However, this negative relationship disappears in Model 3 ($p = .238$). As was previously mentioned, it could be that a relationship does exist but the small sample size is influencing the statistical power of the model to detect the relationship. As foreshadowed in the bivariate analysis, years in the United States was positively related to an increased sense of belonging in Models 2 and 4.[34] Length of time in the United States is the only consistently significant predictor of an increased sense of belonging. This provides additional support for a temporal dimension to an individual's sense of belonging.

Summary

Just as individuals have experienced different educational and economic outcomes after receiving DACA, they experience varying levels of belonging as well. Roughly a quarter of individuals in our sample indicated they already felt a complete sense of belonging before DACA. In contrast to Enchautegui's (2013) hypothesis that a temporary status will have negative effects on one's sense of belonging, a majority of individuals (60 percent)[35] indicated that since receiving DACA they have experienced an increase in their level of belonging.

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[34]A series of likelihood ratio tests confirms that in Model 4 the model is only statistically different when years in the United States is removed ($p = .048$).

[35] Individuals already expressing feelings of complete belonging were excluded from the sample. Only 45 percent of the total sample indicated an increased feeling of belonging.

Utilizing quantitative analysis, I tested the hypothesis derived from the qualitative interviews that changes in one's daily life (i.e., getting a driver's license, opening a bank account and obtaining a credit card) would be positively associated with an increased sense of belonging. However, I found no significant bivariate or multivariate relationship between changes in daily life and an increased sense of belonging. In fact, the only positive predictor of increased belonging I found was years in the United States. As has been mentioned, this finding should not be viewed as generalizable to all DACA recipients given the size limitations of the sample and the sampling strategy. Nevertheless, the methods utilized here provide preliminary insight into factors that may be associated with greater feelings of belonging among a larger population. Additional research in this area is needed to further determine the influence of years in the United and other factors on one's level of belonging.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In terms of belonging, individuals fit into three broad categories: those who indicated an increased sense of belonging since receiving DACA, those who reported they felt like they belonged fully in the United States prior to receiving DACA, and those who indicated no change and continued constraints on their belonging. Among those reporting an increase in their sense of belonging, two themes emerged: diminished fear and a sense of normalcy in comparison to their documented peers.

Given that those living without documentation are faced with the threat of deportation, it is not surprising that all individuals in our sample reported that DACA had minimized their fear—with the exception of a handful of persons who felt no fear before or after receiving DACA. Many interviewees recounted the fear they felt before receiving

DACA. César, who has lived in the United States for 27 years, described this constant fear:

> I felt like somebody had a gun to my head all the time. Any little thing, it was that fear. I remember when I was driving, I had to take my sister to work and I remember coming home and my hands would be shaking. That fear was just constant. Something could happen and *snap*. Everything you know, your family, everything is gone.

Since receiving DACA, he explained, his level of fear has dissipated. He recounted how he even waves to law enforcement officers now—a drastic shift from his feelings before DACA. Some respondents, like Carla, indicated their decreased fear has allowed them to open up more to others, which has facilitated feelings of belonging. Carla recalled how her parents always reminded her not to reveal her immigration status for fear of deportation. Now, with DACA, she feels a sense of security and does not feel like she has to hide her immigration status.

In addition to providing a sense of security, individuals indicating an increased sense of belonging emphasized the changes in their daily life because of receiving DACA, such as: obtaining a driver's license and a Social Security number. For many, a driver's license not only provided them with a sense of security while driving but also a sense of freedom derived from the ability to travel. Eva explained that although she felt like she belonged before DACA, this feeling increased after DACA because she could explore more of the United States, "…I couldn't really go out anywhere. San Diego was like, you know, *just* my home. And, now, I feel like everything, all over is my home." Bernardo echoed this sentiment describing the freedom he felt in being able to travel to Chicago to visit family that he had not seen in a long time: "…I felt more free because I was able to get out of just San Diego and California (laughs)…. It was a nice experience.

It kind of made me feel good, feel better, feel like… I can fit anywhere." As a result, a driver's license does not solely provide a sense of security; it also provides DACA recipients a certain degree of freedom that they did not experience before. This freedom to travel allows them to feel differently about the world around them and their place in it.

Like Bernardo, many of our respondents indicating an increased sense of belonging emphasized that they fit in more with their peers since receiving DACA. For most of their lives, individuals with DACA watched those with whom they have grown up have more rights and the ability to do more things. Abrego and Gonzales (2010:147) noted that because undocumented youth have been socialized with their documented peers, when they begin to see that others are able to do certain tasks (e.g., go to college or find meaningful employment) from which they are restricted, they experience disillusionment. In a review of social comparison in school, Dijkstra et al. (2008:865) found that social comparison within a classroom can be a "two-edged sword: Although upward comparison may lead students to do better, it makes them feel and think worse about themselves." For undocumented youth, while comparison to their documented peers may initially prompt them to "do better," the structural limitations of their immigration status effectively bar them from upward mobility.

As a result, undocumented youth do not experience the benefits of social comparison in the same way—rather the negative feelings are magnified. Because of DACA, however, individuals in our sample are now able to take part in some activities that for so long they have watched others complete. Seemingly ordinary activities of having an identification to show at a bar or filling out one's taxes positively influenced

individuals' feeling of belonging in the United States. Despite always feeling that she belonged, Maria explained how DACA increased this sense:

> It wasn't until, you know, you're 16 and you wanna get a driver's license and you realize you can't. When I got DACA though, it was really a dream come true…. I was able to get a driver's license….I got excited to pay taxes! I got excited to do everything that I had seen everybody else do and I couldn't.

Like Maria, many individuals referenced being able to participate in life events like residents or citizens as a positive component of their experience with DACA—one that allowed them to feel more a part of the United States.

For individuals who already felt like they belonged, many pointed to being raised in the United States and having little to no recollection of their country of origin. Although Sara came to the United States when she was six years old, she still has memories of Mexico. Nevertheless, she explained that if she were to go to Mexico today she would be entirely lost. Accordingly, Carolina, who came to the United States when she was three years old, describes San Diego as the only home she has ever known. This sense of the United States as home seemed to be strengthened among those who reported a lack of social ties to Mexico. This is to be expected as literature on transnationalism has described the "tendency of immigrants to maintain long-term ties and contacts with friends and family members in their origin communities whether through visits, phone conversations, homeland politics, economic activities, or remittances" (Mouw et al. 2014:331). It follows, however, if there are no contacts to maintain, the individual will feel less "transnational" and subsequently less connected to his/her country of origin.

Further support for the argument that length of time in the United States plays an important role in one's sense of belonging comes from those who indicated no increase in

feelings of belonging. For example, Marisol first came to the United States when she was two years old. However, at the age of 13, her parents decided to return to Mexico. After only spending a short time there, the family made the decision to return to the United States for economic reasons when Marisol was 15. She cited that experience, and her parents' continued ties to the country, as the reason she feels she does not belong:

> For me, [living in Mexico for two years] was like a really good experience because I got to learn a lot from my culture. So, I feel like very connected. Yeah, I'm aware I'm here but my identity is Mexican a hundred percent.

For Marisol, her time spent in Mexico as a young teenager allowed her to learn about her culture and develop a connection to it that individuals immigrating at much younger ages may not experience.

Irene, who came to the United States at the age of 12, also pointed to living in Mexico until she was older as part of the reason that she continues to feel a lack of belonging, "…as we were older, it's always like that sense of belonging doesn't feel like it's here or there." Irene explained that although she resides in California, it does not feel like home. At the same time, however, Mexico does not feel like home either because the country has changed since she has been gone. Boehm (2012) documented these feelings of "from neither here nor there" among transnational Mexican immigrants as well. Boehm's (2012) work emphasized the control the nation-state possesses over immigrants through its immigration policy. As evidenced by the feelings of belonging among individuals in our sample, DACA also serves as a means to control individuals and has profound influence on feelings of belonging.

Other individuals indicated that their sense of belonging is not connected to what DACA has offered them—whether it is a driver's license or employment authorization.

For example, Brisa stated that her sense of belonging has not changed and the only thing that has is her ability to get her driver's license. Similarly, Andrea explained her employment status does not determine her belonging. At the same time, individuals' perceptions of what DACA has not offered them have influenced their level of belonging. The limits of DACA further reinforced to some individuals in our sample that they do not belong in the United States. For example, Jaime listed the things he still cannot do despite his DACA status, such as: applying to certain jobs, joining the military, voting or going abroad—something his friends are doing.

Just as before, individuals with DACA continue to make comparisons between themselves and those around them, which continue to incite negative feelings. Accordingly, although Jaime stated he feels more secure, he does not feel complete. Beatriz also brought up the limitations of DACA, "I feel the same [level of belonging] 'cause I mean either way it's not like we can go out of the country and come back; it's just within here. It's good, but it still means that we aren't from here…" In other words, as Jaime and Beatriz highlighted, the constraints placed on individuals continue to highlight the differences between those with DACA and those who fully belong.

It is also important to consider the vulnerability that DACA recipients continue to experience when it comes to their families. Boehm (2012) highlighted that although U.S. immigration policy is purported to promote family reunification, it actually plays a role in creating mixed-status families through its focus on the individual. DACA is no exception. Although DACA recipients experience a two-year reprieve from the threat of deportation and some rights (i.e., employment authorization), they are part of a larger social network

that includes undocumented family members and friends.[36] As a result, although personal fear has decreased, fear regarding the security of family members has not. When asked if there are any barriers he continues to face, Felipe noted he does not have family stability "because my parents don't have DACA, you know, they can be deported at any time. Our families could be deported; our communities could be deported."

At the same time, individuals with DACA are in a vulnerable position because the program is an executive order—not a law—under constant threat of termination as a political maneuver.[37] Drawing on the work on liminal legality, Enchautegui (2013:5) highlighted the obstacles to integration that registered provisional immigrants would face under S. 744, arguing that a temporary status in lieu of legal permanent residency results in a life fraught with uncertainty and anxiety—with subsequent, harmful consequences on feelings of belonging. Marisol highlighted this uncertainty when asked about changes in her sense of belonging after receiving DACA:

> I feel that I still don't belong to the United States because if I belong to the United States then, you know, DACA would not be [something] that would have been issued. So obviously it's still creating a differential thing. Why can't they just give us full residency or citizenship? We've been here like all of our lives. So, I definitely don't feel that I belong here. Who assures me that, in two years, they're still gonna extend the date or whatever?

While Marisol expressed the liminal nature of DACA has caused her feelings of belonging to remain the same, some individuals who noted an increase still felt the weight of their liminally legal status. For example, even though Tomás expressed

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[36] Roughly eight of ten respondents indicated that someone in their family could benefit from the expansion of DACA to include those who were not originally eligible. Of those who indicated someone in their family could benefit, 84.8 percent indicated that one or both of their parents were undocumented along with 23.9 percent indicating that at least one sibling remains undocumented.

[37] Despite Obama's promise of a presidential veto, the precariousness of DACA recipients' situation is highlighted by a recent vote on August 1, 2014, in which House Republicans voted in support of ending DACA (216-192).

increased feelings of belonging, he struggled with describing his position, “Well, it’s kind of like in-between because like now I’m like not undocumented so I’m not illegally here, but I still feel kind of out of the loop.” He directly credited this feeling to not being a permanent resident or citizen. Like Marisol and Tomás, almost half of the individuals in our sample referenced the liminality of DACA at some point throughout the interviews, highlighting how the constraints and limits of DACA enter centrally into their lived experience.

Summary

Qualitative analysis enables a more detailed exploration of the three broad categories of individuals in our sample: those who indicated an increased sense of belonging since receiving DACA, those who reported they had already felt like they belonged fully in the United States prior to receiving DACA status and those who indicated no change in their level of belonging. Among those indicating enhanced belonging, having less fear and a sense of normalcy in comparison to their documented peers were salient. After years of watching their peers get drivers’ licenses or utilize a Social Security number to secure meaningful employment, DACAmented individuals are now able to take part in these important life events, leading them to have an enhanced sense of belonging.

Those who reported they had a sense of belonging before DACA often emphasized being raised in the United States and having little connection to Mexico. In contrast, those who did not experience an increase in perceived belonging highlighted their continued connection to Mexico—whether it is supported by family or through their own memories. Individuals who highlighted this bond to Mexico tend to have been older

when they arrived in the United States. Moreover, among those experiencing no increase in their sense of belonging, interviewees emphasized the practical and temporal limits of DACA. Even among those with a stronger sense of belonging, the liminal legality of DACA continues to have negative effects. Much like how DACA's limitations shape a recipient's economic and educational situation, the legal ambiguity of DACA status is an important factor in how these young people perceive the world and their position in it.

Conclusion

This study has sought to explore the lived experiences of a sample of DACA recipients in San Diego County in terms of economic integration, education and sense of belonging. Because there is not a monolithic experience for DACA recipients, this study specifically focused on the factors that help to explain differences in this lived experience. Given that DACA does not confer the full rights of membership in the United States, individuals with DACA live in a space that is in-between inclusion and exclusion—what scholars have referred to as a "separate class" (Menjívar & Kanstroom 2014:11). With that in mind, this study also explored the challenges and obstacles that stem from this liminal position. Importantly, because of methodological limitations, the results of this study should not be viewed as generalizable to the broader population of individuals with DACA status. Nevertheless, these results offer insight into the experiences of the program's recipients and help to shine light on possible areas for continued research.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Economic Integration

DACA recipients in our sample generally experienced increased economic integration. In terms of financial independence, 78.9 percent of our sample indicated they have earned more which has allowed them to become more financially independent. [38] My analysis indicates that individuals who have gotten their first job or moved jobs since receiving DACA were more likely to indicate increased financial independence than

[38] For measures of economic integration, our sample refers to the number of individuals who were not currently in high school (*n*= 43). 69.4 percent of the total sample (*n*= 54) reported an increase in financial independence.

those who did not. Not all interviewees, however, experienced an increase in wages after moving into the formal sector. This is particularly concerning as prior research has found that economic circumstances after legalization play a role in one's decision to renew his/her status (OECD Secretariat 2000). Future research on DACA renewal is needed to explore the factors related to a DACA recipient's decision to renew.

In terms of occupational mobility, 70.3 percent of our sample reported upward occupational mobility as measured by their N-P-B occupational status score before and after receiving DACA. The average change in N-P-B scores among our interviewees was 18 points (on a scale of 1 to 100). My analysis finds that individuals who did not work before DACA experienced greater gains in terms of their occupational status scores compared to those who had worked before DACA. However, those with prior work experience maintained a higher average score compared to those who had not worked before DACA. Consistent with human capital theory, my findings also indicate that educational attainment is positively related to the amount of change in occupational status score.

For many individuals in our sample, securing employment after receiving DACA did not come easy. Those who decided not to seek a different job after receiving work authorization pointed to the necessity of maintaining a flexible schedule because of school or familial commitments. Many of those who did seek a change in employment reported waiting several months before finding a job. Some pointed to a lack of work experience as the reason behind this difficulty. Before DACA, individuals in our sample were barred from working legally as a result of their undocumented status. In many cases they also were shut out of internship opportunities that could have allowed them to gain

the skills and experience for future employment. As a result, when entering the job market, some felt they were not set up for success in finding employment. Others felt the temporary nature of their status served as an additional obstacle to securing a job and thinking about their future with regard to employment. At the same time, DACA recipients are still not eligible to apply for and obtain all types of occupational and internship opportunities (e.g., working for the federal government). As a result, those who desire to work in these fields are barred from realizing their occupational goals.

Education

After excluding individuals who had been in school prior to DACA, 40.9 percent of our sample had returned to school after receiving DACA (n = 22).[39] Although I did not find any significant bivariate relationships between the independent variables and returning to school (likely due to the small sample size), preliminary evidence suggests that increased financial independence, age and occupational status score may play a role in educational re-entry. I also examined the likelihood that a DACA recipient was enrolled in post-secondary education at the time of the interview. 58.1 percent of our interviewees were current students.[40] The results of my analysis indicate that age is the only statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of post-secondary enrollment. Older individuals were less likely to be enrolled than those who were younger. It is possible that those who are older are more likely to have completed their post-secondary schooling and as a result are less likely to be in school. Additionally, older individuals may have additional responsibilities that serve as a barrier for their continued education.

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[39] 63.6 percent have either returned to school or have concrete plans to return in the near future (e.g., applied or taken a required examination).

[40] Again, this sample excludes individuals who are currently in high school.

My qualitative analysis supports the influence of work authorization and subsequently increased financial independence on educational re-entry and current educational attainment. Many individuals who had returned to school or were currently in school referenced feeling more equipped to finance their education because of employment authorization through DACA. This authorization influenced more than finances as some individuals reported they now felt more invested in their schooling because they can put their degree to use after graduation.

Nevertheless, educational barriers still exist for DACA recipients. While for most the ability to work allowed for greater financial accessibility to higher education, some indicated that because of the temporariness of DACA they wanted to focus on working and saving while they were able. Because DACA only is guaranteed for two years, some individuals reported concerns about being able to work and maintaining their job in the future. Along the same lines, because of DACA's expiration date, others doubted they would be able to meet their educational goals in the future.

My qualitative analysis evidenced that confusion over and ineligibility for certain types of financial aid are additional challenges for DACA recipients. Many study participants conflated DACA with the California Dream Act (AB540, AB130 and AB131), indicating DACA provided them with in-state tuition or eligibility for scholarships and grants. DACA, however, offers no direct educational benefit. At the same time, despite the California Dream Act and work authorization, DACA recipients in our sample reported difficulty in financing their education because they are ineligible for federal financial aid. Many interviewees indicated that attending a four-year university was not a realistic option. In addition to limiting their educational options, ineligibility

for federal aid further distinguishes DACA recipients from their fully documented peers—highlighting that despite the benefits of DACA, the educational playing field is still unequal.

Sense of Belonging

Among all individuals in the study, 45 percent indicated an increase in belonging, while roughly a quarter of individuals indicated they felt like they fully belonged before DACA. My analysis indicates that years in the United States is positively associated with feelings of increased belonging after receiving DACA status. Qualitative analysis shows that the majority of individuals in the sample feel an increased sense of security and a sense of normalcy because of changes in their daily life. Being able to obtain a driver's license and the freedom it provides allow DACA recipients to feel like they fit in more as they are now able to do the tasks that for so long they watched everyone around them complete.

Nevertheless, as my qualitative analysis indicates, because DACA does not offer full membership, some individuals continue to feel a lack of belonging. Interviewees emphasized the things they are unable to do communicate that they still do not belong fully. Limitations like being barred from applying to certain jobs, ineligibility for federal financial aid or the inability to travel outside the United States to visit family they have not seen in many years caused DACA recipients to express continued feelings of difference from their fully documented peers. Other individuals highlighted that concerns regarding the immigration status of their family members continue to have psychological impacts on their own sense of well-being in the United States. Although DACA recipients are temporarily protected from deportation, they are acutely aware that

undocumented members of their family are not. Consequently, despite the benefits that DACA status provides its recipients, its limitations and liminal nature have a negative influence on one's sense of belonging as well.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The above analyses support a variety of policy recommendations that could serve to improve the lives of DACA recipients and undocumented youth more broadly. The following outline my recommendations in the areas of economic integration, education and sense of belonging.

Recommendation #1

There should be increased internship and volunteer opportunities available to undocumented youth. DACA recipients in our sample described difficulty in finding employment because they were barred from applying to certain internship and volunteer positions without a Social Security number. As a result, when they began their job search after receiving DACA status, securing employment was a challenge. Compared to other candidates, they felt they had a lack of experience and skills that they could have gained from prior internships or volunteer work. Instead of requiring Social Security numbers, organizations and businesses could also accept other forms of identification, such as school identification cards or a matrícula.[41] With the possibility of a broader legalization program in the future, increased access to internship and volunteer opportunities for undocumented youth will set them up for greater success when they enter the job market.

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[41] A matrícula is an identification card issued through consulate offices to individuals born in Mexico but who now live in another country.

Recommendation #2

In a similar vein, local immigrant-serving organizations should help to facilitate training programs for DACA recipients to help overcome any gaps in prior experience. In addition to specific training in certain areas, local organizations also can provide application assistance, including resume preparation and interviewing tips. As was mentioned above, some respondents expressed it took several months to find employment, citing a lack of relative experience compared to their fully documented peers. Without a way to gain the experience necessary for desired employment, some DACA recipients will continue to face obstacles to increased economic integration. Training programs would provide DACA recipients with the experience and skills necessary to be competitive on the job market.

Recommendation #3

DACA recipients should be eligible to purchase health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Revisions to the ACA in August of 2012 barred individuals with DACA from certain health insurance options. Importantly, they are the only group of individuals who receive deferred action who are excluded from the ACA. This ineligibility severely limits the affordable options that are available to them, as oftentimes the only way to obtain health insurance is through an employer. This situation forces DACA recipients to make difficult choices or sacrifices with regard to their health. Despite serious illnesses or injuries, DACA recipients instead may choose to focus on paying for school or other expenses. By offering more affordable health insurance options through the ACA, individuals with DACA will be better able to get the care they need, thus improving their quality of life.

Recommendation #4

DACA should be extended from a two-year period to a five-year period to allow recipients to feel more confident in their educational and employment planning. Currently, given DACA's two-year timeframe or their "expiration date" as some described it, some recipients reported they feel a tension between going to school and finding employment. While some would like to return to school, they instead are choosing to work in order to save as much as they can for what they see as an uncertain future. Others doubted they could meet occupational and educational goals because of the uncertainty surrounding DACA's continuation. By extending DACA to a five-year period, DACA recipients will feel less restricted in terms of their options and future planning. An extension also will provide a more adequate amount of time to be able to realize certain goals.

Recommendation #5

Individuals with DACA should be eligible for federal financial aid in order to finance post-secondary education. Although the majority of DACA recipients with whom I spoke experienced an increase in financial independence since receiving DACA status and California has relatively generous policies for undocumented students, many individuals reported that the costs of higher education are prohibitive—especially at four-year universities. Furthermore, ineligibility for federal financial aid serves as a reminder to DACA recipients that they are different from those who are fully documented. By providing access to federal financial aid, this difference will be reduced and more individuals will be better able to achieve their educational goals.

Recommendation #6

All states should provide in-state tuition and access to scholarships for DACA recipients. Currently less than half of the 50 states have in-state tuition polices for undocumented youth. Even in a state like California that provides in-state tuition for undocumented youth and access to scholarship opportunities, the cost of higher education often is challenging for DACA recipients. There is no doubt that in a state that does not offer in-state tuition or scholarships for undocumented students, the obstacles to higher education are even more pronounced. By not providing this financial support to undocumented youth, they effectively are shut out of certain educational opportunities. Given the relationship between educational attainment and employment opportunities, DACA recipients in these states could be relegated to certain, low-skilled job sectors. With in-state tuition and scholarship access in every state, DACA recipients across the nation will have greater post-secondary educational access and the opportunities this level of education can provide.

Recommendation #7

DACA recipients should be granted permission to travel out of the country for a short period of time. Currently those with DACA status are able to travel abroad for certain humanitarian, educational or employment purposes if they apply for advanced parole (an additional $360). For individuals who simply want to visit family members who they have not seen in many years (or, in some cases, they have never met), however, there are no options for traveling abroad. While the majority of DACA recipients mentioned the desire to visit extended family members, some individuals in this study are living in the United States without any immediate family. These types of prolonged

family separations can have grave psychological consequences for DACA recipients. Accordingly, the ability to travel to visit a family member for a short period of time would offer psychological benefits. Travel authorization would also serve to minimize another difference between DACA recipients and those with more permanent status, thus increasing a sense of belonging in the United States.

Recommendation #8

Deferred action should be extended to immediate family members of DACA recipients. Although DACA recipients receive a two-year protection from deportation, their family members are not afforded the same benefit. As a result, despite the sense of security that DACA recipients feel, interviewees in our sample reported continued concerns over the security of undocumented family members. By extending DACA status to the immediate family members of DACA recipients, these fears can be lessened and the general vulnerability of the community is reduced.

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Although DACA is a step in the right direction, this study detailed the challenges that individuals with DACA status continue to confront in their daily lives. The aforementioned recommendations would help to at least partially remedy these issues. Nevertheless, without a pathway to legal permanent residency and full, legal rights, DACA recipients will continue to straddle the line of inclusion and exclusion and will live, as David described, “one step in and one step out.”

Appendix:
Interview Guide

Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with me today. We're going to start with some basic questions about you and then I'll ask you more about your experiences with DACA.

Could you please tell me how old you are?

Years old	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

How old were you when you arrived in the United States?

Years old	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Are you currently in school?

If YES, what grade/year of college are you currently attending?

Grade/Year	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

If NO, what is the highest grade/degree you completed?

Grade/Year	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

If they have education past secondary schooling, what is/was your major or field of study/career track (both undergraduate and graduate, if applicable)?

Major	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Ask all: Do you have any plans for continuing your studies? **If YES,** for what type of degree or training program?

Degree/Training Program	
Does not plan to continue his/her studies	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

With regard to language, would you say you speak English well, a little or not at all? What about Spanish?

	English	Spanish
Well		
A little		
Not at all		
NS/NA	998	998
NQR	999	999

And, which language would you say you use most of the time at home? At work or school? With friends?

	English	Spanish
Home		
Work or School		
With friends		
NS/NA	998	998
NQR	999	999

And, in which zip code do you currently live? ________________________________

Which best describes your **current** employment status?

Employed full-time (40+ hours per week)	
Employed part-time (less than 40 hours per week)	
Self-employed	
Unemployed	
Student	
Stay-at-home parent/Homemaker	
Other (describe)	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

What is your current (or most recent) job?

Description	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Approximately, what was your income in 2013?

Amount	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

And, which of the following best describes your **current** relationship status? Are you…

Single	
Unmarried but living with partner	
Married	
Divorced	
Other (describe)	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

The broader research program that we participate in has a health focus, so the next few questions are focused on access to health care.

Do you have health insurance? **IF YES**, how is your health insurance provided?

	Mark applicable forms of health insurance	When did you first receive this type of health insurance (mm/yyyy)
Current work		
Previous work/other job		
Labor Union		
Purchased		
Spouse's (other family member's health insurance)		
Medi-Cal		
School or University		
Other (describe)		
Does not have health insurance		
NS/NA	998	998
NQR	999	999

Ask all: When you need medical attention, where do you usually go (e.g., personal doctor's office, emergency room, community or neighborhood center, etc.)? How do you usually pay for this medical attention?

Follow-up: Do you have someone who you consider to be your primary doctor?

Has there ever been a time in the past year that you needed medical attention but could not obtain it either due to cost, lack of transportation or any other reason? Could you tell me more about this experience?

Self-Efficacy

I'm going to shift focus a bit and read you a few statements about your beliefs about being able to accomplish the following tasks. Please rate how certain you are that you can do each of the things described below, using the following scale. You can also tell me why you chose a specific number. **Probe to see if DACA status has influenced any of these ratings.**
0= Cannot do at all
50= Moderately can do
100= Highly certain can do

I can meet my educational goals.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I can obtain the job that I want.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I can earn enough money to provide for my needs and/or my family's.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I can make my community a better place.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I can develop friendships and/or work well with others who are from a different culture than I am.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I can live up to what I expect of me.

Number 0-100	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Great! Now, I would like to focus on your experience with DACA.

The Decision to Apply

When did you apply for DACA?

Date (mm/yyyy)	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

When was your DACA status approved?

Date (mm/yyyy)	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Were any of your siblings or other members of your household eligible to apply for DACA? **If YES**, how many?

Number of members of household eligible to apply for DACA **(NOT INCLUDING RESPONDENT)**	
No one else in my household was eligible to apply for DACA	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

I'd like to ask you a few questions about your decision to apply for DACA.

How did you first hear about DACA?

Did you have any concerns about applying for DACA?

If respondent mentions fear that sending in their personal information could be used for immigration enforcement purposes ask: Did you hear that USCIS issued a statement saying they would not share the information included in your DACA application about you or your family with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the border patrol?

Ask all: DACA was announced a few months before the 2012 presidential election. Did you have any concerns about applying because of the uncertainty of who would be elected?

Now, I'd like to ask you more about what your application process was like. Some individuals attended DACA workshops where local organizations helped them to put their application together. What did you do?

Some individuals also went to the Mexican consulate to make sure they had all the necessary documents. Did you go to the Mexican consulate for help collecting the required documents for DACA? **Probe if necessary: How did you go about collecting the necessary documents?**

Recent research has found that the $465 application fee was an obstacle for some individuals applying for DACA. How did you pay this fee (i.e., loans, parents, savings, scholarships, etc.)? Do you feel like the cost posed a financial hardship for you and your family? **If YES,** did your family have to make any sacrifices to be able to afford the application fee?

If respondent indicated previously that other members of his/her household were eligible for DACA ask: You mentioned previously that other individuals in your household were eligible to apply for DACA, have all of those individuals applied? **If NO**, why not?

If individuals were not able to apply due to the cost of multiple family members applying ask: how did your family make the decision about who would apply for DACA and who would not?

Were there any other parts of the application process that you found particularly difficult? Why did you decide to apply for DACA? What were the most important factors in your decision?

Life since Receiving DACA

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about your life since receiving DACA.

Some individuals say that since receiving DACA they feel like they belong more in the United States. Others say their feeling of belonging hasn't changed. How do you feel? Why?

Do you feel like DACA has affected your feeling of being an "American"? Why or why not?

Some individuals see DACA as a safeguard against deportation while others see it as a step toward becoming a U.S. citizen. How do you see DACA?

The reason why I ask is because a survey from the Pew Hispanic Center recently shifted the immigration reform debate. The study found that a majority of Hispanics and Asian Americans believe protection from deportation is more important than a path to citizenship for undocumented individuals living in the United States. What do you think? What is more important to you?

Since receiving DACA, do you feel like there has been in a change in the way you think about the future and your future opportunities? Why or why not?

Some individuals say that since receiving DACA they are less afraid because of their immigration status. Others say their level of fear hasn't changed. How do you feel? Why? **Follow-up:** Have you or anyone close to you ever had any interactions with the police or ICE?

I'm going to read you a list of things that could have happened since receiving DACA. As I read the list, please tell me if any of the following have happened since you received your DACA status. **Mark all that apply.**

Got your driver's license and/or state identification card	
Got your first credit card	
Opened a bank account	
Returned to school	
Qualified for additional financial aid	
Got your first job OR moved to a new job	
Earned more money, which has allowed you to become more financially independent	
Earned more money which has allowed you to help your family financially	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Have there been any other changes in your life since receiving DACA that I did not mention?

What would you say the biggest changes (if any) to your life have been since receiving DACA?

I'm also interested in your participation in your community before and after receiving DACA.

Were you involved in any groups, clubs or organizations before receiving DACA? This can include any extracurricular activities, school groups, sports teams, church groups or volunteer work in the community. Can you tell me about your participation in these groups, clubs or organizations?

> **Probe if necessary: How often did you participate? What types of things did you do?**
>
> **Follow-up:** Has your participation in these groups changed since receiving DACA? Do you still participate in them? Do you participate more/less? Has your role changed?
>
> **Follow-up:** Have you joined any new groups, clubs or organizations since receiving DACA? Can you tell me a little about your participation in these new groups?

I'm also interested in your political participation before and after receiving DACA.

How interested would you say you are in politics in the United States? What about politics in Mexico?

How often do you talk about U.S. politics with your friends or family? Can you give me an example of the things you talk about? What about Mexican politics?

I'm going to ask you questions about things you could have done in the past. I want you to think about the time prior to your DACA status being approved and the time since your DACA has been approved. Thinking about those times, do you do any of the following things…

	Before DACA Mark if YES	**After DACA** Mark if YES	NS/NQR
Speak with someone to tell them that they should or should not vote for a political party or candidate?			
Go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners or things like that in support of a particular candidate?			
Wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car or place a sign in your window or in front of your house in support of a candidate or party?			
Donate money to the campaign of an individual candidate?			
Try to contact a member of the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives?			
Participate in a protest, march or demonstration?			
Attend a community meeting or a meeting of the city government?			
Donate money to an organization dedicated to political or social causes?			
Send a message or post on Facebook, Twitter or other social media about a political or social issue?			
Share your personal story to help influence others on the issue of immigration?			
Participate in any activities geared toward passing the DREAM Act or other immigration-focused legislation?			

After going through the list, ask: Are there any other political activities you were involved in before DACA that I did not mention? Are there any other political activities you were involved in after DACA that I did not mention?

Would you say there has been a change in your political participation since receiving DACA? Why or why not?

Now, I want to ask your opinion about a few statements. Please tell me if you agree or disagree. “People like me don’t have any say about what the government does.” Do you: AGREE STRONGLY, AGREE SOMEWHAT, DISAGREE SOMEWHAT or DISAGREE STRONGLY with this statement?

Agree Strongly	
Agree Somewhat	
Disagree Somewhat	
Disagree Strongly	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Follow-up: Why do you say that?

“Sometimes, politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me really can’t understand what’s going on.” Do you: AGREE STRONGLY, AGREE SOMEWHAT, DISAGREE SOMEWHAT or DISAGREE STRONGLY with this statement?

Agree Strongly	
Agree Somewhat	
Disagree Somewhat	
Disagree Strongly	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Follow-up: Why do you say that?

"When it comes time to make decisions, government officials pay attention to those who elected them." Do you: AGREE STRONGLY, AGREE SOMEWHAT, DISAGREE SOMEWHAT or DISAGREE STRONGLY with this statement?

Agree Strongly	
Agree Somewhat	
Disagree Somewhat	
Disagree Strongly	
NS/NA	998
NQR	999

Follow-up: Why do you say that?

<u>Perceptions of DACA</u>

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about your opinions of DACA.

Do you feel like your expectations about employment after receiving DACA were met? Why or why not?

Do you feel like your expectations for education after receiving DACA were met? Why or why not?

What do you feel DACA has not been able to offer you—if anything? Do you feel like there are barriers that you still continue to face?

When you first applied for DACA did you think that you would have to reapply in two years or did you think that immigration reform with a legalization provision would have been passed by that time?

In light of the fact that immigration reform proposals are currently stalled in Congress, would you want to see a program like DACA for the broader undocumented community?

Do you have any **immediate** family members who could benefit from broadening DACA to include individuals who are older than the DACA cut-off or those who do not meet other requirements?

Follow-up: About how many individuals in your **immediate** family could benefit if DACA was expanded? What specific requirements do they not meet under DACA?

About how many of your close friends could benefit if DACA was expanded? What specific requirements do they not meet under DACA?

<u>Decision to Renew</u>

Now, I would like to ask you about your decision to renew DACA in the future.

Has anyone contacted you about renewing DACA? Have you contacted anyone about renewal?

Have you received or seen any information regarding renewing your DACA status?

Did you know that you can submit your renewal application 120 days before your current period of DACA expires?

Did you know that DACA will cost $465 to renew?

Did you know that fee exemptions are available in some cases of financial hardship?

Tell me some of the consequences of not renewing DACA. Did you know that if your DACA status expires you would no longer have protection from deportation?

Are you thinking about renewing your DACA status after these two years?

If yes: Why are you planning on renewing? What is the main reason(s) you are planning to renew?

If no: Why are you planning on not renewing? **If respondent mentions cost, ask how much the individual could afford to pay to renew their DACA status.**

Those are all the questions I have for you today. Is there anything else I should have asked you about your experiences with DACA? Is there anything else you want me to know?

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