

2017

DREAMERS: UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID

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DREAMERS: UNDOCUMENTED AND UNAFRAID

by

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B.A., Illinois College, 2011

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts

Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
August 2017

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Dr. Stephen Bloom, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
July 7, 2017

DEDICATION

For my brother, Cristhian Flores, and all other DREAMers in the United States.
Also for my aunt, Loraine Brasel, who has helped me through every step of being a
dreamer.

With love, gratitude and inspiration.

They have no idea what it's like
To lose home at the risk of
Never finding home again
Have your entire life
Split between two lands and
Become the bridge between two countries
First generation immigrant – Rupi Kaur

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama made a historic executive order for millions of young immigrants in the United States who for so long had lived in the shadows of this nation. President Obama's executive order known as DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, provides temporary relief to the undocumented migrant youths who meet certain conditions, meaning they would no longer be subject to deportation.

Today the United States has approximately 11 million people who are in this nation undocumented, 99% of whom came to this country to improve their lives, escape repression, to flee desperate poverty and violence (Sanders, 2016). For many, migrating to the United States is a promise of hope to live the American dream. As Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, states, "immigration is about more than immigration. It always has been. The question of immigration is a question about America. About our national identity and destiny" (Gomez 2014). Immigration is not only about politics and economics, but most importantly it is about people--people who are struggling and suffering and have no better alternative than to break laws and migrate for the future security of their loved ones. In many cases this choice is made by parents, and their children are too young to have an opinion in the matter. The children come to the United States and grow up American. These individuals deserve the right to be recognized in the country they know as their home. DACA recognizes the human rights of undocumented immigrant youth by taking into account the morality of their circumstances and giving them the opportunity to thrive through higher education and

socioeconomic status and live the American Dream. Although it benefits these individuals dramatically, it also gives an advantage to the United States. DACA is “the right thing to do.”

SECTION 2

DREAMERS

There are countless stories of families that flee their country searching for better economic opportunities, seeking asylum, fleeing persecution, or saving their families from a life of poverty. For many, migrating to the United States is a promise of hope for a better life than the one they left behind. Unfortunately, millions of these families have been broken apart because of immigration policies. Parents are deported and their children are left in the United States, the only country they have grown to know.

“We are a nation of immigrants. I am the son of an immigrant myself. Their story, my story, our story is a story of America: hard-working families coming to the United States to create a brighter future for their children. The story of immigration is the story of America, a story rooted in family and fueled by hope. It continues today in families all across the United States” (Sanders, 2016).

How can a country stand back and watch families be ripped apart? These are the families that live next door, that work just as hard as United States citizens to get their children through school. “We have grown accustomed to them and our economy depends on them. They provide millions in tax revenues. But these people are living in the margins of this great country and they have no rights, no security and no healthcare” (Gomez, 2014). Unfortunately, the lack of legal status harms the millions of immigrants, especially the undocumented students who graduate from American high schools and hope to pursue higher education, join the military, or enter the workforce; for many their dreams become impossible.

SECTION 3

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND CONTROL ACT OF 1986 – AMNESTY PROGRAM

Under President Ronald Reagan, the first U.S. law to directly address undocumented migration, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), included an amnesty program widely praised for its commitment to democracy, freedom and equality. IRCA was the first comprehensive immigration reform since 1965 and was sponsored by conservative Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson. This reform ushered in sanctions for employers of undocumented workers, welfare cuts, and increased border security, yet also included an amnesty program. According to Leah Perry (2014), amnesty overlooks an offense and extends freedom through legislative or executive acts. IRCA immigrant amnesty was supposed to free immigrants from danger, vulnerability and the stigma of illegality as amnesty overlooked the transgression of undocumented entry and residency.

“In keeping with the American tradition of turning to the law to resolve social issues, amnesty was thus a promise of the freedom and civil rights that the self-proclaimed ‘nation of immigrants’--that is, the nation intentionally and proudly comprised of people from various nations, cultures, religions, races, and creeds--conferred to all citizens, and in the 1980’s that promise of freedom for a diverse populace was especially compelling” (Perry 2014, 846).

During this time there were two strains of ‘nation of immigrants’ discourse that circulated around amnesty during the law-making process. One side of the discourse welcomed and celebrated an abstract immigrant subject who was free to succeed

(competition on the basis of individual hard work was coded as the epitome of Americanism, where race and gender are overlooked, where this overlooking was considered anti-racist and anti-sexist). While on the other side of the discussion, 'nation of immigrants' discourse welcomed and celebrated explicitly racialized and gendered immigrants who were free to succeed on the basis of their hard work (the tokens of diversity or multiculturalism). What Perry found was that amnesty actually was a far cry from universally inclusive or democratic. What this reform did was made it easy to overlook the material conditions of Mexican immigrants during the law making process. Therefore, it kept mostly male, Mexican amnesty applicants highly dependent upon and highly vulnerable to employer abuses during the waiting period.

SECTION 4

2001 DEVELOPMENT, RELIEF, AND EDUCATION FOR ALIEN MINORS

“On April 25, 2001, U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez, a Democrat from Illinois, was the first elected official to sponsor a federal version of what would become the DREAM Act. Then titled the Immigrant Children’s Educational Advancement and Dropout Prevention Act, it attempted to help approximately 1.8 million undocumented immigrant students apply for permanent residency and legal citizenship” (Rivera, 2013). This would have provided certain alien children who were brought to the United States the opportunity to adjust their lawful permanent residency and become contributing members of U.S. society. It would also include the possibility to provide in-state tuition to undocumented alien children. Its specific goal was to encourage these undocumented children to continue education past high school and into college. The bill had specific requirements involving age, residency and education.

The bill that U.S. Representative Gutierrez presented was later developed into the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors). This legislative proposal, like Gutierrez’s, introduced legislation to provide relief and legal rights to stay in the United States. It was introduced in Congress on May 11th, 2001, by Illinois Senator Richard Durbin, California Representative Howard Berman, Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, and Utah Representative Chris Cannon. Just as the former bill proposed, its intentions were to allow a select group of immigrant students with great potential to contribute more fully to America. This legislation was directed at the young people who were brought to the United States as children and who should not be held accountable

for their parents' decisions. The DREAM Act would have given these students the opportunity to earn legal status if they adhered to certain criteria. It was during this time that the term DREAMers was given to this group of undocumented students brought to the United States as children and who in many cases identified as American.

“Additional key criteria specified that applicants be between the ages of 12 and 35 at the time of the bill's enactment; have earned a G.E.D, or high school diploma, be younger than age 30 (though some subsequent bills extended to age 35); and that males register for the Selective Service System” (Rivera, 2013). Other bill proposals have also included the provision of enlisting in the armed forces or acquiring a degree in higher education.

On May 17, 2010, a group of five undocumented students from across the country decided to risk their deportation by organizing a sit-in at Senator McCain's Arizona office. According to Corruner (2012) this group became known as the “DREAM Act 5.” In the end, four of the students were eventually arrested and detained. “As stated by Julia Preston of *The New York Times*, ‘It was the first time students have directly risked deportation in an effort to prompt Congress to take up a bill that would benefit illegal immigrant youth’” (Corruner 2012, 149). Later in July twenty-one undocumented youth from around the country again gathered to participate in sit-in at various senators' offices in Washington, D.C.

Rivera (2013) stated that none of the numerous DREAM Acts became deferral laws. The first DREAM Act bill that came up for a vote was in the Senate in 2007 that gained 52 votes in favor; the second time was in 2010 when it gained 55 votes but still fell short of the 69 votes necessary in the Senate needed to overcome the Republican

opposition bill. For many young immigrants, the failure of the DREAM Act was a dead end to their future. However, the fight did not end there. On April 5, 2011, eight undocumented youth participated in a sit-in blocking traffic at Georgia State University. “The undocumented youth who participated in this act of civil disobedience were arrested and risked their deportation in protest of a bill banning undocumented students from the top universities in Georgia” (Corrunker 2012,150). Over the course of the years, sit-ins, walks, and marches have demonstrated a clear message that undocumented youth are willing to risk everything to fight for the DREAM Act.

SECTION 5

DREAM ACT RHETORIC

“At first glance, one of the most ubiquitous paradoxes of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries seems to be the global persecution, criminalization and prosecution of immigrants aimed at restricting the flow of people, while all other aspects of human life including information, technology, capital, and jobs are flowing across borders at unprecedented levels” (Corrunker 2012).

There is a large rhetorical division between those lawmakers in favor of and those opposed to immigration reform. As Rivera (2013) points out, some contend that the DREAM Act translates into de facto amnesty for people crossing sovereign borders without permission. “Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, a Republican, declared in his “10 reasons to reject the DREAM Act” that ‘this bill simply incentivizes and rewards more illegality’ for immigrants who practice ‘unacceptable lawlessness’ ” (Rivera 2013). Another argument is ethics. California Assemblyman Tim Donnelly, a Republican, argued that Governor Jerry Brown created a new entitlement that would cause tens of thousands of people to come over illegally by granting illegal immigrants the same access as state residents to financial aid at higher education public campuses. He stated this is morally wrong.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, those who are in favor of the DREAM Act cite the social, economic, and cultural development of the United States. Senator Durbin, a DREAM Act proponent, created a page on his website compiling “DREAMers’ stories” to shed light on these undocumented students. After the 2010 DREAM Act

failed to pass the Senate, Senator Dianne Feinstein of California stated in disappointment, "Many of these young people grew up in the United States and have little or no memory of resources of the country from which they came. They are hard-working young people dedicated to their education and serving in the nation's military. They have stayed out of trouble. Some are valedictorians. I happen to know one. And some are honor roll students. Some are community leaders, and have an unwavering commitment to serving the United States of American" (Rivera, 2013).

In the 2012 United States presidential elections, the DREAM Act became a cornerstone in Barack Obama's reelection campaign against Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Obama repeatedly mentioned his backing of the DREAM Act and reiterated it at a Cinco de Mayo celebration in the White House Rose Garden May 2012 speech, stating that it is time to make sure all Americans have the opportunity to reach their full potential, including undocumented students.

SECTION 6

2012 DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS

Two years after the proposal of the DREAM Act, on June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced President Obama's executive order that certain people who came to the United States as children and meet several guidelines may request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal. They are also eligible for work authorization. This executive order would be known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA. Deferred action is a use of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period of time. Deferred action does not provide lawful status.

Guidelines in order to be considered for DACA with United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS):

1. Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012, and at least 15 years old to request DACA;
2. Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2012, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making request for the consideration of deferred action with USCIS
5. Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a general education development (GED)

certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States; and

7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety (Guidelines found on the uscis.gov website).

While not granting a path to legalization and citizenship, the 2012 policy provided an opportunity for a “segment of undocumented immigrants to remain in the country without the fear of deportation, allowing them to apply for work permits, and increase their economic and social incorporation” (Gonzalez and Terriquez, 2013). Those who were eligible for the deferred action relief were the individuals who met the general requirements of the DREAM Act.

“Obama termed this a ‘temporary stopgap measure’ 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. He added that ‘it makes no sense to expel talented young people, who, for all intents and purposes are American...’ ” (Rivera 2013).

SECTION 7

DISCONNECT: MORALITY VS. LEGALITY

Syla Benhabib (2012) argued in her article “The Morality of Migration” in *The New York Times*, that migration pits moral and legal principals against each other. On the one hand, she states that according to Article 13 and 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humans have the right as individuals to move across borders whether for economic, personal or professional reasons.

“Article 13: 1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. 2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country” (United Nations, 1948).

Contradicting the rights of Article 13 and 14 is Article 21 of the declaration that recognizes a basic right to self-government, stipulating that “the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government” which, Benhabib states, includes control over borders as well as determining who is to be a citizen and the status of those who are not (2012).

“Immigration is not only crossing territorial borders but also a cultural, social and psychic boundary and enters into a new relationship in new spaces, the borderlands” (Guedes, 2012).

Although the question of morality versus legality is the main discussion around youth immigration, what is left out is the politics of belonging, the question of how has DACA contributed to the lives of these students.

SECTION 8

LATINO PERSONHOOD

As John-Michael Rivera explains in his article “The DREAM Act and other Mexican (American) Questions,” the topic of Latino personhood is important when discussing the implications of DACA. He defines Latino personhood as encompassing vital concerns such as citizenship, belonging, inclusion, equality, and rights (2013).

Two studies that were conducted on DACA students showed a variety of ways in which having this status has changed their lives. **The National UnDACAmented Research Project** was a national survey studying the impact that DACA had on educational, labor market, health and civic engagement outcomes of young adult immigrants. It was conducted on individuals approved through June 2013, making it significant because this was done just one year after the status was introduced. It showed that DACA students experienced a pronounced increase in economic opportunities in areas like getting new jobs (61% reported), opening first bank account (54% reported), and obtaining first credit card (38% reported) (Gonzalez and Terriquez, 2013). Having quantitative results are important, as are qualitative statistics that specifically look at the lives of these students through their stories and voices.

The DACA Mental Health and Wellbeing research was a case study in 2016 where nine focus groups were conducted with sixty-one DACA eligible Latinos (ages 18-31) in California in order to investigate their mental health. There are approximately 11.4 million undocumented immigrants; of those, half are of Latino origin. The research showed that participants found that DACA also introduced unanticipated challenges,

including greater adult responsibilities, new precarious identity, and threat to wellbeing due to separation from family, exposure to traumatic events, discrimination and loss of social status. The analysis highlighted that “while Latinos living in the US, whether native born, documented or undocumented immigrants face marginalization, socioeconomic challenges, and reduced social integration, the undocumented experience an even greater degree of stigma associated with their ‘illegal status’” (Siemons *et al.*, 2016, 544). The stigma of ‘illegal’ status causes more stressors, including the perpetual fear of deportation and often confinement to the lowest wage jobs.

The study is focused on mental health and wellbeing (MHWB); therefore, it analyzes the challenges of moving between adolescence and adulthood, while also having restricted access to structures of opportunity. These obstacles inhibit social integration, limit social support, and challenge their self identity (2016, 544). There is little research that focuses on these aspects of everyday life of DACA students.

The focus groups analyzed isolation, belonging, and transition to adulthood, survival mode, and external support. Isolation captured participants’ real or perceived feelings and experiences of not belonging or being separate from others. Belonging captures participants’ feelings and experiences of being integrated into main stream society related to DACA status. Transition of adulthood captured participants’ experiences moving from childhood to adulthood. This includes achievements of normal adolescents or young adult development. Survival mode captures participants’ experience of having to devote a great amount of time, energy, resources to meet basic needs (2016, 545-546).

What the research found is that eligible young adults view DACA as having both beneficial and detrimental impacts on MHWB. Prior research on DACA's short-term impacts indicates an increase in young adults' access to new opportunities and a decrease in fear of deportation (2016, 544). The results also showed a greater sense of legitimacy under the status instead of previously being ashamed of being undocumented. Some of the other negative mental health consequences reported were the stress associated with increase in family responsibilities and shifting concerns about deportation risk from oneself to ineligible family members. Some of the DACA participants during the focus groups reported a smoother integration into U.S. society, since prior to this status, students were unable to apply for higher education, seek employment or obtain a driver's license (2016, 545). Besides Siemons, *et al.*'s research, there is little research that focuses on these aspects of everyday life of DACA students, especially at the community level.

SECTION 9

POLITICS OF BELONGING

Community level matters because it shows societal integration with DACA eligible students. For many students, they did not know what it meant to be undocumented or the difference to their naturalized peers until they were faced with obstacles such as applying and paying for college (Siemons *et al.*, 2016, 545). “Guedes Bailey (2012) argues that the politics of belonging encapsulates within itself the politics of becoming which occurs when a cultural marked constituency, suffering under its current social constitution, strives to reconfigure itself by moving the cultural constellation of identity/difference then in place longing refers to both formal and informal experiences, includes inclusion and validation, access to opportunity, and having one’s voice heard”. Integration is a two-way street. It is through community where integration takes place. Integration is one of the aspects of belonging. Awareness and change come from the bottom up, from communities. For many, DACA has created a sense of hope. Even though Dreamers are not legally citizens, they contribute to the community of the United States. Many excel in high school and achieve higher education in fields including science, future doctors; law, paralegals; and military, lieutenant colonels. “There are so many DREAMERS across the country who want to be a part of America’s future” (Dreamers Stories, Senator Dick Durbin). These students not only excel academically, they contribute to the community through volunteer work.

“I am not a criminal, a monster, a predator, or someone who sits at home doing nothing substantive or meaningful. I care for this country; I care for its successes as well as its struggles, for its joys as well as its sorrows. I am not asking that our government maintain an open-door policy for immigrants. I am simply asking that it give an opportunity to those of us who have proven ourselves” (Dreamer’s Stories, Pierre Berstain).

SECTION 10

MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE

According to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools that the Migration Policy Institute provides, as of 2017 the total DACA-eligible population is 1,932,000; those immediately eligible are 1,307,000. However, this research is focused on DACA students in Illinois, which includes 96,000 eligible, 5% of the share of the United States. Those immediately eligible include 68,000 and 18,000 that are eligible but do not meet the education criteria. The Migration Policy foresees 9,000 youth eligible in the future. This tool kit that MPI provides also informs the audience of details such as the top country of origin of each state. Illinois's top countries of origin of DACA-eligible population include Mexico (77,000) and Korea (2,000).

What these numbers signify is two groups of youth that should be targeted for outreach. The first group is the 398,000 unauthorized youth ages 15 and older who could become fully eligible, specifically in terms of education criteria for DACA through GED or adult programs. The second key group includes the 228,000 children ages 7-14 who could become eligible for DACA when they reach age 15. The majority of these children would remain enrolled in school at that age, and thus be eligible to apply. (Hipsman, Gomez-Aguinaga, and Capps, 2016).

The youth known as DREAMers and in many cases DACA attainees present a unique dilemma for policymakers since their lack of legal status often results from the actions of their parents, not themselves. According to MPI "immigration is arguably more intertwined with education and training fields today than any other time in recent

U.S. history” (Hooker, McHugh and Mathay, 2015, 1). For this reason DACA plays a special role in improving education outcomes and career preparation. One example is the special role of adult education programs that provide an opportunity for individuals who lack a high school education or equivalent but surpass the age and need criteria to qualify for DACA protection (Hooker, et. al., 2015, 2).

In 2015, the Migration Policy Institute’s National Center on Immigration Integration Policy has sought to capture the different ways institutions have responded to DACA in seven states with large immigrant populations, which include Illinois, California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New York and Texas. What MPI found in regards to schools and their roles varied from school to school. However, some schools dedicated counselors and support staff with immigrant students and are the primary point for students seeking assistance regarding DACA. In others, though, educators remained confused regarding DACA’s requirements and were not keen on discussing students’ immigration status (Hooker, et. al., 2015, 3).

The report highlights the Illinois DREAM Counselor Training, a citywide initiative to ensure counselors have the tools to work effectively with DACA youth. The Chicago Public Schools have undertaken this notably comprehensive effort to train high school counselors on DACA as well as Illinois in-state tuition policy and scholarships for unauthorized immigrant students (Hooker, et. al., 2015, 3). This step is especially important because students sometimes become aware of their immigration status during the college process and face obstacles to affording college or finding jobs and therefore look to school counselors for guidance.

Another group leading in support of immigrant students and families are immigrant serving-organizations such as those found in San Francisco Bay area, Educators for Fair Consideration, and New York Immigration Coalition that focus on training counselors and other educators in order to help DACA youth attain a college education. Dual enrollment programs are yet another resource that allows students to make college more affordable by taking college-level courses and earning both a secondary and post-secondary credit. “The City Colleges of Chicago explicitly advertises its dual enrollment courses as a resource available to unauthorized immigrant students, though students must meet eligibility requirements, including passing a college placement test” (Hooker, et. al., 2015, 4). As the report points out, the affordability of a college education is significant especially “if past DREAM Act proposals are to be the guide for future legislation that may offer a permanent legal remedy for unauthorized immigrant youth, then a two or four year degree will be a critical requisite” (5).

SECTION 11

METHODOLOGY

In order to build relationships with potential partners, such as community and organization leaders as well as policymakers, and to better understand what it means to be a DACA recipient in all its aspects, there needs to be in-depth conversations surrounding the status. Therefore, community dialogue is a beneficial first step for progress. Change begins through fostering community, by giving the tools and power of knowledge to make a difference to DACA students.

Part of the effects of dialogue is suspending assumptions and certainties, listening, respecting, slowing down the inquiry and giving the opportunity to speak out. The purpose of holding a dialogue in this case is to build understanding and to foster relationships. However, holding a dialogue may require a series of steps to achieve the objectives. In this case, there are three objectives. The first is for the community to have a better understanding what being a DACA student means (the students themselves, their families and community members). The second objective is to make visible their concerns and produce a policy document detailing strategies, options and mechanisms that may improve the situation (for the broader audience). The third objective is to dialogue with policymakers to have them on board to support the DACA agenda.

Before the actual dialogue, there will need to be a lot of time invested in researching the logistics and methodological arrangements. In order to gain insight on the topics and issues to feed the dialogue content semi-structured interviews will be

held with DACA students ages 18-31 who reside in the Chicago, Illinois, area. This will involve key participant interviews to promote trust that their concerns are being heard and their time and commitment are not in vein. The dialogue, however, will be open to these students as well as their families, community leaders and politicians in the state. In order to follow some steps to organize a dialogue program, this intervention design draws from the National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation's Running a D&D Program- The Basics.

1. Create a diverse planning team
 - a. This will consist of community groups and organizations, such as Immigration Youth Justice League, World Relief Chicago, and Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR). The planning team will also consist of those with traditional power positions, such as the staff of U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth.
2. Determine what resources you have and need
 - a. With the help of the organizations and leaders listed above, this would consist of the human resources needed to carry out the event. In terms of a location/venue for the event, a university campus or cultural center would be ideal because it offers an inviting space. We would also ask these groups for financial resources.
3. Create clarity about your intent
 - a. The main goals for this program are building understanding and relationships. The three objectives 1) gaining a better understanding of

what being a DACA recipient means (the students themselves, their families and community members), 2) make visible their concerns and produce a policy document detailing strategies, options and mechanisms that may improve the situation (for the broader audience), and 3) dialogue with policy makers have them on board to support the DACA agenda.

4. Design a process or choose a model or combination of models
 - a. Considering this is the first dialogue and the hypothesis is that there will need to be a series of dialogues to achieve all three objectives, this will be a more meet and greet model. In the future, however, a luncheon with panelist speakers and exhibit of photos of DREAMers would also be beneficial to build relationships with these students who are willing to share their stories. The hope for this is to facilitate a connection to these students and diminish the idea of difference or the “other.”
5. Frame the issue
 - a. As mentioned earlier, in order to have a dialogue that fairly represents the perspective of DACA students and their experiences, interviews will be held to voice their concerns and to discuss what is next, how we can progress.
6. Recruit and train facilitators
 - a. In order to fairly represent the people and issues, we have chosen Immigration Youth Justice League (IYJL), Illinois Coalition for

Immigration and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and World Relief Chicago who have experience with the topic of immigration and DACA, the DACA students themselves to give the audience their experiences and empower their voice, as well as any community members who would like to volunteer their time.

7. Recruit representative group to participate
8. Involve those with decision-making power
 - a. In order to take action and influence policy, Senator Tammy Duckworth and Senator Richard Durbin will be invited to the table to share their thoughts on a future DACA agenda.
9. Inform the press and community
 - a. In order to get the word out, we hope to reach people through our allies and their webs. This will include flyers and posters in universities, high schools, churches, culture events, e-mail blast, phone calls, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
10. Convene the event
 - a. Once all the logistics and methodological arrangements are made, the event will take place and it will give everyone the opportunity to speak and connect with one another in an effort to foster collaboration, community change and influence decision makers.
11. Follow up
 - a. This will be the first in the series of dialogues; therefore, evaluating the event and planning process will be important to improve for the next

dialogue. It would be beneficial to publicize the results of the event and grow the number of those interested for the future events by letting people know how they can help or join.

In February 2010, a two day “DREAM Camp” was held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with the purpose of teaching community-organizing skills specific to immigrant rights and immigration reform. The format of the DREAM Camp included presentations by different leaders in the immigration rights and DREAM Act movement. A major theme was the power of stories for articulating share experiences, shared values, and a common purpose (Corruner 2012). The sharing of experiences is something that can draw connections between people and would be a significant tool for the community dialogue proposal.

As Laura Corruner (2012) explains in her research on undocumented youth-led immigrant rights organizations, an online forum would be a beneficial place to connect undocumented students, community leaders and education institutions with updated news of DACA as well as notes of the dialogues and discussions.

CONCLUSION

The United States is a nation of immigrants; it is a nation where the American dream beckons to hard working families immigrating for a life better than the one they left behind. Children grow up American even if they are not legally citizens. DACA students are our next door neighbors, teammates, friends and family. They are the people who lived in the margins of this country until President Barack Obama's 2012 executive order gave them a sense of hope. Five years later, there is still very little research on the benefits and drawbacks of this status. There is even less information on the experiences of these students and their day-to-day lives.

As we quickly approach the five-year anniversary of the implementation of the DACA program this August 2017, this research seeks to highlight target groups for the future of DACA. As of 2016, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that 1.3 million unauthorized young adults ages 15 and older were immediately eligible for DACA in 2016; however, there is an additional 398,000 unauthorized immigrants who meet all the criteria except for high school graduation or current school enrollment in 2014. Including this group raises the eligible population to 1.7 million (Hipsman, Aguinaga, and Capps, 2016). This raises the question of how we can help these young immigrants become fully eligible and in what ways community efforts would make a difference. The second key target group for outreach are the 228,000 children ages 7-14 that could become eligible for DACA when they reach age 15. The vast majority of these children would remain enrolled in school at that age and thus be eligible to apply but would need knowledge about how to do so.

In this intervention design, a community dialogue sets out to recognize the voices of these students and make them visible to the politicians in whose hands their future lies. Aside from the purpose of the dialogue being to build understanding and relationships, it would also give those students who have not yet applied for DACA, or do not know how to, the resources they need. Especially in terms of education and the ways that the community can participate, having these resources and pre-requisites are important for the DREAM Act many are waiting for.

As was mentioned earlier, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was created by President Obama via executive action and Congress has not yet codified DACA into law. Therefore, it is important to note that future administrations have the direction to continue, suspend or modify the program. During his campaign, Donald Trump pledged to terminate the program, which would take away the protection of DACA's participants. Thus far, President Trump has let the immigration policy continue, although there has been a push by conservative states to end the program (Kopan 2017).

As Priscilla Alvarez mentions, just because President Trump has stepped away from his original pledge does not mean that the DACA-mented students aren't at risk. In 2014, then-DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson announced that the administration would focus on removing undocumented immigrants with criminal records, which would exclude DACA recipients who could not be convicted of a felony in order to qualify. However, this past February, U.S. immigration officials arrested Daniel Ramirez Medina, a DACA recipient. According to ICE he was detained for his gang affiliation and risk to public safety. While in custody, Mr. Ramirez was repeatedly asked to admit to gang affiliation. He was released in late March.

According to Alvarez (2017) in late April of this year, there have been DACA recipients arrested in the recent months, which shows that they can no longer count on being spared from deportation even under the DACA program. Now, more than ever, the voices of DACA recipients and those eligible need to be heard. This community dialogue proposal is not just for those undocumented students, but for the general public and government to understand where these immigrant youth are coming from. DREAMers are caught in a space of limbo. The intervention focuses on the consciousness of the community in order to empower these DACA students and their futures, undocumented and unafraid.

TABLE 1

DACA-Eligible Populations by State and County, 2016



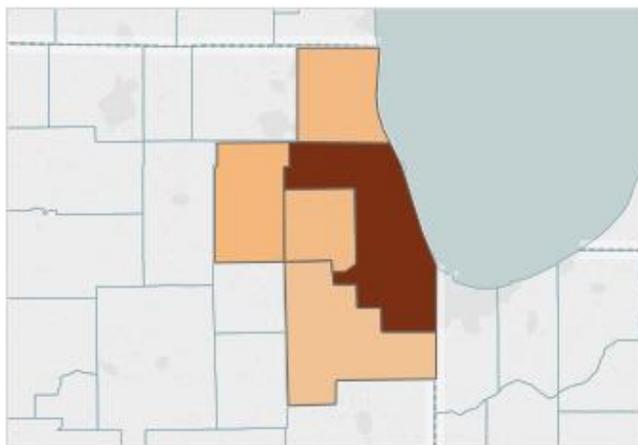
Illinois

Applications accepted by USCIS as of March 2017: **49,710**

Immediately eligible application rate: 73%

Potentially eligible application rate: 58%

**Top Country of Origin
of the State DACA-Eligible Population**



Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub
<http://migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub>

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DREAMers: Undocumented and Unafraid

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