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Title: Situational Triggers and Protective Locations: Conceptualizing the Salience of Deportability in Everyday Life

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Abstract:
Previous research has documented the severe consequences of deportation and conceptualized deportability as a key factor that produces and sustains immigrant illegality. Drawing on interview and survey data with 1.5 generation undocumented young adults in California, we explore the mechanisms that structure the salience of deportability in everyday life. We argue that deportability is a situationally triggered fear that is reduced when individuals occupy protective spatial and social locations that limit their exposure to immigration enforcement mechanisms. Drawing on the case of Californian undocumented young adults, we demonstrate that the more protective locations one occupies, the less likely they are to experience their own deportability as a salient dimension of illegality. In this case, deportability mostly emerges as a fear of family separation and preoccupation with undocumented parents who are less likely to occupy protective locations. Our findings nuance theoretical conceptualizations of the role deportability plays in constructing immigrant illegality.

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"I'm scared at some point it's either my parents or me or my sister that they're going to send back [to Mexico]. And they're going to split our family apart. So that's a constant fear for me. *Even on a daily basis?* Well, not daily. Sometimes I just think about it. Just comes up." – Gaby Hernandez

Gaby, a 19-year-old college student, recounted the deportation fears she experiences as an undocumented immigrant who came to the United States as a child. Reflecting popular and academic understandings, she initially expressed a "constant" fear of deportation. A follow-up question quickly revealed that it is actually more intermittent and grounded more in the threat posed to her family. In this article, we explore how Gaby and her undocumented peers understand and experience deportability: what makes it "just come up" and what impact does it have on everyday life?

Immigrant illegality is produced and sustained by a multiplicity of laws and policies limiting the educational, economic, and social incorporation of undocumented immigrants (Enriquez in press; Gonzales 2016; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014). Similar to Gaby's comment above, dominant narratives in this literature contend that "illegality is lived through a palpable sense of deportability" (De Genova 2002, p. 439) and an "ever-present implicit fear of deportation" (Gleeson 2010, p. 580). Most scholarship presumes the nature of deportation threats and fears without investigating how the study population understands and experiences deportability.

However, undocumented immigrants' understandings of deportability are nuanced as social locations shape perceptions and actual deportation risks. Abrego (2008) establishes that 1.5-generation undocumented young adults develop a legal consciousness less grounded in deportation fears than first-generation adults. Further, immigration enforcement is a discretionary

process unequally targeting undocumented immigrants, particularly Latino men (Armenta 2017; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Spatial context is also important as federal, state, and local policy converge to structure unique socio-legal contexts that can be more or less exclusionary (García 2019; Silver 2018). Building on this work, we elucidate the mechanisms that inform understandings of deportability and structure its salience in everyday life.

We draw on 276 interviews and 508 surveys with undocumented young adults in California, most of whom have DACA and higher education experience. The low salience of deportability among this group provides an opportunity to explore mechanisms that determine the everyday salience of deportability. Using this case, we argue that deportability is a situationally triggered fear emerging from anticipated or actual interactions with immigration enforcement. Protective social and spatial locations lower the risk of experiencing situational triggers and consequential police interactions, ultimately mitigating fears of deportation. Given the individualized nature of these locations, we contend that undocumented immigrants who experience fewer situational triggers and occupy more protective locations are less likely to be preoccupied with their own deportability; this was the case with our participants. However, deportability may remain salient as they assess the risk of groups who occupy less protective locations; in this case their first-generation immigrant parents. Overall, we shed light on the role of deportability in differentiating experiences of immigrant illegality.

Theorizing Immigrant Illegality and Deportability

Immigrant illegality is produced by various federal, state, and local laws and policies that codify structural inequalities and make immigration status a source of stratification. Illegality is consequential because it structures everyday experiences and the long-term educational, economic, and social incorporation outcomes of undocumented immigrants and their family

members (Enriquez in press; Gonzales 2016; Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014). Deportability features prominently as a key aspect of illegality; others include lack of employment authorization, inability to access driver's licenses or state-issued identification, and limited access to higher education. Most scholarship assumes the salience of deportability and few have explicitly examined the mechanisms contributing to diverging experiences of deportability.

Deportation is a material consequence of illegality. It expels an immigrant, often with negative outcomes for their personal and familial economic and social mobility (Boehm 2016; Golash-Boza 2015; Zayas 2015). Deportability characterizes an individual's *potential* to experience deportation (De Genova 2002). It captures the symbolic consequences of illegality as undocumented immigrants negotiate this threat.

Increasingly punitive immigration enforcement policies have made deportability a more salient aspect of illegality. Historically, immigration enforcement occurred along the U.S.-Mexico border (Nevins 2010). However, internal immigration enforcement practices emerged in the 1990s and expanded rapidly. 287(g) agreements between Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and police departments deputized local police to enforce immigration law by holding immigrants for immigration officials. The Secure Communities program facilitated immigration status checks in jails to identify individuals with deportation orders. These enforcement practices fill minor police interactions with deportation risk (Armenta 2017). Consequently, deportations rose, totaling 4.2 million between 1997 and 2012, more than double the 1.9 million deportations before 1997 (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013).

Deportability has severe consequences for undocumented immigrants, families, and communities. Employers may threaten deportation, often resulting in lower wages or wage theft (Fussell 2011). Immigration enforcement, especially raids, can limit civic participation as

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undocumented immigrants avoid public spaces to minimize risk (Maldonado, Licona and Hendricks 2016). This can disrupt educational participation, healthcare, and social service use (Hacker et al. 2011; Jefferies 2014). Within mixed-status families, the deportability of undocumented parents can harm the emotional and developmental wellbeing of U.S. citizen children (Dreby 2012; Enriquez in press; Zayas 2015).

Given the growing risk and significant impact of deportation, much of the literature has characterized deportability as constant: "deportation remains a constant threat" (Gonzales 2011, 605), "the omnipresent threat of deportation" (Menjívar and Abrego 2012, 1388), and "the constant fear of deportation" (Jefferies 2014, 285). Yet, Dreby (2015) notes that many mixed-status families carry out everyday activities, "not seem[ing] to live in fear every single day of the week" (186). We elucidate the process through which deportation becomes less salient by disentangling deportability from an individual's perceived risk and fear of deportation.

Surveillance theories suggest that the salience of deportability is structed by the ability to remind undocumented immigrants of their deportation risk. Describing the panopticon, Foucault (1995) notes that surveillance structures only work if observation is "unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (201). Translating these concepts into the operation of police power, he notes that police have to "be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance" (214). Following this logic, the deportation regime must be visible and unpredictable to incite fear.

Previous scholarship suggests police and immigration enforcement are the actors that spark deportation fears among undocumented immigrants and within mixed-status families. For instance, McDowell and Wonders (2009) suggest that "the presence of police and ICE officers in

Latino/a communities serves as a constant reminder of migrant 'illegality,' and therefore, 'deportability'" (59). Gonzales and Chavez (2012) find that undocumented young adults, "constantly thought about ways to avoid immigration officials, police, and other authorities" (265). Abrego (2011) highlights how, "undocumented youth who learn of a recent raid or deportation in the community come to fear that they or their relatives may also be deported" (361). Dreby (2012) demonstrates that children's fears of deportation and family separation arise when they see police or media coverage of detained immigrants. However, none examine how undocumented immigrants translate such exposure into everyday understandings of deportability.

Using an intersectional framework, scholars find that social locations like race, class, and gender differentiate undocumented young adults' experience of illegality (Cebulko 2018; Enriquez 2017a, b; Valdez and Golash-Boza 2018). Such social locations contribute to discretionary immigration enforcement and create diverging deportation risks among undocumented immigrants. Discretion produces disparate deportation risks as raced-gendered policing leads Latino men to be overrepresented in detention and deportation (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Discretionary guidelines also de-prioritize immigrants who have lived in the United States for years, entered as young children, pursued education (particularly college), have strong ties (especially to U.S. citizen family), or are perceived as deserving of relief (Morton 2011). Youth and students receive discretion more often when campaigning to stop their own deportation (Patler and Gonzales 2015). The de-prioritization of undocumented young adults was formalized in 2012 when President Obama established the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which provided recipients with two-year, renewable protection from deportation and work authorization; DACA is available to undocumented young adults who entered the United States before the age of 16, were under the age of 31, lived in the

United States continuously for at least five years prior to the announcement, and had no serious criminal record (USCIS 2017).[1] It follows that intersectional social locations structure the likelihood of consequential interactions with police and immigration enforcement, and may contribute to differing perceptions of deportability.

Additionally, sub-federal immigration policies structure the presence of immigration enforcement. Federal, state, local, and institutional policies create a multilayered socio-legal context, where each level informs the everyday participation and incorporation of undocumented immigrants (Enriquez et al. 2019; García 2019). In some localities, policy levels align to foster incorporation; but diverge in others to produce exclusion (Golash-Boza and Valdez 2018; Silver 2018). State and local policies can dictate the extent local law enforcement participates in immigration enforcement. In California, state policies limit the scope of local law enforcement officers' cooperation with immigration enforcement efforts; routine traffic stops carry little threat of deportation as long as there is no other reason to take the driver into custody. However, federal and sub-federal policies collide to create a "'multilayered jurisdictional patchwork' of enforcement authority: an emerging, confusing, and often contradictory geography of immigration enforcement" (Varsanyi et al. 2012, 139). In practice, this leaves police officers to practice substantial discretion and undocumented residents remain uncertain about the role of police in immigration enforcement. Therefore, the real and perceived cooperation between local police and ICE may inform one's actual and perceived deportation risk during police interactions.

Data and Methodology

This article draws on four sets of data from two separate projects conducted with undocumented young adults in California. The first project is Enriquez' longitudinal study on the

incorporation patterns of undocumented young adults; we use interviews conducted in 2014-2015 that focused on the impact of obtaining DACA. The second project is the Undocumented Student Equity Project (USEP), a collaborative project in which we both participated. We draw on three sets of data from USEP: a first wave of focus groups and interviews with 154 undocumented students at the nine University of California (UC) undergraduate campuses conducted from 2014 to 2016, an online survey of 508 undocumented undergraduate students across all nine UC campuses during Spring 2016, and a second wave of 30 interviews with undocumented students at one UC campus during Spring 2017.

All data focused on the same study population – undocumented 1.5-generation young adults who live in California – and included questions and spontaneous conversations about deportation threats and fears. Data span a four-year period where perceptions of the federal immigration policy context shifted from the middle of Barack Obama's second term to the first six months of Donald Trump's presidency. Combining these data allowed us to ensure the consistency of mechanisms despite policy shifts.

Data Collection

Interviews for Enriquez' longitudinal study occurred between May 2014 and July 2015, starting almost two years after the implementation of DACA. Interviews were conducted with 92 Latina/o young adults who were undocumented and between the ages of 18-36 in 2011, when the study began. When interviewed, 72 had received DACA and 20 had no legal status. Participants had to be Latina/o and live in Southern California. They were recruited through Enriquez' social networks and participant referrals; interviewees received $20 for participating. Interviews lasted an average of 1.5 hours using a semi-structured guide.

The two sets of USEP qualitative data were collected between 2014 and 2017. The first wave of 154 interviews aimed to broadly understand the experiences and needs of UC undocumented students and was conducted over two academic years. Fifty-one undocumented undergraduate students participated in 13 focus groups on four UC campuses during the 2014-2015 academic year. One hundred three undocumented undergraduate students participated in 19 focus groups and 29 one-on-one interviews on nine campuses during the 2015-2016 academic year. We interviewed a median of 14 students per campus, with a minimum of six students at one and a maximum of 36 at another. A second wave of interviews examined the academic experiences of undocumented students with 30 interviews on one UC campus in Spring 2017. Participants were recruited via personal networks, snowball sampling, and list-serves managed by each campus' undocumented student coordinator. For these interviews, we recruited additional participants from non-Latina/o racial backgrounds and who did not have DACA from survey participants. All participants in the first wave received $15; those in the second wave received $20. Focus groups lasted 2-3 hours and interviews averaged an hour using semi-structured interview guides.

USEP's 125-question quantitative survey was administered in Spring 2016 via SurveyMonkey. We surveyed 508 undocumented undergraduate students across all nine campuses. A median of 55 students participated per campus with a minimum of 22 students on one campus and a maximum of 95 on another. We surveyed approximately 15% of each campus' estimated undocumented student population. The survey link was distributed via list-servs managed by each campus' undocumented student coordinator and undocumented student organizations' email and Facebook groups. Participants received a survey link they could forward to others. All participants received $10.

Sample Characteristics

All four data sources are composed of undocumented young adults who entered the United States as children. Most participated in higher education. USEP participants were enrolled UC undergraduate students. Enriquez' interview sample includes participants with a range of educational attainment, allowing us to explore whether education level shapes conceptualizations of deportability. The average education level of undocumented young adults is unknown; estimates suggest that 29% of the federal DREAM Act eligible population has attended college or received a college degree (Kerwin and Warren 2018).[2] The percentage is likely higher in states like California that offer in-state college tuition rates and financial aid.

All four data sources are composed of large numbers of Latinas/os, DACA recipients, and women. Enriquez' project included only Latinas/os and Latinas/os make up 80-84% of the three USEP data samples. Most participants are from Mexico, reflecting the larger undocumented population where 56% are from Mexico and 77% are of Latin American origin (Rosenblum and Ruiz Soto 2015). Most participants arrived to the United States at young ages with 39-49% of each sample arriving before age 5 and only 13-19% of each sample arriving between ages 11-16. DACA recipients make up most participants: 85% of USEP survey respondents, 81% and 63% of the two USEP interview waves, and 78% of Enriquez' interviews. Most who did not have DACA were ineligible to apply; this mirrors the fact approximately 20% of undocumented young adults were ineligible for DACA due to lacking five years of continuous residence or were over the age of 31 when DACA was announced (Migration Policy Institute 2014).[3] Women are overrepresented in the USEP data, comprising 71% of the survey data, 74% of the first set of interviews, and 63% of the second set of interviews; this may be partly driven by the fact that women, especially Latinas, make up a higher proportion of college students than

males (Santiago, Calderón Galeano and Taylor 2015). There are sufficient participants who are not of Latina/o origin, do not have DACA, and men for comparisons across demographic characteristics. See Table 1 for additional details.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Data Analysis

Qualitative interviews from both projects were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded in HyperResearch to identify when and why participants feared their own and others' deportation. Our analysis focused on sections where we asked about deportation concerns, interactions with immigration officials, and DACA. We developed three groups of discrete codes to identify why they fear their own deportation, why they do not fear their own deportation, and whose deportation they feared. For Enriquez' interviews, we also applied discrete codes to participants' responses to a question about how receiving DACA impacted their life; codes identified each type of impact and the order mentioned. We also provide descriptive statistics of survey variables where relevant; the sample size for each survey item varies as we excluded responses from those who declined to answer when analyzing each item. We use the term undocumented to describe all participants and separately identify whether they had DACA at the time of the interview. All names are pseudonyms.

"Not for Me": The Deportation Concerns of Californian Undocumented Young Adults

Participants suggested that they infrequently think about their own deportability. Only 6.1% of the 508 UC undocumented students surveyed reported thinking about their own deportation on a daily basis. Almost three times as many (17.9%) reported never thinking about their own deportation. Most fell in between with 13.4% thinking about it once a week, 20.7% once a month, 41.9% a few times a year. Kelly Ash, a current UC student with DACA, explained

in her interview: "Deportation is a very real fear, it's a very real thing. I don't think that I'm fearful of it. I don't think about it every day. I think about it maybe a few times a month." Most firmly distinguished between the significant impact of deportation and the limited salience of deportability in everyday life.

Instead, most focused on the deportability of their first-generation undocumented parents. For example, Iris Bautista, a current UC student, stated that she is not afraid of deportation but clarified: "The thing is, the fear is not for me, it's for my parents. I'm always anxious of them being deported." Survey respondents reinforce this trend as 38% reported thinking about their parents' deportation once a week or more, about double the number who think about their own deportation as frequently (See Figure 1); a Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicates a statistically significant difference ($z = -5.8$, $p = .000$).[4]

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

When interviewees were asked if they worried about deportation, they voiced fears that presumed their parent(s) deportation, not their own. For example, Mia Rosas, a current UC student from a single-parent family shared: "[If my dad is] gone, I'm like literally alone. … I'm not going to be able to afford to somehow bring him back. … I'm for sure gonna drop out of college. That's a huge thing that would happen. I would drop out of college, find a job." Another current UC student, Sara Castro shared how deportation fears manifested after becoming aware of "how easily people can be deported if they get stopped by the cops, like 287(g) [collaboration agreements between ICE and local police] and stuff, that freaked me out. I was like, that could be my parents." Only a few participants spontaneously discussed fears of their own deportation. Further, 83% of UC students surveyed agreed that immigration laws negatively impact their parents more than themselves.[5]

Finally, interviewees suggested that deportability was the least salient dimension of illegality in everyday life. Specifically, Enriquez' interviews with 72 DACA recipients suggest that employment authorization was the most salient dimension. Table 2 categorizes eight identified impacts of DACA by order mentioned; we assume earlier mentioning reflects higher salience. Three trends emerge. First, employment authorization appeared as the primary impact with almost all participants mentioning it and nearly three quarters of participants referring to it first. Second, social security numbers facilitated the second, third, and fourth most mentioned consequences: access to driver's licenses, financial accounts, and California identification cards. Finally, deportation protection emerged as a tertiary impact of DACA; only a handful of participants mentioned it, and few discussed it first. These patterns are consistent regardless of age of migration, current age, and educational attainment. Further, the trend persists among anticipated impacts named by the 20 participants Enriquez interviewed who did not have DACA.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Situational Triggers: Contextualizing the Frequency of Risk

The low salience of deportability among Californian undocumented young adults provides an opportunity to explore the specific factors inciting deportation fears. We find that fears are contextual, arising in response to deportation threats. We label this phenomenon, *situational triggers*, defined as specific situations that prompt real or perceived risks of interacting with immigration enforcement. The prevalence of situational triggers shapes the frequency of which participants think about deportation threats. In the case of Californian undocumented young adults, most participants did not think about their deportability often because they encountered infrequent situational triggers.

The most common situational trigger was seeing police officers, who participants viewed as the frontline of the deportation force. Many assumed that police worked in collaboration with ICE. Rosa Ballesteros, a current UC student without DACA, explained that deportations happen, "If you did something bad. If you ever got to the point where you were in jail or with the police, you're out [of the United States]." This understanding encourages her to not "get close to cops or anything like that." She clarified that her fear of deportation emerges, "When I see cops. [I think to myself,] 'Don't do anything bad.' They're on the corner [and I'm] like, 'Don't jaywalk, they're going to stop you.'" Like Rosa, many participants traced deportation fears to situations when they saw or interacted with police officers. Emilio Abrego, a current UC student, noted that these fears have not changed since receiving DACA: "[I grew up] just avoiding any police contact whatsoever. … Just stay in line, do what you gotta do, stay under the radar. ... I think even with DACA for me it's like that."

Most often participants discussed fearing deportation while participating in activities that could lead to police contact, such as driving. Luis Contreras, a current UC student with DACA, explained: "The fear has always been there, and it will always be there. Los Angeles has a lot of checkpoints. Every single holiday, every single Friday even, they always have checkpoints." Police often set up checkpoints at street intersections to identify drivers under the influence of alcohol; however, these also identify unlicensed undocumented drivers (Carpio, Irazábal and Pulido 2011). Although Luis framed checkpoints as pervasive fears, his explanation suggests they are situational and temporal; checkpoints trigger fears in specific spaces (Los Angeles intersections), during specific activities (driving), and on specific days (Fridays and holidays). It is important to note that police encounters while driving were often first described as a financial liability for tickets and car impoundments associated with unlicensed driving and secondarily

linked to deportation risks, suggesting that these situational triggers elicit fear of deportation and financial hardship.

Media coverage of raids, deportations, and anti-immigrant rhetoric also served as situational triggers because they depicted or foreshadowed immigration enforcement activity. Janet Godinez, a DACA recipient who had recently obtained her GED, and Pamela Ortiz, a current UC student with DACA, recalled when they think about their deportation:

> *Janet*: Only like when they say like in the TV, in the news, … The other time they were saying that they were going to report the persons that got the Deferred Action. And I was like oh my God.
>
> *Pamela*: I think when you ask me and I think about it, I'm like, 'Oh damn!' But then I forget about it. (laughter from the focus group) … *Is there any instance when people talk about it?* Oh yeah. When Donald Trump talks! (laughter)

Janet describes thinking about deportation risks when watching news coverage of enforcement activity or potential deportation threats. Similarly, Pamela and others experienced media coverage of Donald Trump's presidential campaign as threats of future immigration enforcement interactions following campaign promises to repeal DACA and deport all undocumented immigrants (Preston and Medina 2016).

In our interviews following the 2016 election of President Trump, participants reported heightened concerns about deportation following increased situational triggers. Nari Kim shared,

> So, after the presidential election, I heard that there were people getting deported left and right and it was just crazy. I also heard they were knocking on doors and asking if you had, if you were undocumented or whatever. And that kind of scares me … and sometimes I think about what if they come to our school and they

bombarded us and deported some of the students here. That's a possibility. I'm sure

it's not going to happen but it's a possibility.

Indeed, following President Trump's inauguration, news reports created a proliferation of situational triggers surrounding immigration raids, deportations, and the detention of DACA recipients (Levine and Cooke 2017; Rubin et al. 2017). Participants referenced these developments as igniting more frequent deportation concerns.

Those who live in heavily policed communities with more exposure to immigration enforcement also described a higher preoccupation with deportation threats due to more frequent situational triggers. Emma Martinez, a UC San Diego student without DACA, described a higher risk of encountering immigration agents due to its proximity to the heavily-patrolled United States-Mexico border. The heightened presence of immigration enforcement officers in San Diego forces her to confront her deportability: "I am alert [and] aware of ICE and the border patrol. I saw them just in convoy where I go out to eat with my friends sometimes and I was so nervous, and I didn't even look in that direction." Similarly, other UC San Diego students mentioned seeing immigration enforcement officials around town and at checkpoints on major freeways out of San Diego. Their comments confirm that they think about their deportability more but suggest that fears are situationally triggered and emerge in specific places – when they venture off campus or closer to the border – and at specific times – such as when they are thinking about moving to San Diego, visiting home, or having undocumented family visit.

Protective Locations: Recognizing Sources of Risk

The extent to which situational triggers impact one's perception of deportability is structured by protective locations. Certain spatial locations offer insulation from situational triggers, minimizing participants chances of encountering immigration enforcement and

decreasing the frequency of thinking about their own deportation. Social locations can also offer protection from consequential encounters with police, minimizing some participants' perceptions that they would be deported following these encounters. Notably, participants recognized that their parents occupied distinct spatial and social locations, elucidating why they feared their parents' deportation more than their own. Collectively, these layers of protection combine to minimize the effect of situational triggers on deportation fears.

"I Feel Sheltered Here:" Protective Spatial Locations

Cities associated with less immigration enforcement function as protective spatial locations, lowering the risk of encountering situational triggers and thus reducing instances of thinking about deportation. Perla Campos, a current UC student with DACA, explained:

> You don't really hear about people in my city [in the San Francisco Bay area] specifically getting deported. I'm not really afraid as much as other people just because I was very lucky to live in a city where that fear wasn't really instigated in me.

Similarly, Julieta Meza, a current UC student who received DACA in high school, shared how this sense of protection emerged when she moved to her college town:

> Before coming to this university— Just because with my whole life, I've been scared of getting deported or scared of getting separated from my family. So, I feel more comfortable being in [this city]. Law wise, I feel like I don't know, I don't really think that much has changed but the fact that [this city] is a sanctuary city, that people here can't get deported, that really takes so much off my shoulders. I really feel so much better.

A sense of protection emerged when participants grew up or spent time in physical spaces where deportation was not visible or where they did not perceive police and immigration enforcement collaborations.

College campuses and schools were viewed by participants as spaces disassociated with immigration enforcement, underscoring their role as protective spatial locations. Patricia Santamaria, a CSU college graduate shared:

> The fear of deportation wasn't really there for us. Especially because we're in school the whole day pretty much. So, I was there from like 8:00 in the morning till like 9:00 PM. Like every day of the week. And during the weekends it was like family weekends or with my friends. We weren't really doing anything that would put us at risk.

Spending most of their time on campus, Patricia and other participants were in spaces where they believed there was a low risk of encountering police and other enforcement mechanisms. Even students in heavily-policed communities expressed feeling safer on campus. Natalia Colorado, a current UC San Diego student shared "I feel sheltered here. As a student. I feel like that gives me extra protection."

In contrast, participants' parents tended to occupy physical spaces that were perceived as having a high risk for encountering immigration enforcement. Three current UC students explained why they were more preoccupied with parental deportability:

Berlyn De León: One time ICE did go to his [my dad's] work. ... So, I do worry … constantly because they [my parents] do their own thing. They work.

Alex Torres: My dad, for his work, he has to travel around. … They constantly have

checkpoints. So, they check for a license and if you don't have a license, they'll

just deport you. So that's the constant fear.

Ozymendias Rendón: My family [is] back in [a border town]. … It's right next to

the border. Here, [where I go to school], no; we're a sanctuary city. That never

really crosses my mind that, "Oh my god, I'm gonna be deported." But my

mind's constantly back home.

Participants recognized that their parents occupy distinct spaces – workplaces, public spaces, and

geographic locations – that create risk rather than protection. Participants who worked also drew

distinctions between their own and their parents' workplace risk. Zen Cruz, a DACA recipient

who had been in and out of community college explained, "I was always [working] in a

restaurant place and I figured … [immigration officers] are not gonna go there in the middle of

the day with a busy restaurant and try to figure out who's working and who's what. So, I wasn't

really too worried about myself, I was worried about my dad [working in a manufacturing

plant]." Participants understand where immigration enforcement is likely to occur, and their

specific fears reflect this.

Previous research suggests that individuals manage deportation risks by monitoring their

activities and developing practices to minimize the risk of interacting with immigration

enforcement (García 2019; Maldonado et al. 2016). In effect, they create protective locations

when they do not emerge organically. We see evidence of this among a few participants and was

most common among those who were not college students. For example, Chente Zumaya, a high

school graduate in his early 30s, structured his life to avoid interactions with enforcement

mechanisms: "Well that's one of the things that keeps me working the night shift [as a security

guard]. There's less risk of having a visit from immigration." Adán Olivera, a high school graduate, explained that he thinks about possible encounters with police infrequently because, "You get used to it. Just be careful because, you know, police." He described how he set his driving schedule to avoid encounters with police: *"I get up around 6 [am], get ready, get to work around 7 [am]. … I rather come here [to work] early because … traffic is less. …. Less traffic, less police."* He viewed this as a strategy to minimize both the financial risks associated with unlicensed driving and deportation risks. These actions allow deportation fears to fade by minimizing exposure to situational triggers.

Receiving DACA allowed some to forego these behavior modifications. Janet Godinez shared, "With the family now we could go everywhere, and we don't have to worry about, 'Oh it's going to be dark. Oh, it's going to be late, we have to go back to the house. We can't be driving this late cause you don't have a driver's license. What if a cop stops you?'" In this way, DACA relieved some of the power of situational triggers to insight fear, whether the strain was associated with a car impoundment or deportation threats.

"I'm Not the Target of Their Attention:" Protective Social Locations

Participants recognized that they did not reflect the popular perception of undocumented immigrants as first-generation adults of Latin American origin. Recognizing that they occupied various social locations that do not align with these popular assumptions, participants perceived themselves to be at a lower risk for actually experiencing deportation when interacting with police. This decreased the potential impact of situational triggers, lowering the salience of deportability.

Most participants spoke of "fitting in" and being "hard to pick out" as providing protection from deportation threats. The majority of participants arrived in the United States as

children and described themselves as relatively acculturated. All participants, regardless of their level of education, had completed most, if not all, of their schooling in the United States. All, with the exception of four of Enriquez' participants elected to be interviewed in English. Participants often referenced these characteristics as providing a layer of protection from immigration enforcement encounters. Catherine Ocampo, a current UC student without DACA, explained, "I've never really been scared of being deported just because, you know, listening to the news, what they're looking for doesn't really fit who I am. In a sense, it gives me some kind of security." Speaking to the protection associated with youthfulness, only 7.6% of students surveyed agreed that young people are more likely to be deported than older adults.[6] A few participants with accents spoke about feeling more exposed. Pablo Ortiz, a 33-year-old college graduate who migrated at age 7 explained, "They talk about assimilation. It's hard for me being dark skinned. My English pronunciation is not great. It's just a luggage that I carry in my back that they're going to recognize my accent, point me out, and say, you know, 'You're undocumented.'"

Similarly, perceptions that undocumented immigrants are Latina/o contributed to non-Latina/o participants feeling insulated from suspicion when interacting with police. Suzy Reyes, a current UC student from the Philippines, noted:

> There's also a racial factor. I think if you look Latino, cops are more attracted to
> that. So, I'm not necessarily that afraid because I'm Asian. They would be like,
> "Oh, she's definitely not undocumented." … I still have that fear [of deportation]
> but in a little bit lesser aspect because I know I'm not the target of their attention.

Speaking to this protection, 75% of students surveyed agreed that Latinas/os are more likely to be deported than immigrants from other racial groups; only 7% disagreed with this statement.[7]

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Further, a t-test revealed that Latina/o survey participants were significantly more likely ($p < .01$) to think about their deportation more frequently than non-Latina/o participants.[8]

Gender intersected with race so that the social position of Latino men was associated with criminalization and increased risk of police interactions. Among survey participants, non-Latina females were .5 times less likely ($p < .01$) to think about their own deportation more frequently compared to Latino male students. However, there were no significant differences when comparing non-Latino male students or Latina female students to Latino male students. Notably, there were no significant differences when considering only gender.[9] Indeed, Latino men more frequently reported being pulled over by police while driving. Cesar Paredes, a current CSU student, recounted how his race and gender contributed to one such occurrence:

> He told me straight forward I stopped you because I thought you looked like a gangbanger. So, I mean, … we don't walk around with a label that says "undocumented," but … being a Latino male we have to carry with that stigma and that negative stereotype that … we're going to be affiliated with gangs.

The racialized and gendered criminalization of Latino men impact whether they come to the attention of police officers and structure any risk of deportation that may transpire.

Complementing the protective nature of being on a college campus, being a student added another layer of protection. In some cases, being a student insulated undocumented young adults from perceptions of wrongdoing. Lisa Fernandez, a current UC student without DACA, rationalized, "Even though I don't have DACA, I feel that because I am a student and I'm in [a wealthy, predominately white city], I feel privileged in some aspects. They [immigration officials] might not come after me." Indeed, only 21% of students surveyed disagreed that students are less likely to be deported than other groups.[10] In recounting the police interaction

described above, Cesar explained that he used his student ID strategically: "He was out there yelling, you know, the keys out of your car, put them on the roof, and put your hands out of the window. So, he walks up and he goes license and registration. So, I pulled out my school ID. I tell him I don't have a license. … He looked at my ID. He asked me, 'Do you go to school?' Told him, 'Yeah.'" Additional accusatory questions followed about potential gang affiliations, tattoos, and his hat on the passenger seat next to him (which was from his university). He was eventually let go without even a ticket for unlicensed driving.

Finally, DACA protections added an additional layer of protection by reducing the risk associated with police encounters. Chris Moreno, a high school graduate, answered a question about moving around:

> Now that I have DACA, I'm not afraid of anything. I can go to pretty much anywhere. They pull me over and they can't do nothing about it. … Like recently last week, I got pulled over as soon as pulling out of my driveway to go to work at 3:30 in the morning. I think they were looking for someone because there was a lot of cops out there. And they pulled me over [makes siren noise]. … At first, I panicked, like oh man! Then I was like, why am I panicking?

In such instances, DACA provided a feeling of protection by allowing recipients to obtain a driver's license and providing deportation protection. However, instances of encountering situational triggers were relatively uncommon given other protective social locations. Omar Valenzuela, a college graduate in his late 20s, described these protective locations as layered: "Before I felt like I was immune [to deportation] because I was doing the school thing but now [with DACA], I feel untouchable (laughs)." Notably, surveyed students with and without DACA did not significantly differ in their frequency of thinking about their own deportation, indicating

that DACA was not functioning as a particularly salient protective location in the presence of other social locations.[11]

Conclusion

Previous research categorizes deportation threats and fears as pervasive because deportation could happen anywhere and anytime (Gleeson 2010; Gonzales 2011; Gonzales 2016; Jefferies 2014; Menjívar and Abrego 2012). Although all undocumented immigrants are deportable, the everyday salience of their deportability is more nuanced. We contend that immigration enforcement mechanisms function as situational triggers, sparking fear of deportation in specific instances. It follows that in extremely exclusionary contexts, the proliferation of situational triggers may lead deportation fears to seem constant. However, a multiplicity of protective spatial and social locations can reduce risk and exposure to situational triggers, mitigating the prevalence of fear in everyday life.

We suggest that undocumented immigrants are aware of what scholarship has established: deportation risks emerge from discretionary interactions with immigration and law enforcement (Aranda and Vaquera 2015; Armenta 2017; Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Using the case of undocumented young adults in California, we establish that they understand the nature of immigration enforcement practices, contributing to their recognition of enforcement-related situational triggers. This does not imply that they are not aware of the catastrophic effects of deportation – they are – but fear for their own deportation emerges infrequently. Notably, they recognize that others, particularly their first-generation immigrant parents, have limited access to protective locations, leading them to experience deportability as a fear of their parents' deportation. This translates into distinct fears of family separation.

Importantly, we found that undocumented young adults who occupied the fewest protective locations were more likely to modify their behavior, effectively capitalizing on protective locations to reduce the incidence of situational triggers and lower the everyday salience of deportability. These examples confirm that deportability is a lived concern; however, as these protective behaviors become routinized, fear fades into the background and such actions are not explicitly acknowledged as evidence of deportation fears. In more exclusionary contexts, undocumented immigrants may depend on such behaviors for protection, leading to chronic stress if they find themselves unable to carry them out; this was not the case among our participants.

Our participants' relatively protected spatial contexts and social locations gave us purchase to explore how deportability emerges; however, it also means that their understandings of deportability do not represent those of all undocumented immigrants. State and local-level variations in immigration enforcement make geographic location a relevant category of difference. Research has established that undocumented immigrants who live in areas with higher levels of enforcement activity – states like Arizona and localities like San Diego, California – have high levels of deportation fear, modify their behavior to lessen risks, and experience negative consequences for their wellbeing and economic and social participation (Ayón 2018; García 2019; Rubio-Hernandez and Ayón 2016). Undocumented immigrants in such areas have a higher lived salience of deportability – a trend represented in our data. Further, scholars have shown varied experiences of illegality along intersectional social locations like race, class, gender, and immigrant generation (Abrego 2011; Cebulko 2018; Enriquez 2017a, 2019). The layering of these social locations shapes the extent to which undocumented immigrants feel exposed to deportation risks. Future work should explore whether situational

triggers and protective locations function similarly among more vulnerable populations. Scholars should systematically explore comparisons across state/local contexts, immigrant generations, and demographic characteristics to assess variations in deportation fears and refine mechanisms that make deportation salient.

Notably, the political context has continued to shift over Donald Trump's presidency. Early in his presidency, deportation threats increased (ICE 2017). Further, in September 2017, the administration announced the rescission of the DACA program (Duke 2017); at the time of writing, its fate remains entangled in courts. We do not believe this changing socio-legal context invalidates our findings. Undocumented immigrants may have higher fears of deportation than before, but our interview data suggests that these are driven by the proliferation of deportation threats – new executive orders, anti-immigrant Presidential speeches, federal policies, and increased immigration enforcement activity (for examples see Murray and Merica 2017; Rubin et al. 2017; Trump 2017). If the DACA program is fully rescinded, this will reduce the number of protective factors insulating recipients from deportation fears, but others remain.

Importantly, recognizing the situational nature of deportation fears highlights interventions to decrease its toll on physical, social, and psychological wellbeing. We point to undocumented immigrants' agency to weigh their own deportation risk – rather than passively absorb fear – and develop proactive practices to mitigate this fear. Interventions could empower individuals with knowledge about the discretionary nature of enforcement mechanisms and modes of avoiding or preparing for immigrant enforcement interactions. Further, the concept of situational triggers pinpoints what creates deportation fear – immigration enforcement; this aligns with the goal of immigrant illegality theories which highlight how laws and policies make immigration status salient (Menjívar and Kanstroom 2014). Doing so refocuses attention on how

sub-federal policies can create other protective locations to mitigate illegality. It points to the importance of state and local policy to limit police cooperation with immigration enforcement and the significance of abolitionist campaigns such as those to end local collaboration with ICE or close detention centers.

In all, we acknowledge the devastating impacts deportation has on individuals, families, and communities, and how deportability can lead people to restructure their modes of participation. However, we highlight a need to distinguish between the impacts of deportability and its salience in everyday life. Researchers must thoroughly describe the specific socio-legal context in which their study participants are living, establishing how their sample understands deportability, rather than presuming its significance based on the literature. By focusing on the salience of deportability, we can turn our attention to how it functions in everyday life. This opens the door to exploring how deportability works in tandem with an amalgamation of laws and policies that produce and sustain contemporary immigrant illegality.

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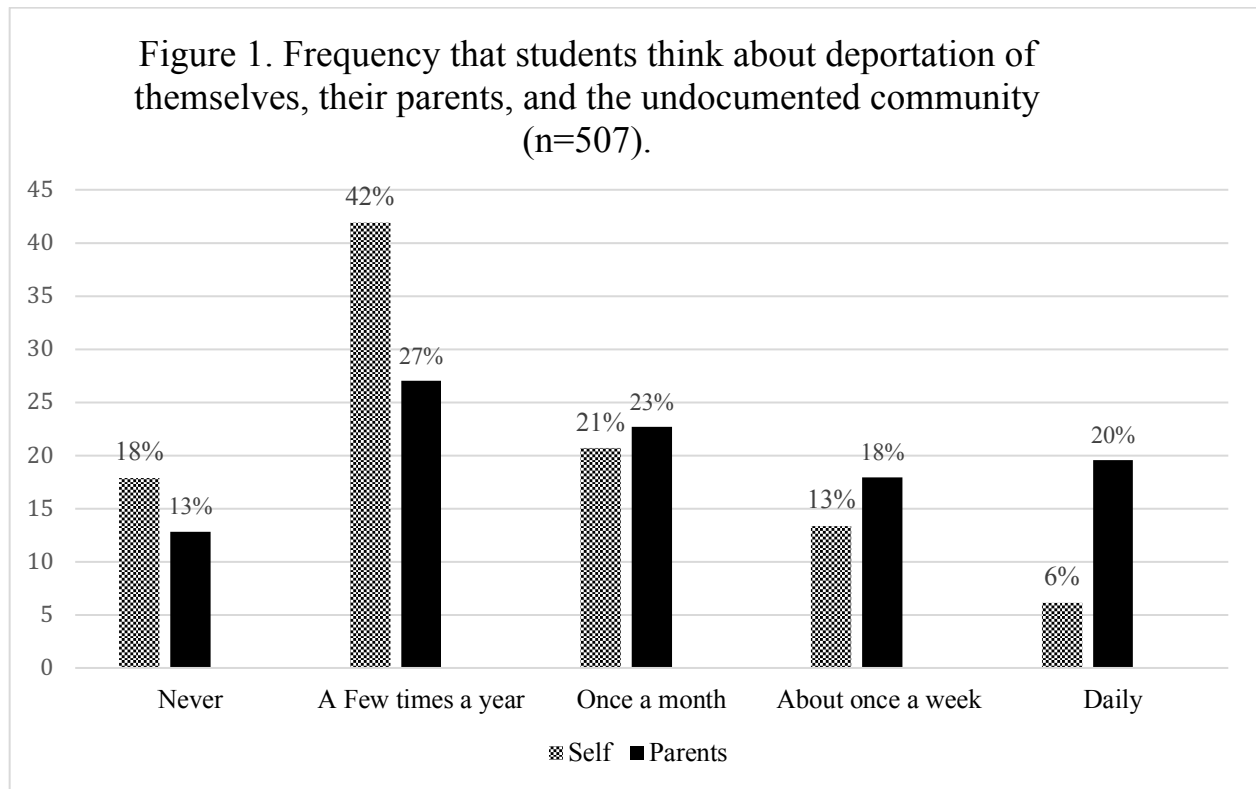
Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

	Enriquez' Qualitative Sample (n=92)	USEP Wave 1 Qualitative Sample 2014-2016 (n=154)	USEP Wave 2 Academic Qualitative Sample 2017 (n=30)
Area of origin			
Mexico	97%	72%	70%
Central America	3%	7%	7%
South America	-	5%	3%
East Asia	-	4%	13%
Southeast Asia and Pacific Islands	-	6%	3%
South Asia	-	1%	0%
Middle East	-	2%	0%
Africa	-	1%	3%
Europe, Canada, and Australia	-	1%	0%
Not reported	0%	1%	0%
Gender			
Women	50%	74%	63%
Men	50%	26%	33%
Alternative gender identities	0%	0%	3%
Age at migration			
0-5 years old	39%	44%	43%
6-10 years old	41%	35%	10%
11-16 years old	19%	19%	17%
Not reported	<1%	2%	7%
Age			
18-19	0%	38%	50%
20-24	26%	53%	40%
25-29	47%	6%	7%

30-38	23%	1%	0%
Not reported	4%	2%	3%
Immigration status			
DACA	78%	81%	63%
Undocumented	22%	18%	33%
Other temporary immigration status	0%	1%	3%
Not reported	0%	0%	0%
Education level			
Less than high school	4%	-	-
High school diploma or GED	17%	-	-
Stop out of college	18%	-	-
Attending 2-year college	14%	-	-
A.A. degree	10%	-	-
Attending 4-year college	9%	100%	100%
B.A. degree or higher	27%	-	

Note: A dash denotes that a group was ineligible for participation.

Table 2. Items Enriquez' interview participants discussed as a DACA benefit by order of mention (n=72).

	First Mention	Second Mention	Third Mention	Fourth Mention	Total Mentions
Employment authorization	52	10	1	2	65
California driver's license	11	27	10	3	51
Financial accounts	0	8	18	5	31
California ID card	1	9	8	7	25
Travel	1	3	4	4	12
Deportation protection	3	3	4	0	10
Educational access	2	6	2	0	10
Social Security number	2	1	0	0	3
Total	72	67	47	21	207

Figure 1. Frequency that students think about deportation of themselves, their parents, and the undocumented community (n=507).

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[1] President Trump's administration rescinded the DACA program in September 2017 (Duke, 2017). At the time of writing, its future remains entangled in the courts.

[2] This estimate includes undocumented young adults who arrived before 2013, were under age eighteen, and either graduated from high school or are currently enrolled.

[3] Participants in Enriquez' study were ineligible for DACA mostly due to being over the age of 31 when the program was announced. USEP participants were ineligible mostly due to not having five years of continuous presence or having another legal status prior to the implementation of DACA.

[4] Survey respondents were asked to rate how frequently they thought about "their own deportation", "your parent(s) deportation, and "members of the undocumented community in general." A response was not collected for one respondent (n=507).

[5] Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5) with the statement, "Immigration laws negatively impact my parent(s) more than me." 33 respondents selected N/A and were excluded (n=475).

[6] Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5) with the statement, "Young people are more likely to be deported than older adults." 17 respondents selected N/A and two did not respond; these were excluded (n=489).

[7] Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5) with the statement, "Latinos/as are more likely to be deported than immigrants from other racial groups." 8 respondents selected N/A and were excluded (n=500).

[8] We compared Latina/o and non-Latina/o students' responses to how often they think about their own deportation ranging from never to daily with a t-test (n = 508).

[9] We used an ordered logistic model with the outcome variable measuring how often students thought about their own deportation. The only co-variate was a categorical variable capturing four combinations of race and gender. We excluded 3 students with alternative gender identities (n = 505). Results available on request.

[10] Survey respondents were asked the extent to which they strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5) with the statement, "Undocumented students, like myself, are less likely to be deported." 8 respondents selected N/A and 1 did not answer; they were excluded (n=499).

[11] We compared students' responses to how often they think about their own deportation ranging from never to daily with a t-test. We excluded 17 students who had some other status (n = 488).