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Ser Americano: The Cost of Being American

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Ser Americano: The Cost of Being American

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Political Science

by

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This thesis is approved for recommendation of the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

Over a decade ago, the Dreamer movement began, led by young undocumented Latinx youth. These activists became known as "Dreamers" who continue to advocate for a pathway to citizenship for all immigrants. Through media, speeches, and artwork, Dreamers use the cultural narrative of the "American Dream" to create the boundaries of their American identity. Traditionally, American Identity is studied through 4 schools of thought: ethno-culturalism, liberalism, civic republicanism, and incorporationism. I offer an analysis of two concepts of American identity, meritocracy, and hyperdocumentation, that are mostly missing from the American identity literature. Additionally, I propose social citizenship as a theory for measuring how Dreamers ascribe to the American identity both explicitly and implicitly. This thesis uses data from the 2016 Blair Center poll and original data from semi-structured interviews conducted in the Northwest Arkansas Region, offering a nuanced analysis of the boundaries of Americanism for Dreamers today.

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Lastly, I want to acknowledge the stories of the participants in this thesis who shared their thoughts honestly and openly to me and contributed to an understudied area of focus.

Dedication

I dedicate my master's thesis to…

my parents, who immigrated to this country as teenagers to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

my sister, Diana Campos, and brother, Diego Campos, you continue to inspire me with your brilliance and passion.

Nunca podre agradecerlos por su sacrificio inmenso, su valencia y su amor. Gracias por soñar en una vida mejor para mi.

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Preface

The American Dream has been the promise of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the United States. At a young age, I was promised this American Dream by my immigrant parents if I worked hard enough in school, behaved well and became an exceptional citizen. The promise of a better livelihood has pulled millions of immigrants into the United States. This "dream" as it influences American identity for immigrants is largley understudied among 1st generation immigrants known as Dreamers.

When I reflected on my own American identity, I often bounded my national identity to the accomplishments I had achieved throughout my academic and civic career. This experience was something I shared with other Latinos in my community who shared a similar immigrant experience. My personal experience with becoming an outstanding citizen accepted by the white majority influenced me to study how other 1st generation and 1.5 generation Latinos formulized their national identity.

To my knowledge, this national identity formation had been largely unexplored, especially among Latino youth and 1st generation Latino immigrants. For the past decade, the Dreamer movement has been one of the largest Latino political movements spearheaded by Latino youth. Despite the media portrayal of Latino immigrants as criminals, Dreamers have largely remained the "accepted" immigrant and have successfully gained temporary immigration relief through DACA. Their adoption of the American Dream and their ability to achieve it offers a nuanced understanding of the boundaries of Americanism for this group. Because survey data cannot capture immigrant status, I decided to conduct a qualitative analysis of Dreamers.

In my initial screening for participants, I wanted to offer a comparison of 1st and 1.5 generation immigrants. I identify as a 1.5 generational immigrant, but my experience with

discrimination and disenfranchisement with institutions, particularly in the present time, guided me in recruiting Dreamers. To capture experiences, I conducted semi-structured interviews. I gave space to other Latinos in the community have experienced disenfranchisement and disillusionment. In doing so, I uncovered that Latinos, particularly Dreamers, had experienced disillusionment with the American Dream, despite seemingly achieving it through their academic accomplishments.

In this thesis, I offer a contemporary analysis of Dreamers, who have used their American identity strategically in media and in congress to gain benefit but have now experienced a moment of disillusionment. In a time where the president of the United States refers to immigrants as criminals and rapists, it is critical to see how this has answered what the real cost of being an American is for Latinos and Dreamers.

Introduction: Ser Americano

The voyage of the first pilgrims, the American Revolution, and the signing of the national anthem are historical events that shape American identity. The National Anthem and the American Flag symbolize the history of freedom and liberty the founding fathers fought for. These celebrations of victories and tragedies become the essence of American identity. For instance, the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, called Americans from every ethno-racial group to join the military to serve the nation they called home. Mexican-Americans, in particular, fought in World War II and became what Álvarez' coins as the "painfully patriotic" (1973). While some events unite groups of a nation, other events create divisions among the nation. The September 11th attack on the Twin Towers struck the nation with fear of the "other" and what would happen to the country if it did not react to foreign terrorism. It was called upon citizens and immigrants alike as Americans to serve their nation again. In many ways, the nation came together to mourn the lives lost. Still, in others, the boundaries of Americanism were redefined. Politicians, media, and the white majority shifted their views towards immigrants, despite the generations of migrants who have served the country in many ways. The idea of a nation of immigrants and its influence on the American identity was damaged. During the 2008 presidential elections, there was a resurgence of the importance of immigrants as part of the American identity. It was during these times that the Dreamer movement began.

In Álvarez's (1973) analysis of the psycho-historical and socioeconomic development of Chicanos in the United States, he found that the zeitgeist of each generational cohort shaped their identity. Zeitgeist is the "spirit of the times." His analysis ended in the Chicano era, and to my knowledge, there has not been an analysis of today's zeitgeist, and its effects on Latinos in the U.S. This thesis examines the generational cohort of today known as "Dreamers" and what

aspects make up the zeitgeist of today. Dreamers have played a leading role in immigration policy advocacy work and have mobilized around the idea of American identity. Dreamers have defined the boundaries of their Americanness through the concept of the American Dream. Hochschild (1996) argues that the American dream ideology was rooted in the idea of being able to become rich. Additionally, Americans had equal opportunity to "achieve success as they define it – material or otherwise – through their efforts, and to attain virtue and fulfillment through success" (Hochschild 1996, xvii). Dreamers have mobilized around the American Dream in the hopes to change immigration policy and gain a pathway to citizenship. The American Dream, both explicitly and implicitly, is used in their protest movements, coalition mission statements, and the highly broadcasted and admired valedictorian speeches.

The mobilization around the American Dream comes from the origin stories written in United States history. Origin stories play an essential role in the American identity, both how it shapes individual perceptions of national identity and how it affects how groups interact with one another (Citrin et al. 2001). The origin story of a monolithic, White protestant nation has prevailed, especially since the 2016 presidential election. As many scholars have critiqued before, the United States is a country of white Protestant peoples who settled in the 17th-18th centuries and crystalized a culture that became the backbone of American ideology (Citrin et al. 2001; Huntington 2004; Buchanan 2001; Mangum & Block, Jr. 2018). Immigrants and other marginalized groups such as African Americans have posed a threat to American identity and culture. A competing origin story focuses on the origins of the founding fathers as foreigners to this land. The birth of this nation is not a homogenous group of people who colonized this land, but a nation of people with hopes and aspirations and a necessity to leave their birth country with the dreams of a better future – a nation of immigrants.

While the founding fathers wrote the American Dream, it was never really intended for marginalized groups. This ideology maintained the status quo and further created the Black-White binary. The Black-White binary argues that nonblack marginalized groups compare their grievances to African Americans (Delgado & Stefancic 2017). Thus, marginalized groups assess their relative status in society through this Black-White binary. Because of the American Dream, marginalized groups, and in particular African Americans, have been blamed for their own economic, social, and educational forthcomings instead of the history of slavery, oppression, and continued institutional racism that continues the cycle of generational poverty. The American Dream becomes instrumental for immigrants as they use their work ethic and educational attainment to show that no matter where you come from and the hardship you have faced, there is always a possibility to succeed when in the United States. Additionally, Dreamers are critiqued for the use of the American Dream to differentiate themselves from other 1st generation immigrants who migrated to the U.S. as adults.

The American Dream is adopted not only by immigrants but by poor white people who then view other marginalized groups as barriers to their fulfillment of this dream (Hochschild, 1996). Immigrants instrumentally adopt the story of being a nation of immigrants as one of the pillars for the "American Dream" (Schildkraut 2007; Schildkraut 2011; Chang 2011; Chávez, Monforti & Michelson 2015; Chang, Torrez, Ferguson & Sagar 2017). Despite being a nation of immigrants, and extensive research on the assimilation of immigrant groups (Chang 2011; Chávez, Monforti & Michelson 2015; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf & Waters 2002; McConnell & Marcelli 2007; Chang, Torrez, Ferguson & Sagar 2017), the 2016 presidential election exposed feelings of immigrant threat among many white Americans. Specifically, the danger of an

ethnocultural change. There is sufficient work that has concluded that, in general, most Latinos and Blacks identify strongly with American identity.

The question I engage in this thesis is not whether or not Latinos identify as American, but rather what American identity means for Latino youth. The Dreamer movement has arguably been one of the longest-lasting and most massive Latino political movements in the last decade that has been pillaged by Latino youth. Despite a continuous effort to gain a pathway to citizenship, undocumented youth have not been able to successfully mobilize congress to pass any legislation that would offer immigration relief. This thesis seeks to understand the development of national identity among "Dreamers" in the United States.

There have been several studies that have sought to understand the development of national identity, and more specifically, American identity. Intuitively, these studies have found that some groups have a stronger sense of American identity versus others. In general, these studies have found that white Americans have a stronger sense of American identity when compared to Blacks and Latinos. Among the literature that analyzes Latino national identity, several authors have found that the Latino community assimilate into the dominate (White) culture, adopt the dominant language and essentially "Americanize" themselves despite or maybe in response to years of discrimination and marginalization. By "Americanizing" themselves, they have adopted English in their homes, celebrated dominant U.S. holidays, and took the dominant U.S. ideology of the American Dream. The American dream, in particular, has been a significant pull factor for many immigrants coming from Latin America and has been the basis of the arguably the largest Latino movement (Dreamer) since the Chicano movement. Despite the Dreamer movement being the most extensive and longest-standing Latino movement

in the last decade, to my knowledge, no research has looked at the effects of the American Dream as it relates to national identity formation among this group.

This study uses data from the 2016 Blair Center poll and semi-structured interviews with Latino youth in the Northwest Arkansas Region. In both the poll data and interviews, Latino youth identifying as Dreamers or immigrants are in the sample. The participants in the discussions shaped the rhetoric of this study, and their stories will be the beginnings of a re-investigation of what American truly means for "Dreamers." This paper analyzes the following research questions: <u>What are the boundaries of the American identity? Why is the American dream still a pull factor for Latinos and Latino youth? How has the American Dream influenced Latino youth to adopt the American national identity? What are the ways in which the strength of American identity can be used as a predictor of non-voting political behavior and support for Black political movements?</u>

As Dreamers and other Latino immigrants have adopted the American dream rhetoric, I argue that this movement will effectively mobilize Latino immigrants to engage with the US political system. Contrary to the "challenges" (Huntington 2004; Buchanan 2001) Latino immigrants seem to pose, these groups embrace American ideology and often value American identity descriptors to a greater extent than perceived (Silber Mohamed 2014; Chang 2011; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf & Waters 2002; Citrin et al. 2001). Research has looked at the effects of language, culture, and phenotype cues to mobilize members of the community (Garcia-Bedolla & Michelson 2012; Holland et al., 1988; Turner et al., 1987) and concluded that group membership is a significant indicator of political behavior. This literature does not, however, address "Dreamer" as an identity that mobilizes Latino youth. Adopting these theories on group membership and mobilization, I argue that Latino immigrants, specifically those that self-

identify as Dreamers, mobilize around self-identifying as American, and not Latino or undocumented even though these factors shape their way of life. Further analysis of this generation of Latino immigrants will provide insight into the political ideologies, values, and identities of this developing cohort.

There is sufficient research that concludes that group identity and social identity theory is a rational choice that predicts political participation, especially among minority groups (Wilcox-Archuleta 2018; Dawson 1994; Verba & Nie 1972). But research on social identity theory often concludes that individuals will self-identify with a group that they perceive to be similar to themselves (Turner et al., 1987; Wilcox-Archuleta 2018). However, because rational choice dictates self-categorization, I argue that Dreamers strategically categorize themselves as Americans before their specific national-origin identity because their lives have been shaped and acculturated through the United States. Meaning, it would be worse to be categorized as Mexican (or whatever country of origin they identify with) than an American because it puts them further away from the dominant in-group, therefore marginalizing themselves further.

I propose an analysis of American identity among young undocumented immigrants. Previous research analyzed the strength of national identity of marginalized groups in the U.S., including Latinos. But, to my knowledge, previous research does not investigate the structure of American identity among undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and how the relationship between a sense of American identity can predict Dreamers' non-voting political behavior. Precisely how feelings of meritocracy and hyper documentation (Chang 2011) shape Dreamers' views on movements such as "Black Lives Matter" and kneeling for the national anthem. I begin with an analysis of how survey research has operationalized what it means to be American. In chapter 1, I briefly outline the four schools of thought of Americanism defined by previous

scholars: ethno-culturalism, liberalism, civic republicanism, and incorporationism. In chapter 2, I propose a new framework, social citizenship, to understand Dreamers' American identity drawing from group identity and social identity theory, both of which analyze group membership as a means to mobilize members. Social citizenship is the set of political and social requirements that individuals distinguish as characteristic of national identity. I argue that the concepts of meritocracy and hyper-documentation are necessary to understand how undocumented immigrants create the boundaries of their American identity. I test the concept of social citizenship by using the 2016 Blair Center poll data. Since the social citizenship framework expands the understanding of non-voting political behavior and attitudes, I present the results from OLS models regarding support for the Black Lives Matter movement. I utilize the final chapter to understand some of the inconclusive findings from the 2016 Blair Center data. I use previous indicators of American identity (Chang 2011; Chang, Torrez, Ferguson & Sagar 2017; Silber Mohamed 2014; McConnell & Marcelli 2007; Schildkraut 2011; Schildkraut 2005) with an adaptation to current rhetoric of what it means to be American to structure the semi-interviews of young Latinos. This mixed-methods approach is nuanced in the study of national identity formation among Dreamers and offers a robust understanding of what the boundaries of Americanism truly mean for Latino youth and undocumented immigrants.

Chapter 1: Boundaries of Americanism

Scholars have written from a multitude of schools of thought to capture the American identity. Some of these include liberalism, ethno-culturalism, civic republicanism, and incorporationism (Schildkraut 2011; Schildkraut 2005; Mangum & Block Jr. 2017; Huntington 2004; Mohmed 2014). American identity literature traditionally splits between the two schools of thought, ethno-culturalism, and liberalism. Civic republicanism and incorporationism are two relatively new bodies of thought that merit importance to the analysis of the boundaries of Americanism (Mangum & Block Jr. 2017; Schildkrat 2007). All four schools of thought are necessary for the study of ascriptive characteristics of American identity.

Ethno-culturalism

Ethno-culturalism defines what it means to be American through exclusive boundaries intended to include some people (White people) and exclude others (Latino, Asian, and Black people). Although the United States is not a homogenous nation, ethno-cultural ascriptive characteristics remain relevant as indicators of American identity. Ethno-culturalism is the belief that American identity conceived on northern European values and cultures, and that the United States intended to be a Christian nation, with one language, English (Magnum & Block Jr., 2018; Theiss-Morse 2009; Schildkraut 2007; Schildkraut 2005; Silber Mohamed 2014; Huntington 2004; Buchanan 2001). Despite the traditional, outdated view of a homogenous nation, the United States has gone through a variety of periods where the nation passed policies in reaction to a changing cultural and physical nation (Theiss-Morse 2009). More recently, scholars, politicians, and citizens have expressed their concern for the changes that the United States has faced from large Latino immigrant waves. Theiss-Morse quotes Tom Tancredo's response over

the dispute of the "immigration problem" during his run for 2008 Republican nomination for the US presidency:

> "Sure, there's that nostalgic part of me that idealizes an America that probably never existed. But, an America more *homogenous*."

Tancredo insisted that he was not dreaming of a "white America" but more so an assimilated America, however, he makes no indication as to what these perceived groups need to assimilate to. Huntington (2004) also responds to the "Hispanic challenge," posing this issue by stating that Latino groups threaten to divide the nation into two cultures, seemingly unable to co-exist as one entity.

While some literature (Schildkraut 2005; 2007; 2011) indicates that this element of American identity is not celebrated or possibly not as widely accepted anymore, its ascriptive characteristics are measurements in other literature (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014) as indicators of Americanism. Certainly, with the recent presidential nomination of Donald J. Trump, we can infer that at least some Americans perceive American identity as being challenged by immigrants, and more so these immigrants represent and show opposite values to American identity. To the extent that Latinos and other minorities ascribe to the idea that ethnocultural characteristics are important to American identity, scholars (Schildkraut 2007; Silber Mohamed 2014) have indicated that Latinos endorse characteristics of ethno-culturalism. However, neither of these studies specifically sought to understand the relationship between ascriptive characteristics shaped by ethno-culturalism and Dreamers' sentiment toward other social movements.

Liberalism

On the other side of the spectrum, liberalism is what scholars (Chang, Torrez, Ferguson & Sagar 2017; Hartz 1955; Silber Mohamed 2014; Schildkraut 2011) identify as our civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, right to bear arms, and "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (Jefferson, 1776). This narrative, in particular, has fueled the idea of the American Dream and remains attainable by some and not others. Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2009) briefly mentions "American principles," which fall under this same ideology of liberalism, cited from other literature of Huntington (2004) and his "American Creed." However, his work predominately outlines the ethnocultural characteristics of American identity. Most importantly, Theiss-Morse (2009) notes that this conception of American or Democratic principles is accepted by Americans widely in abstract terms, but "not when it comes to applying them to marginalized groups in American society" (p. 21).

Written in the United States' Declaration of Independence, these freedoms, or "unalienable rights" are part of America's identity. The foundation of the Declaration of Independence forged the concept of the American Dream, formally introduced by Truslow Adams (1931). Adams defined the concept of the American Dream as "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" (p. 214-215). Schildkraut (2007) formally bounds liberalism to the American Dream by stating that liberalism does "not infringe upon the political and economic rights and freedoms of others and that they try to achieve the American Dream through hard work" (p. 599). While liberalism identifies an important aspect of American identity, scholars (Theiss-Morse 2009; Schildkraut 2007; Silber Mohamed 2014) note that it is important to outline the prevalence of ethno-culturalism as a part of American identity.

While these two schools of thought have prevailed in American identity literature, civic republicanism and incorporation are important aspects of American identity that need further analysis (Schildkraut 2007).

Civic Republicanism

Few scholars have investigated the characteristics of civic republicanism, and fewer have studied its characteristics in measuring American identity among the Latino community. Civic republicanism is what some scholars have cited as what it means to be a good citizen or American – or within the Middle East perspective "active citizenship" (Campos 2010; Theiss-Morse 2005; Schildkraut 2007). So, being a good American or citizen means that you not only reap the benefits of being an American, but you actively participate in politics, community, and pursue the interests of the whole, not the individual (Campos 2010). Important indicators of American identity from civic republicanism are having a high sense of patriotism or pride for being an American (Schildkraut 2007; Tocqueville 1990). Civic republicanism is particularly important because it builds a sense of community. In general, civic republicanism is an important aspect of American identity because members of the community are stakeholders in the progress of a nation.

Additionally, scholars argue that patriotism is an ascriptive dimension to American identity (Byrne & Dixon 2013; Wright 2011; Mangum & Block Jr. 2018). These feelings of patriotism should be particularly high for Dreamers when looking at the literature of group identity and national identity (Theiss-Morse 2005), which indicates that to be un-patriotic is to be un-American. This idea of patriotism concerning American identity creates hard boundaries and exclusive to marginalized groups (Theiss-Morse 2005). The idea of patriotism is especially

important for this paper as it relates to identity among Dreamers and their support for other mass mobilization movements. Among the last few years, the African American community and allies kneeled during the national anthem as a political protest against police brutality. Despite protesting being one of our many freedoms that are part of the U.S. history, White Americans have critiqued this movement as unpatriotic and un-American. Base on previous literature, I would assume that Latinos would hold the same view and White Americans. However, because Latinos define their American identity is complex ways, my analysis will show that many Latinos support Black mobilization movements such as this one. Thus, this idea of American identity is important as it relates to the consequences of coalition-building among Latinos and African Americans.

While some work has looked at this dimension of American identity among whites, Latinos, African Americans, and Asians (Schildkraut 2007; Mangum & Block Jr. 2018), none of this work has looked at how high undocumented immigrants score on this indicator. Previous literature looked at the "painfully patriotic" Mexican Americans who have developed of a high sense of belonging and community in the United States (Alvarez 1973) and the Guatemalan immigrant who was "most loyal un-American American" tearing up at the melodies of the National Anthem (Chang 2011). Therefore, the dimensions of civic republicanism are necessary to assess the current cohort of Dreamers.

Incorporationism

The final school of thought for American identity is outlined and empirically analyzed in very few pieces of literature. Incorporationism, introduced by Deborah Schildkraut (2002), comes from her analysis of the changing American identity following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

This dimension of American identity celebrates U.S. history as a beacon for many immigrants since its founding. Additionally, Schildkraut notes that this dimension of American identity does not "celebrate the idea of a melting pot" (2002; p. 515), instead it is the idea that the United States is encompassed in a multitude of cultures making it an idealized society. The idea of multiple cultures, however, does not mean that there are such extreme divisions that national identity does not form (Zolberg & Woon 1999; Schildkraut 2002). It's important to note that Schildkraut concluded that this dimension of American identity was widely accepted before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Following this, however, resentment over immigration and their culture and beliefs reverted American identity to ethnocultural principles.

Summary

While the literature of American identity has looked at these four schools of thought, less literature has looked at the longstanding effects of civic republicanism, and incorporationism is shaping American identity. Furthermore, I contend that another aspect of American identity is the idea of meritocracy and hyperdocumentation. I argue that meritocracy and hyperdocumentation are especially important to our understanding of the nuances of American identity among Dreamers.

Chapter 2: Social Citizenship

Scholars have indicated the importance of both identifying American identity but also the process of self-categorization into these group and national identities in measuring behavior (Turner et al. 1987; Holland et al. 1998; Chang, Torrez, et al. 2017; Shayo 2009; Mangum & Block Jr. 2018; Wilcox-Archuleta 2018; Theiss-Morse 2005). Two frameworks of importance to explain the behavior of Dreamers are social identity theory (Turner et al. 1987) and social practice theory (Holland et al. 1998) both have which have been cited in previous research measuring American identity and Latino group membership.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory specifically outlines how individuals categorize themselves into a group (Turner et al. 1987). This differs, however, from group membership that is imposed upon people through a system of racial hierarchy (Wilcox-Archuleta 2018). Individual members have at least some agency in choosing which groups they self-categorize themselves and the extent to which they feel solidarity within this group. Another important dimension of this theory is that members categorize themselves into these groups not only by way of similarities but also by looking at the differences from their in-group and other out-groups (Turner et al. 1987; Wilcox-Archuleta 2018). Additionally, this categorization into identities has perceived benefits. When these benefits or resources are no longer available because of this group membership, members begin to act individually instead of collectively (Wilcox-Archuleta 2018).

This literature is important to note because social identity theory and group membership are indicators of what issues individual members will engage in. Where does this situate Dreamers? And, what does it even mean to be a Dreamers? For my paper, I identify Dreamers as

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those that arrived in the U.S. young enough to have adopted the dominant culture and norms of the U.S. This group has been acculturated into the U.S. mainstream and will not remember what it was ever like to live in their home country. With the passage of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), we can strictly define the boundaries of Dreamers as those who have qualified for DACA. This group is defined then by the age of their arrival and their desire to remain in the U.S. As the "immigrant threat" narrative has continued throughout the years, and even more so with the current president, Dreamers stand to gain everything by Americanizing themselves. Dreamers thus situate themselves as undocumented immigrants that unknowingly have been brought to the U.S. as children, making them innocent of any immigration sanctions they may have broken. They are bystanders to the decisions made by their parents, but since their arrival have been socialized in the U.S. Dreamers self-categorize themselves as Americans in every dimension it can be, even in some ascriptive characteristics of ethno-culturalism (i.e., speaking English). Additionally, because this group wants to remain in the U.S., they have subscribed to what it means to be an ideal American – going to school, getting a job, and remaining law-abiding members of society.

Social Practice Theory

While social identity theory explains the process of attaining group identity, social practice theory indicates how people "perform" among these self-categorized group memberships (Chang, Torrez, et al. 2017; Holland et al. 1998). Holland et al. (1998) explain that social practice theory requires individuals to "tell others who they are, but even more important, tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are" (p.3). Meaning individual members participate in activities that prove to others that they embody the group they categorize themselves in. Social practice theory then explains why Dreamers engage in

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meritocracy and hyperdocumentation. To continue to look at the development of Latino

mobilization movements, it worth analyzing the effects of the meaning of citizenship.

Citizenship as a contract between the people and the state will allow this group access to political

and social institutions they are otherwise excluded from. To have access to this, this group will

inevitably identify as Americans.

Meritocracy & The Concept of Hyper-Documentation

Meritocracy has not generally been reviewed in the context of American identity. However,

it has been cited as a strong belief in the United States (Katz & Hass, 1988; Kluegel & Smith

1986; Weber 1958; Wiley & Deaux 2012). Meritocracy is the perception that one can achieve

their goals or position in society through hard work (Wiley & Deaux 2012). In this narrative,

meritocracy can also be perceived as the "American Dream" in that the United States is an

environment where anyone can seemingly change their social and economic status through hard

work.

While not directly citing meritocracy, Chang's (2011) autobiography on her life as an

undocumented child in the United States coins the term hyperdocumentation. The idea of

hyperdocumentation is the necessity that undocumented children feel because of their lack of

papers. This lack of a single document that provides undocumented immigrants legal status in

the United States leads to these individuals to overcompensate in whatever else they can to prove

to society and themselves that they are good Americans. Despite what Chang (2011) labels as

hyperdocumentation or the sensation of meritocracy, Dr. Chang faced immense adversaries for

what calls "the mortal sin that would not be forgiven" – her undocumented status.

Countless studies (Chang 2011; Chang, Torrez, et al., 2017; Chávez, Montforti et al., 2015) on the American Dream and Dreamers have too examined the between these two identities. This research had identified that Dreamers hold on to the dream that with school and hard work, they can one day be contributing members to society. By proving that they are good enough, or more so the "good" type of undocumented immigrants, they assimilate into the United States' norms and values, hoping this will one day give them the DREAM act they want and need. While this literature is notable for looking at the American Dream rhetoric, none of this literature has looked at what perceptions Dreamers have of other social movements. Why would Dreamers join the larger social movements of other minority groups in the United States? Especially, if literature suggests that minority groups, particularly Latinos, indicate high levels of American identity and meritocracy. One study by Wiley & Deux (2012) concluded the opposite was true for 2nd generation Latinos who recognized their relative and absolute status in society. As Latinos became aware of their social and economic status, they recognized that a large part of this was due to a history of discrimination and marginalization against Latinos. However, the study did indicate that 1st generation immigrants had a strong sense of meritocracy and a belief in the American Dream. The study did not differentiate an age group that would have been necessary to measure the perceptions of Dreamers in particular.

While the literature has looked at the particular dimensions of American identity, scholars have indicated that social identity theory and social practice theory allow us to understand why people categorize themselves into a particular group or national identity (Turner et al. 1987; Holland et al. 1998; Chang, Torrez, et al. 2017; Shayo 2009; Mangum & Block Jr. 2018; Wilcox-Archuleta 2018). Because I propose a study looking at the relationship between

Dreamers and other social movements, it is important to look at the theoretical frameworks that examine the rational choices of individuals to categorize themselves into a particular group.

Social Citizenship

To capture the "Dreamer" experience, I offer the concept of social citizenship. Social citizenship is a hybrid between social identity theory and social categorization theory. Dreamers have a unique experience with the U.S. institutions, and as such, their identity and group membership are different from other immigrant communities. Dreamers, unlike any other previous immigrant group, have some agency when compared to other immigrant groups from their attainment of DACA. While not all Dreamers benefit from DACA, Dreamers are generally perceived from the public as the "model immigrants" who have socialized into the US culture and have acted as outstanding students and citizens.

So, Social citizenship refers to the acts that individuals, who are historically marginalized (i.e. Dreamers or immigrants), perform to prove to government institutions that they should receive certain benefits. They are socially citizens because they are stakeholders in the community, but do not receive the full benefits that citizens do, particularly White citizens. This nuanced understanding of citizenship adds to existing literature of associative citizenship outlined by Rocco (2014) in that I observe citizenship for Dreamers who are legally not granted this right. Additionally, I analyze forms of belonging by way of performance through non-political institutions, such as education.

Hypotheses

Existing literature has explained the multi-faceted nature of national identity and particularly the complexity of American identity. Latinos have a unique experience with their

national identity in the US because they are seen in terms of immigrants and citizens. I offer social citizenship as a theory to test the following hypotheses:

H_1: Latinos will find the commonly known ascriptive (ethno-cultural) characteristics of American identity to be important to national identity.

H_2: Latino immigrants will find these ascriptive (ethno-cultural) characteristics more important that Latinos and Blacks.

H_3: Compared to Latinos and Blacks, Latino immigrants will indicate a higher means of the strength of American identity.

H_4: The strength of American identity will be a predictor of support for Black political movements such as Black Lives Matter (BLM). Because these movements have been portrayed in media as un-American, Latinos will be less likely to support BLM.

Data & Methods

To test these research hypotheses, I employ the 2016 Blair Center poll data. The 2016 Blair Center Poll is a national survey with a special focus on the American South that has previously run for the years 2010 and 2012. The Blair Center Poll recognizes the American South as former states of the Confederacy. The poll data used for this study comes from the most recent 2016 survey that was administered following the November 2016 presidential elections. The survey data include an oversample of Caucasians, African Americans, and Latinos living in the American South. The oversample of this population and region makes this the only rigorous academic survey with a specific focus on the South, African Americans, and Latinos.

For the hypotheses that predicted strength of American identity, I utilized the mean

strength of American identity, which came from the survey item that asked, "In general, how

strongly do you think of yourself as any of the following? (1) American (2) Southerner (3)

Ethnic Identity (4) Tea Party member (5) Christian fundamentalist (6) Immigrant. Participants

indicated the strength of each identity individuals on a 5-point Likert scale. This was recoded

into a dichotomous variable for the purposes of the model. "Strongly" or "very strongly" were

recoded to 1= "yes" and "not at all," "not strongly" and "neutral were recoded to 0 = "no."

Mean Strength of American Identity
(2016)

Group	Value
All Latino (n=1,021)	3.2
Latino immigrant (n=572)	2.3
Black (n=915)	3.3
White (n=1,732)	3.6

Scale: not at all — not strongly — neutral — strongly — very strongly

In general, how strongly do you think of yourself as American?
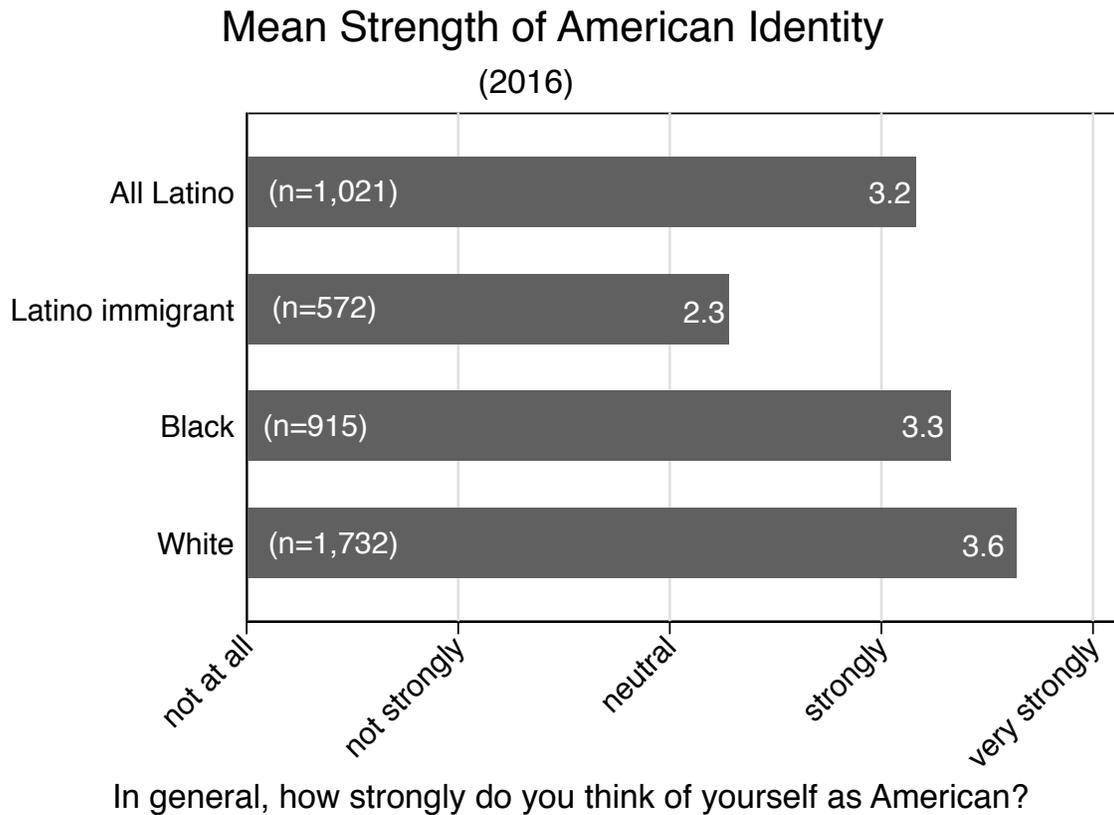
Source: 2016 Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas

Figure 1

Figure 1 illustrates the mean strength of American identity among all Latinos, Latino

immigrants, Blacks, and Whites. The mean strength of American identity between all Latinos
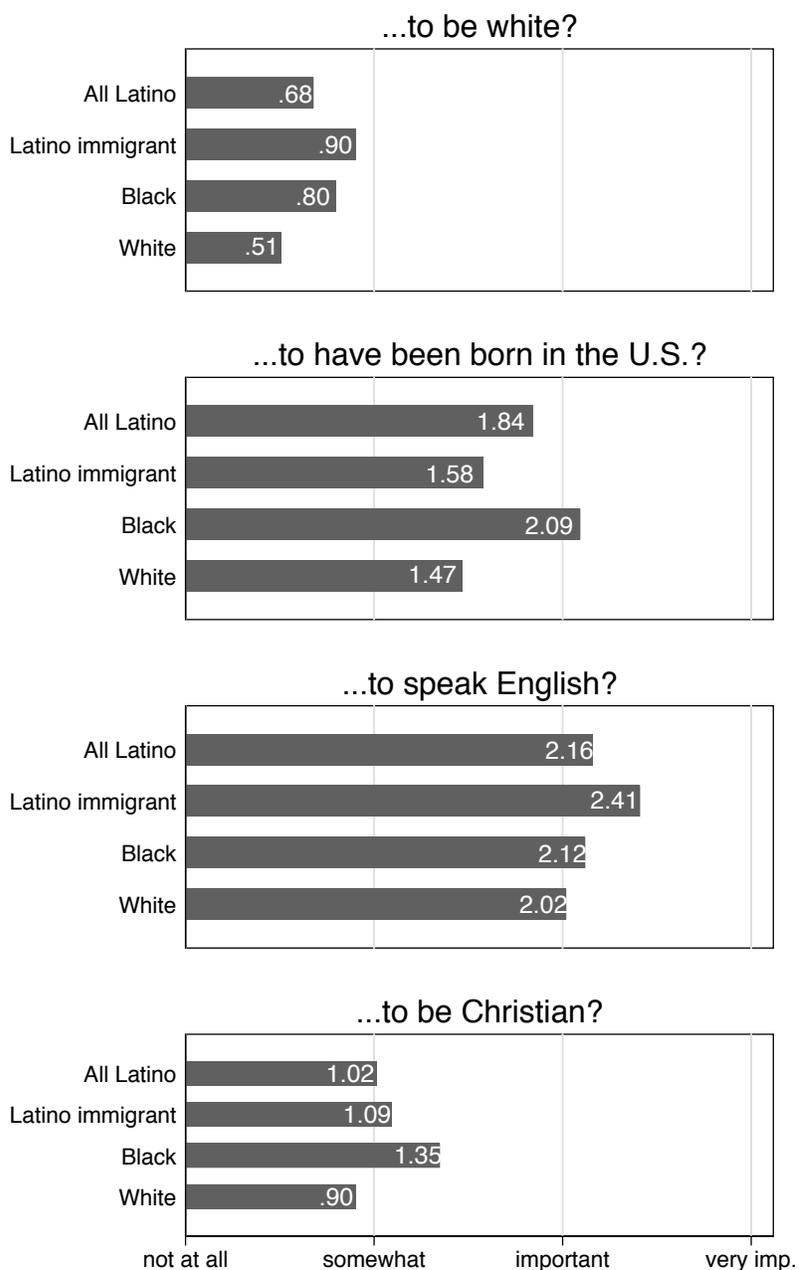
and Latino immigrants is particularly interesting as it does not fit the initial hypothesis proposed. The findings from this figure do not support the third hypothesis that Latino immigrants will think of themselves as Americans more than Latinos, Blacks, and Whites. Instead, this figure shows the opposite as Latino immigrants typically indicating their American identity as falling somewhere near neutral.

The final hypothesis utilizes the dependent variable of *support for black lives matter*. This variable came from the survey item that asked, "We'd like to get your feelings toward some people and groups in the news these days. Please rate the following people or groups on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. A rating above 50 means that you feel favorable and warm toward them. A rating below 50 means that you feel unfavorable and cool toward them. A rating right at the 50-degree mark means you don't feel particularly warm or cold."

Independent Variables

The independent variable used in the probit estimates of Strong American identity was *ascriptive characteristics* of American identity. This survey item asked, "When you think of what it means to be fully 'American' in the eyes of most Americans, do you think it is very important, important, somewhat important, or not important to have been born in the United States? Speak English well? Be white? Be Christian?" Figure 2 illustrates what individuals indicated as important to American identity. From the figure, we see that being White and being Christian are not seen as important to American identity for all subgroups. Not surprisingly, speaking English was the ascriptive characteristic that Latino immigrants regarded highly as being important to American identity. This could be because this characteristic is the only mechanism Latino immigrants can change in their own identity to articulate American identity.

When you think of what it means to be fully "American" in the eyes of most Americans, how important is it..

...to be white?

Group	Value
All Latino	.68
Latino immigrant	.90
Black	.80
White	.51

...to have been born in the U.S.?

Group	Value
All Latino	1.84
Latino immigrant	1.58
Black	2.09
White	1.47

...to speak English?

Group	Value
All Latino	2.16
Latino immigrant	2.41
Black	2.12
White	2.02

...to be Christian?

Group	Value
All Latino	1.02
Latino immigrant	1.09
Black	1.35
White	.90

not at all   somewhat   important   very imp.

Source: 2016 Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas

Figure 2

The subgroups utilized for this study are Latinos, Black, and White. These independent variables were created from the survey from self-identification in the initial screening questions.

These independent variables were included to revisit previous literature that has analyzed Latino

attitudes towards American identity but have not analyzed Latino immigrants specifically.

I operationalize *Latino immigrants* from responses to the survey item that asked if

participants are Latino and indicated "some other country" on survey question "were you born in

the mainland United States, Puerto Rico or some other country?" This survey question was the

closest variable I could use to capture what "Dreamers" into the models might be. It is important

to note, however, that I did not create a variable that captured the age group of 18-30-year-old

non-citizens because the sample size was too small. For the purposes of the quantitative analysis,

I offer a nuanced comparison between citizen and non-citizen Latinos.

The variable *U.S. citizen* was used to differentiate among Latino immigrants. No

questions asked legal status, so this was the closest way to measure whether the Latino

immigrant could potentially be undocumented. It is important to note that being a non-citizen did

not mean that the Latino immigrant was undocumented. This variable was coded dichotomously

as U.S. Citizen "1" and non-citizen Latino as "0."

American identity, Southern identity, and *Ethnic identity* are independent variables for the

final hypothesis. All of these variables are operationalized from the survey item that asks: "In

general, how strongly do you think of yourself as any of the following? (1) American (2)

Southerner (3) Ethnic Identity (4) Tea Party member (5) Christian fundamentalist (6) Immigrant"

on a 5-point Likert scale. For this model, the *identity* variables remained at the 5-point scale.

I included the independent variable of *southern resident*s for these models due to the

oversample and uniqueness of the Blair center poll data capturing residents of Southern states.

Southern residents are those who indicated "yes" to the survey item: Have you ever lived in a

Southern state (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, or North Carolina)?"

For all of the models presented, I controlled the following extraneous variables, gender, age, education, ideology, and income to ensure to limit the probability of a spurious relationship. Descriptive statistics for all variable are reported in Appendix A.
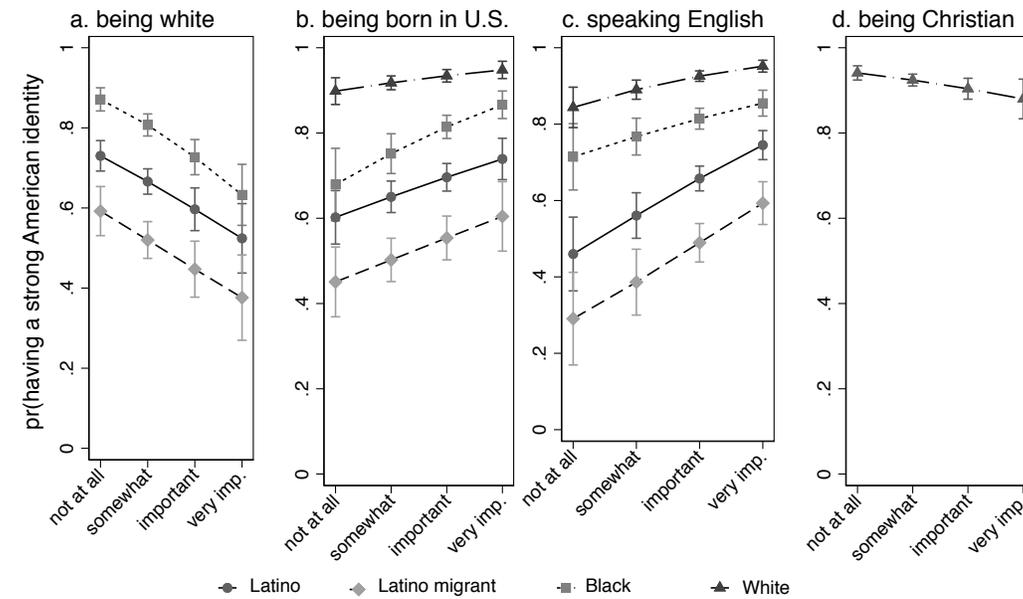
Boundaries of Americanism

I began my analysis of the boundaries of Americanism among Latinos by revisiting models previously studied about the importance of ascriptive characteristics (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014). For this model, I ran probit estimation models to determine the relationship between Latino, Black, and White participants the boundaries of Americanism. I used a probit model because the ascriptive characteristics "being born in the U.S., being white, speaking English, and being Christian" were coded into dichotomous variables 0 as "not important" and 1 as "important." This type of regression model is preferred when the dependent variable can only take two values. To reference all of the control variables used and coefficients of relationships refer to Appendix B. In this model, I included the subgroup of Latino immigrants because I wanted to capture the potential difference between Dreamers and other Latinos in the US. Again, Dreamers are not fully captured in these models because the survey did not explicitly ask any questions regarding immigrant status other than asking if the participant was a US citizen.

Figure 3 depicts the marginal effects of ascriptive "Americanness" on the strength of American identity. Latino, Latino immigrants, and Black participants had a negative relationship with the indicator of "being white" as a part of the American identity as depicted in Figure 3.a. This is not surprising even among the Latino immigrant group considering the theory of social

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citizenship. If Latino immigrants indicate being white as part of the American identity, that potentially leaves out hundreds of immigrants who are not white-passing. Because they are socializing themselves in the American identity status quo, this ascriptive characteristic will be seen as a barrier. Both being born in the U.S. and speaking English was positively correlated with the boundaries of Americanism. Both of these findings are supported by the literature that analyzes ethno-culturalism as a school of thought for understanding the boundaries of Americanism (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014).

A strong American identity was recoded into a dichotomous variable. Recoding it in this way allowed me to analyze the effects of each additive measure on the strength of American identity. Among all groups, as groups indicated "being white" and "being Christian" as important ascriptive characteristics of Americanness, the strength of American identity dropped. For "being born in the US" and "speaking English," there was a positive relationship between the importance of these ascriptive characteristics and the strength of American identity. These marginal effects support previous literature on Latinos and the strength of American identity (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014). However, the figure does not give us a better understanding of why Latino immigrants are using the American identity and American dream in their political speeches to gain benefits. Additionally, the figure illustrates that Latino immigrants across all ascriptive characteristics score lower than any other demographics, and the marginal effects are not as significant.

Marginal effects of ascriptive 'Americanness' on strong American identity

Source: 2016 Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas

Figure 3

Support for Black Lives Matter

This study sought out to understand two things: the boundaries of Americanism for immigrants, and how this could be used to predict support for traditionally "un-American" political movements. Among these highly critiqued movements have been the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and kneeling during the National Anthem, both led by Black citizens. The Black Lives Matter movement pre-dated the recent protests by NFL players, so the 2016 Blair data only had questions on support for BLM. During the semi-structured interviews, I supplement this data by asking questions about feelings toward the BLM movement and kneeling during the National Anthem.

Media often asks why Latinos and Blacks do not have a stronger sense of solidarity among one another. Latinos for Trump and the perpetuation of anti-Blackness is often misunderstood by many, including myself. Fox News and mainstream media outlets alike have

revealed the backlash among white Americans against both of these political protests. Fox News referenced BLM as a "murder movement," claiming that the BLM movement incited violence against police officers (Smith 2020; Hanson & McCormack 2020). More recently, when Jay-Z and Beyoncé sat during the National Anthem at the NFL Superbowl, they were received with immense backlash on major social media outlets. Tomi Lahren, a famous conservative Twitter influencer, critiqued Jay-Z, and Beyoncé's refusal to stand during the National Anthem as "downright disrespectful and disgraceful behavior" (London 2020). There is thus, some consideration to take into investigating whether the un-American portrayal of these political movements by media influences Latino support.

I ran an OLS regression model to compare support for BLM among Latino, Black, and White respondents. For this model, I included two additional independent variables to ensure that the relationship observed was not spurious: experience with discrimination and being unfairly stopped by the police. These variables coded from the survey item that asked: "In your day-to-day life, how often do any of the following things happen to you because of your racial or ethnic background? Would you say very often, fairly often, once in a while, or never? (a) You experience discrimination, (b) You are treated with less respect than other people, (c) You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores, (e) You are called names or insulted, (g) You have been unfairly stopped by police, (h) Your competency or intelligence is challenged." I coded both variables on a 4-point scale, 0 "never" 1 "once in a while" 2 "fairly often" 3 "very often." Like the previous models, I included the standard variables, gender, ideology, age, education, and income, for robustness.

Figure 4 plots the OLS regression coefficients of the full regression model provided in Appendix C. Despite the media portraying BLM as un-American, interestingly, the relationship

between a strong American identity was not a statistically significant predictor of support for

BLM. There is some worth noting that there was a negative relationship as respondents indicated

a higher sense of American identity; however, across all races and ethnicities, there was no group

that that was statistically significant. What is worth noting in this model is the point of departure

between the variables "ethnic identity" and "southern resident." Recall that "ethnic identity"

referred to the strength that one had with their own ethnic identity and "southern resident"

referred to those who indicated they had lived in South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama,

Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, or North Carolina. The relationship

between strong ethnic identity among Latinos resulted in a positive correlation between Latinos

and support for BLM. However, when Latinos indicated that they had once lived or lived in a

Southern state, the relationship became negative. There is something to be said here about

Southern identity but more so location. While I do not explore this finding in this paper, I

attempt to capture this point of departure during the semi-structured interviews to understand

why being a Southern resident leads to lower support for BLM.

OLS estimates of support for Black Lives Matter (2016)
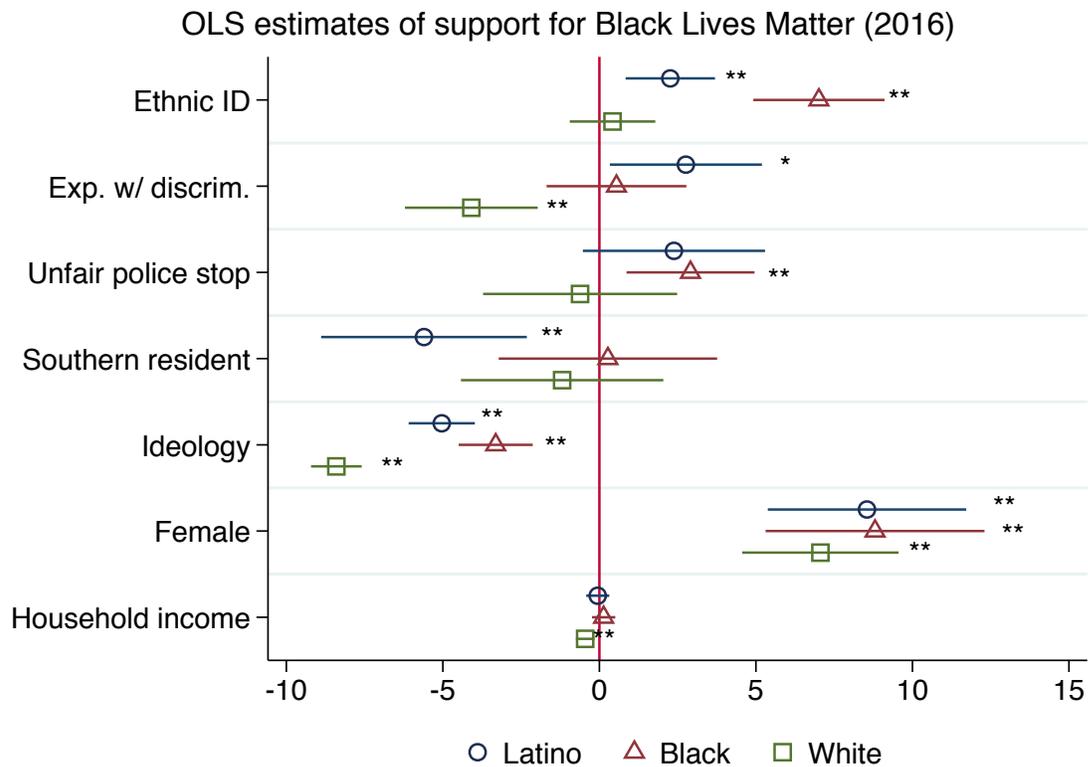
* p<.05 ** p<.01

Source: 2016 Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas

Figure 4

Summary

In my initial hypotheses, I used the 2016 Blair poll data to gain a nuanced understanding of the boundaries of Americanism for Latino immigrants. In particular, I sought to understand the relationship between the strength of American identity and support for Black political movements. Due to the lack of original data, I could not target the "Dreamer" group that has been largely understudied in literature. Because of this, I move onto the qualitative piece of this study.

In addition to the lack of data, the results from the regression models largely rejected all of my original hypotheses. There are a number of reasons why this could have occurred, ranging from the way the questions were asked in the survey, to the political climate, and the small sample size

of the age cohort needed to capture Dreamers. The following chapter examines American

identity and the idea of the American dream among 7 participants from the Northwest Arkansas

region. Their understanding of the American Dream offers a nuanced understanding of what

being American truly means to them.

Chapter 3: The American Dream for Me

Although Dreamers are socialized in the United States from a young age, their immigrant experience is unique in formulating their identity. The uniqueness of their immigrant experience also poses issues in quantitative measures. Because this group lacks protections against immigration enforcement agencies, they have an exceptional experience with governmental institutions. Survey data cannot capture this body of immigrants because of ethical and moral issues.

To capture the Dreamer narrative of American identity, I conducted semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews provide a general guide for the conversation; however, they are open-ended in nature (Burnham et al. 2008; Gilbert & Stoneman 2016). This technique was the most fitting for this research because I wanted to understand how Dreamers defined the boundaries of Americanness and how they fit themselves into that American identity using inductive questioning. The purpose of the semi-structured interviews was to understand the experience of DACA recipients and Latino youth in the U.S. and how this could be used to predict their non-voting behavior, and support for mass political movements traditionally portrayed in media as "un-American." Based on the results from the Blair Center Data, I formed the following hypotheses regarding Dreamer identity:

H_1: Individuals who are DACA recipients will have an understanding of American identity in terms of meritocracy and incorporationism.

H_2: Individuals who are DACA recipients will be more involved in local and national politics than those who are 1.5 generation immigrants.

H_3: Compared to individuals who are U.S. born Latinos, individuals who identify as DACA recipients will be less likely to view the traditional ascriptive characteristics of American identity as important.

H_4: Individuals who are 1.5 generation immigrants will hold the traditional understanding of the "American Dream" as working hard, going to school, and being an outstanding citizen.

Data & Methods

To gather participants for my study, I used a Google Forms screening survey to ensure that the interviewees identified as "Latino" and were between the ages of 18 to 30. A total of 45 individuals filled out the initial screening survey; however, only seven participates decided to continue with the interview. The screening form was emailed through the University of Arkansas Latinx listserv in addition to outside affiliated Latino groups. I sought to outsource the advertising material so that I could get participants that were not necessarily University of Arkansas students. Unfortunately, most of the participants were University of Arkansas students, and all of the participants had had at least some college training. This is, of course, not representative of the Latino youth in Arkansas or any of the stated in the Confederate South.

In the initial screening form, I did not ask questions about immigration status due to ethical and confidentiality reasons. I followed the guidelines from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that my research methods did not violate any ethical guidelines. The IRB approval for this research appears in Appendix D. Of the 7 participants, 3 identified themselves as DACA recipients. DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) passed in 2012, giving Dreamers temporary relief from deportation while they continued to advocate for the DREAM Act. One-and-a-half generation immigrants are defined as individuals who have both or one parent who immigrated to the United States. Ages ranged from 23 years

to 31 years old, and all of the participants had at least some college experience. Table 1below reports some demographic information for each participant. No names were taken during the interview to maintain confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in person and audio recorded. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to an hour and were transcribed and analyzed afterward.

Table 1. Background of Participants

Participant	Immigrant Background	Age	Education Achieved
1	1.5 Generation	23	Master's Student
2	DACA	31	Ph.D. Student
3	1.5 Generation	23	Some Community College
4	DACA	28	Ph.D. Student
5	1.5 Generation	28	Ph.D. Student
6	1.5 Generation	23	Some Community College
7	DACA	26	Bachelor's Student

Results

I asked the same set of primary questions regarding demographics, immigrant background, the American Dream and American identity, and political behavior. The full set of interview questions appear in Appendix E. The themes that emerged during the interviews were feelings of disillusionment, meritocracy and hyperdocumentation, and low political behavior.

Feelings of Disillusionment

Although three participants identified as DACA recipients, all of the participants had a history of immigration in their families. Of the non-DACA participants, all identified as 1.5 generation immigrants. The distinctiveness between participants and their family immigrant

history allowed for a comparative analysis of the importance of legal status in formulating an understanding of the American Dream and their national identity. Here I offer an explanation of feelings of disillusionment among 1.5 generation immigrants and DACA recipients by analyzing where the disillusionment for the DACA recipients begins.

In both 1.5 immigrants and the DACA recipients, they had all experienced some indirect or direct narration of the American Dream in their lives either from their parents or from school. The 1.5 immigrant group spoke about the American Dream in the traditional sense: working hard, going to school, and having a family. Of the immigrants who were DACA recipients, they all recalled the Dreamer movement as a fundamental turning point in their lives. For all of the recipients, they became involved either directly or indirectly. Some were involved directly in that they attended Dreamer marches and followed the news around the Dreamer movement; others knew that the Dreamer movement had been a fundamental process in them attaining DACA status. More so, they understood that the Dreamer movement became the catalyst for many young immigrants to begin to come out of the shadows and show the world who they were. Despite having involvement with the Dreamer movement, the DACA recipients had disillusionment with the American Dream.

When asked what the American dream meant to the DACA recipients, they stated:

"I personally think it's a lie, and it's a lie ... it's a cultural narrative that we've been telling ourselves for post-World War II when there was an actual version of the American dream, but again it was only available for white Americans where you had a house, you had a car, and you had a good-paying job." – Participant 2

"Yeah, that's a hard question. Something that I've been thinking about a lot lately because I used to ... Growing up you wanted to be the good immigrant. I got good grades, I didn't have license, I didn't drive so that I wouldn't get pulled over or stuff like that. And you do all those things with the hope that at some point your status changes….

And it hasn't. And I think I used to just be really confined in the idea that I had to stay here. This is my home, this is where I belong. And I still think that, that I have a right to be here, but I'm not super afraid of the idea of having to live somewhere else. I feel less tied to pursuing the American dream or trying to stay here." – Participant 4

"So, no. It has looked very different for me throughout ... just throughout my journey of growing and learning. So yeah, before I think, when I was young, it used to be like, "Oh we can go to Disney World now." We can do all this fun shit. But ever since I started to read and really pay attention to people that I do admire, especially people that do come from my country, the way that they talk about the US, it has really opened my eyes a lot. So, I think for me, that looks a lot different. I don't think I could ... anytime soon I could live in peace, in peace of mind, here in the US. I feel like I can achieve that in other countries a lot easier. I feel like that dream of liberation for me, it'll expire on the other side." – Participant 7

Despite having memory of immigrating to the US, the DACA recipients all felt some experience of disillusionment for the American Dream. Unlike their parents, who had also immigrated to the US, they no longer envisioned the same dream that had been narrated to them at a young age. What is interesting about the participant's narrative about the American dream is that in some ways, they have experienced disillusionment, but in others, their actions have shown quite the opposite. All the DACA recipients had reported that they tried to remain outstanding citizens by following the law, some continuing their education to a doctoral level, and one immersing themselves heavily into political campaigns and non-profit organizations. Despite achieving high levels of success in school and in their communities, when asked if they could achieve the American Dream, participants 2, 4, and 7 stated they could not, at least not in the way the US narrated it.

From the 1.5 generation, when asked about the American Dream, all provided the common narrative of "working hard" to achieve success.

"Just opportunity, come, make families, start a family, buy a house, get a job. Repeat." – Participant 6

"You can do anything you want here in America, anything's possible. You're going to have

to do a lot of work, but you can get to where you desire. For some people it's more challenging, but part of the American dream, it's anyone can make it here….

Well, I'm a grad student. My mom had me at 14, I had a bunch of other statistics against me. I grew up in Gardena near Compton, so near bad neighborhoods in California. So, I had every statistics against me and we achieved that as a family to move out of it. So, I'm here now living it and I'm proud to be American." – Participant 5

Participant 1 had a unique response when asked about the American Dream. She identified as 1.5 generation. While both of her parents had immigrated to the US, they achieved legal permanent residence fairly quickly and she could not recall experiencing a sense of fear of deportation. She recognized that her family had been privileged in their immigrant experience due to the relative easiness they had in immigrating here and attaining legal permanent residence. When I asked her about what the American Dream meant to her, initially, she had difficulty explaining it what it meant both in terms of the traditional narrative, and what it actually meant for marginalized communities. She stated:

"Although I feel like I definitely had the opportunities to be able to move up mostly because my parents pushed me so hard, I know that for other people this American dream isn't plausible because of so many different factors in their lives that just doesn't make it possible for them."

Despite being a 1.5 generation immigrant, a first-generation student, and identifying as an Afro-Latina, she disassociated herself from "other people" who cannot access the American Dream. She was the only participant who had a unique experience with immigration in that both of her parents had received benefits relatively quickly.

Meritocracy & Hyperdocumentation

Initially, I expected to find that DACA recipients (or Dreamers) would value the American dream more than other Latinos. Instead, Dreamers were hyper-aware that the American Dream may not be a possibility for any of them and critiqued the cultural narrative.

Even though Dreamers critiqued the American Dream, they still actively participated in the narrative. This was shown in their educational attainment, similar to what was documented in previous studies of hyperdocumentation and meritocracy (Chang 2011; Chang, Torrez, et al., 2017). The finding that Latino youth, in general, were hyper-documenting themselves through their education and performing in "American" activities was not surprising. Although it is worth further exploration since Dreamers had a distinct critique of the American dream.

I asked the participants what it meant to be American for them and whether or not they identified as Americans themselves. The answer ranged from the ideas of incorporationism () to ethno-culturalism (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014; Theiss-Morse 2009), but there was little mention of civil republicanism (Campos 2010; Schildkraut 2007; Theiss-Morse 2005; Tocqueville 1990) or liberalism (Chang, Torrez, Ferguson & Sagar 2017; Hartz 1955; Jefferson 1776; Silber Mohamed 2014; Schildkraut 2011). Participant 5 explained the complexity of the boundaries of Americanism. He noted there were not any harsh boundaries but more so what was in the "heart" and stated, "I think what makes you American is living here, being good to your neighbor, and just trying to better everyone around you." The concept of "being good" or "trying to better everyone" follows the literature of meritocracy that has largely been understudied within the framework of national identity formation. Following the concepts of meritocracy, participant 6 also stated that being American had to do with being a "contributing member to society."

Low Political Behavior

An unexplored area of study among Dreamers is their political involvement outside the Dreamer movements. I asked a series of questions regarding political involvement ranging from as little to following local and national news to actively participating in campaigns, registering

people to vote, or protesting. I focused on non-voting political behavior because I wanted to capture the Dreamer experience with politics.

Liberalism and civic republicanism are two schools of thought that reviewed the importance of active citizenship among members of the community as important to formulating national identity. Active citizenship, meaning individuals who are participating in governmental institutions regularly. In my theorization of social citizenship, I anticipated that Dreamers actively participate in politics more than 1.5 generation immigrants. Instead, all the participants, except participant 7, indicated being highly involved in politics. Interestingly, participant 7 also held very strong views against the American dream and political processes stating, "So to be honest with you, I do not believe in the system of voting. I don't like politicians either." Participant 7 currently held DACA status but had managed the campaign for an Arkansas politician and actively participated in the Dreamer movement. All other DACA indicating participants had remembered the beginning of the Dreamer movement a decade ago, however, indicated that they had not been highly involved in the political movement. While this was unexpected in that it did not follow the theorizations of meritocracy and social citizenship, it was expected that, in general, citizens have low political participation regardless of immigrant status. This non-participation is thus not a critique of Latino populations or Dreamers but more so support to the feelings of disillusionment many feel in the US political system.

Discussion

During the interviews, I was able to gather invaluable insight into the lives of DACA recipients and their experience with the American Dream. Media, politics, and advocacy groups have constructed these immigrant's identities. Since the 2016 presidential elections, however,

members of this community have reexamined what it means to be a citizen of the US. While some of the participants may not ascribe to the national identity, they are still actively participating in the aspects of the American identity. Mostly through meritocracy and the desire to "succeed" in the US and do better than their immigrant parents.

Hypothesis 1

From the literature, I had predicted that DACA recipients would understand American identity in terms of meritocracy and hyper-documentation. Meritocracy was reflected in the participants' desire to achieve higher levels of education and to do well in society, particularly better than their parents. For those, I categorized as Dreamers (DACA Recipients); however, the ability to be seen as society as American and achieve the traditional "American Dream" did not seem attainable. They indicated this disillusionment both from the decade long battle they have had with congress seeking a pathway to citizenship and from the 2016 presidential elections that revealed anti-immigrant racist attitudes held by a large majority of. White citizens and the elected president.

Hypothesis 2

When it came to involvement in politics, I found that DACA recipients and 1.5 generation participants alike had low political participation. In addition to low political participation, all participants showed support for BLM and kneeling during the national anthem. I had hoped that during the semi-structured interviews, I would be able to understand the point of departure for low support for BLM when Latinos were southern residents, however, none of the participants that had grown up in Arkansas had indicated that they did not support this movement. Only participant 5 indicated some empathy for White citizens who backlashed both

political movements. Recall that participant 5 was a U.S. born citizen and believed that he could achieve the traditional American Dream.

Hypothesis 3

For the third hypothesis, I was unable to determine what the ascriptive boundaries for any group were due to the inductive questioning that occurred in all interviews. All of the participants quantified their American identity by place. Indicating that that being American meant being the United States and contributing to society. None identified any of the traditional boundaries (Christianity, Speaking English, Being Born in the U.S., or Being White) as important to their American identity or the concept of American identity at all.

Hypothesis 4

In the final hypothesis, I predicted that 1.5 generation immigrants would understand the American Dream in a traditional sense. In addition to that, they will believe that the American Dream is attainable for them. From the participants, I found this to true in most cases. All of the participants who were 1.5 generation immigrants defined the American Dream as the ability to work, gain an education, and succeed while the Dreamer participants had experienced disillusionment with the American dream. Because all of the 1.5 generation immigrants were U.S. citizens, they were not faced with any institutional barriers in gaining economic success.

Summary

It is unclear from the literature what caused the disillusionment of the participants, as some scholars have noted (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014; Theiss-Morse 2009) that hatred towards immigrants has generally existed for some time now. While Chang (2011) documented hyperdocumentation and meritocracy in her research, she still found that Dreamers were hopeful that they would someday attain the American dream. While the

participants of this study were disillusioned with the cultural narrative, they still actively participated in it. The discontent from the prospect of their livelihoods could have accounted for a number of reasons: age, education attainment, or experience with discrimination. In this study, I did not explore the possibility of these factors influencing their disillusionment; however, this can be addressed in future research. The findings from the qualitative study have little generalizability because of the demographics of the participants, such as educational attainment, the sampling used, and the lack of Dreamer participants. However, the themes that emerged from this portion of the study are worth noting for informing future research.

Conclusion

Dreamers find themselves in a unique situation within the United States as both stakeholders in governmental processes and institutions yet lacking the basic access to function within these institutions. For the past decade, Dreamers have utilized the American Dream narrative to gain a pathway to citizenship passed in congress. This cultural narrative has been used in their protests, speeches, and media. Despite the saturation of American Dream propaganda, this group has largely been understudied by identity and political behavior analysts.

 When I began my analysis, I had made assumptions about the national identity formation of Dreamers in the US. Because this group had arrived at the US at a young age and socialized themselves into mainstream society, I assumed that they would hold a very strong sense of American identity. In addition to a strong sense of identity, I argued that their unique position in society made them vulnerable targets if they were to go against the white majority values and norms. Because Dreamers stand to lose a pathway to citizenship, they will participate in activities that prove to themselves and others that they deserve a place at the table. While in many aspects, Dreamers participated in activities to prove their worth (i.e., attaining a high education or being politically involved), in many ways, they became disillusioned with the idea of being American and having the American Dream.

The 2016 Blair poll data offered an initial understanding of the attitude's Latinos had towards American identity. In addition to measuring the importance of ascriptive characteristics to the American identity, I analyzed the strength of American identity for Latino, Black, and White participants. These findings were supported by previous literature measuring the boundaries of Americanism (Mangum & Block Jr., 2018; Silber Mohamed 2014).

In addition to utilizing the poll data for quantitative analysis, I argue that this type of research must include qualitative analysis. Because Dreamers are not protected by the government from deportation, they have a unique experience with institutions. Fear of backlash makes it difficult to truly capture this population of immigrants in survey data. Apart from the lack of access to data, a qualitative analysis using semi-structured interviews offer a nuanced understanding of Americanness and the American Dream.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Descriptive Statistics

2016 Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
Strong American ID	0.814	0.389	0 = not strong	1 = strong
Black Lives Matter Therm.	47.412	31.283	0 = very cool	100 = very warm
White Amer. Boundary	0.662	1.004	0 = not at all important	3 = very important
Born US Amer. Boundary	1.688	1.160	0 = not at all important	3 = very important
English Amer. Boundary	2.123	0.970	0 = not at all important	3 = very important
Christian Amer. Boundary	1.058	1.130	0 = not at all important	3 = very important
American Identity	3.290	1.133	0 = not at all	4 = very strongly
Ethnic Identity	3.263	1.022	0 = not at all	4 = very strongly
Southern Identity	1.083	1.386	0 = not at all	4 = very strongly
Experiences discrimination	0.731	0.798	0 = never	3 = very often
Unfairly stopped by police	0.346	0.712	0 = never	3 = very often
Age	50	17	18	93
Sex	0.497	0.500	0 = male	1 = female
Education	10.086	2.303	1 = none	14 = prof., doc.

Household Income	11.682	5.067	1 =	21 =
Southern State Resident	0.498	0.500	0 = non-south	1 = south
Ideology	4.038	1.619	1 = strong liberal	7 = strong conserv.
U.S.- born (Latinos)	0.440	0.497	0 = immigrant	1 = U.S.-born
U.S. Citizen (Latinos)				
Mexican Ancestry (Latinos)	0.558	0.497	0 = non-Mexican	1 = Mexican
U.S. Citizen (Latinos)	0.716	0.451	0 = non-citizen	1 = citizen
Time in U.S. (Latino imm.)	23.472	13.955	0 years	68 years

Appendix B. Probit estimates of having a strong American identity (2016)

	Latino	Latino Immigrants	Black	White
Being American means…				
…being white	-0.184** (0.047)	-0.183** (0.062)	-0.264** (0.046)	-0.087 (0.062)
…being born in the U.S.	0.127** (0.044)	0.130* (0.060)	0.215** (0.055)	0.118* (0.053)
…speaking English	0.253** (0.053)	0.262** (0.072)	0.164** (0.058)	0.217** (0.054)
…being Christian	0.051 (0.041)	0.078 (0.054)	0.073 (0.049)	-0.129* (0.053)
Age	0.008** (0.003)	0.008 (0.005)	0.012** (0.003)	0.015** (0.003)
Female	-0.165 (0.087)	-0.047 (0.121)	0.004 (0.101)	-0.023 (0.090)
Education	0.014 (0.017)	-0.006 (0.022)	0.011 (0.030)	0.010 (0.026)
Household income	0.047** (0.010)	0.045** (0.015)	0.030** (0.011)	0.038** (0.010)
Southern resident	0.067 (0.092)	0.037 (0.127)	0.162 (0.101)	0.117 (0.100)
Ideology	-0.054 (0.030)	-0.131** (0.043)	-0.043 (0.036)	0.155** (0.029)
U.S. born	0.676** (0.099)			
	Δ *.24*			
Mexican ancestry	-0.083 (0.094)	-0.285* (0.141)		
		Δ *-.11*		

Appendix B. Probit estimates of having a strong American identity (2016), cont.

	Latino	Latino Immigrants	Black	White
Years in U.S.		0.004 (0.006)		
U.S. citizen		0.367** (0.140)		
		Δ *.15*		
Constant	-1.233** (0.288)	-0.986* (0.401)	-0.657 (0.384)	-1.065** (0.325)
N	1,021	568	915	1,732
Pseudo R^2	0.137	0.121	0.119	0.127
chi^2	179.9	85.71	112.2	142.0
df ǀ ll	12 ǀ -566.2	13 ǀ -312.6	10 ǀ -413.9	10 ǀ -490.2

Standard errors in parentheses * p<.05, ** p<.01 ***Marginal effects [min→max]***
Source: Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas (2016)

Appendix C. OLS Estimates of Support for Black Lives Matter (2016)

	Latino	Black	White
American ID	-1.084 (0.623)	-0.834 (0.845)	-1.595 (0.914)
Ethnic ID	2.266** (0.727)	7.012** (1.068)	0.420 (0.697)
Southern ID	0.552 (0.772)	-0.361 (0.631)	-0.606 (0.572)
Exp. w/ discrimination	2.763* (1.238)	0.546 (1.138)	-4.091** (1.081)
Unfair stop by police	2.382 (1.483)	2.911** (1.042)	-0.617 (1.580)
Southern resident	-5.603** (1.675)	0.273 (1.778)	-1.190 (1.648)
Ideology	-5.036** (0.539)	-3.312** (0.603)	-8.402** (0.413)
Female	8.549** (1.615)	8.806** (1.781)	7.061** (1.272)
Age	0.011 (0.056)	0.080 (0.056)	0.068 (0.037)
Education	0.339 (0.056)	-0.226 (0.490)	0.353 (0.369)
Household income	-0.053 (0.188)	0.136 (0.189)	-0.454** (0.152)
U.S. born	1.220 (1.812)		
Mexican ancestry	1.343 (1.695)		
Constant	54.29** (5.415)	47.79** (7.376)	76.34** (5.124)
N	1,021	915	1,732
Adjusted R^2	0.137	0.114	0.257

Standard errors in parentheses * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$
Source: Blair Center Poll, University of Arkansas (2016)

Appendix D. IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

To:	Alejandra Campos BELL 4188
From:	Douglas James Adams, Chair IRB Committee
Date:	11/26/2019
Action:	**Expedited Approval**
Action Date:	11/26/2019
Protocol #:	1909217995
Study Title:	The American Dream - modify
Expiration Date:	10/20/2020
Last Approval Date:	

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.

If the research involves collaboration with another institution then the research cannot commence until the Committee receives written notification of approval from the collaborating institution's IRB.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without Committee approval. Please submit continuation requests early enough to allow sufficient time for review. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in the automatic suspension of the approval of this protocol. Information collected following suspension is unapproved research and cannot be reported or published as research data. If you do not wish continued approval, please notify the Committee of the study closure.

Adverse Events: Any serious or unexpected adverse event must be reported to the IRB Committee within 48 hours. All other adverse events should be reported within 10 working days.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, study personnel, or number of participants, please submit an amendment to the IRB. All changes must be approved by the IRB Committee before they can be initiated.

You must maintain a research file for at least 3 years after completion of the study. This file should include all correspondence with the IRB Committee, original signed consent forms, and study data.

cc: Xavier Medina Vidal Medina, Investigator

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Have you read the consent form given to you to and agree to participate in this interview?

[ ] Y [ ] N

Do you understand that your participation in this project is voluntary, and that you may discontinue participation at any time? [ ] Y [ ] N

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

What is your age? _____

If under 18, stop interview.

With which gender do you identify?

[ ] Male [ ] Female [ ] Non-binary/Gender Queer [ ] Other/Prefer Not to Disclose : _____

Which pronouns do you prefer I use?

[ ] He/Him [ ] She/her [ ] They/Them [ ] Other: _____

Do you have your high school diploma or GED?

[ ] Y [ ] N _____ (specify which)

If yes, are you currently enrolled in college/university?

[ ] Y [ ] N

Have you ever been enrolled in college/university?

[ ] Y [ ] N

What level of education was attained by your parents?

Mother: _____

Father: _____

SECTION 2: IMMIGRATION BACKGROUND

Where is your place of birth?

Are you a US Citizen, permanent resident, or DACA recipient?

If US Citizen, are you a naturalized US Citizen?

If DACA recipient, how long have you had DACA?

If not from the US, how old were you when you came into the United States?

Are your parent's US Citizens, or permanent residents?

Where did they immigrate from?

Why do you think they came to the United States?

SECTION 3: AMERICAN DREAM/AMERICAN IDENTITY

What is your understanding of the American Dream?

Do you think you can achieve the American Dream? In what ways?

Do you feel you American? If yes, in what ways?

What do you think makes someone an American?

Do you think there are benefits to identifying as American?

Do you parent's talk about the American Dream? Either indirectly or directly. (Indirectly would be that they encourage you to go to school, get a job, have a family, be law-abiding citizens of the state.)

How important is it for you to go to school and find a good job?

SECTION 4: POLITICS

Do you participate in local politics? (e.g.: Town hall meetings, protests, local voting/lobbying)

How much do you listen, watch or read up on the local news?

Do you participate in national politics?

Have you ever voted or participating in registering other to vote?

What are your thoughts of the 2016 presidential election?

Have you ever participated in a social or political movement?

What are your thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement?

What are your thoughts about kneeling for the national anthem?