

# Narrative Paradigm Analysis of Differentiating Immigrant Experiences from Holland, MI

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### Introduction

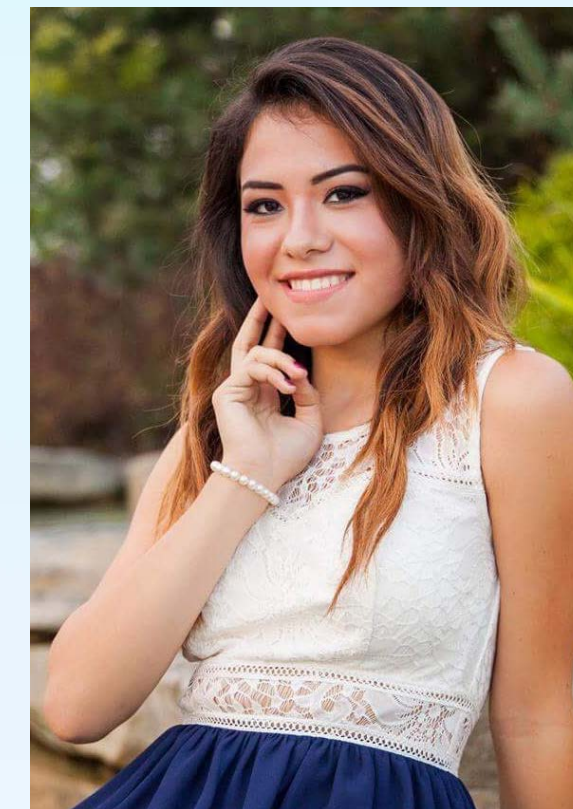
- The 2010 Census documented 50.5 million Hispanics in the United States or 16.3% of the total population, making Latino families the largest ethnic minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
- Additionally, reports indicate that in 2005, the undocumented foreign born population reached an estimated 30% of the United States (Brabeck, Xu2, 2010).
- DACA protects individuals brought to the United States as minors.
- DACA status is given to those who came to the United States before turning 16 and under the age of 31 before June 15, 2012.
- Only people that meet certain requirements are eligible for this program. Some requirements would include:
  - Continuously lived in the country since June 15, 2007
  - Not been convicted of a felony offense
  - In school, graduated high school, or discharged from armed forces
  - Does not pose a threat to national security or public safety
- Of great importance are the ways immigrant family members manage the uncertainty of DACA.

### Ferris State University, Center for Latin@ Studies

**Cristian**  
DACA Recipient



**Lezley**  
US Citizen



**Sandra**  
Permanent Resident



### THEMES

- Didn't know the difference of being undocumented in this country
- Sacrifice from parents for a better future
- Hard finding job because of the legal status
- Had to be independent at an early age because his parents were always working
- Compare his life with people that had documents or citizens
- Had to miss out in so many opportunities
- No traveling inside or outside the country
- The struggles of finding scholarships
- Difficulty getting financial information from universities
- No say as a child when it came to decisions
- Childhood cultural difference
- Different struggles
- Parents have hard jobs
- Not feeling that you belong
- Realizing some differences
- Missing out on opportunities
- Very secretive about status
- People should value what they have
- Self doubts
- Did not know about the different legal statues that this country has as a child
- Sacrifice from parents in this country for the family
- Feeling guilty of all the opportunities a citizen is given that other people don't have
- Feeling secure no matter what
- Fear of her family being deported
- The opportunity of traveling
- Family is a very important aspect
- Family sacrifices
- Different perspective due to legal status
- Reasoning of moving to different country
- Childhood difference
- Being scared and confused
- New environment, not fitting in
- Language barrier
- Distant from father at young age
- Difficult decisions
- Cultural change

### Theory

As storytelling beings, Griffin (2012) reminds us that storytelling is not something that is taught and that stories provide valuable insight into immigrant "hopes, dreams, and values."

Narrative Paradigm: People interpret life, thereby creating meaning. The communication process is impacted by past experiences and other factors for every person. Communication happens through storytelling, with both the narrator and listener roles crucial in the process of communicating.

- Coherence: The content that the listener understands from the narrative. The delivery of the story is influenced by three characteristics
  - The structure of the narrative
  - The resemblance between stories
  - Credibility of characters
- Fidelity: The interpretation of credibility of the story teller. This is shaped by the perception and perspectives of the listener--if they believe the narrative or not.

### Method

#### Research Question:

What are the similarities and differences of immigrants with different legal statues in the United States?

- Content analysis – focus on themes
- Two coders for each narrative
- Each coder analyzed stories of others
- Comparative analysis

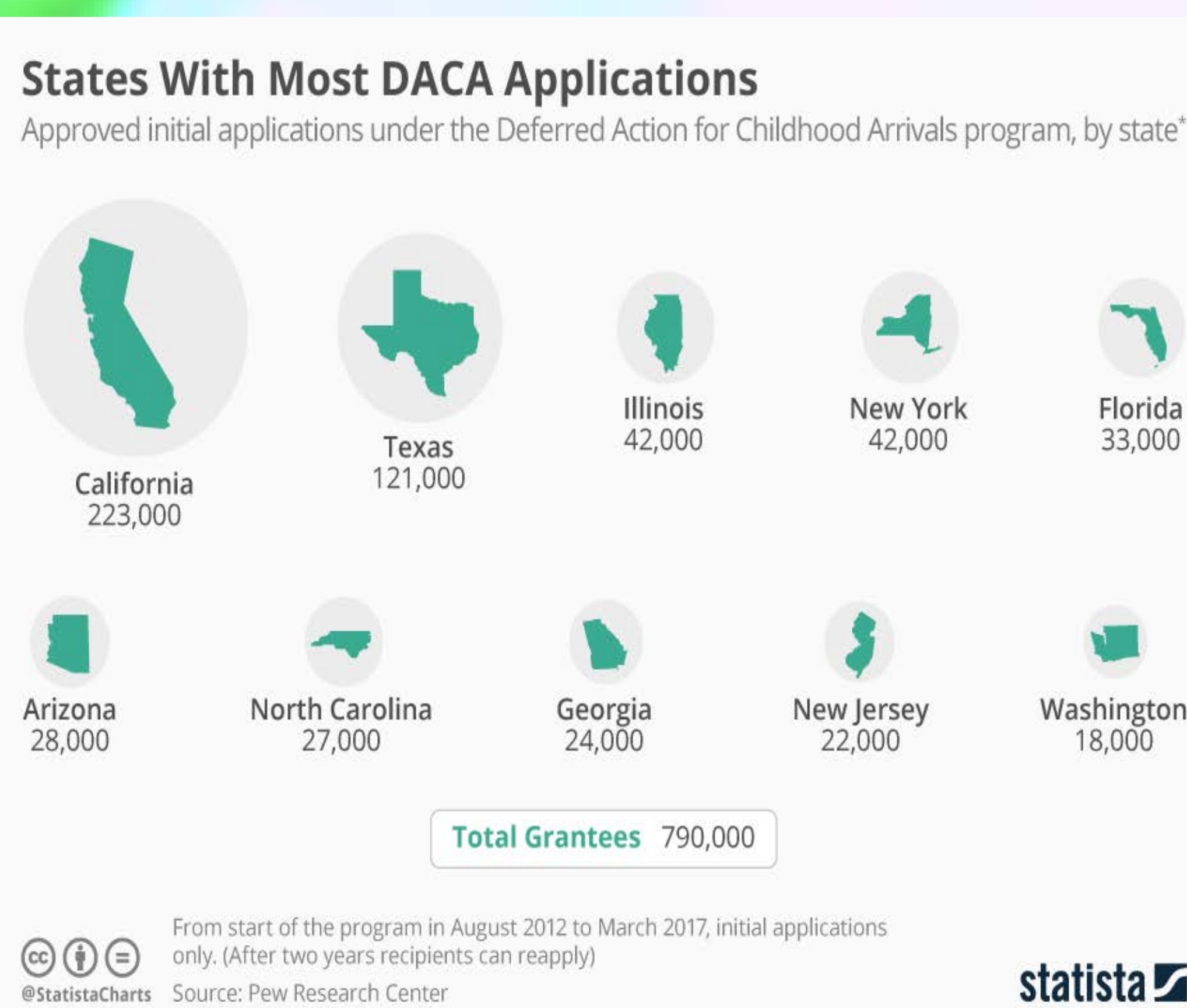
Throughout our research we used thematic analysis; to examine, pinpoint and identify any similarities and differences we found in the three narratives. With the narrative paradigm attention to coherence and fidelity was essential.

### Limitations

- Additional narratives would enhance generalizability
- Additional coders would increase reliability and validity
- Variation of coder cultural backgrounds could reduce coding bias

### Conclusion

- Narratives have coherence, likely because of cultural similarities.
- Listener reactions to stories based on knowledge of an individual is the way the listener interprets the narrative.
- Sharing immigrant narratives plays an important role in expanding perspectives of listeners, of describing the current struggles of immigrants, of changing the American narrative.



### COMMON THEMES

- Sacrifice of parents
- Cultural clash
- Family importance
- Separation of families
- Limitations
  - Language barrier
  - Traveling
- Wanting a better future
- As children not acknowledging status difference
- Fear and confusion
- Constantly comparing oneself to others
- Overcoming obstacles

