

NYC Votes

**How has COVID-19 affected undocumented immigrants in the Greater New York City Area?**

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8/24/20

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## Abstract

*COVID-19 has become an integral part of people's lives in 2020. It has caused paradigm shifts within our mentalities and the ways in which we move about the world as well as within society. In essence, the onset of the virus has exposed the growth of the multitude of systemically ingrained issues which communities have faced prior to the pandemic. Between the disproportionate spread of the virus unto POC communities as well as a lack of accessibility, undocumented individuals are one of many groups experiencing the pandemic uniquely – due to the institutions which govern them. In New York City, especially, a place which holds a large undocumented population – as well as a place which had faced high rates of COVID-19 – it makes for a more diverse experience with the narrative of the undocumented community*

## Introduction

Historically, undocumented individuals in NYC have had to face systemic barriers – those which have prevented them from obtaining the same opportunities as others within their communities. Further, with the onset of COVID-19 such divisions have only become more pronounced as the dearth of access to healthcare, economic advancement, etc. has grown much larger. At the beginning of March 2020, where the preliminary effects of the virus began to affect society at large, undocumented immigrants grew to be at a higher risk of not being counted by the census – a notion which would continue to perpetrate the same cyclical disadvantages which have impacted generations of said peoples. Moving from spring into the summer, you would also notice how, in NYC, DeBlasio announced a relief program for the immigrant community and

how a multitude of non-profit organizations were working towards aiding undocumented families. However, these initiatives weren't able to supply aid at the rate of which individuals needed it as the amount of those who needed help was greater than the amount of funding which could be given.

Thus, though the effects of COVID-19 have been widespread and have impacted many lives to date, it can be seen that the virus has affected communities in a disproportionate manner: with undocumented immigrants having to face particular struggles disparate to other communities of peoples in the Greater New York City area. Quoting the New York Magazine in its 2018-published article, "City of Fear," it makes the statement:

*"An estimated half a million New Yorkers are undocumented. Whether they've lived here for 2 months or 20 years, they came to this city of immigrants – a place where more than a third of the population was born in another country – looking for the same things that have brought newcomers here for centuries."*

By this, one can determine the impact of which this research spans. Considering the hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants in NYC – many of them being a part of the systems working within the city, whether it be school or the workforce – all had to face a nondescript entity which affected them differently due to social institutions set forth. The intersection of their New York identities and personal identities are integral aspects of their experiences with self-isolation and are not separate from such.

As aforementioned, our research delves into the question of how COVID-19 has affected undocumented immigrants within the

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Greater New York City area. Due to this, we directly spoke with undocumented individuals within the aforementioned area as well as those working for reform in non-profit sectors. Undocumented immigrants, in the context of this study, are defined as being those who do not have the legal documents to portray their citizenship within their resident country. They are a particularly unique demographic as they experience institutions set forth differently than those who are citizens of said country. Not only this, but the specificity of New York, also provides for a contrasting lens, being that New York is home to a diverse range of immigrant individuals from countries around the world. Not only this, but there are certain socio-political mentalities which can be seen as being unique to the city and its surrounding areas.

#### **Thesis**

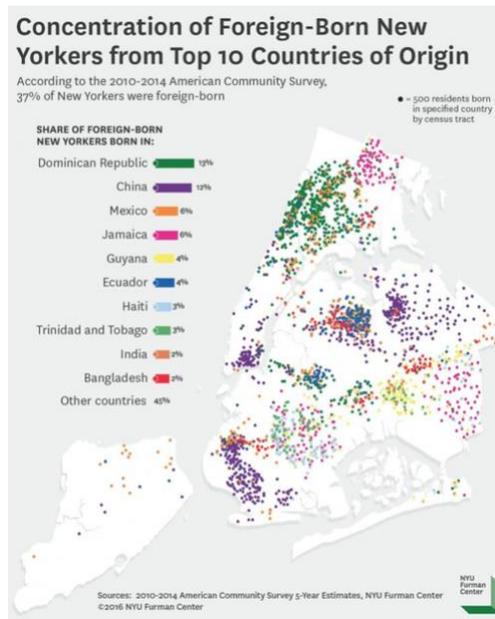
Based upon the initial literary analysis and the demographic spread of COVID-19 in relation to undocumented immigrant populations, we deduced that the effect of COVID-19 on the undocumented population would be disproportionately high. Undocumented, in the context of our study, is defined as not having citizenship – that of which is shown within a country’s legal documentation. For example, one may be undocumented prior to seeking asylum within a country. In the United States, documentation can be found in the form of a U.S. birth certificate, a legal visa, marriage certification (to a spouse who is a U.S. citizen), etc. To conceptualize the factors which were theorized to have affected the undocumented population in NYC, in particular, we have theorized three inherent influences: 1) access to healthcare 2) geographic distribution within NYC 3) occupation: all which have been shown to have had a

historical, in-depth impact on said community prior to the pandemic.

#### **Access to Healthcare:**

Within New York City, in 2015, approximately half of the undocumented community was insured due to employer-provided insurance, private insurance, or Child Health Plus according to *Undocumented Immigrants and Access to Health Care in New York City: Identifying Fair, Effective, and Sustainable Local Policy Solutions: Report and Recommendations to the Office of the Mayor of New York City* (2015, Berlinger, Nancy, Claudia Calhoun, Michael K. Gusmano, and Jackie Vimo). The other half was uninsured with a majority having been eligible for DAPA and DACA. By this, many undocumented individuals in NYC depended on safety-net healthcare systems which they could find in their neighborhoods across the city. In 2019, as it became for difficult for individuals to apply for green cards or visas, places such as New York Health + Hospitals began to provide healthcare regardless of immigration status, as well. Mayor DeBlasio announced the expansion of the public healthcare system as an initiative to support uninsured people to receive aid that is affordable. Nonetheless, with many barriers preventing undocumented immigrants from accessing the healthcare (being fear of ICE, transportation, and presently COVID-19) it has been increasingly difficult to reach out to these communities in order to provide them with the help that they need – especially when getting tested for the virus.

### Concentration of Foreign-Born New Yorkers from Top 10 Countries of Origin.



Source: Mapping the Melting Pot: Where Foreign-Born New Yorkers Live, <https://furmancenter.org/thestoop/entry/mapping-the-melting-pot-where-foreign-born-new-yorkers-live>

#### **Geographic Distribution:**

According to the above image, it illustrates the distribution of immigrants within the Greater New York City Area. As is shown, the majority foreign-born population in 2016 constituted of immigrants from the Dominican Republic who primarily resided in Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx. In contrast, Chinese immigrants who made up 12% of the foreign-born population (NYU Furman Center, *Mapping the Melting Pot:*

*Where Foreign-Born New Yorkers Live*) lived in concentrations within Chinatown, Flushing in Queens, Sunset Park, etc. Per a borough as a whole, Queens houses a majority of immigrant cluster groups throughout its various neighborhoods. Nonetheless, during COVID-19, such diversity caused for greater strife within these same communities. Both Queens and the Bronx had high rates of COVID-19 with Flushing becoming an epicenter for the virus. Towards the spring, many hospitals in these areas were operating at capacity and were losing supplies quickly - a notion which negatively affected the residents in the areas.

#### **Occupation:**

Currently, in New York City, a significant portion of the workforce is made up of immigrant workers; As of August 2020, they made up about a quarter of the city's labor force (American Immigration Council, *Immigrants in New York*). Even more so, there are over half a million immigrant individuals working within the healthcare and social assistance sector, hundreds of thousands in the accommodation and food service sector, etc. With undocumented immigrants making up a large portion of the immigrant population, during COVID-19, many became unemployed due to the pandemic. Statistically, half of the working-class immigrant population lost their jobs (The City, *Half of NYC's Immigrants are Unemployed Because of The Pandemic, Report Finds*). This unplanned loss of income makes it especially hard for those without citizenship as they are unable to collect upon food stamps, rent subsidies, unemployment insurance, etc. – these individuals make up a predicted 350,000 peoples within the NYC population alone. Not only this, but for the undocumented workers working on the frontlines, they are at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19 due to their

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employment within the city's labor force, though they do not have same protections as those with citizenship.

### Research

After procuring the thesis at hand, the preliminary literary research allowed for a compilation of information pertaining to the factors influencing COVID-19 throughout the pandemic. Pertaining specifically towards NYC, with national implications/data at hand, through a historical lens, one can notice the change in the impact of the pandemic on the immigrant community over time as well as the effect of local/nationally based institutions on the community at large.

### Timeline:

*The variables of impact on undocumented communities (during the pandemic period) as seen over the passage of three months:*

#### March

- *March 12, 2020:* The 2020 Census begins accepting responses, with many undocumented immigrants at risk of not being counted due to fears of ICE and lack of accessibility – this will continue the cyclical dearth of resources towards the NYC immigrant/POC community as a whole.
- *March 13, 2020:* Dr. Allen and Dr. Rich explain their concerns to the DHS on ICE detention for healthcare reasons, though they are met with little to no avail.
- *March 15, 2020:* The immigration judges union, ICE trial attorney union, and the American Immigration

Lawyers Association make a case to close immigration courts due the concerns over the spread of COVID-19

- *March 17, 2020:* Human Rights First, Physicians for Human Rights, and Amnesty International USA press for the release of asylum seekers and immigrants to the DHS and ICE
- *March 18, 2020:* The FFRCA (Families First Coronavirus Response Act) was passed, allowing for Covid-19 testing (for uninsured peoples) through National Disaster Medical System reimbursements.
- *March 20, 2020:* All nonessential businesses are closed state-wide. Being that numerous essential workers were undocumented, they continued to work whilst at risk of contracting the virus.
- *March 23, 2020:* New York reports 12,000 cases of COVID-19 (35% of cases in the U.S.).
- *March 26, 2020:* The U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) Public Charge web page urges undocumented immigrants to receive medical treatment for those presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, though many are scared to do so. The Affordable Care Act excludes undocumented immigrants and app. 7.1 million are uninsured

#### April

- *April 2, 2020:* Queens is officially named the epicenter of the COVID-19 virus in NYC - many of the hospitals being at capacity with patients testing positive for the coronavirus. Home to a diverse immigrant population, many are at an even higher risk of contracting the virus.
- *April 16, 2020:* Mayor Bill de Blasio announces a COVID-19 relief program with the Open Society

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Foundation (20 million dollars would go to aid 20,000 immigrant workers).

- *April 24, 2020*: The only immigration and customs reform enforcement office in NYC is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. More than 100 ICE detainees have been infected with the virus at 6 New York and New Jersey facilities.
- *April 28, 2020*: The New York State Youth Leadership Council works to raise funds for undocumented youths (which eventually closes due to an overwhelming amount of responses).

### May

- *May 6, 2020*: First ICE detainee dies from the coronavirus.
- *May 13, 2020*: DHS Secretary Chad Wolf states, “What we’re not going to do is release all of the detainees in our care” and the Trump administration looks to extend the virus border restrictions indefinitely.
- *May 15, 2020*: The Trump administration considers suspending the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program (allows foreign students to stay in the U.S. for one or two years after completing their studies).

### Key Figures

#### 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

As a national public health institute, the CDC possesses valuable data regarding live cases and total deaths in New York City (due to COVID-19) as well as other information pertaining towards the pandemic, at large. By this expanse of resources, it gives way for those in NYC to create policies/initiatives in order to aid the

communities which need the most assistance during this time – undocumented individuals being at the top of the list amongst other POCs.

#### 2. The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE):

By keeping detained immigrants in narrow spaces with poor hygiene, ICE had led to the infection of more than 100 immigrants (of COVID-19) at 6 New York and New Jersey facilities by April 21, 2020. On May 6, 2020, despite the first detainee dying from coronavirus, ICE has continued to deport, arrest, and detain immigrants during the pandemic. Prior to such, in NYC, DeBlasio made clear his opposition towards the divisive practices of ICE after the Trump Administration took the city to court on its sanctuary policy. This followed the arrest of an undocumented immigrant at the beginning of the pandemic– DeBlasio made a statement on his belief in due process of law rather than that of ICE’s deportation.

#### 3. President of the United States (Donald J. Trump):

The Trump administration has made clear its support for anti-immigration policy. Currently, though garnering support for the sole purpose of curtailing the pandemic, such a stance has also negatively impacted immigrants currently residing in the NYC. For instance, the Trump administration placed stricter limitations on green cards and visas for guest workers. Not only this, but he blamed foreign-born individuals for the virus, allowing for the perpetration of anti-immigrant sentiment and violence nationwide. In “The Danger of America’s Coronavirus Bans” written by Ilya Somin for The Atlantic, it illustrates how, though the total ban on entry for immigrants seeking a green card (for permanent residence) was shown to be temporary, those

such as Stephen Miller would prefer to have it continue indefinitely – a notion which would affect immigrant families throughout the city and beyond.

*4. Nonprofits/Donors/Volunteers:* Unqualified for unemployment benefits, relief paychecks, and other government-based programs, the undocumented community has been most ardently impacted by the current economic recession. With this, many grassroots initiatives have come to fruition in order to support these communities in NYC, such as those by New York State Youth Leadership Council, as well as those endorsed by the mayor's office (ie. the NYC Immigrant Emergency Relief Program). Their influence expands over a multitude of services, such as, providing and/or assisting with cash, clothing, and food donations, immigration resources, housing assistance, as well as legal services.

*5. Legal Services (per Immigration, Housing, etc.):* Without direct legal knowledge and/or assistance during the pandemic, the undocumented community is left vulnerable to ICE and their landlords due to housing and employment insecurity. To abate this issue, in NYC, many local government websites include information pages on pro-bono legal services (the nysed website includes a list of resources for immigrant communities as seen in the **Advocacy Groups & Resources** section). Not only this, but the NYC District Attorney's office provides confidential legal assistance regardless of immigration status.

#### **Local Positions:**

*1. Mayor Bill de Blasio:* During the pandemic, he aided immigrant individuals in NYC, with programs to maintain their overall quality of life which was disrupted due to the onset of

the virus (ie. programs supporting the unemployed, food provided outside of DOE school buildings, etc.). On April 16, 2020 Mayor Bill de Blasio also announced a partnership with the Open Society Foundation in order to establish the New York City immigrant emergency relief program.

*2. City Council:* Hayley Gorenburg, the legal director of New York lawyers for public interest, sent a letter to the city council asking for aid on behalf of the immigration community and communities of color. Even more so, on the city council website, they have provided resources for immigrant communities during this time (ie. information of DACA, education, low-cost healthcare, etc.).

*3. District Attorney:* The New York District Attorney works to protect immigrant New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. In particular, the Manhattan District Attorney works to prevent unnecessary deportation, to protect immigrant communities from fraud, and to keep courts safe and accessible. To do this, they manage an anonymous immigrant affairs hotline for those who may need assistance. Not only this, but they support the Protect our Courts Act (so undocumented individuals feel safe in the courtroom) and have created the first Collateral Consequences Council – bridging the gap between immigrant communities and access to law enforcement.

*4. Borough President:* Gale Brewer is the borough president for Manhattan. In the past, he has worked with the committee on Immigration to discuss the detriments of immigration enforcement tactics on individuals and has worked to hold four bystander intervention trainings, protest observer trainings, and immigration teach-ins to education the NYC community at

large. Recently, a candidate for Queens borough president, Donovan Richards, announced a plan to create a welcome center for immigrants at the Queens Borough President's Office. If implemented, it would allow for immigrants to have a greater access to immigrant attorneys, employment services, etc.

5. *Public Advocate*: The Public Advocate for New York City, Jumaane D. Williams, created a comprehensive information sheet for undocumented immigrants and immigrants of all ages in order to understand the rights which they hold – in the case of encountering ICE. During COVID-19, he had also introduced legislation for property tax deferment – a policy that would aid the immigrant community, especially those facing unemployment.

6. *Comptroller*: The NYC comptroller, Scott M. Stringer, created a comprehensive guide to city, state, and federal services for immigrant communities in order to clarify issues and to answer questions which individuals may have due to the changing political landscape. Further, in a 2019 report, he explained immigration enforcement under the Trump presidency through demographics of detention in NYC.

7. *Community Boards*: The purpose of the community boards is to empower neighborhoods and individuals with resources, skills, etc. in order to communicate about issues pertaining to their surrounding areas. As immigration status is not a factor in receiving aid, and due to the confidentiality provided to all seeking assistance, it allows for people, such as undocumented immigrants, to advocate for themselves and for restorative justice services in a safe, mediated environment.

### **Advocacy Groups and Resources:**

1. *InformedImmigrant.com*: Provides “access to resources and knowledge for the undocumented immigrant community across the U.S.”

2. *New York Immigration Coalition*: Provides legal services as well as Covid-19 resources for the immigrant community.

3. *Hep Free NYC*: Provides medical resources, mental health resources, and intimate partner violence support amongst other information/aid - including valuable assistance for the uninsured or under-insured.

4. *Legal Services NYC*: Provides clients/former clients with Covid-19 relief funds.

5. *The New York State Youth Leadership Council*: Provides relief funding to black immigrants as an undocumented youth-led non-profit organization in NYC.

6. *RAISE*: Created the “Undocu Workers Fund”: a grassroots initiative spearheaded to provide monetary, immediate relief to individuals and their families.

*For more resources and information pertaining to the immigrant community in NYC, visit:*

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/bilingual-ed/nyc-cbo-list-v7-a.pdf>

### **Method**

Due to the current nature of the pandemic, we utilized a mixed-methods approach in order to contrive a greater understanding of the effects upon undocumented communities during the

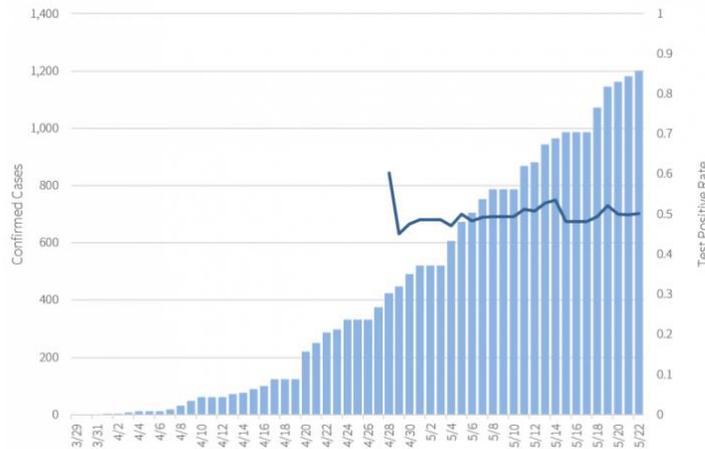
pandemic. Per data, we utilized that of which could be garnered from the Internet as well as literary sources. We also conducted four interviews which elucidated different perspectives upon the situation at hand: one of which being an oral history from an undocumented individual.

**Data Analysis:**

The data collected is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Thus, the approach to analyzing such follow a similar pattern of comparison and observation. *For safety purposes all names will be omitted from the interview portion of the data to protect the individuals mentioned.*

**Quantitative Analysis:**

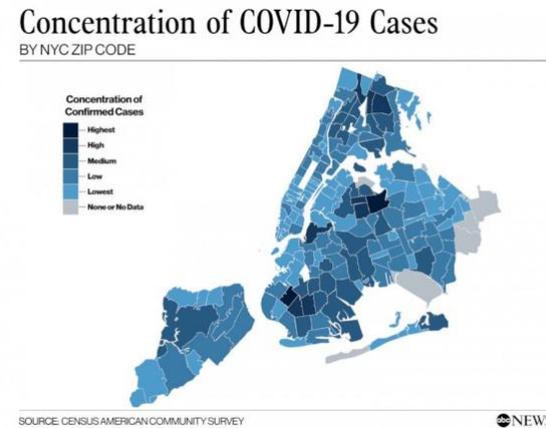
Confirmed Cases of People with COVID-19 in ICE Detention



Source: Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE Guidance on COVID-19, Confirmed Cases, <https://www.ice.gov/coronavirus>

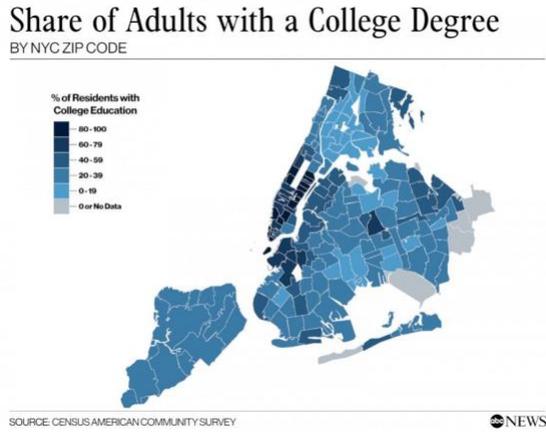
According to the American Immigration Council, the numbers which ICE has released are likely to significantly undercount the proportion of people in detention who have contracted the virus (Loweree, J., Reichlin-Melnick, A., Ewing, W., *The Impact of COVID-19 on Noncitizens and Across The U.S. Immigration System*). This is due to the fact that they do not report contractors and staff who test positive. They also limit the number of tests provided towards their detainees. For undocumented immigrant detainees in the New York and New Jersey detention centers, this means that there are possibly more people who have gotten the virus despite not being reported. By this, the immigrant communities residing in the city are at a higher risk of contracting the virus not only if they are detained but also if they come into contact with ICE or those who may work at the detention centers where COVID-19 has high rates of spreading.

Concentration of COVID-19 Cases by NYC Zip Code



Source: In NYC, ‘stark contrast’ in COVID-19 infection rates based on education and race, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/nyc-stark-contrast-covid-19-infection-rates-based/story?id=69920706>

Share of Adults with a College Degree By NYC Zip Code



Source: In NYC, ‘stark contrast’ in COVID-19 infection rates based on education and race, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/nyc-stark-contrast-covid-19-infection-rates-based/story?id=69920706>

Within these graphics, provided by ABC in Erin Schumaker’s article, “In NYC, ‘stark contrast’ in COVID-19 infection rates based on education and race,” the first graph illustrates the concentration of COVID-19 cases in relation to the various areas within NYC – darker areas implying a higher concentration and lighter areas implying less of a concentration- while the second graph portrays the percentage of residents with a college education. Though base observations when viewed separately, together they portray how COVID-19 has disproportionately affected NYC residents as it poses a higher risk for those who have had less of an opportunity to pursue levels of higher education.

Further, as many of these areas with higher concentration also contain POCs and immigrant communities who have not had

access to other resources, as well, (due to the cyclical manner of the institutions which govern them), it portrays how systemic barriers set in place prior to COVID-19 have become further entrenched with onset of the pandemic; As undocumented immigrants have a greater chance at contracting COVID-19, they also face a higher level of societally-based disadvantages – pertaining to a lack of healthcare, education, employment, etc. opportunity (a notion which can be taken conversely as well).

Racial Composition in NYC Neighborhood By COVID-19 Concentration

**Racial Composition in NYC Neighborhood**  
BY COVID-19 CONCENTRATION

	Lowest Concentration		Low Concentration		Medium Concentration		High Concentration		Highest Concentration	
Cases per 1,000 People	1.74 - 3.33		3.33 - 4.13		4.13 - 4.77		4.77 - 5.87		5.87 - 11.6	
<b>Racial Composition</b>										
Share Asian	20.20%	(+/-0.3%)	10.6%	(+/-0.2%)	11.70%	(+/-0.3%)	10.7%	(+/-0.3%)	15.80%	(+/-0.3%)
Share Black	16.80%	(+/-0.3%)	23.3%	(+/-0.3%)	22.80%	(+/-0.3%)	21.9%	(+/-0.4%)	25.20%	(+/-0.4%)
Share Hispanic	20.50%	(+/-0.4%)	32.8%	(+/-0.4%)	29.80%	(+/-0.4%)	32.2%	(+/-0.4%)	30.40%	(+/-0.5%)
Share White	39.80%	(+/-0.3%)	30.2%	(+/-0.3%)	32.60%	(+/-0.3%)	31.9%	(+/-0.3%)	25.80%	(+/-0.3%)

SOURCE: NYU FURMAN CENTER

abc NEWS

Source: In NYC, ‘stark contrast’ in COVID-19 infection rates based on education and race, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/nyc-stark-contrast-covid-19-infection-rates-based/story?id=69920706>

In another graphic (Schumaker, E. “: In NYC, ‘stark contrast’ in COVID-19 infection rates based on education and race”) it further elucidates how Black and Hispanic neighborhoods have shown to have had the highest concentrations of COVID-19 – the concentration being the highest for Hispanic peoples.

Fatalities by Race/Ethnicity (due to COVID-19)

<b>Fatalities by Race/Ethnicity</b> <small>Data is preliminary. With 99% reporting, below is the breakdown for NYS excluding NYC. With 63% reporting, below is the breakdown for NYC as provided by NYCDOHMH.</small>		<small>Click to see NYS excl. NYC age-adjusted rate</small>
Race/Ethnicity	NYC	NYS Excl. NYC
Hispanic	34% (29% of population)	14% (12% of population)
Black	28% (22% of population)	17% (9% of population)
White	27% (32% of population)	61% (74% of population)
Asian	7% (14% of population)	4% (4% of population)
Other	4% (3% of population)	4% (1% of population)

Source: NY State COVID-19 Tracker Data,  
<https://covid19tracker.health.ny.gov/views/NYS-COVID19-Tracker/NYSDOHCOVID-19Tracker-Fatalities?%3Aembed=yes&%3Atoolbar=no&%3Atabs=n>

Further, in data provided by the New York State, one can take note that though Hispanic and Black people make up approximately 14% and 17% of the New York State population, respectively, they also make up the highest fatality rate for COVID-19 at 34% percent and 28% respectively (with the NYC rates follow a similar pattern).

As many undocumented immigrants primarily reside in black and brown neighborhoods, though they may make up a minority of those who reside in the city, they also make up a majority amount of those who have obtained/have a higher rate of obtaining the virus. Not only this, but due to their limited access to healthcare, it makes for a much deadlier situation pertaining to these residents as these limitations may lead to a higher overall fatality rate for undocumented individuals and their communities.

**Interviews:**

According to the interviews, the reform and situation reflected by the individuals seemed similar on a macro scale – though the experiences within the pandemic were multifaceted and disparate.

For example, when speaking to an undocumented individual residing in NYC, Laura\*, they explain how their parents were undergoing difficulties due to the pandemic. Laura was working as a babysitter in order to support their parents, but soon became unemployed, after the parents (of the child they were babysitting) found themselves no longer in need of their services. Currently, Laura’s family is readjusting their budget and they are living off of their combined savings – Laura being afraid of becoming homeless once the rent moratorium is lifted.

As per another young person within NYC (Dylan\*), they reflected the sentiments of a teacher/non-profit facilitator (Rochelle\*) in that there must be reform within the systemic barriers facing undocumented immigrants as it is the underlying, institutionally-based which are causing such disparity when it comes to widespread issues such as the pandemic. They explain that New York City, being a place with a large population of immigrants should be on the forefront of this change. Though the pandemic portrays the physical differences which undocumented immigrants and citizens of NYC face in contracting the virus, such is the same within the education system, healthcare, etc. though more nuanced – the result of such aren’t as easily seen but need to be addressed.

Finally, a community organizer (Clara\*) from the CPC (Chinese American Planning Council) illustrates the impact of local advocacy upon undocumented communities. Though, they (Clara) didn’t believe that the organization responded as quickly

as it could have, it is currently providing services to combat discrimination, wellness check programs, etc. in order to support those within the community. Further, the organization secured a million dollars in donations to provide to undocumented folk in the form of cash assistance.

Overall, though these individuals have had different perspectives upon aiding the undocumented community in the current time, the general consensus portrays the prevalence of the issue for a plethora of New Yorkers, going beyond undocumented individuals. Advocates, young people, and educators with different backgrounds all express that the undocumented community, in particular, is one that needs more aid and support – that the institutions which have caused such a difference in assistance need to be reformed, as well.

*\* All names have been changed in order to protect each individual's identity.*

### **Conclusion**

In essence, the thesis was correct in that access to healthcare, geographic distribution within NYC, and occupation are main factors which have caused such a disparity when it comes to the undocumented community facing high rates of COVID-19. Nonetheless, considering the information as a whole and conglomerating these three factors, they all fall under the notion of which undocumented individuals are faced with systemic barriers which have caused such a dearth in resource distribution.

As these issues are institutional and are historically based, they cannot be treated as separate entities. Especially in a city as

diverse as New York, though the difference can be seen lucidly due to the pandemic – we must remember that these numbers pertain to human beings. That, though the issues are clearer due to the percentage rates, each fatality is a life lost. Even as it may be difficult for one to see a difference in quality of education, healthcare, legal assistance, etc. we must know that they are there because all of such are the reason for the disproportionate concentrations of COVID-19 that we see now.

Thus, in order to resolve the issues and in order to save more lives in the future, to protect the large immigrant communities, POC communities, and undocumented communities, to protect our New Yorkers, we must solve these ingrained, societal issues before it is too late to do so.

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### Personal Qualifications:

*Meera Dasgupta:* She is a Stuyvesant High School senior and the first Asian-American U.S. Youth Poet Laureate as well as a 2020 We Power Ambassador. She has spoken on a panel pertaining to systemic oppression with the Encyclopedia Britannica, on voting with the Ford Foundation, has done research through the guidance of Columbia professors and PhD students, etc.

*Vladimira Asinor:* A CUNY college student who has worked within the public service system and is a passionate about

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*Joshua Lee:* A fourth year political science and communications double major with an emphasis on International Law and Human Rights at Baruch College. He has worked with the CPC as a social activist and is currently a We Power Ambassador.

*Caris Lashley:* He is a 2020 We Power NYC Ambassador and a senior in high school. He is passionate about healthcare for all as well as human rights.

**Acknowledgements:**

Thank you to NYC Votes and the We Power Ambassadorship for providing our team with the means for conducting this research. Also, special thank you to Olivia Brady for directly facilitating and overseeing the research process in all stages.