The Political Consequences of Ethnically Targeted Incarceration: Evidence from Japanese American Internment during World War II

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What are the downstream political consequences of state activity explicitly targeting an ethnic minority group? This question is well studied in the comparative context, but less is known about the effects of explicitly racist state activity in liberal democracies such as the United States. We investigate this question by looking at an important event in American history—the incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II. We find that Japanese Americans who were imprisoned or had family who were imprisoned are significantly less politically engaged and that these patterns of disengagement increase with detention length. Using an identification strategy leveraging quasi-random camp assignment, we also find that camp experience matters: those who went to camps that witnessed intragroup violence or demonstrations experienced sharper declines, suggesting that group fragmentation is an important mechanism of disengagement. Taken together, our findings contribute to a growing literature documenting the demobilizing effects of ethnically targeted detention and expand our understanding of these forces within the United States.

Growing immigrant populations in liberal democracies have spurred a rise in policies targeting immigrants and ethnic minorities. These include indefinite detention, the corralling of unauthorized immigrants into holding facilities, and the reinforcement of border barriers that create hostile conditions for migrants. Such policies raise questions about the impact of such detention on the individuals detained and about the universal scope of democratic principles.

The US government's incarceration of people of Japanese descent is a key case that frames the difference between democratic principles and practice. In June 1942, approximately 120,000 people of Japanese descent were sent to camps throughout the American interior.[1] By the time the camps were shut down at the end of World War II, hundreds of thousands of people had been displaced and their lives severely disrupted. This included not just adults but also children—many of whom spent formative years living in incarceration.

Despite the significance of this event and growing use of detention centers in the United States and elsewhere, we still know little about the political consequences of such large-scale ethnic targeting within liberal democracies. Some studies in comparative politics have examined forced migration and the imprisonment of ethnic minorities in autocracies, concluding that these tend to inflame interethnic conflict and reduce minorities' trust toward the state (e.g., Lupu and Peisakhin 2017; Zhukov and Talibova 2018). In addition, a growing American politics literature has examined the crippling impact of

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1. While the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II has historically been referred to as "internment," we use the terms "incarceration," "imprisonment," and "detainment" throughout this article in recognition of the fact that the majority of Japanese American people forcibly relocated and imprisoned during this period were US citizens and thus could not be "interns."

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incarceration on affected populations (e.g., Lerman and Weaver 2014). This literature—focused on penal institutions as opposed to military ones—has found that incarceration depresses the political engagement not just of those incarcerated but also of their extended families (White 2019). However, whether and how a large-scale, ethnically targeted detention policy could affect subsequent political attitudes in liberal democracies is less clear.

The context of Japanese American incarceration provides an important instance to address the question. First, the detainment of Japanese Americans during World War II was a large-scale government activity, putting it on par with ethnically driven state activity in a comparative context. Second, the historical record is rich, and we have substantial documentation on incarceration and its consequences. In this regard, an important literature on Japanese American political engagement posits that the group's history of incarceration might be a reason why Japanese Americans are among the most politically active of Asian American groups (Wong et al. 2011). In addition, we have useful variation: not only was there variation in who was detained, but, conditional on initial location, families were mostly exogenously assigned to camps throughout the United States. This enables us to gain causal traction on how these incarceration experiences affected subsequent engagement.

We find that incarceration has had negative downstream repercussions. First, we find that being detained or having family members who were detained is associated with a lasting, large, and significant decrease in political interest and engagement. Although not necessarily causal, we find that this relationship cannot be explained by factors that plausibly covary with detainment (such as military service or income). Second, conditional on incarceration, we find that an additional year of detainment is associated with a decrease in political trust and engagement; again, this does not appear to be explained by other factors. Third, shifting to a causal analysis, we leverage that, conditional on prewar location, Japanese Americans were quasi-randomly assigned to camps. This allows us to examine the nature of the camps themselves (following Shoag and Carollo 2016). We find that being assigned to a camp that experienced violence or unrest resulted in greater political disengagement. This suggests the social conditions within camps themselves were key pathways to disengagement. Surprisingly, we do not find similar effects for exposure to militaristic environments or the cultural or political environment in camps' surrounding areas.

We explain these patterns by highlighting an important mechanism linking negative state activity to disengagement: group fragmentation. We argue that, in contrast to atomized encounters with the criminal justice system, the detainment process produced political disengagement by exposing prisoners to divisions within their ethnic group, revealing possible barriers to collective action. These findings suggest that the negative effects of punitive government interactions might be transmitted via intragroup dynamics. While previous studies have emphasized vertical relations between minority populations and the state as a key determinant of disengagement, our study illuminates how captivity-induced conflicts within groups can lead to disengagement.

Our article speaks to several research streams. First, we link disparate literatures from comparative politics with scholarship on American politics, explaining how state-sponsored racial targeting—even within a large liberal democracy—can have lasting political consequences. Second, our research shows how more adverse collective conditions produce larger effects over time, illuminating that the nature of hostile state contact is important. Third, our study provides an opportunity to assess theories of hostile state contact using a case in which the psychological linkages to the government are strong. Our findings therefore have strong implications for governments' current-day use of detention centers, including those confining migrants. Finally, our results engage a growing literature on Japanese American public opinion, complicating the link between the group's high levels of political engagement and incarceration.

This article proceeds as follows. We first evaluate connections between the literature on ethnic conflict, the adjacent literature on the American "carceral state," and the literature on Japanese American political behavior, drawing on these to describe a theory of how detainment might affect political engagement by eroding group cohesion. We provide context on the Japanese American incarceration experience and explain our data, which include novel data on camp conditions and surroundings. We next present our main results showing that direct and family exposure to imprisonment predicts subsequent political disengagement and that, among those imprisoned, the length of the incarceration does as well. Although not causal, these results are not explained by alternative characteristics, such as differences in terms of military service or economic success. We next leverage quasi-random camp assignment to show that group fragmentation—in particular camp social unrest—plays a key role in furthering disengagement. Finally, we demonstrate that our design assumptions are robust to several challenges and alternative explanations. We conclude by noting how our work informs other findings on involuntary detention policies in Western democracies.

EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP

Incarceration of Japanese Americans presents a unique circumstance, although it is not one without similar cases in

existing literatures. Scholars have explored instances when states have controlled ethnic minorities via repression and violence during upheaval, migration, or war (Levy 1988). Some studies reveal that repression can mobilize targeted groups (Blattman 2009; Davenport 2005), while others suggest demobilizing effects (Lyall 2009). While this literature clarifies the potential impacts of violence and repression on targeted communities, recent work has drawn attention to regime strength and whether repression efforts are carried out by state actors. As Zhukov and Talibova (2018) note, repression scholars have traditionally focused on cases of ethnic targeting perpetrated by nonstate actors or weak states.

We know less about the impact of large-scale repression efforts by "strong" states on minority political participation. Focusing on the deportation of ethnic minorities during the Stalin Era, Lupu and Peisakhin (2017) and Rozenas, Schutte, and Zhukov (2017) find that punitive encounters with the Soviet Union during the twentieth century continue to have positive effects on group attachments and that groups experiencing violence in the past report lower levels of contemporary support for pro-Russian parties. Rozenas and Zhukov (2019) find that places exposed to Stalin's terror campaigns were more hostile toward the regime when under threat of retribution, suggesting several plausible mechanisms under autocracies. Looking at China, Wang (2019) finds that communities targeted by state-sponsored violence in the 1960s are less trusting and more critical of political leaders in modern times.

Ethnic targeting in liberal democracies

Even within democracies, minorities have collided with punitive institutions and experienced ethnic targeting (Fouka 2019; Mann 2005). For example, relevant to our inquiry is the contemporary status of European Jews, who were targets of atrocities by fascist Germany but many of whom continue to live in Europe today. Although recent work has found effects of concentration camps on local non-Jewish populations (Homola, Pereira, and Tavits 2020), the literature on the downstream effects of the Holocaust on Jewish political participation suggests that Jews may be more politically engaged than the general population (e.g., Schnapper, Bordes-Benayoun, and Raphael 2011).

Moving to the present day, the past few decades have seen democracies detain immigrants indefinitely and sidestep due process in the name of national security (Radack 2004). Despite this, it is unclear whether the effects of ethnic targeting translate across different kinds of political systems. "Threat-mobilization" studies in the United States have shown that policies targeting ethnic groups can increase political participation (Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura 2006; Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001). Consistent with some of the existing literature on repression (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017), prominent theories posit that punitive policies increase the political salience of ethnic identities, thereby strengthening the link between group attachments and voting patterns (White 2016).

There are certainly key differences between incarceration and more contemporary adversarial state interactions. Despite racial disparities in the criminal system, a minority of Blacks and Latinos experience incarceration. This complicates our ability to assess the effects of punitive policies because "policy recipients" often differ markedly from other group members. In addition, an immigrant-based group might respond to state repression differently than would, say, African Americans. Finally, existing studies in this literature have mostly assessed contact with punitive institutions in a binary fashion. However, as Weaver, Hacker, and Wildeman (2014, 19) note, scholars have yet to "move beyond treating incarceration as a uniform treatment" and leverage "variation in the character of custodial interactions." As we note below, the experience of Japanese Americans enables such an inquiry.

Nonetheless, historians have noted a connection between the violating experience of involuntary detainment and incarceration. Lyon (2012), for example, notes that "Japanese Americans were accused of being a threat to national security and were 'incarcerated' in camps that looked and acted like some strange hybrid of concentration camps and prisons, even though they lacked formal designation as prisons" (xiii). In this regard, carceral effects research has found that direct experience with racially disparate criminal justice policies can have both demobilizing and disengaging effects on those populations affected (Burch 2013). According to this perspective, contact with law enforcement serves as a political socialization experience that erodes trust in government by exposing minority groups to aggressive elements of otherwise democratic systems (Lerman and Weaver 2014; Weaver and Lerman 2010). This facet could parallel the "stigma" that scholars of the incarceration of Japanese Americans have observed (Kashima 2003, chap. 10).

Scholarship on incarceration and Japanese American public opinion

Japanese American imprisonment during World War II makes a compelling case to study these topics. First, unlike instances in authoritarian regimes, the Japanese American case took place in a modern, liberal democracy.[2] Second, incarceration involved the explicit targeting of an entire ethnic group, a

2. Scholars have noted subnational authoritarianism in the US South, not to mention the proceeding 250 years of chattel slavery. In addition,

contrast with ostensibly race-neutral targeting (such as policing or even immigrant detention centers). Finally, Japanese Americans remained in the United States following their incarceration, enabling us to evaluate subsequent political participation.

In this regard, Japanese American political behavior has been the subject of robust scholarly research, with scholars finding a high baseline level of political engagement (Fugita and O'Brien 2011, chap. 9). For example, Wong et al. (2011, 18–20) report that, among Asian Americans, "Japanese Americans are the likeliest group to be registered to vote and to report voting," with registration, turnout, and engagement rates far outpacing US averages (table 1.1). However, the same authors also report that "among national-origin groups . . . Japanese (11 percent) are the most likely to report being a victim of a hate crime" (169).

Several scholars have linked political engagement among Japanese Americans to incarceration. For example, Wong et al. (2011) argue that Japanese Americans as a group "are characterized by relatively high socioeconomic status, as well as stark historical experiences of racial discrimination, including the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II" (180). Within anthropology, Takezawa (1991) points to the movement for redress as a unifying event for many third-generation Japanese Americans: "the ethnicity of the Sansei today is constructed not merely from racial and cultural markers of pre-war days," she notes, "but from a sense of suffering of their forebears who experienced internment" (41).

However, scholars have also detailed devastating effects stemming from incarceration including not just pecuniary ones but also psychological ones that speak to political engagement. Hayashi (2004) writes that imprisoned Japanese Americans "were stripped of their farmland, businesses, jobs, material possessions, and wages and suffered excessive losses" and also "learned to cut commercial and cultural ties to Japan" (214–15). Similarly, Kashima (2003) argues that feelings of "stigma" among those incarcerated contributed to distrust and despair. "Wartime events," he writes, caused prisoners to "question their identities as Americans. They felt that their government not only had refused to protect them from outside prejudices but had created a mechanism for withdrawing their citizenship in order to deport them from their birthplace" (218).

In addition, that both direct and indirect experience with incarceration could yield lasting effects across generations is supported by other literature. Political orientations such as partisanship and political cynicism are correlated across generations (Jennings and Niemi 1968). Moreover, as research on preadult political socialization has shown, intensive exposure to salient political events can crystallize attitudes toward policies and candidates, closing attitudinal gaps between adolescents and adults (Sears and Valentino 1997). Furthermore, in the aftermath of repression, group attachments, victimhood perceptions, and feelings of threat are correlated across generations, despite a lack of direct experience with oppression among younger generations (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017). For example, although conversations within families about incarceration were brief and infrequent, children still sensed the "racial implications of the internment" (Nagata and Cheng 2003, 268). Kashima (2003) notes that "some Sansei became angry and criticized their parents' silence, some felt frustrated and alienated from their parents, and still others became more curious about the wartime events" (218). There is similar evidence that experience with the US carceral state can have effects on family members (Walker 2014), albeit ones that are not long lasting (White 2019).

THEORY OF INCARCERATION'S IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT

Existing streams of research examining repression, incarceration, and Asian American politics serve as useful guideposts for understanding incarceration's possible effects, but its unique circumstances warrant theorizing about relevant mechanisms and scope conditions. The majority of studies examining the political effects of repression have been conducted in autocratic or postconflict settings where opportunities to address grievances through formal venues are limited, and collective action in the form of contentious politics may be seen as an effective response to an adversarial state (Davenport 2007). These forces mostly appear to have had a unifying effect on targeted populations, although there are important deviations suggesting that multiple political strategies (and, thus, outcomes) are possible in autocracies.

In contrast, incarceration represented something different with respect to group outcomes. First, as we discuss below, the presence of accountability mechanisms such as competitive elections in the United States could produce expectations that group-based grievances are to be channeled through formal political processes (Collier and Rohner 2008). The presence of both formal and informal mechanisms introduces heterogeneity with respect to political strategies, as some group members might prefer a more "accommodationist" approach to dealing with punitive institutions, whereas others might consider a more radical politics that pressures the government into making concessions (Mele and Siegel 2017). These tensions within groups—when paired with the experience of ethnic targeting—could lead to political disengagement by

American history is replete with examples of racial targeting, including the targeting of Native Americans, Asian immigrants, and Latino/as.

eroding faith in institutions and reducing the perceived effectiveness of collective action. In sum, the political effects of incarceration might depart from comparable cases elsewhere because democratic institutions induce preference heterogeneity within groups over political strategies, due to the presence of both formal and informal venues for addressing grievances. This is consistent with research on immigrants showing that underlying group attachment can affect the effects of threat (Pérez 2015).

Second, detention locations suffered from a scarcity of resources. In a matter of months, families were displaced and forced to share crowded spaces with strangers for several years. This environment was not conducive to cooperation, as substandard housing conditions and limited resources activated conflicts within the community (Burton 2000, chap. 14). Further, despite the potential for mobilization because of a sense of linked fate, incarceration may have reduced the perceived benefits of collective action by exposing some prisoners to a politically fractured group. Consistent with this notion, we find that some camps experienced substantial conflict between prisoners that devolved into violence. Thus, incarceration may have been a "political socialization experience" that not only revealed the government's capacity for coercion and repression but also served as an informative signal about the possibility of successful collective action. This is consistent with research on immigrants arguing that the nature of threat and individual context is highly important (e.g., Nichols and Valdéz 2020).

Despite some similarities between traditional incarceration and imprisonment of Japanese Americans, the detainment process involved the blunt targeting of an entire group, whereas scholars have traditionally considered the impact of the criminal justice system to be more localized (Lerman and Weaver 2014). However, on this particular dimension, the broader scope of detainment ought to have increased political engagement by cultivating a sense of linked fate. Indeed, Walker (2020) argues that individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system can subscribe to "narratives of injustice"—or perceptions that punitive policies are unjust because of their group-targeted nature—which can offset the demobilizing effects of "carceral contact." However, detainment not only exposed Japanese Americans to the "second face of the state"; it also created confined and contentious spaces that eroded the quality of intragroup interactions. In other words, it divided rather than united Japanese Americans as a group.

Figure 1 synthesizes our proposed mechanism in simple terms and illustrates how repressive state action—such as World War II incarceration—might lead to depressed political engagement via fragmentation. (Importantly, repressive actions in autocracies could also similarly cause fragmentation.) Because of the conflict engendered by hostile camp conditions, we expect that incarceration was a politically disengaging experience that created tenuous relationships between group members. In camp locations where the community was more fractured, we expect that even greater levels of political disengagement will be observed decades after the experience. In the following sections, we describe various dimensions of the social camp environments that allow us to evaluate this claim.

JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION CONTEXT AND DATA

The United States entered World War II on December 8, 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. This authorized the forcible relocation of more than 110,000 people of Japanese descent—the majority (62%) of whom were American citizens—into years-long detainment.

Public Proclamation 1, issued on March 2, 1942, created two "exclusion zones." Military Area 1 included swaths of the American west coast deemed militarily sensitive. This encompassed coastal California, Washington, and Oregon, as well as southern Arizona (Kashima et al. 2012). The remainder of these states constituted Military Area 2. Initially, all Japanese

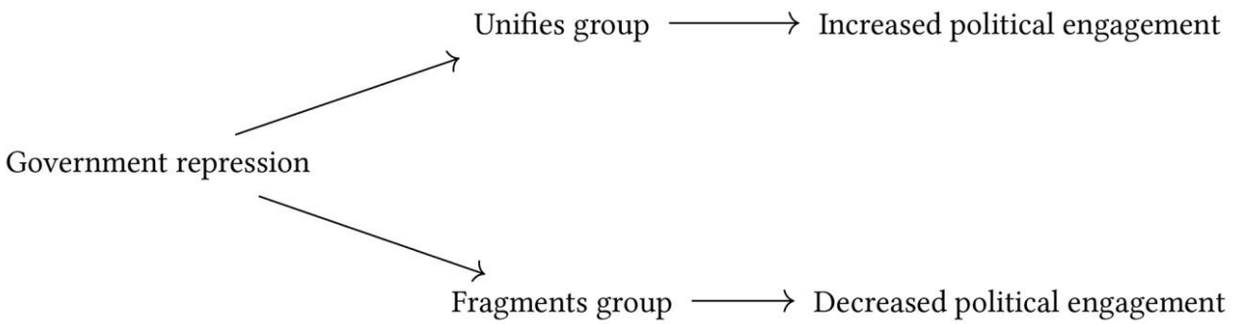

Figure 1. Theoretical diagram

Americans living in Area 1 were under mandatory evacuation, but all California-based people of Japanese ancestry eventually fell under the military order. People of Japanese descent living further inland in Washington and Oregon, as well as those living away from the coast, were not subject to evacuation or incarceration.[3]

Figure 2 shows the eventual exclusion zone. Over 110,000—more than 86%—of Japanese Americans in the continental United States resided within the final exclusion zone and were relocated; California alone contained around 73% of Japanese Americans living in the continental United States (Ruggles 2019).

Detainment camp site selection

The US Army began scouting sites in the spring of 1942. Suitable sites had to be far from military targets, large enough to house thousands, and connected to transportation and public utilities. Because of these pressures, the US Army focused on sites with these features already in place. Accordingly, all but four assembly and relocation centers were located on fairgrounds, stockyards, and exposition centers (Ng 2002).

A key inquiry for us is to assess whether and how camp characteristics affected subsequent engagement. Figure 2 shows the locations of the 10 major War Relocation Centers, while table 1 summarizes several camp characteristics. As the table shows, some camps had more military-style infrastructure, including watch towers and military-use buildings.

Camp assignment

The US Army began evacuations on March 31, 1942, using a consistent procedure (Daniels 1993). The larger military zones depicted in figure 2 consisted of 108 Civilian Exclusion Zones encompassing approximately 1,000 people each. Exclusion orders posted in public locations informed people with Japanese ancestry (people who were at least 1/16 Japanese) that they were required to register and prepare to transfer. In the following days, the head of each household would report to a nearby control center, register, and receive instructions for relocation. Evacuees were given six days to travel to one of multiple assembly centers located throughout California, Oregon, and Washington. Evacuees spent an average of 100 days in an assembly center before being transferred to a permanent detainment camp (Kashima et al. 2012).

3. While approximately 2,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans living in Hawaii were imprisoned in the continental United States, the US Army did not forcibly relocate the vast majority of Hawaii's approximately 158,000 ethnically Japanese residents (Kashima 2003). Additional information is provided in app. sec. A.3.

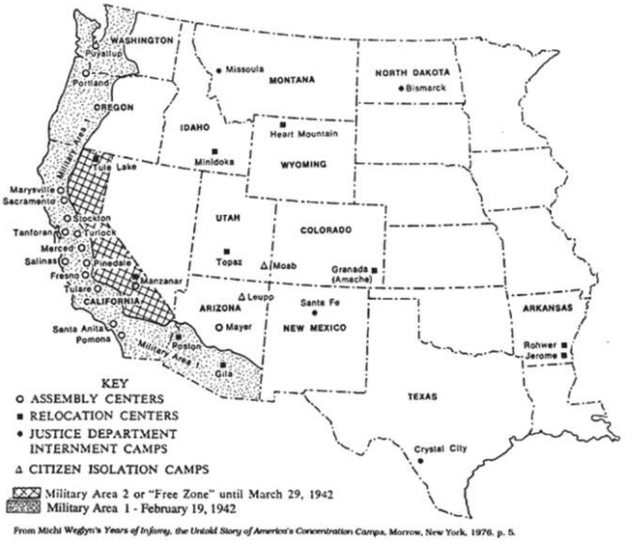

Figure 2. Exclusion zones and detainment camps. (Source: Weglyn 1976.)

With few exceptions, evacuees were transferred from assembly centers to detainment camps according to criteria unlikely to be correlated with their personal backgrounds, an assertion that we formally evaluate in the "Robustness of the Results" section and that is also discussed extensively in Shoag and Carollo (2016). Evacuees in assembly centers with the most dangerous conditions (e.g., no indoor plumbing) were moved to detainment camps first (Burton 2000). US Army records suggest that it made efforts to move evacuees waiting at assembly centers to the nearest camps with climates closest to what they had known at home (Burton 2000). Beyond these two concerns, families were assigned—together when possible—to camps that were (1) sufficiently complete in terms of construction to house evacuees and (2) had room for them. We see direct evidence of this in the War Relocation Authority's (WRA) records and in figure 3. For instance, figure 3*A* shows that evacuees from Los Angeles County were primarily sent to the nearby assembly centers in Manzanar, Pomona, and Santa Anita. The same evacuees were distributed across a variety of detainment camps (fig. 3*B*) in Arizona (Gila River, Poston), Colorado (Granada), Wyoming (Heart Mountain), and Arkansas (Rowher, Jerome). Thus, conditional on initial preevacuation location, final camp assignment was exogenous to family characteristics.

Data sources and key variables

Our primary interest is in how incarceration affected the political attitudes of those incarcerated and their direct descendants. For this, we draw on the Japanese American Research Project (JARP), a nationally representative, multiwave survey of 4,153 mainland Japanese Americans that was conducted

Table 1. Detainment Camp Characteristics

Camp	State	Peak Population	Guard Towers	Demonstrations	Use of Force	Violence
Amache	Colorado	7,318	6	0	0	0
Jerome	Arkansas	8,497	7	0	0	1
Heart Mountain	Wyoming	10,767	9	1	0	0
Minidoka	Idaho	9,397	8	0	0	0
Manzanar	California	10,046	8	0	1	1
Rohwer	Arkansas	8,475	8	0	0	0
Tule Lake	California	18,789	19	1	1	0
Poston	Arizona	17,814	0	1	0	1
Gila River	Arizona	13,348	1	0	0	0
Topaz	Utah	8,130	7	0	1	0

Sources. Burton (2000), Densho Encyclopedia (http://encyclopedia.densho.org/FortSill(detentionfacility)/), Ishizuka (2006), and New Mexico Office of the State Historian (http://newmexicohistory.org/places/lordsburg-internment-pow-camp).

Note. Summary of the 10 major Japanese American detainment camps. Smaller detention facilities were in active operation throughout the United States during World War II, and we include these in our analysis in order to preserve power and leverage additional information about internment length and location. These 10 camps account for 2,545 of the 2,777 incarcerated Japanese Americans in the Japanese American Research Project.

between 1962 and 1968. (See app. A for details regarding survey modes and timing.)[4] The survey excludes Hawaii-based people of Japanese descent. (As we discuss above and in app. sec. A.3, this is not a problem for our substantive inferences as only a very small fraction of Hawaiians of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated.) Although JARP is an older data set and was collected approximately 20 years after the end of World War II, we use it for several reasons.[5] First, the JARP was conducted when many who were incarcerated were still alive and politically active. (Using data collected today would be impossible; as of our writing, those incarcerated as infants would be in their late 70s.) Second, other surveys of Asian Americans tend to be underpowered with regard to Japanese Americans. Third, JARP includes information about where respondents lived between 1932 and 1941, allowing us to leverage conditionally exogenous variation in camp assignment (following Shoag and Carollo 2016). Finally, JARP allows us to evaluate effects across generations because it includes three immigrant cohorts. These are (1) Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants), (2) Nisei (descendants of Japanese-born immigrants, or second generation), and (3) Sansei (third generation). Key features of the JARP data are summarized in table 2.

The JARP data are constrained in that camp assignment is only available for Issei, despite the fact that many Nisei and even some Sansei were incarcerated (table 2). In the results that follow, we link respondents in JARP using the survey's family identifier and assign subsequent generations the detainment camp reported by Issei members. That is, we assume that all members of the same family were incarcerated at the same place. This assumption is plausible, given that the US Army prioritized keeping families together. It is also important to note that, in order to protect respondent privacy, the JARP recorded preevacuation locations at the state level with the exception of California. California respondents have codes that place them in a cluster of metropolitan areas, but these clusters are based on city size rather than geographic location. Our main results effectively control for state, but we demonstrate their robustness by including more specific locations from additional data and controlling for more precisely recorded birthplace instead of 1940 residence in appendix G. In addition we include a fixed effect for immigration generation since JARP used different questionnaires for each cohort. This also makes substantive sense: cultural and political differences as well as differences in citizenship status (discussed below) across these cohorts could have affected incarceration as well as political attitudes.

In addition to JARP, we use the WRA's records to validate our results and provide richer descriptions of the detainment

4. The JARP was used as the primary data source in Levine and Rhodes (1981). As the authors note, however, their interest was mostly in examining the social and political incorporation of Japanese Americans, rather than the effects of incarceration (6).

5. One concern with the use of this survey is that deaths between the time of incarceration and the survey may not be random, and this could correlate with our outcome variables. If this were the case, JARP demographics such as age would depart from other data sources from the period of incarceration. However, as we show in app. A, the JARP is comparable to administrative data sources such as the WRA data.

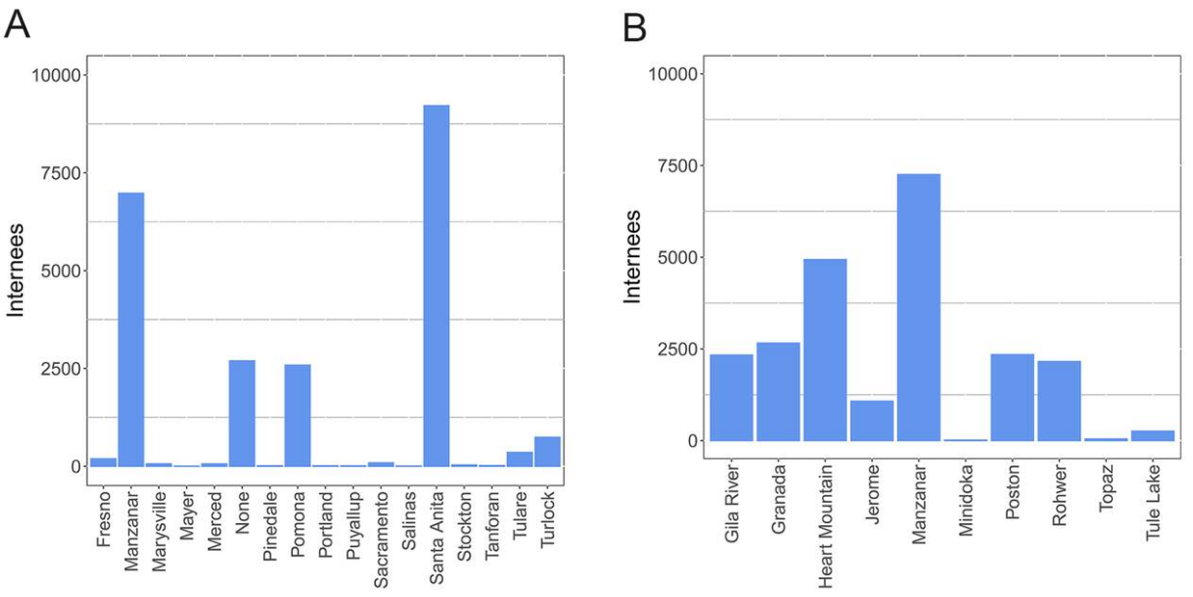

Figure 3. Distribution of assembly center (*A*) and detainment camp (*B*) locations among Los Angeles prisoners

process.[6] The WRA recorded detailed information about internees, including name, age, gender, preinternment address, family units, education, and occupation. These records also contained assembly center and detainment camp assignment information for 109,384 Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II. In appendix A, we show that the sample characteristics of the JARP are generally consistent with descriptive data from the WRA, which provides strong evidence of JARP's representativeness; this also lessens concerns about the time lag of the JARP data. Finally, we use the WRA data in support for the idea that, conditional on preevacuation location, camp assignment was unrelated to personal characteristics.

Detainment status. Given that the data span three immigration cohorts, we operationalized exposure to incarceration in three ways: (1) *Direct Exposure*, respondents who were themselves incarcerated, either solo or with family (67% of sample); (2) *Family-Only Exposure*, respondents who were not themselves incarcerated but had at least one family member in the sample incarcerated (18% of sample);[7] (3) *Baseline*, respondents who were not incarcerated and did not have an incarcerated family member in the JARP (15% of sample).[8]

Individual covariates. We also include gender and age, which are pretreatment features that may affect our outcomes. (Age, e.g., likely affects political engagement independently of the incarceration experience.) Finally, our analysis of camp-level effects relies on controls for respondents' place of residence on the eve of incarceration. Since the detainment camp to which people were ultimately confined was orthogonal to pretreatment characteristics, it was largely a function of where they lived at the onset of World War II. All of our analyses of camp effects therefore control for pretreatment area of residence.

We do not control for citizenship status because it was not asked for all individuals in JARP and because it presents significant posttreatment bias problems. For example, just 22 of the 591 citizen Issei in our sample obtained citizenship before 1941, meaning that the remainder may have been influenced directly by their incarceration experience in deciding whether to pursue citizenship. However, we do include fixed effects for cohort (Issei, Nisei, and Sansei), which accounts for much variation in citizenship. Nisei and Sansei, for example, were not asked about their citizenship status; however, all but

6. See the Database of Japanese American Internees, record group 210, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/wra.

7. Each family in the JARP was assigned a family identifier, which can be used to calculate how many respondents within a given family were incarcerated.

8. Detainment status might be subject to underreporting. Focusing on those who were eligible for evacuation, 80% of our sample reported being incarcerated, which is comparable to the estimate derived from IPUMS data.

Table 2. Japanese American Research Project Sample Demographic Information

Generation	*N*	Age	Gender	Married	California	Oregon	Washington	Other	Incarcerated	Families
Issei	1,047	72	.66	.57	723	47	127	150	.82	.70
Nisei	2,304	41	.52	.81	1,470	101	266	467	.76	.86
Sansei	802	22	.47	.30	104	2	24	672	.21	.85
Total/average	4,153	45	.55	.65	2,297	150	417	1,289	.67	.82

Note. Age represents mean age, gender represents proportion male, and married represents proportion married. California, Oregon, Washington, and Other represent counts of Japanese Americans living in each location on the eve of the detainment period. Incarcerated represents the proportion of respondents in each generation who were incarcerated. Families represents the proportion of respondents in a family with at least one member incarcerated.

58 Nisei and all but 22 Sansei JARP respondents were born in the United States, making them citizens by birth.

Camp environment covariates. We gather new data to evaluate how different camp conditions affected group cohesion, per our theory. First, we operationalize the level of militarism in camps by recording the numbers of watch towers per 1,000 people in each camp. Second, we draw on multiple historical resources to identify relocation centers that experienced demonstrations, violence between prisoners and civilians, or the use of force by military personnel against prisoners (shown in table 1). "Demonstrations" were oppositional demonstrations by some detainees against personnel to protest resource shortages, working conditions, failures to pay claims when workers were injured, and so on. Importantly, other groups in the camps (like the Japanese American Citizens League) preferred cooperation with Army and Wartime Civil Control Administration staff to demonstrations, making this variable an expression of dissatisfaction by specific subsets of detainees and a marker of disagreement within the group. "Violence" represents violence between prisoners or violence between detainees and the surrounding civilian population. Finally, we incorporate contextual features such as the percentage white in the surrounding county (from the 1940 Census) and the percentage of the county-level vote share won by Franklin Roosevelt in 1940. We use these camp characteristics in the "Robustness of the Results" section.

Outcome variables. Our focus is on political engagement, a topic on which we have several JARP questions.[9] First, "political interest" is a four-item ordinal scale ranging from "no interest at all" (0) to a "a great deal" (3; $\bar{x} = 1.29$; $s = .83$).[10] Second, "political engagement" is a binary item asking respondents whether nonfamily members have asked them for advice regarding politics ($\hat{p} = .17$). Third, "faith in government" is a binary item asking whether respondents disagreed that "most people in government are not really interested in problems of the average man" ($\hat{p} = .43$). Finally, preferences for dissent are measured using a trichotomous variable that captures whether respondents would have preferred a leadership strategy during the detainment process that emphasized dissent (-1), accommodation (1), or neither (0; $\bar{x} = .61$; $s = .77$). Substantively, preferring accommodation indicates a more politically disengaged attitude.

We focus on these outcomes for several reasons. First, they are representative of the political topics (interest, participation, views of government) about which respondents were asked in the JARP. Second, we focused on questions for which question wording and the coding of responses were sufficiently similar across two or more generations to allow us to make these comparisons. Finally, our use of these outcomes is consistent with other studies involving the JARP that have used these measures as indicators of engagement (Levine and Rhodes 1981, chap. 7).

DETAINMENT STATUS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Before we delve into camp-specific effects, we investigate the possible role detainment status (i.e., the relationship

9. We do not present results on turnout and vote choice. Only Issei were asked whether they voted in specific elections, and more than 42% of them in our sample are noncitizens. Also, over 40% of Sansei in the JARP data were under 21 at the time the survey was administered, making them ineligible to vote. Thus, the JARP limits our power to investigate this question. The directionality of an incarceration effect is also unclear. Incarceration was ordered by a Democratic president, but prominent Republicans supported incarceration and restrictions on Japanese immigration.

10. The Issei version of this question had different response options, allowing for no or yes responses. We code these responses as 0 and 1 on a 0–3 scale.

between direct exposure or family-only exposure to incarceration) played in shaping political engagement. For this, we leverage the fact that nearly 86% of people of Japanese descent living in the continental United States resided in the exclusion zone, but 14% did not. This variation lets us assess the relationship between whether a person or one of his or her family members was sent to a camp and subsequent political attitudes—a relationship that many scholars believe could have galvanized Japanese Americans (Wong et al. 2011). Although this analysis is not causal, we investigate alternative explanations below.

Figure 4 reports results from a linear model regressing indicators of political engagement on measures of direct exposure and family-only exposure to incarceration with fixed effects for preevacuation residential locations and generational identifiers. We also control for age and gender. (The full specification is provided in app. C.) The figure shows that those who were incarcerated are about 13% of a scale point (±9% of a scale point)[11] less likely to report an interest in American politics than those who were not, a statistically significant difference. These patterns are similar among Japanese Americans who themselves were not incarcerated but who had family that were. These individuals are about 18% of a scale point (±9% of a scale point) less likely to express interest in politics. These estimates correspond to a movement of approximately 3% and 4% along a three-point scale, respectively. For both distrust and political advice, estimates are in the expected direction, but there is considerable uncertainty. Additionally, those who had direct exposure to incarceration are about 11% of a scale point (±11% of a scale point) more likely to support a "peaceful and orderly" leadership approach during detainment than one employing protest and dissent, relative to others. Among those who were not incarcerated themselves but had family who were, this difference is approximately 19% of a scale point (±11% of a scale point). These two estimates reflect a 3% and 6% movement across a three-point scale, respectively.

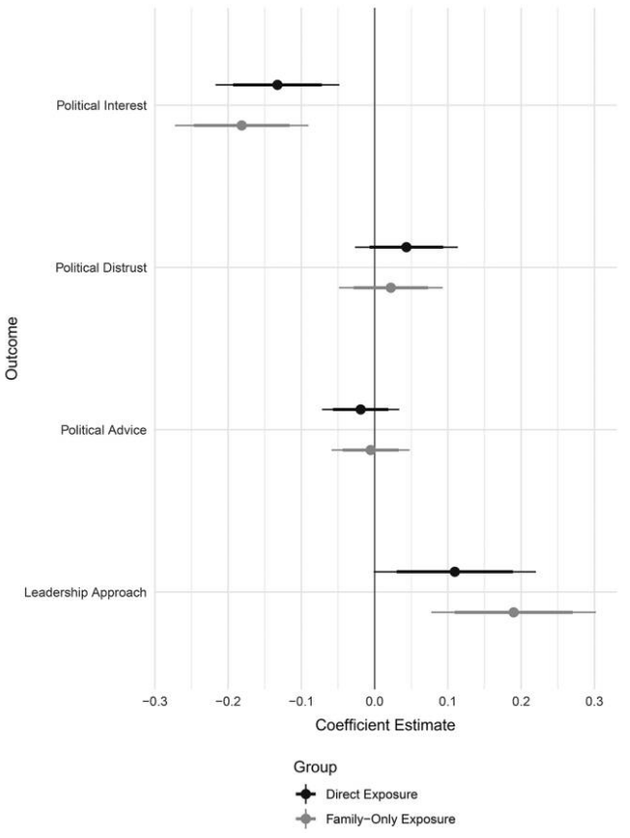

Figure 4. Relationship between detainment status and political engagement. Political interest models rely on data from all three generations; political advice, leadership approach, and political distrust models are based on the Nisei and Sansei sample. 95% (*narrow bar*) and 84% (*thick bar*) confidence intervals (CIs) are shown: 84% CIs allow for visual tests of equality across coefficients; 95% CIs result in type II errors when comparing visible coefficients (Bolsen and Thornton 2014). Sample sizes are reported in appendix section C.2.

Consistent with intergenerational transmission, coefficient estimates for both detainment status measures are strikingly similar across outcomes. Formal tests of differences between the two never reach conventional levels of statistical significance (table 7).

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS IN MILITARY SERVICE, EARNING POTENTIAL, AND ARRIVAL DATE

These results provide evidence that incarceration suppressed political interest. But could other explanations drive this finding? One possibility is that there is unexplained confounding between those of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated (or had family incarcerated) and those who were not. However, using data from the 1940 Census, we fail to reject the null hypothesis of no mean difference between Japanese Americans inside and outside of the exclusion zone with respect to gender, marital status, age, education, employment rates, and occupational class (see app. sec. E.2). We also fail to find evidence that military service, income, or differences in arrival date explain our pattern of results (see app. H).

INCARCERATION LENGTH AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

We next evaluate the association between detainment length and political engagement. This analysis is not strictly causal, especially because some prisoners petitioned for early release. There were 14 conditions for early release, which included

11. Parenthetical values represent the bounds of a 95% confidence interval around each corresponding point estimate.

Table 3. Incarceration Length: Summary Statistics

Incarceration Length	*N*	% Incarcerated Sample
Less than 1 year	313	11.50
1–2 years	498	18.30
2–3 years	678	24.90
3–4 years	1,064	39.10
4–5 years	157	5.80
5+ years	8	.30

promising not to live among other Japanese Americans, conforming to American customs, and not moving to an area with hostility toward Japanese Americans (Yonemura 2019). (This also included individuals released for military service, which we showed in the previous section is not driving our results.) Many of those released early were young people going east for university studies, and, according to Yonemura (2019), the vast majority of people granted indefinite leave were ages 15–35. In the analyses below, we control for age, which accounts for some of this.[12]

Table 3 provides summary statistics on detainment length. Roughly 12% of prisoners in our sample were released within one year, while 45% were detained longer than three years; this is consistent with the fact that most people stayed in camps until the camps were closed, thus providing an end date to incarceration that is exogenous to personal characteristics.

We would suspect, in accordance with the literature on ethnic targeting (Lupu and Peisakhin 2017) and carceral contact in the United States (Weaver and Lerman 2010), that longer interments would more strongly demobilize and depress civic engagement. After all, shorter detainments may have little effect, but longer detainments may expose prisoners to more intragroup conflict, perhaps souring them on future engagement (Weaver and Lerman 2010).

To analyze this, we subset the data to only those with direct experience with incarceration. We again control for age, gender, and generational cohort. Those incarcerated for longer periods had greater attenuation in political engagement, shown in figure 5. (The full specification is provided in app. sec. C.2.) An additional year of being incarcerated is associated with approximately 1.4% of a scale point decrease in political interest (±2.6% of a scale point, so narrowly insignificant), a 4.2 percentage point increase in distrust (±2.2 percentage points), a 3.4 percentage point decrease in the likelihood of being sought out for political advice (±1.6 percentage points), and 4.3% of a scale point (±3.4% of a scale point) increase in supporting a peaceful and orderly leadership approach during the detainment process. To put this into context, those who were incarcerated for four years or more (6% of the incarcerated sample) are approximately 4% of a scale point less likely to report an interest in American politics than those who were incarcerated for less than one year (12% of the incarcerated subsample). Moreover, they are approximately 17 percentage points more likely to express distrust in government, 14 percentage points less likely to be sought out for political advice, and 17% of a scale point more likely to support a peaceful and orderly leadership strategy. This corresponds to a movement of about 6% across the three-point scale.

GROUP FRACTURING IN DETAINMENT CAMPS

These findings show that disengagement is associated with detainment status and length. In this section, we examine the experience more closely, to explain these findings and to shed light on our theory of incarceration as a divisive, fractionalizing event. Additionally, as we discussed in the "Japanese American Incarceration Context and Data" section, conditional on initial place of residence, assignment to one of the 10 major detainment camps was unrelated to individual or family attributes (Shoag and Carollo 2016). This allows us to

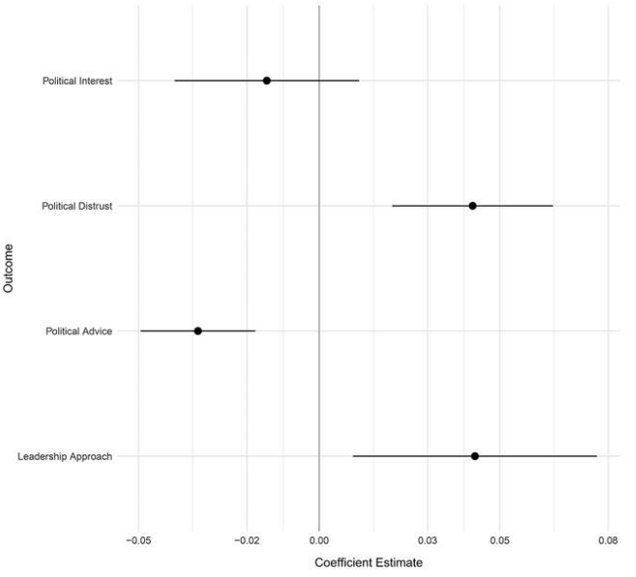

Figure 5. Relationship between incarceration length and political engagement. Political interest models rely on data from all three generations; political advice, leadership approach, and political distrust models are based on the Nisei and Sansei sample. 95% confidence intervals are shown. Sample sizes are reported in appendix section C.2.

12. In app. sec. C.2, we address possible nonlinearities in age by including an indicator for the subgroup described in Yonemura (2019). We also subset on respondents whose families remained in detainment camps after 1945 and, thus, were not eligible for early release. Our key findings are unaffected in both cases.

estimate the causal effects of exposure to specific camp conditions, conditional on incarceration, on downstream political behavior in order to gauge possible mechanisms.

We expect that these conditions are important in shaping political attitudes. As suggested by the custodial citizenship literature (Weaver et al. 2014), detainees in camps that experienced more unrest, demonstrations, or backlash may have experienced greater disengagement. First-person incarceration accounts frequently emphasize two socially pertinent features: (1) the struggle to access basic resources and (2) unrest among detainee factions. Shortages of basic necessities were widespread. Flimsy quarters meant exposure to vermin and extreme weather (Pistol 2017). Grievances over basic needs sparked conflict, driving demonstrations and strikes across several camps and inflaming tensions among detainee factions. At Tule Lake, agricultural workers protested authorities' unwillingness to compensate the widow of a worker killed in a trucking accident; the camp's project director responded by using Poston and Topaz prisoners as strike breakers (Burton 2000). At Manzanar, prisoners led an investigation into supply shortages and founded the Mess Hall Workers Union in 1942. Tensions between this union and the pro-American Japanese-American Citizens League led to larger-scale violence on multiple occasions (Burton 2000). These activities broadly affected camp populations, and their effects were exacerbated still further by the way life in camps interfered with traditional family networks. For many, home life was replaced by life in a barracks, and meals were increasingly taken with members of an prisoner's work detail rather than her family. Scholars of detainment have hypothesized that these changes may have reduced communication and increased fissures between family members (Ng 2002).

Per our theory, we expect that being imprisoned in a camp that witnessed demonstrations or violence among detainees might further disengagement for several reasons. Detainees who demonstrated or went on strike did so because they believed that camp authorities—the arm of the state with which they interacted most—were not committed to providing basic needs. At Manzanar, for example, detainees found evidence that camp officials were smuggling out supplies, causing shortages. Violent disagreements among detainees would similarly have depressed political activity by straining communication and fostering resentments in the community.

We explore these possibilities in figures 6 (demonstrations) and 7 (violence). These show the results of ordinary least squares regressions of outcomes on whether the respondent was relocated to a detainment camp in which a faction-driven demonstration or violent event took place. In both analyses, we include fixed effects for immigration cohort, as well as controls for preevacuation location, age, and gender. (JARP includes case detainment location only for Issei; we again assume that incarcerated Nisei and Sansei were sent to the same camps as their Issei relatives.) As before, we assess camp-treatment effects across two groups: (1) Direct Exposure (people who were themselves incarcerated, either solo or alongside family) or (2) Family-Only Exposure (people who were not incarcerated but had Issei family who were). We do not estimate effects on those who were not incarcerated and had no family incarcerated.

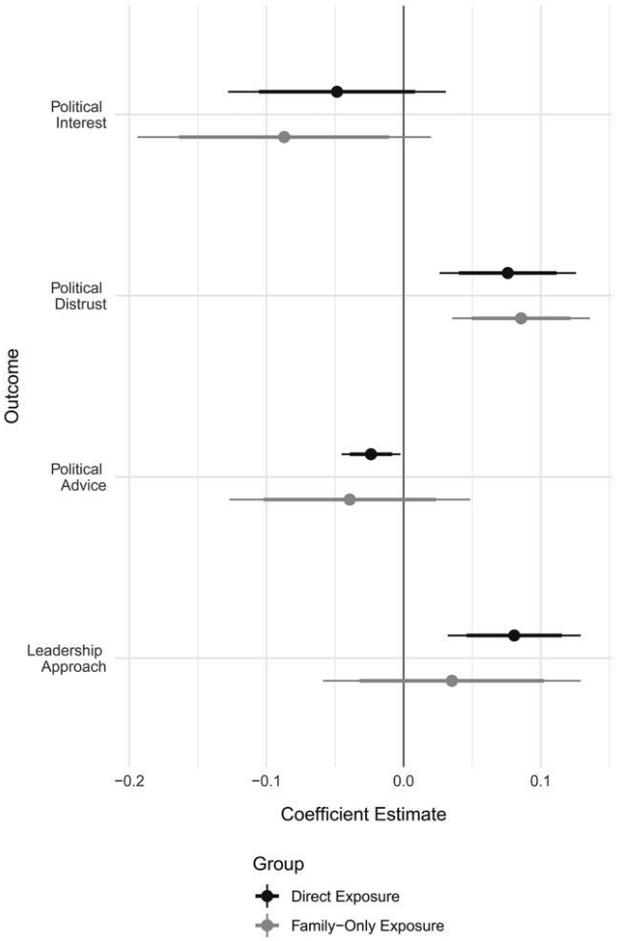

Figure 6. Effects associated with oppositional demonstrations in a camp. 95% (*narrow bar*) and 84% (*thick bar*) confidence intervals are shown. Controls include age, gender, preevacuation residential location, and survey wave (Issei, Nisei, Sansei). Political interest models rely on data from all three generations; political advice, leadership approach, and political distrust models are based on the Nisei and Sansei sample. Sample sizes are reported in appendix D.

Oppositional demonstrations

Figure 6 shows that respondents who were incarcerated in camps where demonstrations by factions took place were 5% of a scale point (±8% of a scale point) less likely to report being interested in politics, although this is narrowly insignificant. Among those who were not themselves incarcerated,

but had family who were, this effect is of a larger magnitude (nearly 9% of a scale point) but insignificant (±11% of a scale point). In terms of trust in government, respondents who were incarcerated were approximately 8 percentage points (±5 percentage points) more likely to say that the government is not concerned with everyday people; results are similar for respondents whose families were incarcerated. Both are significant.

Respondents detained at camps that witnessed such demonstrations were 2.4 percentage points (±2 percentage points) less likely to have been approached for political advice, although this finding is significant only for those who themselves were incarcerated (and not for those who only had family incarcerated). Finally, the results suggest that detainees sent to camps that experienced demonstrations were significantly more likely to favor leaders who espoused peaceful transitions, perhaps because such respondents did not believe protesting would yield concessions or because they feared retribution. On this point, those directly incarcerated are 0.08 (±0.05) scale points (relative to the −1, 0, 1 scale) more likely to prefer leaders who backed orderly transitions. The findings are similar in magnitude but insignificant for those who were not themselves incarcerated but who had family who were.

Overall, the results support the hypothesis that labor unrest and deprivation at camps has a depressive effect on political engagement. We detect slightly stronger findings for those individuals themselves incarcerated although formal tests assessing the difference in effects between direct versus family-only exposure are insignificant (app. D). This provides suggestive evidence in favor of an intergenerational transmission of attitudes, consistent with our findings above.

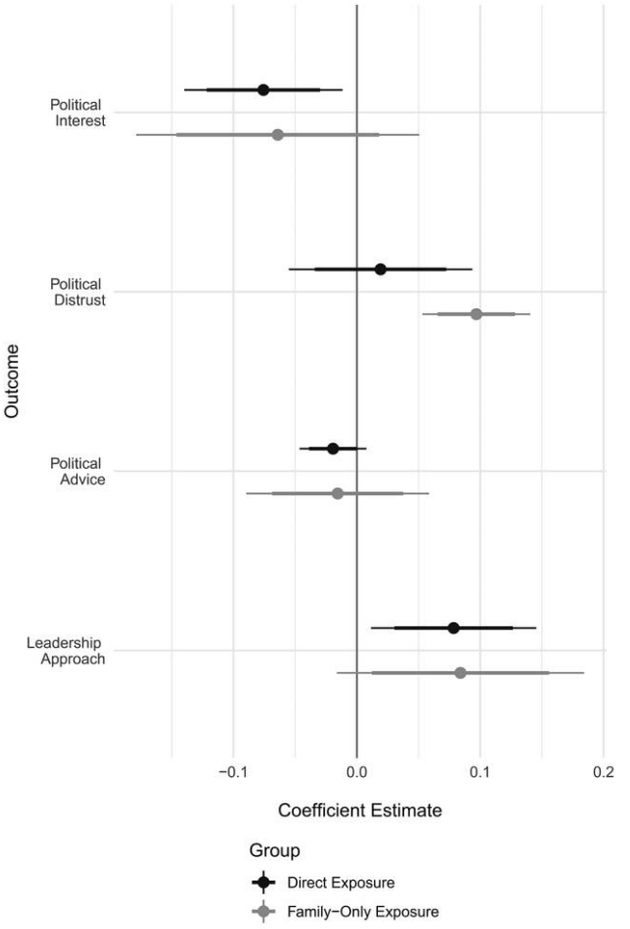

Figure 7. Effects associated with violent conditions in a camp. 95% (*narrow bar*) and 84% (*thick bar*) confidence intervals are shown. Controls include age, gender, preevacuation residential location, and survey wave (Issei, Nisei, Sansei). Political interest models rely on data from all three generations; political advice, leadership approach, and political distrust models are based on the Nisei and Sansei sample. Sample sizes are reported in appendix D.

Violence

Results for the camp violence models are presented in figure 7. Respondents who lived through violent episodes while they were incarcerated express significantly lower levels of interest in American politics than counterparts who did not experience violence (7.5% of a scale point, ±6% of a scale point). However, the effect is only significant for those who themselves were incarcerated either on their own or alongside family. For individuals who only experienced the effects of incarceration via family, the effect is in a similar direction but not significant.

For trust in government, detainees in camps that witnessed violent episodes among detainees themselves were 2 percentage points (±7 percentage points) more likely to report believing that the government had little concern for the problems faced by average people. Respondents who only had family incarcerated were significantly more likely to express skepticism of the government, scoring 10 percentage points (±4 percentage points) higher on distrust. Those incarcerated in camps that experienced violence among detainees also reported lower rates (2 percentage points) of being sought out for political advice, but the finding is not significant for both groups. Finally, the respondents directly incarcerated in camps that experienced violence were 0.08 scale points (±0.07) more likely to support leaders who did not favor protest. The effect for those were not themselves incarcerated but who had family who were are similar in magnitude but narrowly insignificant.

Overall, these effects are slightly more modest than those we found regarding demonstrations. However, they provide suggestive evidence that violence had a negative effect on political engagement. In addition, we cannot rule out differences in treatment effects transmitted across generations (shown in app. D), although our findings are mostly significant for those who experienced incarceration themselves.

Robustness of the results

Our results lend support to a demobilizing effect associated with incarceration with particularly strong effects among those who were incarcerated longer and those with direct connections to camps exhibiting labor conflict or violence. We also find a corresponding, albeit slightly weaker, effect among those who only had family members incarcerated lending evidence to the intergenerational transmission of attitudes. We note, however, some threats to this analysis, the most pressing being (1) confounding in camp assignment and (2) differences in preevacuation locations.

Robustness to unobserved confounders in camp assignment. Following the historical record and other work on incarceration (e.g., Shoag and Carollo 2016), we assume that, for individuals who were themselves incarcerated (either solo or alongside family members), camp assignment is orthogonal to preevacuation characteristics at the individual level. However, detainees may still differ on characteristics affecting political engagement, even conditional on location.

We first assess whether camp assignment is related to any pretreatment covariates for those were personally incarcerated. Since incarcerated camps are discrete units, we model camp assignment as a multinomial logistic function of age, gender, and preevacuation location. Values in table 4 correspond to *z*-scores, calculated by dividing coefficients from the multinomial logit by their corresponding standard errors, for each covariate. In the age and gender columns, no camp is associated with a test statistic greater than 1.96 or less than −1.96. (Preevacuation location, however, is significantly associated with camp assignment in our model, but this is what we expect given the way camp assignment was carried out.)[13] This analysis is consistent with Shoag and Carollo's (2016) table 1, which finds individual covariate balance across the camps using redress data, as well as additional analyses in appendix B, which find covariate balance using the more expansive WRA data.

Another possible challenge is that the government reassigned or sequestered prisoners on the basis of their level of resistance after their initial camp assignment. An example of this is the WRA's loyalty questionnaire, which was administered to men age 17 and over beginning in 1943. Respondents who answered that they would not register for selective service and could not pledge unconditional loyalty to the United States were labeled "disloyal" and sequestered at Tule Lake. To address this, we replicate the analyses subsetting to JARP respondents who were younger than 17 in 1945. The results from that analysis are consistent with the effects of incarceration that we report in this section. (See app. H for these results.)

Table 4. Covariate Balance across Detainment Camps

	Age	Gender (Male)	Precamp Location
Jerome	−.88	1.27	−1.43
Heart Mountain	.38	−.54	−2.74
Minidoka	.14	.31	−1.97
Manzanar	−.18	1.58	−2.73
Rohwer	1.37	.15	−4.17
Tule Lake	−.49	.68	−1.07
Poston	−.09	.12	−2.06
Gila River	.04	−.64	−1.41
Topaz	.67	−.33	2.34

Note. Reference category is Granada (Amache).

Location before evacuation. Identifying the effect of camp environment assumes that every Japanese American family living in roughly the same area was treated similarly by the WRA. Figure 8 supports this assertion. Each panel in figure 8 displays the distribution of detainees living in California, Oregon, and Washington on the eve of World War II. Figure 8*A* describes this information using the WRA's records, while figure 8*B* shows the same distribution using JARP data. (This is, again, only for those individuals who themselves were incarcerated.) If the assumption that the US Army prioritized proximity and speed in transfer is reasonable, then most detainees from a given state should have been held in camps closest to their state of residence.

This is borne out by the two figures. For example, Japanese Americans living in Oregon and Washington were sent to the northernmost camps in California (Tule Lake), Wyoming (Heart Mountain), and Idaho (Minidoka). Californians were sent to camps located near them—Manzanar, Poston, and Gila River for people living in southern California and Tule Lake for people living in northern California. Finally, we note strong correspondence between the two figures, providing assurance that JARP's self-reported data accurately portray detainment camp assignment.

Alternative mechanisms of demobilization

Our analyses suggest that differences in political engagement among Japanese Americans varied not just by detainment status but also by features of the camps themselves, with

13. Precamp location is a three-digit numeric code, which we leave as a numeric variable in this model to preserve power. Locations in the same region and state will be close in value and locations across states will differ considerably in value, which provides reasonable distinctions between different precamp locations.

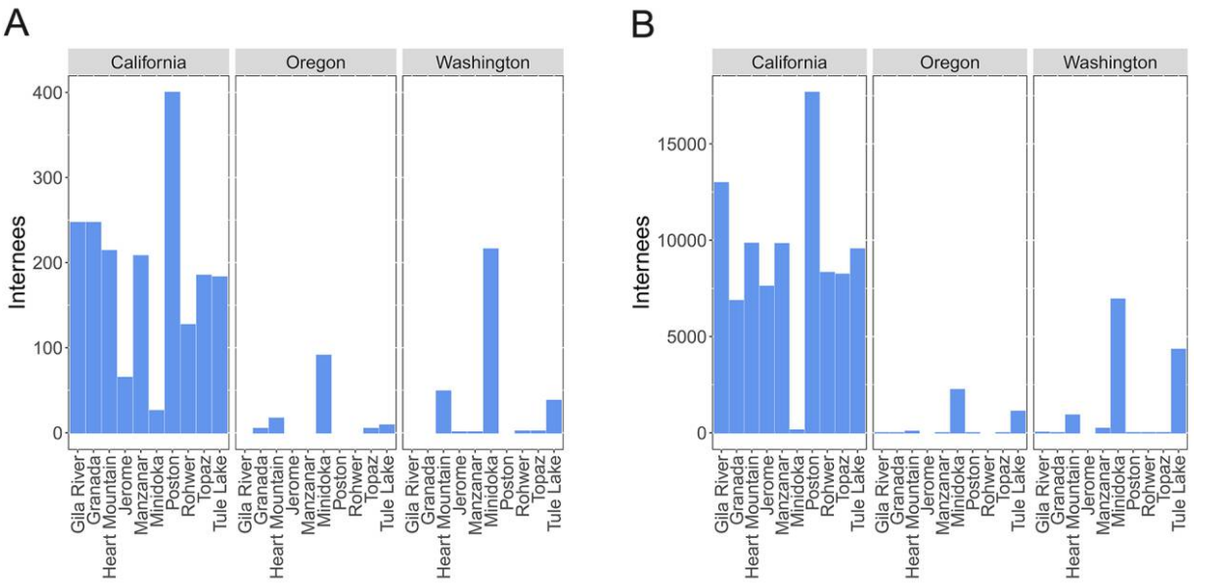

Figure 8. Assignment to detainment camp by state of residence: *A*, War Relocation Authority data; *B*, Japanese American Research Project data

exposure to unrest being an important mechanism behind demobilization. However, a potential challenge is the possibility that any camp effects are the result of another factor correlated with detainment location. Here, we examine the two likeliest alternatives: (1) the severity of camp environments and (2) the camps' surrounding racial and political environments. We evaluate and set aside additional mechanisms—including loss of income—in the appendix.

Severity of camp environments. Previous work implies that harsher incarceration conditions could have instilled a greater fear of the state or of repression, thereby having greater demobilizing effects. We test this by (1) looking at the use of state force against detainees and (2) looking at the severity of camp conditions themselves.

With regard to the use of force, the prediction is not borne out, as shown in figure 9*B*, which analyzes camp effects according to whether the camp experienced at least one use of force by military personnel against prisoners. The point estimates of this effect on political distrust, advice, and interest and preferences over leadership are close to zero. Only among those with family exposure is there a single significant finding (on political interest); all other findings are insignificant.

One reason we might observe disengagement for violence among detainees (discussed in our previous section), but not for cases in which military personnel used force, is the difference in scale. Episodes of violence among detainees generally tended to precede or follow large demonstrations or involve large groups. Incidents in which guards used force against detainees in contrast, tended to be more isolated and rare. To give an example, we coded a guard at Topaz camp fatally shooting an elderly detainee for standing too close to a perimeter fence as use of force (Burton 2000). Violent confrontations between large groups of detainees would have exposed more detainees to unrest than isolated shootings such as this, which involved few individuals.

Second, we investigate a second component of severity: the extent to which prisoners lived under militarized conditions. These conditions manifested in physical space through the use of guard towers, barbed wire fencing, and barracks-style housing for detainees and served as constant "reminders of [internees'] lack of freedom" (Burton 2000, 45).

We operationalize the militarization of space as the number of guard towers per 1,000 prisoners at peak camp population. Figure 9*A* shows that respondents incarcerated in more militarized camps (or with relatives who were) were 8% of a scale point ($\pm$8% of a scale point) more likely to express interest in American politics, a finding in the opposite direction from what we would expect. This effect is, however, only significant among respondents who were not incarcerated but who had family members who were. Other findings are, across the board, insignificant and with point estimates close to zero. This suggests that the disengagement patterns observed in the JARP sample are due to the detainees' collective exposure to unrest and fractionalization, rather than differences in the severity of the camp conditions.

Surrounding political and racial environment. Although camp locations were remote, exposure to local culture provides a possible alternative explanation for the results in the

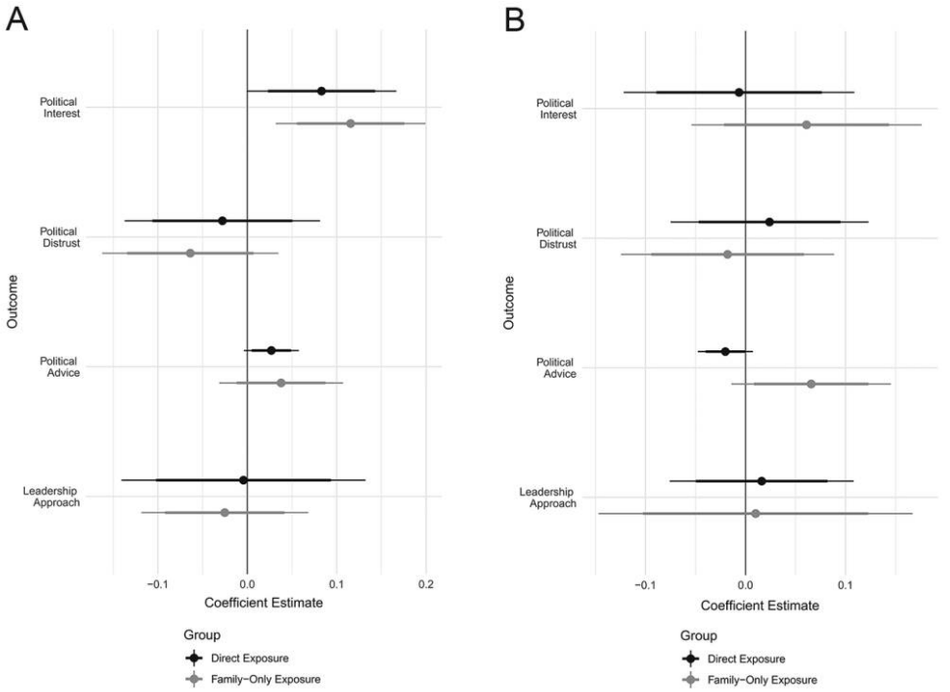

Figure 9. Camp effects: militarized conditions. *A*, Effect of being incarcerated in highly militarized camp. *B*, Effect of witnessing use of military force while incarcerated 84% and 95% confidence intervals are shown. Controls include age, gender, and preevacuation residential locations. Political interest models rely on data from all three generations; political advice, leadership approach, and political distrust models are based on the Nisei and Sansei sample.

"Group Fracturing in Detainment Camps" section. For example, if detainees were sent to camps located in nearly exclusively white or extremely conservative areas, this might have led them to have lowered feelings of belonging, thereby suppressing overall political engagement (Wong et al. 2011). We test for this possible alternative explanation by analyzing the effects of (1) the proportion of the detainment camp's county population that was white in 1940 and (2) the political climate, as measured by Franklin Roosevelt's 1940 share of the two-party vote. We fail to find any evidence that these variables consistently predict political engagement (see app. F).

CONCLUSION

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, thousands of people of Japanese ancestry were held for years in militarized detainment camps. Our findings suggest that this unjust internment strongly affected their subsequent political behavior in ways that speak not just to scholarly discussions but also to ongoing current events. First, we find that those with direct and family experience with incarceration are less politically engaged and that this association strengthens with detainment length. Second, we leverage that camp assignment was exogenous to individual or family characteristics conditional on preevacuation location, finding that camp conditions are associated with decreases in political engagement. In particular, those assigned to camps exhibiting intragroup conflict experienced larger disengaging effects. This provides evidence for our theory that a key way in which incarceration was demobilizing was in weakening group ties and in undermining political cohesion. Finally, across every measure of political engagement, we cannot find meaningful differences in the effect of incarceration among those directly interned versus those who experienced incarceration through a family member. This suggests a depressing effect of incarceration that extended across generations.

Our study makes several contributions to scholarly discussions. From the perspective of the comparative politics literature, our article highlights the potential depressive effects of punitive state interactions on political engagement in the unusual context of a liberal democracy. This is an important inquiry: to date, existing work on the topic of repression and ethnic targeting has mostly focused on weak or authoritarian states. Our findings dovetail with those of Lupu and Peisakhin (2017) and Rozenas et al. (2017), who find that repression increases distrust toward the state. (However, in contrast to Lupu and Peisakhin [2017], we do not observe increased mobilization or political engagement in the targeted group.) Additional research could explore whether these differences between democracies and autocratic regimes are shaped by the impact of government repression on weakening

or fracturing group ties, as we posit, or by the nature of repression efforts (as suggested by, e.g., Rozenas and Zhukov 2019).

We also contribute to research in American politics examining the political consequences of growth in the carceral state. Much of this literature has viewed exposure to penal institutions in a binary fashion (contact vs. no contact). Although our context is different in scope and in populations affected, we find that conditions within these institutions matter. Conditions that foster intragroup conflict increase the likelihood of distrust and disengagement in the future. Potential avenues for future research could assess whether variation in the severity and duration of punitive encounters with the state yield worse consequences for affected groups. Moreover, a more complete accounting of mechanisms across different contexts could illuminate whether group fragmentation is a primary driver of disengagement and whether it is the result of the social processes described here or more material losses.

Finally, our article contributes to a growing literature on Asian American public opinion and political behavior. Previous work demonstrated that Japanese Americans have high rates of political participation, with scholars positing that incarceration may have had a galvanizing effect (Wong et al. 2011). Our findings complicate this explanation, suggesting that those with firsthand or secondary contact with incarceration are, if anything, less likely to be politically engaged. This leaves open several questions that are worthy of further research, including whether incarceration indirectly had galvanizing effects via the movement for redress in the 1970s and '80s.

We conclude by noting this study's relevance beyond scholarly discourse, particularly as liberal democracies have increasingly turned to the detention of minority or immigrant groups. The psychological and material effects of these policies suggest that government must think deeply about immigrant political incorporation after these adversarial interactions. Our study—which suggests that detentions that happen in the modern day could suppress political engagement among these groups for generations to come—urges caution in the use of these punitive policies.

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