

DACA, Immigrant Youth, and Education: An Analysis of Elite Narratives on  
Nationhood, Citizenship, and Belonging in the U.S.

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Masters of Arts in the  
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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2014

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis I examine liberal and conservative U.S. immigration debates, specifically as found in 2012-2014 speeches about undocumented immigrant youth by Barack Obama, Richard Durbin, and Luis Gutiérrez, and a report on “patriotic assimilation” published by a conservative think tank, the Hudson Institute. Here, I engage in an analysis about youth and education by following Michel Foucault (1972) in thinking about the productivity, exteriority, and rarity of these discourses in generating dominant conceptions of the nation-state. Through an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, I argue that the liberal speeches about undocumented immigrant youth analyzed provide both ambivalent messages of inclusion and at the same time solidify a good/bad immigrant dichotomy. These productively reaffirm the nation as a liberal, humanitarian nation of immigrants that begins with difference and always ends in sufficient sameness, and an exceptional choice-worthy meritocracy. At the same time, these liberal speeches, through processes of racialization and criminalization, as well as the perpetuation of a “crisis of immigration” provide necessary justification for the exclusionary practices of what some have called “the homeland security state.” Moreover, I argue here that there is little significant divergence between the analyzed liberal and conservative voices —except for a few moments in which liberal notions of sameness, race neutrality, and altruism are disrupted by conservative voices. Lastly, focusing on the “silences” of all sites analyzed, I discuss issues of youth, citizenship, multiplicity, and conflict by drawing from education and youth cultural studies scholarship. I make connections between schooling environments, national discourses, and state practices, arguing that issues of language, citizenship, and belonging are not always negotiated in harmonious terrain. I end by exploring the possibilities of engaging in

more “complex,” “uncertain” and “open-ended” discussions of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging (Lugones and Price, 1995).

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## **INTRODUCTION: DACA, IMMIGRANT YOUTH, AND “LEGALITY”**

On June 15, 2012 President Barack Obama stood at the White House Rose Garden and announced that, effective immediately, the “shadow of deportation” would be ‘lifted’ from immigrant youth who met a certain criteria.<sup>1</sup> Due to a memorandum titled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that was put together by the Department of Homeland Security and announced that same morning by the then Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, many immigrants would soon be eligible “to request temporary relief from deportation proceedings and apply for work authorization” (Obama, 2012).<sup>2</sup> President Obama explained that this was a temporary attempt by his administration to “mend our nation’s immigration policy” given the failure of U.S. congress to pass the bipartisan legislation popularly known as “the Dream Act” or take any action to fix a “broken immigration system” (Obama, 2012).

According to the PEW Research Center (2013), as of 2011, Immigrants make-up about 13% of the overall U.S population, and Passel (2013) specifies that

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<sup>1</sup> As stated in the official White House website, the criteria include that the applicant: entered the U.S without inspection before the date of announcement, or his/her lawful immigration status was expired as of time of announcement; arrived in the U.S before their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday; has been continuously present in the U.S since 2007; was under 31 years old as of June of 2012; is either in school or has graduated from high school, obtained a GED, or is an honorary discharged veteran; has not committed a felony, significant misdemeanor or more than three misdemeanors (or otherwise poses a threat to national security/public safety); and was present in the U.S on the date of the DACA announcement and is present at the time of application.

<sup>2</sup> The ‘relief’ provided To DACA recipients is a two-year deferral from “removal action” or deportation, eligibility for work authorizations (which fulfills the requirement to apply for a driver’s license in most states), and eligibility to file request for “advance parole” to travel outside of the U.S in special circumstances.

immigrant youth<sup>3</sup> make up one-fourth of the under-eighteen population. However, in the U.S., 11.7 million immigrants are considered “unauthorized” (Passel, Cohn & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013), and of these almost 12 million persons, about 1 million are underage (Passel and Cohn, 2011).<sup>4</sup> Gonzales (2007) estimates that about 65,000 undocumented persons graduate from U.S. high schools every year.

While situations may vary by personal circumstances and state policies, the conditions of being constructed as unauthorized in the United States generally include the possibility of deportation and thus often family separation, lack of employment authorization, significant travel restrictions, lack of access to certain social services, and increasing criminalization and hostility in many states.<sup>5</sup> All these conditions impact youth, and in recent years, there has been a proliferation of scholarship that looks at both the direct and subtle impacts of immigration status on the educational possibilities of immigrant youth in the U.S. Many scholars have studied how pre-college experiences, particularly in schooling institutions, can become implicit barriers toward higher education possibilities for these youth.

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<sup>3</sup> Passel (2011) uses this term to refer to “children under age 18 who are either foreign-born or U.S-born to immigrant parents” (p.19).

<sup>4</sup> In this thesis, I use the terms undocumented and unauthorized interchangeably. I do so, because although the term “undocumented” (versus the more criminalizing term “illegal”) is widely used to discuss the issues at hand, it is limited in various ways. To begin, as Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, and Suárez-Orozco (2011) point out; the term ‘undocumented’ does not capture the reality that many persons who fall under this category do indeed have some sort of immigration documentation. And most importantly, unlike the term “undocumented” which suggests an ontological status, the term unauthorized brings the role of the state to the forefront, shifting the usual standpoint of the conversation. As De Genova (2007) discusses, if we discuss the issues at hand “from the standpoint of the elementary freedom of movement as something like a basic human entitlement, then rather than presupposing that there is something inherently suspect about the human beings who migrate, the real problem comes into considerably sharper focus: that problem, clearly, is the state itself” (p.425).

<sup>5</sup> See Santa-Ana’s (2010) work *Arizona Firestorm: Global Immigration Realities, National Media, and Provincial Politics* for an in-depth discussion of anti-immigrant laws in Arizona and the emergence of copycat laws in other states.



Many times, undocumented students face K-12 environments that do not account for their day-to-day experiences and lack information on how to support them academically, socially and culturally (Gildersleeve & Ranero, 2010). Gallo (2013) explores the effects of parental deportation on youth in middle childhood who often face high stress situations and even act as mediators between parents and police. Moreover, Gonzalez (2011) notes that immigration status has a material impact on the educational possibilities of immigrant youth. This legal status, in conjunction with schooling environments that offer little support, lead many immigrants to withdraw in school, as well as exit the K-12 system as a whole. Moreover, and perhaps most powerfully, Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, and Suárez-Orozco (2011) have explored the broader developmental impacts of immigration status on immigrant youth and conclude that,

The evidence reveals a consistent pattern: the effects of unauthorized status on development across the lifespan are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility, and ambiguous belonging. (p.461)

While I later write about the notion ‘ambitious belonging’ or even conflictive belonging in the context of what María Lugones and Joshua Price (2006) call “structural multiculturalism,” at this point, it suffices to say that recent scholarship has consistently exposed the negative effects on young people of their own or parental unauthorized immigration status at all levels of the educational trajectory.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (2013) reports having thus far granted DACA status to 475,458 persons. DACA is targeted for a particularly small subset of immigrants as specified by the criteria. Moreover, its important to note that as reported in a Migration Policy Institute (MPI) study by Batalova, Hooker, and Capps (2013), out of all those potentially eligible for DACA, there had only been a 36% application rate by mid-2013. In this study, MPI researchers find that it is probable that many factors like “limited English skills, lower incomes, higher rates of workforce participation, and a greater likelihood of

having children at home” prevent many eligible immigrants from meeting the educational requirement, which could be simply fulfilled by enrolling in adult education or career training programs (Batalova, Hooker, & Capps, 2013, p. 11).

The DACA program is not only limited in scope but it is also a temporary measure. It is set up in two-year increments, and many of those who received DACA early on in the process are now facing expiration dates, and the U.S. government has been unclear about renewal processes. The precarious nature of this program is perhaps best captured on the program’s renewal page found in the USCIS website. As stated, “even if you satisfy the threshold criteria for consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, USCIS may determine, in its unreviewable discretion, that deferred action is not warranted in your case” (“Ice-granted DACA renewal,” 2014). In essence DACA is temporary, limited, and conditional, providing limited support and guaranteeing very little.

### The Subject of Study

The prevalence of issues of immigrant documentation in the U.S. makes this an important subject of study. Moreover, the fact that, as Gonzales (2014) notes, despite ongoing national conversation on the topic since 2001 there has been little change beyond limited, exclusionary, and temporary fixes to immigration issues (such as DACA), makes immigration discourse an interesting and contested site of analysis. Even more, the notion that youth—for whom the construction of illegality takes on particular meanings and negative impacts—have been central to these debates since 2001, also makes this a particularly contested and pressing exploration. The questions that guide this work are: In what ways are particular national speeches and documents about youth and immigration productive for the nation-state? What are the connections, links, or regularities among different sites of the conversation? And what possibilities emerge or are foreclosed under this “limited system” of discourse? I explore this by focusing on elite liberal and conservative conversations that take on issues of immigrant youth and education.

By focusing on these elite sites as a “discourse,” I discuss the convergences and divergences of different sites and draw connections to schooling practices and citizenship discourse in U.S.

### Thesis Outline

In the first chapter, I set up the theoretical framework for the rest of this thesis. I discuss the role of immigration discourse for the U.S. as a nation-state, particularly in normalizing ideas of national identity that (re) invigorate notions of exceptionalism, humanitarianism, and similarities and at the same time justify the policing and exclusionary practices of the state.<sup>6</sup> In chapters II and III, I explore some current dominant voices, including key speeches of national figures that have advocated for DACA eligible immigrant youth, a report on “patriotic assimilation” by a powerful conservative think tank, an immigration rally and a congressional hearing where seemingly opposing discourses meet. In chapter 4, I draw from scholarship in the field of education on youth, citizenship, and subtractive schooling to raise questions about the liberal and conservative documents analyzed, working these at the silences, “at the limit that separates them from what is not said” (Foucault, 1972, p. 119).

### A Note on the Silences

Important here, are Foucault’s (1972) assertions in *The Archeology of*

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<sup>6</sup> I use the term “exclusionary” or “exclusion” widely in this work. As Joshua Kurz (2012) notes, however, speaking of inclusion/exclusion does not sufficiently capture the complexity of U.S. immigration practices and policing, which have become multi-sited, and often even de-territorialized. Thus, I note that when I use this term I am not only speaking of deportation practices aimed at keeping people outside of the nation-state, but also a broader range of regulatory and disciplinary practices aimed at policing persons deemed outsiders and take place in all sorts of societal institutions and spaces.

*Knowledge* that the aim of working at the limit of discourse is not to give voice to some sort of “repressed” silence but rather to define a “limited system of presences” (p.119). While I do not wish to replace a limited system with “something other,” I do pay attention to the ‘stakes’ of certain silences, particularly for the possibility of imagining education systems that affirm youth in their multiplicity, and more broadly, inclusive nations that are not predicated on the dissolution of difference but rather, interested in the possibilities of multiplicity. My interests in the stakes of such silences allow me to acknowledge that this work is far from disembodied, unattached, or neutral. It is necessarily marked by my positionality as an immigrant in the United States, who moved here while young, and yet has never personally experienced the reality of being undocumented. Such connections of course, lead me to be interested in ‘certain’ silences more than others, and in fact, simply by writing about these, I do ‘give voice’ to specific silences. Patti Lather (1993) has written about “voluptuous validity.” This is a kind of validity criteria premised on being openly ideological and expressing embodied self-reflexivity, rather than searching for a neutral or objective answer. Following Lather (1993), when I work “at the limits of what is being said,” I do not, and cannot suspend my investments in certain silences. I have personal investments in both the necessity for a) widening the conversation on issue of immigration and b) acknowledging material conditions created by a web of discourses, practices and policies of immigration in the U.S. Here, I concur with Foucault (1991), that perhaps, “the object is to proceed a little at a time, to introduce modifications that are capable of, if not finding solutions, then at least of changing the givens of a problem” (P.159).

## **CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL & CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK**

In this first chapter, I will provide a theoretical framework, or web in which to explore political elite discourse of immigration and youth in subsequent sections. By political elites here, I am referring to a small subset of powerful and dominant voices that largely control national debates. Through the works of comparative literature scholar Ali Behdad, political theorists Bonnie Honig and Falguni Sheth, and political scientist Alfonso Gonzales, I explore the productive or contested role of immigration discourses for the nation-state. I draw from speeches by President Obama on youth and the DACA program, to discuss the re-production of ideal national subjects and the justification of exclusionary state practices. Setting up an important context for my own discursive analysis, I also draw here from feminist theory to supplement Behdad's (2005) discussion on the similarities between language of inclusion and of exclusion.

### **The Nation-State and the Good/Bad Immigrant Dichotomy**

We can understand the nation following Benedict Anderson (1991) as an "imagined community." The nation is imagined because, although members of the nation will never know all fellow members, "in the mind of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). On the other hand, we can understand the "state" as "a web of politico-legal apparatuses" (Behdad, 2005, p.19). As Ali Behdad (2005) notes, both the state and the nation work in tandem to create particular immigration realities. While the "imagined community" plays a large role in setting up the terms of immigration discourse, and the state is made up of a series of

institutions and practices, members of “the state” are, in fact, part of a larger social imaginary. In this sense, we cannot always clearly separate “the nation” from “the state.” Although this thesis centers on the reproduction of a certain national identity through immigration discourses, it is also important to acknowledge that, as Alfonso Gonzales (2014) states, “it is not the discourse alone that kicks down the door to deport brown bodies in the middle of the night: it is the state” (p. 12). In many senses, the following pages explore the productive role of political elite immigration discourse for consolidating a particular sense of the “imagined community” and at the same time justifying state-sanctioned practices and policies of exclusion that target certain populations.

In *A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States*, Ali Behdad (2005) writes about U.S. immigration discourses and the (re) production of the nation. He does so by analyzing discourses ranging from those of the “founding fathers” and early European travelogues, to those of 20<sup>th</sup> century immigration policies and nativist movements. Behdad finds that in the United States, the figure of the immigrant has historically played a productive role for the re-consolidation of the nation. Following Bonnie Honig, Behdad (2005) argues that immigration discourses serve a project of imagining a homogenous nation that “is never complete” (p.12), regardless of whether the immigrant is constructed as a “threatening other” or as a “model minority.” Behdad (2005) states, “immigrants are useful to the political project of national identity, through an exclusionary logic that defines them as differential others and also through inclusive means of identification that recuperate them as figures of cultural conformism, exceptionalism, and regeneration” (p.12).

In both iterations of the good/bad immigrant dichotomy, U.S. national identity becomes re-invigorated as a stable, coherent, and knowable identity (much like the Cartesian subject). As Behdad and Honig note, key characteristics of this identity include homogeneity (usually understood in a linear narrative that starts in

difference and ends in sameness<sup>7</sup>), exceptionalism (often characterized by hard working, meritocratic subjects who chose the nation) and humanitarianism (characterized by a constant understanding of the nation as one of immigrants, but often with a disavowal of the harsh, racial and exclusionary realities of immigration history in the U.S.). Both Honig (2001) as Behdad (2005) pay close attention to the different shapes that the notion of the “good immigrant” can take. They note that such can be constructed as “wretched and weak” and thus, in need of national “charity,” productively shoring up ideas of U.S. humanitarianism (Honig, 2001, p.77). However, the good immigrant may also be understood as one—rather than needing charity—embodying the “ideals of democracy:” “family values, dedication to hard work, and the possibility for upward mobility” (Behdad, 2005, p.108). Following Falguni Sheth (2009) we might add to this, that the ideal immigrant also embodies the ideals of liberal societies, as “societies that take their lead from the rule of law” (p.15), and even societies with “a consent-based sense of legitimacy” (Honig, 2001, p.76). Honig (2001) and Behdad (2005) both find the ideal immigrant to be an “object of identification,” a “screen onto which we project out idealized selves” (Honig, p.78). Interestingly however, particularly through the notion of consent (which cannot be claimed by U.S. born citizens), the ideal immigrant can become a *better* image in the mirror. Honig writes “he works harder than we do, he values his family and community more actively than we do, and he also fulfills our liberal fantasy of membership by way of consent” (2001, p.78). According to the dominant national imaginary, what makes the U.S. exceptional and unique is the notion that people belong by choice rather than simple inheritance. As Representative Zoe Lofgren noted in a congressional hearing “the genius of America has always been our strength as a society. People from all over the world come to America to become

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<sup>7</sup> Behdad (2005) notes that this narrative is particularly symbolized by the 20<sup>th</sup> century melting pot metaphor, which affirmed that differences would be tolerated as long as “they would be melted into a single national form” (p. 12). He notes that while post-civil rights multiculturalism has attempted to de-stabilize this, “the notion of difference remains an abstract liberal ideal, masking the economic and social inequalities that belie the universal language of American inclusiveness” (p.12).

Americans with us" ("Comprehensive," 2007). The immigrant, *choosing* this country, re-invigorates an image of an exceptional "choice-worthy" democracy. We can see here how both the constructed "good" immigrant in need of charity and the "Ideal immigrant" who re-invigorates the nation produces a patriotic idea of the U.S. as a humanitarian and exceptional nation. As I will show in the following chapters, in certain documents, undocumented immigrant youth often productively represent both of these images of the "good immigrant:" the "needy" immigrant as well as the "ideal immigrant." Language of law-abiding subjects and members by consent also show up in such documents, re-affirming the nation as a liberal democracy based on such principles. Most pointedly, I discuss the stronghold of the narrative of national similarities. Indeed, I find that while conservative narratives argue for the importance of working toward homogeneity in all aspects, liberal narratives, posit an already-there sameness, which, while positing wider inclusivity, does little to challenge the conservative narrative.

Perhaps a statement by President Obama (2012), in his speech announcing the implementation of the DACA program can exemplify how this notion of the "model immigrant" as an "object of identification" often functions when it comes to immigrant youth. Asking his audience to empathize with the fear of deportation, Obama (2012) states,

Imagine you've done everything right your entire life – studied hard, worked hard, maybe even graduated at the top of your class— only to suddenly face the threat of deportation to a country that you know nothing about, with a language that you may not even speak.

Immigrant youth are often exalted in liberal immigration conversations in this way, as "ideal subjects" who are not only exemplar (in that they study hard, work hard, excelled), but, as we will see later, are also joining the nation by choice, and even willing to "earn" belonging, and "step-up" to become part of the national imaginary.

Such language, however, in placing certain subjects at the forefront, as "ideal subjects," mirrors of "ourselves," sets the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion rather plainly. In Falguni Sheth's (2009) words, "the limits of acceptable often function as



vehicles and justifications by which to preempt or exclude dissenting groups from participating in “pluralistic” and “democratic” discourse” (p.9). Moreover, as Behdad (2005) and Honig (2001) note, the “bad immigrant” is also helpful for productively solidifying a certain national identity. Alfonso Gonzales (2014), writing in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century U.S. immigration debates, argues that that the anti-immigrant bloc (composed by certain intellectuals, civil society institutions like think-tanks, and elected officials) has forcefully set the terms of the immigration conversation within this good/bad immigrant dichotomy. Due to this force, the conversation (often even on the side of migrant justice activists and allies) becomes

A false binary opposition in which the rights of the “good immigrant”—the poster child image of a palatable assimilated American kid who came to the United States—as a child, may potentially stay at the expense of the “bad immigrant.” The latter of whom...may have made a mistake a few mistakes in their lives, must be policed detained, and deported. (p.7)

We can see how an opposite image of the immigrant youth discussed in Obama’s words above—a lazy, law breaking immigrant— could also, as an object of differentiation, re-create the construction of exceptional, meritocratic, law abiding Americans. In many of President Obama’s speeches we see both dynamics at work, as he often discusses both “ideal” and “bad” immigrants in conjunction. Following Honig (2001) and Behdad (2005) we can see this as doubly productive for the construction of stable, solid, coherent, and knowable national identity.

In her book *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race* Falguni Sheth (2009) provides a wider framework through which to understand such dichotomous constructions that demarcate the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. The aim of her work is—rather than showing how a particular moment of exclusion functions—to discuss exclusion as a pattern as opposed to an aberration in liberal societies. Here she defines liberal societies as “societies that take their lead from the rule of law...[and]... a certain socio-cultural worldview that highlights individual autonomy, consent, and a particular view of freedom as one that involves the active making of “decisions” or “choices” which leads to the logical conclusion of consequence and

responsibility (Sheth, 2009, p. 15). Sheth's (2009) interest in a discussion of exclusion in liberal societies arises precisely because we often hold on to "the idea that legal structures within liberalism are inherently fair and neutral toward all its denizens (best-case version) or accidentally skewed in favor of some (worse-case version), that atrocities such as slavery, internment, or massacres are accidental mishaps" (p. 17). In her analysis, the United States becomes a central example of such liberal societies, where discourses of pluralism and inclusion provide a "façade of equality" but yet exclusion is a systematic pattern. Among numerous considerations, Sheth (2009) discusses how race and racialization of populations becomes a technology, one that can be deployed by the state to produce "certain political and social outcomes that are needed to cohere society" (2009, p. 22). Part of the process of racialization, is the construction of populations as "unruly," due to their perceived inability to melt into dominant norms (whether cultural, political, etc.). As discussed above, such norms may include hard work, 'traditional' family values, consent to follow the law, etc. Moreover, under the umbrella of sameness or similarities, such norms may include, as I discuss in the following chapters, a patriotic and unilateral loyalty to the nation-state or speaking the dominant language. Documents about immigrant youth that I discuss in later chapters include reference to such norms and practices. A perceived inability to melt into dominant norms, as Sheth notes, often, quite productively, becomes tied to discourses of reason and madness, naturalizing the terms of acceptance or exclusion.

The employment of the good/bad immigrant binary and demarcation of the limits of acceptance show up Obama's 2012 DACA speech. Obama (2012) does not only discuss how this bill provides "a degree of relief and hope to talented, driven, patriotic young people," but he also proudly asserts the deportations and border security measures of his administration. Obama (2012) states,

In the absence of any immigration action from Congress to fix our broken immigration system, what we've tried to do is focus our immigration enforcement resources in the right places. So we prioritized border security, putting more boots on the southern border than at any time in our history –

today, there are fewer illegal crossings than at any time in the past 40 years. We focused and used discretion about whom to prosecute, focusing on criminals who endanger our communities rather than students who are earning their education. And today, deportation of criminals is up 80 percent.

Here, President Obama asserts that his administration has indeed focused on the problem. His administration has focused on securing the border and deporting “the bad guys,” those “criminals who endanger our communities rather than students who are earning their education” (Obama, 2012).<sup>8</sup> Here the president of the United States sets up a student/criminal binary. Another iteration of such dichotomy is very clear in Obama’s 2012 presidential debate with candidate Mitt Romney held at Hofstra University. Obama defended his administration asserting

What I've also said is if we're going to go after folks who are here illegally, we should do it smartly and go after folks who are criminals, gang bangers, people who are hurting the community, not after students, not after folks who are here just because they're trying to figure out how to feed their families. And that's what we've done. And what I've also said is for young people who come here, brought here often times by their parents. Had gone to school here, pledged allegiance to the flag. Think of this as their country. Understand themselves as Americans in every way except having papers. And we should make sure that we give them a pathway to citizenship.  
(Barack & Mitt, 2012)

Again the good/bad immigrant dichotomy is clearly set up. On the one hand, there are students—not any students but students who came to the U.S. passively and innocently, pledge to the flag, think of the U.S. as their country, and understand themselves as Americans—who should have a pathway to citizenship. On the other hand, there are criminals, gangbangers, and people who hurt the community; people

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<sup>8</sup> I use “the bad guys” in reference to a speech by Representative Luis Gutiérrez that I discuss later.

the state should clearly be “going after.” There are two aspects of these statements that I would like to further explore here through the work of Gonzales (2014) and Sheth (2009). These are, 1) a deployment of race as a technology through the construction of the unruly and untamable subjects of deportation, as well as the construction of what Sheth (2009) calls “border populations.” And 2) the naturalization of what Gonzales (2014) calls, “the homeland security state.” This exploration will be helpful as I later analyze other ways in which elite discourse about immigrant youth and issues of education is productive for the nation-state.

### Gangbangers & Students: The Unruly & Border Populations

Sheth (2009) explains that in liberal societies like the U.S., racialization is prevalent in state juridical institutions. Indeed, racialization is key to understanding the functioning of what Sheth calls the “violence of the law.” Directly opposed to an understanding of liberalism and its legal structures as always already working toward justice and protection for all individuals, the “violence of the law” framework posits that the purpose of the state is “preserving itself and managing populations for those interests; thus protecting those that preserve its existence, and abandoning those who threaten it” (Sheth, 2009, p.42). This framework calls attention to the historical violence of liberalism (slavery, dehumanization, etc.) not as aberrations or mistakes, but systemic patterns that must be examined. Hence, this crucial feature of racialization becomes a key object of analysis. Sheth (2009) explains racialization as a “process delineating a population in contrast to a dominant (or powerful) population and a corresponding political tension” (p.51). As part of a process of racialization she provides two concepts relevant for this work, the notions of the “unruly” and “border populations.” Sheth (2009) explains that the construction of “unruliness” “is the lightning rod by which a population becomes singled out for out-casting” (p.66). Before unruly, however, there is the notion of

“Strangeness.”<sup>9</sup> The perceived strangeness of someone is characterized by a primordial fear: the stranger’s actions are unpredictable, his or her appearance disrupts harmony of customs and norms perceived as given, and she (her commitments, scruples, and loyalties) cannot automatically be ‘counted on’ (Sheth, 2009, p. 69). However, unruliness goes beyond strangeness. Perhaps the stranger can “tame” his or her differences, and ultimately become someone “we” can “count on.” But what makes a stranger unruly is unwillingness, or perhaps ‘inability’ to tame his or her differences, particularly those that are perceived as threatening. The “threat” of the stranger often becomes symbolized through tangible aspects like skin color, language, a religious practice, etc. For Sheth, such tangible aspects “become fetishized as the core representation of a group’s singularity, and their continual practice—read as the absence of conformity, adaptation, or assimilation of a group’s practices within a larger society—is what is viewed as unruly” (2009, p. 70). Unruliness thus, stems from a lack of “adaptation;” it is dangerous because it will not melt away into some comfortable, familiar configuration, but continues to be conspicuous, like a protruding excrescence” (Sheth, 2009, p.70).

In Obama’s dichotomous explanation of his administration’s deportation practices—which distinguishes strongly between the passive student who clearly is an “American”, and the “criminal,” “gangbanger” and person who endangers “our communities”—the notion of the unruly is at play. Those immigrants, who are contrasted to the “tamable” and unthreatening student, explicitly represent an inability to follow the “rule of law.” This is particularly significant in liberal societies, where laws are “generally presumed to be just or have just cause” and thus legal punishments become a logical and moral consequences for the actions of “bad people” (Sheth, 2009, p.15). Through this construction of “unruly” subjects U.S. institutions often criminalize the movement of people along racial terms. A few of

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<sup>9</sup> Sheth notes that “foreigner” often refers to a similar phenomena, however, strangeness captures more broadly the notion that it is not only the national outsider, but also the stranger within, who is excludable in liberal societies.

the stories highlighted in the upcoming chapters will show some of the consequences of these unquestioned assumptions about the “rule of law” which often functions to criminalize certain populations through “unruliness.” As I will later discuss, Gonzales (2014) notes that criminalization often becomes a “neutral” and “objective” way to racialize populations. Indeed Sheth (2009) argues that the language of irrationality also further naturalizes the construction of unruliness, and criminalization of those deemed ‘unable’ to follow the rule of law, or any other normalized set of practices, whether linguistic, cultural, sexual, or political. And this naturalization allows the state to effectively avoid charges of racism (Sheth, 2009, p.80).

Discourses of irrationality often emerge when dominant norms are seen as invisible, even universal and thus, the rational ‘order of things.’ Anne Philips (2009) for example, has argued that the term “culture” often becomes equated with minorities or non-western cultures. The trouble with this invisibilization of dominant culture is that it,

Makes the cultural specificities of people from majority groups less visible, it encourages them to treat their own local practices as if these were universal rules of conduct, spawning much indignation against newcomers, foreigners, or immigrants who fail to abide by the rules. Cultural difference then becomes loaded with moral significance. Being different equates with being wrong. (Philips, 2009, p.65)

As Philips (2009) and Sheth (2009) note, dominant norms are often perceived as moral and even rational. They are understood as “better or correct, or at least, the definitive status quo toward which a new group has the obligation to assimilate” (Sheth, 2009, p.70). Obama’s words above, in which immigrant youth are not only juxtaposed to “criminals” because they did not ‘break the law’, but also (and perhaps most importantly) because they exude “Americaness” in every way but paper, invoke the notion that whatever the dominant image of “American” is, it is equated

with legality, morality, even rationality.<sup>10</sup> The “bad immigrant” is on the other side of this coin: un-American, simply irrational.

Ultimately, for Sheth (2009) the construction of unruliness is part of a process of racialization that makes populations ripe for exclusion. Here, conditions are laid down, for the possibility of creating what Sheth (2009) calls an “exception population” following the insights of Italian theorist Giorgio Agamben. This is a population “simultaneously subject to the law, but not entitled to its protection” (Sheth, 2009, p.117). Indeed, if as Sheth (2009) notes, this construction of unruliness is a process of racialization that makes populations vulnerable to exclusion, in many of the liberal claims for inclusion, undocumented immigrant youth, who are discussed as idealized members of the nation, are often, quite oppositely de-racialized. I will take up this construction of DACA eligible immigrant youth in chapter 2.

Another useful term provided by Sheth is the notion of “border populations.” A border population is “located on the periphery itself, which distinguishes insiders from outsiders. And so like any border, the political and rhetorical positioning of this population now serves to protect the “internal boundaries” of the nation...” (Sheth, 2009, p. 130). The idealized, DACA-eligible immigrant students can be understood as a “border population.” He or she is always on the periphery, acting as a boundary that clearly allows us to see the differences that will be “tolerated” and those that will become “subject to state wrath” (Sheth, 2009). Interestingly, Sheth argues that border populations serve numerous functions beyond that of a symbolic wall between “us” and “them.” Border populations also provide a “decoy” to prevent charges of ostracizing. For example, as I discuss in the next sections, the partial inclusion of unauthorized immigrant youth through DACA reinvigorates discourses of U.S. exceptionalism and humanitarianism. Border populations can also be deployed as a ‘moral gauge’ through which the state can further justify the creation of new border populations. Gonzales (2010) notes the productivity of placing

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<sup>10</sup> In Chapter 2 I unpack this notion of “Americanness”

Latinos in high-level appointments at the state level and how such appointments “have created a facade of inclusion even as the Obama administration has maintained an immigration enforcement apparatus that systematically uses coercion and racial profiling to control the flow of Mexican and Latino migrant labor” (p.15). More generally, for Sheth (2009), border populations are “long-standing political and cultural pillars of those polities that wish to maintain the myth of universal and equal treatment of its citizens, while selectively extending those rights in order to help maintain their value” (p.145). Throughout my later analysis, I will explore documents and speeches about undocumented immigrant youth and immigration in general as productive for the construction of “unruly” subjects, as well as the construction of border-like boundaries of belonging in the nation-state.

#### Boots on the Ground: Naturalization of the “The Homeland Security State”

The second aspect of Obama’s DACA speech that is relevant for this project is the naturalization, and as Behdad would argue, even disavowal of state violence. Following a neo-Gramscian tradition, Alfonso Gonzales, a political scientist, understands the United States as a ‘Homeland Security State.’ He borrows the this term from anthropologist Nicholas De Genova (2007), who uses it to refer to

Significant new deployments of migrant “illegality” as this sociopolitical condition has been significantly reconfigured in the United States in the aftermath of the proclamation of a purported War on Terrorism, and the concomitant implementation of draconian police powers domestically.”  
(p. 421)

The homeland security state is a sort of ‘retooling’ of the Cold War’s “National Security State.” The similarities are highlighted by Iris Marion Young, who discusses parallels in keys aspects like “public rhetoric, domestic security policies, militarization of foreign policy and culture, curtailment of civil liberties, a pervasive sense of fear and threat” (De Genova, 2007, p.421). For Gonzales, the homeland



security state, which has been on the rise since 9/11, was symbolically consolidated with the 2003 PATRIOT ACT. Indeed, as Sheth (2009) notes, the PATRIOT ACT allowed for “for the indefinite detention, interrogation, and incarceration Muslims without writs of habeas corpus—on the grounds that as Muslims, they are potential terrorists” (p.35).

Hallmark of this homeland security state for Gonzales, is also the record number of immigrant deportations in the current century. This is the case, as “the United States has removed more people in the last 10 years than in the last 110 years combined” (Gonzales 2014, p.2). As Obama (2012) proudly asserts, today there are “more boots on the southern border than at any time in our history.” Unfortunately however, research has extensively shown that such militarization has human casualties. Massey and Riosmena (2010) show that militarization rather than decreasing migrant crossings historically, has increased coyote cost, and most importantly “the need to cross more remote and hostile terrain also increased the risks of injury and death, thereby raising psychic costs of undocumented migration” (p.297, 2010). An Arizona based human rights organization, has recorded that since 2001, remains have been recovered at the Arizona border for 2,649 persons. Interestingly, 2009 took the highest amounts of human remains recovered in 21<sup>st</sup> century with 253 dead bodies (Arizona Human Remains project).

The homeland security state and its consequences, however, often become naturalized, or even disavowed. In Obama’s statements, the high amount of “boots on the ground,” the ‘securitization’ of the border, or his deportation record are the givens of the debate. These aspects of the nation-state are not up for discussion. For Gonzales (2014), such naturalization has to do in large part to what he calls an “anti-migrant hegemony.” This hegemony is driven by a powerful anti-migrant bloc that includes “elected officials, state bureaucrats, think tanks, intellectuals, and charismatic media personalities who, under the influence of strategic fractions of global capital, have set the boundaries of the immigration debate around narrow questions of criminality and anti-terrorism” (Gonzales, 2014, p.5). As the author notes, there are economic interests at stake, particularly under global capitalism, for

those who form part of the anti-migrant bloc, and have been able to forcefully set the limited terms of the debate. These boundaries, as Gonzales rightfully argues, make little room for a discussion of the racial politics of immigration control, the homeland security state, and the underlying causes of international migration flows, such as the forces of global capitalism.

Gonzales (2014) reminds us that under global capitalism, significant economic interests are at stake in exclusionary immigration discourses and practices. And such interests often exist beyond the boundaries of the nation-state. However, in this discussion of the role of these discourses for the nation-state, it is also important to note that while these discourses are always complex and changing, simply understanding them in light of economic shifts “misses that immigration as a practice, and as a discourse of exclusion, has *always* been part of the American Polity” (Behdad, 2005, p. 113). For Behdad (2005), these discourses and practices have historically functioned, not just for economic interests but also for the justification of state power and national identification. He states, “it is my contention that the United States, as a modern nation-state has always relied on the phenomenon of immigration to construe and delineate its national, geographical, and political boundaries” (2005, p.114). Similarly, Honig had noted that in liberal democratic societies, ambivalence toward the foreigner cannot simply be explained by economic realities or labor needs. She states “these may be part of the story, but there is a deeper logic at play here” (2001, p. 76). For Honig (2001), the foreignness of the immigrant allows for a productive reinvigoration of national democracy. Sheth perhaps would disagree, finding that the construction of certain ambivalent populations who are ripe for exclusion a systematic pattern of liberal societies that does not necessitate foreignness but rather, strangeness. But notably, all these scholars find the stranger, whether found within or outside, to be tremendously productive in liberal societies, beyond economic and labor needs. Part of this productivity, as Gonzales (2014) notes, is the justification of the homeland security state and its practices of exclusion.

## Immigration Discourses: Forgetfulness and Ambivalence

Thus, far I have provided a discussion of how the good/bad immigrant dichotomy often functions to construct unruly and border populations, vulnerable to the violence of the law, as well as idealized notions of nationhood that affirm the 'homeland security state.' At this point, in thinking about discourse, it is helpful to return to Behdad and Honig who further highlight some of the key characteristics of U.S. immigration discourses, namely forgetfulness and ambivalence. These are helpful for later analyzing how elite discourse about immigrant youth is both at times quite forgetful about U.S. immigration realities, and often ambivalent about hospitality.

Key for Behdad, is that while national identity is affirmed and solidified through immigration discourses, the material causes and effects of immigration policies, practices, and discourses are disavowed through mechanisms of forgetting. He understands forgetfulness, following Freud's concept of negation, in which "one may acknowledge an event, but the subject either denies its significance or refuses to take responsibility for it. As such, a disavowal is a split perception of what constitutes our reality, a perception vacillating between denial and a supplementary acknowledgement" (Behdad, 2005, p. 4). Amnesia becomes a mechanism that allows for disavowal of the United States' history—including its violent and xenophobic beginnings as well as the economic and social realities of immigration—and the (re) invigoration of myths like that of 'immigrant America' or the U.S. as 'an asylum for immigrants' (Behdad, 2005, p. xii). The social conditions disavowed for Behdad (2005), are very similar to those discussed by Gonzales, they relate to underlying economic causes of migration, and also to state exclusionary practices (p.9).

For Behdad, forgetfulness actually allows for a useful ambivalence toward immigrants. This ambivalence materializes in a constant vacillation between hospitality and hostility: xenophobia and xenophilia (a vacillation that can be found in adjacent sentences in one of President Obama's speeches). Drawing from Jacques Derrida's theorizations of hospitality, Behdad argues that hospitality has always

implied ambiguity. Agreeing with Derrida, he discusses how the U.S as a nation vacillates between hospitality toward immigrants (often characterized by discourse of a country of immigrants) and hostility towards immigrants (often characterized by state practices of exclusion). Forgetfulness “ensures continual vacillation between hospitality and hostility, between a claim of total acceptance of foreigners and the laws that regulate and restrict their reception” (Behdad, 2005, p. 17). Turning back to Obama’s speech, we can see how the ambivalence, through which the president is able to assert hospitality (although conditional) for some and the need to “go after” for others unfolds in the same speech. Moreover, as I will discuss in a later section, despite the acknowledgment of a complex past, certain liberal documents and speeches often employ forgetfulness in order to identify only with “the ideal immigrant” constructed through immigrant youth, and thus neatly perpetuate, without contradiction, the hospitality/hostility dynamic.

In thinking about this ambivalence toward immigrants in the U.S., Honig (2001) finds Behdad’s scholarship useful because--unlike many others who acknowledge the ambivalence but seek to undo it by either attributing it to economic shifts or political powers-- it “asks about the performative effects of that ambivalence. What productive energies are unleashed at that site?” (p.77). One performative effect of these discourses, can indeed be economic, as Gonzales (2014), for example finds the ambivalence to be generative for a state-civil society nexus that finds itself in need of cheap labor to run the machine of global capitalism. In the following sections of this work, I discuss some ways in which I understand the productivity of these discourses, paying particular attention to the consolidation of a national identity as not only exceptional and humanitarian, but also uninterested in multiplicity.

An attempt at analyzing the performative effects of certain discourse is of course, deeply aided by some understanding of these in context. As I have discussed here, the context of the discourse about immigration and youth that I will discuss in this thesis, is the United States a “homeland security state” and a liberal society which has historically functioned in exclusionary ways that make people vulnerable

to the law despite a “façade of equality” (Sheth, 2009). As a final consideration for my discussion, I provide next a note on discourse and flexibility.

### Different Discourses “Cut From Similar Cloth:” A Note on Discourse and Flexibility

After an extensive discussion of liberal and nativist immigration discourses in the United States, Behdad concludes, “the liberal and nativists discourses of immigration, in sum, are cut from similar cloth” (2005, p.129). More broadly, feminist scholarship often calls attention to the notion that discourses of inclusion, much too often deviate little from the logic of exclusion. For example, Maria Lugones (2005) distinguishes between ornamental and radical multiculturalism, noting that often times ‘ornamental’ multiculturalism simply masks over the logics of monoculturalism. Sheth (2009) and Gonzales (2014) note a post civil-rights shift in U.S. racial politics, in that openly racist discourse is widely replaced with “race-neutrality.” They note that this shift in discourse does not mean that we live in a “post-racial” United States, and in fact, the authors each work on identifying how it is that racism continues to systematically emerge (through for example ‘colorblind’ criminalization).<sup>11</sup> Jodi Melamed (2006) also discusses the legacy of the post-war moment in the U.S. and the world. She writes about this as an “era when overlapping, internationalized anticolonial and civil rights movements posed challenges to the limits of racial democracy of such global magnitude that they produced a permanent crisis in white supremacy” (Melamed, 2006, p.1). And yet, following Howard Winnant, she notes, “Even as some liberal freedoms have

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<sup>11</sup> Many of the arguments discussed here are similar to those made by scholars of Critical Race Theory, particularly through the central tenets such as “Interests Convergence” and the “Critique of liberalism.” Very relevant here for example, are Derrick Bell’s (1980) arguments that *Brown versus Board of Education* came about because global interests of white Americans converged with those of Black Americans, or his (1991) argument that racism is a permanent aspect of the U.S. that simply takes on new forms at different times.

expanded, racial privilege and discipline evolve to take on new forms adapted to post-coloniality and the demise of legal segregation” (2006, p.2). Moreover, Melamed makes connections between the language of multiculturalism and global capitalism and U.S. ascendancy. Under the hegemony of global capitalism and neoliberal policies, in a world where ‘overt racism’ is no longer explicitly acceptable, what Melamed (2006) calls “neoliberal multiculturalism” becomes increasingly useful. Neoliberal multiculturalism pertains to the employment of a multiculturalist language of inclusion and pluralism for the promotion of neoliberalism as a “beacon for justice.” This conveniently covers over of “racial antagonisms and inequality” of the neoliberal project (Melamed, 2006, p.1). The difficulty that arises for Melamed (2006) is that official language of inclusion—which as we see, often simply leads to different forms of exclusion—can “deflect and limit awareness of the logics of exploitation and domination in global Capitalism” (p.2). Similarly but more broadly, Shannon Winnubst (2006) has argued that the logic of domination is deeply embedded in epistemological and political systems, however, this too is often veiled under an unquestionable language of democracy, liberation, and freedom.

These scholars, coming from different theoretical backgrounds, and addressing particular problematics, warn us, in one way or another, that discourses of inclusion, while they can often stem from radical movements, can and do also become quite useful to promote or cover over the very exclusionary logics and practices they wish to resist. As, Winnubst (2006) writes, “who, after all, dares to argue against freedom?” (p.2) Highlighted here is the difficulty of working against domination, exclusion and inequality when it is embedded in pluralist discourse. For these purposes, Winnubst proposes following Michel Foucault’s archeological project. In such project, we must think about the ‘historical present,’ and “attempt at every step, position, and moment of thinking to turn back upon that thinking and sort out its particular contours” (Winnubst, 2006, p.4).

### Less Forgetful Liberal Immigration Discourses

Indeed, in the context of immigration discourses, Behdad writes about the similar underlying logics of both liberal and nativist discourses. He also notes a shift in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the way that the nation was imagined when we see the incorporation of a pluralist multicultural discourse on immigration. The liberal conversation on immigration, which was very amnesiac until then, begins to acknowledge some of the lacking past of the U.S when it comes to the treatment of immigrants. Behdad notes that this shift was exemplified by the work Robert Kennedy's (1964) *A Nation of Immigrants* and Oscar Handlin's (1951) *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People*. In these texts, both Kennedy and Handlin had less forgetful approaches to immigration questions than earlier U.S. liberal thinkers. Behdad (2005) notes that Kennedy and Handlin's more 'realist' approach to immigration, exposed the social and material condition immigrants lived under and was highly influential in the elimination of the racial quotas put in place in the 1920's and the formulation of new immigration policies. However, these authors, as previous liberal thinkers, still employed forgetfulness and exemplified ambivalence towards migration. For example, Kennedy and Handlin's work highlighted the story of the European peasant, disavowing non-European immigrants, and thus effectively reenacting "the ritual of self-renewal and perpetuated the ideology of American exceptionalism" (2005, p.106). The story, Behdad (2005) states, "begins with disfranchised European peasants and ends with their successful incorporation into industrial society" (p.107). In forgetting other immigrants, the authors were able to put aside the impacts of racial formations in the United States, and construct a narrative of hard working immigrants who all started on 'equal footing' (Behdad, 2005, p.95). While Kennedy and Handlin qualify previous liberal discourse of a homogenous nation, expressing the diversity of European immigrants, they failed to go beyond this during a time when African-Americans and Chinese-Americans could not access full citizenship (Behdad, 2005, p. 107). As I will discuss in a later chapter, the speeches I analyzed by liberal politicians President Obama, Luis Gutiérrez, and Richard Durbin, are parallel to those discourses of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, given that they are less forgetful, but still,

productively ambivalent and affirmative in that they construct a neat dichotomy between good/bad immigrant, and place “us” on the “good” side, (re) producing an idea of an always hard working, upwardly mobile, law-abiding, exceptional national subject who starts with difference and ends in an acceptable level of sameness. As Behdad (2005) notes, “these liberal accounts therefore do not constitute an oppositional moment in the discourse of immigration: they are ideologically affirmative, shoring up patriotism and national pride by corroborating the idea of American exceptionalism (p.108-109). Moreover, Behdad also importantly notes that such discourses do not only function to exclude those immigrants who do not fit into this construction, but also, any subject who “strangely” does not fit neatly into such idealized categories.

#### Nativist Immigration Discourses and Flexibility

These newer liberal discourses, as Behdad notes, are not far from the logic of nativist discourses, and, indeed such seem to be “cut from similar cloth.” As discussed above, Behdad (2005) goes beyond theories of economic change to argue that the immigrant has systematically been productive for the nation as both a “nodal point for the exercise of state power and as a differential mode of national identification” (p.114). In other words, immigration both allows the nation to imagine itself as homogenous—because “we” are *not* “them,” and it provides the necessary “crisis” to justify state disciplinary practices.

What makes xenophobic discourses key to the reproduction of certain national identities is their ability to manufacture a constant “crisis of immigration” through recycled concerns about immigration (new immigrants don’t assimilate, they are culturally and racially inferior, they take jobs, they produce political crises, etc.) (Behdad, 2005). Behdad (2005) also adds that nativism is also flexible enough to constantly renew itself, for example, shifting from ideological xenophobia, to mid twentieth century “scientific,” and “medical,” “objective” racism (and perhaps today, criminalization of illiberal subjects). In the constant re-production of an immigrant



crisis, nativism is highly productive for the nation; it “awakens the community to self-consciousness as a nation, while legitimizing the disciplinary power of the state apparatus” (Behdad, 2005 p.142). As I will discuss later, national liberal leaders on issues of immigration and youth take this “crisis of immigration” as a given, much like conservative groups. This productively leaves the homeland security state and its practices, unquestioned and often even re-affirmed.

Nativism is often understood as a glitch, an aberration to the United State’s liberal traditions. However, Behdad here shows that xenophobia is as central as liberalism for the (re) production of the nation. Nativist discourses have provided many of the necessary components for the U.S. national imagination. For example nativism has produced a distinction between the native and the alien that functions at all levels of immigration discourses. This distinction “has supplied liberal America with the political rationale to justify assimilation, or to deny cultural heterogeneity, in spite of claiming a pluralistic view of national identity” (Behdad, 2005,p. 129). Here new immigrants (dissident aliens), unlike old immigrants (patriotic natives), are “crude, unskilled, and poor.” Moreover, perhaps as Thomas Whitney’s theoretical nativism explained, they are unfit to participate politically in the nation, and (especially in masses) have the ability to subvert rather than strengthen liberties and institutions in the U.S. (Behdad, 2005, p. 126-127). These dichotomies constructed in xenophobic, often theoretical nativist discourse are central today, and show up in all sides of the debate. In fact, as Behdad (2005) notes, they help reconcile the tension between claims of pluralism and assertions of necessary assimilation (p.129).

Interestingly, as much as nativism is central to the nation-state, and similarly invested in the construction of “a homogeneous America” there are some ways in which nativism, as discussed by Behdad can deviate from liberal claims on immigration, showing a potential to be revealingly less amnesiac about certain subjects. Behdad (2005), writing about Thomas Whitney notes that —unlike the liberal writings of Jefferson, Whitman, Handlin and Kennedy—the writings of this 19<sup>th</sup> century nativist politician acknowledge the underlying reasons for the initial

construction of the U.S as a “nation of immigrants.” That is, Whitney wrote about the encouragement of early European migration due to “the economic need for labor and the political desire to appropriate new territories” (Behdad, 2005, p. 126). Although Behdad (2005) notes that Whitney was amnesiac in his own way, he still finds Whitney to be offering ‘radical critique’ of a capitalist desire and exploitation of cheap labor that “exposes the self-interested intention of those who advocate lax immigration and naturalization laws” (p. 128). This economic critique, and perhaps more broad critique of disavowal is very interesting, and as I will argue in a later chapter, continues to be a part of certain nativist or ultra-conservative immigration conversations.

Behdad’s exploration of liberal and nativist discourses on immigration as both playing productive and complementary roles for the nation-state is insightful. In addition, feminist scholarship helps note that it is not only the nativist discourses, as Behdad (2005) notes, that are flexible enough to re-new themselves. The liberal language of hospitality and multiculturalism that has emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is also part of a flexible history that cannot be untied from questions of capitalism and race relations. Moreover, there are interesting implications raised here, if as Behdad shows, nativists have the ability to call out amnesia, disrupting liberal and pluralist conversations on immigration, and economic relations.

All these considerations call for an analysis of elite liberal and conservative documents in tandem. The following part of this thesis will analyze different elite sites, including liberal speeches on immigration and youth, particularly surrounding DACA, as well as an anti-immigrant document coming from the theoretical strands of ultra-conservatism. I will argue, following Behdad, that the similarities between these seemingly different sites are striking, and indeed there are certain moments in which conservative voices disrupt the liberal promises of the language of inclusion. Both sites, and the moments in which they meet, productively shore up ideas of a humanitarian, exceptional, and sufficiently similar nation, at the same time draw the boundaries between insiders and outsiders. These are boundaries, that due to a

certain ambivalence and forgetfulness at play, leave undocumented immigrant youth straddling the borders between inclusion and exclusion.

### On Theorizing “Immigrant youth”

Given that this work centers on questions of immigrant youth, and later implications for educational institutions, it is important to note that the term “youth,” is quite contested and attached to certain “vulnerabilities, rights, desires, and dangers” (Maira & Soep, 2005, p. xxiii). To begin, not all those referred to here in speeches, policies, and documents should be understood as “youth.” In fact, many who are constructed as youth or “young Americans” in the elite discourse analyzed are often in their mid or late twenties. DACA eligibility, for example, ranges between ages 15 and 31. When I speak of youth, I also re-produce this category, and thus turning to scholars of Youth Cultural Studies who have problematized this term is necessary.

As Sunaina Maira (2009) notes, in Western societies “youth” is a socially and politically constructed category that “is viewed as a liminal stage when social identities and political commitments are being formed” (p.14). This category is necessarily tethered to state institutions, as part of “broader age-graded relations that underpin systems of labor, education, criminal justice, taxation, property, marriage, and family” (Maira, 2009, p.15). In these terms, “youth” becomes a teleological construction. Youth are seen as “inadequately formed adults” tied to a problematic logic of development and “always proceeding toward a desirable end goal, which is to be realized only and always in adulthood” (Maira & Soep, 2005, p. xxi). In this transition-like state, youth “are not mature citizens who can act effectively...[and]... they are actually citizens with the power to effect change that some may not desire” (p. xxiii). Thus, the very liminality, or in-between-ness of the category “youth” becomes symbolic of “the unknown future or possible direction of the nation” and thus, a source of great anxiety (Maira, 2009, p.15)

Moreover, Maira (2009) notes that if the category of youth is a source of

anxiety, then the category of immigrant youth, in its “double liminality” further compounds this anxiety. That is, immigrant youth, seen as navigating different worlds, are also “the object of national anxieties about assimilation and the economy that are culturally and racially coded” (Maira, 2009, 15). As immigrant youth, they are not only suspect for being caught in-between in terms of age, but also, when it comes to national affiliation, they also become “culturally and even politically suspect” (Maira, 2009, p.15). This is important to consider as I analyze how conversations about youth and education are limited and productive. There seems to be a lot at stake for the nation-state, when youth become key targets of “nationalizing discourses” (Maira, 2009, p. 16).

Scholars like Maira and Soep demonstrate that discourses of immigration are not only complicated by notions of nation, state, and racialization, but also by an understanding of “youth” as an always already anxiety-ridden category that becomes further complicated when marked by migration. Moreover, in the following chapters, these authors are key influences for thinking about youth—not as under-developed adults—but as “thinking agents who may express important critiques of citizenship and nationhood” (Maira & Soep, 2005, p. xxii). Understanding youth as providing valuable, important critiques of questions of citizenship and belonging becomes central to the last chapter of this thesis.

### Limitations of this project

I understand power here, following Foucault and feminist scholars as not only repressive but also additive, diffused, productive, omnipresent, subtle, and flexible (Frye, 1983), (Young 1992), (Cohen 1997), (Winnubst 2006), (Brown 2006), (Sheth 2009) (Melamed, 2006). The documents and speeches I explore are necessarily embedded in complex webs of power, and thus, no one analysis could capture all the ways in which power can function. While I do not attempt to capture all the complex webs of power that are implicated in such elite discourse, I am interested in its relation to the construction of U.S. national identity and state

practices of immigration. Particularly, I am interested in the role of this elite discourse about immigrant youth for the construction of logics of inclusion/exclusion in the U.S. Yet, one important limitation here is that the voices of youth are not directly present in this project. Rather, I takes an approach that looks at dominant voices that either focus on youth or education to analyze the relations between discourses of immigration, youth, and the nation-state. This does not preclude the importance and need for approaches that explore how youth deploy, resist, negotiate, and navigate such immigration discourses. Indeed, analyzing these in conjunction seems to open up many more possibilities and is perhaps a direction in which this project can grow.

## Conclusion

In this first chapter, I hoped to provide some contextualization by discussing the key program (DACA) that has impacted undocumented immigrant youth since 2012. Through this same legislation, and President Obama's speech, I discussed some relevant theoretical context, weaving a web in which I will explore different speeches and documents that I find to be relevant to issues of immigration and youth. Through this theoretical framework, I also hoped to provide some background that helps contextualize the discussion to follow as part of a liberal society with deeply embedded mechanisms of exclusion, and a largely unquestioned "homeland security state." Lastly, my discussion of discourses of inclusion and exclusion and their forgetfulness, ambivalence and flexibility will be particularly helpful in analyzing certain themes that emerge in both liberal and conservative documents.

## **CHAPTER 2: LIBERAL VOICES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DACA-ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANT YOUTH**

### **Introduction**

On August 15, 2012, U.S. Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois gave a very emotional speech in front of thousands of young undocumented immigrants at Navy Pier in Chicago. Durbin's speeches on the Dream Act are, as he calls them, "personal."<sup>12</sup> They are personal because Durbin was one of the Democratic senators who first introduced this legislation in the U.S. senate and has been advocating for it, alongside countless undocumented immigrant youth activists and allies, since 2001. And they are personal because, as the senator discusses in his speeches, his Lithuanian mother's immigrant story provides him with a deep level of identification with the stories of the "Dreamers." Durbin's speeches can, at least in my case, often evoke feelings of encouragement, and even inspiration.

This speech initiated a DACA workshop, which was organized by Durbin himself and U.S. Democratic representative Luis Gutiérrez. The aim of the workshop was to provide DACA eligible immigrants with the necessary information and resources to participate in the DACA program, which had been just announced two months before by president Obama. Gutiérrez, who is the son of Puerto Rican migrants, has also been active on immigrant issues during his time in U.S. congress.

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<sup>12</sup> "Dream Act" (Development Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act) is the name of the legislation that the DACA executive order takes after. The Dream Act has been in and out of congress, without success since 2001.

Further, he has been on the Dream Act journey, with Durbin as one of the House of Representatives sponsors since 2001. The speeches by Gutiérrez are perhaps as emotional and ‘personal’ as Durbin’s. However, at least to this listener, they often summon a different set of emotions, usually anger and frustration with the U.S. immigration system. This is perhaps due to the representative’s tone, which is often as harsh, hasty and urgent as it is passionate, but also due to content of his speeches. Gutiérrez is often careful to highlight some of the difficult lived realities that many immigrants face in the United States. Gutiérrez has even participated in acts of civil disobedience for which he has been arrested twice in order to call attention to the Obama administration’s deportation policies (Gabbay, 2011). Gutiérrez is a strong opponent not only of the deportations of Dream Act or DACA eligible immigrants, but has also been pointedly outspoken about the issue of family separation, and the need to stop deportations of immigrants more generally. On countless occasions Gutiérrez has called attention to the Obama administration’s deportation of the parents and family members of the same youth who are eligible for DACA, the same family members who “stood in line” with them at Navy Pier. Very recently, during March of 2014, Durbin has joined Gutiérrez in pressuring president Obama to use procedural discretion to stop the deportations of immigrants who may be eligible for a more general comprehensive immigration reform (Min Kim, 2014).

President Obama, despite ongoing criticism from Gutiérrez and Dream Act activists, and very recent criticism from Durbin, has also been outspoken in support of policies like the Dream Act and comprehensive immigration reform. As discussed earlier, On June 15, 2012, his administration announced the DACA program. Obama’s personal story is of course, also marked by migration, as his father migrated from Kenya to study in the United States. Yet I am often struck by how Obama’s speeches on immigration and DACA seem deeply marked by his position as president and his need to “please” both liberal and conservatives on the topic of immigration. That is, many of his speeches on immigration do not always feel personal, or emotional, in the way that those by Durbin or Gutiérrez might. Neither do they conjure anger or frustration toward the homeland security state, as Obama

treads lightly along the contours of 'safe' language. Perhaps marked by his status as President of the U.S., more adequate descriptors of some of his immigration addresses are rational, measured, and calculated. Obama easily straddles a deep ambivalence towards immigrants. His speeches, much more so than those by Gutiérrez and Durbin, also go out of their way to address the interests of businesses who have stakes in immigration policies.

While this cannot be said for Durbin and Gutiérrez' speeches, many have studied Obama's rhetoric. Communication scholars Keith Jenkins and Grant Cos (2010), for example, attribute to the president a "pragmatic moral voice." This is the case because his speeches, often in keeping with American pragmatism, provide methods to address national uncertainties, emphasize his and other individual stories, and always seek to build community. Obama's rhetoric, they state, almost always utilizes "all the available means of persuasion" to either acknowledge or reach out to as broad an audience as possible" (Jenkins and Cos, 2010, p.188). In fact, in a study of Obama's immigration views as a U.S. senator, communication and anthropology scholars Dorsey and Díaz -Barriga (2007) characterize Obama's approach to immigration as "both...and" rather than "either or." They argue that Obama's stance on immigration when he was a senator usually resonated with both liberal and conservatives, straddling ambiguous space.<sup>13</sup> For example, they state "Although Obama's policy and proposals mirror those of the CCIR [Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform—usually associated with liberal immigration stances] language he uses to depict the immigration "problem" harmonizes with conservative positions" (Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga, 2007, p. 96). This helps us understand Obama's more current discussions on immigration and youth, which often straddle between what Behdad (2005) understands as a vacillation between

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<sup>13</sup> Quite similarly, Patricia Hill Collins (2012) discusses how president Obama, through the discourse of "the family" is able to subtly address issues of race, gender and economic equality throughout his campaign and presidency. See this article for an extensive discussion of notions of the family in Obama's discourse and representation.



hospitality and hostility, as part of a more continuous engagement with the issues, rather than simply tied to his status as president. Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga also make the argument that this ambiguity is perhaps due to Obama's ability to empathize with both nativist and humanitarian immigration perspectives. They cite Obama's 2006 book *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* as evidence of this, as here Obama expresses his own conflicting views on immigration, particularly on issues of 'assimilation.'

In this next section, I analyze some key speeches made by each of these three representatives of liberal voices on issues of immigration and youth in the U.S. I choose these voices particularly due to their close relation to the DACA program and their nationally visible and recognized support for DACA-Eligible immigrant youth. The speeches I picked were speeches that occurred between 2012 and 2014, and either specifically discussed the DACA program, or issues of immigrant youth in general.<sup>14</sup> It strikes me, however, that the three voices I explore here, are male. This was by no means a purposeful decision, but rather, possibly a symptom of the gender dynamics of immigration law sponsorship in U.S. congress.<sup>15</sup> The speeches and documents analyzed below are the following:

- Obama, B. (2012, June). *Remarks by the president on immigration.*
- Obama, B. (2013, January). *Remarks by the president on comprehensive immigration reform.*
- Gutiérrez, L. (2013). *DACA. Deportation Relief for DREAMers Turns One.*
- Gutiérrez, L. (2012a, July). *Floor speech supporting prosecutorial discretion for dream act-eligible immigrants*
- Gutiérrez, L. (2012b, August). *Floor speech: A call to Dreamers.*
- Gutiérrez, L. (2012c, September). *Congressman Luis Gutierrez at the 2012 Democratic National Convention.*

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<sup>14</sup>See Appendix A for a more detailed list of all the speeches discussed in this section.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the latest bipartisan proposed immigration reform bill in the U.S. senate, led by "the gang of eight" is composed of all male senators. The same was the case for the House of Representatives "Enforce Act" which addressed immigration and passed in 2014. Moreover, in the U.S. senate, all Dream Act versions, since 2009 have been sponsored by groups of all male congresspersons.

- Durbin, R. (2012a, June). *American dreamers*.
- Durbin, R. (2012b, August). *DACA workshop*.
- Durbin, R. (2013, June). *Commemorating the one-year anniversary of DACA*.
- Durbin, R. (2014, February). *Ayotte amendment*.

My analysis of these speeches recognizes Gutiérrez, Obama, and Durbin's long-term engagement with the issues and acknowledges that my relation to these conversations is not, and cannot be detached and objective. As I engaged with these speeches (and the other documents I discuss in later sections)—over and over—marking them and thinking about patterns and disruptions, ultimately to come up with a series of themes—I was surprised to find that even after constant engagement, I continued to react to certain phrases, lines, tones.

### “Doing” Discourse Analysis?

Recognizing a necessarily embodied analysis of the data (Lather, 1993), does not preclude the importance of delineating the methodological and theoretical framework I employ in this analysis. Therefore, I would like to discuss some of background to the “how” of this work. My approach here, is widely guided by a Foucauldian (1972) understanding of discourse, in the sense that it aims to unpack the ways in which the discourse analyzed is productive, part of systems or networks of regularities, and limited. However, the term “discourse analysis” is sticky territory. As Graham (2005) notes, while different discursive practices and methodologies have emerged in the social sciences, like “Critical Discourse Analysis” that draw from structural linguistics and promote particular forms of engagement with the text, there is little consensus about what it would mean to “do” discourse analysis following Foucault's insights (p.2). Given this uncertainty, Graham (2005) proposes an approach which forefronts methodological transparency. Thus, to be clear, my approach in this discussion is not meant to be qualitative or quantitative, but rather, guided by both Foucauldian problematic, and informed by ‘thematic’ ways of engaging with data. I think of this, following Jackson and Mazzei (2012) as

producing knowledge out of an “assemblage” that involves a process of “reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory” (p.2-3).

I am first of all interested in examining the “productive energies” of discourses of immigration in the United States. Such aim is usefully guided by looking at what is said (and not said), following Foucault, as “discourse” rather than “language” or “speech.” In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault defines this project as follows,

A task that consists of not—of no longer —treating discourses as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to concepts or representation) but as practices that systematically form the object of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to language (*langue*) and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe. (1972, p.49)

I see all the different sites analyzed here, which emerge from political elites, as part of one “discourse” on immigration. This allows me to think about how different speeches and documents, are productive. Rather than calling into question the “truth” of each of these sites, I am interested in working at the “more” that renders them, together, irreducible to language. Foucault has often called this the “positivity” of discourse. As Wendy Brown (2006) explains in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory*, “For Foucault discourse never merely describes, but rather, creates relationships and channels of authority through the articulation of norms” (p. 71). Indeed, the questions that I ask here are less in line with “how accurately does this discourse represent the experiences of immigrant youth?” And much more in line with, “In what ways is this discourse, through the articulation of certain norms, productive for the nation-state?”

Moreover, engagement with Foucault’s work also allows me to raise questions about the connections and regularities between different sites. Foucault (1972) insists in *The Archeology of Knowledge* and “The Discourse on Language,” a series of possibilities emerge when discourse is analyzed in its “exteriority,” or its

“external conditions of existence” (1972, p.229). Rather than looking at hidden meaning, or the “interiority of discourse,” this shift in thinking makes room for an analysis about the connections between seemingly different speeches or documents and the conditions for their emergence (Foucault, 1972). Thinking about discourse in its “exteriority” allows me to raise questions in the upcoming sections about the links between liberal and conservative voices on immigration.

Lastly, Foucault (1972) calls attention to discourse as a limited system of presences, rather than a totality. Indeed, he notes, “everything is never said,” discourse is a “distribution of gaps, voices, absences, limits, divisions (p.118-119). He calls this the “rarity of discourse” and calls for critics to make this rarity, or “law of poverty,” an object of analysis in itself (Foucault, 1972, p.120). Indeed he goes on to note that rather than an inexhaustible treasure of statements to choose from, discourse:

Appears as an asset---finite, limited, desirable, useful—that has its own rules of appearance, but also its own conditions of appropriation and operation; an asset that consequently, from the moment of its existence.... poses the question of power; an asset that is, by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle. (Foucault, 1972, p. 120)

This approach of thinking about discourse in its rarity, leads me to speak of silences, of that which lies at the limit of the statements I discuss. Not, as Foucault warns against, to give voice to something perceptively repressed, but to note that there are silences, and that what is being said, is indeed part of a political struggle. In thinking about the emergence of discourse about youth as a political struggle that implicates U.S. institutions, I can raise the following question: What possibilities emerge or are foreclosed for the immigrant youth in the context of the U.S. as a nation-state, when this is this discourse is used to discuss issues of immigration?

With these guiding questions in mind, drawing from Glesne (2010), I organized my engagement with the data through “thematic analysis,” categorizing the different speeches, and documents “to discern themes, patterns, processes, and to make comparisons and build theoretical explanations” (p.194). While “thinking

the theory,” this approach provided a way of organizing statements within each document, and thinking with the language of the documents in order to draw out certain categories or themes. This was a messy yet productive process of changes and re-arrangements, through which “regularities” and contradictions began to stand out. Glesne’s (2010) discussion of “constant case comparison” was also helpful, as it allowed me to compare extreme and subtle convergences and divergences within certain sites (i.e. a speech), as well as between different documents (i.e. a speech and a congressional hearing or two different speeches) (p. 190). I discuss here some of the themes that I found to be prevalent in the documents, also noting some moments of disruption in which certain themes are challenged by a specific moment or voice. Most importantly, I acknowledge these sites as contradictory and changing. In fact, one of the difficulties of this project has been the emergence of new “talking points” in the national immigration debates. As I write this, there is an increasing amount of pressure from activist groups, as well as Gutiérrez and Durbin on President Obama’s administration to change deportation practices. This, in my view seems to be an interesting shift that should be further analyzed, but this is beyond the scope of this work.

#### Analysis: Gutiérrez, Durbin & Obama on Immigrant Youth

In this section I discuss two aspects of the speeches I analyzed, which seem to be much in keeping with the arguments discussed in the previous section, particularly in their “positivity” for reproducing the U.S. as a liberal, humanitarian, exceptional nation of immigrants that starts with difference and ends with sufficient sameness. This understanding of the nation, with the help of ambivalent discourse, often leaves state immigration practices intact and unquestioned. The first aspect I discuss is the numerous ways in which the ‘inclusion’ of DACA eligible immigrant youth is ambivalent. I do this by discussing notions of earning belonging, as well as providing opportunities, and an ever-present trope of the “shadow of deportation.” The second aspect I discuss is the constant re-production of a

good/bad immigrant dichotomy. I do this by examining both how in these documents ideal “all American” immigrants, and ‘unruly’ criminal immigrants are co-constructed. Moreover, within this second theme, I examine notions of criminalization as tied to racialization. Lastly, in this chapter I discuss how after this dichotomy is set up, immigrant youth become an object of identification for this nation of immigrants, which allows for the re-affirmation of dominant narratives of national identity and still, leaves unquestioned the current treatment of immigrants in the U.S, including the status of immigrant youth, who despite DACA, continue to be “border populations” with a precarious presence in the U.S.

### Theme 1: Ambivalent Inclusion of Unauthorized Immigrant Youth

There is an interesting tension that shows up in some of the speeches by Obama, Durbin and Gutiérrez. This is a tension between a trope of “earning” recognition, citizenship and belonging on the one hand, and a trope of “giving” recognition, citizenship and belonging as a chance or an opportunity on the other hand. This particularly functions to construct immigrant youth simultaneously as needy subjects of humanitarian inclusion, and exceptional subjects that personify an idealized national identity. Following comparative literature scholar Ali Behdad (2005) and political theorist Bonnie Honig (2001), I see this tension productively functioning to affirm the nation as both a humanitarian nation of immigrants, and at the same time, a nation where membership is of value and of course, may or may not be granted to outsiders depending on how deserving and exceptional they are. Following Derrida, Behdad calls this a vacillation between the conditional “juridico-legal” form of hospitality based on adherence to a series of laws and norms, and the “unlimited law of hospitality.” As Behdad (2005) explains, “while an ethical and unlimited claim to hospitality has been central to liberal articulations of national identity...the laws of immigration rigorously delimit the boundaries of citizenship and cultural and political enfranchisement, making the hospitality conditional and conditioned by our economic needs, cultural demands, and political desires as a

nation” (p.15). In the speeches I’ve analyzed, Obama, Gutiérrez, and Durbin often vacillate between these differing notions of hospitality in their discussions of immigrant youth in that they both speak of exceptional immigrant subjects and ‘earned rights’, and at the same time, of affording chances and opportunities that are widely conditional and always dependent on “us.” That is, U.S. membership becomes both (re) produced as a privilege only for those deserving enough, but also as a humanitarian gift, an opportunity, or a chance, that “the American people” may or may not choose to extend to others out of the “goodness of their hearts” (Durbin, 2012b).

This tension is subtly captured by Representative Gutiérrez’ speech on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012, on the senate floor, in which he discussed an upcoming DACA workshop and called “Dreamers” to participate. The representative states,

It’s a day of long-overdue fairness for our young people and I don’t want one eligible young person to miss this opportunity. I want our young DREAMers to demonstrate to America on August 15th what they’ve demonstrated to their communities and their families and their friends their entire lives. They worked hard and earned this right. By excelling in school. By helping your neighborhoods. By serving your country. (Gutiérrez, 2012b)

Here, Gutiérrez refers to DACA possibilities both as an “earned right” that is achieved with “hard work” and at the same time an “opportunity.”

### Earned Belonging

The notion that DACA is an earned status, is in keeping with a whole series of statements in all speeches where Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama discuss how it is that immigrant youth have earned inclusion “by excelling in school, helping neighbors and serving the country” (Gutiérrez, 2012b). Speaking of undocumented immigrants and immigration reform more broadly, President Obama similarly employs a language that suggests that here in the United States; belonging is clearly something one earns. He states,

We've got to lay out a path -- a process that includes passing a background check, paying taxes, paying a penalty, learning English, and then going to the back of the line, behind all the folks who are trying to come here legally. That's only fair, right? (Applause.) So that means it won't be a quick process but it will be a fair process. And it will lift these individuals out of the shadows and give them a chance to earn their way to a green card and eventually to citizenship. (Obama, 2013)

The conditions for earning belonging here become paying penalties, learning English, "going to the back of the line," and of course, taking part of a permanent residency and naturalization process already set up in the U.S. Interestingly, some of these very conditions are oftentimes discussed as the reasons immigrant youth are deserving of programs like DACA in the first place. As I will discuss later, one of the factors that make immigrant youth "deserving young people" (Gutiérrez, 2012c), includes the notion that they have stayed away from crime. Moreover, the trope of getting in "the back of the line," also becomes a factor by which youth prove that they have earned this form of belonging. For example, roughly one year after the DACA workshop Durbin (2013) remembered,

The line started forming at midnight. At midnight, these families stood there – Mom, Dad, and their son or daughter, waiting for a chance for their son or daughter to apply for this decision from President Obama. Many of the parents were undocumented themselves and they risked it to come and apply.

Gutiérrez too, has evoked the image of the line in reference to DACA, also highlighting the implications of getting in line. One year after the DACA workshop, he states, "young undocumented immigrants who were raised in the United States lined up by the thousands to pay the fee, submit their fingerprints, and sign up" (Gutiérrez, 2013). In many ways, attending the DACA workshop becomes additional proof that these youth deserve inclusion. This is in keeping with Gutiérrez' earlier call to "Dreamers" to come out and show "America" who they are, and with Durbin's DACA (2012) speech, in which he discusses the courage of these youth in attending



this workshop, in trusting the nation, as one that parallels the courage and sacrifice of all those immigrants who came before them. So whether it is about community participation, military service, exemplar school records, paying fines, learning English, getting in a line, or taking substantial risk (subjecting oneself to the risk of deportation), the indication is that belonging in the U.S. is something that is earned through a series of actions that “prove” one to be a deserving immigrant. This trope of earning inclusion is employed in all sorts of proposed legislative changes, from Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) and the Dream Act, to DACA. In this sense, undocumented immigrant youth become “exceptional” subjects, given that they have “earned” this, by evidencing that they, like previous immigrants, are successful, hard working, courageous, and law-abiding persons; persons who embody national ideals. Moreover, as Honig (2001) would note, these exceptional subjects, in choosing the nation, reaffirm national ideas of democracy by consent, of the U.S. being a choice-worthy, liberal society.

### Conditional Opportunities and Chances

Of course, it should not be surprising that the nation constantly “reaffirms” the conditions for belonging. However, this is interesting when it simultaneously comes into conversation with notions of humanitarianism and “charity” for “needy” immigrants (Honig, 2001). Indeed, in their speeches Durbin, Gutiérrez, and Obama speak of language of “giving” that includes “chances” and “opportunities” afforded to young immigrants by “the American People.” This comes up in a conditional language that (re) produces what Behdad (2005) discusses as the narrative of the U.S. as an unlimited “hospitable asylum” (p.22) while at the same time, re-affirming the limits of inclusion. We are reminded here of an always-already limited of hospitality. Derrida (2000) has noted that contradiction lies at the core of the concept itself,

...Hospitality is certainly, necessarily, a right, a duty, an obligation, the greeting of the foreign other [l'autre étranger] as a friend but on the

condition that the host, the Wirt, the one who receives, lodges or gives asylum remains the patron, the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority in his own home, that he looks after himself and sees to and considers all that concerns him... (p. 4)

Despite reaffirming an often-recalled narrative of ‘unconditional hospitality,’ these speeches make clear the conditionality of juridico-legal hospitality. We see that what these youth have earned is often simply understood as a chance, and the ‘host’ remains in power of ultimate decisions. That is, “earning” is not over, but rather an ongoing test. Programs like DACA or proposed immigration reform legislation become conditional acceptance for all intents and purposes. Note conditional after conditional in Obama’s (2013) statements referring to DACA

We said that if you’re able to meet some basic criteria like pursuing an education, then we’ll consider offering you the chance to come out of the shadows so that you can live here and work here legally, so that you can finally have the dignity of knowing you belong.

The possibility for inclusion here is quite ambiguous. Not only do DACA eligible immigrants need to meet a set of criteria to apply (and subject themselves to the potentially violent law), but also ultimately, whether or not they are given a “chance” is in our hands.<sup>16</sup> Meet these requirements, and “we” will “*consider offering you the chance to come out of the shadows.*” Both Obama and Durbin speak of DACA as a “chance.” They also, like Gutiérrez above, use the word opportunity to refer to the program. For example, Durbin (2012a) explains that DACA “gives these young immigrants an opportunity to come out of the shadows and be part of the only country they’ve ever called home.” This use of terms like chance and opportunity to refer to the DACA program can be quite productive. Indeed, the words chance and opportunity are synonymous, as a chance can be defined as “an opportunity or

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<sup>16</sup> See earlier DACA section for language on DACA renewal website for a further example of how the DACA program is ambiguous in its explanations of who will and will not receive DACA status, always leaving the possibility for exception open.

occasion” and an opportunity as “a chance or prospect” (Collins, 2010). Unlike an “earned right,” to speak of a chance highlights the “giver” of this chance, affirming DACA as humanitarian. It is important to note here, that the DACA program is listed in USCIS website under “Humanitarian services.” Moreover, there is an element of risk attached to the word chance. Collins (2010) provides a further definition of chance as “a risk; gamble,” as one could “take a chance.” Thus, to speak of offering young immigrants a “chance” not only highlights ‘those who offer’ this chance as humanitarian, but also even courageous. Indeed “we,” Gutiérrez, Obama, Durbin and “the American people” are taking a chance on “DREAMers.” The word chance also strikes me as something temporary, even fleeting that is always dependent on the giver, much differently than something like an “earned right.” Chances are not guaranteed, they require being taken advantage of, and indeed Durbin, noting the risk, assures congress that immigrant youth, given this chance will “step-up.” He states that Dreamers “are prepared to step up, to follow the law and to become part of America’s future with permanent residency some day, and perhaps citizenship, which is our ultimate dream” (Durbin, 2012). Much like the conditionality expressed by Obama, the word chance, which re-occurs in speeches by Durbin and Obama, reproduces the U.S. as a historically humanitarian country, ready and willing to afford “chances” to those in need. To speak of chances is to remind outsiders that DACA is nothing more than a humanitarian program, one greatly dependent on “a goodness, an understanding, and a caring” that the American people have “in their heart of hearts” (Durbin, 2012b), and of course, state institutions.

While this language of chances affirms humanitarian actions, close attention reveals that these chances are partial and conditional, despite previous affirmations of immigrant youth as exceptional, deserving subjects. Moreover, unquestioned are the material conditions that created the “necessity” for these chances afforded, conditions that of course cannot be disconnected from the very institutions ready to “take a risk” and provide a chance. In other words, who gives chances is quite clear, but why “chances” are necessary is not. This is best explained by the trope of the

shadow, which is also quite widespread in the speeches of Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama.

### The Trope of the Shadow

DACA becomes an opportunity for eligible immigrants like Alan, a pre-med student recognized in Obama's (2013) speech. The program becomes a way for the nation to "offer a chance for folks like him to emerge out of the shadows" (Obama, 2013). President Obama usually discusses the "shadow of deportation" as something "lifted" away from youth, or as something, they will have an opportunity to "emerge out of." Gutiérrez, on the other hand, has discussed youth "stepping out" of the shadows, perhaps recognizing their efforts in organizing in support of the Dream Act. Nonetheless, when it comes to the consistently employed trope of the "shadows," the "shadow of deportation" is talked about as a mysterious force; no one seems to address where it came from, or who has "casted it" upon immigrants in the U.S.

Through the tropes of earning, opportunities, and chances Obama, Durbin and Gutiérrez navigate an ambivalence well described by Behdad (2005) and Honig (2001). This is an ambivalence that helps re-produce U.S. citizenship as a privileged, exceptional status reserved for qualified people in the world, and at the same time something conferred by a humanitarian country, interested in taking a risk, "offering" a chance, "lifting" immigrants out of the shadows. Lastly, through the tropes of chances and opportunities, we also see the flattening of the demands of immigrant youth activists. That is, particularly, Durbin and Obama simplify these demands over and over in their speeches. In Obama's (2013) words, this is simply a debate about people, "who want nothing more than the chance to earn their way into the American story" or in reference again to Alan; "all he wants is the opportunity to do his part to build a better America." Or as Durbin (2014) puts it, these young immigrants are "just asking for a chance to be legalized, to be part of America's future. They felt they were Americans start to finish" (p.861). However, a brief survey of the online presence of undocumented youth activism shows that the

demands, and claims of this heterogeneous movement go beyond individually asking “for a chance to be part of the American future” or to contribute. Just from two of the largest immigrant youth activist networks, DreamActivist.org and Unitedwedream.org, we see that many of these youth are taking issue, among other things, with U.S. deportation practices and conditions of detention facilities, family separation, lack of educational possibilities, institutional and legal racism and sexism and xenophobia (“DreamActivist: Take Action,” n.d.), (“United We Dream,” n.d.), (“UndocuQueer Manifesto,” 2013).

## Theme 2: Good/Bad Immigrant Dichotomy

The second aspect of the speeches that struck me as quite significant was a constant re-production of the ideal, deserving immigrant, or as Honig (2001) discusses it, the idealized reflection of the national self. Of course, as Sheth (2009) notes, constructing the limits of what is acceptable, necessarily functions to exclude those who do not ‘fit’ within these limits, and in this section I will discuss how these liberal speeches about immigrant youth function to produce an unyielding good/bad immigrant dichotomy. This discussion of the good/bad immigrant is not fully detachable from the first theme, particularly the discussion of earned or deserved belonging, as it is here that Obama, Gutiérrez, and Durbin outline a certain image of the immigrant youth they advocate for; youth who are, all in all, “outstanding young Americans” (Gutiérrez 2012a).

### “Outstanding Young Americans”

National similarities—as opposed say, political or linguistic plurality—becomes key to an image of an idealized national self who is fully committed to the nation-state. Following Sheth (2009), we can understand this image as conjuring an unthreatening level of docility, one in which the ‘strangeness’ of these youth is not unruly: their commitment, scruples and loyalties can be counted on. In these liberal

speeches immigrant youth are not “only” asking for a chance to contribute. But they are only asking for a chance to contribute, to the “the only nation that has ever truly been their home” (Gutiérrez, 2012b). And even more so, to continue pledging to “the only flag they’ve ever known” (Durbin, 2014, p.861). Indeed, the call for inclusion is urgent, as under the current system these young immigrants face deportation to countries they “know nothing about” with a language they may not speak (Obama, 2012). The supporting evidence for arguments of inclusion asserts ‘enough’ sameness; these immigrant youth, *only* truly know our country, our flag, and they mainly speak our language. Particularly through the image of pledging to the U.S. flag, but also through direct language of patriotism and service to the nation, a case for inclusion is made. Durbin (2012a) for example, speaks of a “Dreamer” who dreams of “being in our military and serving the nation that he loves.” Unlike the conservative document that this thesis takes up in the next chapter, which takes a stand directly against recognizing a variety of ethnic and racial identifications within the U.S, Durbin, Gutiérrez, and Obama, do allow for certain kinds of multiplicity within this language of enough similarities and patriotism. Indeed, although the speeches are mostly silent about the racial, ethnic, and linguistic multiplicity of immigrant youth, Obama, Durbin and Gutiérrez both embody and assert different forms of racial, ethnic, and linguistic plurality that exist under the “American” umbrella. Nonetheless, through silences and affirmations in their speeches about immigrant youth, it seems that certain forms of political multiplicity are unspeakable, marking the borders of acceptable forms of plurality.

These statements, along with the constant highlighting of the considerable educational achievements of DACA eligible persons, seem sufficient to often mark these immigrants as “Americans.” And indeed, Durbin, Gutiérrez and Obama have all referred to these youth as “American in every way—except on paper” (Gutiérrez, 2012c). In Obama’s (2012) words, “these are young people who study in our schools, they play in our neighborhoods, they’re friends with our kids, they pledge allegiance to our flag. They are Americans in their heart, in their minds, in every single way but one: on paper.” Here, “Americaness” becomes inscribed in the young

immigrant's mind and heart, precisely because they have gone to "our schools" and "fledged to our flag." But then what makes these youth "American," If indeed, the very institutions Obama is referring to, U.S. schools, are attended by youth who are multicultural, multilingual, and even citizens of more than one nation; youth who indeed, know more than "our nation," and "our flag"? The trouble is, that as Maria Lugones and Joshua Price (1995, 2006) have argued, despite the U.S. being a multicultural society, U.S. institutions are structurally mono-cultural. That is, they cater to the dominant "Anglo" culture, subsequently promoting and "advancing the adoption of certain ways of valuing, perceiving, and acting..." (Lugones & Price, 1995, p. 105). In U.S. schools, as I will discuss in chapter four, "Americaness" is often attached to certain ways of being, acting, and speaking, that do not always account for the cultural, linguistic, and political multiplicity of all students.

How the similarities that make these youth "American in every single way" are constructed is key for understanding the stronghold of what 'Americaness' means in these speeches. Speaking to the House of Representatives, Gutiérrez asserts that immigrant youth are "no different from your children or my children"(2012a). And in fact, this 'Americaness' is not only inscribed in their hearts and minds through notions of homeland and flag, but it is also inscribed in their behaviors as 'exemplar' youth. Gutiérrez states,

Dream Act eligible people have lived in America for at least five years. Most of them were brought to our nation as children, many of them as infants or toddlers. They have stayed away from crime. They attend our high schools and colleges. They are no different from your children or my children.

(2012a)

They are like "our children," America's children, albeit those who have no criminal record and have attended high school (those who do not fit this seem to become illegitimate children). In fact, these youth, as discussed by Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama have excelled in U.S. institutions (as noted, despite the hurdles of exclusion). As Obama states they have "studied hard, worked hard, maybe even graduated at the top..." (2012). As Gutiérrez notes, these youth "regularly excel at school – some

are valedictorians. They are athletes and musicians and leaders. Many of them want to serve our nation in the military” (2012a). And no one has highlighted the institutional achievements of undocumented immigrant youth more than senator Durbin, who, speech after speech, in support of the Dream Act and DACA, has shared the educational success stories of undocumented immigrants who are “our future doctors, our engineers, our teachers, our lawyers, our soldiers...” (2012a). Left unspoken in the speeches is the racial, ethnic, political, and linguistic plurality that many of these youth negotiate. President Obama, in his 2012 Del Sol High immigration reform speech reminds us that the weight of these success stories cannot be separated from U.S. interest, and what he calls “the greatest economic engine the world has ever known.” He states

As I said in my speech on the economy yesterday, it makes no sense to expel talented young people, who, for all intents and purposes, are Americans -- they’ve been raised as Americans; understand themselves to be part of this country -- to expel these young people who want to staff our labs, or start new businesses, or defend our country simply because of the actions of their parents -- or because of the inaction of politicians.” (Obama, 2013)

Obama views these immigrant youth as having the potential to fuel the greatest economic engine in the world, and embodying enough similarities with dominant conceptions of “Americaness” to be “counted on.” Following Lugones and Price (2006), having been raised as “American” is tied to a whole set of institutions that work toward structural monoculturalism. While the discourse around young undocumented immigrants has not been devoid of economic jargon—that is, we have invested in them, they will contribute, immigrants are a growth engine, etc.—it is here in Obama’s 2013 speech that we see liberal economic interests on immigration reform and programs like DACA, interests that are often disavowed in the rhetoric of shadows and choices discussed earlier, interests that, as I will highlight later, lead ultraconservative groups to denounce them for thinking of the U.S. as a “market” rather than a “nation.” Here Obama (2012; 2013) discusses expanding immigration reform beyond DACA in order to provide ranchers the



security that they will have workers, and attracting the “best and brightest” in the world; keeping U.S. PhD’s and entrepreneurs, rather than loosing them to “in China or India or Mexico or someplace else.” This of course, is reflected in current Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) proposals that strengthen immigration enforcement, expand precarious guest worker programs, and propose a “merit based point system” for visa allocations that will surely benefit those Obama deems “the best and the brightest.” As political scientist Alfonso Gonzales (2014) notes, this would leave most global migrants out of legal possibilities for migration to the U.S. beyond guest worker programs. Under this system, familial ties beyond immediate family members, which are currently privileged, become simply one more category next to English language skills, level of education, age, civic involvement, country of origin, etc.<sup>17</sup> This language reminds us that concerns shift, and that the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are deeply tied to issues of global capital. Indeed, Chen (2014) finds the latest CIR proposal to be “a crucial window for understanding the current alignment of powerful stakeholders advocating immigration reform” (p.31).

### “The bad guys”

In discussing the idealized humanitarian, exceptional, meritocratic, law-abiding, homogenous national identity constructed through the image of DACA or Dream Act eligible immigrant youth, it is equally important to explore the construction of the subject of (dis)identification; that which *is not* us. Obama’s words above are helpful here in that he asserts that young people should not be, either at the mercy of inactive politicians or at the mercy of their parent’s actions. The guilty parent/innocent child dichotomy shows up considerably in these speeches on immigration. But this is just one of the many dichotomies constructed by Obama, Durbin and Gutiérrez. Such include: the young immigrants who “were brought here” versus the parents who “broke the rules,” (Obama 2013), the youth

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<sup>17</sup> See SB744

who “have futures here” versus the community endangerers (Obama, 2013), the “high school kid” versus the criminal (seemingly an ontological difference) (Gutiérrez, 2012a), those who are occupied with studying versus those who are occupied with breaking the law (a behavioral difference) (Gutiérrez, 2012a), and “honest hard working” immigrants, versus “the actual bad guys” (Gutiérrez, 2012a). Perhaps in the service of political rhetoric the distinctions are often quite stark, leaving very little room for in-between-ness. Addressing congress, Gutiérrez (2012a) poses the question,

In a world where our law enforcement officials have limited time and resources, who should they be focused on investigating, detaining, putting behind bars, rounding up, or deporting? The captain of your high school chess team? Or a drug smuggler? “

There is a basic distinction made between those who should be left alone, the subjects of DACA and the Dream Act, often characterized as brilliant students—an image that conjures the hard work and dedication of a country’s immigrant story—and blatant criminals; gangbangers, drug smugglers, engenderers of community. Here, the tamable immigrant subject, who can even be a better reflection of the national self in the mirror, meets the unruly, irrational immigrant subject whose norms and values seem fundamentally different. Gonzales (2014) helps us think about the productivity of this discourse through the foreclosed possibilities. He states,

Advocating for the rights of the good immigrants within the binary serves to silence potentially counterhegemonic discourses that challenge the structural causes of migration and that take an unequivocally anti-racist stance to defend the human rights of Latinos (and other people of color), who, regardless of legal status or history with the law, are perpetually suspected to be deportable by virtue of their phenotypic and cultural characteristics. (Gonzales, 2014, p. 7)

In the speeches by Durbin, Gutiérrez and Obama, the most clear manifestation of this difference between the good and bad immigrant seems to be the ‘bad’

immigrant subject's relation to the law, or more clearly, his or her perceived inability or unwillingness to follow the rule of law. Of course, as seen in the earlier discussion of the trope of the shadow, the "rule of law" and its criminalization of certain subjects, is left unquestioned.

### Criminalizing and Deporting

Although this could be equally problematized so as not to re-create good/bad immigrant dichotomies, the fact is that the "homeland security state" does not simply "investigate, detain, put behind bars, round up, and deport" people that could be categorized as gangbangers, criminals and drug smugglers (Gutiérrez, 2012). Representative Gutiérrez himself has spent a great deal of time calling attention the deportation of immigrants, beyond "Dreamers" for whom these categories simply seem ridiculous. Gonzales (2014) has pointed out that it takes very little for an undocumented immigrant to be deemed a criminal under current immigration policies. Indeed, immigrant youth activist networks have extensively covered stories of racial profiling and deportations where the sheer "criminality" is far from obvious.<sup>18</sup> For example, currently emphasized across different youth activist networks is the case of Elvira Arellano, who was an undocumented immigrant from Mexico living in the U.S., deported on August 15, 2007. Arellano was arrested during ICE airport sweep in 2002 at O'Hare where she was working as cleaning personnel through a false social security number. As sociologist Maura Toro-Morn (2013), writes, this was seen as a particularly serious offence given a post-9/11 U.S., and Arellano's employment at a major international airport. Arellano was able to push her deportation back, but she was due to report for deportation in 2006. When the time came, she sought sanctuary, along with her 8-year-old U.S. citizen son, at

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<sup>18</sup> See Kurz (2012) for a discussion of the de-territorialization of immigration policing practices, the proliferation of sites of enforcement, and expansion "criminal infractions that now serve as grounds for deportation" (p. 35).

Adalberto United Methodist Church in Chicago (Toro-Morn, 2013). She was deported in 2007, after leaving sanctuary to attend an immigration rally. Her son later joined her in Mexico. On March 20th, 2014 Elvira came back to the U.S. with the help of numerous immigrant activist organizations that called attention to the cases of Elvira as well as others who have been separated from their loved ones due to the U.S. deportation practices.

As Gonzales (2014) notes, despite language of race neutrality when it comes to deportation practices, the case is, that in 2010 “Mexicans and Latin Americans comprised 97% of removals “ (p. 6). Moreover, when it comes to immigrant policing practices, scholars like (Romero, 2006), (Provine & Doty, 2011) and (Hing, 2009) have noted that these overwhelmingly impact immigrants (and U.S. citizens in general) of color. Gonzales unpacks this through a discussion of criminalization and Latinos in the United States. He understands criminalization as discursive glue for the homeland security state, “it is a process in which a set of discourses attribute criminal characteristics to a targeted group, in this case Latinos, to win consent for legal violence” (Gonzales, 2014, p.6). While neither Gutiérrez nor Durbin seem to criminalize Latinos in particular in the speeches under discussion, they also do not call into question the homeland security state, or the ‘common sense’ need for border enforcement in their speeches about DACA-eligible youth. Obama’s words however, in his Del Sol High School speech, demonstrate a climate of Latino criminalization that all these discourses are working under. For the president, there is no question that there is a need to “strengthen borders to stem the tide of illegal immigrants” (Obama, 2013). Otto Santa Ana’s (2002) study of media metaphors about Latinos in California in the 1990’s is helpful here, as it reminds us that the naturalistic notion of a dangerous wave taking over the landscape has been deeply associated with Latinos in the United States, both immigrants and U.S. born. As Dorsey and Díaz -Barriga (2007) note, this language is also usually employed by ultra-conservative organizations to signal what is perceived as dangerous change. They state, “the watery metaphors of floods and waves seem to construct an image of cultural and political erosion that will ultimately lead to social chaos and a

weakening of the U.S. state” (2007, p.92). This notion of a “tide of illegal immigrants” does not only conjure deeply embedded ways of imagining the threat of racialized minorities like Latinos in the United States, but this is further emphasized by Obama’s sole concern for putting “boots on the ground” in the southern border. It would seem here that the unruly, untamable, criminalized subjects of exclusionary immigration discourse are overwhelmingly found at the U.S. Mexico border.<sup>19</sup>

The criminalization of Latinos of course cannot be untied from a long U.S. history of racialization. Gonzales (2014) explains racialization as “a complex process that attributes racial characteristics to a target group through a variety of both subtle and overt discursive tactics” (p.40). The homeland security state hinges on historical U.S. race relations. Focusing on Latinos in the U.S., Gonzales notes that despite representing a multiplicity of races, ethnicities, languages, class relations, and cultures, Latinos have been historically racialized in the U.S. in general ways. Gonzales notes the specific history of racialization of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans since the 19th century and Dominicans since the 20th century, and more broadly states “while not all Latinos experience racialization in the same way, the ironic outcome of anti-migrant hegemony is that it racializes most of Latinos as “foreigners” and “immigrants,” including those born in the United States because of their phenotypic and cultural characteristics” (Gonzales, 2014, p.14). Criminalization, for Gonzales, functions as an “objective” way to enact exclusionary racial politics for the purposes of the homeland security state.

As discussed earlier, Gonzales and many others like Sheth and Behdad acknowledge a change in U.S. racial politics post War World II. With this change—which Gonzales (2014) and Melamed (2006) show cannot be disconnected from the

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<sup>19</sup> While one could note that the focus on the southern border has to do with more significant migration activity, the notion that for example, the first version of Arizona’s famous anti-immigrant law SB1070 provided provision to exclude Canadian citizens from profiling, as well as wider national narratives of Canada as non-threatening problematize this conclusion. See, for example, Magnet (2011) for a discussion of a dominant national narrative of Canada as a friendly white neighbor, which although shaken-up post 9/11 continues to hold strong.

distribution of global capital—criminalization becomes a “neutral,” and as Sheth would note “rational” way of racializing different populations. Given that these new racial politics argue that racism is no longer “an impediment for racial minorities” (Gonzales, 2014, p.17), it is no longer acceptable to speak of genetic inferiority or use racial slurs. Thus, we get the racialization, particularly of Latinos in immigration discourse through language of criminalization. Criminalization, for example, attributes “historical stereotypes about Mexican male criminality to all Latino groups in the North American imaginary, an imaginary that is shaped by two hundred years of conflict and colonization” (Gonzales, 2014, p.14).

This criminalization of certain immigrant populations, like Latinos, and particularly Mexicans, “allows for the advocates of the homeland security state and novel police practices to make post-racial claims that enforcement is colorblind and that it is just about ‘enforcing the law’,” even when people of color are overwhelmingly targeted by the homeland security state (Gonzales, 2014, p.6). If those who are being deported are criminalized, in ways that are covertly racialized then there is little ‘novelty’ in the exclusionary practices of the homeland security state. It is simple “common sense” to enforce the law and these are simply the “givens” of the debate. In keeping with Sheth’s (2009) discussion of racialization, we see here how many immigration speeches re-produce seemingly objective and neutral grounds for the potential creation of an ‘exception population.’ She develops this term through engagement with Giorgio Agamben’s (1995) notion of “State of exception.” Here, Agamben argues that sovereignty is paradoxical in that “it is both, at the same time, inside and outside the juridical order” (15). This is because the sovereign itself always has the ability to suspend the law. For Agamben, all those within a polity are subject to a possible exception from the protection of the law. Sheth, however, interested in how certain populations are racialized and deemed excludable, qualifies Agamben, stating that not all populations, at least at all times, are equally subject to be abandoned by the law. She uses the term exception population to discuss “a population that is simultaneously subject to the law, but not entitled to its protection” (Sheth, 2009, p.117). Through Sheth’s framework, Elvira

and Saul's case comes to mind. Elvira was subject to the law (and thus convicted, detained and deported for working under a false social security number), and at the same time, neither her nor her U.S citizen son were entitled to its protection. Following Elvira's deportation they were separated, and Saul had to join her in Mexico. Elvira and Saul were not able to return to the U.S. together for seven years, and would probably have not been able to return without the aid of activist organizations. Indeed however, the earlier discussion of criminalization and racialization allows us to note that Elvira and her son were perhaps particularly vulnerable to being abandoned by the law (in a way that they may not have been if they were white Canadians). These dichotomous languages of law-following youth (students) versus unruly criminals who perceptively do not and perhaps cannot follow the rule of law are highly productive. Understanding Elvira as a criminal, an unruly subject unable to follow the most basic principle of this liberal society, provides a useful foundation for the practices, premises, and human consequences of the homeland security state to go unquestioned.

#### A Nation of Immigrants [who were brought here]

Sheth (2009) notes that oftentimes, discourses of exclusion/inclusion, such as those in reference to immigrant youth discussed above, function to de-racialize populations that are moving from the "outside" to the "inside," particularly through "the lenses of patriotism and family loyalty, cultural similarity if not homogeneity, and shared reason"(p.140). We can see how notions of similarity and patriotism are functioning in the speeches about immigrant youth discussed above. Moreover, this, along with all the claims that they are meritocratic subjects yields a more "identifiable" immigrant subject (than say, Elvira). In the speeches under discussion, Obama and Durbin disrupt nativist dichotomies between natives and immigrants by recalling the U.S. as a "nation of immigrants." Nonetheless, they often re-create the good/bad immigrant dichotomy in ways that functions similarly for the perpetuation discourses of exclusion. They both seem to call for national

identification with the immigrant youth who are “brought” to this country. For example, in the Del Sol High speech Obama (2013) states,

...A lot of folks forget that most of “us” used to be “them.” We forget that. (Applause.) It’s really important for us to remember our history. Unless you’re one of the first Americans, a Native American, you came from someplace else. Somebody brought you. (Applause.)

In a moment of remembering, Obama reminds his audience of this country’s “immigrant roots.” He even goes on to acknowledge the racism and resistance that many previous immigrants faced. What is interesting here is Obama’s assertion that if you are not Native American, “somebody brought you.” While perhaps these are not Obama’s intentions, given the prevalent attachment of the language of being “brought here” to the figure of the “Dreamer,” Obama’s statement produces a broad national identification with Dreamers, who at this point connote innocent, orderly and deserving subjects. However, at the same time, he promotes a dis-identification with immigrants like Elvira, or the parents of Dreamers, who are constantly constructed as unruly and unable to follow the rule of law. Similarly, Durbin invokes the immigrant history of the U.S. in his DACA workshop speech, which not coincidentally begins with “welcome my fellow immigrants.” Speaking directly to DACA eligible immigrants, praising their courage for attending the workshop despite uncertainty, he discusses his mother’s immigrant story,

Ona Kutkaitė, who 101 years ago came to the United States, was brought to the United States as a two year old baby from Lithuania... a dreamer in her own day. I think about her sacrifice and her determination and her courage and I think of you. That’s my story, that’s my family’s story, that is your story, that is America’s story, that is who we are today.” (2012)

Both Durbin and Obama employ language on immigration that is not as forgetful as others. This is in keeping Behdad’s (2005) discussion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century liberal discourses of Kennedy and Oscar Handlin, who were less amnesiac than those before them, but still disavowed significant details about immigration realities. Obama and Durbin seem to remember a history of immigration that is embedded



with racism, hardship, and even slavery. Obama (2013) notes, “They faced hardship. They faced racism. They faced ridicule.” And yet, particularly in this identification with those immigrants currently constructed as those who were “brought here,” these speeches remain partially amnesiac and affirmative of the good/bad immigrant dichotomy. Indeed the immigrant discussed as exemplifying the American story is an exceptional, meritocratic immigrant who, through hard work and determination, overcomes obstacles and melts into the fabric of the nation. Obama (2013) continues, “over time, as they went about their daily lives, as they earned a living, as they raised a family, as they built a community, as their kids went to school here, they did their part to build a nation.” Durbin (2012b) also praises previous immigrants, for example by stating, “I will dedicate this day to my mother’s memory and to all those immigrants who came to our shore and made America a better place.” Obama (2013), speaking of earlier immigrants’ states, “They were the Einsteins and the Carnegies. But they were also the millions of women and men whose names history may not remember, but whose actions helped make us who we are; who built this country hand by hand, brick by brick.” The good/bad immigrant dichotomy allows these liberal voices to un-problematically celebrate the nation as a meritocratic and exceptional nation of immigrants, and at the same time assert the importance of the homeland security state; of “investigating, detaining, putting behind bars, rounding up, or deporting” certain immigrants (Gutiérrez 2012a). That people, particularly criminalized and racialized subjects like Latinos are being constantly subjected to the “violence of the law” does not seem to provide any cognitive dissonance, as these are simply “the bad guys.”

### Border Populations and a Constant State of Crisis.

This dichotomy created, which racializes and criminalizes those placed in direct juxtaposition to the idealized national identity represented by the innocent, loyal, similar, hard working, exceptional student, can be better understood symbolically and materially by thinking about borders. As Sheth writes, border

populations are symbolically located at the periphery, distinguishing insider from outsider. We can understand undocumented immigrant youth as a border population here, as a clear message of belonging is marked onto their bodies, productively turning them into protectors of the nation. Given the language about these youth as exemplar young Americans, it is tempting to understand them simply as insiders, however, even those who have managed to secure DACA continue precarious status in the nation-state. As a border population, they are “both inside and outside” (Sheth, 2009, p.136), and while exalted as ideal subjects, they continue to face the potential of exclusion. It seems that liberal language of deserved opportunities and chances, serves as a constant reminder to border populations that inclusion is conditional and it ultimately hinges on “our” humanitarianism.

Forgetting the precarious status of immigrant youth despite the DACA program provides a great example of the productivity of these discourses, particularly for disavowing the conditions that immigrants face in the nation, and possibility of exclusion and violence they face from the state. That is, in the language of exceptionism allows immigrant youth to be imagined as meritocratic subjects who clearly belong and chose the nation, the language of humanitarianism as subjects who have been given a chance, and the constant construction of the good/bad dichotomy as people who are on the “inside” of the border. Yet, generally unspoken in these speeches about immigrant youth are the material causes of immigration flows, the lived impact of a dehumanizing and violent system of immigration laws (such as family separations or unequal access to education), and the whole set of U.S. institutions that provide little room for multiplicity of belonging, a multiplicity that seems unspeakable in these speeches about immigrant youth that simply emphasize their similarities to “America’s children.”

Much in keeping with the previous section on the racialization and criminalization of certain immigrants, Sheth (2009) notes that border populations (usually moving from outsider to insider status—still at the border) are usually de-racialized through notions of sameness and patriotism. Further, she notes the numerous ‘productive energies’ of these populations for the nation-state, as for

example, they help the state 'guard' outsiders, and at the same time allow it the possibility of asserting inclusivity and "a superior moral position" (Sheth, 2009, p.140). Most importantly however, Sheth (2009) notes that with the presence of border populations the polity can maintain both the myth of universality of a liberal nation, and at the same time a selectivity that gives value to belonging (Sheth, 2009, p.145). Perhaps the language of earned and offered belonging discussed above productively and usefully puts these youth at the border.

The border, in its material manifestation is also very productive for the nation. That is, we see the continual creation of an "immigration crisis," such as Obama's (2013) discussion of a "tide of illegal immigrants" and a constant talk from all sides of the debate about the need to "secure the border" despite research that shows that numbers of unauthorized migration peaked in 2007 and even stalled in 2012 (Passel, et al. 2012). Just like the construction of border populations, who hold an ambiguous, potentially dangerous, relationship to the law, this "crisis" at the physical borderlands plays a productive role for the nation. Behdad (2005) writes,

National borders constitute of violent third space where identities are monolithically and normatively inscribed while cultural differences are marginalized. Disciplinary power hinges on this "unnatural boundary" to simulate a state of siege that normalizes its functioning and legitimates its exclusionary techniques. The creation of the border as a "deviant" space, in sum, is in accordance with the fact of its suppression through a national politics of exclusion. (p. 168)

As Behdad explains, the notion of a crisis at the border allows for the practices of the homeland security state to be normalized and go unquestioned. Indeed, through the perpetuation of an ideal immigrant student /criminal dichotomy, these liberal voices necessarily perpetuate notions of a "crisis" and thus, justify the need to focus material and symbolic resources on "going after" "the actual bad guys." As I will explore in the next section where I put these speeches in conversation with a conservative document on immigration, the creation of an immigration crisis, not only leads to a disavowal of the homeland security state, but also forecloses

possibilities for conversation about multiple forms of belonging, forms that are not affirmed in U.S. institutions, and certainly are, through silence, placed under erasure in the speeches by Gutiérrez, Obama, and Durbin.

### **CHAPTER 3: IN CONVERSATION WITH CONSERVATIVE VOICES: THE CONSONANCES AND DISSONANCES**

#### **Introduction**

I have thus far discussed the ways in which the speeches of Durbin, Gutiérrez, and Obama (re) produce an understanding of the U.S as a humanitarian, exceptional, liberal nation of immigrants who are sufficiently similar. Through an ambivalent discourse of inclusion about immigrant youth, and the solidification of the good/bad immigrant dichotomy, Gutiérrez, Obama, and Durbin produce this understanding of the nation, and at the same time, leave the practices of the homeland security state mostly unquestioned, and even largely justified. Next, I would like to juxtapose these liberal voices to more conservative (perhaps ultraconservative) voices on immigration, particularly the language of a report on immigrant “assimilation” interested in defunding multicultural education, released by a conservative think tank, The Hudson Institute. I will first discuss the report, then the consonances and dissonances between these conservative voices and the liberal voices discussed above, and lastly, I will analyze a few “moments” where liberal and conservative voices on immigration meet. The aim here, in constant comparison, is to note continuations and ruptures between the liberal and conservative sites analyzed. As I will discuss in the upcoming sections, I have found that in the particular conservative site I analyze, there is an overarching interest in homogeneity, or foreclosure of possible difference or even conflict that is similar in numerous ways to liberal sites. However, within these interests in similarity, there are countless differences between sites. Moreover, I have found some ultra conservative voices to

be interestingly insightful in pointing further to some of the interests of liberal documents.

## The Hudson Institute and the Crisis of Patriotic Assimilation

### Background

There are several interesting aspects of the (2013) report titled “America’s Patriotic Assimilation System is Broken” produced by John Fonte and Althea Nagai through The Hudson Institute. The Hudson Institute is a non-profit 501(c)(3) status think tank that was founded in 1961 by Herman Kahn, a then military strategist and Department of Defense consultant who had spent 12 years at the Rand Corporation, a defense research and development think tank founded in 1946 (Rich, 2005). According to the institute’s website, since its founding the think tank’s mission has been “to think about the future in unconventional ways”(“Hudson Institute”). Given the historical moment during which the think tank was founded, the earliest purpose of the institute was producing research on Vietnam and national defense. According to their website, while many of the questions addressed by the institute continue to be about foreign policy and security, since Kahn’s death in 1983, the topics taken up by the institute are far wider in scope. This is best captured by the think tank’s recent self-description as an “An independent research organization promoting new ideas for the advancement of global security, prosperity and freedom” (“Hudson Institute”). In fact, Rich (2005) finds that the Hudson Institute is one of few think tanks in the U.S. that focuses their budget on a wide range of issues (p.17). According to the institute’s website, funding for research and events comes from private individuals, foundations, corporations and government grants.

Rich (2005) explains that in the 60’s the Hudson Institute was seen as inclined toward conservative research, although many of its contributors were sometimes described as “liberal democrats” (p. 46). From the beginning, he explains, Hudson became very well respected due to its research quality. While the institute

was first mainly funded through government contracts, Rich (2005) explains that starting in 70's, think tank funding took a big turn. This is due to a changing political climate in the U.S. Such change included the rise of political mobilization of corporations, neoconservative intellectuals, and neoclassical economics (2005, p.49). By the 90's Hudson was minimally funded by government contracts and mostly funded by corporations and foundations (including very conservative foundations such as the Scaife Foundation). Rich (2005) notes that based on the perceptions of congressional staff and journalists in 1997, the Hudson Institute is considered to be one of the most conservative U.S. think tanks.

While Hudson continues to claim to be an "independent research organization," this claim is complicated by Rich (2005), as well as by its numerous connections to nativist and anti-immigrant hate groups in the United States. For example some of Hudson's research fellows have contributed to the anti-immigrant websites like [vdare.com](http://vdare.com)<sup>20</sup>. Vdare has been identified as a hate site by the ACLU (American Civil liberties Union), and has been linked to the organization FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform), a major anti-immigrant lobbying organization which has been listed a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) ("The Nativist Lobby", 2009). John Tanton who is considered a leading nativist with links to white supremacist and ultra-conservative organizations founded FAIR. Jiménez (2012) explains, "Tanton's anti-Latino and eugenicist ties are well documented. Tanton released many of his private letters to the University of Michigan, and they reveal he and FAIR were more concerned about the growing ethnic and racial diversity than about immigration" (p.297). The Scaife foundation has also provided funding for Hudson Institute projects in the past. Gonzales (2014) notes that this foundation led by John Scaife has been a key-funding source for what he calls the "anti-migrant block". Thus, while the Hudson Institute claims to be an independent research think tank, its history, research

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<sup>20</sup> Such include John O'Sullivan, Edwin S. Rubenstein (Beiric, 2007).

funding sources, and various ties to hate groups and the anti-immigrant bloc complicate this depiction, particularly when it comes to questions of immigration.

The authors of the report, Althea Nagai and John Fonte, also hold very conservative views on immigration. In fact, their views on “assimilation” are very much in keeping with groups like FAIR or the Center for Immigration Studies, which Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga (2007) characterize as “ultra-conservative.” Nagai holds PhD from the University of Chicago in political science. John Fonte is a Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for American Common Culture at the Hudson Institute and holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago. Nagai, along with husband Robert Lerner has conducted various studies for very conservative U.S. organizations. For example, in 2001 they produced the book *No Basis: What the Studies Don't Tell Us About Same-Sex Parenting questions the validity of several studies concerning children of same-sex couples* funded by the “Marriage Law Project.” Nagai also produced numerous anti-affirmative action studies. Fonte is the author of (2011) *Sovereignty or Submission: Will Americans Rule Themselves or be Ruled by Others?* In this book he raises concerns about the survival of the U.S. as a constitutional democracy in the face of a rising global and transnational institutions. His concerns about rising global institutions and the ability to maintain the sovereignty of nation-states provides a helpful backdrop for understanding the work he and Nagai produced in their report on assimilation, which explores what they call a “broken system of patriotic assimilation” in the United States.

With this background, we can broadly situate the work of Nagai and Fonte on the other end of the political spectrum from Obama, Durbin, and Gutiérrez. It is important to note, that while Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama may be part of the liberal narrative, they are not necessarily the “most” liberal voices. Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga for example, have characterized Obama’s views on immigration as closer to those of “conservative democrats.” Moreover, while it is tempting for me to place Nagai and Fonte in the “nativist camp,” their views on immigration are not as concerned with closing off borders, as with assimilation. Nonetheless, Nagai and Fonte’s stance on assimilation and issues of immigration reform and inclusion, as



well as the webs of funding and collaboration that surrounds them and the Hudson Institute, help us understand them as largely oppositional voices, voices Gonzales (2014) would describe as part of the “anti-migrant bloc.” Lastly, Fonte and Nagai, while not particularly speaking about immigrant youth, draw significant conclusions in their study about immigrant “assimilation” and the role of educational institutions, raising deep concerns about multicultural education, a topic unaddressed by Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama; A topic too easily sidestepped within their overwhelming language of similarities.

### The Report

In their report, Nagai and Fonte first seek to establish that there is a problem with assimilation in the United States. They argue that, unlike previous immigrants, current immigrants are not developing patriotic attachments to the nation, and for them, this is “the single most important aspect of immigrant integration in the United States” (Fonte & Nagai, 2013, p.6). The establishment of this “assimilation crisis” is perhaps parallel to and productive like Obama’s border crisis, in that the message is that immigration and immigrant bodies have gotten out of control. Fonte and Nagai cite 1) the work of sociologists Rumbaut and Portes (2001) on second generation immigrants in U.S. high schools and their identification with different nationalities and ethnic identities, 2) surveys done by the Pew Research Center on the self-identification of U.S. citizens of Hispanic descent, and 3) an “assimilation index” created by a Duke Professor (also funded by a conservative think tank) as evidence of a crisis in the patriotic assimilation system in the last few decades.

Having established a crisis of the “unruly”—through the very works of scholars from the Latino immigrant community— in which U.S. immigrants are not being tamed and cannot be “counted on” because they continue to identify with other nations or racial and ethnic identities before “Americaness,” Fonte & Nagai move on to provide further, quantified, and calculated evidence of the issue at hand: the patriotic assimilation gap. They do so by revisiting a survey previously commissioned by the Bradley Foundation for a different project that interviewed

2,421 adult (over 18) U.S. citizens in December of 2007, distinguishing between “native” and “naturalized” citizens. The survey took place online, and as reported by the Harris Interactive, “Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income” (2008, p.49). Fonte and Nagai argue that the answers to these survey-questions are useful for understanding the “patriotic gap” because they elicit “gut responses” about patriotic attachment, national identity and U.S. exceptionalism (Fonte and Nagai, 2013). Some of the questions asked in the surveys, for example, include, *“Which of these statements comes closest to your opinion? Overall, the U.S. is better than other nations; The U.S. is a country like any other, and is no better or worse than other nations; Overall, the U.S. is worse than other nations; Not sure”* Or *“In general, how proud would you say you are to be an American? Not at all proud; Not very proud; somewhat proud; Very proud.”*<sup>21</sup>

By exploring and quantifying the answers to this survey, the authors conclude that U.S. born citizens have greater patriotic attachment to the U.S. and civic knowledge of the U.S. than naturalized citizens. Noteworthy for them, for example is that 30% gap between those who consider themselves primarily “citizens of the U.S.” or “citizens of the world.” 30% more U.S. born citizens answered that they considered themselves citizens of the U.S. rather than of the world. Moreover, in the surveys, the authors find that 30% more U.S. born citizens than naturalized citizens think that U.S. constitutional law should have higher legal authority for Americans than international law. Similarly, more U.S. born citizens than naturalized citizens (21%) believed that the U.S. “is better than other nations.” Other findings include that U.S. born citizens believed more than naturalized citizens that naturalized citizens should give up loyalty to other countries, and more U.S. born citizens believed in the importance of all citizens speaking and reading English.

Of course a quick review of the survey questions shows that they are informed by a set of underlying beliefs and assumptions deeply tied to very

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix B for a complete list of all survey questions

conservative view on immigration as well as very narrow understandings of what constitutes U.S. national identity and even patriotism. Nonetheless, the point is made—whether the question is about a single U.S. national identity, a single “American” culture, attitudes about English, sharing values with institutions like the U.S. military, attitudes about civic education, or civic knowledge—immigrants “fail” this test across the board. As critical education scholar Michael Apple (2002) notes in regards to post 9/11 schooling climates, compulsory patriotism becomes a defense of a perceptively threatened imagined community, which is further exacerbated during times when the nation seems “under physical threat” (p. 1768). More broadly however, Apple (2002) also ties this compulsory patriotism we see in schools (and in this survey) to an “almost an unconscious desire for community” that arises with market-driven individualism (p.1768). This claim seems quite appropriate when read alongside the claims made by Fonte and Nagai (2013) that we are “we are not just a market but a nation”(p.4). Moreover, following critical education scholar Henry Giroux (2002), we can see that the “patriotism” at stake in the survey questions is merely a “a euphemism for shutting down dissent, eliminating critical dialogue, and condemning critical citizenship in the interest of conformity and a dangerous departure from what it means to uphold a viable democracy” (p.1143). Of course, critiquing what “patriotism” might mean for these authors is of upmost important, but what I find most interesting in these surveys, (and this goes unexamined by the authors), is that immigrant citizens are more prone to respond “not sure” than U.S. born citizens, in every single question in which this is a possibility (17 out of the 22 questions). I will explore this in a subsequent section, as perhaps a source of possibility for what Giroux (2002) calls “a politics of uncertainty.”

For the authors, the results are quite clear and they have significant implications for the field of education; naturalized citizens are considerably less patriotic toward and less knowledgeable about the U.S. than U.S. born citizens. This is highly problematic for them, because the type of patriotism elicited in these questions, they argue, is essential for the nation. This is a patriotic attachment that

goes beyond a civic integration (voting, citizenship and acclimation to politics), and as they state later, beyond “economic assimilation.” It is “something more emotional and intense, something closer to Montesquieu’s and Madison’s concept of patriotism as love of country” (Fonte and Nagai, 2013, p.31). Returning to Obama, Durbin, and Gutiérrez, one could argue this is the very patriotism they shore up through the images of undocumented immigrant youth constructed in their discussions. These are youth who [despite being constructed as “unauthorized” in the U.S., and subjected to the violence of the law] only know this “great nation”, this flag, and are only asking for a chance to “give back,” and even serve in the military of the country they love.

While all those who took the survey cited by Fonte and Nagai were over eighteen, and issues of youth are unexplored in their report, the results lead the authors to assert that the issue at hand is a large “patriotic gap” and speculate about issues of education and other “federally imposed” barriers to “patriotic assimilation”. De-facto Americanization they state, has been replaced with multicultural assimilation (Fonte & Nagai, 2009). The problem though, is not immigrants, but rather, they argue, it is in the narrative they are told; “it is our fault, not theirs that the gap exists” (Fonte & Nagai, 2013 p.32). As multicultural education scholar James Banks (2008) explains, since the 60’s and 70’s ethnic revitalization movements, many began to view countries like the U.S. as multicultural democracies where “minority groups can maintain important elements of their community cultures and become full citizens of the nation-state. However, there is a wide gap between the ideals of these nations and the experiences of ethnic minority groups” (Banks, 2008, p.133). Indeed, others education scholars like Kathleen Abowitz and Jason Harnish (2006) note that citizenship education, particularly after 9/11, continues to adhere widely to what they call a “civic republican” discourse which promotes affection, love, and passion for country. They state, “this sort of passion is not the result of our rational consent to the principles of governance, but of a love that translates into action and service to the common good” (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p.659). Not only is this largely the

“order of things” in U.S. schools, but also as Valenzuela (1999) and others argue, U.S. schools are largely subtractive, often productively divesting youth of their multiple linguistic, cultural, and political resources. One is left wondering here why Fonte and Nagai are so concerned given these realities in U.S. schools, and liberal voices (like those of Obama, Gutiérrez, and Durbin) that also chose to highlight a similar narrative of exceptionalism, similarities and patriotism.

### The wrong message to changing demographics

Despite being concerned about the U.S. being more than just a market, Fonte and Nagai (2013) argue that part of the problem is the loss of individualism. The authors claim openness to immigration, as long as it is founded on individual opportunity. The language of individual opportunity does not in any way diverge from the constant image of the “deserving,” “hard working,” and “exemplary,” young immigrant who has “earned” belonging and thus, can be provided provisional status through a program like DACA with a complete disregard for the web of relations that necessarily surround him or her in this country (after all they were “brought here”). Fonte and Nagai (2013) are interested in establishing what they call “a truly welcoming system of patriotic integration for newcomers based on equality and individual citizenship” (p.40). What they are not interested in, they say, is the perpetuation of messages that lead immigrant to be welcomed into system of group consciousness and rights. They argue that this is currently the case under what they call the “multiculturalism-diversity-legal-administrative regime.” This regime, Fonte and Nagai (2013) argue, serves the interests of its administrators more than immigrant integration and at the same time sets up a series of barriers to patriotic assimilation (p.34).

For the authors, federally funded barriers to patriotic assimilation include programs “promoting multicultural education, bilingual education, diversity training, and any so-called multi-cultural or cultural competency training” (Fonte and Nagai, 2013, p.39). The authors cite a recent emphasis on bilingual education in

Illinois, a promotion of teacher cultural competency and bilingual education by the Massachusetts' governor's office, and support organizations for multilingualism in Indiana and Maryland as evidence for the expansion of this multicultural regime (Fonte and Nagai, 2013, p. 34). They compare this to the Ellis Island days in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and argue that back then, public schools rightly promoted quick "Americanization." They state,

Immigrant children were pushed to learn English as soon as possible; school curricula was designed to represent the values and culture of the American mainstream in order that the children of immigrants would be assimilated into the American way of life. (Fonte and Nagai, 2013, p.34)

The authors seem oblivious here, to a whole series of scholarship both within and beyond the field of education that argues that education catered for a dominant, white culture continues to be 'the order of things' in U.S. Institutions.<sup>22</sup> Citizenship education scholar Thea El-Haj (2010) for example, in light of her study about Palestine-American youth in U.S. schools, writes about "teachers' faith in the power of education to assimilate youth from new immigrant communities to the dominant language, values, and norms of American society" (p. 268).

Nonetheless, the authors argue that multicultural education programs (and the like) are usually rationalized through explanations of changing demographics. For example, Fonte and Nagai show that the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) has argued that with changing demographics, immigrant integration requires a "re-definition of national identity." For the authors, it is precisely the fact of changing demographics that provides the necessary reasons to resist multicultural forms of national identity, and rather "rebirth" the patriotic assimilation system. Speaking again of Ellis Island immigration, and the concerns of changing demographics then, they state, "America's leaders of that day sought to re-affirm—not "re-define" American citizenship and national identity" (Fonte and Nagai, 2009, p.37). In fact,

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<sup>22</sup> See for example Valenzuela (1999) on subtractive schooling, El-Haj (2009) on citizenship education, or Lugones and Price (2006) on monocultural U.S. institutions in general.

Fonte and Nagai (2013) note that if it were not for exclusionary immigration practices of the 1920's, the U.S. may not have "succeeded in Americanizing tens of millions of newcomers and their children just in time for the great existential challenge of World War II" (p. 38). This decision to "Americanize," rather than accept multiculturalism becomes a moral decision, one that rests upon a "firm moral vision of the concept of equality of individual citizenship" (Fonte & Nagai, 2013, p.38). Fonte and Nagai are deeply interested in what they call a "common culture." In the report they do not define what this might mean, but what seems of upmost importance is that it is "the same." Given their concerns about changing demographics and mainstream norms, it seems quite clear here that that which the authors aim to hold on to is linked to white supremacists ideas of culture or citizenship and demonizes the cultures that immigrants of color negotiate. As discussed in the first section of this work, dominant norms often become equated with rationality, and here, even morality. On the flip side, the construction of unruly subjects, as discussed by Sheth (2009), stems from a perceived lack of "adaptation;" unruliness "is dangerous because it will not melt away into some comfortable, familiar configuration..." (Sheth, 2009, p.70). For Fonte and Nagai, the lack of "patriotic assimilation" could yield a crisis of the unruly, and thus, prevention is a question of morality, at least for those who have the love and passion for country and are interested in "the common good" (Abowitz and Jason Harnish, 2006).

Dissonances from Liberal Voices: "We are not just a market but a nation"

Next, I explore some of the divergences, or dissonances between the liberal and conservative voices under discussion. These are small moments in which conservative immigration voices, like those explored here, momentarily disrupt liberal language. Sometimes, Fonte and Nagai interestingly seem to call our attention to empty liberal promises, selective memory and particular racial interests/politics.

Obama, Durbin and Gutiérrez all re-produce the image of an exceptional “America” through the construction of hard working, meritocratic, exemplary young immigrants. Particularly in the words of President Obama, issues of immigration show up in tandem with economic concerns. In his DACA announcement speech, Obama states,

And we still need to pass comprehensive immigration reform that addresses our 21st century economic and security needs -- reform that gives our farmers and ranchers certainty about the workers that they'll have. Reform that gives our science and technology sectors certainty that the young people who come here to earn their PhDs won't be forced to leave and start new businesses in other countries. (Obama, 2012)

The expressed need to provide labor force certainty for ranchers and technology sectors is particularly complicated by a brief look at one of the most recent proposed immigration reform bills in the senate. For example, S744 proposed by the well-known “Gang of Eight” (of which senator Durbin forms part) does exactly this at the expense of many currently undocumented immigrants. For Gonzales (2014) the bill has the potential of creating “the emergence of a twenty-first century migration and labor-control system” (p.163). That is, the bill proposes the expansion of the homeland security state (through border enforcement and employment verification) and “provisions for the expansion of a guest worker program and visas for high skilled workers in technology and science, among other critical areas” (Gonzales, 2014, p. 161). This is perhaps exactly what Obama has in mind when he discusses border enforcement, and security for ranchers and high-tech sectors in his 2012 DACA speech. And yet, Gonzales (2014) explains that the provisional status, and eventual ‘path to citizenship’ proposed in the bill is set up as a series of hurdles that will leave many of the currently undocumented immigrants in the same situation. With these changes, unauthorized immigrants will have no choice but to go deeper into more precarious underground economies or leave. And other migrants wishing to come to the U.S. to work will have little options but to take part of the guest worker programs proposed, especially given that visas



significantly privilege high skilled labor. Citing sociologist Robyn Rodriguez, Gonzales (2014) argues that these guest worker programs are very useful for the neoliberal state, as they meet demands for labor and at the same time provide a workforce who will not be able to claim membership (p.164).

Fonte and Nagai (2013) seem aware of the liberal interest in immigration reform that is largely based on economic interests. In fact, the authors tellingly state early on in their document, “we are not just a market but a nation”(p.4). Elsewhere, in regards to a previous immigration reform bill, Fonte makes a similar point stating, “comprehensive immigration reform is primarily about the special interest and need of particular businesses, not the interests of the American people as a whole” (“Comprehensive,” 2007). For Fonte and Nagai the issue of patriotic assimilation should not take the backseat to economic issues. They propose “careful attention should be paid to all aspects of immigration policy. This means that the Congress should seriously consider the assimilation component of any proposed legislation as much as it considers any other aspect of immigration policy, such as labor needs” (Fonte & Nagai, 2013, p.39). Here, Nagai and Fonte emphasize that of proposed immigration policies and debates in the U.S. are primarily about is labor.

Further, Fonte and Nagai similarly provide a wider critique of corporations and their interests in multiculturalism that sheds light on the possible ‘emptiness’ of the language of pluralism, not only of large corporations but also of liberal politics. For example, speaking more broadly of the “multicultural regime” (in relation to bilingual education, and multicultural curricula) they state “the multiculturalism-diversity-legal-administrative regime serves the interests of those who administer the system, much more then its serves the integration process for the intended minority group recipients” (Fonte & Nagai, 2013, p.37). Interestingly here, Fonte and Nagai show that while conservative critics have little interests in the possibilities in multicultural programs, they can however, provide insight into some of their constraints (albeit of course in order to dismantle rather than construct).

Moreover, Fonte and Nagai, particularly in their mentioning of changing demographics, and discussion of to the usefulness of 1920’s immigration

restrictions for “Americanizing” the population—which of course, as Behdad (2005) notes, were racially discriminatory—call direct attention to the racial motivation of their anxieties about immigration, and “assimilation.” Quite differently, the liberal voices analyzed employ a language of “race-neutrality” to speak of immigration practices, despite research that shows that immigration enforcement and policies particularly impact persons of color in the United States (immigrant or not). For the liberal voices, immigration enforcement is about “common sense,” about enforcing the law in a liberal society founded on this principle. Deporting unruly, irrational subjects who simply do not fit-in in this nation of laws just makes sense. At the same time, by emphasizing how it is that immigrant youth “fit” into the nation, they justify inclusion on “de-racialized” terms. As Sheth (2009) notes in regards to populations that become “included” in liberal societies (despite remaining at the border) a process of de-racialization often takes through notions of patriotism, loyalty and cultural similarity. In this difference, which can be about implicit versus explicit racial politics, we can perhaps better understand immigration discourses and their underlying motivations, and anxieties.

Lastly, through these conservative voices, difference becomes speakable. Of course, cultural, political and linguistic difference is spoken about in terms of a ‘crisis’ or emergency that must be resolved, but it seems to be acknowledged and speakable in a way that is not openly possible in liberal speeches. What is to be done with this plurality is of course, another question, and it is here, I argue, in the erasure of difference, (although through different tactics), that liberal and conservative voices meet.

### The Consonances with from Liberal Voices: Unspeakable Difference

Clearly, there are also numerous threads in the liberal speeches analyzed and this particular site of conservative language. For example, in the way that Fonte and Nagai (2013) envision ideal immigrants and the way that Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama discuss the undocumented immigrant youth they advocate for. Or in the

notion of individual, earned belonging, as well as the construction of a crisis of unruly immigrants that justifies the homeland security state and creates divisions between the native/foreigner (even within the framework of citizenship). As Behdad (2005) notes in discussing early nativism, nativist discourses tend to create the dichotomy between the patriotic native and the immigrant who is unfit and unable to participate in the polity. We see this taking place in this report, as Fonte and Nagai (2013) show clearly, that not all citizens, are good citizens, and that U.S. born citizens are simply much more patriotic and knowledgeable about the nation. As Behdad (2005) notes, this dichotomy is very productive for liberal discourses, as they seek to reconcile claims of pluralism and requirements of assimilation (p.129).

Most importantly here, however, Fonte and Nagai aim to (re) produce an image of a unilateral, unproblematic, harmonious national identity. This is not far from the productive energy of some of the liberal speeches discussed in chapter 2. That is to say, that the questionable pluralism of liberal speeches— in which inclusion is preached, but differences are erased by mere affirmation of sameness and silences— and the monocultural advocacy of Fonte and Nagai, in which the existence of difference is acknowledged but openly placed on the board for erasure, hold similar productive energies. Both sites discussed re-affirm a sufficiently similar, normalized understanding of national identity, one in which, possibly dangerous difference always ends in acceptable sameness.

#### Elite Immigration Discourse and Logophobia: Liberal and Conservative Voices Meeting in the Middle

In his lecture *The Discourse on Language* (1970), Michel Foucault expresses an anxiety over speaking, confessing a deep yearning to be “freed from the obligation to begin” (p. 215). But he also imagines an institutional response to this fear, one that reassuringly would explain that his discourse and even fears are within the ‘order of things,’ that their powers have been reduced and anticipated, and there is little to worry about. He wonders thus, if institutions also harbor a fear

of unrestrained discourse, its powers, and its dangers. He wonders if there is an overarching uncertainty: “uncertainty when we suspect the conflicts, triumphs, injuries, dominations and enslavement that lie behind these words, even when long use has chipped away their rough edges” (Foucault, 1970, p. 216).

Following Foucault (1970), we can understand “logophobia” as a fear of “this mass of spoken things, of everything that could possibly be violent, discontinuous, querulous, disordered even and perilous in it, of the incessant, disorderly buzzing of discourse” (p. 229). This concept is useful for attempting to make sense of the similarities found in the liberal and conservative sites under discussion. Indeed, I wonder, why Gutiérrez, Durbin and Obama, are silent about possible differences, choosing to highlight patriotism and particular similarities, and Fonte and Nagai acknowledge the differences that immigrants may bring to a nation-state with them, but quickly scramble to find ways to assert a “common culture” where there is little room for cultural, political, and linguistic multiplicity.

### Put away the flags

President Obama’s concerns about immigrants’ political ties come to mind here. In *The Audacity of Hope* he states,

And if I’m honest with myself, I must admit that I’m not entirely immune to such nativist sentiments. When I see Mexican flags waved at pro-immigration demonstrations, I sometimes feel a flush of patriotic resentment. When I’m forced to use a translator to communicate with a guy fixing my car, I feel a certain frustration. (2006, p. 266; cited in Dorsey and Diaz-Barriga, 2007, p.101)

Indeed, in March of 2006, when a series of mass pro-immigrant mobilizations and student walkouts took place throughout the country, Mexican flags were present. As Gonzales (2014) discusses, for example, “In Montebello, students raised the Mexican flag above an upside-down U.S. flag” (p.61). Gonzales also discusses a mass mobilization that took place in Washington D.C. in 2010, which was the largest

immigrant mobilization since 2006. Buses came in from all over the states, and Gonzales (2014) interviewed people during the protests and found that they “conveyed a sense of collective power and solidarity between Latino migrant workers and the second generation, both of whom expressed a sense of righteous indignation over immigration policies that separate families and deny them the right to live and work in the United States” (p.134). However, juxtaposing these demands to a rally that was staged the same day by RIFA (Reform Immigration For America—a national campaign that supports immigration reform) he notes “the voices of people on the ground contrasted with the voices of those on stage” (Gonzales, 2014, p.135).

At the staged rally, there was a carefully crafted communication strategy. Present were members of the U.S. congress and of Obama’s administration. Further, a speech prepared by the president was played during the rally. The stage was also covered in red, white, and blue, “it looked like a stage at a typical concert or a mainstream political convention” (Gonzales, 2014, p.135). Perhaps, most importantly U.S. flags were handed out, and those holding flags from other countries were asked to put them away. Gonzalez (2014) notes “The ceremony was opened by a group of all-white students from the Midwest holding American flags and singing the national anthem...it was managed in such a way as to suggest that the very people who made up the bulk of the protesters...had little to say (p.136).

This moment would be a reminder that when liberal voices like Obama speak so adamantly about immigrant youth only knowing one flag, and pledging alliance to it daily, there is certain awareness that for many immigrants, belonging may be a much more complex and diffused matter. It is tempting to see this “one flag” message as a simple political strategy, a way to respond to the anti-immigrant bloc, for whom Mexican flags at a U.S. immigration rally become proof of a broken patriotic assimilation system: proof of a chaotic, an uncontrollable “buzzing of discourse,” that necessarily must be contained to maintain the order of things. However, Obama’s words above show that perhaps messages about one nation and one flag, are not simply strategic political messages meant to get conservatives on

board, but productive discourses meant to remind immigrants—who often exhibit the need to be reminded— of the way that the immigrant narrative has historically functioned. In this narrative “America is the land of equal opportunity, accessible to anyone willing to abandon his or her “old” identity and embrace the new form of modern citizenship” (Behdad, 2005, p.108). The carefully constructed young immigrant of liberal language becomes central in this sense, not only is he or she exceptional and meritocratic, but most of all, his or her differences are reducible to sufficient similarities. This is an immigrant who, all in all, “can be counted on” to put away another flag (Sheth, 2009, p.69), one who would “pass” Fonte and Nagai’s patriotic assimilation survey with flying colors.

### As Alliance, Language is Simply Not a “Problem”

Obama’s words above also suggest a discomfort with linguistic multiplicity. Following Sheth (2009), much like the image of non-U.S. flag is sign-of unruliness, languages (particularly certain languages) can also become symbols of unruliness. In Foucault’s (1972) terms, these conjure anxiety about the dangers of everything that could possibly be said or done. For Obama, Durbin, and Gutiérrez, DACA eligible immigrant youth should not be seen as a source of such discomfort. That is, as the speakers note quite explicitly, these immigrants *only* know this country and this flag, and they may be deported to a country where don’t speak the language. Moreover, this lack of multiplicity, and hence concern, is also reproduced in the silences of these liberal politicians. For example, among young immigrants’ countless talents and achievements highlighted, possible linguistic multiplicity is simply unexplored. Indeed, all authors highlight the significant achievements of unauthorized immigrant youth in order to show their value to the nation, but knowledge of or even interest in languages other than English or places other than “this great nation” is simply unspoken, perhaps unspeakable given an overwhelming value attached to similarities.

Further insight on the topics of linguistic and national plurality is provided in a May, 2007 House of Representatives subcommittee hearing titled “Comprehensive Immigration Reform: Becoming Americans—U.S. Immigrant Integration.”<sup>23</sup> Present at the hearing were both John Fonte and Luis Gutiérrez, among numerous congress people and ‘expert’ witnesses. Fonte was the minority witness, and among the majority witnesses, was the well-known immigration sociologist, Ruben Rumbaut.

Rumbaut has focused much of his scholarship on the lives of second-generation immigrants, their linguistic, cultural and familial patterns, and achievements. Rumbaut, in this meeting, was called upon to provide expert knowledge to a subcommittee torn about how to address the issue of immigrant “integration” in a proposed immigration reform bill interestingly titled “Save America Comprehensive Immigration Reform.” Rumbaut found himself in an interesting position as his work gave ammunition to both Democrats for whom what they call “Americanization” was a non-issue, and conservatives like John Fonte, for whom “patriotic assimilation” was a central concern. Although Rumbaut seemed to be in a position of power to support immigration reform through his research, his scholarly concerns (particularly his understanding of the U.S. as a graveyard of languages) were quite marginalized at the hearing. Yet the sociologist still made several attempts to voice these concerns, despite an audience interested in a different conversation.

Rumbaut testified, “the power of assimilative forces is nowhere clearer than in the linguistic switch across the generations” (“Comprehensive”, 2007). He explained his studies that show that children of immigrants of all sorts of nationalities usually exhibit an extremely rapid switch to English. Convincingly adding,

In fact, the United States has been described as a language graveyard because of its historical ability to absorb millions of immigrants...and to extinguish

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<sup>23</sup> Subcommittee of Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International

their mother tongues within a few generations. And Spanish appears to offer no threat to this reputation, unfortunately .... What is endangered instead is the survivability of the non-English languages that immigrants bring with them to the United States, and whether the loss of such assets is desirable or not is, of course, another matter. ("Comprehensive," 2007)

These statements are deeply concerning and they indeed seem to concern Dr. Rumbaut. Yet, in this meeting, they mostly became a side note, or even at times an "I told you so" from Democrats to Republicans regarding what they saw as a non-issue. Much like a cross-examination, in which a lawyer tries to make a point extremely clear, Democratic representatives, after Rumbaut had already stated his point that Spanish poses no threat to the hegemony of English, asked him to repeat himself more clearly. Representative Zoe Lofgren asked him to clarify, "But do you see any chance that English will stop being the common language of the United States from your studies?" ("Comprehensive," 2007). No, Rumbaut responded, absolutely not. Later on, Democratic Representative Linda Sanchez asked one more time, "Based on your research, do you believe that there is a danger that English is going to stop being the common language of the United States? Is there a real threat of that?" (Comprehensive, 2007). Rumbaut here insisted, by making what seemed to be an even more reassuring claim,

No. Well, as I mentioned, no. If anything, English is the official language of the Milky Way Galaxy already. And its headquarters are right here in the United States, and with 250 million English monolinguals, it has absolutely nothing to worry about. ("Comprehensive," 2007)

Here Rumbaut went on to make claims about the need to use different languages immigrants bring "free of charge" as an asset in the global economy. It was on these terms, that at the hearing there were any concerns for the scholar's discussion of the hegemony of English and the productive powers of U.S. "assimilative forces." The hearing transcript reads with a sense of triumph, one in which, as the conversation developed, experts proved that immigrants "assimilate" and they even do so patriotically.



Fonte, however, still pled his case. The type of assimilation that matters to him and his colleagues is not just linguistic or economic, but “patriotic assimilation.” English is not enough, although it is a start. As in the 2013 report Fonte published with Nagai, he argued then that there are currently a whole series of “anti-Americanization barriers” in place, including “foreign language ballots, voting in foreign countries by dual nationals, bilingual education and Executive Order 13166” (“Comprehensive, 2007”). The elimination of these barriers, Fonte insisted, is a necessary step before any immigration reform can be “comprehensive.” As proof, Fonte cited a study by Rumbaut himself, in which high school students identified with nationalities other than the United States.

To these concerns, Rumbaut responded that in fact, there is something called “reactive ethnicity” and that many of the results of the mentioned study were due to adolescence, as well as an anti-immigrant-proposition-187 context in California at the time. Rumbaut stated, “it takes two to assimilate” (“Comprehensive,” 2007). Democratic members of the committee took this as an opportunity to show that English-only policies, and even not passing immigration reform, would lead to less assimilation. Rumbaut agreed with these statements and further explained his overarching point; “There is no need to require people to speak a language when they are all moving toward it at historic speeds” (“Comprehensive,” 2007). Still, Fonte, perhaps as aware as Behdad and Honig about the productivity of immigration discourses, found deep value in the message. He stated, “I think that that would be fine as a statement of E Pluribus Unum. I think there is no reason we shouldn't all be voting in English. That gives the signal that we are all in this together” (“Comprehensive,” 2007).

At this meeting, Gutiérrez found himself in the Rumbaut camp, agreeing that language retention is very difficult in the U.S., insightfully sharing his struggles to teach his daughters Spanish, and his gratitude to bilingual schools in Chicago. He also took a moment to discuss the economic value of speaking more than one language. He went on to say that it is not language, but prejudice and bias “that stops people from becoming assimilated into American society”

("Comprehensive,"2007). Here, like in some of his speeches about immigrant youth, we see Gutiérrez noting racial formations in the U.S. and historical anti-immigrant sentiment. As I have noticed throughout, out of the three politicians whose speeches I've discusses, Gutiérrez always seems to be the least forgetful about the nation's immigrant past. Nonetheless, as noted above, possibly unwittingly, his language constantly constructs a good/bad immigrant dichotomy that continuously criminalizes immigrant subjects.

The issue of national loyalty was also taken up in this hearing. African-American Democratic congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee took this up by addressing questions of identity formation. She told Rumbaut about her involvement in the Black Power Movement, stating that pride in certain identities is not exclusive of "becoming Americanized" ("Comprehensive,"2007). Rumbaut agreed, stating "part of the problem is framing the issues in either/or terms. There is no contradiction between being proud of one's heritage and being proud of one's roots..." ("Comprehensive," 2007). Jackson-Lee later compared these things to apples and oranges and made her final point by posing the question to Rumbaut "Do you think the immigrant community, if a comprehensive immigration reform bill-- would run away from the concept of English, Americanization, community service?" Rumbaut responded "Absolutely not." Fonte however, insisted that sometimes it is an either/or question, especially when speaking of political alliance. Jackson-Lee disagreed, "I don't think that makes sense at all. They take the oath and they still believe in singing the songs and understanding their culture. Believe me, they are still Americans. That is what America is----"("Comprehensive,"2007). As I will discuss in the last chapter, immigrant youth often do experience conflicting relationships to the nation, and sometimes, their multiple ways of understanding the world, do come together in much more complex and even conflicting ways than the harmonious image of apples and oranges that, along parallel lines, simply do not clash. As Banks (2008) notes,

Research by scholars studying immigrant high school students indicates that these students have complex and contradictory transnational

identifications...These researchers describe the nuanced and intricate identifications that immigrant youth have with the United States, their countries of origin, and their local communities. This research also indicates that the cultural and national identities of immigrant youth are contextual, evolving, and continually reconstructed. (p. 135)

This congress subcommittee report is interesting for numerous reasons, among those, the un-questionability of “patriotic assimilation” or as many of them call it “Americanization,” and the need to maintain unilateral national loyalties. This was well captured by the testimony of Donald Kirwin from Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. who stated, “I don't think people dispute the need for patriotic assimilation. You know, there may be some out there that do, but I think in general it is understood that that is necessary” (“Comprehensive,”2007). Unspoken, and perhaps productively erased through silences here are possibilities of different forms of belonging, the possibility that many, particularly those deeply marked by migrant experiences, may have cares and concerns for networks, communities, or geographical spaces, beyond this nation-state. This is a reality that however messy and complicated, is often expressed by youth featured in the studies of critical education scholarship. Moreover, silenced here, is the gravity of Rumbaut’s condemnation of the U.S. as a graveyard of languages. Indeed, as they attempted to prove their point, congresspersons expressed little concern about this remarkable condemnation beyond the personal struggles of a few representatives or economic-driven considerations.

## CHAPTER 4: DISCOURSES AS LIMITED SYSTEMS

### Introduction

Thus far, I have discussed the productivity of a certain set of elite discourse about immigrant youth for the nation-state. I have also tried to explain connections and disruptions between the analyzed liberal and conservative voices, focusing on what I find to be an overarching silence, possibly even logophobia, about multiplicity of belonging and being. I find Foucault's (1972) notion of "logophobia," to be a useful metaphor for overarching institutional frameworks that place certain differences at the margins, seemingly finding them too "dangerous" for the established order of things. This previous analysis has been largely in relation to immigrant youth and the productivity of discourses of legality for the construction of certain subjects of inclusion/exclusion and the justification of what Gonzales (2014) and DeGenova (2007) call the homeland security state. This last chapter makes a shift to focus more specifically on the silences of the elite immigration discourse discussed; on questions of multiplicity of belonging and citizenship in U.S. schools in relation to youth of immigrant backgrounds. I argue here, that U.S. schools and citizenship discourses are also necessarily connected to, embedded in, and productive for the homeland security state. Thus, the very issues discussed above, issues of language, citizenship, and belonging negotiated by immigrant youth, are negotiated in a conflicting, contested and often-unharmonious terrain.

Turning to scholarship in the field of education is helpful here for numerous reasons. First, within the field of education, scholars have extensively explored notions of belonging, multiculturalism, and multilingualism. Second, because this scholarship deals with the institutions (schools) that often become targets of

national ideological battles. As we see in the previous chapters for example, schools are the very institutions that liberal voices purport make immigrant youth “American” and the very institutions conservative voices fear are direct barriers for what they call “patriotic assimilation.” This scholarship also shows how these institutions exhibit similar patterns of (perhaps willful) indifference when it comes to affirming immigrant youth linguistically, culturally, and politically. And lastly, this scholarship is particularly useful because it provides a more complex understanding of the lived experiences of immigrant youth who negotiate multiple ways of being and belonging that transcend easy boundaries. Here, I begin by examining how schools are first of all, uncomfortable with “conflict” even at the epistemic level, I then go on to discuss how this is particularly the case when it comes to immigrant youth (providing two in-depth examples stemming from educational ethnographic studies). I then go to make connections between what Angela Valenzuela (1999) calls “subtractive schooling” practices and the interests of the nation-state in maintaining the “order of things.” Here, by drawing from critical citizenship education scholarship, I end this work by thinking about the constraints and possibilities of the above analyzed national elite discourse about immigrant youth and immigration.

Education and the Reduction of Conflict: do schools exhibit anxieties over  
‘unrestrained discourse’?

Education scholar Michael Apple (2004) might concur with Foucault (1972) in that schools harbor anxiety over unrestrained discourse. In “the Hidden Curriculum and the Nature of Conflict,” Apple argues that an overarching reduction of conflict takes place in schools at epistemic level. The author shows how this is the case in science and social studies curricula. In science, for example, students learn neutrality and objectivity. Scientific information is provided as a deeply uncomplicated and impersonal subject, rather than as a product of people, values, and ongoing conflicts. Simply, the science youth learn is “divorced from the

structure of community from which it evolved and which acts to criticize it" (Apple, 2004, p.86).

Similarly, Apple discusses how social studies curricula pay little attention to processes of societal conflict. Students are often taught that all aspects of society (from postal workers and firefighters to civic institutions) are necessary pieces of a well functioning 'cooperative' world. Here, "internal dissension and conflict in a society are viewed as inherently antithetical to the smooth functioning of the social order" (Apple, 2004, p. 87). Further, similarly to the discourse examined above and their insistence on understanding the U.S. as a "nation of laws," in social studies classes, youth learn about a world made of rules, that when followed, yield orderly societies. And lastly, Apple explains that even curricula that engage histories of conflict, such as those of Black Studies, often still perpetuates the notion of conflict as a dysfunctional aspect of society, something to resolve or overcome (2004, p.90).

For Apple (2004), the term 'hidden curriculum' refers to "the norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively taught in schools" (2004, p.80). Foucault (1970), although in different terms, viewed the hidden curriculum of institutions like schools as the enactment of procedures that control, organize, select, and redistribute discourse, with the central aim being "to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality" (p.216). It seems that the liberal and conservative voices analyzed would concur here, as they seem to place a great deal of energy on the subject of schooling. For Gutiérrez, Obama, and Durbin, attending "our schools" is what has made immigrant youth "outstanding young Americans." And for Fonte and Nagai, schools too are key sites, where immigrants can either be "Americanized", or taught what they see as a dangerous multiculturalism. Indeed, it seems like all parties analyzed here would agree about the centrality of schools for controlling discourse and producing national subjects.

Michael Apple, in keeping with Foucault's hypothesis, also views schooling practices as tied to the maintenance of societal power relations. He argues that the reduction of conflict in schools works under two implicit assumptions. The first is

that the nature of conflict is negative, and the second that people are recipients rather than creators/re-creators of values. For Apple (2004) “students are forced... to internalize a view that has little potency for questioning the legitimacy of the tacit assumptions about interpersonal conflict that govern their lives and their own educational, economic, and political situations” (p. 86). That is, such understandings of conflict, “may contribute significantly to the ideological underpinnings that serve to fundamentally orient individuals toward an unequal society” (Apple, 2004, p. 95).

In numerous senses, we may begin to draw broader connections here, between the reduction of conflict in schooling institutions, and the reduction of conflict in elite liberal and conservative discourse about immigration in the U.S. It seems to me that the figure of the immigrant is read as embodying conflicting difference: a potentially unruly difference that cannot always be “counted on.” Thus, the aim is to reduce difference through silence, or through explicit attempts like those proposed by Nagai and Fonte. The productivity of ‘controlling, organizing, selecting, and re-distributing’ discourse seems indeed, as Apple (2004) notes, aimed at orienting individuals to accept the order of things (as the survey questions examined by Nagai and Fonte would suggest).

### Subtractive Schooling & Immigrant youth

I find numerous points of convergence between the epistemic reduction of conflict and difference in U.S. schools discussed by Apple (2004), and subtractive schooling practices, policies, and attitudes impacting youth of immigrant backgrounds. I will show this by exploring the ethnographies of scholars whose work with youth has been deeply influential in the field of education. These scholars, demonstrate how—perhaps read as embodying the ‘powers and dangers’ of linguistic, cultural, and political plurality— the figure of the immigrant puts discursive anxieties into full throttle in schools, propelling the enactment of reductive schooling practices.

### Subtractive Schooling: Culture, Language, Politics & Citizenship

In her book *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.- Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, Angela Valenzuela (1999) analyzes “the ways in which schools promote cultural and linguistic subtraction” (p. 16). Through her three-year study with Mexican and Mexican-American students at a high school (Seguin) in Houston Texas, she shows schooling practices, policies and attitudes that align with the context of conflict and discourse reduction in schools. The term ‘subtractive schooling’ refers to the notion that U.S. schools often subtract (rather than build on) linguistic and cultural identifications of students “to their social and academic detriment” (Valenzuela, 1999, p.25).

Valenzuela (1999) shows how this is the case at the level of curriculum. For example, despite a 95% Latino population, the school offers few culturally relevant courses, few possibilities for advanced training in Spanish, and a language and system of deficit attached to the ESL curriculum. In many senses, Valenzuela (1999) notes, “the structure of Seguin’s curriculum is designed to divest youth and their Mexican identities and to impede the prospects for fully vested bilingualism and biculturalism” (p.172). Moreover, school-wide policies also exude subtractive schooling. Little mention is given in the staff handbook to working with Mexican and Mexican-American youth, except at the level of discipline (Valenzuela, 1999), and Valenzuela notes an implicit system of cultural tracking in the school that is in place through the ESL curriculum.

As Valenzuela (1999) shows, these practices subtract rather than build on the knowledge, cultures, and languages of students. Some of the negative implications of what she calls the “structural denial of Mexicanidad” (Valenzuela, 1999, p.20) include fostering of difference among students (foreclosing opportunities for students to share cultural capital across immigrant generations), and the fostering of oppositional attitudes toward schooling.<sup>24</sup> Given the negative

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<sup>24</sup> Oppositional attitudes toward schooling emerge mostly among Mexican-American youth. Valenzuela explains that while immigrant youth also discuss the inadequacy of their schooling



impact of these policies, one may wonder why such practices are so prevalent in U.S. schools.<sup>25</sup>

The attitudes of teachers at Seguin—which are not far from those of liberal and conservative language on immigration—could show that one of the driving forces of these practices and policies may be “logophobia.” Valenzuela explains that there is a negative attitude toward “all things Mexican” at Seguin. For example, students report that most teachers find Spanish speaking problematic and express interests in a disavowal of ‘Mexicanidad.’ A good example of this is a conversation that Valenzuela records at Seguin in Mr. Perry’s classroom. In this conversation, students engage in a complex discussion about “Mexicaness” and belonging, and Mr. Perry expresses a deep investment in seeing his students call themselves “American” (Valenzuela, 1999, p.171). This agenda forecloses a pedagogic opportunity to engage with students meaningfully, but it also gives us a glimpse of the similarities between schooling practices and attitudes and those of national discourse. Moreover, one might wonder what is at stake for Mr. Perry— or for Gutiérrez, Obama, Durbin, Fonte and Nagai—when they insist that these students of immigrant backgrounds are “American.” What are the powers and dangers embodied by someone interested in “Mexicaness”? Perhaps ties to Mexico, and even Spanish in this case, are seen as particularly dangerous for the nation-state and thus in need of containment, of control. We begin to see here that the ‘control of discourse’ takes place at numerous levels. This is tied to an understanding of societal conflict as fundamentally problematic. In this view, schooling practices such as fostering biculturalism and bilingualism (practices with little support from Seguin’s administration) would be understood as an open door to conflict, to the perceived societal power and danger of an immigrant’s discourse. In this sense one could imagine why, Fonte and Nagai scramble to convince those involved in

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experience at Seguin, they don’t exhibit oppositional attitudes due to a sense of ‘agradecimiento’ or thankfulness of being in school in the United States. How this relates to discourses of logophobia is not unpacked here, but seems like an interesting avenue for future work.

<sup>25</sup> See Menken & Kleyn (2010) and Garza & Crawford (2005) for more recent examples.

immigration policy-making, that such programs should be stopped. Particularly in their mention of changing demographics, they show that these anxieties are not race-neutral, and they pertain particularly racialized immigrant subjects such as the Mexican and Mexican-American students at Seguin. This of course, as youth cultural studies scholars note, is compounded by anxieties about youth as subjects who are seen as underdeveloped and underprepared but yet, with the ability to act in the world (Maira, 2009; Maira & Soep, 2005). Derrida's explanation of the term "hospitality" as always conditional given the necessity of a "host" and a "guest" is helpful here in reminding us that to maintain "the order of things" and to control the possibly dangerous discourse of immigrant youth, is connected to a desire to keep those currently in power, "the hosts," in power.

In her article "Becoming Citizens in an Era of Globalization and Transnational Migration: Re-imagining Citizenship as Critical Practice," Thea Abu El-Haj (2009) discusses citizenship and belonging in light of her research with "1.5- and second-generation Arab youth from immigrant communities" (p. 276). For El-Haj (2009), schooling practices and citizenship discourses do not account for many of the youth in her study who had "strong connections with the economic, social, and political struggles in the Middle East, and were often critical of the role the United States played in that region" (p. 279). Here, she shows how 1) the citizenship models dominant in schools do not account for all youth and the complex webs of belonging and global citizenship that they negotiate and 2) challenges to this limited model (from youth) are often met with attempts at subtraction and reduction. This can further show how immigrant youth may be perceived as holders of an 'unrestrained discourse' that is to be feared, and thus procedurally contained to 'advert' its powers and dangers (Foucault, 1972). The researcher shows that school citizenship models construct an incompatibility of certain types of identity intersections. For example, being 'American' and being Arab and Muslim are often seen as irreconcilable identities. In El-Haj's (2009) study, while the strongest pushback against the merging of these identities came from students, "a majority of the teachers viewed Arab American students' political commitments as problematic, and indicative of

both an insufficient allegiance to the United States and an alliance with terrorism” (p. 279). Similarly to teachers at Seguin, the teachers El-Haj interviewed had a certain investment in seeing their students claim “full Americaness.” In both cases, such “Americaness” is assumed to be incompatible with the claimed identities of the students, despite their legal “Americaness” (many of the youth in both studies were born in the United States). Here, Fonte and Nagai’s discussion of “Americanization” comes to mind, in that they do not only see patriotic assimilation as incompatible with non-U.S. national identifications, but also racial and ethnic identities.

El-Haj also shows how the school’s everyday ‘citizenship practices’ and education fail to account for transnational experiences. The models of citizenship enacted by the youth do not seem to ‘count’ as citizenship practices to learn from and build on. El-Haj reflects on the paradox these youth face in U.S schools, where their identities are often subtracted, and yet they are expected to display acts of “banal nationalism,” (El-Haj & Bonet, 2011) or dominant rituals of citizenship. For the youth, El-Haj, (2009) states, “It was hard to comply with the implicit and explicit requirements that, as a condition of belonging, they pledge allegiance to the United States; remain uncritical of U.S. foreign policy; or choose between their identities as Arabs and Muslims, and as Americans” (p. 270). With these insights in mind, we can imagine how similar conflicting views can arise for many immigrant youth who have been placed on the national stage as deserving belonging precisely because of their unquestioned, unilateral, patriotic attachment to the very nation-state that— under the guise of criminalization—has made them and their communities subject to the violence of the law.

### Discomfort with Multiplicity of Identity

El-Haj’s research, while particular to Arab-American youth and the reality of living in a post-9/11 United States, provides significant insights regarding the role of schooling in the selection, organization, control and distribution of discourse. It shows that schools don’t only actively subtract linguistic and cultural resources, but

also seek political subtraction from immigrant youth (particularly certain immigrant youth). One of the driving forces of such reduction seems to be a true discomfort with multiplicity of identity, its 'powers and dangers.' Here, working against the multiple identities of youth, school staff members perceive the role of schools (central state institutions), to be controlling potentially conflictive discourses that could threaten the state. Or better yet, they may see themselves as essential agents who aid a national process that begins with dangerous immigrant difference and should always end in sufficient sameness, in mono-citizenship. This is particularly relevant in a "homeland security state," where public rhetoric as well as foreign and domestic policy continually posits a sense of threat to the state (De Genova, 2007). There seems to be a similar dynamic at play at Seguin, where certain teachers like Mr. Perry, take it upon themselves to promote a certain kind of "Americaness" (one that is incompatible with "Mexicaness"). Whether these are conscious or unconscious practices, both schooling contexts analyzed here are uninterested in biculturalism, bilingualism, multigenerational alliances, or transnational forms of belonging and citizenship. Such possibilities, are perhaps perceived as opening doors to conflict, something, (that as Apple shows), we've all learned to see as highly undesirable. Here, however, following Foucault and Apple's insights on discourse and conflict, we might wonder, who benefits, since it is certainly not the youth in these studies, from institutional investments in producing monolingual, monocultural, mono-citizens? And how do such practices of schooling institutions relate to wider national interests of the homeland security state in constructing certain, acceptable, immigrant youth?

### Subtractive Schooling & the Nation-State

As scholars of language and citizenship education note, the subtractive picture described by the studies above is largely descriptive of U.S. schools today. In the context of language education, Pierre Orelus (2011) writes that, "despite the widespread rhetoric that the U.S. is a melting pot, a multilingual and a democratic

country, languages labeled as minority have been attacked, stigmatized, and relegated to an inferior position” (p.17). Orelus notes that linguistic discrimination persists in U.S. schools. And even though there have been gains in the number of diverse education programs, due to persistent and powerful English-only movements, there have been significant losses in the recent years. Orelus (2011) states, “for example, many bilingual programs in the U.S., which had allowed linguistically and culturally diverse students to maintain and use their first language to learn and succeed in school, have been closed in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts” (P.26). In terms of citizenship education and issues of belonging, scholars also note a great scarcity of critical programs. Abowitz and Harnish (2006) note that while there has been a proliferation of diverse ways in which citizenship is enacted and theorized, in U.S. schools, citizenship education continues to be predominantly taught through a “civic republicanism” or “political liberalism” ideology. As discussed earlier, under civic republicanism, students are taught the value of love and service toward their political community, civic knowledge, and participation toward the common good. Under political liberalism, students are also taught the importance of reproducing national values and civic knowledge, although within a more flexible understanding of national values and identity. Under this model, however, individual autonomy and liberties are the central constructs, and the purpose of citizenship education is to learn about individual rights and build skills for creating consensus, for self-rule.

With this understanding of U.S. schools as largely ‘structurally monocultural’ (Lugones and Price 1999, 2006), one might wonder what all the concern is about in Fonte and Nagai’s patriotic assimilation report. In fact, U.S. schools continue to function in a “subtractive” manner, attending to the interests of those in power, and the concern for maintaining the established system of power. Yet, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) note that after 9/11 we have seen a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, we’ve seen the rise in patriotism and civic republican models of citizenship education. Here, conservative groups launched a wide critique of models of citizenship that deviate from the civic republican model (such as liberal and

critical models) that is much in keeping with the work of Fonte and Nagai. On the other hand, however, we've also seen a rise of critical scholarship on citizenship education. For example, transnationalist citizenship discourses—which are more widely constructed and focus on local, national, and international communities—became re-vitalized post-9/11 (Abowitz and Harnish, 2006, p.677). As I will discuss in these last sections, it is within this critical education scholarship on citizenship discourses that scholars call for paying serious attention to the complex ways that youth relate to the nation-state, particularly complicating the neatness of liberal language about immigrant youth, and the value of conservative aims to “Americanize” the population. It is in this post-9/11 to-and-fro, which gives rise to both the consolidation of the homeland security state and the proliferation of critical scholarship and practices, that we can best locate all the discourse discussed here, and the stakes of the conversation.

Educational institutions share the interests of the nation-state in controlling the discourse, and thus, the established order of things. As Sheth (2009) notes, the interest of the state in self-preservation and population management leads to the legal protection of those perceived to be promoting these interests and the threat of abandonment to those deemed threatening. Discourse thus, becomes a limited system; “an asset---finite, limited, desirable, useful...an asset that is, by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle” (Foucault. 1972, p. 120). Schools are part of this political struggle, places where “logophobia” becomes institutionalized. But particularly after the rise of the homeland security state, they are not the only place where subjects are deemed threatening, in need of discursive control. Indeed, the citizenship and language discourses discussed above, and the elite immigration discourse about youth all exude a symbolic control of discourse. That is, these speech acts send an ambiguous but still productive message about who will be tolerated in the nation-state, and at the same time, who may become subject to “the violence of the law.”

While these discourses are symbolically productive, they also have quite material consequences in the homeland security state. This of course, functions

through the criminalization, racialization, and deportations or deportability of subjects deemed “unruly.”<sup>26</sup> The work of critical race theory scholar Mary Romero (2008) helps exemplify this point. Romero (2008) shows quite specifically the “controlling” impact of the everyday policing practices of the homeland security state. She tells the story of a woman, who after being heard speaking Spanish to her three children outside of a grocery store was stopped by the police and asked about her citizenship status. Romero discusses how the woman subsequently became reluctant to teach her children Spanish. Romero (2008) explains, “she canceled their trip [to Mexico] because she does not want to risk her children picking up a Spanish accent” (p. 33). This particular example, not only shows the material impact of the homeland security state on effectively policing certain subjects deemed threatening, but also helps put into context the earlier discussion in which sociologist Ruben Rumbaut calls the United States a “language graveyard.” That is, issues of youth, belonging, citizenship, and language cannot be detached from the material conditions of nation-state, one which as discussed here, is deeply logophobic and interested and invested in controlling certain subjects who are deemed capable of emitting what is seen as an uncontrollable, unruly, dangerous discourse. And of course, as Sheth (2009) notes, that which is deemed possibly dangerous, perhaps “unruly” is neither static nor constant, but a construction that is historically situated. In this regard, it is “a floating signifier, pointing to something that insinuates a threat to the political order” (Sheth, 2009, p. 27). As all previous discussions here show—in the context of the U.S. as a homeland security state—at school, at the airport, at the grocery store, and on the streets, racialized bodies can be deemed unruly, and become subject to control at best, but the violence or abandonment of the law at worst.

### Youth, Conflict, Multiplicity

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<sup>26</sup> De Genova (2007) notes that the possibility of deportation (deportability) itself is highly productive for the homeland security state.

Scholarship in the field of education also shows that many youth of immigrant backgrounds, including those born in the U.S., inhabit complex, and multiple realities that constantly transgress linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries. Moreover, it problematizes notions of unilateral alliance solidified by liberal and conservative voices on immigration. That is, particularly in certain context like a post-9/11 United States, Fonte and Nagai (2013) are perhaps right to say that persons of immigrant backgrounds may have conflicting relations to the nation-state.

Indeed, this could very well be the case for youth have been subject to the “violence of the law,” directly or indirectly, and have attachments to other geopolitical spaces that have been impacted by U.S. policies. Following a review of the literature of youth of Muslim transnational communities, El-Haj and Wesley Bonet (2011) suggest that educational research should take up the ways in which youth negotiate these conflicting relations in schools, as well as “the ways that schools are involved in the processes of nation formation and imperialism”(p. 55). Similarly, Sunaina Maira (2009) in *Missing: Youth Citizenship and Empire After 9/11* explores the complex relations that South Asian Muslim immigrant youth form to the U.S nation-state in a post-9/11 context. For example, Maira (2009) highlights, as a form of cultural citizenship, that youth in her study employ “critiques of war, nationalism, and human rights that speak implicitly, if not explicitly, to the workings of the U.S. Empire” (p.284). This critical education scholarship demonstrates that questions of immigrant youth, language, citizenship and belonging are necessarily embedded in wider national discourses and conditions. This resonates deeply with Foucault’s (1972) claims that schools, which emerged alongside a whole set of other state institutions with the purpose of managing populations (Ball, 2013), are merely “a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it” (p. 227). As such, it is no surprise that we find significant threads in the ways that both schools, as well national and civic sites of political discourse (such as congress, think tanks, or the police) imagine immigrant youth.



It is in schooling institutions that immigrant youth often negotiate their relations to the nation-state. Moreover, it is in these very spaces, that 'logophobia' is enacted, and many of the discourse we've seen through the examined liberal and conservative voices emerge in full force, as schools attempt to mark certain ways of being onto the student body. The example of Mr. Perry's investment on "Americaness" comes to mind. This of course, is further complicated by a whole set of conditions that impact unauthorized immigrant youth, or youth from mix-status families. As I highlighted earlier, being constructed as undocumented or unauthorized creates a whole set of barriers, hurdles, and fears that immigrant youth live with on a daily basis, which of course, exist at the state-school nexus. As we saw in this century for example, with the emergence of anti-immigrant laws in states like Georgia and Arizona as well as through post-9/11 policing of Arab and Muslim youth (Maira, 2009), the possibility that homeland security state will show up at the doors of U.S. schools is not, in any sense, far-fetched. Indeed, El Haj (2010) discusses cases in which schools have disciplined, suspended and even reported Arab-American students to the secret services. Thus, when speaking of youth, language, citizenship and belonging, we cannot always posit a harmonious foundation. Indeed youth of immigrant backgrounds in the United States negotiate belonging in a "homeland security state." As Rios-Rojas (2011) notes similarly in the context of Spain, all that which is being negotiated (language, belonging, citizenship, etc.) is "negotiated at the dizzying intersections of politics, policies, ideologies, and representations"(p. 65).

#### Accounting for Complexity, Conflict, and Multiplicity: the Possibilities

In this sense, in their work, Fonte and Nagai seem to be much more open about immigrants' possible relations to the nation than the language of Obama, Durbin, and Gutiérrez. That is, the differences highlighted by Valenzuela (1999), El-Haj (2009), Maira (2009) and others are at least limitedly accounted for in their work. For example, the survey they examine shows that naturalized citizens are

much less “sure” than U.S born citizens about easy questions of U.S. exceptionalism, unilateral loyalties, linguistic hegemony, etc. Their report captures a certain “ambiguity” that can perhaps come with experiences of migration, or even multiple forms of imagining the self. Here, Henry Giroux’ (2002) interest in a “politics without guarantees” comes to mind. This is a politics, that working against easy certainties, “perpetually questions itself as well as all those forms of knowledge, values, and practices that appear beyond the process of interrogation, debate, and deliberation” (Giroux, 2002, p.1158). Following youth cultural studies scholars in understanding youth as actors in the world rather than underdeveloped adults, could open possibilities for learning just *how* to build foundations for a “politics without guarantees.” Indeed, too many scholars note that youth in the U.S, including youth of immigrant backgrounds, have a lot to say about the very issues at stake in the immigration discourse analyzed. This however, does not seem to be a possibility in the liberal or conservative speeches and documents analyzed, which seem far too invested in seeing youth and the nation as part of a teleological process that must always end in a sufficient sameness.

As expected however, critical education scholars, and ultra-conservatives like Fonte and Nagai, take this ambiguity to very different conclusions. While Fonte and Nagai find this to be a crisis, and urge for a “rebirth” of a system in which immigrants learn unequivocally that the U.S. is exceptional, that English is the most important language, that U.S. constitutional law trumps international agreements, that racial and ethnic identities only come second to national identity, and so on and so forth. El-Haj and Valenzuela call for scholarship that will help us *account for and even sustain* multiplicity. Following the premise of these theorists, and a backdrop of Latina feminism (Anzaldúa, 1987), (Lugones 2005), (Ortega 2008), that informs my interests in the ethical, epistemic, and creative possibilities of the “borderlands,” I find multiple possibilities in working *against* logophobia when it comes to immigrant youth and immigration in general.

Accounting for the multiple ways that youth of immigrant backgrounds belong could be an exercise in working toward what Maria Lugones and Joshua

Price (1999, 2006) have called “structurally multicultural” societies. For these scholars, attitudes and expectations linked to the search for “certainty,” “simplicity” and “agreement” necessarily lead to the constant reconstruction of monocultural societies that do not account, structurally, for their multicultural populations. These attitudes resonate deeply with the liberal and conservative voices about immigration and youth examined here, as well as the practices and discourses found in educational institutions. On the other hand, for Lugones and Price (1999, 2006) there are attitudes like “uncertainty,” “complexity,” and “open-ended understanding.” Following these scholars in thinking about the movement of people and education, in uncertainty, we can begin to take seriously the multiplicity of reality, and in complexity we can relinquish “the need to separate, classify, straighten, and simplify people, events, or situations” (Lugones and Price, 1995, p.125). Lastly, in open-ended understanding, we can realize that “seeking resolution too quickly indicates a discomfort and impatience with cultural plurality and tends to erase it” (Lugones and price, 1995, p.125). It is only in a structurally multicultural society that youth of immigrant backgrounds can be affirmed positively, without a scramble for subtraction and reduction that takes place at educational and national institutions. It is perhaps in such a society that the ambiguity shown in the surveys examined by Nagai and Fonte, and the youth in the studies by Valenzuela and El-Haj would not embody a discursive danger, but possibilities to explore that which has not been said.

In his discussion of a ‘hidden curriculum’ that reduces discourse and negates conflict (or uncertainty, complexity, and open-ended understanding) Apple (2004) argues that more complex ways of embracing multiplicity can lead to a “rule-making” rather than “rule-breaking” schooling attitude. That is, youth can be embraced as creators and re-creators of values, rather than as mere consumers of values (Apple, 2004, p. 80). Such a shift can create possibilities in schools for orienting students [and teachers] to change societies, rather than “to political quiescence and the acceptance...of a perspective on social and intellectual conflict that acts to maintain the existing distribution of power and rationality in a society”

(Apple, 2004, p. 79). The studies discussed here, show that many youth already form part of complex, uncertain, open-ended conversations about citizenship and belonging. It is essential, that— rather than deeming the linguistic, cultural and political resources youth bring to schools, and more generally, to the nation-state problematic to “well functioning cooperative societies”— we see that there is much value to be found in uncertainty, and ambiguity. There are possibilities that emerge, when a large amount of citizens “do not know” whether the U.S. is “better than other countries.”

Abowitz and Harnish (2006) note, however, that transformative practices and theorizations of citizenship (feminist citizenship, queer citizenship, cultural citizenship, etc.) that pose challenges to dominant narratives of belonging and nationhood do not make their way to school curricula. Earlier, following Foucault, I posed one of the guiding questions of this project as: “What possibilities emerge or are foreclosed, in the context of the U.S. as a nation-state, when this is the discourse used to describe immigrant youth?” I think Abowitz and Harnish (2006) are quite helpful here, when they state, “The relative silence of critical language, values, and practices in curricular and taught texts of citizenship in schools speaks volumes about the power of dominant discourses of citizenship to shape how present and future generations do, and do not, think about democratic citizenship” (p.667). In fact, it seems that the elite discourse analyzed in this work would have a significant impact on schooling practices, which of course, is quite troubling for those of us interested in the possibilities of more uncertain, complex and open-ended conversations about national identity and the homeland security state that take shape in the very context of U.S. schools. But of course, if the aim is to maintain “the order of things,” then certainly, the liberal and conservative documents and speeches about immigrant youth examined here are productively affirmative.

## CONCLUSION

In this work, interested in thinking about immigrant youth who are deeply impacted by conditions of illegality in the United States, I made a certain set of elite liberal and conservative discourse about youth and immigration the object of my analysis. First, I set up an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that allowed me to examine this discourse as necessarily embedded in questions of national identity and homeland security state policing practices, and at the same time part of a liberal project in which discourses of inclusion often cover over systemic and flexible patterns of exclusion. I have provided an analysis of speeches by liberal politicians including President Obama, Representative Luis Gutiérrez, and Senator Richard Durbin, all leaders who have been at the forefront of debates about the legal inclusion of undocumented or unauthorized immigrant youth. Moreover, I have analyzed a 2013 report on the “crisis” of assimilation produced by John Fonte and Althea Nagai and released by the conservative think tank the Hudson Institute, and a few other “moments” in which elite liberal and conservative voices meet. Informed by a Foucauldian (1972) understanding of discourse as productive, part of a network, and still, limited, I have guided my analysis through the following questions: How are these discourses about immigrant youth productive for the nation-state? What are the connection, regularities or links among different sites? And what possibilities emerge and are foreclosed under this “limited system” of discourse?

This engagement led me to posit a few key arguments. To begin, I have argued here that the liberal discourses I analyzed, in their ambivalence toward the inclusion of immigrant youth, as well as their deployment of the DACA or Dream Act

eligible immigrant for the reproduction of a good/bad immigrant dichotomy, are productive in a two-fold manner: 1) In constructing immigrant youth as good and even ideal national subjects of identification, they (re) produce the United States as an exceptional, humanitarian nation of immigrants that starts in difference and ends in sufficient sameness, a meritocracy, and a liberal nation of laws. And 2) At the same time, through the perpetuation of a “crisis of immigration,” particularly through the image of the non-student immigrant as criminal, they justify and largely leave unquestioned the immigration practices of what Gonzales (2014) and De Genova (2007) call ‘the homeland security state.’ That the nation-state must “investigate, detain, put behind bars, round up, and deport” (Gutiérrez 2012a) certain immigrant subjects who are deemed unruly and unable or even unwilling to follow the rule of law is a given. The law, its racialized practices, and the discourses, which “produce” unlawful or excludable subjects, seem to be left untouched and at times, even reinvigorated in the liberal speeches examined.

I have also argued that the conservative voices I analyzed also perpetuate notions of a “crisis of immigration.” However, they cast a wider net, and include those very youth exalted by liberal voices as ideal national subjects, as part of this crisis of the unruly. They do this by proposing that fixing a “broken assimilation system” requires dismantling of multicultural and bilingual education programs. Interestingly, these discourses ring the alarm on liberal economic interests on issues of immigrant inclusion. Moreover, although always with the aim of dismantling, they call into question multicultural rhetoric as often functioning for the benefit of a few in power rather than those such discourse is supposed to represent, opening a possibility for critique that seems quite unthinkable in the liberal voices analyzed. Such liberal voices call for certain inclusion, while still deeply wrapped up in language of patriotism, national loyalty, and similarities and quite productively silent about the multiple ways of being and belonging that immigrant youth may negotiate. Moreover, in their less than subtle racial politics, these conservative authors help situate the broader immigration conversation as one that cannot be detached from race relations. Lastly the conservative voices analyzed, acknowledge

possible immigrant multiplicity is a way that seems push the limits of liberal language, despite the notion that this acknowledgment is followed by a plan to “tame” the “unruly” by dismantling the abovementioned programs. Thus, I argued that the regularities between these liberal and conservative voices could be understood through Foucault’s concept of “logophobia.” That is, this elite discourse seems deeply invested in producing—through implicit or explicit means— an immigrant who is sufficiently similar and exudes a unilateral, unproblematic, harmonious national identity. That is to say, that the pluralism of liberal discourses— in which inclusion is preached, but differences are erased by mere affirmation of sufficient sameness and silences— and the monocultural advocacy of Fonte and Nagai, in which the existence of difference is acknowledged but openly placed on the board for erasure, hold similar productive energies. Both discourses particularly re-affirm a U.S. national identity in which structural multiplicity seems unthinkable.

By turning to scholarly work on education, citizenship and youth, and I have shown how U.S. schools are similarly “logophobic,” and cannot be separated from the interests and impacts of the homeland security state. Moreover, through various scholars in youth cultural studies and education, I have argued that conservative discourses are not necessarily wrong to say that bodies marked by migration may have complex relations to the nation-state. I have done this by discussing how youth of immigrant backgrounds often form ambiguous relations to the nation, pushing the boundaries of belonging. However, reaching conclusions far too different from those of Fonte and Nagai, I have followed youth cultural studies scholars in pointing to the possibilities of following youth to more “complex,” “uncertain” and “open-ended,” conversations about nationhood, citizenship, and belonging.

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## APPENDIX A: LIBERAL VOICES: SPEECHES UNDER DISCUSSION

### Obama:

1. Obama, B. (2012, June). *Remarks by the President on Immigration.* , Rose Garden, White House. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/15/remarks-president-immigration>
2. Obama B, & Mitt, R. (2012, October). In Candy CROWLEY (Chair). *President Barack Obama and former Gov. Mitt Romney participate in a candidates debate.* , Hofstra university, Hempstead, New York
3. Obama, B. (2013, January). *Remarks by the president on comprehensive immigration reform.* Del Sol High School Las Vegas, Nevada.

### Gutiérrez

1. Gutiérrez, L. (2013). *DACA Deportation Relief for DREAMers Turns One.* From <http://gutierrez.house.gov/press-release/daca-deportation-relief-dreamers-turns-one>
2. Gutiérrez, L. (2012a, July). *Floor speech supporting prosecutorial discretion for dream act-eligible immigrants*, U.S. House of Representatives.
3. Gutiérrez, L. (2012b, August). *Floor speech: A call to Dreamers.* U.S House of Representatives.
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### Durbin

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**APPENDIX B: QUESTIONS FROM THE HARRIS INITIATIVE SURVEY CITED BY NAGAI &  
FONTE (2013)**

1. Which of these statements comes closest to your opinion? Overall, the U.S. is better than other nations; The U.S. is a country like any other, and is no better or worse than other nations; Overall, the U.S. is worse than other nations; Not sure.
2. Do you believe that Americans share a unique national identity based on a shared set of beliefs, values, and culture? No; Yes, somewhat; Yes, definitely; Not sure.
3. Do you think of yourself more as: A citizen of the United States; A citizen of the world; Not sure.
4. Some U.S.-based multinational corporations may consider themselves to be global companies with no more responsibility to America than to any other country. Do you think this is: A bad thing; A good thing; Not sure.
5. When there is a conflict between the U.S. Constitution and international law, which should be the highest legal authority for Americans, for instance, on human rights, economic, environmental, trade, family and other issues? U.S. Constitution; International law; Not sure.
6. In general, how proud would you say you are to be an American? Not at all proud; Not very proud; Somewhat proud; Very proud.
7. In general, how would you compare being a citizen of the United States with being a citizen in other countries? Would you say citizens in the United States are: Much worse off than those in other countries; Somewhat worse off than those in other countries; Somewhat better off than those in other countries; Much better off than those in other countries; Not sure.

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8. In the oath that immigrants take when they become American citizens they promise to renounce all loyalty to their former country. Do you agree or disagree that individuals should be required to give up loyalty to their former country when they become American citizens? Strongly disagree; Somewhat disagree; Somewhat agree; Strongly agree; Not sure.
  9. Do you believe English should be made the official language of the United States? Definitely should not be; Probably should not be; Probably should be; Definitely should be; Not sure.
  10. How important do you think it is for the future of the American political system that all citizens be able to speak and read English? Not important at all; Not that important; Somewhat important; Very important.
  11. Please indicate which of the following statements comes closest to your own opinion: Election ballots should only be printed in English; OR Election ballots should be printed in English and foreign languages spoken by people living in the U.S.; No opinion.
  12. At times in American history, Congress has passed legislation banning members of certain groups from immigrating to the United States if they opposed the U.S. Constitution and system of government. For example, in the past, anarchists, Nazis, and Communists were forbidden to immigrate to the United States. Currently, some radical Islamists have said that they are against the U.S. Constitution and that it should be replaced with Islamic law. If someone believes this, do you think they should be allowed to immigrate to the United States? Definitely should not; Probably should not; Probably should; Definitely should; Not sure
  13. Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion? Although there are many ethnic groups and cultures in the U.S., there is still a unique American culture that defines what it means to be an American; OR Since there are so many different ethnic groups and cultures in the U.S., there is not a single definition of what it means to be an American.

14. Looking at this list of people and groups, please indicate if you believe they do or do not share your personal values: 1) Members of the news media; 2) Business leaders; 3) U.S. Political leaders; 4) College and University Professors; 5) K-12 teachers; 6) Entertainment figures; 7) U.S. Military commanders; 8) Enlisted soldiers; 9) Clergy and religious leaders. Definitely do not share my values; Probably do not share my values; Probably do share my values; Definitely do share my values; Not sure.
15. What should be a greater priority for our schools? To focus on each student's ethnic identity to ensure that they feel proud of their own heritage and ethnic group; OR To teach students to be proud of being part of the U.S. and about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; Not sure.
16. Do you believe that students in U.S. public schools (kindergarten-12th grades) should learn more or less about the following topics: Heroes in American history; U.S. military history, including how the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and World Wars were fought and won and the difficulties America faced in Korea and Vietnam; The history and role of America's founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution; Slavery and other of America's failings? Much less; Somewhat less; Neither more nor less; Somewhat more; Much more; Not sure.
17. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? Thomas Jefferson; Ulysses S. Grant; George Washington; Martin Luther King; Not sure
18. Who did the United States fight in World War II? Please select all that apply: Italy; Germany; Japan; France; The Soviet Union; Poland; None of these; Not sure.
19. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do? Freed the slaves; Gave slaves the right to vote; Ended the Civil War; Added new state(s) to the Union; Not sure.
20. Which document outlines the division of powers between the states and federal government? Marshall Plan; Declaration of Independence; U.S. Constitution; Homestead Act; Not sure.

21. How interested are you in following U.S. politics? Not at all interested; Not very interested; Somewhat interested; Very interested.
22. How would you describe your own political philosophy? Conservative; Moderate; Liberal.