Contested Citizenships: Reflections on the Politics of Belonging for "Youth of Immigration" in the Greater Barcelona Area.

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Resumen/ Abstract

The proposed paper is framed within the global context of immigration and migrations and the ensuing debates around *citizenship* and *belonging, inclusion* and *exclusion.* Schools, as the social institutions charged with the task of "absorbing" and "integrating" the children of "immigrants," can thus be seen as the primary sites where the *politics of belonging* (Yuval- Davis, 2006) and struggles over belonging and citizenship are waged. The proposed paper aims to provide some emergent findings on schooling of "immigrant" youth and their experiences of *(non) belonging* in a Catalonian high school. The work, based on current fieldwork taking place in a high school located in an affluent area of Barcelona, draws on ethnographic case-studies of eight 'immigrant' youth (from various national origins) in their third and fourth years of compulsory education, alongside focus group interviews and participant observation conducted in the school site. In particular, the work engages with the contradictions inherent in schools and the manner in which national systems of education are implicated in constructing different "kinds" of citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) and reproducing hierarchies of belongingness, even in their efforts to "welcome" and "include" (Gitlin et al., 2003).

The paper will thus center on exploring the following preliminary questions: (1) what are the larger "official" citizenship/membership narratives invoked and promoted within the school? (2) What role do institutional structures play in constructing immigrant youth's belonging or non-belonging within (and beyond) the space of schools? (3) In what ways do immigrant youth negotiate their belonging within and beyond school? In concluding, the paper aims to illuminate the ways in which structures, discourses, and power relations –both within and beyond the school— impact students' belonging and are ultimately implicated in immigrant youth's social and academic engagement and integration (Gibson et al., 2004; Carter, 2005).

Palabras clave / Keywords: immigration, youth, citizenship.

Introduction: "Nationness," Immigration and Youth

The intensified cross-border travels of goods, information, and peoples, undoubtedly one of the defining features of globalization during our current "age of migration" (Castles, 1998), continues to transform the social and political landscapes of societies throughout the globe. Within this historicized present —one marked by intensified movements and (forced) displacements, alongside new forms of exclusion and violence—notions of belonging and identity take on new meanings and inspire thorny questions for the societies who must (perhaps reluctantly) fold new citizen-subjects into the social and political fabric of the nation. For contemporary immigration societies, immigration has come to occupy a contested space in the national imaginary; their *unsettled* relationship with a particular "brand" of immigration and immigrants— that is, migrants of color hailing from "third world" countries—evident in renewed discourses nationalisms and in the political and popular representations of immigration and immigrants. The social construction of the "immigrant," as a subject that requires some measure of *intervention*, whether framed in terms of assimilation and "integration" or in terms of containment and surveillance—wields substantial symbolic power for advanced societies wrestling with the "problem" of immigration (Gibson & Ríos Rojas, 2006).

For contemporary European immigration societies, such as Spain, recent migration flows streaming from Latin American, African and Asian countries expose a particular set of vulnerabilities related to notions of nationhood. Faced with its increasingly plural social reality (in addition to its pre-existing plurality), Spain must contend with a shift in its self-image as it makes the *uneasy* transition from being a country of *e*migration to one of *im*migration (Cornelius, 1994; Collectivo ÍOE, 2000). The presence of "immigrants," discursively constructed in uniform terms and in opposition to "natives" (*autóctonos*) and the more highly regarded "foreigners" (*extranjeros*), on Spanish soil serve to disturb notions of a uniform and timeless community —essential fictions for the production and reproduction of "nationness" (Alarcón, Kaplan, & Moallem, 1999). These disturbances to the national "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) are met with regulatory practices and political strategies designed to restore the nation's legitimacy. And as Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem (1999) further note, it is through the intersecting processes of "racialization, sexualization, and genderization" that the nation insures its staying power. These more or less recent migrations to Spain have served to inspire nativist discourses, evident in sensationalist popular metaphors that prey on the vulnerability of citizens. Underlying the images of "avalanches," "uncontained waves," "massive phenomenon," and "invasion," is the implicit assumption that "immigrants" pose "a threat to [Spain's] supposed cultural homogeneity" and is thus a problem requiring redress and control (Martín Muñoz, García Castaño, López Sala, & Crespo, 2003, p. 15, translation).[1]

The young persons I will refer to in this paper stand at the intersection of these politics, ideologies, and representations and on the edges of contradictory boundaries

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[1] The case of Catalonia introduces added complexity to the equation of nationhood, belonging and immigration. The location of new citizen-subjects in Catalonia, a "stateless nation (in the words of some of my informants), and in relation to Catalan nationalism is most certainly an area I need to continue to explore.

such as equality/difference, belonging/not-belonging, foreigner/native, and citizenship itself. These "youth of immigration," diverse in their regional and national origins, family-compositions, (raced and gendered) self-performances, class-backgrounds, styles, and academic orientations, come together in the classrooms, hallways, and patios of schools, key institutions entrusted with the project of nation-making (Keaton, 2006). As Forman (2005) further illuminates,

> "It is also in schools that immigrant and refugee youth most directly encounter the formal and informal integration forces of their new society, where the structured discourse of nationalism, conveyed through the educational curriculum and other facets of public schooling, converge with the unwieldy discourse of contemporary popular culture" (p. 6).

Schools, as the social institutions charged with the critical task of "absorbing" and "integrating" the children of these new "immigrants," do not stand outside of these politics of citizenship and are instead implicated in such discourses in consequential ways. The social space of schools thus provides a fruitful site where struggles over belonging, what Yuval-Davis (2006) terms the "politics of belonging," can be further understood.[2] The narratives and representations related to immigration and nationhood must therefore be kept in mind when considering the experiences of these youth since the manner in which they are entangled in these will have an undoubted impact on their experiences of belonging.

This paper departs from the premise that notions of "the citizen" and constructions of belonging are also imagined and mediated with and through schools. The manner in which schools, implicitly and explicitly by way of their curriculum, practices, policies, and "standards" are implicated in constructing different "kinds" of citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) even in their efforts to "welcome," "include" or "integrate" raises questions about what it means to belong for these immigrant-origin youth coming of age in a society perhaps not entirely ready to embrace them as complete citizens. The manner in which youth negotiate and navigate through the contradictory logic inherent in schools and society –a logic that at is at once "welcoming and unwelcoming" (Gitlin et al., 2003) – and the ways in which this paradoxical reality affects youth's understandings of citizenship and assertions of belongingness are emergent themes explored in this paper.

"Youth of Immigration" Somewhere in Between and Beyond the National and the Global

This paper is based on an ethnographic study currently underway with youth of immigrant-origin in a public high school located in the greater Barcelona area. The study, initiated January 2007, centers on the experiences of eight focal "youth of

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[2] Nira Yuval–Davis makes the analytical distinction between "belonging" and the "politics of belonging." Belonging, she notes, is linked up with identity, peoples' emotional attachments to different groups or communities, and their various social locations (i.e. gender, "race", class, etc.). The "politics of belonging" refers to the larger discourses of citizenship and nationalisms and "the ethical and political value systems" used to construct the boundaries of belonging and designate, at various times and within varying contexts, who belongs and who does not (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199) .

immigration," at the time in their third and fourth years of compulsory schooling, and on their notions of citizenship and belonging.[3] The majority of the students are of Latin American countries, although they vary in terms of their national and regional origins and ages of arrival in Spain.[4] Since the onset of the study, I have accompanied these students to their classes, interviewed their teachers, as well as other school staff, and spent time with them during their recess breaks and after-school hours. As part of the research, I have also interviewed various city officials, social workers and other members of the community.[5]

I borrow the descriptor, "youth of immigration," from Keaton's (2006) work with second-generation Muslim youth in France. My preference for this term comes from my dissatisfaction with what I see as the limitations of traditional immigration frameworks. I bear in mind DeGenova's (2002), and other scholars, call for interrogating the teleological assumptions inherent in such terms as "immigration," "immigrant," "illegal," and "foreigner," noting how these concepts are most often posited from the perspective of the immigrant-receiving societies. According to DeGenova, (2002) embedded in this seemingly neutral language are deeper questions that point to "political" orientations (p. 421). If left unchecked, such terms work to "naturalize" nation-states as discrete entities or centers being invaded and assaulted by "outsiders" (p. 421). Within the framework of this study on youth, the classical language of "immigration," described in terms of its traditional push/pull and origin/destination tropes, runs the risk of circumscribing the lives and realities of "immigrant" youth, especially within the context of a globalized present where youths' social realities and locations are increasingly subject to forces that extend beyond the national boundaries of their countries of *origin* and *destination*. As Maira & Soep (2005) argue, youth today stand at the intersections of "popular culture, national ideologies, and global markets"—at the "center of globalization" (p. xv). The challenge is thus articulating a framework that situates youth beyond "origin" and "destination" –and recognizes their own imaginings of citizenship that emerge from this more "glocalized" location.

Although the youth I have been working with were admittedly not born in Spain (they arrived in-between the ages of 6 and 14) and thereby could be defined in classical terms as "immigrant youth," the *immigrant* part of their identities represents just one layer of their multiple and varied identities. The "trans-atlantic" and "trans-national"

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[3] This study is part of a larger comparative, international project, which includes the U.S., France, England, The Netherlands, Sweden, and Spain funded through NSF (National Science Foundation's Partnerships for International Research and Education) that centers on the schooling of "the children of immigrants."

[4] The national origins of my focal participants range from Ecuador (4), Colombia (1), Cuba (1), and Morocco (2). The majority of these youth, with the exception of one student who lives in a smaller town in Ecuador's sierra, are for the most part urban. These students' prior "homes" were urban centers [too much personal info?]. With regards to Ecuadorian youth, this is in line with what immigration scholars have noted. Ecuadorian immigration to the U.S. from the 1960s up until the 1990s was largely from more rural regions. The mass exodus of Ecuadorian migrants coming to Spain since the late 1990s, however, are for the most part coming from urban areas and is overwhelmingly female-led (see Pedone, 2004; Gratton, 2007).

[5] In the months that follow, I also plan to interview parents and directors/co-directors of the various community and youth organizations in the city.

youth in this study did/do not always construct their identities in relation to immigration, despite the insistence of some of the adults in their lives, their teachers and myself included. In fact, the youth in this study repeatedly asserted that they are "youth" or "persons" first and "immigrants" second, if not third, fourth or tenth. For some, their identity performances were acted out on the increasingly global/trans-national stage of music and technology. Despite my insistence, the topic of immigration was not one youth were always enthusiastic to talk about. There "teen" identity seemingly preceding both their "immigrant" and "national" identities. Thus, when not spending their time with the inquisitive "researcher from California," as I came to be known, these youth enjoyed listening to rai, hip-hop, reggeaton, and bachata, visiting one another's "my spaces" on the web, "chatting" with other youth from different parts of the globe, and participating in other "teen-oriented production and consumption" practices

However, there is also a paradox that hangs over some of these youth that needs to be examined. While these global youth define themselves in ways that stretch beyond their identities as "immigrants," many of them found themselves not being able to escape the term. Thus, when entangled with gendering and racializing processes, immigration admittedly figured as an important force—at moments a "policing" force— in some of these youth's self-understandings and experiences. For some youth, being identified as "immigrant," implied living with a certain sense of everyday surveillance that limited the conditions of their belonging. This is the theme to which I turn to next.

The Politics of Belonging in a Barcelona City

The lives of the majority of the youth in this study unfold in city located in the greater Barcelona area. Described in the local press as "one of the most expensive cities to live in Catalonia" Sant Antoni has over the years as also been described as a "bedroom community" for young professionals seeking refuge from the frenzy of urban life and a more tranquil setting in which to raise their families, while still remaining relatively close to Barcelona.[6]

Some residents, however, still recall Sant Antoni's more *provincial* past. According to a community member who grew up in the city and has over the years witnessed the city's transformation, Sant Antoni was at one time simply a "pueblo," a country town with cows, sheep and dirt roads. Up until the 1970's, the city was in fact a popular vacation spot for Barcelona's bourgeois classes. The city tended to hibernate during the winter season and during the warmer months was populated by families who arrived to spend their summer months in their tennis-court and swimming pool-equipped homes away from home. Today, the narrow cobblestone streets of Sant Antoni's downtown are lined with high-end boutiques, small cafés, restaurants, bakeries and other small specialty businesses. The city's continuing growth can be evidenced in the series of high-rise apartment buildings, equipped with pools and large grassy areas, being erected in the peripheries of the city. Absent, however, from the city's official self-presentation (as seen on the city's webpage) is any mention of the recent demographic changes the city has experienced during the course of the last decade.

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[6] All the names of people and places, and any other identifying information, have been changed to insure the confidentiality of the participants.

Although perhaps not included as "Sant Antonians," Sant Antoni is also "home" to a small, but increasingly visible "immigrant community," from Ecuador and more recently Bolivia. Although perhaps less visible than the growing South American population, there is also a significant Moroccan community that predates the more recent migrations from Latin America.[7] As I have learned from my conversations with social workers and other city officials, the majority of immigrant men (Moroccan and Ecuadorian) work in construction, while women hailing from South America and other Latin American countries, work in the domestic sector doing care-work (i.e. as nannies and care-takers/companions for the elderly). In strolling through the city's narrow streets, it is therefore not unusual to see what in the U.S. context would be described as "women of color" pushing blonde hair, fair-skinned babies in luxurious strollers. Nor is it uncommon to find posted on the walls of the nearby *locutorios* (calling houses) pieces of paper that have scribbled on them messages such as, "*Señora: buscando trabajo…cuidado de personas mayores o niños"* (Woman: looking for work….caring for the elderly or children), *"Señora se ofrece para limpieza o cuidado de personas mayores* ("Woman offering to work in cleaning or care for elderly folk").

The city of Sant Antoni during the course of the last decade has had to wrestle with the changes in identity that these most recent migrations imply. According to some members of the community, Sant Antoni, as a city, continues to be in denial about its increasing "diversity." The growing number of "immigrants," the majority of whom are not white and not upper middle-class, that have recently settled in Sant Antoni appear to be at odds with the city's self-image. This is perhaps most evident in the types of extra-curricular activities the city offers for its youth. "Look at this and see if it does not make you laugh out loud!" exclaimed one social worker handing me a pamphlet. On the cover of the pamphlet is a group of what look to me as "white" (to employ U.S. race terms) suburban teen-agers. I cannot help but silently ask: who is included in this image as a Sant Antoni teen? Who is excluded from that imagination? Inside, the pamphlet advertisements of a range of lessons available for Sant Antoni's youth, among which are included golf, tennis, and equestrianism. "Is this not a complete joke? You tell me how interested a young boy, whose parents work two jobs to make rent or who even has to work himself, is going to be interested in taking golf lessons or tennis? Please!" were the social worker's indignant observations.

Questions relating to belonging and the politics of belonging are therefore accentuated in contexts such as this one. Making certain these activities are offered to *all* youth living in Sant Antoni keeps intact the liberal, equity-centered discourses the larger Sant Antoni community requires to maintain its self-image as a progressive and democratic city. However, underlying the veneer of "equity" and "integration" there exists a sub-discourse on belonging, one that, either wittingly or unwittingly, works to
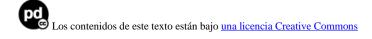
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[7] Sant Antoni's demographic figures are: Population: 73, 774 (year: 2006); Immigration from outside of Spain (by continent of origin): 668 from America (North, Central and South): 668; Africa, 56; Asia, 100; Oceania, 4; European Union, 292; Non-European Union members, 103. (source: www.indescat.net)

exclude particular *types* of youth. Eli, another social worker, shared with me an observation a young Moroccan boy living in Sant Antoni once said to him: "I think that the people here [in Sant Antoni] need to have at least a few of us poor people around so that they can feel good about themselves." "So that the Sant Antoni community can be like 'oh, look, *pobrecito*, and feel good about their altruism," was Eli's somewhat caustic analysis. Therefore, the Other supplies the narrative, in this case a missionary one, for the legitimacy of the dominant classes. The uses and occupation of social spaces have also worked to put into relief the various discourses and politics of belonging taking place in Sant Antoni. Only recently the city's cultural mediation services were requested by some neighborhood associations to solve the "problem" of the community basketball courts at a local park. As Andrea and Eli saw it, these public basketball courts until recently had remained empty, except for an occasional game on the weekends. However, more recently, the courts had become a popular meeting point for the various youth that lived in the neighboring areas (which are predominantly of Moroccan and South American origin). Enter the cultural mediators, who are asked to "mediate" and help the neighbors' association address the problem of what they see as the potential for "conflict" and perhaps "delinquency." The neighbors complained of the increased levels of noise, since these young men tended to "scream" and "yell" at each other and they worried about potential "gang conflicts" between the different groups.

These "fears" are suckled by ongoing stereotypical and alarm-inspiring media images and coverage of "violent" and "conflictive" bands of "Latino gangs" (the most mentioned being "the Latin Kings") running amok in Spain's urban centers.[8] As Eli mentioned, these young boys, mostly of Ecuadorian descent, were only doing what they were used to doing in their countries of origin, where it is neither uncommon nor delinquent to play in the street in large groups. In contrast to these more alarmist portrayals of "uncontrolled packs" of urban youth, Lucas, one of my focal participants, described the scene differently. The contested park was a place where he, his friends, and other Ecuadorian youth gathered to play volleyball and even baseball. And although an occasional argument might take place, violence was not commonplace. I myself visited this park on several occasions with my three-year-old daughter and my perception of the space seemed to coincide with Lucas' depiction. On one particular Friday late afternoon I observed a group of young men (of various ages) playing volleyball. As the evening approached, more women and children arrived, wheeling baskets filled with plastic containers of food that they passed around. I failed to see the park as a site of conflict. Perhaps the real "problem," is the *hyper-visibility* of these boys, already associated with criminality and aggression and the discomfort caused when spaces are occupied differently and by "different" groups in ways that deviate from the "norm." Nirmal Puwar (2006) argues that when "racialized and [gendered] bodies are in places where they are seen to not quite belong," they are prone to a range of surveillance strategies or "super-surveillance" (p. 79). Puwar further describes this process as one of "amplification," noting that,

> Any errors they make are noticed and *amplified* as a sign of authority misplaced. Because they are not the somatic norm, one or two bodies also become amplified

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[8] See Pedone (2001) for an analysis of media representations of Ecuadorian immigration and immigrants in Spain.

in the imagination as four or five, especially if they work together. Then they can indeed incite organizational terror as they become seen as a potential troublemaking bloc (Puwar, 2006, p. 79; emphasis added)

One has to wonder if a different "type" of gendered group would produce as much alarm and anxiety. As Lucas mentioned, the local police often made their "routine" rounds to the park, at times searching youth for drugs and weapons, something Lucas asserted he and his friends did not carry. On one occasion, Lucas observed as a friend was taken away. When I inquired as to why, he responded, "he had a metal bat…and they [the police] said that it's considered a weapon" When I naively asked why he had the bat, Lucas responded matter-of-factly, "We were playing baseball." Despite it being "standard procedure," Lucas had the impression that this would not happen to "los Españoles" (the Spanish)—a term he and some of the other youth did not feel included in. During a separate conversation, Lucas mentioned a separate, but related incident, this time in front of the high school. Lucas and two other youth, that I also know, were sitting on a bench in front of the school when a police car pulled up in front of them. Lucas and his friend, a young man of Moroccan-origin were searched for "drugs" and all three were then asked for their papers. Elena, one of my focal participants, and one of the youth *in question*, said she was nervous because she had left her identification at home that day. Again, although this practice was justified by the police, and later by one of the youth's teacher as "standard procedure," both Elena and Lucas understood these events as "standard procedure" reserved for non-Spanish youth. Moments such as these beg the question if youth of color are allowed to "belong," but only on certain terms –terms, in this case, that ask them to be quiet, to stay indoors, to resist from hanging out in groups, and to not speak Spanish so unabashedly in public spaces. In sum, to "integrate." These youth's experiences invite us to interrogate what forms of belonging and citizenship are made available to youth within an atmosphere of surveillance and to ask if within this rhetoric of "integration," there needs to be an opening for one to ask "how" (to integrate)? At what price? And on *whose* terms?

Citizens-some? Citizens-all? Constructing Different "kinds" of Citizens in School[9]

The politics of belonging also play out in the local high school attended by the youth in this study. Over the last decade, Vallés High School has had to contend with a difficult shift in its identity. Prior to the LOGSE Reform of 1996, which extended the compulsory age of schooling from fourteen years o to sixteen years old for *all* students, Vallés High, like many other high schools in the city, enjoyed the reputation of being an elite B.U.P. *(Bachillerato Unificado Polivalente)* institution The shift from a model premised on the sifting and sorting of students to one that was more comprehensive and, in theory, against ability tracking coincided with the increased migrations from Latin American, North African, and Asian countries and their presence in Catalonia's classrooms (Carraso, 2004). Vallés High School, located in a residential area of Sant Antoni, today offers the compulsory ESO (1ESO-4ESO), as well as the university-track

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[9] I am borrowing here from Immanuel Wallerstein's (2003) article, titled "Citizens All? Citizens Some? The Making of the Citizen."

bachillerato.[10] From the onset of the fieldwork, various faculty members reminded me that Vallés High was a "small bubble" (*"una pequeña burbuja")* in relation to the rest of schools in the greater Barcelona area. What the teachers were referring to was the unusual demographic composition of their student population. "There are very few immigrants here….for that you should go to [name of neighboring city that is described as more "working-class" and with larger numbers of "immigrants"]… or a school in downtown Barcelona. But not here!" is what I commonly heard when I shared that I was interested in the experiences of immigrant-origin youth. According to the school's official documents, 19.2% (98 students total*)* are categorized as "foreigners." However, only 13% of the total student population come from non-European countries, the majority of which are from Ecuador and Bolivia, although included in this figure are also youth from Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Lebanon, Morocco, and mainland China. These students are mostly concentrated in the earlier levels of compulsory schooling (1ESO and 2ESO), and their numbers dwindle as you move up through the grades and into the university-bound *(bachillerato)* tracks.

During the last academic year, there were very few immigrant-origin youth enrolled in the *bachillerato* cycles; only two students from Ecuador and one student from Colombia were in these classes. And while professors recalled having other Latin American students in their previous *bachillerato* classes, they remembered these "successful" students as being either from Argentina or Chile, groups that as I will argue later, are constructed differently (although still in homogenous terms) and whose "belonging" at times came to be "naturalized." It is worth noting that the teachers at the school struggled to remember if there had been any Morrocan-origin youth that had passed through their *(bachillerato)* courses. When I inquired into the reasons there were so few "immigrant-origin" youth (from which, as I mentioned Argentine and Chilean students are exempt) the responses I have received ranged from being evasive and guarded to more "culturalist" explanations. Some faculty simply shrugged their shoulders, perhaps noting the "normality" of such a pattern, while others offered a more - sociological analysis to why these youth were not found in these upper tracks (relating it to parents' educational backgrounds, the realities of parents today, the need to work, inequalities in the labor market, etc.). Still, some teachers relied on more "culturalist" explanations for students' presence or absence in these higher university-headed paths. "We have had students [in the past] from Argentina and Chile finish the *bachillerato*…but one thing is immigrants and the another are Argentineans and Chileans. That is a whole other thing!" was one teacher's observation. In a separate conversation with another faculty member, similar references to the cultural superiority of Argentinean and Chilean students resurfaced. Referring to a recently arrived student from Chile, whom she and other professors lauded for his motivation to learn and the "natural" speed with which he had learned Catalan, this faculty member noted the ways in which her experience with Chilean and Argentineans had made her think they were "culturally different." "I see them as more European. I don't know, more like us" she commented. "They tend to learn more quickly and with the Catalan, they pick it up almost immediately." Pre-migration factors such as social class, regional differences

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[10]Vallés High, unlike some of the other institutes in Sant Antoni, does not offer "professional tracks ("ciclos formativos"). This is perhaps a legacy of its past identity as strictly baccalaureat school, but also one the reflects the "reality" of the majority of its students, who come from middle-class/upper-middle class backgrounds—sons and daughters of lawyers, professors, doctors and business executives.

(urban vs. rural) or educational background were not mentioned. The category of "European," equated with "intelligence," "motivation", and a "natural" facility and willingness to learn Catalan, were reserved for youth of Argentinean and Chilean backgrounds.

These comparisons were not limited to the faculty and surfaced among some of the students as well. During a focus group interview, students also engaged in what Mamdani (2005) calls, "the talk of culture" or "culture talk" (cited in Yuval-Dais et al., 2006). During our conversation, these students drew the counter-distinction between "cultures-that-sit-well" *("culturas que les caen bien")* and "cultures-that-sit-not-so-well" *("culturas que les caen mal").* Responding to the question of what role speaking either Catalan, Spanish or another language played in students' ability to belong and "integrate," one student explained:

> "I think that apart from this question of…of speaking Spanish
> or Catalan, there are cultures here that sit better with us than others.
> Well, they sit better with us. I don't know. Personal experience, I don't
> know, but here an Argentine speaks to you Spanish and you really dig him.
> And you really like the way he speaks, and in general, you like him. But
> on the other hand a….." "A Moroccan…" (interjects another student) "…
> or in addition…I don't know, right now I couldn't give you (an example of)
> another culture, but somebody that has learned Spanish and has not learned
> Catalan, then…in the end their speaking to you in the same language. But there
> are things that we like more than others. I don't know why."[11]

Students, thus also fall victim to what Carrasco (1997) describes as "uses and abuses of culture". As another student in this group elaborated, the "cultures-that-sit-well" are those they perceived as being "more open," in sum, "more Western." By way of this inherently Orientalist equation, (Said, 1979) the world comes to be discretely divided up between "the west" and "the rest" (Mamdani, 2005, p. 4). Where youth from "the rest" are positioned and position themselves within this equation influences youth's assertions and experiences of belonging in school, but also more generally, how youth feel and respond to their various locations in the social world. For a U.S. scholar of color, whose own self-understanding has been forged within a racialized hierarchy of belonging extending between California and Costa Rica, it is difficult for me to avoid questions related to the construction of "race" and the ways in which the this imagined European identity also comes to be a racialized one –one imagined in relation to "whiteness." I note this with caution, since I understand the importance of recognizing the social, political, and historical specificities of a particular context. Transferring a U.S.-based racial formation framework to Spain would be a great over-sight (Omi &

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[11] The always-imperfect translation is mine. The original version is included below.
> "Yo creo que aparte de esto, de que hables castellano o catalan, hay culturas que aqui
> nos caen mejor que otras. Bueno, nos caen mejor. Bueno, no se. Experiencia propia
> no se, pero aqui un Argentino te habla en castellano y te cae super bien. Y te hace
> mucha gracia como habla, y….en general te cae bien. O por otra parte te viene un…"
> "Un Marroqui…" (añade otra estudiante) "…o incluso, no se…. ahora no sabría decirte
> otra cultura, pero alguien que ha aprendido castellano y no ha aprendido catalan,
> entonces…. a veces al fin y al cabo te estan hablando en la misma lengua. Pero hay   cosas
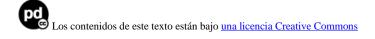que nos gustan mas que otros. No se porque."

Winant, 1994). However, I think that ignoring the raced (and gendered) dimensions of belonging and constructions of citizenship would be just as grave an error, if not more.

Implicated in the constructions of belonging and the politics of belonging that come to be played out on the school plane is this shift in identity many of the staff and faculty at Vallés High have experienced over the last decade. Many teachers continuously referenced the school's more *oppulent* past, one in which they were able to "teach" and when the school prided itself in offering a highly rigorous curriculum. The pre-educational reform Vallés High was imagined almost in idyllic terms. Students of the past were, as a whole, "more respectful,""more hardworking," and more "intellectually capable." "Only *the best* came here…but those were other times!" commented a teacher. *Who* is included in "the best" is not spelled out explicitly, but one need question to what extent youth of color with ties to the "third world" and working-class/poor students are included in this appraisal. "Now we have kids that shouldn't be here…that should be working…and what they are doing here is wasting their time when what should be done is to prepare them to do another type of [professional] formation" confided an Vallés English teacher.

In fact, one of these "students who should not be here" was Ayal, one of my focal participants. Ayal, when I first met him, had arrived from Morocco just under two years ago. Quiet and reflective, Ayal spent most of his class time, apart from the occasional opportunity to "work" with a group of students (when group-work was permitted), silently completing work-sheet packets his teachers had made for him. To break up the monotony of his days, Ayal confessed that he took to skipping classes when he could. Ayal could very well have been invisible had he not been caught jumping the fence one day, which forced teachers to keep a closer eye on him, and had he not made acquaintance with a group of students identified by some teachers and students as "trouble-makers." Still, Ayal was generally described by his teachers as "a good kid," but having "good" behavior (that is being quiet despite not completing his "work") has not been enough to insulate him from the lowered expectations some teachers have of him. "The teachers here…because they see that I am from Morocco…think that I'm dumb."[12] noted Ayal during one of our conversations. Ayal, who had turned 16 and thus was no longer legally committed to continuing school, was neither expected nor encouraged to continue with school. As one of his teachers' saw it, she feared that Ayal would be another one of those students that slipped through the institutional cracks and left the school without a "certificado de graduado" (required to continue on to vocational/prof. tracks). Acting in what she saw as Ayal's best interests, this teacher encouraged him, despite his father's initial wishes for him to continue schoolto not finish his last year of school and opt for a (2-month) training program in auto mechanics to be an "auto mechanic auxiliary" or assistant. According to Ayal, his father was critical of such a program. Understanding that his son's opportunities and ability to compete in the labor market could be significantly reduced without the "certificado de graduado" or diploma, he disagreed with this teacher's advice. Still, when I asked Ayal why not in fact finish the last year, Ayal responded "It is better…I don't want to because probably they [the teachers] will not pass me…and then I will be left with nothing."

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[12]   The translation into English is my own. *("Los profesores aqui…porque ven que soy de Maruecos…piensan que soy tonto.")*

Most students at Vallés High School, "immigrant" and not, must therefore continuously contend with notions of the "ideal citizen-student" and in the process negotiate ways in which they can strive to best approximate the "ideal students" their teachers continuously reminded them of. The challenge lies in being constructed at the opposite pole of such a construction and perhaps not being included in the spectrum at all. As the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and other social theorists examining processes of social reproduction and inequalilty, those students most capable of mirroring and performing the cultural norms, codes, values and practices of the dominant classes are also the ones most likely to be deemed "intelligent" and "gifted." And those who resist the standards and cultural codes of the dominant classes are more easily relegated to the shadows of academic failure, although the work of Gibson (1988) and that of other scholars, Carter (2005), Davidson (1996), and Pámies (2006), among others, all attest to the ways in which "bicultural" or "additive" identities, nurtured inside and outside of school, play a powerful role in students' academic engagement and ultimate achievement. Youth's belonging is thus predicated on their ability to measure up to "prescribed standards and simultaneously conform to the ideals of the school and the nation" (Forman, 2005, p.12).

Concluding thoughts:

"Belonging is NOT a Luxury!" Towards a Cultural Citizenship Framework of Youth and Immigration

> *"Para los que viven en la plentitud de la pertenencia no la*
> *reconocen como tal, es como el aire que se respira sin pensarlo,*
> *parece ser lo más natural" (Rosaldo, 2000, p. 10)*

As Chicano anthropologist, Renato Rosaldo (2000) notes above, belonging is not a "luxury," but rather a *right* that needs to be recognized and respected (p.10). For some, belonging is taken-for-granted, akin to "the air they breath." However, if our goals are to move towards a truly democratic and socially just society, we need to consider the perspectives and voices for those whom which belonging is neither "effort-less" nor an "invisible privilege" enjoyed from birth. For some of the youth in this study belonging is in fact contested. Despite the promises of the institution of (formal) citizenship, designed to protect and ensure the rights and equality of *all* "citizens," formal citizenship, as other scholars have noted, is not always enough for those whose citizenship is at moments rendered "delinquent" and for whom the right to belonging and commitment to the nation is seen as suspect (Ramos Zayas, 2004; Maira, 2004). And while perhaps not all of the youth in this study suffered the stigma of what Ramos-Zayas (2004) calls "delinquent citizenship," whereby legal citizens and entire communities are constructed as "criminals" and "terrorists," these youth bear the weight of a *question mark* that hangs over them, calling into question their legitimate belonging in society (Rosaldo, 2000). As noted by Hall and Held (1998) the new politics of citizenship is increasingly being defined in relation to belonging. They ask, "Who belongs? And what does belonging mean or look like in practice? Questions related to who is a member or not —who belongs and who does not belong— are the points of departure for the politics of citizenship." (p. 175).

How youth respond to these questions and to the regulating forces in their lives that circumscribe the conditions of their belonging and citizenship requires continued attention. Research on youth and citizenship, as scholars have critically noted (Maira & Soep, 2005), continues to be sparse. Perceived as *citizens-in-training*, youth have for the most part been excluded from debates and discussions of citizenship and belonging. I, however, take inspiration from recent scholarship that has directed attention to the multiple and varied ways in which youth of color participate in contesting and reframing the terms and conditions of citizenship within the context of asymmetrical power relations and discursive representations of the "legitimate/illegitimate" or "good/bad" citizen (Maira, 2004; Ramos Zayas, 2007). Exploring the various ways in which these youth of immigration negotiate these representations and participate in (re)imagining alternative forms of citizenship and belongingness in their everyday lives is an avenue of study I will continue to explore in the following phases of the work.

The concept of "cultural citizenship" (Rosaldo, 1994, 1997; Flores & Benmayor, 1997) can prove helpful in this endeavor in that it extends beyond the formal parameters of citizenship. Its attention to the "everyday practices" and expressions of citizenship help to push on our definitions of what constitutes "the political." Although "politics," defined in traditional terms, (i.e. voting, reading the politics section of newspapers, commenting on the speeches and positions of political candidates, etc.) was not an important topic of discussion for the majority of youth, many of them had what I understood to be an "emergent critique" of the inequalities they perceived in their local environments and in the world. Attention to these youth's expressions of "dissident citizenships" (Maira, 2004) is therefore critical in order to better understand the emergence of new kinds of political identities and social consciousness among youth of immigration. Contained in their visions of the world might be valuable lessons for advancing towards a more just society.

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