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Making Americans: Negotiating the Boundaries of Somali Identities in the Public Education System of Lewiston, Maine

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Making Americans

Negotiating the Boundaries of Somali Identities in the Public Education System of Lewiston, Maine

An Honors Thesis

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The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology
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By

Ashley Bryant

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Abstract

With the rise of political discourse on immigration in America and the resulting linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity, American public schools must negotiate the boundaries of accommodation and assimilation for their diverse student populations. As an aspiring educator, I am drawn to the performance of institutionalized American national identity within a local school district. The arrival of Somali refugees in early 2001 to Lewiston – a former mill town in the state with the whitest demographic – challenged the parameters of what it means to be a member of the community, especially within the classroom. By analyzing the English Language Learner (ELL) program, Lewiston's approach to the nation's policies of secular education, and the Blue Devils Soccer Team, I argue that schools are where nations are imagined and that the Lewiston Public School system defines "Americanness" through the inclusion and exclusion of Somali identities. I also investigate theories surrounding various understandings of nationalism – ethnocentric and polycentric – and their role in determining the permeability of ascribed boundaries of acceptance and repudiation. This thesis attempts to answer the larger question of "How do schools make Americans?" in the hopes of using these findings to elicit educational reform and social change.

Introduction: "I, Too, Sing America"

"I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong."

– Excerpt from Langston Hughes' poem, "I, Too."

"We'll help him be an American"

Vibrant red, orange, and yellow leaves fall onto the pavement in front of me as I walk across the parking lot of Montello Elementary School on a crisp autumn morning. In the distance, children climb on the bright blue playground equipment, their joyful screams echoing off the brick walls of the school building. Montello's motto, "Be safe. Be respectful. Be responsible," is written in large, bold white letters on the pathway leading up to the main entrance. I swing open the old glass and metal door and turn to my left to greet the secretary. She smiles warmly as she writes me a visitor pass to Ms. Celeste Hynes' classroom. "Down the hall, to the left!" she instructs me as I enter through the second set of doors and walk towards the first grade wing.

The hallway is decorated with student work and brightly colored posters; some stray jackets and papers lay on the tile floor in the aftermath of the students' rush to recess moments before. The wall outside Ms. Hynes' classroom is covered with bright red paper apples, each with a student's name on it. They all surround a paper cutout of a tree, its trunk has "Welcome to Our Class!" written on it in thick, black marker.

I pull open the dark wooden door and see Ms. Hynes sitting in a small blue chair holding a

picture book in her hands. Her students sit "criss-cross applesauce" on the carpet below, trying their best not to stare at the stranger entering their classroom. She soon has the students break into groups to begin their reading and writing workshop, rotating every ten minutes to a new station.

As the students rush to grab their writing journals, headphones, and iPads, one boy paces the carpeted area, looking around the classroom with a mixed expression of awe and confusion. I approach him, squatting so our eyes are level with each other.

"Do you know what station you should go to?" I ask him. He smiles widely, revealing two missing baby teeth. There is silence. "My name is Ashley. I'm helping Ms. Hynes class today. What's your name?" He vigorously nods his head, his smile growing larger.

Ms. Hynes walks over and introduces the student; her voice is genial and her smile soft and welcoming. "This is Abdurrahman. He's from Somalia. He just came to America three days ago. This is his first day in an American school. Say hi to Ms. Ashley, Abdurrahman." She gestures in my direction and waves. Abdurrahman begins to move his hand from left to right, copying his teacher. "Hi!" He says, his eyes wide with excitement. "He doesn't know much English but he loves to learn," says Ms. Hynes. "Why don't you sit and read to him for a couple of minutes?"

Abdurrahman rushes to the reading corner, picking up every book with gentleness and wonder. He finds one about a cat and holds it above his head, jumping with eagerness and anticipation to hear the story. Two students, named Jacqueline and Tommy, approach us, curious about their new student's enthusiasm. "Can we help you read, too?" they both ask. I graciously nod and we all take a seat on the bright carpet.

Jacqueline leans close to me and whispers in my ear, "Abdurrahman doesn't know English yet, but that's okay. We'll teach him, we'll help him be an American." She grins and takes the

book from Abdurrahman's hands. She opens to the first page and begins to read, using her pointer finger to help her follow the words. Abdurrahman looks over her shoulder and shows his toothless smile; Tommy beams back and leans closer to Jacqueline. Overhead, the American flag on a wooden pole protrudes from the cement wall, its bright red, white, and blue colors are a contrast to the students' dark clothing below.

I glance outside the window from across the room and watch as occasional gusts of wind blow the fallen leaves across the empty field. Jacqueline's words resonate in my head: *We'll help him be an American.* The students giggle and change readers, huddle together in a shared sense of fascination and camaraderie. *We'll teach him, we'll help him be an American.*

Exploring America

After my visit to Ms. Hynes' classroom, the idea of helping a student like Abdurrahman become an 'American' continued to perplex me. What did Jacqueline mean by this? Does Abdurrahman need to be taught how to be an American, or can he, perhaps, declare this identity without opposition? Does his Americanness need to be ascribed, earned, or negotiated? What is preventing Abdurrahman from being seen as an American by his peers? More specifically, what role does the school play, if at all, in creating and perpetuating these ideas of American identity?

Having vast experience working in classrooms and a passion for furthering my knowledge of the American educational system, Lewiston Public Schools became an indisputably perfect place to conduct fieldwork. I found Lewiston Public Schools to be an excellent site not only because of its proximity and accessibility to Bates College, but also for the recent diversification of its student population, a result of its Somali refugee community.

After Somalia collapsed in 1991 and entered a disastrous clan-based civil war, millions of

Somalis fled their homeland in the Horn of Africa. Many sought refuge in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya; some Somalis found their way into the United States through family reunification programs. Upon hearing of Lewiston, Maine, a community with low crime rates, affordable housing, and good schools, many Somalis made the journey to the Northeast to make the former mill town their new home. Since the Somalis' initial arrival in 2001, the Lewiston community has continued to negotiate the boundaries of assimilation and accommodation around its Somali population within the public sphere. [1]

Catherine Besteman, a professor of anthropology at Colby College who has done extensive work with Lewiston's Somali Bantu community, asks, "When immigrants are black and Muslim in addition to non-English speaking, what is integration to the Euro-American white mainstream supposed to look like?" (Besteman 2016: 31). In other words, does Lewiston encourage Somalis to assimilate to American culture, does it embrace the diversity of its refugee population, or is Lewiston able to strike a balance along a continuum of possibilities? Somalis' ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities contrast with Lewiston's predominately white, Christian, and English speaking population. This diversity affects all levels of community – the school, the city, and the nation. [2]

Methodology

This thesis is based on the observations and informal interviews that I conducted with

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[1] Various sources: Voyer 2013, Huisman et al. 2011, Finnegan 2006, and Jones 2004.

[2] It is important to note that my thesis does not differentiate Somalis from Somali Bantus. Although I recognize the distinction between the two refugee populations, I chose to not focus on the differences in their schooling experiences in my thesis. As a result, my thesis explores the experiences of the refugees from the Horn of Africa, both Somali and Somali Bantu, within the Lewiston Public School system. I will refer to members of these populations collectively as 'Somali' and will call members of the Lewiston community who often are white, Euro-Americans 'non-Somali' throughout my thesis. For more information regarding the distinction between the two refugee populations, see Besteman 2016.

students and teachers from Montello, Longley, and Lewiston Middle and High schools throughout my four years as an undergraduate at Bates College. As an Educational Studies minor, I have completed over 30 hours every semester working with a range of public school classrooms in Lewiston, such as mentoring middle school adolescents in college aspirations, tutoring elementary students in mathematics and reading, and teaching literacy to English Language Learners at Lewiston High School. In these different learning environments, I was able to build close relationships with many Somali students and hear their stories of inclusion and exclusion within the schools. When using information gathered from these experiences, I drew on the reflective journal entries that I wrote for my education classes in an attempt to re-create the sights, sounds, and emotions as vividly as the moment they occurred, even if they happened weeks, months, or years ago.

I used pseudonyms for all teachers and students mentioned in this thesis, along with a majority of the remaining people that I interviewed and observed. I did not change, however, the names of people mentioned in published newspaper articles, because of the inherently public and accessible nature of the information, which is available through local media outlets. Some interviewees, however, requested that I use their real name and I make this distinction clear using footnotes. [3]

I conducted a majority of my research from September 2015 to March 2016. During the fall semester, I researched Lewiston teachers' pedagogical approaches to multicultural education, the educational praxis that focuses on embracing cultural diversity and promoting social justice within the classroom, for my Educational Studies capstone project. I conducted formal interviews with teachers and administrators and observed elementary and middle school

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[3] I obtained approval for my thesis from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), receiving informed and verbal consent from all of my interviewees.

classrooms. I asked questions, made detailed observations, and took notes that applied to both my capstone and thesis. I drafted a project proposal explaining the dual nature of my research and distributed it to the Superintendent of Lewiston Public Schools, William Webster Jr., and the principals of each school I visited, receiving approval from both forms of administration.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the education class I took during the Spring 2016 semester, I completed my hours in an English Language Leaner classroom at Lewiston High School where I worked closely with refugee and asylum seeking students from Kenya, Somalia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. While teaching and assisting, I observed the way the Somali students navigated the school's institutional boundaries due to their linguistic and religious identities.

I formally interviewed 10 teachers, 2 administrators, 3 Lewiston High School alumni, and 3 community members. I also conducted many informal interviews with teachers, staff, administrators, and students throughout my research period. In addition, I followed the local newspapers and online media outlets throughout the academic year to gather additional ethnographic information in both my background and analysis chapters.

Despite the detailed and deliberate methods I used to conduct ethnographic fieldwork, my thesis does have limitations. I only observed minors in the classroom while formally interviewing Somali students who had graduated from Lewiston High School. It was my intention to observe how the Somali students currently in the schools navigated these boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and how the teachers and administration reacted. My interviews with Lewiston High School alumni allowed them to reflect on their overall experiences within the city's public schools, paying attention to how these borders around their identities continue to affect their understanding of their own Americanness years after leaving the classroom.

The Anthropologist's Dilemma

My own positionality as a white researcher from Bates College is an important consideration when reflecting upon the methods I used in obtaining my research. As an undergraduate student teacher, I had the freedom to move throughout Lewiston Public Schools with little resistance. I was able to use the name of my elite institution to acquire information from influential school administrators with ease. Furthermore, teachers were extremely willing to contribute to my research in exchange for my assistance in their classroom. These visits within the schools served the dual purpose of community-engagement and observational research. These aspects of my fieldwork made me recognize the innate privileges I had as an anthropologist who belongs to the white, Euro-American mainstream culture of the school, the community, and the nation. I was rarely excluded due to my identity and I was instead graciously welcomed within the Lewiston Public School system. I doubt that I would have been able to conduct such extensive fieldwork and gain as much detailed insight had I been of a different cultural group or a researcher without collegiate status.

Fieldwork aside, the community-engaged learning I have conducted in Lewiston Public Schools has been a pivotal aspect of my Bates experience, and I feel incredibly invested in the wellbeing of the teachers and students that I have written about in this thesis. As Margery Wolf says in reflecting on her own fieldwork in Taiwan, "we felt a responsibility to 'our village' to 'get it right'" (Wolf 1992: 3). Not only am I attached to the community where I have conducted my fieldwork but I also feel obligated to portray my interviewees' experiences faithfully within these pages. I want to feel like I am doing the teachers, administrators, and students in my thesis justice. Yet, this is easier said than done. "When human behavior is the data," writes Wolf, "a tolerance for ambiguity, multiplicity, contradiction, and instability is essential" (Wolf 1992:

130). Working with such a wide range of community members, I gathered a considerable amount of contradictory information. My analysis then became a constant battle between accurately representing the Lewiston Public Schools and its members, while remaining critical of the observations that I was making from my privileged position.

At the same time, I recognize the social activist tone I establish throughout my thesis in regards to Lewiston Public Schools' treatment of its Somali population. As an aspiring educator, I want to use to this thesis as way to explore the role the politics of recognition plays in the process through which the Lewiston Public Schools respond to the diversity of its Somali students. I hope my findings can move beyond the "ivory tower" of academia and that they can be used to implement education reform within the American public school system.

Understanding America

According to Patricia Albjerg Graham, a leading historian on American education, "In America we are deeply indebted to our educational institutions for developing the population that makes our nation work. Yet, we are ambivalent about their contribution, unsure how many of our national successes and failures are attributed to our children's schooling" (Graham 2005: 6). Graham's comment highlights how Americans place a tremendous amount of faith in their schools, seeing them as the conforming source of creating the next generation of educated Americans to solve the nation's problems. Yet, what does Graham mean by "developing the population that makes our nation work," and what is the "population" to which she specifically refers? Furthermore, if schools make educated Americans, is there a certain type of "American" student that benefits the nation more than others?

In this thesis, I explore questions pertaining to American identity, arguing that public schools are where nations are imagined, boundaries are drawn, and Americans are made. Moreover, I investigate the integration of Somali students – who are black, non-English speaking Muslims – into "the Euro-American white mainstream" of the Lewiston Public School system. [4] I suggest that this process illustrates how America defines its own national identity.

I equate the way that the Lewiston Public School system negotiates boundaries of inclusion and exclusion around its Somali students with the two opposing definitions of nationalism: ethnic nationalism, which is inherently exclusive, and multicultural nationalism, which is inherently inclusive. Additionally, the banal and commonplace practices of the Lewiston Public School system continue to prevent the Somali students from attaining complete acceptance into the school, and thus the nation's identity, revealing the power that imagination has on the maintenance of divisions within communities.

This thesis examines how these normalized practices play out within both the English Language Learner (ELL) program and the school's understanding of the nation's secularism. I argue that the Lewiston Public School system balances assimilation and accommodation for its Somali students' linguistic and religious identities, a path that closely parallels the way that America defines its own national identity. Yet, the reactions to the victory of the Blue Devils, Lewiston High School's soccer team composed of many Somali refugee players, reveals how the Lewiston Public School system, like the American nation, imagines its community to be pluralistic while it still maintains exclusive boundaries that discourage multiculturalism, and continue to exclude cultures that do not fit the mainstream. Ultimately, the Lewiston Public

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[4] By "integration," I mean how Lewiston Public Schools respond to their Somali students. Is it through assimilation, accommodation, or perhaps a little of both? This is what my thesis explores.

School system defines Americanness through the inclusion and exclusion of Somali identity, making its students adapt to its desired definition for what makes an "American."

The Argument

In "Chapter One: Out of Many, One," I equate Anthony Smith's two definitions of nationalism (ethnocentric and polycentric) with ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism, respectively. I relate the concept of nations as "imagined communities" to theories on "banal nationalism," invented permanencies, and inclusive and exclusive boundaries. I also consider how these theories of nationalism and boundary-making apply to the American nation. In using America's slogan, "e pluribus unum – out of many, one," I question whether America embraces a 'melting pot' (exclusive) or 'salad bowl' (inclusive) approach in terms of assimilating or accommodating its diverse society.

"Chapter Two: Schooling America" describes the relationship between American public schools and the rhetoric of nationhood. In analyzing the American public education system's transformation over the past century, Pierre Bourdieu's cultural reproductive theory, and concepts of citizenship education, this chapter questions the likelihood of the nation's public schools embracing pluralistic, cosmopolitan ideologies to accommodate its diversifying student population.

"Chapter Three: 'We Have Responded Valiantly'" provides ethnographic background on my fieldwork site of Lewiston, Maine. By presenting the history of the former mill town along with information about the civil war in the Horn of Africa and the Somali diaspora of the United States, this chapter reveals how diversification of the city's population forced Lewiston and its

public school system to negotiate the boundaries of assimilation and accommodation around its Somali "New Neighbors."

In "Chapter Four: Crossing Linguistic Boundaries," I analyze the Lewiston Public School system's English Language Learner (ELL) program throughout the elementary, middle, and high schools. I explore how linguistic assimilation and spatial boundaries not only prohibit Somalis students from being "educated" as Americans but also continue to perpetuate the mainstream culture of American public schools.

"Chapter Five: A Symbol of Acceptance" questions Lewiston's approach to the nation's policies of secular education. In examining conflicts surrounding Islamophobia, Muslim prayer, and holidays, this chapter suggests that Lewiston Public Schools must continue to negotiate these religious issues in order to attain equality for all of its students.

"Chapter Six: One Team," explores the story of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils Soccer Team through the three "imagined communities" of the school, city, and nation. I argue that viewing the players as models of national unity encourages multiculturalism, while at the same time it continues to ignore the linguistic and religious boundaries of exclusion established around Somali students.

In the conclusion, "I, Too, Am America," I consider the implications of my research on the Lewiston Public Schools and the American educational system as a whole. I demonstrate how these findings can transcend the "ivory tower" of academia so that activists can use anthropological research to promote social justice and education reform.

"I, Too, Sing America"

"What is one thing you learned about Booker T. Washington from reading the article last week?" I ask Ms. Michelson's students quietly seated in front of me. The class has only nine students, all of them are from refugee populations and many of them are Somali. I pick up a copy of "Scholastic Scope," a magazine designed specifically for English Language Arts classroom instruction and turn to the article entitled, "Up from Slavery," a story about Washington's life from slave to scholar. The students acclimate quickly to their 'new' teacher, shouting phrase like "Slavery! Discrimination! Emancipation Proclamation! Hard work! Exclusion!" across the room.

"Excellent!" I reply. "Now, for today's class we're going to read Langston Hughes' poem which is called, 'I, Too.' I want you to remember the topics we discussed from Booker T. Washington's life and how it relates to what Hughes is saying in this poem." Hughes wrote his poem from the perspective of an African American – either a slave, domestic servant, or someone living in the Jim Crow South. The lack of concrete identity and historical context expresses the universality of the poem's message. I distribute copies of the poem to the students and give them two minutes to read it alone. "Circle any words or phrases that you do not know or understand and we can talk about them as a class," I instruct them.

Before I have time to break the students into groups, a bright student named Bahdoon raises his hand firmly into the air. "Ms. Ashley, what does Langston Hughes mean when he says 'I too, sing America?'" Other students nod and express similar concerns around this line. I pause for a moment then ask the students to share their thoughts. "It means he sings the National Anthem!" one student exclaims. "And says the Pledge of Allegiance," another adds. Many students mumble 'yes' in agreement with their peers' responses. "No," says Abukar quietly from

the front row. "It means he is patriotic. He believes in America even though others think he can't because he is black."

"Excellent!" I exclaim. "That is absolutely correct. The African American speaker in the poem is claiming his right to be patriotic. He believes he can show his love and devotion for America even though he is the "darker brother" who must eat in the kitchen. Wonderful, Abukar!"

Hassan, a rather rowdy, outspoken student in the class reacts strongly to the poem. He silences his usual chit chat and engages with the poem's message. "I, too, sing America," he whispers. "I, too, sing America..."

Chapter One: "Out of Many, One"
Nationalism, Inclusion, and Exclusion

"e pluribus unum" – out of many, one

The Rhetoric of Nationhood

On December 8, 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered a speech to an emergency joint session of Congress declaring war on Japan. The previous day, one he referred to as "a day that will live in infamy," Japanese forces conducted a surprise attack on a navy base, Pearl Harbor, in Oahu, Hawaii. He argued that "our whole nation [will] remember that character of the onslaught against us," arguing that the "very life and safety of our nation" rests upon the declaration of war (Roosevelt 1941). "No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory," he declared. "Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger."

The rhetoric of President Roosevelt's speech not only evokes the ideology of nationalism, fighting as a collective "we" against the "othered" enemy, but it also brings to question what exactly is the "nation" to which he consistently refers? Is it the "people," "territory," and "interests" that are under attack or perhaps is it the American Dream or the Pursuit of Happiness?

According to Michael Billig, a professor of social sciences at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, "much of this slaughter" of war and international conflict "has been performed in the name of the nation" (Billig 1995: 1). When President George H.W. Bush announced the start of the Gulf War, he claimed Saddam Hussein had not "raped, pillaged and

plundered" individuals, but something much more important: a nation (1). [5] Billig argues that

Bush "did not justify why the notion of nationhood was so important" or "why its protection

demanded the ultimate of sacrifices" (2). He simply employed the ambiguous yet unifying idea

of defending "the nation" to justify military action. George W. Bush used this persuasive

language in his speech in the wake of 9/11, asserting that "a great people has been moved to

defend a great nation" (Bush 2001).

This "rhetoric of nationhood" allowed these Presidents to declare war on American

enemies in order to protect the nation from the threat of further "invasion." [6] These men,

however, never specified what it is about the nation that Americans feel so compelled to defend.

In short, what *is* a nation and why are its members, specifically Americans, willing to fight for it,

protect it, and die to preserve its honor?

In exploring the concept of nations as "imagined communities," this chapter argues the

relationship between theories of nationalism and boundary making. It relates Smith's concept of

ethnocentrism and polycentrism to ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism, arguing that these

nationalist ideologies affect the permeability of a nation's boundaries. It also considers how these

theories apply to the American nation and how America's slogan, "e pluribus unum – from

many, one" highlights aspects of inclusion and exclusions around its national identity.

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[5] It is important to make the distinction between nation and state. Nations, as I will soon discuss, are "imagined communities" while states are political entities. People can be members of a nation and they can be citizens of a state. Not all nations have states, such as Palestine and Kurdistan. A nation-state is a sovereign political community of citizens who are relatively homogeneous. America is a state; Americans can imagine their nation in a variety of ways as I will explore in this thesis.
[6] See Jeffrey P. Mehltretter Drury's book, *Speaking with the People's Voice: How Presidents Invoke Public Opinion*, for theories on presidential rhetoric and nationhood.

Nations as Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson, a renowned historical and political scientist and one of the main theorists surrounding the origins of nationalism, echoes similar sentiments regarding the complexity and, proposed impossibility, of defining a 'nation.' In the beginning of his book, *Imagined Communities*, he refers to Hugh Seton-Watson's argument that "no 'scientific definition' of the nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists" (Anderson 1996: 3). Despite nationalism's unfathomability, it continues to be expressed in prominent and banal practices throughout the world. Although the "the era of nationalism" was long prophesied to have ended decades ago, Anderson believes this ending "is not remotely in sight." "Nation-ness," he claims, "is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time." Almost every part of the world's land surface, except for perhaps areas of Antarctica, are divided between nations and states (Billig 1995: 22). This system of nations is a "territorial vacuum," producing a world where all land is divided by national boundaries into sovereign states. Nationhood is often synonymous with sovereignty, revealing a nation's power in its ability to define itself from the rest of the world of nations.

Anderson notes three paradoxes pertaining to the concept of 'nation.' First, he notes the juxtaposition between the perceived antiquity of a nation by nationalists and the nation's modernity in the eye of the historian (Anderson 1996: 5). This contradiction reveals the power of imagination in creating nationhood and the ability to fabricate history to empower the nation. Secondly, Anderson comments on the "socio-cultural" concept of nationhood where everyone is expected to possess a nationality just as "he or she 'has' a gender". [7] He reasons that everyone

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[7] It is important to note that 'he' and 'she' are not the only definitive options of gender identity. Although Anderson fails to recognize the plurality and fluidity of gender identity in this instance the quote is still

has the ability to connect to a national identity, regardless of whether they have a state or not. [8]

Anderson recognizes that although people can be from Israel, for example, they can identify nationally with Palestine. Finally, Anderson recognizes the "political power of nationalisms" and the philosophical incoherence and impalpability of a "nation." In other words, he realizes the power nationalism has over its members while, at the same time, understanding the immense difficulty of defining 'nation' and 'nationalism.'

Although "[n]ation, nationality, nationalism," and nationhood are all "notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze," Anderson defines the indefinable. In recognizing these paradoxes, Anderson proposes the definition in "anthropological spirit," arguing that a nation "is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). He reasons that nationalism cannot be classified as an ideology such as 'liberalism' or 'fascism' but must be thought of as belonging with 'kinship' or 'religion.' A nation is socially and politically constructed and imagined by both the people who perceive themselves as part of that community and by others. [9]

According to Ernest Gellner, a British-Czech philosopher and social anthropologist, "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964: 169 as cited in Anderson 1996: 6). Anderson agrees with Gellner in arguing that nationalism's power stems from its ability to "invent" nations. He believes, however, that Gellner is quick to associate "invention" with "fabrication" and "falsity" instead of "imagining" and "creation." Nations are real but they are not natural. There is validity in an

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valid in its ability to recognize the shared characteristics of nationhood and national identity between all members of the world.

[8] Loring M. Danforth would argue that not everyone has nationality. See his book, *The Macedonia Conflict*, for more information regarding concepts of statelessness and national identity.

[9] Anderson's idea strongly correlates with Fredrick Barth's theory on self-ascription and ascription by others – see the section entitled "Creating Boundaries" for further explanation.

imagined nation, not fallacy or untruth. "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 1996: 6). In other words, one should not debate if a community is real or not, but recognize and analyze the manner in which it is created.

In fact, Anderson argues that *all* communities are imagined. He defines nations as being "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion," their community (Anderson 1996: 6). Anderson argues that the imagined nation is, in fact, *limited*, having "finite, elastic boundaries beyond which other nations lie" (7). He adds that "[n]o nation imagines itself conterminous with mankind," meaning that its members recognize the limits of its community and the boundaries it shares with other nations. Additionally, the nation is *sovereign*, possessing the power to draw these finite boundaries and define their permeability.

Lastly, a nation is a community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1996: 7). This camaraderie has the power to unite a nation under communal goals and ideology. In other words, these feelings of nationalism are the reason why millions of people within the nation are willing to kill and "die for such limited imaginings." In reference to President Roosevelt's rhetoric of nationhood, these "limited imaginings" of national community and the fear that they are in danger are what causes wars to be fought.

Gellner argues that a nation, "identified with a national culture and committed to its protection, is the natural political unit" (Gellner 1993: 409 as cited in Billig 1995: 19). Like Anderson, Gellner views nationalism as both a "political principle" and depiction of community.

He argues, however, that nationalism possesses a "specific form of consciousness" that allows it to depict these political principles as "natural." In other words, the political principles of nationalism – the consciousness of people recognizing their membership to a nation – make the nation seem as it were natural. Yet, Gellner believes that there is nothing "natural" about nations. Nations are ingrained and they are undeniably true. The issue, however, is that they are reified, meaning that nation members take their "imagined community" and attribute it to a 'blood community,' believing that nationalism has primordial sentiments. [10]

Michael Billig, a professor of social sciences at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom, compares Gellner's idea of "natural" to his concept of banal nationalism, or the everyday understandings of nationalism that appear "routine" and "almost invisible" (Billig 1995: 15). In short, he assumes a synonymous relationship between "natural" and "banal." He argues that these notions or "ideological constructions of nationalism" that seem so "solidly banal" to the nation's members are in fact "invented permanencies" (29). These permanencies become so engrained in the daily practices within the nation that it is forgotten that they were created and fabricated like the nation itself; they become so "common sense" that no one questions the naturalness of both their existence and daily performance (13).

This commonplace nature of nationalism leads to a dichotomous relationship between a singular nation and other imagined communities, one of Self versus Other, us versus them. [11] Billig argues that this polarity affects how one nation views another. He uses America as an

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[10] I will discuss the concept of "blood" and nationalism further in the coming sections. For now, it is important to understand that Gellner believes people attribute a nation to concepts of kinship and "blood brothers." In other words, people who think in this 'blood' way believe, for example, that a Somali cannot be an American because they do not share the 'American' blood to make them 'true' members of the American nation. See Clifford Geertz's "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" for more information regarding the presumed correlation between primordial sentiments and nationalism.

[11] These concepts of Self versus Other and "us" versus "them" are taken from Edward Said's theory of Orientalism that will be discussed later in this chapter.

example, commenting on how "'our' patriotism is made to appear 'natural,' and thereby invisible, while 'nationalism' is seen as a property of 'others'" (Billig 1995: 17). In this instance, Americans distance themselves from other nations by claiming their nationalism as "patriotism." Nationalism, then, is "the property of others" (Billig 1995: 49). It often has a negative connotation of being a wild, unruly celebration of national pride that only "other" nations practice. Yet, in changing the name, the actions, sentiments, and expressions of "patriotism" remain the same. In fact, a simple dictionary definition of patriotism will reveal synonyms such as loyalty and devotion along with nationalism, jingoism, chauvinism, and xenophobia. This "rhetoric distances 'us' from 'them,' 'our' world from 'theirs;'" a nation believes it "belong[s] to a reasonable world," one with "a point-zero of nationalism" unlike its neighbors (Billig 1995: 49). Although patriotism is viewed positively by the nation that possesses it, to others it may often be viewed as excessive and aggressive nationalism.

Billig believes "[w]e must question – or put into ideological brackets – the very concepts which seem so solidly real to us and which enable us to understand the assumptions of the daily news" (Billig 1995: 15). By bracketing – in other words, questioning or doubting – daily routines of nationalism, Billig argues people will begin to understand how their nation was imagined as what it is today. He states, "'our' common sense about nationhood and 'our' psychology of national attachments should be located within the history of nationalism" (16). People must revert to the history of their nationhood in order to understand how their nation maintains expressions of national devotion through subconscious, banal practices.

Billig exemplifies the power and persuasiveness of seemingly commonplace practices such as "flagging the homeland daily." By displaying a nation's flag throughout public places such as schools, government buildings, and town squares, it subconsciously reminds people of

their nation and its ideology. "[N]ational identity," Billig claims, is "embedded in routines of

life, which constantly remind, or 'flag,' nationhood" (Billig 1995: 38). These constant reminders,

or "flaggings," are so numerous and familiar that they "operate mindlessly" and unconsciously

"rather than mindfully." National currency can also stand as symbols of modern nationhood;

however, these permanencies are unnoticed in the daily transactions within the nation.

According to Anderson, nationalism often possesses a "near-pathological character,"

oftentimes uncontrollable in its expressions of national pride. He states,

> [nationalism's] roots in fear and hatred of the Other and its affinities with racism [are] useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love. The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles. On the other hand, how truly rare it is to find analogous nationalist products expressing fear and loathing (Anderson 1996: 141-142).

This "love" is what causes people to live and die for the nation. Cultural products and national

symbols, such as poetry and music, allow members to express feelings of deep devotion to the

nation. Anderson refers to the routine, common sense practice of singing national anthems and

the power it has in fostering nationalism. "No matter how banal the words and mediocre the

tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity," argues Anderson. "…people wholly

unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody." (145). He refers to this

singing as "unisonance," or the blending of different sounds to create a unified whole. Despite a

nation's size, strangers are able to unite in order to create and instill a common ideology within

its imagined community.

Yet, Anderson romanticizes nationalism, believing that this "self-sacrificing,"

empowering love of the nation is the *only* emotion that perpetuates feelings of national unity.

Although a nation can be joined through love, it also can be united through sentiments of hate,

fear, and loathing. For example, President Roosevelt's "Pearl Harbor Address" unified the American nation as a collective "we" against the "othered" enemy, declaring war with Japan out of fear of further invasion and danger.

Although Anderson, Gellner, and Billig are in agreement in their theories surrounding the complexity in defining a "nation," Anthony D. Smith, a former student of Gellner, argues for two theories of modern nationalism: ethnocentric and polycentric (Smith 1983). The former suggests the recognition of solely one ethnic group while the latter argues for the acknowledgement of diversity within the nation. Regardless of these two definitions, Smith believes nationalism is "a sentiment of devotion to one's nation and advocacy of its interests" (Smith 1983: 167-168). Yet, how a nation defines its nationalism according to these two definitions affects the fluidity of the nation's boundaries and, thus, its inclusivity. [12]

Creating Boundaries

According to Fredrick Barth, a social anthropologist, ethnic identity is maintained through processes of inclusion and exclusion. He believes "ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves" (Barth 1969: 10). In other words, ethnic boundaries are both self-ascribed and ascribed by others. For instance, if someone ethnically identifies as African-American, yet possesses fair hair and pale skin, another individual may disagree with this ascription and refer to them as Caucasian. [13] The individual may not know, however, that the African-American has distant ethnic roots in Africa even though their physical appearance may suggest otherwise.

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[12] I will expand upon Smith's two definitions of nationalism in the following sections, 'Exclusion' and 'Inclusion,' once I explain Fredrick Barth's theory on ethnic groups and boundaries.

[13] In this thesis, I will use "they" and "them" in the singular form when necessary in order to recognize gender-neutral pronouns and gender fluidity.

It may then seem, from this example, that ascription is based solely on physical or cultural characteristics. Barth argues, however, that this is not the case. Classifying a person's "basic, most general identity… [by their] origin and background," there is no "one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences" (Barth 1969: 13-14). [14] Although people often use cultural characteristics to categorize others into groups, this is only one form of ethnic ascription. Sometimes cultural features are distinguishable "emblems of difference" while in other situations they are ignored or denied (14).

Barth argues against the traditional approach to defining ethnic groups that claims "a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others" (Barth 1969: 11). He discredits this definition because it proposes a relationship between biology and culture that simply does not exist. It promotes the false idea that blood determines ethnic identity and cultural content. There is no combination of proteins or white blood cells that suggests ethnicity. A physician cannot tell the difference between a German and a Greek by sampling their blood.

This traditional formula disregards other possible characteristics of ethnic groups and expresses preconceived notions about the "genesis, structure, and function of such groups" (11). These assumptions suggest that ethnic boundaries are "unproblematic" and formed due to characteristics such as racial and cultural differences, language barriers, and unprompted enmity. Additionally, this definition limits the scope of studying cultural diversity, leading people "to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation." It implies that these ethnic boundaries are natural and should be accepted without concern. [15]

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[14] In saying "general identity," Barth is talking about someone's physical features and their relation to the person's ethnic identity.
[15] "Natural," in this context, refers to the way Gellner and Billig define it in accordance to "banal" and "common sense."

Barth revolutionized the way theorists view these ethnic groups and boundaries. He believes "the critical focus of investigation" should be "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (15). These boundaries of ethnic identity are "social boundaries," formed and maintained through the "interactions between people" (10).

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann agree with the correlation between identity and social processes, stating:

> Identity is, of course, a key element of subjective reality, and like all subjective reality, stands in a dialectic relationship with society. Identity is formed by social processes. Once crystallized, it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations. The social processes involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by social structure… (Berger and Luckmann 1990: 173).

As Barth suggests, ethnic identity is, in part, a "subjective," self-ascribed process. Other actors, however, also have the ability to ascribe identity through the social situations Berger and Luckmann mention. People are constantly negotiating the boundaries of ethnic identity, maintaining, modifying, and reshaping it through every social process. To return to the earlier example of racial identity, the self-ascribed African-American may never doubt their ethnicity until others question it in a social situation. One individual may agree with the person's self-ascription of ethnicity while another may not. These constant social interactions cause people to preserve or change their self-ascription.

Ascription – by both self and others – is a way to create ease and comfort in a social situation. As Barth mentions, "actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction" (Barth 1969: 13-14). Ethnicity denotes "membership" in a specific group, giving individuals an identity that is recognized by others (11).

Identifying and belonging to a certain ethnicity "implies a certain kind of person" that causes an individual "to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to

that identity" (Barth 1969: 14). Stereotypes exist for every ethnicity. Outsiders of a given ethnic group begin to view the members of that group with certain "standards" or expectations of their values and beliefs. For example, an African-American who does not possess the prominent features of a black man or woman may face less discrimination or judgment than an individual with dark skin and tightly curled hair.

Ethnic identity involves "a series of constraints on the kind of roles an individual is allowed to play," limiting people in many of their day-to-day activities (Barth 1969: 17). The differences between ethnic categories affect the social interactions between individuals and limit the ability for these groups to unite under a "common understanding and mutual interest" (15). Without any unifying similarities, ethnic groups and their boundaries become more distinct and rigid. Ethnic grouping is then similar to the "territorial vacuum" of nation making in the way it produces a world divided by both national and ethnic boundaries (Billig 1995: 22).

Members of each ethnic group, however, have the ability to decide on the severity of its group's boundaries similar to how members of a nation have the capacity to define its idea of nationalism. Thus, ethnic groups, like nations, constantly negotiate the fluidity of their borders. These next two sections explore the correlation between Smith's two kinds of nationalism and the permeability of boundaries.

Exclusion

"The repressed has returned, and its name is nationalism," writes Michael Ignatieff, former Canadian politician and author of *Blood and Belonging* (Billig 1995: 46). In this instance, he portrays nationalism as a negative, dangerous expression of identity, a "call to arms" of defending the ideals of nationhood. Ignatieff comments on the "ethnic civil wars" erupting

throughout the modern world in countries such as Northern Ireland, Kurdistan, Quebec, and Ukraine. Nationalism, he argues, is threatening to "turn the new world order into disorder" (Billig 1995: 47). Yet, this statement questions if these "ethnic civil wars" are in fact detrimental to the wellbeing of the world or if the "new world order" truly needs changing. Is this crusade for independent nation-states through ethnic nationalism dangerous or valuable to a world so divided by ethnic groups and national boundaries?

Ethnic nationalism is the belief in a shared heritage between members of a nation, often including a common language, faith, and ethnic ancestry. This definition suggests a "pure" ethnic group of individuals similar in multiple facets of identity such as physical and cultural characteristics. Due to the shared commonalities between members, ethnic nationalism is also the belief in a state, or organized political community, for its nation. In this case, ethnic nationalism relates to the proposed relationship between race and culture, which Barth disputes [16]. Ignatieff views ethnic nationalism as "the hot, surplus variety, being based on sentiments of 'blood loyalty'" (Billig 1995: 47). If an actor does not possess the desired "blood type" the ethnic group endorses, it will not allow the individual to be a loyal member of that nation. Given these strict characteristics of inclusion, ethnic nationalism tends to maintain impermeable boundaries.

Ethnic nationalism is then synonymous with Smith's concept of ethnocentrism. [17] "For an ethnocentric nationalist," Smith reasons, "both 'power' and 'value' inhere in his [or her] cultural group" (Smith 1983: 158). These nationalists view their ethnic group as a "vessel of wisdom, beauty, [and] holiness;" their culture is pure and highly valued. Any attribute, whether it is language, religion, ethnicity, or cultural practice gives the group power. Ethnic nationalists then

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[16] "a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others" (Barth 1969: 11).
[17] Throughout this thesis, I will refer to this type of nationalism as "ethnic nationalism" while recognizing the parallels it shares with Smith's ethnocentrism.

use absolute sovereignty to ensure the preservation of their nation's homogeneity. They assert this "power" through the maintenance of rigid borders while also recognizing the pluralistic nature of these boundaries. For example, a Canadian can more easily become an American than they can become a Greek. Although there are borders between being a Canadian and an American, they are less rigid than being a Greek due to the similarities the Canadian and American ethnic groups share. In other words, the border becomes more or less permeable depending on who is crossing it. Thus, Smith believes these two "dimensions are inseparable" in the creation and preservation of ethnic nationalism.

Smith believes an "ethnocentric kind of nationalism… characterised the ancient (and medieval) world" (Smith 1983: 159). Back then, "the 'nation' was assumed to be the centre of the world." If all nationalists viewed their nation with the utmost loyalty and importance, however, this surely created conflict due to the nations' different ideologies and ethnic compositions. Each nation's cultural distinctiveness instills a strong sense of cohesion, purpose, and identity amongst its members. As Billig notes, this type of "[n]ationalist thinking involves more than commitment to a group and a sense of difference from other groups. It conceives 'our' group in a particular way" (Billig 1995: 61). In other words, this undying unity towards the nation's identity creates a division between insider and outsider. "[I]f nationalism is an ideology of the first person, which tells 'us' who 'we' are, then it is also an ideology of the third person. There can be no 'us' without a 'them'" (Billig 1995: 78).

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism elaborates upon the distinction in this relationship between "us" and "them." Although Said focuses specifically on the division between the West (Europe and America) and the East (the Middle East and Arab world), his approach can be applied to this division in ethnic nationalism between "insider" and "outsider." He claims the

idea of "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience" and that the West's culture is "gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient" (Said 1978: 1-3). In other words, the Orient is portrayed as everything the West is *not*. It is important to note that the very notion of what the West is came about by a process of differentiation. It was Western scholars, not the Orient, who defined what it means to be Western just as they decided what it means to be Oriental.

Both Smith's ethnocentric nationalism and Said's Orientalism create relationships of opposition. The West polarizing its identity to the East is similar to ethnic nationalism juxtaposing its cultural and physical characteristics with other nations' identities. The West gains "strength and identity" by differentiating itself from the Orient. Similarly, an ethnocentric nation achieves power in determining what characteristics will be its national identity and instilling the value and maintenance of its homogeneity. This act of "Othering" creates and preserves these boundaries of ethnic differences due to the fear of losing this profound sense of "strength and identity."

Orientalism depicts the East as being *exotic*, a puzzle that awaits solving by Western scholars. Said argues that, "the 'East' has always signified danger and threat" to the West, leading to the reinforcement of stereotypes of the Islamic World and an urge of standardization and cultural hegemony in the West (26). These notions of exoticism instill an "us" versus "them" mentality between the supposedly civilized West and "mysterious" Orient.

Similarly, ethnic nationalism believes outsiders are intruders and sees them as a threat to its nation's autonomy, strength, and identity. In order to keep these "dangerous" intruders from harming the goals of the nation, the ethnic nationalists "stamp[s] them with an otherness" that makes them "non-active, non-autonomous, [and] non-sovereign" characters (Smith 1983: 96).

The nation defines the imposters as an "unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object," similar to how the West characterizes the Orient (Smith 1983: 98). Thus, homogeneity is preserved and an ethnocentric nation is established.

According to Billig, "the battle for nationhood is a battle for hegemony, by which a part claims to speak for the whole nation and to represent the national essence" (Billig 1995: 27). With this said, once hegemony is achieved, how is it used to effectively "speak for the whole nation," if at all? Additionally, Billig argues "a nation is said to have a distinctive identity of its own" (64). Is this "distinctive identity" composed of only one ethnic group or many? More importantly, if this identity is multi-faceted, how does the nation address its many diverse needs?

Inclusion

In contrast to ethnocentrism, Smith's second kind of nationalism – polycentrism – "resembles the dialogue of many actors on a common stage" (Smith 1983: 158). Regardless of these actors' differing ethnicities, they are able to unite under the nation's communal goals. In other words, it promotes the cohesion of multiple 'nations' into one diverse, yet and unified, state. Polycentric nationalism is then synonymous with multiculturalism, or the belief in the existence, acceptance, and promotion of multiple cultural traditions and identities within a single nation. It believes there are "many centres of real power" and encourages the borrowing and adapting of "valuable and genuinely noble ideas" of these various cultural sub-groups. Multiculturalism is "a diversity within a unity;" a single category meriting inclusion amongst its many sub-varieties (Smith 1983: 193).

According to Smith, there are three ideals of polycentrism: (collective) autonomy, individuality, and pluralism (170). First, in valuing personal individuality, the nation creates laws

that are uniquely its own. Other nations cannot replicate its diversity, which gives the nation independence and power over other nations. Second, this individuality gives the nation its own set of affiliated rights and duties into order to promote and protect this diversity. Third, despite its own uniqueness, it is important for the nation to realize it exists within a system of nation-states all possessing their "own cultural character[s]" (Smith 1983: 170-171).

Smith extends this point even further, arguing that polycentricism values the dictum, "one civilisation, but many nations" (159). [18] In other words, not only is the world filled with diverse nations, but a single nation also contains various "sub-nations." This "multicentered nationalism" seeks to unite the "family of nations" under an identity that appropriately recognizes all cultural groups in an equal manner (158-159).

Amy Gutmann, a political scientist and university administrator at the University of Pennsylvania, discusses the challenge of multiculturalism and the politics of recognition in modern democratic societies such as Canada and the United States. In the introduction to Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's book, *Multiculturalism*, she explains that although these liberal democracies are "committed in principle to equal representation of all," they often experience tremendous difficulty in putting this theory into effective practice (Taylor 1994: 3). Gutmann questions if people even need "a secure cultural context to give meaning and guidance to their choices in life" (5). If a nation is multicultural, is it even necessary or productive for people to identify by their culture since *every* individual is unique? She examines if it is possible for nations to unite under common needs such as health care, education, and the righto vote, as opposed to cultural recognition, implying a division between cultural identities and political practices (Taylor 1994: 4, 8).

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[18] Throughout this thesis, I will refer to this type of nationalism as "multiculturalism" while recognizing the parallels it shares with Smith's polycentricism.

Charles Taylor challenges Gutmann's inquiries, arguing that the politics of a multicultural society cannot exist without the politics of recognition. Identity, "a person's understanding of who they are, of their fundamental defining characteristics as a human being," is directly linked to recognition (Taylor 1994: 25). Multiculturalism's belief of accepting multiple identities within a single nation makes it impossible to have this form of nationalism without recognition. Gutmann wonders if a group's demand for recognition is "illiberal" since it detracts from the ideology of communal, universal diversity. In other words, if the democracy fails to account for a particular identity, is it fair to label it as exclusion or discrimination? (3) Taylor would say 'yes.' He claims "nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm [and] be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (25). Multiculturalism must then recognize the "unique identity" of an individual or group, understanding that this distinctness must be maintained and honored "not just now but forever" if the nation is truly multicultural (Taylor 1994: 38, 40).

In his analysis of Australia's rise of multiculturalism, Stephen Castles comments on the concerns around nationalism's existence in the modern world. He recognizes that some people doubt the validity of multiculturalism as a form of nationalism, believing its recognition of numerous cultural groups gives the nation no unifying features (Castles et al. 1988: 2). He expresses peoples' concern, asking that if members cannot define their nation in terms of its homogeneous cultural content, what aspects can unite their diverse nation – a "shared history, traditions, culture, and language?" (5). Castles believes that multiculturalism is a "viable way of defining the nation." At the same time, he recognizes that ethnic pluralism and a desire for "the

cohesiveness of a society" may continue to live in tension until people understand how to unify a

nation through the recognition of its diversity. [19]

The American Nation

There is no denying it – America is a diverse society, one that has grown in its diversity

over the past centuries. In an era of globalization and territorial displacement, the presence of

refugee and immigrant students and families has dramatically increased in communities

throughout the United States. Yet, this diversity creates difficulties surrounding the politics of

recognition in how to accurately represent these different demographics and their culture,

language, and ethnicity equally in political practices.

America is a country that appears to pride itself on its vast history of immigration with a

large proportion of the population possessing German, English, Mexican, and Italian ancestry.

The Immigration Reform Act of 1990 drastically increased the number of immigrants allowed to

enter the country from the previous Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. [20] Emma Lazarus'

poem, "The New Colossus," printed at the base of The Statue of Liberty, depicts America as

"The Mother of Exiles," a place of acceptance, freedom, and economic opportunity.

Despite its welcoming façade, America has struggled with this mentality of recognition

throughout its history – the genocide of Native American cultures and the Internment of Japanese

Americans during World War II, to name a few. More recently, since the terrorist attacks on the

World Trade Center on September 11, the United States has experienced a recent rise of Muslim

hate crimes and Islamophobia. In the 1990s, around 25 percent of Americans believed that Islam

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[19] For more information on the tensions of multiculturalism, see *The Perils of Multiculturalism as a National Ideal* by Donald Horne.

[20] The 1990 version increased from 170,000 to 700,000 immigrants allowed per year.

encouraged violence while 51 percent disagreed (Ernst 2013: 3). In 2011, the same question yielded results of 40 and 42 percent, respectively. A *New York Times* article published in September 2015 revealed the polling results from a few hundred Republican primary voters in the southern state of North Carolina (Downes 2015). In one question, "Do you think a Muslim should ever be allowed to be President of the United States?" 16 percent said yes while 72 percent said no. In addition, when asked, "Do you think the religion of Islam should be legal or illegal in the United States?" 40 percent said it should be illegal, 40 said it should be legal, and 20 said "not sure."

The negative sentiments that some Americans have towards its Muslim population, as evident in these surveys, reflect ideas of ethnic nationalism. By devaluing and discriminating against Muslims due to their religious identity, it suggests that only a certain "type" of American is welcome to be President and practice their religion freely. Thus, the nation continues to contradict its "Mother of Exiles" persona throughout its history. America preaches multiculturalism, promoting the acceptance of *all* diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities, while restricting the inclusion of certain religious groups into its national identity.

According to Carl W. Ernst, a professor of Religious Studies at University of North Carolina and co-director of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, some Americans believe "all Muslims are dangerous, and that liberty must be defended by taking freedoms away from Muslims" (Ernst 2013: 4). This ideology is "driven by fears of threats to national security," similar to the sentiments expressed by President Roosevelt in his Declaration of War after the Pearl Harbor attacks. When the nation's safety is endangered, its members perceive any outsiders "as potentially disloyal and un-American" (9).

America's history of slavery also brings to question the acceptance of racial identity within its "The Mother of Exiles" persona. The Three Fifths Compromise declared a slave to be worth 3/5 of a white man for the purpose of apportioning representatives according to a state's population. Although the Thirteenth Amendment incorporated at the end of the Civil War nullified the compromise, the struggle for black equality continues today. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 promotes equality on paper, outlawing the discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, and ethnicity, however, race relations still exist in "post-racial" America as evident in movements such as #Black Lives Matter which brings awareness to the disproportional violence faced by black men from white police officers. [21]

Given these historical events, it may argued that America is trying to promote a certain type of American national identity based on ethnic, religious, and racial homogeneity. Yet, is American identity white washed like its history? Is American "patriotism" a form of ethnic nationalism? The Declaration of Independence declares "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" to *all* human beings. Does the government, however, protect these unalienable rights for all Americans or only the ones who fit the Euro-American white mainstream culture that America seems to have promoted throughout its history? The country appears to be ascribing ethnic boundaries, including some people and excluding others into this definition of "American." Yet, given America's history of immigration, is it even fair to say that there is one type of "American"?

If America cannot be defined in terms of ethnic identity, what aspects can unite the country and its people (Castles et al. 1998: 5)? As Gutmann suggests, do Americans need "a secure cultural context to give meaning and guidance to their choices in life," or can they unite

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[21] See Helen Fox's *Fractured: Race Relations in "Post-Racial" American Life* for more information on racial movements and discrimination in modern day.

under the shared commitment to the political ideologies of the state, such as freedom and opportunity (Taylor 1994: 5)? America is divided between two ideologies of national identity – a "melting pot" and a "salad bowl." The former believes people must combine, or "melt" their cultural diversity to create a new American culture. This "melting pot" theory suggests ideas of cultural assimilation due to the fact that some aspects of a person's culture will be lost in the "melting" process and they will be forced to accommodate to practices that are not their own. On the other hand, the "salad bowl" theory suggests ideas of pluralism and multiculturalism, allowing diverse ethnic identities and cultural practices to be evident like the ingredients of a salad.

Yet, what do these two ideologies on national identity mean for the unity of the American nation? According to Billig:

> As far as national identity is concerned, not only do the members have to imagine themselves as nationals; not only do they have to imagine their nation as a community; but they must also imagine that they know what a nation is; and they have to identify the identity of their own nation (Billig 1995: 68).

America's national identity centers upon its definition of nationalism, affecting the way it imagines its "community" and creates the permeability of its boundaries. If nation members cannot decide on a unifying national identity – one that is based on either a shared cultural character or an ideological commitment – America cannot be considered a nation. Billig believes "[a] nation will only exist if a body of people feel themselves to be a nation" (66). Thus, without any unifying features, Billig reasons that the American nation will not exist.

Out of Many, One

On the back of all American coins, reads the Latin phrase: "e pluribus unum" – "out of many, one." Given the complexity of defining the American nation, it is important to understand what this phrase means in terms of its nationalism. Are the boundaries of Americanness permeable, promoting a pluralistic "salad bowl" ideology of American identity or is America an exclusive nation, possessing rigid boundaries of "melted" ethnic nationalism?

In examining various theories on nationalism and ethnic boundaries, this chapter proposes that America is an "imagined community." It negotiates boundaries of inclusion and exclusion around its diverse population, deciding which ethnic and cultural groups are welcomed into its national identity. America continues to balance practices of assimilation and accommodation, multiculturalism and ethnic nationalism, in both its philosophy and practice. Due to these conflicting ideologies, Americans must continue to question if their nation truly recognizes all of its "many" diverse members under "one" national identity or if it only welcomes some and not others.

Chapter Two: Schooling America
Cultural Reproduction Theory and Citizenship Education

"Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery"
– Horace Mann

Education in Crisis

When Horace Mann became the Secretary of the newly formed Massachusetts Board of Education in 1837, the condition of the state's public education system was a disaster (Downs 1974: 31). Child labor in factories and other mechanical employments affected the regularity of students' attendance. Textbooks were unstandardized, and the turnover rate for teachers was at an utmost high. Parents who were able to pay for their children's education sent them to academies and private institutions, unwilling to pay taxes towards public education (Downs 1974: 35). This lack of tax support patronized the public schools, creating vast inequalities and class distinctions between the public and private sectors.

Mann campaigned for education reform throughout Massachusetts, working towards the attainment of better school facilities, longer school requirements,[22] an expanded curriculum, and higher teacher salaries. Through his twelve *Annual Reports*, Mann addressed the education system of the state of Massachusetts, bringing issues to the awareness of the public. He increased government support for public schools, doubling the state expenditures on education. Mann became the nation's leading education reformer. He hoped that by creating one unified education system, students would come together to have a "common" and equal learning experience throughout the nation.

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[22] Students are required by law to stay in school until they are 16 years old.

In 1838, Mann founded and edited *The Common School Journal*, which focused on six fundamental principles: 1) the importance of universal public education; 2) and that such education must be paid for in the interest of the public; 3) "embrace children of all religious, social, and ethnic backgrounds;" 4) be free of "sectarian religious influence;" 5) reject harsh pedagogy in the classroom; and 6) have well-trained, professional teachers (Cremin 2016). "Common schools" throughout the nation embraced these principles and used them as the foundational guidelines in America's system of public education.

Yet, did Mann's "common" school movement truly promote equal education for *all* students? In the 1830s, the number of immigrants arriving to work in factories was steadily increasing, bringing people of different religions and ethnicities together. At the same time, slavery was still legal, prohibiting blacks from attending school. Could Mann have possibly predicted that, decades later, blacks and whites, Italians and Greeks, Catholics and Protestants, would *all* learn in the same common school classroom? Most importantly, what did Mann mean in referring to education as "the great equalizer of the conditions of men?" Did he see public education as a means of promoting common, civic virtues or promoting the diversity and individuality of the nation's students? By analyzing the history of American public education, cultural reproduction theory, and ideologies surrounding citizenship education, this chapter explores these questions and presents the relation between the American public school system and the rhetoric of nationhood.

A Century of Schooling

Before Mann's crusade for common schools in the 1830s, American children faced difficulties in obtaining universal elementary schooling due to the vast inequities in location,

class, and race (Binder 1974: 161). By 1865, however, "all states outside the South had achieved or were on the threshold of establishing universal, tax-supported, free common schooling" (161). The South soon followed the rest of the nation, adopting common schooling during the Reconstruction Era after the Civil War. The nation saw public, universal education as a way to ensure unity and nationhood, joining the Union and the Confederacy into national solidarity.

According to Patricia Graham, a leading historian of American education, the history of the American public school system in the past century can be divided into four periods of educational reform and change: *assimilation*, *adjustment*, *access*, and *achievement*.

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, many Europeans immigrated to the United States in search of economic opportunity in industrialized fields such as mill and factory work. In 1890, European immigrants were estimated to compose 15 percent of the total U.S. population, bringing diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities into the daily life of the American people (Zong and Batalova 2015). Between 1900 and 1920, America responded to its diverse new neighbors with assimilation.

In 1877, William Torrey Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education, responded to America's mass migration by stating, "If we do not 'Americanize' our immigrants by luring them to participate in our best civilization… they will contribute to the degeneration of our political body and thus de-Americanize and destroy our national life" (Graham 2005: 11). Many agreed with Harris, seeing assimilation as a "national priority" (12). Some feared that if the nation failed to unify under common ideologies, another civil war was bound to occur. Others believed assimilating immigrants would be just as difficult, if not more, than melding the thirteen original, diverse colonies together.

As communities, houses of worship, and newspapers across the country "perpetuated the language and religious and cultural traditions of immigrants," many Americans saw schools as the only source of the Americanization process (Graham 2005: 15). Public schools "became the core upon which Americans relied to assure the continuity and evolution of their government, their economy, and their social values" (3). The school system changed the curriculum in order to supply students with American nationalist ideology and academic, practical knowledge. Schools also strictly enforced English-only policies, coercing students to assimilate linguistically to American culture. It also "instill[ed] a primary allegiance to the United States" through units on civics, democracy, and behavior (Graham 2005: 3-4). In order to "assure the academic achievement for all students," the new curriculum provided the knowledge and skills necessary for prosperity in American society. As Graham notes, "[t]he schools' role was to meet the needs of the society by preparing children for participation in it" (10). Thus, the needs of the nation were placed above the needs of its students.

As Mann wished, public education became "the standard for the nation," but in a way that promoted American values within its diverse immigrant population in order to create devout, knowledgeable citizens (Graham 2005: 13). This era of education was "the great equalizer of the conditions of men," forcing immigrant students to assimilate to a unified set of American values. The assimilation period was similar to ethnic nationalism in the way it hoped to unify the nation under one, ideal type of American student. As Commissioner Harris said, the schools were responsible for "Americanizing" its immigrant students, fearing that their diversity would "de-Americanize and destroy our national life." American public education believed that by uniting its students under one common ideology it would preserve the nation's solidarity through its homogeneity.

Once Americans believed they had achieved assimilation, schools moved away from serving the needs of American democracy to ensuring the wellbeing of their students. This period of adjustment, between 1920 and 1954, moved beyond the formal, intellectual development instilled during assimilation to encompass the social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth of American students (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010: 4). Schools promoted "individuality through the integration of experience" and valued each student's personality and learning capabilities (Graham 2005: 53). In order to accommodate this individualization, schools developed ways to organize students into "academic, vocational, and general tracks for a more personalized educational offering" (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010: 9).

This form of education, known as progressivism, "was the dominating educational ideology after World War II" (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010:11). It promoted individuality rather than conformity, valuing students' needs over those of the nation. Progressivism was similar to multiculturalism in the way that it fostered inclusivity in the classroom and encouraged students to embrace their differences rather than assimilate to the nation's former ideology of homogenization. With the start of the Cold War, however, Americans became anxious about the lack of academic rigor and disregard for traditional academic subjects during the adjustment period.

Thus, 1954 to 1983 marked the period of access as America competed with the Soviet Union in technological advancement while struggling to ensure educational equality to *all* children, regardless of race. The United States Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 – which made separate public schools for blacks and whites unconstitutional – was a landmark step towards equality within public education. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, "racial" revisionists claimed, "schools reinforced existing patterns of discrimination and

inequality" (Reese and Rury 2008: 1). They questioned the purpose of schooling, arguing that its history dated back to immemorial inequalities between race, gender, and class. The Civil Rights Movement "demanded the integration of all children in traditionally white, high-achieving schools," instigating busing programs in an attempt to combat residential, *de facto* segregation (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010: 14). President Lyndon B. Johnson's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 emphasized equal access to education, established high standards of accountability, and aimed to lessen the achievement gap. Blacks, women, and handicapped students all called for greater equality and representation within the American public education system.

While American education attempted to create equal access to quality education for all students, it also strove for excellence as the nation competed with the Soviet Union in the Cold War. With the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the first successful human space orbit in 1961, America reevaluated its progressive education reforms from the adjustment period. It began reinstating rigorous academic programs in the disciplines valued during assimilation. Schools hoped to "Americanize intellectual life" through "Gifted and Talented" programs, created for intelligent youth in mathematics and sciences in order to aid America in the Space Race against its communist enemy (Graham 2005: 123).

According to Mansilla and Lenoir, "[t]he access era in American was defined by two fundamental forces which imposed often conflicting demands on education" – excellence and equity (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010: 14). As political rhetoric from the Cold War pushed for the development of stronger math and science programs, the Civil Rights Movement struggled for equality within all public schools in America. The era of access thus marks a period of tension in the history of American public education as it attempted to balance the needs of both the nation

and its students, accommodating educational equality while also promoting assimilation during a time of global competition.

In 1983, Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, commented on the failing status of American education in *A Nation at Risk*. The report noted the drastic decline in American students' performance on national tests, arguing that the nation was "raising a new generation of Americans that [were] scientifically and technologically illiterate" (Mansilla and Lenoir 2010: 16). Bell reasoned that in order to compete in the global market and assume a role of leadership with post-industrial societies such as Japan, China, and Europe, America needed to drastically improve its standard of education.

A Nation at Risk sparked an era of achievement that continues into the 21st century as the United States struggles to improve its education system in order to advance the nation's rankings in a globalized society. As Graham argues, "[a]s the purpose of schooling narrowed, so did the measure of educational quality. What counted now was one's test scores in standardized tests" (Graham 2005: 166). Students' diversity and individuality are now lost within the standardization of American public education, causing the public school system to, once again, focus on the nation's needs rather than the students'.

According to Monica R. Brown, an associate professor in the Department of Special Education at New Mexico State University, "the dramatic demographic shift in the United States is more apparent in the public schools than anywhere else" (Brown 2007: 57). The number of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in U.S. schools is increasing. "By the year 2020, CLD students will comprise approximately half of the public school population in the U.S." (Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti 2000: 25). In 2007-2008, white students made up only 54% of the student population while Latina/o students represented 22%, African American 17%,

Asian/Pacific Islander 5%, and American Indian 1% of the national student population (Rios and Stanton 2011: 19). Additionally, five percent are English Language Learners, and 11 million, or 21%, of the entire student population speak languages other than English at home. The diversity of teachers, however, does not correlate with the diversity of the student body. Although whites make up barely half of the entire student population, in 2007-2008 they made up 83% of the workforce of educators, often lacking knowledge around the needs of CLD students (Rios and Stanton 2011: 19; Cho and DeCastro-Ambrosetti 2000: 25).

Students of various ethnic backgrounds bring diverse cultural practices into the American public school classroom. In order to adapt to this changing demographic, Brown promotes the practice of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), a theory that encourages educators to "develop a closer fit between students' home cultures and the culture of the school" (Brown 2007: 57). This method "necessitates inclusion and authenticity," emphasizing teacher's responsibility to respect students' many "diverse cultural characteristics" (Nieto 2004: 353 as cited in Brown 2007: 60). CRT relates to Taylor and Castles' ideas of multiculturalism in the way it fosters students' diversity within the classroom and bridges "students' home cultures" with the school culture. Instead of forcing students to assimilate to a "common" ideology, Brown's educational practice believes American public schools should accommodate its diversifying student population.

Culturally responsive teaching is just one method schools and educators have developed in response to diversity in American classrooms. Others may take a less progressive and multicultural approach, suggesting that CLD students assimilate to American school culture instead of forcing teachers to accommodate to their cultural needs. Given the drastic changes that have occurred in the American public school system over the past century, balancing the needs

of both the students and the nation has always been a complicated task. The title of Graham's book, *Schooling American: How the Public Schools Meet the Nation's Changing Needs*, would suggest that schools have attempted to accommodate the nation's needs more than the ones of their students.

American public schools are a site of institutionalized American nationalism, imagining the American nation and producing Americans. Therefore, it is vital to determine how the nation defines its nationalism in order to understand what type of nation it is creating. According to Graham's historical timeline, schools have embraced the nation's seeming ethnic nationalist ideology, homogenizing its student population towards a unifying cultural identity as evidenced during the era of assimilation. The adjustment period, however, suggests that the nation, at one point in time, wanted to ensure the multifaceted wellbeing of its students' over ideals of American democracy. Now, in the era of achievement, schools are promoting national standards in order to compete with other global societies. With this said, does the current state of American public schools promote ideals of multiculturalism or ethnic nationalism?

According to Frederick M. Binder, an educator, administrator, and scholar, schools have always encouraged the latter:

> From time immemorial, schools have functioned as agencies for propagating and preserving dominant cultural values. As such, they invariably are conservative institutions, resistant to change, indeed we have seen, often lagging behind a rapidly moving society… They have been expressed in the certainty of superiority with which middle-class, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon values have been imposed upon those whose heritage differed from that of the majority (Binder 1974: 163).

Binder suggests that public schools are fixed in their conservative ways, promoting structures of white hegemony amidst times of increasing diversity. Although CLD students will compose over half of the school population by 2020, Binder implies that middle class, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon

values – which constituted the cultural base during the historical formation of public education –
will continue to be the dominant culture group valued in schools throughout the country.

Reproducing Inequalities?

Noah Webster, often referred to as the "founding father of American nationalism," fervently believed in the nationalization of American public education (Rudolph 1965: 41 as cited in Justice 2008: 1). He criticized teaching American children languages and histories of other countries before they learned to "treasure their own." In his 1790 essay, "On the Education of Youth in America," he wrote:

> Every child in America, as soon as he opens his lips… should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrations heroes and statesman who have wrought a revolution in her favor (Webster 1790: 64-65 as cited in Justice 2008: 1).

Webster saw American public education as a system for homogenization, a tool to bring the American people together into one, unified identity. Historians have studied historical figures, such as Webster, in order to analyze the growth of "national education" in American history, specifically around the "perceived need to homogenize and assimilate the population into a distinctly American mode, and the perceived need to centralize and 'nationalize' a system of public schools" (Justice 2008: 2). Although Webster wrote his work in the late 18th century, Binder would suggest that this ethnic nationalist ideology "from time immemorial" is what perpetuates dominant cultural values in schools today.

According to Bradley Levinson and Dorothy Holland, two educational anthropologists renowned for their study of social theories in education, "schools have served to inculcate the skills, subjectivities, and disciplines that undergird the modern nation-state" (Levinson and

Holland 1996: 1). In other words, schools are where nations are imagined, boundaries are drawn, and citizens are made. They believe a school is a "state organized or regulated institution of intentional instruction;" one that promotes American nationalism through structured and shared ideology (2). "With the rise of the nation-state as a political form, schooling became a crucible of common culture," a melting pot of cultural hegemony (Levinson and Holland 1996: 15-16).

Levinson and Holland argue that cultural reproduction, or the transmission of cultural values and norms from generation to generation, creates and maintains American school culture. Patricia Buck and Rachel Silver add to this definition, claiming that this theory "emphasizes the exercise of bounded agency within structurally determined parameters and offers a means to articulate the ways in which understanding and action reflect the specificities of time and place" (Buck and Silver 2008: 35). [23] In other words, these cultural values are perpetuated through structures that posses authority over people throughout history. Cultural reproduction – also known as enculturation or cultural transmission – involves two actors: the groups of people from dominant cultures who reproduce the existing social structure to preserve their social standing and modern school systems who instill these dominant cultures through "the institutionalized mechanism of schooling" (Buck and Silver 2008: 35).

Pierre Bourdieu, a French anthropologist, sociologist, and philosopher, developed this theory of cultural reproduction, specifically analyzing the nexus of economic and cultural values within the public education system (Bourdieu 1974 and 1983 as cited in Nash 1990: 432). He argued that the concept of education as an agent of cultural reproduction was less associated with the material taught and more linked with the socialization of education, or the "hidden

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[23] Buck and Silver are the co-founders of Matawi, a non-profit organization at the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya that works to increase education opportunities for girls and women. Buck is Associate Professor of Educational Anthropology at Bates College and Silver is a former PhD graduate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison for Educational Policy Studies.

curriculum." This "curriculum" instills the appropriate attitudes and values students are expected to possess in order to become effective members of the nation.

Thus, public "schools are not 'innocent' sites of cultural transmission, or places for the inculcation of consensual values" (Levinson and Holland 1996: 5). In fact, Levinson and Holland argue that public schools actually "exacerbate and perpetuate social inequalities" through the cultural reproduction of dominant cultural values. As Webster suggests in his ideas of "national education," schools were not designed to create a space for individual empowerment and advancement, but to inculcate discipline and conformity towards the nation-state (Levinson and Holland 1996: 5). The education system accomplishes what Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist, philosopher, and psychologist, refers to as "the conservation of a culture inherited from the past;" a transmission of power and privilege throughout history (Bourdieu 1973: 56). Gerd Baumann reasons that nations often target children as a main part of the nation-building process. Schools are "the primary site for integrating social and cultural differences into a predefined national whole" (Baumann 2004: 1 as cited in E. Doyle Stevick 2008: xvii).

Bourdieu uses the word *habitus* to refer to "a system of embodied dispositions" that promotes the dominant culture code of "the social world" (Nash 1990: 432-433). Schools teach these habitus to their students in order to transmit, what Binder refers to as, the "middle-class, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon" cultural heritage that is considered to be "the undivided property of the whole society" for generations to come (Bourdieu 1973: 57).

By drawing their student populations into the "dominant projects of nationalism," minority students feel unfairly subjected to educational values and practices that favor the more powerful cultural group (Levinson and Holland 1996: 1). Given the American education system's desire for homogeneity, hegemonic definitions of the "educated person" became

defined increasingly along lines of gender, race, class, and ethnicity (Levinson and Holland 1996: 2). When schools are unable to provide appropriate settings to accommodate their students' diverse needs, students often feel unaccepted by the school culture and are more likely to fail both the social and academic components of national education. Levinson and Holland argue that,

> As they develop a sense of their social position, and the relatively degraded value of their own cultural-linguistic resources in given social situations, non-elite persons also tend to develop a "sense of their social limits." As these limits become permanently inscribed in a person's "habitus," he or she learns to self-censor and self-silence in the company of those with greater social standing (Levinson and Holland 1996: 6).

When minority students are instructed to devalue their own linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identity, they internalize this ideology into their daily performance within schools. By converting social hierarchies to educational hierarchies, schools perpetuate the "social order" of the nation and continue to prevent non-dominant culture groups from attaining success both in and out of the classroom (Bourdieu 1976: 60). It is important to note that "while the educated person is culturally produced in definite sites, the educated person also culturally produces cultural forms" (Levinson and Holland 1996: 14). Schools instill subjectivities within their population through the production of cultural forms, but students are the ones who consume and then reproduce these hegemonic structures, allowing them to define American education.

Given the nation's diversifying student population, it is important to question if American public school system's approach to valuing these dominant cultural groups is truly "American" (Justice 2008: 18). Benjamin Justice, a professor and historian of education at Rutgers University, claims the historical scholarship of American education has "meant many things to many people" (Justice 2008: 5). He argues, "[t]he project of educational thought in America was not only the education of a nation, for a nation, by a nation, but the beginning of a 'novus ordo

seclorrum,' a new order for the ages." The country's founders believed in the global impact

America's formation would have on other nations; its schools were no exception.

Citizens of the World

Graham recognizes that schools' need to "respond to the public's different and sometimes

conflicting demands" that are placed upon them (Graham 2005: 5). She argues, however, that

"the American people have believed the schools are theirs, and they, not the teachers or

administrators, are the ones who should establish priorities for the schools. Public education in

American has meant that the public controls the schools which then serve the public's needs" (5).

If this theory holds true, the public has the ability to make changes in schools that benefit their

increasingly diverse student population. Yet, Graham does not specify whom she means when

referring to the "public." Is it truly *all* members of the nation's school system or solely the

members of the elite, dominant culture? If the American education system was truly created "for

the people of the world" as Benjamin Justice suggests, then the public schools should be not be

promoting ideologies of nationhood but ones of global citizenship (Justice 2008: 5).

James A. Banks, a leader in the field of multicultural education, believes that concepts of

citizenship education – the teaching of children to become educated, engaged civic members of

the nation – must be reformed in order to accommodate America's diversity. Assimilationists'

views of citizenship require citizens to leave their native culture and language at home in order to

become "full participants in the civic community of the nation-state" (Banks 2008: 129-130).

Banks disagrees with this narrow scope of nationalism and instead argues for immigrant and

ethnic groups' ability to fully participate in American civic culture while maintaining their own

cultural practices and heritage. He believes "the dominant culture of the nation-state should

incorporate aspects of [immigrant and ethnic groups'] experiences, cultures, and languages, which will enrich the mainstream culture as well as help marginalized groups to experience civic equality and recognition" (Banks 2008: 130).

Yet, Banks' use of the word "civic" is questionable. "Civic" specifically refers to the duties or activities of people in their local areas, such as towns and cities. Given this definition, it initially appears that Banks is only referring to students becoming engaged members of the nation on a local level. When he refers to students being "full participants in the civic community of the nation-state," however, perhaps Banks is implying that having equal representation on the civic level ripples out to affect the students' inclusivity and acceptance into the larger nation-state.

Banks' proposal around "equality and recognition" hearkens back to the ideals of Taylor and Castle's ideals of multiculturalism within the democratic, diverse society of the United States. Yet, both multiculturalism and progressive citizenship education reform face similar problems of creating civic communities and ideologies that "reflect and incorporate the diversity of citizens" while also possessing an "overarching set of shared values, ideas, and goals to which all of the citizens of a nation-state are committed" (Bank 2008: 131).

According to Buck and Silver, the American "nativist political philosophy" is one that promotes a "homogenous, White Anglo-Saxon nation-state and thereby perceives the immigrant (racial and religious) other as a threat to national wellbeing and as underserving of protection or inclusion" (Buck and Silver 2008: 41). In other words, the American nation excludes minority cultural groups from their definition of nationalism. Given American public education's historical tendency to value the nation's needs over its students', Buck and Silver suggest that a progressive theory, such as Banks' multicultural and citizenship education, would conflict with

America's propensity for ethnic nationalism. In short, American public schools tend to assimilate its students more than it accommodates their diversity.

Banks believes that ostracizing the immigrant community actually separates the American nation rather than uniting it. He refers to the discrimination ethnic minority students in other diverse, democratic societies such as Canada, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom experience due to their linguistic, cultural, and religious differences (Banks 2008: 132). These acts of marginalization and Othering from students and teachers of the dominant cultural group lead minority students to create strong ties to their ethnic identity and "develop weak attachments" to the dominant culture, and thus the nation-state (132).

While many nationalists and assimilationists are concerned about citizens' commitment to the nation if they retain connections to their cultural communities, Banks proposes that ethnic nationalism is counter-productive to the solidarity of the nation. By creating a nationalism that embraces multiculturalism, minority citizens will feel more included and will be less inclined to foster negative attitudes towards their national community. Ritty A. Lukose, Associate Professor of socio-cultural anthropology at New York University's Gallatin School, believes that cultivating this unity within a nation as diverse as America is a necessity, especially as the country's immigrant population is quickly approaching percentages recorded during the early 20th century migration movement (Lukose 2007: 407). Lukose's idea of creating a unity within diversity is similar to America's motto of "e pluribus unum" – "out of many, one." She seems to imply that by embracing multiculturalism and including the country's diverse populations into its national identity, American can truly be one, unified nation.

One in five children attending American public schools has an immigrant parent, and the number of individuals living outside of their home country increased from 33 million in 1910 to

175 million in 2000 (Lukose 2007: 407; Banks 2008: 132). Lukose emphasizes the importance of fostering pluralism within the American public education system in order to accommodate immigrants of various ethnic diasporas. Both Lukose and Banks believe national boundaries are eroding and becoming more permeable due to the number of people living in several nations (Banks 2008: 132; Lukose 2007: 409). Globalization has delocalized communities, causing many people, especially immigrants, to reconsider how they define "homeland." [24]

Lukose argues that national education systems are an excellent site to understand "the work of cultural (re)production in the age of globalization" (Lukose 2007: 416). She reasons that people should not see diaspora, or transnationalism, as a threat or form of separation from the nation-state (408). Lukose claims national assimilation cannot be the assumed identity for members of diasporas because it fails to consider the individual experiences of migrant students.

Banks concurs with Lukose' ideals of plurality, proposing for a democratic classroom that teaches multicultural citizenship, or cosmopolitanism (Banks 2008: 134). He believes that schools need to recognize the rights and needs of students in order to maintain a multi-faceted relationship to their transnational communities and nation-state. Cosmopolitans pledge their allegiance "to the worldwide community of human beings" and advocate for democratic classrooms that foster cooperation and unity instead of competition and exclusion (Nussbaum 2002: 4 as cited in Banks 2008: 134). "If students experience democracy they will internalize it," reasons Banks (Banks 2008: 136). In this instance, Banks interprets democracy to mean the practice of social equality, which he believes a nation can only attain through multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Transformative schooling provides students with the "knowledge, values, and skills" to become "deep citizens" which are,

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[24] For more information on globalization, delocalization, and neoliberalism in the 21st century, see Novella Zett Keith's article, "Community Service Learning in the Face of Globalization: Rethinking Theory and Practice."

…conscious of acting in and into a world shared with others… [and are] conscious that the identity of self and the identity of others is co-related and co-creative, while also opening up the possibility of both engagement in and the enchantment with the world (Clarke 1996: 6 as cited in Banks 2008: 136).

Deep citizens are members of the global community and are responsible for recognizing and practicing ideals of pluralism and democracy. In contrast, "shallow" students are ones that fail to embrace multiculturalism and instead adhere to ideologies of ethnic nationalism. These students instill Bourdieu's *habitus* of favoring the dominant cultural group and fail to recognize the nation's diversity within the American public school system. As William Tierney argues, education must support students to "come to terms with their own and others' identities, and to understand how the world shapes and is shaped by social interaction" (Tierney 1993: 158 as cited in Buck and Silver 2008: 50). Schooling is a process of socialization, allowing students to grow in their understanding of identity and democracy in a diverse world.

In short, "what goes on in our schools matters[s]" (Deborah Meyers 1995: 9 as cited in Buck and Silver 2008: 50). Education has the power to transform students into multicultural, deep citizens of both their national and global communities. When the school community unites in teaching democratic, citizenship education, students can begin to change their nation's national identity right within the four walls of a classroom and create a nation that is inclusive and cosmopolitan.

The 'Real Picture' of American Schools

As the bell rings, I quietly close the door to Celeste Hynes' first grade classroom at Montello Elementary School in Lewiston, Maine and hurry down the hall, eager to beat the
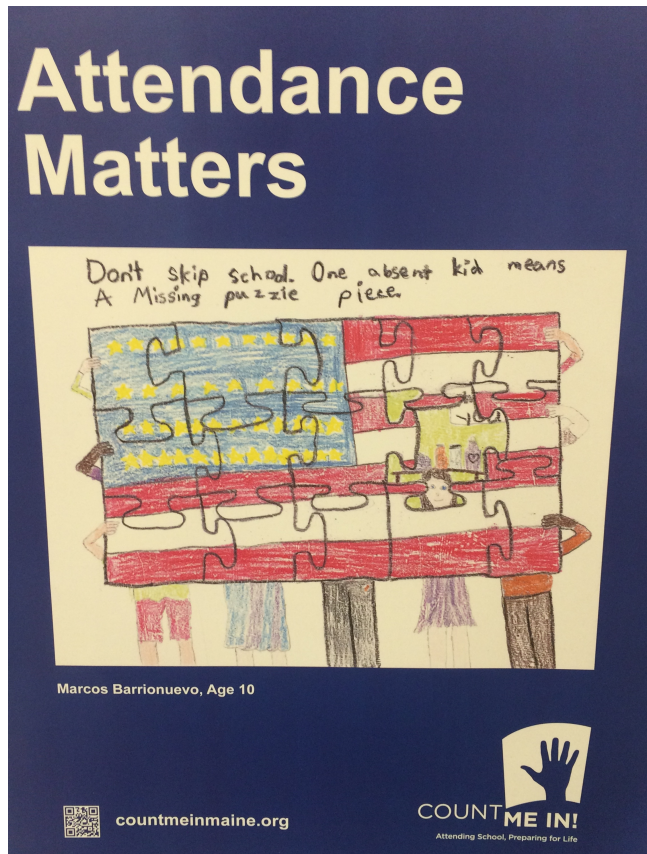
imminent rush of students and teachers. My mind replays the events and conversations I just witnessed during my short visit to Ms. Hynes' classroom.

I was helping a young Somali student named Samatar with his reading workshop exercises, explaining to him the concept of main and supporting characters evident in his picture book. In the middle of our session, a young boy named Wyatt with freckled skin and light brown hair, approached the desk and took the book out of Samatar's hands. I immediately scolded Wyatt, explaining how his action showed disrespect for his fellow peer. Samatar sprung from his chair in an attempt to retrieve the book and missed, resulting in chuckles from Wyatt and other observing classmates. Suddenly, Samatar began screaming and kicking the desk with tears streaming down his face. After minutes of attempting to console Samatar to no avail, Ms. Hynes called Mr. Worthy from In-School Suspension (ISS). He came and escorted Samatar out of the classroom and the class activities resumed as normal.

Ms. Hynes could see the look of shock and confusion on my face and began to disclose information around Samatar's behavior as we sat on the carpet cleaning up puzzle pieces used for an earlier vocabulary exercise.

"This is not the first time he has done this," she explained, sighing. "I don't understand. We have experienced a lot of this type of behavior recently from our population of Somali boys, but it has not always been this way with this specific group of students. Many of these kids are having a hard time adjusting to the classroom. I have been meeting with the principal, trying to understand ways to improve our students' behavior. I hate placing them in ISS but what else can I do to keep the classroom in order?"

As I walk down the hallway of Montello Elementary School, my eye is drawn towards a splash of color on the white cement walls. The poster I see is one of four created by students for Count ME In, a program that promotes partnership between schools, youths, families, and communities in order to reduce students' chronic absence within public schools across the state. I look around and see the same poster taped at various spots along the hallway walls intermixed with student work and fire safety signs.

Beyond messages of attendance, this poster possesses a larger significance regarding school culture and citizenship education. Students are the individual puzzle pieces that compose the school, which is represented by the American flag. As depicted by the colorful hands holding the flag, this school represents students from different ethnic backgrounds and, thus, different cultures. To the Montello community, this poster suggests that the school maintains its unity through the attendance of *all* of its students. When one student fails to come to class, however, the absence of this one puzzle piece weakens the school's structure.

To the lone anthropologist walking the halls of Montello Elementary School, this poster instantly evokes notions of nationalism. The flag is not only a symbolic representation of the school, but of the American nation. This symbolism implies that the school promotes nationalist

ideologies within its student population. But what happens when a student does not embody

these philosophies? Ms. Hynes responded to Samatar's behavior by expelling him from the

classroom. In-School Suspension (ISS) is not only a form of deportation from the classroom, but

a symbolic expulsion from the school and the nation. If Ms. Hynes removes Samatar's piece

from this puzzle of American education, is his absence felt? Alternatively, is the placement of

Samatar into ISS a way to remove him from the nation because his behavior does not belong?

Does his attendance affect the solidarity of the nation? [25]

George and Louise Spindler's analysis of the transmission of the American cultural

dialogue, or dominant cultural group, is strikingly similar to Bourdieu's cultural reproduction

theory. [26] Like Binder, they also argue that the mainstream, dominant culture of American

society is white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant (Spindler 1990: 4). They argue that students in

American schools participate in the transmission of this cultural dialogue differently, stating:

> Some children will be incorporated in the mainstream dialogue. Others will be left out of
> the mainstream dialogue but will be encouraged to make a positive adaptation with it. Yet
> others will, in effect, be disregarded, left so far outside of the center there is little hope for
> them to move into it (Spindler 1990: 58).

Not all minority students at Montello Elementary will be included in the school's cultural

dialogue. As George and Louise Spindler argue, some students will assimilate to this dialogue

while others will not as the school continues to promote ideologies that mirror those of ethnic

nationalism. The flag poster displayed in Montello's hallway illustrates American schools as

places of inclusivity, ones that depend on *all* students' pieces in order to have a complete puzzle.

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[25] For more information on the suspension and exclusion rate of Somali male students in Lewiston Public Schools, see Catherine Besteman's recent work, *Making Refuge: Somali Bantu Refugees and Lewiston, Maine* (2016).

[26] George Spindler, a professor at Stanford University, was one of the main founders of the field of educational anthropology. George and his wife, Louise, became a team in researching this new field and revolutionizing classroom practices around the country.

Yet, the Spindlers believe that this puzzle only requires the pieces of students' from the mainstream dialogue. The students outside of this dialogue must then choose to assimilate or continue to be excluded from the nation's puzzle.

Although Ms. Hynes is working with the principal to better understand the situation with her students, Lukose and Banks would argue that expanding citizenship education to contain the experiences of immigrant and refugee students is a vital component of making American public schools more pluralistic and multicultural. Until then, it is questionable if Samatar and so many other students of the Somali diaspora in Lewiston, Maine will ever be fully included in the school system's definition of the American national community.

Education for the Future

The American public education system imagines nations, draws boundaries of inclusion and exclusion around a dominant national culture, and makes students into members of the nation. As Levinson and Holland claim, schools are a "crucible of common culture," drawing students into "dominant projects of nationalism." Pierre Bourdieu's cultural reproduction theory exemplifies how white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant culture maintains its dominance through the curriculum and institutionalized values of American public schools. Students are taught to internalize this *habitus* of cultural superiority, which maintain educational inequalities for individuals of 'non-dominant' cultures. As Graham reveals in her history of American public education, schools have always been a "contested terrain," balancing the needs of the nation and its diverse student population (Reese and Rury 2008: 6).

To some, it may seem that public schools will always perpetuate injustices towards minority students outside of the mainstream cultural dialogue. Yet, given the diverse,

transformative history of the American education system over the course of 100 years, who is to say the next era will not be one that promotes an inclusive dialogue for students of *all* cultural communities? Banks and Lukose stress the need for a more democratic form of citizenship education, especially for students of ethnic diasporas. Instead of teaching students to be devout members of the American nation, Banks suggests schools should teach students to be cosmopolitan citizens of the world.

For the students in Lewiston, Maine, how does the public school system instill this cultural dialogue? How do students of the Somali diaspora navigate these cultural boundaries of inclusion and exclusion? More specifically, how does the Lewiston Public School system imagine the American nation and how does the nation's definition of nationalism define the "American" student?

Chapter Three: "We Have Responded Valiantly"
Maine, Lewiston, and the Somali Diaspora

"As our demographics change, people sometimes see things, and they may have an opinion based on their fears that a community or a neighborhood is [heading] in a certain direction, when in reality it's totally different. People love to live in the past and love to live in this nostalgia that things were somehow better. Things were not better in Lewiston 25 or 30 years ago. It wasn't anywhere near as good as it is now."
– Michael Bussiere, Chief of Police of Lewiston Police Department –

'Visible' Diversity

When walking down Lisbon Street, Lewiston, Maine's business avenue, a pedestrian will observe the city's prominent, multicultural diversity. Somali women wearing vibrant purple, gold, and green *jelabeeb* (long cloaks) and *garbasaar* (customary Somali scarves) paint a stark contrast to the neutral colored suits and dress shirts worn by local businessmen. Halal stores selling goat meat, spices, and rice stand adjacent to law offices, bakeries, and the public library. The pungent spices of *sambusas* (a traditional Somali savory pastry) blends with the smell of freshly baked bread from the nearby Country Kitchen factory. Families walk down the street, speaking a range of languages, including Somali, Swahili, Portuguese, English, and French.

At first glance, the city may appear to be a harmonious intermixing of cultures. Lewiston, however, has not always had such a visibly diverse demographic until Somali refugees began arriving in 2001. Thus, this chapter presents not only the history of Maine and Lewiston but information about the civil war in the Horn of Africa and the Somali diaspora in the United States in order to provide background on how the former mill town's "New Neighbors" made Lewiston, and its public school system, into what it is today.

The Whitest State

According to the 2010 United States Census, Maine is the whitest state in the United States; 96.9% of its population identifies as White (Voyer 2013: 22). "[M]igrant workers have been a pillar of Maine's economy for many years," especially in its main source of revenue: agriculture (Finnegan 2006: 49). Jamaicans and Haitians pick apples for the autumn harvest, Guatemalans and Hondurans cut trees, and Mexicans collect blueberries. Lobstering seems to be the only traditional Maine agricultural occupation still "performed exclusively by local whites" (Finnegan 2006: 50). These migrant workers, however, depart at the end of the season, leaving Maine with an overall minority population of less than 4 percent (Jones 2004).

In 2014, current Maine governor, Paul LePage, stated, "[w]e have more people in Maine dying than being born" (Gibney 2015). The state has the country's "oldest, whitest and slowest-growing population;" as a result, attracting new residents to Maine is "an economic imperative." Mainers, however, are traditionally known for their self-reliance and insularity. "Anyone whose grandparents weren't born in the state is an outsider" and designated as being 'from away' (Finnegan 2006: 49). Given the state's exclusivity, any minority populations, especially ones of significant size, are bound to be visible amongst Maine's homogeneous demographic.

Until 2001, the old mill town of Lewiston – Maine's second largest city with a population of around 37,000 – reflected the homogeneity of the state. In 1768, a Boston-based land company by the name of Pejepscot Proprietors granted Newbury, Massachusetts residents, Jonathan Bagley and Moses Little, land on the east side of the Androscoggin River (Hodgkin 2014). As more settlers arrived, the town sought incorporation and received its charter on February 18, 1795. Beginning in the late 1830s, Lewiston and its sister city, Auburn, "underwent rapid growth and industrialization" with the construction of several mills, canals, and dams

(Voyer 2013: 22). With the waterpower from the Androscoggin River, Lewiston became a prosperous mill town, with textile factories, a large paper industry, and a diverse population of working class immigrants (Hodgkin 2014). Before the industrial decline in the 1950s, Lisbon Street was at the heart of the city, with an opera house, apartments, and countless small businesses. Competition from the South and abroad, however, led all of the mills to close by the mid 1980s, leaving many former mill workers unemployed.

Between the 1970s and 1990s, Lewiston fell into economic hardship (Hodgkin 2014). The once-bustling, commercial avenue of Lisbon Street had boarded-up storefronts amidst adult bookstores and darkened bars (Jones 2004) The housing market faced an economic downturn as the three- and four-story clapboard tenements, once filled with mill workers and their families, sat vacant and dilapidated. According to the 2000 census, the downtown area included the poorest census tract in all of Maine with about 15 percent of Lewiston residents living in poverty. The city lost 10 percent of its population between 1990 and 2000 (Jones 2004). "No one wants to talk about the fact that the kids are gone and aren't coming back," stated former state attorney general, James Tierney. "If people find their way to us, then we need to welcome them and help them." The city's economic devastation left legions of former millworkers living with "lower household incomes and higher rates of poverty than the state and national averages" (Voyer 2013: 22). Many of these unemployed workers were descendants of French Canadians, part of the large Franco-American diaspora that arrived in Lewiston shortly after the founding of the mills.

After initially hiring "Yankee farm girls" and Irish immigrants, the mills began employing French-speaking Quebecers and northern (Acadian) Mainers in the 1860s. It is estimated that by 1900, the population of Lewiston was nearly 46 percent Franco. In 1971, 61

percent of the community was French-Canadian, making Lewiston the city with the "largest per capita Franco-American population in the United States" (Voyer 2013: 24). Despite their majority status in the community, Franco-Americans consistently occupied underclass positions throughout their Maine history due to their "lower household incomes, low-skilled employment in agriculture and manufacturing, and depressed educational attainment." Francos lived in segregation, having separate churches, hospitals, and schools from their Yankee neighbors (Parker 1983). They occupied an area of the city known as Little Canada and Yankees labeled them as "lazy" and "intellectually inferior" (Voyer 2013: 24). Lewiston and the state of Maine made efforts to eliminate French language and culture from the public sphere. In 1937, Franco-American students were banned from speaking French in school, in both the classroom and hallways (Lindkvist 2008: 168). [27]

Overtime, these negative stereotypes have diminished and ethnic boundaries have become less defined, allowing Lewiston to recognize Franco-American heritage and history (Voyer 2013: 24). Little Canada is now dispersed throughout the city and Francos have assimilated to the mainstream culture and attained educational equality to city residents. A Franco-American Center was founded downtown, hosting cultural festivals and weekly dinners that welcome French to be spoken. Museum L-A, a private non-profit organization, was established in 1996 to fulfill the City of Lewiston's Bicentennial goal of "creating a permanent memorial to local history" (Museum L-A 2015). The spires of the Roman Catholic Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul have become an iconic symbol of the Lewiston skyline. It is home to the last French-language mass in Maine, celebrated every Saturday at 4 p.m. (Bayly and Harrison 2015). The Lewiston Colisée was once home to the Lewiston Maineiacs, the sole professional

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[27] For more information on Franco-American history in Lewiston refer to, Rice-Defrosse 2015, Hendrickson 2010, and Roby 2004. Also, read more of Parker 1983 about the Franco-Americans in Maine, specifically in regards to their ethnic segregation.

sports team in town and the only Quebec Major Junior Hockey League in the United States (Voyer 2013: 25). Although having a history of ethnic diversity resulting from the multiple waves of immigrants such as French-Canadians, Italians, Irish, and Greeks, Lewiston is argued to have "lacked historical racial diversity," specifically in regards to immigrants of color, until recently (Voyer 2013: 5).

A World Away: The Somali Civil War

Somalia gained its independence from colonial powers in 1960 when British Somaliland and Italian Somalia merged to form the Democratic Republic of Somalia (Huisman et al. 2011: xxiii). As of 2005, Somalia, an Eastern African country located in the area known as the Horn of Africa, was home to 10 million ethnic Somalis, with many more living in the surrounding countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti (Voyer 2013: 30). Although mostly a region of arid savanna, the area between the Juba and Shebelle rivers, known as the Juba Valley, is arable and more conducive to farming. The valley is home to the ethnic and linguistic minority known as the Somali Bantus, brought to the area in the 19th century as slaves. [28]

Despite the country's regional differences, Somalis "have generally considered themselves an ethno-national group" and share the ability to speak Somali, practice Islam, and keep an oral tradition (Voyer 2013: 30-31). Somalis, however, are members of four principal, patriarchal clans that have "traditionally underwritten Somali social organization, political association, and legal protection and obligations" (32).

After the overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991, Somalia fell into a clan-based civil war. Barre, the dictator who had ruled the country since a military coup in 1969, was initially against clan affiliation. Years later, however, he became involved in clan coalitions and

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[28] See Besteman 2016: 35-56 for more information regarding the history of the Jubba Valley.

conflict which ultimately led to the state's collapse. When Barre left the capital of Mogadishu in 1991, Somalia fell into chaos. Clan warlords attempted to fill the absences of state power, beginning programs of "clan-based ethnic cleansing" in Mogadishu and spreading violence through the southern region, formerly known as Italian Somalia (32). [29]

Numerous droughts and famines struck the country throughout the Barre regime and beyond – especially during the years 1974-1975 and 1979 – forcing thousands of nomads from their regions (Huisman et al. 2011: xxiv). The drought in central and southern Somalia in 1992 left 25 percent of the population in danger of starvation while thousands died daily. By December 1992, the United Nations and the United States reached an agreement over the devastation in the Horn of Africa, sending 25,000 American peacekeeping troops into Somalia (Besteman 2016: xi; Voyer 2013: 33). Operation Restore Hope cost the lives of eighteen American military personnel, as depicted in both the book and movie "Black Hawk Down." By 1994, President Bill Clinton removed all troops from Somalia; the following year, UN Peacekeepers left the country, declaring their mission a failure (Huisman et al. 2011: xxv). In 2006, President George W. Bush decided to overthrow an emerging government led by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) that was believed to have ties to Al-Qaeda (Voyer 2013: 33). With ICU fractured, its radical faction, Al-Shabab, rose to power, openly claiming ties to Al-Qaeda. The group used severe measures, such as banning music and television, and violent punishments for infractions to maintain order. It staged various suicide bombings, its most notorious being at the 2010 World Cup in Uganda that left 74 dead and 70 injured.

In 2006, the UN reported that about 35,000 Somali refugees escaped to surrounding regions due to drought, continued rivalry, and war (Huisman et al. 2011: xxv). By 2007,

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[29] See Lidwien Kapteijns' book, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy of 1991*, for more information on clan conflict in Somalia and its effects on the civil war.

hundreds of thousands more had fled due to battles between insurgents and government forces. The UN declared Somalia as the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa with the refugee population reaching one million later that year (Huisman et al. 2011: xxvi). The UN estimated that just as many Somalis died, if not more, during the course of the war (Buck and Silver 2012: xv).

Although southern Somalia has faced violence and civil war for over two decades, Northern Somalia was much more politically and economically stable (Voyer 2013: 34). After Barre's expulsion from power, local clan leaders joined together, declaring the region an independent nation, known as Somaliland, in 1991 (Huisman et al. 2011: xxiv). While the US and the UN sent international aid predominately to the war-town South, Somaliland established a functioning government. It held its fourth election in 2010 where it saw power transfer peacefully for the second time in its short history (Voyer 2013: 34).

Similarly, the Northeast region of Somalia, known as Puntland, did not see as much violence as its southern counterpart. Somali pirates, however, seized ships in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, causing the area to become the "focus of international anti-piracy efforts." In 2009, pirates attacked over 200 vessels – hijacking 47 and ransoming 12 (Voyer 2013: 34). Even with fewer attacks the previous year, piracy brought nearly $100 million into Somalia. Various Islamic factions, many claiming loyalty to Al-Shabab, were involved in the piracy stock market and, as a result, caused Puntland to experience some levels of violence.

Somalia, however, has experienced some level of stability in recent years. In 2010, the UN officially recognized a transitional government, which has slowly been taking power since the African Union successfully ousted Al-Shabab from a majority of the cities (Voyer 2013: 34). In 2006, Mogadishu – once the world's most dangerous city – opened its airports and seaports

for the first time since 1995 (Huisman et al. 2011: xxiv). Some members of the Somali diaspora are beginning to return home as Mogadishu is experiencing economic growth and less violence.

Dadaab, Kenya: A Life of Refuge

In January 2009, nearly 600,000 Somalis sought refuge outside of the country in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda (Voyer 2013: 35). An overwhelming majority of these refugees travelled to the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, 50 miles away from the border of neighboring Somalia (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2011). [30] Surrounded by barren desert, Dadaab is comprised of three camps – Dagahaley, Hagadera, and Ifo – collectively known as "the biggest refugee camp in the world." Originally established in 1991 to accommodate 90,000 people escaping violence and civil war in Somalia, the camp now has a refugee population of over 370,000 with numbers rising every day due to the severe drought throughout East Africa (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2011; Buck and Silver 2012: xv).

The camp is the size of a city and, as of 2011, it was at its full capacity. Many refugees – around 8,000 – have responded by building fragile shelters in the desert on the camp's fringes with no proper security and limited water and sanitation (Medecins Sans Frontieres 2011). On average, it takes new residents of Dadaab 12 days to receive their first ration of food and 34 days to obtain other supplies such as cooking utensils and blankets. Until then, many families have to fend for themselves, having already gone days without water, food, and shelter. The rate of malnutrition is extremely high, especially amongst children under the age of five. Many have not received any vaccinations in their lifetime, causing fear of a disease outbreak throughout the

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[30] To learn more about Dadaab, see Ben Rawlence's book, *City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp*.

camp. An extension of one of the camps, known as Ifo Extension or Ifo II, opened in 2001 and houses 40,000 extra spaces.

Even in 2016, the number of refugees continues to grow. Medecins Sans Frontieres workers have referred to the lack of food, water, shelter, and education at Dadaab as a "humanitarian crisis." According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 80 percent of the residents of Dadaab are women and children and 95 percent identify as ethnic Somalis.

Resettled: Somalis in the United States

Although many Somali refugees still live in Kenyan refugee camps like Dadaab, "a lucky few among the camp population find their way onto the UNHCR resettlement lists" (Buck and Silver 2012: xv). Once Somalis cross the border into Kenya, they are eligible to apply for refugee status and its associated rights and protections. "Although living primarily in refugee camps in neighboring Kenya, this substantial and growing Somali diaspora was nonetheless dispersed over many nations" (Voyer 2013: 35). Some Somalis resettle in Yemen, Canada, United Kingdom, or Denmark while many find their way to the country with the fourth largest number of Somali refugees: the United States (Buck and Silver 2012: xv). [31]

Between 1991 and 2005, the country admitted around 35,000 Somalis as refugees, many through family reunification programs (Voyer 2013: 35). This approximation, however, fails to account for the 400 Somalis admitted as permanent residents each year, refugees who came to the United States before 1991, and the number of well-established second generation Somali

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[31] See Cawo M. Abdi's book, *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity*, for more information on the conflicts of Somali resettlement in the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, and the United States.

Americans. According to the Office of Immigration, there are easily 100,000 Somalis currently living in America.

Somalis have resettled in every state except seven (Huisman et al. 2011: 24). According to Voyer, "in 2008, more than half of newcomers to the United States settled in just four states – California, New York, Florida, and Texas" (Voyer 2013: 37). The Somali immigrant population, however, is concentrated mainly in Washington, Minnesota, and Ohio and in cities such as Seattle, Minneapolis, and Columbus. They tend to demonstrate "distinct settlement patterns, often residing in areas with little history of recent nonwhite immigration and where they make up a substantial proportion of the immigrant community" (37). As of 2008, Somalis made up 19 percent of the permanent residents in Minneapolis and 24 percent in Columbus (39). Contemporary immigration is characterized by movement to "new immigrant gateways," settling in towns and cities with little "prior immigrant experience." These areas are referred to as "gateway cities," having a population between 35,000 to 250,000 and a median household income that is below the state average.

"[E]ven after resettlement Somalis do not sit still," causing their migration to be "understood within the larger context of nomadic traditions" (Huisman et al. 2011: 24). [32] Since 2000, the Somali refugee population has experience a large amount of secondary and tertiary migration in search of opportunities such as employment, affordable housing, health care, and education. For example, many Somalis have migrated to the Midwest to acquire positions in the meatpacking industries. It is estimated that of the 15,000 to 30,000 Somalis living in Minnesota, 60 percent of them living in the Twin Cities – Minneapolis and St. Paul – moved there from

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[32] Some researchers would consider referring to Somalis as being "nomadic" to be debatable. In my interviews with Somali members of the Lewiston community, however, many referred to Somalis as having "nomadic roots," emphasizing the importance of these "roots" in their ability to create a sense of community in the United States.

other locations in the United States. This is what happened to Abdiaziz Ali and his family living in Atlanta, Georgia in late 2000 (Jones 2004).

Maine's Mogadishu: Somalis in Lewiston, Maine

At the turn of the 21st century, hundreds of Somali refugees from Atlanta and Clarkston, Georgia – a city ten miles northeast of the state's capital – resettled to the old mill town of Lewiston, Maine. Like Ali and his family, Somalis found urban life "too violent, too drug-ridden, [and] too infused with consumer culture" for their devout practice of Islam (Jones 2004). Somali elders sent groups in every direction of the country – Kansas City; Dearborn, Michigan; Portland, Maine – to find a safe home for their community. They learned that Maine's crime rate was ranked 46th in the nation compared to Georgia's 13th (Jones 2004). Portland had a sizeable immigration population but a scare amount of low-income housing. Somalis then drove 45 minutes north to Lewiston, a community with low crime, affordable housing, and good schools.

Information about the Maine city was posted on the Somali website, www.hiiraan.com, and reached throughout the United States and Kenyan refugee camps. Somalis first started coming to Lewiston in February 2001 (Finnegan 2006: 48). [33] Between the summer of 2001 and October 2002, more than 1,200 Somalis moved to the city, with 40 to 50 arriving every month (Voyer 2013: 20; Jones 2004). By the summer of 2002, Lewiston was known within the global Somali diaspora as a desirable location (Voyer 2013: 20). Two years later, the city had around 3,000 Somalis, making it home to the largest concentration of Somalis in the United States (21). As of 2015, there are over 7,000 Somalis in Lewiston and Auburn; around 4,000 live in Lewiston and account for well over 10 percent of the city's population (Huisman et al. 2011: 24). In 2008,

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[33] Somali Bantus, a minority group targeted by Somali clans during the civil war, began arriving in Lewiston in 2005 (Besteman 2016: xii).

81 percent of Lewiston's legal permanent immigrant residents identified as being Somali or Kenyan born (Voyer 2013: 39) [34].

This large number of African Muslim refugees settling in a predominately white, Roman Catholic, and Franco-American city, caused many Lewiston residents to react with fear and hatred (Huisman et al. 2011: 24). On October 1, 2002, Mayor Laurier T. Raymond Jr. wrote an open letter to the Somali elders, asking them to tell their Horn of Africa diaspora community to stop coming to Lewiston [35]. "We have been overwhelmed and have responded valiantly. Now we need breathing room. Our city is maxed-out financially, physically and emotionally" (Voyer 2013: 2). Local liberals condemned the mayor as a racist and openly supported Lewiston's diversity while others used 'the Letter' to encourage racial purity and immigration restrictions. The Somali community called for an apology, upset that their city leader did not support their arrival. They replied with a letter that dismissed the mayor's accusations, criticized him for using Somalis as scapegoats to the city's financial difficulties, and explained the benefits of immigrant resettlement in the old mill town.

Unfounded rumors began to spread about Somalis receiving free cars, housing preferences, and vast amounts of welfare money (Finnegan 2006: 48). A majority of second wave Somali immigrants left Georgia, a state with one of the lowest level of welfare benefits in the nation (ranked 40th), and moved to Maine, ranked 13th (Huisman et al. 2011: 27). Unlike Georgia, Maine has no lifetime limit on welfare, allowing benefits to continue to children long after their parents stop receiving assistance (29). The main reason for Somali migration to the state, however, was to "improve quality of life" due to Lewiston's affordable housing, low crime

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[34] Many ethnic Somalis identify as being Kenyan due to the large amount of refugee children born and raised in Kenyan refugee camps. These individuals are referred to as "the camp's first children." Some experience a sense of displacement, however, feeling neither Somali nor Kenyan.
[35] See Appendix A for Mayor Raymond's full letter.

rates, and good schools (30). "[G]eneral assistance to asylum seekers accounts for less than 1 percent of the city's budget" and the Somali unemployment rate is only slightly higher than Maine's rate of 4.7 percent (Gibney 2015). Yet, many residents of Lewiston still feared that Somalis would "bankrupt the town" (Finnegan 2006: 48).

Additionally, Somalis' religious and ethnic identity made them targets for terrorism concerns. As journalist, William Finnegan, states, "[i]t was not the best historical moment in which to be a Muslim immigrant in American, particularly not a Somali" (48). Months after Somalis' arrival in early 2001, the United States witnessed the worst terrorist attack in its history on the World Trade Center Twin Towers on September 11th. The release of the movie, "Black Hawk Down," showed graphic images of American soldiers being dragged throughout the streets of Mogadishu. One of the military personnel had grown up near Lewiston, which made terrorism and the traumatic events abroad feel incredibly close and personal. Fear spread about Somali Americans being recruited and trained to lead additional terrorist attacks across the nation. [36]

On January 11, 2003, The World Church of the Creator (WCOTC), a white supremacist group, visited Lewiston claiming that "Somalis [we]re unwelcome" and were invading the community (Hamzeh 2003; Jones 2004). The group's leader, Matt Hale, said, "I want to rally the white people of Lewiston for their own interests, and those interests do not tolerate the invasion of Somalis in their city. The Somalis are unwelcome there, and they shouldn't be there." Despite the group's widespread media attention, less than four-dozen WCOTC supporters attended the event.

The Many and One Coalition, a diversity organization formed in opposition to the WCOTC, staged a counter-rally at Bates College (Hamzeh 2003; Jones 2004). The event drew 4,500 people, including the governor and attorney general, forcing over half of the supporters

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[36] For more information on Somali American's possible links to global terrorism, see Voyer 2013: 41-43.

outside in the middle of the cold Maine winter, cheering and chanting (Jones 2004). Many attendees, however, were predominately liberals from Southern Maine and did not accurately represent Lewiston's working class population. Lewiston Chief of Police, William Welch, created a security plan that called for "the largest mobilization of law enforcement in Maine's history" (Voyer 2013: 3). Yet, there was no violence at either event.

Some city members hailed the event as a turning point, claiming that Somalis were now welcome into the community. Diversity programs, multicultural events, and Somali ethnic festivals filled the city's calendar following the demonstrations (Voyer 2013: 3). Omar Ahmed, a playwright and teacher when he lived in Somalia, wrote a play called "Love in Cactus Village" in an attempt to thank Lewiston for its hospitality and showcase Somali culture (Finnegan 2006: 49). Despite some negative reviews from the imam of the local mosque and other conservative Somalis who believed theater was *haram* (forbidden), many members of the community saw Ahmed's play as "a step in the right, pluralist direction" towards bridging cultural differences in Lewiston (Finnegan 2006: 49).

In July 2006, after the 2003 Many and One Rally promised to be a 'turning point' for the city, a local man threw a frozen pig's head into the Lisbon Street mosque while Somalis were prostrating during Friday prayer (Finnegan 2006: 54). Local churches came together to organize a rally and top state officials, like the governor, visited to show their support. The Lewiston community called the "rolling of the pig" incident a federal hate-crime and the perpetrator was arrested, facing criminal charges. [37]

In a 2012 BBC documentary, current Mayor Robert Macdonald told Somalis to "accept our culture and leave your culture at the door" (Thistle 2012). In an attempt to clarify his

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[37] It is important to note that the perpetrator was considered mentally ill. Shortly after his conviction, he committed suicide. Despite these details, the community still reacted strongly to this event and interpreted it as an anti-Muslim hate crime.

statement, Macdonald told WGME television, "[i]f you believe in (Somali culture) so much, why aren't you over there fighting for it? … [W]hy aren't you over there shedding your blood to get it? Why are you here shirking your duties?" Many members of the Lewiston community viewed the Mayor's comment as a setback to the progress the city had made since Somali's initial arrival in 2001. "Would he ask that of the other cultures in Lewiston?" asked Hussein Ahmed, an owner of a *halal* store on Lisbon Street. "Would he ask that of the Franco-Americans and of the Irish?" Lewiston City Council President Mark Cayer asserted that Macdonald's words were not intended to be controversial, arguing that the Mayor embraces his town's multiculturalism. "[T]hat's what made American culture the way it is, that diversity," stated Cayer.

Yet, Mayor Macdonald has continued to be involved in controversies surrounding Lewiston's population of "New Mainers". During his re-election campaign for a third term in 2015, he echoed Tea Party Maine governor, Paul LePage, openly backing efforts to end general assistance to asylum seeking immigrants and threatening to publish a public list of welfare recipients (Gibney 2015). Macdonald's rival mayoral candidate, Ben Chin, campaigned for continued public assistance for asylum seekers. Chin is a Chinese-American and the political director of the progressive Maine People's Alliance. In October 2015, local landlord, Joseph Dunne, put up signs reading, "Don't Vote for Ho Chi Chin: Vote for More Jobs, Not More Welfare," depicting a caricature of Vietnam communist leader, Ho Chin Minh (Russell 2015). Around 100 people, including many Bates College students, gathered in the center of town to condemn the racist signs and attempted to assure the community that Lewiston is a welcoming city that "will not tolerate hate."

Despite Lewiston's progress over the years in being more inclusive to its Somali population, these events reveal the lingering ignorance, racism, and intolerance some city

members have towards its "New Neighbors." In the early years of the Somalis' arrival, "a swelling contingent of welfare-dependent non-English-speaking immigrants traumatized by war and violence" entering the city "didn't exactly promise an economic miracle" (Gibney 2015). Over the years, however, Somalis have grown and rejuvenated Lewiston's population. They have filled once-vacant buildings along Lisbon Street with *halal* stores and other Somali businesses. Empty tenements in the downtown area are now occupied by large families, helping improve the city's housing market. Somalis have also had a drastic effect on the Lewiston Public School system, in terms of demographics, academic performance, and public social services.

Changes in the Classroom: Somalis in School

According to Gibney, "since 2002 the number of kids in its schools has risen by 20 percent. If that's a burden, it's one that nearby communities might like to have: the school population for the rest of Androscoggin County has fallen by 15 percent" (Gibney 2015). Lewiston's increased population in its public school system, however, came at a cost of negotiation between assimilation and accommodation.

The English Language Learner (ELL) program originally had about forty students for the whole district, requiring only one tutor. With the arrival of Somalis, however, the ELL population rose to 1,298 by the end of 2001 and to 1,446 in 2008 (Lindkvist 2008: 167). Suddenly, "children of French Canadian descent sat side-by-side with Somalis from a war-torn nation in the Horn of Africa" (167). Due to *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) [38] and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Somali students were able to speak their native language freely within the classroom and

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[38] *Lau v. Nichols* is a civil rights case brought forward by Chinese-American students in San Francisco in 1974 that claimed they were not receiving special help because of their limited English proficiency. The Supreme Court ruled that ELL students should be treated with equality in schools. Due to language's connection to national origin, the Court also ruled that language discrimination is a form of ethnic discrimination and is therefore not tolerated.

hallways (168). Franco-American families were frustrated, however, remembering how Lewiston schools forced their ancestors to linguistically assimilate in the mid-1930s due to a strict English-only policy.

Lewiston Public Schools also adapted to changes in its school system in regards to dress code, dietary restrictions, and religious observances (Lindkvist 2008: 166). The debate about the allowance of religious "headgear," specifically the hijab (headscarf) and *masar* (head wrap), in schools was controversial during the Somalis' initial arrival. Many argued that if Somali girls could wear head covering, then local girls could don bandanas – a practice banned due to their symbolization of gang affiliation (167). In the Student Handbook of 2004–2005, the school updated the dress-code policy ruling that any type of headwear is banned except for ones due to "medical or religious requirements" (176).

Additionally, Somali girls' long, modest clothing posed an issue for the "shorts and tee shirts" athletic wear expected in Physical Education classes (Lindkvist 2008: 184). After much discussion, the school agreed to allow Somali girls to wear the *masar* and lose pants with elastic at the ankles to allow for movement. Some opted out of gym class during Ramadan, using the fast as an excuse to limit their physical activity (186).

Religious observations were also negotiated between the Somali community and the Lewiston School Department. Muslim's inability to eat pork caused the cafeteria staff to adapt their food services to protect the dietary needs of their Somali students. They developed special signage, labeling foods containing pork and gelatin with "doofaar," the Somali word for pig.

Additionally, the school allowed Somalis to have an excused absence during the Muslim celebrations of Ramadan and Eid. Although not recognized holidays, the school agreed to send out emails to notify teachers of the students' absence and inform them of the work they would

need to make up (189). It also debated permitting Somali students to leave class for *Jumma*, or Friday prayer, along with the allowance of daily worship and prayer rooms in schools (189).

Although the Lewiston Public School system has made numerous changes to its public service programs and policies, the department continues to negotiate the boundaries of accommodation and assimilation for its diverse student population. [39]

"American culture"

As City Council President Cayer stated, "diversity…[is] what made American culture the way it is." Furthermore, it can be argued that Somali's linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity has begun to redefine Lewiston's history and identity away from a white, homogeneous population into a promising metropolis of multiculturalism.

The tragedies of the civil war and droughts in the Horn of Africa displaced hundreds of thousands of Somalis who fled to and settled in surrounding countries such as Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda. Many sought refuge in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya, with limited access to food, water, sanitation, safety, and education. A few lucky thousand were dispersed throughout the world, finding their way to American cities such as Minneapolis, Cleveland, Seattle, and Lewiston. In 2015, nearly 4,000 Somalis called Maine's former mill town home, adding to the city's historical demographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity.

Lewiston has come far from its initial unwelcoming responses to the Somalis' arrival in early 2001. Events such as the Many and One rally and the reactions to the "Rolling of the Pig" and the racist "Ho Chi Chin" mayoral campaign posters showcase how Lewiston continues, time

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[39] There is not much literature on Somalis within public schools, specifically in Lewiston. To learn more about Somali, specifically Somali Bantu, suspension rates within Lewiston Public Schools, however, see Besteman 2016: 169-201.

and time again, to not tolerate hate towards its Somali neighbors. At the same time, these events also illustrate the city's lingering negative sentiments towards its Somali community.

Despite the community's growing acceptance of Somalis into the city, there is still a question of how much of their culture should be "left at the door," both in coming to Lewiston and entering the public school classroom. Teachers and administrators continue to debate the boundaries of assimilation and accommodation in order to provide a healthy, productive, and safe learning environment for *all* students. What is the "American culture" to which Cayer is referring and how is Somali identity included and excluded in this definition of Americanness within Lewiston Public Schools?

Chapter Four: Crossing Linguistic Boundaries
The English Language Learner Program

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart."
– Nelson Mandela –

Commonality

I sit in Superintendent William Webster Jr.'s office in the Dingley Building, which is located at 36 Oak Street, the official address for the head administrators of the Lewiston Public School system. The engine of a Greyhound bus roars as it exits the station across the street. The smell of its exhaust slowly drifts into the office through the open window mixed with the distant fragrance of crisp autumn leaves on the October morning. I lean in across the large round table, trying to tune out the loud typing and chatting of his secretaries on the other side of the wall. I have just asked him to describe his experience working with Lewiston's diversity as the superintendent of the city's public school system. He pauses and then says:

> One of the issues in our society is perhaps how much we should embrace these [cultural] differences and how much do we need to develop some type of commonality such as that we function as a society here in Lewiston, Maine and in the United States… And I think the teachers and communities that have been most successful with that have found a balance with respecting, in some case honoring, and in some cases incorporating the new with sufficient commonality … We want someone to be able to be successful in American society and if our society is predominately one there needs to be that awareness.

Superintendent Webster highlights the dichotomy between exclusion and inclusion, assimilation and accommodation, ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism, topics that nationalists often negotiate in nation building. Given Lewiston's history of immigration – both during the period of its industrial prosperity and the arrival of the Somalis at the beginning of the 21st century – Webster emphasizes the importance of the public school system creating

"commonality" in order to unify its diverse population. "Commonality" is similar to "assimilation," seeming to promote ethnic nationalist ideology of accepting "predominately one" dominant culture within the Lewiston Public School system. At the same time, Superintendent Webster claims this "commonality" will create a functioning, successful school society while *also* valuing the individual diversity of its students. He mentions that some teachers and schools have successfully respected, honored, and even incorporated their students' new culture into the classroom through the pedagogy and practice of multicultural education and accommodation.

For Somali students in the Lewiston Public School system, these cases of acceptance often contrast with performances of exclusion, especially in regards to language. The English Language Learner (ELL) program teaches Lewiston's "New Neighbor" students how to assimilate to American culture by learning and accepting English as the sole academic language used within the public schools. In examining the ELL program and its exclusion of non-English speaking students from the school community, this chapter questions how Somali students can ever fully be accepted into America's national identity given the historical boundaries of segregation and linguistic assimilation created by the American public school system.

Spatial Boundaries

I step out of my car on a cold January morning, my windshield is still covered in a thin layer of ice left over from the previous evening's freezing temperatures. The condensation of my breath leaves a momentary path of white clouds behind me as I rush into Lewiston High School. It is my first day assisting in Ms. Michelson's ELL classroom. My stomach churns with nervous excitement as I wait in line to sign into the main office. Will the students like me? How will I meet their needs?

I think back to the last time I walked these halls as a student teacher in Ms. Bradley's history class well over two years ago. Her classroom was located on the top floor and would receive the bright sunlight throughout the day, so much so that Ms. Bradley often had to close the blinds in order to prevent the sun from bleaching the brightly colored posters and student work that decorated the white cement walls. I remember sitting in a swivel chair in the back with the high noon sun beaming down on my face and shoulders as Ms. Bradley lectured about World War I and the Holocaust.

 "Where to?" asks the secretary with a tired, yet gentle smile on her face. I return to the large, empty lobby of the high school. There is no sunshine today as I look outside and see the gray skies and frozen landscape of the Maine winter.

"Ms. Michelson's classroom," I reply. She instantly seems puzzled. I fumble for the classroom number scribbled on a piece of paper in my pocket. "I think it is room B4," I add.

"Ah, yes!" she exclaims. "You're going underground, then?"

Now a look of bewilderment appears on my face. "I'm sorry… I don't understand. You said undergr- ?" She cuts me off.

"You said Michelson, right? She's ELL. Her class is in the basement; you're going underground. Take the stairs on your left and it should be one of the first classrooms on your right." She smiles, gives me my visitor sticker, and sends me on my way, pointing in the direction of the classroom.

I swing open the wooden double doors and slowly make my way into the basement. The morning sunlight fades with every step I take down the circular cement staircase. As I push open the heavy door, I enter a dimly lit hallway, cluttered with mismatched desks and chairs. I peak into an office on the right that is pitch black except for a single desk lamp in the far corner. Used

coats, sweaters, and scarves hang from a metal clothing rack with a sign that reads: "FREE! Please take some for the winter and stay warm!"

I turn the corner and enter room B4. Ms. Michelson waves at me upon my arrival and introduces me to the students. I smile awkwardly and place my belongings by her desk in the back as she settles the students into a writing activity. My body shivers from the cold. I realize there are no windows in the classroom, no sunlight to keep me, Ms. Michelson, or the other students warm. The posters decorating the room are faded, not from sunshine but old age. Ms. Michelson approaches her desk and begins to give me all the details on her students.

"These guys," she says, gesturing to the three male students on her right – Omar, Ali, Mohammed – "need some more encouragement to do their work. Try to work a lot with them, especially Omar. He needs constant reminders to complete his assignments. I give the other three guys, Hassan, Bahdoon, and Abukar, harder work. They like to be challenged and can really complete the assignments. Asha, the one with the red hijab in the front, is smart. She came here just a few years ago and her English has drastically improved. Shukri is smart too, but very quiet. Sagal is sitting behind her but don't waste your time. She is struggling with English but she's been here longer than any of my other students – we're trying to get her into special education down the hall."

"Wait, special education services are also in this hallway?" I ask.

"Yes, they're all kind of underground here," Ms. Michelson replies in a very matter of fact manner.

I give a half-hearted smile and nod as she rises to help Omar across the room to format a complete sentence. My body shivers from the draft above – I look to my right hoping to see the sunbeams dance across the glistening snow as I did everyday in Ms. Bradley's classroom but all

I see is a cold, white wall with a poster stating the words of the Pledge of Allegiance in colorful, bold letters.

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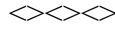
Within the first ten minutes of my visit to Ms. Michelson's classroom, I could already notice the structural divisions of students within Lewiston High School. The moment I pushed open the heavy door into the basement, it was as if I had walked into a completely different school. The upstairs classrooms, like Ms. Bradley's, have cleaner hallways, newer equipment, and windows to welcome in the sunlight. Ms. Michelson's classroom, on the other hand, is underground with cluttered spaces, fading decorations, and a droning buzz from the overhead fluorescent lighting. Yet, these disparities are not only evident in the physical appearance of the space but also the demographics of the classrooms. [40]

According to Frederick Binder, an educator, administrator, and scholar, public schools have "functioned as agencies for propagating and preserving dominant cultural values" which he claims solely encompass those who identify as being "middle-class, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon" (Binder 1974: 163). Out of the 20 or so students in Ms. Bradley's mainstream history class, only three are students of color. Ms. Michelson's class, however, *only* has students of color, and almost all, except for two to three students, identify as Somali. [41] Given the drastic demographic difference between the two classrooms, it is arguable that the school's act of separating Ms. Michelson's Somali students from Ms. Bradley's class evokes ideas of ethnic nationalism. Ms.

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[40] See Michel S. Laguerre's book, *Minoritized Space*, for more information on how social hierarchy is perpetuated through the maintenance of spatial boundaries and segregated space.

[41] It is important to note that not all ELL students of color are Somali. Although Somalis make up a large number of the immigrant population in Lewiston, there has been a recent migration of asylum seekers from Angola, Rwanda, Sudan, and the Congo, adding to the diverse student population. For the purpose of this thesis, however, I am specifically focusing on the Somali students within the diverse population of Lewiston's ELL program. Additionally, as I mentioned in the Introduction, my thesis does not differentiate between the Somali and Somali Bantu students but refers to the two refugee populations collectively as 'Somali.'

Bradley's mainstream class is predominately of, what Binder refers to as, the "dominant cultural group." By placing Ms. Michelson's minority students physically below Ms. Bradley's, the school is promoting a hierarchy of identities, inherently valuing the culture of the mainstream students over the culture of ELL students. In other words, this act of separation can be interpreted as a way for Lewiston High to prevent the diversity of Ms. Michelson's class from being integrated into Ms. Bradley's in order to maintain its homogeneous cultural hegemony.

When Ms. Michelson says, "they're all kind of underground here," she implies a division between ELL and Special Education students and the rest of the mainstream classes. According to Michael Billing, a professor of social sciences, "there can be no 'us' without a 'them'" (Billig 1995: 78). Using third person pronouns to refer to non-mainstream students can be interpreted as an act of Othering. If there is a "we" there is also a "they" and this difference in pronouns exists due to a difference between groups of people. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said elaborates upon this relationship of "us" and "them," arguing that this opposition creates an "Other," or outsider, that the West views as a dangerous, "exotic" puzzle. The students who fall into this category – ELL and Special Education – are seen as a threat to the solidarity of the school culture at Lewiston High and, thus, are placed in the basement, creating physical disparities both spatially and demographically.

The physical and demographic differences of the "upstairs" and "underground" classrooms are obvious and extremely striking. For the administrators and teachers of Lewiston High, however, this contrast is commonplace, normal, and "just the way it is." Neither the secretary nor Ms. Michelson seemed upset in referring to an area of the school as "the underground." This label is so embedded within the structure and culture of Lewiston High that

its meaning, significance, and the effects it has on the students who must go "underground" everyday for their classes remain unquestioned.

As argued in the "Schooling America" chapter, schools are where nations are imagined, boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are drawn, and nation members are made. Lewiston High is like a nation, divided by boundaries of "upstairs" and "underground" classrooms. According to Billig, these boundaries make up a "sort of map which is familiar" and assumed to be the undeniable truth (Billig 1995: 20). The nation and its members "accept the naturalness of [this] 'boundary-consciousness' [and] think that the nation-state system introduced order and organization into a world of disorder and inefficient chaos" (21). To the administration and teachers, these boundaries are seen as "unproblematic," or as Billig argues, "routine" and "almost invisible" (Barth 1973: 11; Billig 1995: 15). These spatial divisions are "invented permanencies," so deeply engrained in the school culture and structure that their creation is forgotten and existence is accepted as "common sense" (Billig 1995: 29).

Yet, by placing "underground" students in the basement, a place that is physically below the mainstream students, it designates them as lower class citizens. This separation, as noted between Ms. Michelson and Ms. Bradley's classes, devalues Somali ELL students due to their linguistic identity as non-native English speakers. Instead of placing mainstream classes in the basement or allowing ELL students to share hallways with mainstream students, the ELL classrooms are located "underground" because that is where they are thought to belong. Yet, to the ELL students who must go "underground," these permanencies are not only visible but are also felt everyday in their schooling experience.

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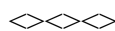
It is break time in Ms. Michelson's classroom, and I am helping Sagal and Asha with their worksheet on fragment sentences. Suddenly, I see a young Somali student in a patterned hijab lock eyes with me in the hallway, her face full of excitement. She bolts across the threshold of the door and tackles me with a hug. Sagal and Asha appear confused and slightly annoyed – who is this girl who is interrupting their tutoring session?

"Ashley, Ashley!" she exclaims. "Do you remember me? I remember you! You helped me at 21st Century." She stumbles with a few of her words, pausing to recall the proper conjugation of 'help' in the past tense.

I scan her face and see her smile. "Fusia!" I yell. We hug again. It had been almost two years since I had last seen her at Lewiston Middle School's 21st Century, a government funded after school program that provides academic enrichment to students of low-income areas. When I met Fusia, she could barely speak English. I helped her with her homework two days a week from fall to spring and watched her slowly improve with every session. Now, she is no longer a shy seventh grader, but a proud high school student.

"How is school going? How are your classes?" I ask.

"Oh, very good. Guess what?!" She grabs my forearm and pauses, building the suspense of her good news. "I'm in a class upstairs!" She points to the ceiling with her right hand and mouths the words "upstairs" for a second time, beaming with delight.

"Upstairs is…?" I ask.

"Mainstream!" Fusia states.

"Oh… oh! That's wonderful. Congratulations! You must be very proud; that's quite an accomplishment." I exclaim. She nods and smiles once more. We talk for a little more, discussing her "upstairs" class and her experience as a freshman at Lewiston High. Soon, the bell

rings, warning students to transition to their second period class. We embrace once more and she disappears down the hall.

I turn back to Sagal and Asha and continue helping them with their assignment. I gently remind Asha to reconsider her answer for number seven. "Is 'Danced and sang all night' a fragment or a sentence? Who is doing the dancing and the singing?"

"There's no subject so it's a fragment," she answers.

"Correct!" I state and smile.

"No mainstream for you!" Sagal chuckles.

Asha replies with a half-hearted laugh and erases her answer. Her head lifts to the stained paneled ceiling above and her eyes fill with longing, for upstairs, for mainstream, for acceptance into the school culture.

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Although a portion of Lewiston High remains unaware of the ways it is affected by the maintenance of these boundaries, to the ELL students who regrettably refer to the "underground" as their designated learning destination, these boundaries are more apparent. These students not only notice the physical disparities between the two worlds but also feel their effects since they are the ones who are separated and "othered" from the rest of the mainstream students.

Fusia's excitement about being a student in an "upstairs" class demonstrates that ELL students recognize and internalize the meanings of these boundaries. The rhetoric of "upstairs" and "underground" is powerful and signifies a constant negotiation between inclusion and exclusion. According to Berger and Luckmann, "identity is formed by social processes… [which] are determined by social structure" (Berger and Luckmann 1990: 173). Boundaries are not only self-ascribed but also ascribed by others. Many ELL students, like Asha, want to be a

mainstream student, but they do not possess the power to determine how they will be classified, the public school system does. Fusia is in a mainstream class because she speaks better English than Asha. Thus, schools maintain, modify, and reshape students' identities based on the preconceived definitions and qualifications required to be considered a mainstream student.

As Billig argues, these spatial boundaries distance "'us' from 'them,' 'our' world from 'theirs' (Billig 1995: 49). Going "upstairs" implies the student has mastered a level of English proficiency that is acceptable by the dominant culture to allow for their inclusion into the school community. Since Lewiston Public Schools make Americans, this acceptance is into not only the school community but also the national community. Becoming a member of the mainstream culture at Lewiston High is then synonymous with being a member of the American nation. In other words, in possessing the identities valued in the dominant cultural group that Binder argues public schools propagate and preserve, students are accepted into America's national identity. "Underground" students, however, are excluded from this definition due to their inability to meet the school's standards for English.

According to Billig, "the creation of a national hegemony often involves a hegemony of language," which, in the case of all American public schools like Lewiston High, is English (Billing 1995: p. 29). These students must work to assimilate linguistically to the dominant culture of Lewiston High in the hopes of becoming members of the school and national communities. In this instance, Lewiston High seems to embrace ethnic nationalism, including students into American national identity when they meet their standards of linguistic assimilation and excluding them when they do not. Thus, these boundaries centered on English proficiency exclude Somali ELL students from becoming members of the American nation causing them to be seen as second-class citizens.

In Ms. Michelson's class, the students understand the "hegemony of language" in Lewiston High. By laughing at Asha's mistake, Sagal seems to realize that her poor language skills prevent her from attaining the status of a mainstream student, at least for now. Asha, on the other hand, is one of the hardest workers in the class. She hopes that by improving her English she will one day be like Fusia, a student in an "upstairs" class, a member of the school and national communities.

Separate but Equal?

When I met with Margaret Creedon, the head administrator of the city's English Language Learner program, she discussed her own experience as an ELL teacher, revealing how the structure of the program has changed over the years since Somalis first arrived in 2001.

> Traditionally, how we taught English Language Learners when I was a teacher was for students who are struggling academically and their language proficiency is also low, they would be pulled out for a majority of [the class] and, as their ELL teacher, I was their primary teacher for math and reading. They were 100% mine. The classroom teacher would do some sort of support with them, but I was the primary teacher.

Realizing the flaws and various innate forms of exclusion and stereotyping this created, Lewiston made the change to a more promising structure. Elementary schools in the district now use a "workshop model" where the primary teacher will lead a mini-lesson and guided exercise with the whole class. When the students break off to complete individual practice, the ELL students will work with a designated certified teacher to receive extra support.

Although this model, in theory, has well-meaning intentions of inclusivity, in practice it was almost the same, if not worse, than the original model. In working closely with Ms. Haley Sanders' second grade classroom at Longley, Lewiston's lowest performing elementary school, I realized that theory and reality were, unfortunately, two completely different concepts. Ms.

Sanders, like all teachers in the school, had a schedule to follow. At 10:10, she would teach a 15-minute lesson on addition and distribute a worksheet to work on as a class. By 10:30, students who needed more support, in theory, would be taken out of class and returned by 11:00 in order to be present for the next mini lesson. Many of the ELL teachers, however, ran well over the scheduled time and would wind up teaching students the next mini lesson instead of returning them to their primary teacher.

"I never see my kids," Ms. Sanders told me one day after she had dropped the students off at recess. "The schedule is always wrong. Sometimes, I'll go for two hours without seeing them. It's so incredibly frustrating."

Teachers were not the only ones, however, who noticed these absences within their classroom; the whole class did, too. In Ms. Sanders' class, students sat in clutters of four to five desks in a way to promote group work during the independent activities. Yet, students accomplished little collaborative work when they were easily missing half of their group due to ELL workshops. Instead, many students wound up doing work on their own or combining with other groups. Throughout my time assisting in Ms. Sanders' classroom, I created a strong relationship with students like Tyler, Abdi, and Lily – knowing their strengths and weaknesses, favorite sport, and most enjoyable family memory. But for ELL students, such as Fariyo, Hibo, or Ibrahim, I saw nothing but their empty desks a majority of the time. When they did return to class, their presence felt like an inconvenience or interruption from the 'new' norm. Hibo tried to start up conversation about her family's weekend trip to Portland with Brittany and Alicia, but the two girls would politely nod and smile, exhausted from the 'Weekend Update' activity they had completed during Hibo's absence. Ibrahim wanted to join in on a prolonged game of tic-tac-

toe with the other students in his group, but the teams were already picked – they did not have space for him.

To return to the earlier discussion of Montello's puzzle poster, Ms. Sanders' noticed her ELL students' missing piece and lamented their absence. Yet, at the same time, the ability of the remaining students to continue to learn in the classroom despite their peers' absence raises the question, 'Are these pieces necessary to the structural solidarity of Ms. Sanders' classroom?' The ELL students, like Hibo and Ibrahim, were trying to place themselves back in the puzzle but their pieces just did not fit. By removing ELL students from the classroom, the school was also affecting their inclusivity into the communities of both the school and the nation. Once they left, it was harder for the students to achieve acceptance. Thus, Longley perpetuated a cycle of exclusion, prohibiting ELL students from becoming Americans through their "workshop model."

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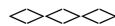
Lewiston Middle School embraces a different approach to its ELL student population using a "literacy support" model. According to Margaret Creedon, these classes are meant for any student who is struggling both academically and linguistically, and, as a result, possess both English Language Learners and native English speakers.

"They don't look like an ELL class and kids don't realize they're in ELL classes," stated Creedon. "Kids report to us that they don't want to be singled out – they don't want to go only to ELL classes and they don't want to be different from their peers."

In theory, this model seems like an appropriate way to balance students' academic and linguistic needs while creating a demographically diverse classroom. Unlike Lewiston High, the literacy support classes share hallways with mainstream students and teachers. Yet, stereotypes still occur.

Annabel Adams, a 7th grade mainstream literacy teacher, informed me how a student approached her one day after class stating, "Ms. Adams' class is for the white kids, Mr. Long's class is for the black kids." Mr. Long teaches a literacy support class down the hall to a diverse group of students, many from Somalia and Kenya.

"And that's not the way it is but that's the way it looks," claimed Ms. Adams. "This student asked, 'Why does he have all the black kids?' and I was like, 'What do I say to that?'"

Although the spatial boundaries between ELL and non-ELL students are not as pronounced as they are at the Lewiston High between "underground" and "upstairs" students, the stigma around ELL-type classes still exists. Despite the ethnic diversity present in literacy support classes, Lewiston Middle School cannot erase the assumptions around ELL students given the city's history of hostility toward the Somali newcomer population.

"I think there were events that took place in the community that happened around the time refugees starting settling here that probably went towards creating that tension," stated Mr. Long. "[Somalis] were not welcomed into the community."

"I think that still leaves behind a residue of tension on both sides. I feel like you can feel it," added Ms. Adams. "I think there's an atmosphere that's the opposite of acceptance."

As two teachers who both grew up in the Lewiston-Auburn area, both Mr. Long and Ms. Adams understand that the stereotype of ELL as a program solely for Somalis is still strongly engrained within the school culture, despite the city's recent surge of other African immigrants.

These stereotypes not only persist amongst the students' but teachers as well. Ms. Creedon spoke of these "misunderstandings" in her visit to a middle school classroom around the celebration of the Muslim holiday, Eid:

I was at a class with a substitute, and the Muslim students had just come back from Eid. There were four students in a group, three of them were Muslim, and one was not Muslim

but was just sitting there quietly. The teacher, who was a substitute, wanted to include them in the conversation. She assumed, because he was an ELL student in Lewiston, that he was also Muslim. So the teacher very nicely asked, 'How was your Eid?' and the student said, 'I don't celebrate Eid.' It was this very awkward moment, and I had a conversation with the teacher after saying that 86% of our [ELL] population is Somali and tend to be Muslim but not all [members] of our ELL program fit the stereotype of the 'typical ELL' [student] in Lewiston.

Ms. Creedon, like Mr. Long and Ms. Adams, recognizes the stereotypes surrounding Lewiston's "typical ELL" student. As Fredrick Barth mentions, there are expectations and stigmas that come with identifying and belonging to a certain ethnic group. These characteristics then allow an individual to be judged "by those standards… relevant to that identity" (Barth 1969: 14). For the non-Muslim boy in Ms. Creedon's story, the substitute teacher assumed he was Somali because of his status as a black ELL student. There then exists "a series of constraints on the kind of roles a [Somali student] is allowed to play" (Barth 1969: 17). It is possible that a teacher or other student could doubt a Somali student's acceptance in a mainstream class due to their ethnic identity. Thus, the stigma around the "typical ELL" student maintains these rigid boundaries between ELL and mainstream for Somali students.

Testing for Nationhood

When students are registered into the Lewiston Public School system, they are required to complete a home language survey. This questionnaire asks about the language(s) spoken in a student's home with their family and friends. If the survey identifies a language other than English, the student must take the state mandated English Language Proficiency test known as ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State). The scores range from 1-6 with various decimal possibilities in between. Each state determines what score signifies proficiency in the English language; for Maine, that score is a perfect 6. This means that

the school considers students who score between 1 and 5.9 to not be proficient in English. These students must take the ACCESS every year and are labeled as "ELL" until they receive a perfect score.

Although these students are given the title of "ELL," many of them, especially those who receive scores of 5.8 or 5.9, are placed in mainstream classes and never see an ELL teacher.

"When your academic language is so close to proficiency like that, the best place for you to acquire that grade-level language is to be with your mainstream peers," affirmed Ms. Creedon. "Being classified as ELL does not mean you are going to get ELL services."

"It's a very rigorous test," she added. "It measures your ability to speak, listen, read, and write English using the language of math, science, social studies, and literature. I would love to distribute the test city-wide to show people how truly difficult this test is, but right now, the state mandates it only for ELL." Within the past two years, 60 students have exited the ELL program out of 1,000. A rigorous test indeed.

Yet, Ms. Creedon doubts that even students labeled as "native" English speakers would receive a perfect score the first time taking the ACCESS test. Instead of distributing this exam to *all* students in Lewiston Public Schools, the state specifically targets its test takers by the evaluation of their language.

Why label Somali students who receive a near-perfect score and take mainstream classes as "ELL" if they never go "underground" to receive additional language support? Said would argue that this state-mandated test is an act of Othering, a way for the schools to separate their mainstream students – who hypothetically are believed to have all scored a 6 – from those who have failed to officially pass the exam. Although these high-scoring "ELL" students are not physically distanced through the spatial boundaries between "upstairs" and "underground"

students at Lewiston High, their title of "ELL" acts as an indicator of "otherness." Somali "ELL" students take classes with their fellow mainstream peers, reading the same materials and completing the same assignments as the rest of the class. Yet, they still have this title of being "ELL," a label that denotes difference from their non-Somali classmates.

In *Orientalism*, Said claims the idea of "the Orient" was created through a process of differentiation. In applying this theory, the school defines what it means to be an educated American student (mainstream) just as it supplies the definition of the un-educated, non-American pupil (ELL). By labeling Somali mainstream students with near-perfect scores as "ELL," it maintains a symbolic boundary of separation between insider and outsider, even if a spatial division does not exist. These Somali students will never be seen as a true mainstream student until this label is removed. But, as Ms. Creedon mentions, the test is incredibly difficult. Some mainstream Somali students, although never entering an ELL classroom, graduate from Lewiston Public Schools with their label still intact.

This title is a mark of difference, a way for mainstream, American school culture to gain its "strength and identity by setting itself off against" English Language Learners (Said 1978: 1-3). Although not physically removing them from the classroom with the 'workshop model' or separating them through hierarchal spatial boundaries of "upstairs" and "mainstream" classes, the Lewiston Public School system symbolically distance high-scoring Somali students from their non-Somali mainstream peers by labeling them as "ELL." By having this title of "ELL," Somali students will continue to not be seen as members of the school and national communities. Therefore, their linguistic identity affects their ability to be a member of both the dominant school culture and American national identity.

In order to expedite the process of receiving a perfect score, many Somali students will linguistically assimilate to American culture – sometimes deliberately and other times subconsciously through the hegemonic structure of language promoted within the Lewiston Public School system – forgetting their mother tongue in order to be more proficient in English.

"My nieces and nephews don't speak Somali," stated Sumaya Abdi, a caseworker at a non-profit organization in Lewiston's downtown area. She graduated from Lewiston High in 2008, having successfully completed her ELL education at her previous home in Columbus, Ohio. "They understand it but they speak English. When my aunt and uncle try to communicate to them in Somali, they think it's strange and weird. It's sad. That's their culture they are forgetting. I tell them, 'one day you're going to regret it.'"

Leaving Language at the Door

In 2012, the current mayor of Lewiston, Robert Macdonald, infamously told the Somali community to "accept our culture and leave your culture at the door" (Thistle 2012). Upset by their Mayor's words, Somalis questioned if Macdonald would have made a similar statement to other cultural groups within the city, such as the Franco-Americans. The Mayor's reference to "culture" encompasses many aspects of Somalis' identity such as religion, values, customs, and language. For Somali students in Lewiston Public Schools, Mayor Macdonald's statement demands that they leave their culture at home and adopt American values and practices upon entering school. His comment encourages ideas of assimilation and ethnic nationalism, believing there should be one culture in Lewiston Public Schools to unify its diverse student population. Yet, for Somali students, "leaving their culture at the door" means leaving their identities behind.

"In my community I'm looked at as one of the Americanized kids," asserts Zaynab Farhan, a confident 22-year-old recent college graduate. Her gold and black *direh*, the traditional long, colorful dress worn by Somali women, creates a vibrant contrast against the room's neutral shades of cream and beige during our interview. "Then I go to the Americans and I'm looked at as an other, like I'm not American enough. So I'm stuck between two worlds, essentially." She sighs and continues:

> I speak the English language better than I speak by mother tongue and that, to many members of the Somali community, is problematic. [When] you've embraced a different tongue, your original tongue is diluted. Some members of the Somali community have a hard time coping [with] how fast children are integrating into the [Lewiston] community… you're forcing your children to straddle two worlds.

Zaynab was born and raised in a Kenyan refugee camp before moving to Lewiston with her mother and two brothers towards the end of 2002, right in the midst of Mayor Laurier Raymond's 'Letter' controversy. After living in many locations throughout her childhood, Lewiston is the one place she feels the most connected to and is able to comfortably refer to as home. Yet, she still struggles to balance her past as a refugee and her current life as an educated college graduate. The Americanization she experienced throughout her years in American public schools has greatly affected her Somali identity, especially her language. She realizes that her inability to "speak her mother tongue" weakens the connections to her Somali culture. Zaynab must navigate between these two worlds of Somali and American culture, constantly negotiating the boundaries of assimilation and accommodation.

Sumaya uses the analogy of a "hat" to illustrate the choices Somali students must make every day upon leaving their home and entering school. This hat is worn as the student learns to speak English in the classroom and respect American values; it is removed once they cross the threshold of their home and re-enter their native culture. The student is "betwixt and between"

two worlds, constantly negotiating these boundaries of Somali and American culture. [42] For

Zaynab, however, this hat was worn so consistently that she has lost the ability to speak her

mother tongue. The hat has become so engrained in her identity that the Somali community sees

her as an "Americanized kid." At the same time, by attempting to maintain some of her native

roots, the opposing side sees her as "not American enough." In straddling these two worlds,

Zaynab struggles with receiving complete acceptance from both sides. Yet, she also understands

the sacrifices she made regarding her linguistic identity in order to become a successful student

in the Lewiston Public School system. Leaving her mother tongue at the door allowed Zaynab to

gain a greater acceptance into the school community than perhaps other Somali peers who still

maintain aspects of their linguistic identities. In order to be an accepted member of both the

school and national communities, Somali students are forced to assimilate to the dominant

culture of the American national identity and "leave their language at the door."

Other Somali students, like Sumaya's nieces and nephews, learn to reject this liminality

and ultimately pick the side that will allow them to be a successful student in their 'new' home:

the American one. Given the pronounced division between ELL and mainstream students and the

stereotypes of English Language Leaners, Somali students will learn to internalize feelings of

negativity and shame towards their language.

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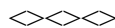
It is midterm week at Lewiston High. Ms. Michelson asks her students to read the "The

Tell Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe and complete an in-depth exam around character

description, quotation analysis, and mapping story plot. She assigns me to work with Sagal and

Asha and the three of us take a place at the table towards the middle of the dimly lit hallway.

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[42] Victor Turner's essay, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage," discusses human reactions to liminal experiences. He specifically comments on liminality's effects on the identity of "threshold people," humans living between two worlds.

"Help me with this, Miss. I don't know English," Sagal pleads after I ask her to find a quote that describes the main character's physical characteristics. She slams her pencil down on the desk and turns away in frustration.

I stop and look at her. "Yes you do," I say. "You just spoke to me in English."

She gives me an eye roll. "Yes, but… Help me! I don't know anything."

I go on to ask her what language she knows other than English. At this point, Asha puts down her work and enters the conversation.

"I just speak Somali and a little English," replies Sagal.

"What did you say?" I ask. I raise my eyebrows and open my mouth to exaggerate my astonishment.

"We *just* speak Somali!" cries Asha.

"Don't say 'just'; don't belittle your native language! That's wonderful that you speak Somali. I'm jealous that you know another language."

"What do you mean?" chimes in Sagal.

"Guess how many languages I speak fluently other than English?" I ask.

They both look at me blankly.

I hold up my right hand to make an 'O'. "Zero," I say.

"But you do know other languages… Arabic, Spanish… you were telling us yesterday!"

"I'm learning them; I'm not fluent. I'm trying to be like you and be fluent in a language other than my native one. It takes practice and I get frustrated *all* the time. You have something really special. You should be proud. Don't you dare let anyone tell you your language is 'just Somali'… you understand?" My voice suddenly changes in tone, becoming very stern.

They both smile. Asha hugs me and mumbles under her breath, "I wish other teachers thought so, too."

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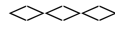
According to Levinson and Holland, two anthropologists renowned for their study of social theories in education, when a school's culture fails to accept cultural and linguistic diversity, minority students are more willing to "self-censor and self-silence [their identity] in the company of those with greater social standing" (Levinson and Holland 1996: 6). Culturally and linguistically diverse students are more likely to feel excluded by their school community based on their identity and, thus, attempt to conceal the aspects that differentiate them from the dominant culture in order to be accepted.

Lewiston High's spatial boundaries between "underground" and "upstairs" classes cultivate negative attitudes towards English Language Leaners. Students like Asha and Sagal internalize these opinions of their identity, seeing their Somali culture as something that is shameful and needs to be hidden in order to successfully assimilate and be accepted into the American school culture. In referring to their knowledge of another language as "just Somali," they believe their cultural heritage should be silenced and forgotten instead of respected, honored, and praised. By "self-censoring" their identity, Asha and Sagal perpetuate the social order of valuing the dominant, mainstream culture and maintain its superior "social standing" over minority cultures, such as Somali. Pierre Bourdieu would argue that Somali students are taught to internalize this *habitus* of valuing the group with the "greater social standing" by learning to devalue their own native language and culture. Asha and Sagal realize that their social standing is far below that of mainstream students, both physically (in terms of spatial boundaries) and socially (in terms of cultural hegemony). With nowhere to go but up, Somali

students reproduce these hegemonic structures and, thus, continue to allow the dominant culture to define American public education and the nation's identity.

Yet, forcing students to disregard their native language through linguistic assimilation is actually detrimental to the formation of nationhood within schools, doing more harm that good. James Banks, a leader in the field of multicultural education, notes that when students of ethnic minorities "are marginalized in school and treated as the 'Other,' they tend to develop weak attachments to the nation-state" (Banks 2008: 132). In other words, Somali students are less likely to feel connected to a school culture and national identity that inherently excludes them due to their linguistic identity.

According to Tessa Jones, a first grade teacher at Montello Elementary School, "[t]eachers originally thought that speaking only English was the best way for students to learn [the language]." Buck and Silver believe the opposite, arguing that "English-only language instruction has been theorized as a limiting pedagogical technique that actually hinders language acquisition" (Buck and Silver 2008: 46). "The real aim of monolingual ESL instruction is 'functional *illiteracy'* that will 'maintain a class of unskilled, non-English speaking workforce who are marginally literate and thus willing to take minimum wage jobs which others are unwilling to accept" (Warriner 2003: 31 as cited in Buck and Silver 2008: 46).

In short, students learn to acquire fluency in another language faster and more effectively when they are allowed to transfer their knowledge between two or more languages. Teachers must not be so quick to disregard their students' native linguistic abilities, but should find ways to incorporate multilingual opportunities into their learning. Ms. Jones leads a Newcomer Breakfast, a program designed for students who have lived in the country for less than two years. Although she realizes the need for her students to learn English and be successful in Lewiston

Public Schools, Ms. Jones makes a conscious effort to value the multiple languages of her students. She often overhears teachers instructing their students to use "only English," but Ms. Jones understands that it is more neurologically beneficial for students to think in two different languages. When teaching her newcomers vocabulary or basic phrases, she will first say the word in English and then ask her students to share the translation in their native language. Ms. Jones states:

> Languages are so valuable. Why wouldn't I value that in my students? I don't want them to lose it, and I don't want them to lose that part of who they are because it's more than just language, it's really about knowing your identity and where you come from. Identity is huge.

Ms. Jones recognizes the correlation between language and identity. She argues that degrading a student's language also devalues who they are – their heritage, history, and experiences. Some teachers are conscious of this need to strike a balance between academic and "non-academic" English, while others embrace monolingual instruction by outwardly shaming students from speaking their native language.

Two years ago, I was tutoring at the 21st Century Afterschool Program at Lewiston Middle School helping two female Somali students with their assignment. One of the students, Amina, had just moved to America three weeks before and was struggling to complete her homework. The other student, Taifa, had been in Lewiston for over two years and understood the exercise. Taifa tried to explain it in English first, but after no success, switched to describing the assignment in Somali so Amina could understand. The teacher supervising the session overheard the two students conversing and proceeded to scream across the room, yelling "NO SOMALI IN HERE!" Taifa and Amina turned cold, their eyes bulging out of their head. They looked terrified, as did I. For the rest of the session, the two girls worked in silence. Amina did not finish her work, too afraid to ask Taifa for clarification. This teacher made these students feel fear and

shame for speaking their native language. Ms. Jones suggested that the monolingual approach to language acquisition "stem[med] from good intentions" and the belief that "if we're all speaking a common language, we can all understand each other." This teacher at 21st Century, however, did not respect her students' language and, therefore, their identity.

In the Lewiston Public School system, there are teachers like Ms. Jones, who promote multilingual learning and see linguistic diversity as an asset to their classroom community. At the same time, there are others, like the 21st Century supervisor, who encourage monolingual instruction and perceive speaking Somali as a deficit to learning. Somali students must constantly navigate these boundaries of linguistic inclusion and exclusion ascribed individually by teachers and administrators in the school community.

The "Educated" American

"What is the one thing you would change about Lewiston?" I asked Anwar Osman, a Somali undergraduate student in the Lewiston-Auburn area. He moved to the city when he was in 5th grade and had a hard time maintaining strong connections to his Somali identity during his adolescents in the public school system. Throughout our interview, Anwar was meticulous with his answers, pausing after every question to format a well-articulated response. Yet, with this question, he replied almost immediately, stating:

> I would change the education system in Lewiston. I don't think it is just Lewiston but the education system throughout the country. But specifically in Lewiston I feel like there is this view that the Somalis are a deterrent to the success of the community … If there was more of a view to kind of allow the younger Somali generation to be more engaged in the classroom and the future investment of the community, I could honestly say that, 10 years down the line, there would be a community that would represent the ideal American community, a community that allows for development, integration, and inclusivity that everyone sort of preaches about…

Anwar's comment is critical of the Lewiston Public School system's exclusivity of Somali students into the school community. He believes Somali students will continue to struggle for recognition as members of the dominant culture continue to ascribe boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Spatial boundaries and structures, such as the 'workshop' and 'literacy support' models, preserve the stereotypes around ELL students and force Somalis to assimilate linguistically in the hopes of achieving acceptance into the dominant school culture. Until Somali students are welcomed into the communities of both the Lewiston Public Schools and America, they will continue to question their identity as educated students and members of the American nation.

According to Billig, "[a] nation will only exist if a body of people believe themselves to be a nation" (Billig 1995: 66). When a nation sees its diversity as a deficit instead of an asset, it hinders the willingness of its minority populations to unite under a nationalist ideology that inherently excludes them. Similarly, by promoting assimilation over accommodation, the Lewiston Public School system creates a school culture that fails to include *all* of its students. Somali students are less likely to preach loyalty and devotion towards a school culture that degrades, disrespects, and devalues their language and identity. By maintaining both spatial and symbolic boundaries and forcing students to leave their language at the door, Lewiston Public Schools exclude Somalis into the definition of American national identity and, ultimately, weaken the cohesiveness of the American nation.

Chapter Five: A Symbol of Acceptance
Islamophobia, Secularism, and Religious Observances in School

"[A] compulsory state educational system so structures a child's life that if religious exercises are held to be an impermissible activity in schools, religion is placed at an artificial and state-created disadvantage. [The] refusal to permit religious exercises thus is seen, not as the realization of state neutrality, but rather as the establishment of a religion of secularism."
– Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting *School District of Abington v. Schempp* –

A Post-9/11 World

The morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001 marks the worst terrorist attack in American history. The Islamist terrorist group, Al-Qaeda, coordinated four attacks on symbolic U.S. landmarks, leading to nearly 3,500 deaths of civilians, firefights, and law enforcement officers. The United States responded to the tragedy by launching the "War on Terror," an international military campaign against Al-Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups. Since the terrorist attacks, Islamophobia, which has been defined as the "social anxiety about Islam and Muslims" has continued to increase, as evident in the rhetoric of media outlets and political rhetoric (Ernst 2013: 2).

For Muslims living in a post-9/11 United States, Islamophobia is increasing at frighteningly high rates and anti-Muslim hate crimes have nearly doubled since the bombings of the November 13 Paris Attacks in 2015.[43] According to Steven Sheehi, a professor at the American University of Beirut, "Islamophobia pervades all levels of American life," and the "War on Terror" continues in the classrooms of American public schools (Sheehi 2001: 31). For example, 14-year-old Ahmed Mohamed's teacher accused him of bringing a real bomb in the form of a clock to his school in Irving, Texas while a Muslim female student at P.S. 89 in the

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[43] Source: San Bernardo's Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.
On the evening of November 13, 2015, a series of coordinated attacks by suicide bombers in Paris' northern suburb, Saint-Denis, and the central part of the city. The attackers were members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Bronx, New York was attacked and called "ISIS" by her three male peers. Schools in Augusta County, Virginia shut down after a geography teacher taught her students an Arabic calligraphy lesson, seeing it as an "indoctrination" of faith (Irshad 2015). As Islamophobia continues to pervade the daily life and institutional structures of American public schools, teachers and administrators continue to question Muslim students' acceptance into the school community. It is not only Islamophobia that affects the inclusion of Muslim students in school, but also the American public school systems' approach to secular education, or the separation of governmental institutions from religious foundations.

For Somali students in the Lewiston Public School system, their religious identity as Muslims affects their incorporation into the school community. By examining accounts of religious stereotypes and exclusion, this chapter proposes how fostering dialogue around the misconceptions of Islam can help Lewiston create a more welcoming environment for its Somali students. At the same time, it questions Lewiston's approach to the nation's secular education – specifically with regard to Muslim prayer and holidays – and applies it to ideas of multiculturalism and ethnic nationalism. This chapter suggests that Lewiston Public School's must negotiate these boundaries of accommodation and assimilation and be critical of the nation's observance of secularism in order to attain equality for its diverse student population.

"Don't Insert Your Culture… Into Ours"

In an interview with BBC regarding the Somali population in Lewiston, Mayor Robert Macdonald said, "If you want to come in here and you want to celebrate your holidays, I don't care… just don't insert your culture, which obviously isn't working, into ours which does" (BBC 2016). In claiming Somali culture "isn't working," Macdonald seems to be initially referring to

the failed state of Somalia, a country that continues to face instability and corruption since the outbreak of its civil war in 1991. Yet, since the Mayor also refers to the celebration of Muslim holidays, he could be implying that the Somalis' religion, like its state, is flawed and, therefore, not welcome into the public sphere. Upon further examination of his comment, however, Macdonald specifically states that he does not care if Somalis celebrate their holidays as long as they do not "insert their culture" into Lewiston. In that case, perhaps Macdonald is telling Somalis to not expect the city's public schools to accommodate their religious needs.

As Andrea Voyer mentions in her book, *Strangers and Neighbors*, Somalis have a unique, multi-faceted identity that "def[ies] classification" (Voyer 2013: 44). Although this is a rather oversimplified and exotifying description, Voyer does highlight the Somali population's interesting intersection of ethnicity, race, and religion. They are Muslim, "a group that is increasingly stereotyped as uncivil, un-American, and undemocratic," but do not originate from the Middle East. Their East African origin and skin color places them in the racial category as "black," but they do not have historical ties to "slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and civil rights movements" as African-Americans do (44).

Before Somalis arrived in Lewiston at the start of 2001, Catholic Refugees resettled five French-speaking refugee families from Togo, a country on the West African coast, into the city given its Franco-American history (Kirby 2015). Although they were "from away," a Maine expression referring to out-of-staters, they were able to 'blend in' as African Americans while Somalis could not. As Muslims, many Somalis, women in particular, dress modestly. Some Somali men walk down Lisbon Street in *sarongs*, patterned or white fabric worn around the waist, and women don brightly colored *direhs*, traditional long, colorful dresses, and hijabs and *qamars*, or a form of head covering. It is not only their physical appearance that stands as such a

stark contrast to Lewiston white-majority community, but their religious identity as Muslims in a predominately Judeo-Christian city.

Given the fact that a large number of Somali refugees arrived in Lewiston in the aftermath of 9/11, many Lewiston residents feared that their 'New Neighbors' were being recruited and trained to lead terrorist attacks against the United States. Yet, "[w]hy do many Americans choose to explain 9/11 and the era of insecurity and warfare it has bequeathed to the nation primarily in terms of Islam?" (GhaneaBassiri 2013: 59). Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, a professor of Religion and Humanities at Reed College, reasons that religion has played a historical role "in the development of American national identity" (59). He argues America opposes Muslims "on the ground of its foreign (i.e. 'un-American') connections" (59). According to Carl W. Ernst, a professor of Religious Studies and co-director of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, Muslims are an "out-group" in American society, inciting fear and, therefore, a need to exclude them due to their 'unfamiliar,' 'strange,' and 'foreign' religion (Ernst 2013: 9).

The rhetoric of Mayor Macdonald's previous comment strongly depicts Somalis as an 'un-American out-group.' His use of opposing pronouns, such as "our" and "your," creates a division between the Somalis and the rest of Lewiston. Yet, "our culture" not only refers to the daily practices and customs of the local community but the culture of the American nation. By instructing Somalis to not "insert" their culture in "ours," Mayor Macdonald is promoting what Anthony Smith would call ethnocentric, or ethnic, nationalism. He believes Somalis should be "stamp[ed] out with an otherness" and made into "non-autonomous, non-sovereign" characters within the public sphere of Lewiston (Smith 1983: 96). This comment mirrors his previous request for Somalis to assimilate and "leave [their] culture at the door." In other words, the

Mayor does not care about what goes on behind closed doors in Somali households, as long as it is not "inserted" into or imposed upon American culture. In failing to accept Somali culture, Macdonald preaches ideologies similar to ethnic nationalism, encouraging his city's Somali population to assimilate to American culture and for their "otherness" to disappear.

Mayor Macdonald's sentiments towards Somalis are an expression of Islamophobia in America. Macdonald sees Somali's religious identity as a danger to the sanctity and safety of Lewiston. These opinions are similar to how the United States, post-9/11, is naturally conditioned to see Muslims as intruders and outsiders that threaten the autonomy and identity of the American nation. By demanding that Somalis not insert their culture into the public sphere, Mayor Macdonald "stamps them with an otherness" and, thus, separates their culture "that does not work" from the rest of the American nation, "that does."

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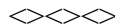
To reiterate, Steven Sheehi believes that "Islamophobia pervades all levels of American life" (Sheehi 2001: 31). These anti-Muslim sentiments permeate American public schools. Mayor Macdonald's words of Othering and exclusion resonate throughout the hallways of Lewiston Public Schools, affecting how teachers, administrators, and non-Somali students view their Somali peers.

Maya Flahtery, a literacy teacher at Lewiston High School, recalled how misconceptions around Islam affected the lives of Somali students within the public schools, especially after instances of terrorism.

> After the Boston Marathon bombing, I had one of my students [Fatuma] come to me after school and ask, 'Why do people think it's us?' She was devastated. 'Why do they think

it's me?' She had been hearing stuff around the building. It was heartbreaking to her that people tied it to her religion. [44]

Fatuma's question suggests that she too recognizes the divisions and misunderstandings that exist between Muslims and non-Muslims within her school. In saying "us" and "me," she classifies herself and her Somali peers in a separate category because of their religious identity. Fatuma has internalized these feelings of "otherness" that she has receive as a Muslim student in an American public school, naturally viewing herself and her Somali classmates as an "other."

Sumaya Abdi, a Somali graduate of Lewiston High School, also expressed similar frustrations about being an American Muslim living in a post-9/11 world. Whenever there was a terrorist attack linked to her religion, she always worried how the non-Somali members of the school would view her and her Somali peers. After the Boston Marathon bombing, she vividly remembered thinking: "I hate it, I hate it, I hate this religion. I wish I was white, I wish I wasn't a Muslim." As a Muslim, particularly a woman who wears the hijab, Sumaya believes her religion is an integral aspect of her identity. According to Edward Said, "[o]ne aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed" (Said 1994: 26). As I mentioned in the chapter concerning theories on nationalism, Said's argument of Orientalism – the way the West Others "the Orient" and controls its autonomy – and its relation to the ideologies of ethnic nationalism parallels the exclusionary practices directed at Somalis in Lewiston Public Schools. Somali students, like Sumaya and Fatuma, are conscious of the effects these stereotypes have on the perspectives of their non-Somali schoolmates.

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[44] A terrorist attack consisting of two bombs exploded near the Finish Line of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013. One of the bombers, Dzhokar Tsarnaev, declared that "we Muslims are one body." (NBC News 2014).

In order to change these perceptions of Islam, Sumaya suggests that Lewiston Public Schools should foster "an open dialogue about religion" and allow students to correct these false stigmas and misconceptions surrounding their religious identity. She proposes that if schools "open that door" and allow students to share their experiences, the school community will be more willing to respect the religious differences of the student body. "It would be an awesome opportunity for people to share their religious practices," states Ms. Flahtery. "I think there [are] a lot of unknowns about Islam, it's unfortunate… I think they feel that there is a lot of bad information out there. It's too bad; it breaks my heart."

Although some non-Somali teachers, like Ms. Flahtery, agree with their Somali students and see the educational value of critical discussions around religion, America's adherence to secular values within its public schools prevents these opportunities from becoming reality.

A Religion of Secularism

The United States claims to be a secular nation, which means that it does not officially sanctify religion in school. The Establishment and Free Exercise clauses in the First Amendment of the Constitution declare, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof…" Together these two clauses promote the "separation of church and state," a concept defining the distance between organized religion and the nation-state, particularly in schools.

According to Craig S. Engelhardt, a writer, teacher, and administrator on the issues of public education and religious schooling, "[e]very public educator is thoroughly trained that they should not promote religious views at school" (Engelhardt 2013: 18). Engelhardt argues this non-

religious view of public education, however, is not as secular as it would seem given the role of religion in America's educational founding.

Before Horace Mann's "common school" movement in the 1830s, communities saw education as a way to teach and discipline students to build strong individual faiths, which in turn, they argued, would create a stable society (Engelhardt 2013: 27). The Protestant faith aligned strongly with the morals and political conceptions of the country, and, therefore, was believed to be capable of supporting the democratic ideals of America's founders. With the country's continued expansion and increased governmental control, schools began to "slowly mov[e] from the home to the schoolhouse. As individual concerns became more public, education increasingly came under governmental regulation" (27).

Horace Mann, often referred to as the "father of American public education," saw the expansion and diversification of American society as a sign to make drastic changes to the country's school system (Engelhardt 2013: 30). By establishing the 'common school,' Mann hoped universal education could unite the nation under a common culture. Although he claimed that his 'common school' movement supported children of all socio-economic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, he founded the schools upon Protestant beliefs, just like the American nation. Public schools them became part of the nation's "united Protestant mission" (Engelhardt 2013: 39). [45]

As America became more diverse, many religious minorities criticized Mann's 'common school' movement, claiming that its goal was to "wean immigrants from aspects of their native faiths," such as Jews and Catholics, and assimilate to the nation's religious ideology (Engelhardt

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[45] Many would argue against Engelhardt's claim regarding Protestantism's specific role in the formation of American public schools. Instead, many would refer to America's founding in broader terms of Judeo-Christian beliefs. When applying Engelhardt's theory to Lewiston Public Schools, I will refer to the school's founding as Judeo-Christian, not solely Protestant.

2013: 36). As teachers struggled to present sectarianism without hostility or indifference to religion, religious education lost its importance in the public sphere. Supreme Court rulings such as *School District of Abington v. Schempp* (1963) [46] and *Engel v. Vital* (1962) [47] expedited the secularization of American education throughout the latter-half of the 20th century, arguing that America, as a pluralistic society, should not favor any form of religion within its public schools.

Engelhardt discusses two conflicting goals of American ideology: the need to define a national identity and the protection of individual religious integrity (i.e. personal liberty) (Engelhardt 2013: 77). These concerns relate to Anthony Smith's definition of nationalism as being either ethnocentric (exclusive) or polycentric (inclusive). According to Charles Taylor, a Canadian philosopher, identity is "a person's understanding of who they are" and is, therefore, directly linked to the politics of recognition (Taylor 1994: 25). Secularism could initially be interpreted as a form of multiculturalism; in other words, by not recognizing any religion, it accepts all. The practice of this reasoning within the school culture and structure, however, lacks veracity given America's founding as a Judeo-Christian nation.

In adopting secularism, the American public school system ignores the role of Judeo-Christian beliefs in the history of its foundation, thereby abstaining from addressing the inherent inequalities within the system. In other words, American schools are being "religion-blind," [48]

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[46] This Supreme Court case declared that school-sponsored Bible readings in American public schools were unconstitutional.

[47] *Engel v. Vital* (1962) made it unconstitutional for public schools to compose an official school prayer and encourage its recitation.

[48] In this instance, I refer to the term "color-blindness," which is the racial ideology that believes by ignoring racial identities, racism no longer exists. Adopting a color-blind ideology continues to ignore the white hierarchal structures and continues to let whiteness dominate the racial discourse. I apply this idea of being "color-blind" to America's adoption of secularism within its public schools. I claim that this "religion-blind" mentality of secularism within American public schools ignores the structures that subconsciously promote Judeo-Christian values due to the nation's history in Protestantism.

promoting equality through ideas of multiculturalism when in reality they are instilling the religious hierarchical structures of their Protestant past. [49]

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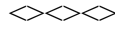
"Turn around and look behind you," instructs Diane Oakes, a history teacher at Lewiston High School. "Behind you are the rules we have set up for each other."

I rotate my body in the silver and blue chair to see a poster hanging on the back of the classroom wall that reads: 'Home Court.' In the background of the poster, is the drawing of a basketball court and written over it in thick black marker are the classroom rules.

"When they come to this room, it's their 'home court,' and we talk about what it means to have a 'home court advantage,'" states Ms. Oakes. "There's always somebody on your side… [to] feel safe and supported. So they need to show respect for different opinions, be open and kind to one another, take turns speaking, be respectful, and encourage each other… kids need to feel safe and know that you've got their back and that they can take a risk."

Ms. Oakes encourages her students to feel supported in broaching serious, important issues in her classroom. Yet, as much as she tries to foster engaging conversations, she recalls a situation where religion challenged her student's 'home court advantage.'

Michael, a Christian student with a boisterous attitude, entered Ms. Oakes' classroom, expressing his eagerness to share his family's weekend trip to a Christian youth camp. Mohammed, a Somali student who often competes with Michael for classroom personality, felt jealous of the attention Michael was receiving. When Michael dropped his highlighter on the floor, Mohammed instructed Jama, the Somali student next to him, in Somali to not pick up the

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[49] It is important to note that America's secularism does not only affect the religious observances of Muslim students. For the purpose of this thesis, however, I am specifically focusing on how America's adoption of secularism affects the religious identity of the Somali students in Lewiston Public Schools.

item. Believing the students were talking poorly about his religion, Michael went home and told to his parents, "I talk about my church this weekend and they laughed and made fun of my religion in Somali." The next day, Michael's mother called the principal exclaiming, "This is America. Any kid should be able to speak about their own religion!" When Ms. Oakes talked to Jama, he nervously asked if he was did something wrong, having listened to Michael's discussion about religion.

Ms. Oakes was shocked, instructing Jama that it was acceptable to convey curiosity about another religion. Jama was relieved and excitedly replied, "That's good because I enjoyed that conversation and learning about Michael's camp."

"That was such a missed opportunity!" expressed Ms. Oakes, frustrated by her inability to have an enlightening conversation in her classroom. "They shared a bit of their culture, and it was something that Jama was interested in hearing. I think that if Michael had the opportunity to ask Jama and Mohammed about Islam, he would have been just as intrigued. But that conversation didn't happen because we were all stuck on the idea that 'we can't talk about religion.' I felt like I automatically silenced the conversation without even considering the implications for learning this event would have had on my students."

Ms. Oakes' story perfectly encompasses the internal struggles teachers and students face on a daily basis. Throughout our conversation, she continued to express her desire to foster these types of conversations in the future. "It would have been so insightful to have Michael and the other students hear about how Jama and Mohammed attended the Islamic Center on Saturdays to learn Arabic in order to read and recite the Qur'an!" she eagerly stated. She predicted these types of conversations and activities would educate many students, and even teachers and administrative faculty, on the false stereotypes and assumptions around Islam. Ms. Oakes wants

to promote religious pluralism within her classroom. She yearns for her students to apply this 'home court advantage' to talk about their diverse beliefs. Yet, Ms. Oakes also conveyed her concerns about how parents and the administration would react to such a controversial topic, misconstruing her teaching as a form of religious indoctrination.

Although secularism does not abolish classroom discussions on religion, it indirectly leads schools to evade such conversations. As Michael's mom perfectly affirmed, "This is America. Anyone should be able to speak about their religion!" According to the Free Exercise clause, students should be able to practice and express their religion freely. If the school were to acknowledge the religious plurality of its students by breaking the false conception that religion cannot be used for educational gains, it would not be promoting one religion, but many. As Taylor argues, "nonrecognition or misrecognition… imprisons someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor 1994: 25).

Lewiston Public Schools assume that students can leave their religious identity "at the door" before entering school. In other words, they believe that religion, and all the stereotypes that persist, stops existing once students cross the threshold into their public educational institutions. This reasoning, however, privileges students whose identities are not questioned or stereotyped within their daily lives, especially at school. The structure of the Lewiston Public School system inherently values certain religious identities over others. Thus, the expectation that religion can be left "at the door" forces Somali Muslim students to suppress their identities while Judeo-Christians are not required to do so.

According to Karen Isaken Leonard, a historian and anthropologist at the University of California Irvine, Muslims, and other religious minorities, are "equal before the law but necessarily different in other spheres of their lives" (Leonard 2003: 51). Theoretically, the

Lewiston Public School system's adherence to the rules of the nation's secularism promotes religious equality by not recognizing one faith to govern a public institution. On the contrary, in claiming to be secular, Lewiston Public Schools ignore their historical religious hierarchy and, thus, continue to instill religious inequalities. This argument hinders teachers and students from fostering constructive dialogue regarding religious misconceptions and, thus, allows Judeo-Christian values to subconsciously continue to dominate the school culture.

Prayer

In July 2006, a local man threw a severed pig's head into the Lisbon Street mosque in Lewiston while Somalis were in the midst of Friday prayer. [50] Although local churches came together and rallied in opposition to the religious hate crime, Anwar Osman, a young Somali male alum from Lewiston High School, recalled how the event deeply affected his outlook on the non-Somali community:

"I remember taking my identity very seriously then, trying to push my boundaries in school to see what I could do or can't do as a Muslim. Being a Muslim, Friday prayers are pretty important, especially as a male, and I remember trying to find as many ways as possible to get excused to go to Friday prayer."

As a sophomore, Anwar and his friends began a weekly tradition of forging notes about false medical appointments in order to attend Friday religious services. This became so reoccurring that the administration stepped in and put a stop to it.

"I remember asking myself, 'Why do I have to lie to go to Friday prayer?' It's my religious right to be a Muslim. I tried that and got shot down. The school wanted to take a stand

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[50] Friday prayer, or *Jumma*, is the day of religious congregation where Muslims are required to assemble in the mosque and pray as a community (Esposito 2011: 35).

to make a separation between religion and school but at the same time there were Christmas parties and people saying the Pledge of Allegiance."

According to Mahad Said, a Somali caseworker in Lewiston and an administrative leader of the Lewiston Auburn Islamic Center, students are now allowed to leave school early for Friday prayer but it is an unexcused absence. The school system came to this agreement with Somali elders from the downtown mosque. [51] This allowance reveals the changes Lewiston Public Schools are willing to make in order to accommodate their students' religious beliefs and create a more inclusive school culture. At the same time, Anwar's comments regarding the observances of Christmas parties and the Pledge of Allegiance, do question the secularism that American public schools claim to uphold.

Every morning, students are required to stand, often with their hand on their heart, and pledge "allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Although *Engel v. Vital* (1962) made it unconstitutional for public educational institutions to encourage its students to recite a prayer in school, it can be argued that the Pledge of Allegiance is a religious act. Billig claims this "ceremony is a ritual display of national unity [with which] the nation celebrates itself routinely" (Billig 1995: 50). This act of pledging allegiance to the American flag, which is symbolic of the nation, turns a compelling national tradition into a seemingly commonplace practice. Students and teachers routinely "proclaim the unity of their nation under God," but which God is it and what religions does the Pledge recognize? (Billig 1995: 55).

According to Robert M. Bellah, a sociologist and scholar on religion, there is a "well-institutionalized 'civil religion' in America" that requires the same amount of understanding as any other religion (Bellah 1967). He argues that this "civil religion" explains the ingrained

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[51] I learned this information by asking the Attendance Clerk at Lewiston High School.

religious practices and ideologies of "the American Way of Life." He specifically discusses how America's use of the word "God" is a "central symbol" in its civil religion just as it is to Judaism and Christianity. This civil religion is evident in banal practices such as the recitation of the Pledge. In 1892, Francis Bellamy, a New York minister, wrote The Pledge of Allegiance (Sterbenz 2014). The phrase, "under God," was later added and signed into law on June 14, 1954 on Flag Day by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Two years later on June 14, 1956, "In God We Trust" was declared as the national motto. In using Bellah's theory, it can be argued that reciting the Pledge every morning in public schools is a practice of America's civil religion because it recognizes "God" as an essential aspect of the American Way of Life.

Bellah's concept of American civil religion can also be used to question the weekly structure of the American public school system. Students attend classes from Monday to Friday, having no school on Saturday or Sunday. Bellah would claim that this weekly schedule is a product of civil religion's historical roots in Judeo-Christian values. This weekend structure allows Jews to attend synagogue services on Saturday and Christians to go to church on Sunday. Thus, these "common beliefs of ordinary Americans," such as the weekly structure of schooling and the use of "God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, are a product of Bellah's civil religion.

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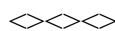
Muslims are required to pray five times a day, doing so according to the patterns of the sun. At dawn before sunrise (*salat al-fajr*), midday after the sun passes its highest peak (*salat al-zuhr*), the late part of the afternoon (*salat al-'asr*), after sunset (*salat al-maghrib*), and between sunset and midnight (*salat al-'isha*) (Esposito 2011: 19).[52] The second prayer, *salat al-zuhr*, always coincides during the school day causing controversy over the assumed secularism of the American public school system.

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[52] A Muslim friend taught me the names in Arabic for the five daily prayer times.

Although Lewiston has made many religious accommodations for its Somali students, such as religious head covering, dietary restrictions, and *Jumma*, it has yet to allow prayer rooms within the public schools. Mahad has worked closely with the school system over the years in the hopes of creating a space for Somali students to observe *salat al-zuhr* during school hours. Yet, he is repeatedly met with the same response that schools "do not recognize religion."

Throughout his schooling experience in Lewiston, Anwar struggled with the boundaries of acceptance and exclusion that Lewiston Public Schools created, prohibiting him from correctly observing his religion. The Lewiston Auburn Islamic Center acknowledged students' struggle in performing *salat al-zuhr*, allowing them the opportunity to perform the prayer once they returned home. Yet, Anwar and other Somali students expressed their frustrations in their inability to observe a "purer" schedule of prayer given the school's inability to accommodate their religious needs. Teachers were often the deciding factor in a students' ability to pray; some would allow their students to take the allotted time needed before class to pray, while others were strict observers of secularism.

Frustrated by this inconsistency, students began to challenge the school's secularism, using bathroom breaks as an excuse to perform their religious needs. Once teachers and administrators throughout the Lewiston Public School system realized this scheme, they began monitoring Somali students' breaks from the classroom to ensure sure they were using them for non-religious purposes. Anwar even noted an incident that occurred in Lewiston Middle School where a Somali girl was punished for praying in a bathroom. [53] Yet, it is important to note the aspects of Muslim prayer that led Somali students to leave the classroom in order to perform their religious act.

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[53] The date of this event was not specified. It probably occurred during Anwar's time in high school, somewhere between 2008 and 2012.

A Muslim's prayer ritual is detailed and elaborate, requiring them to wash and complete a series of prostrating and standing positions that correlate with recitations from the Qur'an. Somali students' act of prayer and religious identity is more apparent and, therefore, easier to control than other religions present in the school. For example, if Christian students were to pray in school, they theoretically could clasp their hands, bow their heads, and close their eyes at their desks while mouthing passages from the Bible. This could be argued as an easier form of prayer to perform in school, given its lack of prostrating motions, than Muslim students' prayer ritual. Given the school's willingness to accommodate religious head covering, dietary restrictions, and *Jumma*, it is interesting to question why Lewiston has yet to make a similar decision regarding prayer in school (Lindkvist 2008: 166).

According to Catherine Besteman, an anthropologist teaching at Colby College, "tolerance as accommodation meant policing the boundaries of Somali involvement in decision making about their lives in Lewiston to ensure their inclusion in city institutions met the letter of the law but did not change institutional practice or culture" (Besteman 2016: 133-134). Lewiston Public School system's practice of religious tolerance towards its Somali Muslim students is one of containment. In other words, the schools decide which religious observances to allow and which ones to exclude based on how it will affect their institutional practices and culture of secularism. Perhaps Lewiston Public Schools fear that by recognizing Muslim prayer in school, it is violating "the separation of church and state." Other schools around the nation, however, have begun to recognize Muslim students' religious needs, allowing them to pray in designated prayer rooms in school.

According to Sumaya Abdi, her previous school in Columbus, Ohio had prayer rooms, and teachers were more understanding of their Muslim students' religious obligations. A high

school in Portland, Maine and some public schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota have begun to make accommodations as well, assigning a space or room in the building for prayer. [54] Yet, whenever I brought up the topic of prayer in Lewiston High School, teachers were quick to argue against it referring to "the separation of church and state."

Ms. Adams, a 7th grade literacy teacher, informed me that Lewiston Middle School has an unused hallway in the cafeteria designated for prayer; however, students are only allowed to pray during lunch hours, not class. Despite the timing restrictions, the school has been wiling to recognize prayer in some capacity during school hours. Given the taboo nature of religion in public education, however, the school is still hesitant to fully accommodate this religious observance. Perhaps in accommodating prayer in school, Lewiston fears it is violating *Engel v. Vital* (1962) and the Establishment Clause. In allowing Somali students to pray, however, Lewiston would not be breaking either law because it is not requiring all students to recite a prayer in school, nor is it advocating for the observance of only one religion. "If the prayer room proposal did pass, it would be a symbol of acceptance," stated Mahad. By accommodating prayer rooms for *salat al-zuhr*, Lewiston Public Schools would be challenging the nation's secularism and "the separation of church and state." They would allow their Somali students the freedom to observe their own religion without promoting the institutional observance of one superior religion to dictate the public institution. In short, this religious accommodation towards the Somali community would continue to advance the Lewiston Public School system towards promoting multiculturalism and acceptance within its hallways and classrooms.

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[54] Source for Portland High School: http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1994-12-17/news/9412160606_1_flash-flood-muslim-students-gejdenson. I heard more about Portland and Minneapolis' prayer rooms in my interview with Sumaya Abdi.

Holidays

The bell rang, its sound resonating throughout the halls of Lewiston Middle School. Ms. Adams' students quickly packed their bags and ran to the direction of the cafeteria for the start of lunch. Maulid Hassan, a 7th grade Somali student, stayed behind and began a conversation with Ms. Adams. Both seemed engaged and excited, smiling occasionally as Maulid scribbled down notes on a loose sheet of lined paper. Soon, he too dashed out the door, excited for the pizza that awaited him on the first floor.

"I'm so thrilled for our next lesson," Ms. Adams squealed in excitement. "Maulid has this great idea – he wants to write a letter about recognizing Eid as holiday!" She was delighted, having just gone over possible interview questions and participants for the project with Maulid.

In one of the units in her curriculum, Ms. Adams has her students write an argumentative essay on any topic that inspires them. Students in the past have written on a variety of topics, from immigration policy and police brutality to suggestions for school-wide activities and changes to the lunch menu. As a practicing Muslim, Maulid felt frustrated by the lack of recognition for his religious holidays. Eid al-Adha, or the "Festival of the Sacrifice," is one of the two Muslim holidays celebrated worldwide, yet its date varies each year according to the lunar calendar (Esposito 2011: 36). The other holiday, Eid al-Fitr, or "the Feast of Breaking the Fast" marks the end of Ramadan, a holy month of fasting. Particularly given Lewiston's large Somali population, Maulid hoped to write a letter to Superintendent Webster asking Lewiston Public Schools to add both Eid celebrations to the academic calendar and recognize them as district holidays. He was inspired to do so after returning from celebrating Eid al-Adha in the fall, irritated that he had so much schoolwork to catch up with after missing one day of class. Maulid approached Ms. Adams and expressed his concern:

"How come for Christmas, we all get a week off of school and don't have to make up work but when we, the Somali students, have our holidays, we do not receive the same treatment?"

"I thought that was just the best question," stated Ms. Adams. "I encouraged him to pursue the topic for his argumentative essay later in the semester!"

After weeks of conducting interviews and drafting letters, Maulid completed his project with the help of two Somali peers. All three invited Superintendent Webster to their classroom to discuss the topic further and were pleased to hear of some possible changes the school has negotiated around the holiday. Superintendent Webster seemed very open to the idea of adding Eid to the district calendar; however, he expressed two major concerns regarding the logistics of recognizing the two Muslim holidays. [55]

First, Superintendent Webster instructed the students that he cannot have religious holidays explicably stated on the district calendar in order to adhere to secular school policy. "Christmas is not on there," stated Ms. Adams, "it's labeled as 'Winter Break' but everyone knows what holiday is being recognized." If Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr were to receive recognition on the school calendar, Superintendent Webster suggested they be labeled as Teacher Workshops or Professional Development Days.

According to Charles Taylor, multiculturalism cannot exist without the politics of recognition. He believes identity, "a person's understanding of who they are," and recognition are inseparable entities in the formation and solidarity of multicultural nations (Taylor 1994: 25). In applying this reasoning to Superintendent Webster's proposal, Taylor would argue that by failing to openly recognize the reasoning behind these vacation or teacher days, the Lewiston

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[55] I gathered this information regarding Superintendent Webster's comments from personal communication via email with Ms. Adams.

Public School system is not promoting multiculturalism. This approach seems to imply that by not identifying any holidays on the district calendar, the schools are adhering to the nation's policies of secularism. In other words, by not denoting a break on the calendar for religious purposes, the schools ensure that they are adhering to "the separation of church and state" and, thus, promote religious equality.

Superintendent Webster also expressed concern around the inconsistencies in the holidays' timing. Eid al-Adha falls on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the twelfth and final month of the Islamic calendar, while Eid al-Fitr always occurs on the last day of Ramadan (Esposito 2011: 36). Muslims observe a lunar calendar, however, causing these celebrations to change every year with the cycles of the moon. Although Christmas is always on December 25th, Easter is inconsistent in its timing, varying between the months of March and April. Regardless, the school is able to adapt to this irregularity and plan accordingly. If Lewiston Public Schools are willing to accommodate the fluctuating schedule of Christian holidays such as Easter, why can they not do the same for Eid?

According to a *New York Times* article, New York City public schools will begin recognizing Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr in the coming school year (2016-2017). Beyond being what Mayor Bill de Blasio as "matter of fairness," this recognition of the two Muslim holy days is a symbolic act of acceptance to a religious community that "has endured suspicion and hostility since the September 11 terrorist attacks" (Grynbaum and Otterman 2015). Muslim students make up 10 percent of the New York City public school system that serves 1.1 million schoolchildren. "When these holidays are recognized, it's a sign that Muslims have a role in the political and social fabric of America" stated Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights advocacy group.

Lewiston has a population of 37,000. Approximately 5,000, or 14 percent, are Somali. Like Muslim Americans living in New York City, Somalis have also experienced hardship in attaining political and social equality within Lewiston. As Mahad Said, a leader of the Lewiston Auburn Islamic Center, said, "If the prayer room proposal did pass, it would be a symbol of acceptance." The same reasoning goes for Eid. If the two Muslim holy days were to be recognized on the district calendar, it would be a symbolic act towards creating a more tolerant, accepting, and inclusive community in Lewiston.

As Lewiston Public Schools continue to negotiate the boundaries of religious recognition, Somali students must continue to question their acceptance in the school community and the American nation due to their religious identity. Yet, the fact there is continued discussion surrounding the recognition of the two Muslim holidays is a sign that perhaps Lewiston is willing to make these boundaries more permeable in the coming future.

According to Ms. Adams, the school committee and Superintendent Webster are currently discussing whether to start summer school later in order to accommodate Eid al-Fitr after the month-long fasting of Ramadan. In a staff meeting at Lewiston Middle School, the principal asked summer school teachers if they were willing to make this change in order to adapt to the Muslim holiday – all agreed. Thus, the discussion around accepting aspects of Somali students' religious identity continues to involve a balance between accommodation and assimilation with a continuum of possibilities in between.

"Am I American?"

"What does it mean to be an American?" I ask Sumaya as we sit across from each other at a dark wooden table in a local Starbucks. It is peak coffee hour and customers are quickly

occupying the adjacent tables in our vicinity. She takes a sip from her ceramic mug and positions

herself closer to me, leaning in across the small table. She looks around at the crowd of people.

Although it has gotten increasingly louder, she lowers her voices, sighs, and states:

> I don't think I'm American because I'm Somali. I am an American by citizenship but
> other Americans don't see me as an American because I'm of a different faith, different
> culture…. So what's it like to be an American? I'd like to know… I'm just American by
> paper… I'd like to be an American but I don't think other people will let me be
> American.

"Why do you feel like you can't be American?" I ask. Sumaya's expression is one of frustration

and dejection. She fixes the pin holding her hijab tightly to her face then interlocks her fingers

into a light fist on the table.

> Because I don't fit in. I don't wear jeans, my hair is not exposed. That's how I feel. I do
> respect this country… At the end of the day [others] have a different opinion than I do.
> But I will defend this country, I won't ever leave. My next generation will be born here…
> I think there are two separate [definitions]. One, there are people who think I'm not an
> American…but to me, I am.

These "two separate definitions" of being an American strongly relate to Barth's

explanation on the social processes of boundary formation. Being an American is a bounded

identity and acceptance into this "imagined community" can either be self-ascribed or ascribed

by others (Barth 1969: 10). Sumaya wants to be an American and feels immense pride in this

identity. Yet, she recognizes that many other Americans do not agree with her self-ascription and

will, instead, perceive her as not being American due to her different faith. As a Muslim woman,

Sumaya wears the hijab and more modest clothing such as long sleeved tops and floor-length

skirts. She believes her religious identity makes others question her Americanness.

According to Said, "[a] group of people living on a few acres of land will set up

boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings" (Said 1978: 54). These

boundaries will create "a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours'

which is 'theirs'" (54). Yet, divisions between "us" and "them" are not always solely physical. In the case of Lewiston Public Schools, the separation between ELL and mainstream students are evident through spatial boundaries, such as "upstairs" and "underground," and the divisional structures of the "literacy support" and "workshop" models for ELL students. As Said mentions, however, these boundaries can exist "in our own minds" as well. For Somali students, "'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours'" (54). Their identity as Muslims causes the Lewiston Public School system to challenge their integration into the school community.

As Said argues in his discussion of the West and the "mysterious Orient," the East has "always signified danger and threat" (Said 1978: 26). For Sumaya, a Muslim woman living in a post-9/11 world, her religion is seen as a threat to the solidarity of the American nation. According to Ernst, many conservative Americans believe that Muslims "stand in contrast to an 'American way of life'" (Ernst 2013: 56). As a result, they often have "a much greater uphill battle finding a place in America's national narrative and body politic than their white counterparts" (Billig 1995: 66). Sumaya's religious identity causes many people to label her as an "other" and exclude her from becoming an integrated member of the American community. Having never had the opportunity to combat the cultural stereotypes of her religion in school or assert her religious identity through prayer and recognition of Eid, she continues to struggle with the effects these misconceptions have on both the Lewiston community and the nation in accepting her self-ascribed Americanness.

A "Common Destiny"

In *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948), the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional

for a state to promote religious instruction in its tax-supported public school system. [56] Justice

Felix Frankfurter, who concurred with the final decision, wrote:

> Designed to serve as perhaps the most powerful agency for promoting cohesion among a
> heterogeneous democratic people, the public school must keep scrupulously free from
> entanglement in the strife of sects. The public school is at once the symbol of our
> democracy and the most pervasive means for promoting our common destiny. In no
> activity of the State is it more vital to keep out divisive forces than in its schools.

Since their creation during Horace Mann's "common school" movement, American

public schools have served as the driving force in creating a unified nation. They are seen as the

"symbol of [America's] democracy" by promoting a "common destiny" amongst a diverse

population. Yet, in stating that these differences, specifically religious ones, are "divisive"

instead of beneficial, Justice Frankfurter implies that American public schools inculcate

exclusivity rather than acceptance. In other words, ignoring its students' diversity and

encouraging a unifying culture and "common destiny," the nation's public school system

believes it is promoting theories of multiculturalism, when in reality, it preaches ethnic

nationalism. Yet, Justice Frankfurter's belief of "keep[ing] out divisive forces," such as religious

"strife," fails to recognize the hierarchal Judeo-Christian structures of America's public school

system and, instead, identifies America with a false ideal of unity.

Lewiston Public Schools create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion regarding Somali

students' religious identity as practicing Muslims. This chapter by no means condones the

observance of any religion in the Lewiston Public School system. It does argue, however, that

the public school's adoption of "the separation of church and state" is full of contradictions. In

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[56] *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948) was a landmark case, acting as an early test to "the separation
of church and state" in terms of education.

claiming secularism, Lewiston Public Schools, like all American public schools, are ignoring the role of religious hierarchies in the history of their foundation, thereby refraining from addressing the inherent inequalities within their system. In other words, in believing students can "leave their [religion] at the door" and adopt secularism, Lewiston Public Schools are privileging students whose identities are not questioned or stereotyped. As Islamophobia continues to increase in the United States and manifests itself in the hallways and classrooms of American public schools, Somali students will continue to question their identity as Americans, such as Sumaya and Fatuma. Additionally, Lewiston Public Schools' secularism is "religion-blind." The school system ignores its historical roots in Judeo-Christian values and thereby abstains from addressing the inherent inequalities within its school system. It believes that by failing to recognize religion in schools, specifically prayer and holidays, it is practicing multiculturalism, when in reality it is ignoring Somali students' religious differences and provoking ideas of ethnic nationalism.

In order for Lewiston Public Schools to accept its Somali students into the school community, it must be willing to reevaluate the very root of its religious inequalities. This chapter suggests that Lewiston Public Schools must continue to negotiate these boundaries of accommodation and assimilation and question the true nature of the secularism that it claims to uphold in its "common destiny."

Chapter Six: One Team
The Lewiston High School Blue Devils

"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers."
– Nelson Mandela –

Game Day

On Saturday, November 7, 2015, the Lewiston High School Blue Devils men's soccer team played in the Class A State Championship game against Scarborough. The Fitzgerald Stadium in Portland was packed with over 4,500 fans, making it the highest attended soccer game in the history of the state (Brekke 2015). The stands were overflowing, forcing many fans to flood into the street. Others stood outside the gate along the chain-link fence, hoping to catch a glimpse of the game without paying the $5 entrance fee. [57]

At the line up, the Blue Devil's roster surpassed Scarborough's in terms of diversity. 18 of Lewiston's 25 players are refugees from countries such as Somalia, Kenya, Turkey, Germany, and the Congo (Brekke 2015). Eight of these athletes are Somalis who all grew up in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp in Kenya, and knew each other before settling in Maine (Jordan 2015).

Scarborough was Lewiston's toughest competitor this whole season. The first half ended without a single goal scored. With 16:32 remaining in the second half, Maulid Abdow gave one of his notorious front handspring flip throws from the corner of the field (Craig 2015). [58] It

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[57] I obtained this information through personal communication with Cassandra Hamilton via email.

[58] All of the names in this chapter that are quoted via newspaper sources remain unchanged (i.e. McGraw, Clough, soccer players, community members, etc.) The teachers such as Ms. Michelson and Ms. Hawthorne, their students, and two outside sources, Cassandra Hamilton and Sumaya Abdi, are pseudonyms.

deflected off a Scarborough defender in the box and… GOAL! Lewiston fans erupted with

exuberant cheers and joyful screams. The Blue Devils scored the only goal the entire game,

defeating Scarborough with a final score of 1-0. They ended the season undefeated (18-0) and at

the end of the year were ranked as 22nd in the country.

On the surface, the story of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils is one of diversity,

community, and acceptance, showing how the team overcame its differences to become State

Champions. Upon closer examination, this tale relates to Anderson's concept of "imagined"

nationhood and the power of print technology. This chapter explores the story behind the

Lewiston Blue Devils soccer team through the lens of nationalism in three "imagined

communities:" the high school, Lewiston, and America. In interviewing Lewiston teachers and

residents and reading local and national news articles, this chapter analyzes the reaction to the

soccer team's victory and reasons that the Blue Devils embody the archetype of multiculturalism

and inclusivity, acting as a model for the future of the school, the city, and the nation.

On and Off the Field

One day after a soccer game, a group of African refugee boys approached Coach Mike

McGraw and introduced themselves, telling him of their interest in joining the Blue Devils'

soccer team. "We're going to be okay, we're going to be good, we're going to make a

champion," they informed him. After a state final loss against Cheverus in 2014 followed by

countless hours of training, the boy's soccer team finally won the championship they promised.

Before the victory, however, the players needed to act like a team and overcome the barriers of

diversity. In an interview with the Huffington Post, Coach McGraw revealed the previous racial

and ethnic divisions that existed amongst the players:

I don't know what year it was but the Somali kids sat by the brick building getting ready. The white kids were by the light pole. I said to them, 'I want you guys to come over here in the middle and sit!' I sat this guy here and that guy there so they were intermingled and speckled with color. I said, 'This is how a team plays, this is how I want you to be on and off the field, together' (Brekke 2015).

Coach McGraw's act of intermingling the players according to their physical diversity, such as race and ethnicity, is one that promotes an ideology of multiculturalism. According to Smith, this pluralistic nationalism fosters "a diversity within a unity," including various sub-varieties or cultural groups under a unifying, shared ideal of nationhood (Smith 1983: 193). The Blue Devils are not only players on a team but members of a multicultural nation united by the "transformative powers of [their] differences." [59] In identifying the intermixing of his teammates as "speckled," Coach McGraw recognized the diversity of his players, perhaps beyond their physicality. On the field, blacks and whites, Somalis and non-Somalis, refugees and natives, all played together in harmony. Despite their different ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities, the players united under one team, as one nation, for a common goal: to play the game and win.

"It is about the game and how these kids came from these refugee camps to a completely different country," stated Ian Clough, a 2001 graduate of Lewiston High School. "But they still had this sense of normalcy by being able to play soccer" (Bass 2015). Clough played the sport under Coach McGraw during his time at Lewiston High. Now, an independent filmmaker and freelance videographer, Clough has returned to his native city to create the documentary, "One Team: The Story of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils." Throughout his filmmaking process, Clough realized that many of the players do not want their differences to define their victory. "These kids don't look at themselves as refugees or Muslims or immigrants, they want to be looked at as high school soccer players" (Brekke 2015). "'Why are we refugees that won?'

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[59] Excerpt from the Bates College's mission statement. http://www.bates.edu/about/mission/.

they ask. 'Why can't we be high school students who won?'" (Bass 2015). In a trailer for Clough's documentary, a player stated, "Coach McGraw doesn't care where you're from as long as you can pass a ball" (Clough 2015). This comment suggests that the players do not see their diversity as a necessary component of their team's cohesion.

Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, argues that multiculturalism cannot exist without the politics of recognition. He believes identity, "a person's understanding of who they are," and recognition are inseparable entities in the formation and solidarity of multicultural nations due to their nature of accepting multiple, diverse identities (Taylor 1994: 25). Yet, Amy Gutmann, a political scientist and university administrator at the University of Pennsylvania, challenges Taylor's theory and, instead, questions if multicultural nations can unite under shared values as opposed to recognition (Taylor 1994: 4).

The Lewiston Blue Devils' desire to be seen as 'high school students' instead of 'refugees' does not invalidate their philosophy of multiculturalism but instead suggests ideals of cosmopolitanism. According to Karen Isaksen Leonard, "American concepts of multiculturalism have emphasized pluralism (respecting inherited boundaries and preserving ethno-racial groups) more than cosmopolitan (promoting multiple, changing identities and favoring voluntary affiliations)" (Leonard 2003: 51). By trying not to let their identity as refugees be the *sole*, defining feature of their victory as state champions, the Lewiston Blue Devils attempt to transcend the boundaries of ethno-racial groups often emphasized in pluralistic interpretations to multiculturalism and, instead, propose a cosmopolitan approach to their team mentality.

The Blue Devils unite under a shared desire to play the game and win for each other and their Lewiston community. As team captain, Mohamed Khalid, said to his teammates in a group huddle before the start of the state championship game, "We're doing this for the guy on the left,

for the guy on the right. We're doing this for the community. We're doing this for Coach

McGraw" (Craig 2015). This devotion to victory is the driving force in uniting the Blue Devils

as one team and in a collaborative, harmonious manner on the field. Cassandra Hamilton, an

undergraduate student teacher in Lewiston Public Schools, commented on the cohesiveness of

the team during the championship game:

> The Lewiston team looked like had been playing together for years. Every player was of African descent except the goalie who was white. All the other players, white and black, actually stood up and screamed from the bench. They worked together flawlessly. [The players'] passes were so crisp and on point. They controlled both halves and kept possession for almost the entire game. Their dynamic was so much more in sync than Scarborough's'. It was as if the Lewiston boys knew where their teammates were going without thinking. They were in it to win, clean and fair...and together. [60]

The Blue Devils worked together, whether it was on the field passing the ball or on the

bench cheering. They made a voluntary choice to define themselves as a cohesive unit of high

school athletes, a unified nation of Americans. At the same time, in the brief trailers for Ian

Clough's documentary, he commoditizes the team's diversity and does not develop the players

beyond their identities as African refugees. This label of "refugee" implies a level of Otherness

and exclusion. As a result, defining the Somali students solely as "refugee players," refuses to

acknowledge the fact that these students wish to be a part of the greater Lewiston community,

and American society as a whole.

"They play so well," stated Coach McGraw. "It takes time but when they play well

together it's a thing of beauty. The game is a universal language that all adhere to." (Bass 2015).

Throughout his countless interviews with local media outlets, McGraw consistently emphasizes

one word: together. By commenting on his players' ability to "play well together" during the

game, he hopes his team will instill these ideologies of cosmopolitan multiculturalism beyond

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[60] I obtained this quote through personal communication with Cassandra via email.

the field as well. McGraw wants the team's "universal language" of acceptance, camaraderie, and multiculturalism to transcend the boundaries around the field and enter the classroom, the Lewiston community, and beyond.

"Our boys"

"Quiet Hassan!" Ms. Michelson, an ELL teacher, yells sternly across the room, her voice reverberating off the white cement walls. "I told you to do your test corrections quietly. Stop chatting with Bahdoon and get to work!"

Hassan picks up his pencil, sighs, and returns to the pile of papers before him on his desk. The students are finishing the class period by correcting their recent vocabulary test and all are on edge, worried about their grades; many students did not receive the score they would have liked. I am in the midst of helping another student correct his answers when Ms. Michelson calls me over to her desk in the back of the room.

"Look!" she says, pointing to a newspaper clipping on her desk. The Blue Devils cheerleading coach and fellow ELL teacher, Ms. Laverdiere, stands poised and smiling amidst her girls dressed in bright blue and white uniforms. Lewiston High School's cheerleading team just performed in the Class A North Regionals performance the following weekend, winning first place.

Ms. Michelson brings the clipping out into the hall and instructs me to follow. She tapes the article on the wall across from her classroom next to other newspaper clippings about Lewiston High School ELL student athletic accomplishments; almost half of them are about the State Champion boy's soccer team.

"These are my guys," she says, beaming proudly as she refers to a picture of the players lined up before the start of the game at Fitzgerald Stadium. [61] Ms. Michelson points to each player, stating their name with utter admiration and divulging countless details from when she had them all as students. "It's so great! I'm so proud of them," she states, smiling brightly with pride. "My boys..."

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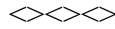
Teachers and administrators throughout Lewiston Public Schools have similar reactions to any mention of the Blue Devil's soccer team. Newspaper clippings are displayed in classrooms around the school along with photos depicting "their boys" dressed in the white and blue colors of Lewiston High School. Posters publicizing Ian Clough's documentary are sprinkled throughout the hallways, both "upstairs" and "underground."

When I spoke with Nina Hawthorne, a teacher at Lewiston High, in the lunch lounge one day, she praised the Blue Devils as a symbol of imminent unity. "It's made the school come together," she said, with an equal amount of confidence and pride in her voice. "Despite all Lewiston has gone through, the victory of this diverse team brings hope to our school culture and community." Having taught at Lewiston High for over 20 years, Ms. Hawthorne has seen the school adapt to its changing demographic. She witnessed the ELL program rapidly transition from one teacher to a whole department and, now, she watches a team of 25 boys from diverse upbringings slowly begin to unite their school.

Many Lewiston High teachers eagerly asserted that the Blue Devil's victory, especially given the diversity of its roster, illustrates the value of refugees and immigrants to the school community. One educator even suggested, "We're so past the race thing now – we just won the State Championship. Diversity is great!" Although the soccer team's triumph may be a step in

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[61] See 'Photo I' in the Appendix.

the right direction towards a more inclusive, multicultural community, other steps are still necessary in attaining a successful integration of Somalis into the school.

According to Benedict Anderson, Lewiston High is an "imagined community," one that creates ideals of nationhood within its school culture (Anderson 1996: 6). Ernest Gellner claims "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964: 169 as cited in Anderson 1996: 6). Although the school is quick to foster ideals of "togetherness" when linguistic and religious differences are still very much present, Anderson argues there is validity in these proposed fallacies. Unlike Gellner who associates "imagination" with "fabrication" and invalidity, Anderson believes communities should be classified "not by their falsity or genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6). In the case of Lewiston High, it is not important to study whether the Blue Devils do unite the school community. Rather it is necessary to analyze the fact that the school defines its "imagined community" on the victory of a diverse soccer team. It invents a school culture united, both on and off the field, by the success of 25 diverse student athletes.

Yet, as Cassandra stated, "'[w]inning' on the field is *so* different than succeeding in the classroom, hallway, [and] the college process, in those primarily white spaces." Many of these boys, specifically the Somalis, are accepted into the school culture, without hesitation, while they are on the field playing for the Blue Devils. Once they leave the field and enter these dominant school culture spaces, however, they must navigate these boundaries of inclusion and exclusion established by the very people who preach unity through their victory.

Anderson notes how the nation is sovereign, possessing the authority to draw these boundaries and define their permeability (Anderson 1996: 7). Although state and federal laws prohibit Lewiston High School from being completely sovereign, its power is similar to a

nation's sovereignty in its ability to include the Somali players into the school culture due to their athletic achievements, just as easily as it can exclude them based on their linguistic and religious identity. As Anderson states, nations are also imagined as a community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7). Despite the inequalities that exist for the Somali soccer players within the walls of the classroom, the school is able to claim a sense of national unity and camaraderie amongst its students and staff. Although some teachers may believe this athletic triumph is the cure to end all inequalities, others reason that the Blue Devils are a model of hope, a 'little victory', and a step in the right direction towards *true* equality in the future of its school culture.

Don't Leave All Your Culture at the Door

On Wednesday, November 4, 2015, the semi-final game of the Lewiston Blue Devils against the Broncos of Hampden High School brought the community's diversity to the Franklin Pasture fields of Lewiston High School. 10 of the 11 starting players, except the goalie, were African refugees, many of them Somali. The Lewiston cheerleading team, all 20 of which were white, cheered for the Somali players on the field, chanting their names in unison with the sharp movements of their blue and white pom poms. There were different sections in the stands – some were mixed while others were predominately Somali or non-Somali. Both Somali and English were spoken in the stands; a Somali man enthusiastically led the crowd in a wave. At the snack shop, the school sold pretzels, fried dough, and *sambusas*, a traditional Somali savory pastry.[62]

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[62] I received this information through personal communication with Loring Danforth, local Lewiston resident and college professor.

As many teachers and Lewiston residents are quick to state, the Blue Devils soccer team appears to have brought the community together. The crowd at the championship game against Scarborough three days later was similar, and significantly larger, illustrating how soccer has been a critical element in forging unity amongst its diverse residents, not only physically but also ideologically. [63] "You can't imagine how many people were there," stated Abdikadir Negeye, co-founder of the Somali Bantu Youth Association of Maine in 2008 (Bass 2015). "White, black, all around, cheering for [the team]. There is still division, but it's better than it was before." Ian Clough agreed, echoing Negeye's sentiments: "The fan base is amazing, absolutely incredible. It is a total hodgepodge of the community, and not just in terms of the students."

Two weeks after the state championship, Maine Community Integration (MCI), a local non-profit organization that promotes the support and understanding of the community's various cultures, organized a celebration event at the Ramada Hotel in Lewiston. "The event was very intermixed," states Sumaya Abdi, a member of MCI. "The whole school came – teachers, coaches, parents. Oh my goodness, it was phenomenal!" She showed me photos from the event – the diversity of attendees mirrored the demographic of the stands during the games. Fatuma Hussein, an executive director of United Somali Women of Maine, also attended. "I looked at the crowd and thought, 'This is who we are.' The white and the blacks, the young, old, women, children, men – all of us were there to celebrate our boys" (Anderson 2015). Instead of referring to Somali and non-Somali members as "us" and "them," Fatuma transcends these ethnic boundaries in using "we" and declares Lewiston as one, collective community. Her use of "we" is a form of self-ascription, a way for her to assert her inclusivity into the former mill town. She imagines a community united by the desire to "celebrate our boys" and participate in Lewiston's shared athletic victory between whites and blacks, refugees and natives.

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[63] See 'Photo II' in Appendix.

As McGraw and his players had hoped, the shared value of "playing well together" seemed to have transitioned beyond the field and spread throughout the Lewiston community. It is not only teachers at Lewiston High, such as Ms. Michelson, who feel immense pride for their champion soccer team; residents of Lewiston also embrace notions of togetherness in uniting under the victory of "our boys."

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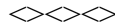
After November 7, the Sun Journal, a local newspaper for the Lewiston-Auburn area, ran countless front-page stories on the Blue Devil's victory as State Champions. For days, the team's blue uniforms filled the front-page with color, endlessly praising their success. The papers were all over town – in libraries, cafes, schools, and organizations. Yet, these newspaper articles were more than just texts, but powerful acts of nation building.

Anderson believes "the convergence of capitalism and print technology" played a major role in creating the modern nation (Anderson 1996: 46). Newspapers, or what Anderson designates as "print technology," became the intermediary to the "imagined community." [64] They made it possible for an immense number of nation members to associate with each other indirectly by the seemingly simple act of reading printed text. Michael Billig agrees with Anderson's emphasis of the importance of newspapers in the "reproduction of nationality" (Billig 1995: 125). Indeed, "a feeling of national community is produced by the knowledge that all over the nation people are performing the daily ritual of reading the same newspaper" (125). Billig, however, expands upon Anderson's argument, examining the intersection of 'print technology' and sports in the formation and maintenance of nationhood. Newspapers are a form of what Billig calls, "flagging the homeland daily," or the use of seemingly commonplace

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[64] Specifically refer to "Chapter 3: The Origins of National Consciousness" in *Imagined Communities* for more information regarding the intersection of capitalism and print technology in the formation of modern nations (Anderson 1996: 37-46).

practices to subconsciously remind people of their nation and its ideology. In other words, the

way writers display their newspaper in the public sphere is similar to the manner in which people

proudly display their nation's flag as a symbol of national unity.

For the Lewiston Blue Devils, their heroic story of winning the State Championship was

"flagged" in countless front-page spreads in community newspapers. To any given Lewiston

resident, the act of reading about their city's high school soccer victory may not have instantly

evoked feelings of national unity and togetherness, at least not directly. This athletic

achievement, however, induced a sense of pride towards their city that paralleled the nationalism

Americans feel for their nation. Whenever the Blue Devils moved up in the rankings towards the

state finals, the newspaper exhibited their accomplishments, acting as "a swirling flurry of flags"

waving for "'us,' 'our victories' and 'our heroes'" (Billig 1995: 120). The soccer players'

success was interchangeable with the city's success; they became "heroes" of the local

community. By writing about the Blue Devil's victory in print, it depicted the players as "'our

new star[s],' whom 'we,' the city readers, were invited to praise" (120). This act of praise

parallels feelings of nationalism, and in the case of Lewiston, praising a diverse team like the

Blue Devils for their athletic triumph is an indirect way to instill a multicultural ideology

throughout the city and beyond.

Although much of Lewiston rallied around their city's soccer triumph, there were still

some negative comments about the Somalis, such as fears of diversification, welfare budgeting,

and an increase in crime rates. [65] Yet, none of the comments openly targeted the victory itself.

'Winning' has the power to make people come together and unite under the joy in seeing their

nation succeed. As Billig states, "[t]he constant flaggings ensure that whatever else is forgotten

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[65] See the comments at the end of *Sun Journal* and *Bangor Daily News* articles regarding the Blue Devil's
athletic victory for more insight regarding residents' negative sentiments towards their 'New Somali
Neighbors.'

in a world of information overload, we do not forget our homelands" (127). Regardless of whether Lewiston residents were in the stands cheering or in their homes with a copy of the *Sun Journal*, by reading the newspaper, they were constantly reminded of their "imagined community" – its members and its ideologies.

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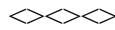
In a *BloombergView* article entitled, "Maine's Somalis Could Be Its Saviors," James Gibney highlights the fact that Lewiston's Somali refugee community has actually rejuvenated the city while the rest of state continues to experience a demographic disaster. Gibney wrote the piece in the midst of the 2015 mayoral elections that paired conservative incumbent, Mayor Macdonald against Ben Chin, a Chinese-American and the director of the progressive Maine People's Alliance. After discussing Lewiston's rough history of segregation and controversy around immigrant populations and the racist "Ho Chi Chin" poster scandal of the mayoral runoff, Gibney states: "But here's some good news: Lewiston's polyglot high school soccer team, with players like Abdi Shariff-Hassan, Maulid Abdow and Noralddin Othman, just won the State Soccer Finals. Go Blue Devils – and don't leave Maine" (Gibney 2015).

By ending his article with the Blue Devil's state champion victory, Gibney refers to the "polyglot" team as a symbol of hope for the future of the Lewiston community. His comment implies that "soccer is at the center of Lewiston's ability to understand and, indeed, embrace its changing demographic landscape" (Bass 2015). By instructing the team's refugee players to not leave Maine, Gibney suggests that the Somali athletes have changed Lewiston's soccer team for the better, just as the larger diaspora from the Horn of Africa has helped rejuvenate the city's once declining population. "Coach McGraw has been coaching for 35 years and this is his first championship," stated Sumaya Abdi. "It had to be New Mainers that brought the championship

home." Both Gibney and Sumaya infer that Lewiston's Somalis have changed the community for the better, both on and off the field.

These opinions regarding the Somali community contrast drastically with Mayor Macdonald's infamous demand that Somalis "leave their culture at the door." Given the fact that the Blue Devil's State Champion title win was largely due to the Somali population, it is interesting to wonder if the Mayor would still stand behind his previous comment or, perhaps, instruct the Somali community not to leave all their culture at the door, at least not the part of it that wins state champions.

As Anwar Osman, a Lewiston High School alumnus, put it, "[w]hen the Somali community does something positive, the community preaches inclusivity." A State Champion victory is indeed an outwardly positive contribution to the Lewiston community. When it comes to linguistic and religious diversity, however, Lewiston does not respond in the same positive manner. Thus, the community, like the school, has the ability to be inclusive when certain actions of the Somali population are deemed as acceptable. As Anderson notes, regardless of the exclusivities that may prevail, the community maintains a sense of "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1996: 7). Despite the many ways the city still excludes Somali identity from the mainstream culture, Lewiston is an "imagined community" that creates its ideals of multiculturalism around the athletic accomplishment of its "polyglot" high school soccer team.

America's Heroes

Given their athletic achievements in combination with the dramatic story behind their diverse roster, the Lewiston High School Blue Devils received widespread attention, not just in local Maine newspapers, but also throughout the nation. Media outlets such as the Huffington

Post, CNN, and USA Today wrote articles praising Lewiston and its "polyglot" team. Just as Gibney employed the team's diversity to contrast Lewiston's historical struggle with welcoming immigrant populations, many of the journalists used the Blue Devils as example at the local level for large-scale, national problems. Ben Rohrback of USA Today High School Sports argued that Lewiston's "title-winning soccer team" was a "microcosm of refugee success" (Rohrback 2015). Both Kira Brekke from the Huffington Post and Amy Bass from CNN referred to the success of Somali refugees in Lewiston as a small-scale solution to the global Syrian refugee crisis. [66] To reference Clifford Geertz, a renowned interpretative American anthropologist, the Lewiston Blue Devils became both a "model of" and "model for" multiculturalism to the American nation. [67] In other words, the soccer team's victory was a source of refugee success and a national influence in the way it encouraged the rest of the nation to reevaluate its approach to nationalism.

In referring to the Lewiston Blue Devils as a 'microcosm,' all three reporters argue that what has occurred in Lewiston, can happen throughout the rest of America. They believe the soccer team is the epitome of diverse populations coexisting together in one harmonious imagined community. More specifically, there are parallels between welcoming refugees and embracing diversity on a local and nation level. Thus, not only have communities of the team, school, and city begun to imagine their identity around the Blue Devil's ideology of inclusivity and multiculturalism, but the American nation has as well.

On the back of all U.S. coins is the Latin phrase: "e pluribus unum" – "from many, one." This American axiom compares to Smith's definition of multiculturalism as being "a diversity

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[66] Since the start of the Syrian Civil War in early 2011, millions of Syrians have been forced to leave their homes, seeking refuge in the Middle East, Europe, and Canada. After the Paris Attacks on November 13, 2015, many American politicians, mainly conservatives, openly declared to make it more difficult for Syrian refugees to enter the United States.
[67] See Clifford Geertz's chapter "Religion as a Cultural System" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), for more information on "model of" and "model for."

within a unity" (Smith 1983: 196). The Lewiston Blue Devils are a symbol of hope, a prospect of

unity amongst many "imagined communities." They represent an example of refugee success

that can be applied to the macrocosm of the American nation. "The way they play together, the

way they get along, that's the future of our cultures together," stated Coach McGraw in Ian

Clough's documentary (Clough 2015). He wants his team to "play together" both on and off the

field and be an example of camaraderie and multicultural nationalism. Clough argued, "this

extraordinary group of young men demonstrates to the world how the sport of soccer transcends

all borders" (Clough 2015). These "borders" include among others the national boundaries of

inclusion and exclusion that are often tightly placed around Somali students given their linguistic

and religious identities. From microcosms to macrocosms, the Lewiston Blue Devils victory is a

step towards a more pluralistic, inclusive American nation.

In her article for CNN, Amy Bass, a history professor at the College of New Rochelle and

a scholar of the Olympic games, asserts that the success of the Blue Devils is a prime example of

"How soccer made refugees Americans." [68] Yet, it is important to note the irony in this

statement. Bass claims that soccer, a European sport, made refugees, who are often viewed as

being "un-American," into Americans. It was not the physical act of playing soccer, however,

which challenged the impermeable boundaries of Somali player's integration into the various

"imagined communities." Instead, soccer was a vehicle for the school and city to reevaluate its

definition of collective, community identity in order to be more inclusive towards its refugee

population. Perhaps a more fitting title would be, "How refugees changed the definition of what

it means to be an American."

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[68] Bass is the author of "Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the
Black Athlete." She is a supervisor for NBC's Olympic Research Room, a veteran of 8 Olympics, and a
2012 Emmy winner (Editor's note in Bass 2015). "How soccer made refugees Americans" is the title of
Bass' article.

In a 'Speckled' Manner

Early one Monday morning, I took Asha and Mohammed, two of Ms. Michelson's ELL students, into the hallway of the "underground." We sat in mismatched chairs around a small rectangular table and began reading their new short story aloud, switching speakers after every two paragraphs. Suddenly, students begin filing down the stairs and flooding the classroom across the hall to finish ACCESS testing, the rigorous national exam designed to measure the English proficiency of English Language Learners. I looked to my left and saw three of the Blue Devils soccer players turn the corner. In the newspapers, their faces were filled with excitement and joy, but down in the "underground," they looked tired and somber. Instead of sporting blue and white soccer jerseys, they wore jeans and dark sweaters. There was no cheering for them as they rounded the corner, only teachers urging them to hurry into the windowless classroom next door.

One of the boys turned to his left and saw Ms. Michelson's newspaper clippings with photos of him and his teammates embracing their coach after the victory and running into the stands with smiles on their faces to greet their fans with the State Championship trophy. [69] He nudged his two teammates and gestured to the wall. They stopped in the middle of the hallway and looked at the photos. For a moment, they seemed to have transported themselves back onto the field – the ball beneath their feet, the crowd cheering their name. They glanced at each other and smiled before disappearing into the testing center.

"Their victory was something these boys could really publicly 'own,' no matter the shit they have had to deal with everyday in public school or in the basement of some ELL class," said Cassandra Hamilton. Winning the state championship title made the Somali members of the Blue Devils soccer team "heroes," a model of national unity. Lewiston High School, the local

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[69] See 'Photo III, IV, and V' in Appendix.

community, and the United States "flagged" the team's victory through the national distribution of newspapers, expressing pride and acceptance towards this "microcosm of refugee success."

As these victorious players walk the halls of Lewiston High, however, they continue to navigate the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of the American public school system due to their linguistic and religious diversity. Although they see their success proudly displayed on places like the wall outside Ms. Michelson's classroom and receive praise on the soccer field, they still struggle to cross borders and become accepted into the "imagined communities" of the school, city, and nation off the field as well. In viewing the Lewiston Blue Devils as an archetype of multiculturalism and inclusivity, it is important for the high school, Lewiston, and America to not only celebrate acceptance on the surface, but to practice what they preach and break down the boundaries that continue to divide Somali students.

Conclusion: "I, Too, Am America"

"Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America."

– Excerpt from Langston Hughes' poem, "I, Too."

"We're teaching him"

A few weeks after my initial interaction with Abdurrahman, I return to Ms. Hynes' classroom at Montello Elementary School. By this time, the once-colorful autumn leaves now lie in brown piles scattered throughout the parking lot, moved occasionally by gusts of bitter cold air that foreshadow the imminent winter. The same secretary greets me, writes me a pass, and directs to me to first-grade wing once more. I walk down the long hallway, now more cluttered with students' winter hats, scarves, and mittens, and reach Ms. Hynes' classroom. I notice that Abdurrahman now has his name written on his own apple by the paper tree just like his fellow peers. As I push open the door, I see Abdurrahman sitting on the colorful carpet with his classmates reading a picture book together. He recognizes me from across the room and dashes to the door. "You back!" he exclaims. He smiles with the same excitement he had on the first day I met him.

I bring him to a small table in the back of the room and begin to complete a vocabulary exercise. He writes his name in larger letters at the top of his paper. "My name!" he claims

proudly. We begin to review the words he struggled with during my last visit to the classroom –

dog, car, house, and bell – and, to my surprise, he knows every single one. "See? He's learning!"

says Jacqueline from the adjacent table. "We're teaching him." Abdurrahman smiles, once again.

"Words – good! I know words." I congratulate him on his accomplishment, letting him pick a

book of his choice to read aloud with a friend as his reward.

As I rise out of the small blue chair and turn towards the door, I hear the "click" of the

heater turn on and begin blowing warm air into the frigid classroom. The American flag that

protrudes from the wall on a worn, wooden pole above the vent begins to gently wave.

Jacqueline's words from weeks ago replay in my head. *We'll teach him, we'll make him an*

American.

Defining 'American'

While conducting fieldwork in a local adult learning center in downtown Lewiston,

Patricia Buck and Rachel Silver ask, "Will the refugees follow the assimilation patterns of

previous generations of immigrants, or will their arrival challenge existing regimes of

integration?" (Buck and Silver as cited in Stevick 2008: xxii). Like Catherine Besteman, Buck

and Silver wonder what the integration of Somali refugees into Lewiston will look like. How

much culture will Somalis "leave at the door" through the process of assimilating to American

society and how much will the city accommodate?

In regards to Lewiston Public Schools, my thesis has argued that this integration of

Somali students into the education system is a mixture of assimilation and accommodation, a

contradictory balance between ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism. In exploring theories on

nationalism and the history of the American public school system, I claim that the relationship between schooling and nationhood is inseparable.

Lewiston Public Schools not only teach math and literacy but also imagine nations, drawn boundaries, and make Americans within its hallways and classrooms. It negotiates these boundaries of inclusion and exclusion for its Somali students, deciding which aspects of their linguistic and religious identities is allowed into the school's culture and, thus, America's national identity. The Lewiston Public School system fails to recognize the spatial divisions and hierarchy it promotes around linguistic identity and their effects on the definition of an American student. Additionally, in adopting the nation's idea of secularism, Lewiston Public Schools continue to instill an educational structure that inherently favors Judeo-Christian values over Somali students' religious identity.

The Lewiston Public School system imagines its school community as one that preaches pluralism and accepts *all* of its students' identities. After their State Championship victory in November 2015, the Lewiston High School Blue Devils soccer team became a "model of multiculturalism" for the school, the city, and the nation. Despite the team's victory, Somali students continue to navigate the hierarchal structures that inherently favor the Euro-American, white, Judeo-Christian culture over their identities as black, non-English speaking Muslims.

I turn my attention to Abdurrahman, the young Somali student with a joyful nature and toothless smile in Ms. Hynes' first-grade class. What boundaries will he have to confront as he continues his educational experience in Lewiston Public Schools? Will he take classes in the "underground" if he fails to acquire an acceptable amount of English proficiency by the time he reaches high school? Will he still be labeled as an "ELL" student even with a score of 5.9 on the ACCESS language test? Will he celebrate Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr without having to miss a

day of school? Will he be able to pray in a designated prayer room with his other Somali peers for *salat al-zuhr*? Will the school, city, and nation see him as an equal both on and off the soccer field? Most importantly, will the Lewiston Public School system and the nation ever see him as an American?

Implications Within and Beyond the "Ivory Tower"

This thesis adds to the field of Educational Anthropology, presenting the relationship between the American public school system and the nation. It shows how Lewiston Public Schools, like many of the nation's public institutions, are sites of cultural transmission and reproduction that continue to value the white, Euro-American mainstream culture within its increasingly diversifying student population. This thesis also shows how schools, like nations, can be "imagined communities" and how they often fail to implement their ideologies of acceptance and pluralism into effective practice. Additionally, it illustrates the similarities between assimilation and accommodation, exclusion and inclusion, and ethnic nationalism and multiculturalism.

Although some scholars fear that multiculturalism gives a nation no unifying features, I argue that a nation is able to unite under its ability to recognize *all* identities equally. As Billig states, "a nation will only exist if a body of people believe themselves to be a nation" (Billig 1995: 66). For Lewiston Public Schools, Somali students will only feel a part of the school community and larger national identity if the schools recognize their students' diversities and integrate them equally. Without the politics of recognition, a nation will continue to instill false ideals of unity and promote an ideology that inherently devalues difference.

Yet, how do I move my findings beyond the "ivory tower" of academia that much of

anthropology has sat in comfortably since its creation during the colonial expansion of Europe? My first inclination is to release my thesis to the Lewiston Public School system, contacting Superintendent William Webster about my conclusions regarding the relationship between Lewiston Public Schools and American national identity. An important question comes to mind, however: will people actually read it and, most importantly, will they know what to do with it? Given the nature of anthropology, with its thick description, dense analyses, and experimental prose, will this thesis actually be a valuable source of information to the Lewiston Public School system in order to implement educational reform and change? Would the school system benefit instead from a series of presentations or condensed reports summarizing my findings? Once I begin to abbreviate the aspects of my ethnography and analysis to share to the schools, however, does anthropology lose its integrity? In other words, does it lose the aspects that make it the unique discipline that it is? As I continue to debate the best practices to move my thesis beyond the "ivory tower," I maintain my self-ascribed title of being an anthropologist of social change.

Margery Wolf believes that fieldwork never ends. She argues ethnographers "leave the field site because we must, not because we feel we have finished the work" (Wolf 1992: 128). Even though my thesis is complete, the fieldwork is never over. Whatever public school I work in, whether it is Lewiston or beyond, I will continue to be aware of the relationship between schools and the nation. Although Somalis are the focus of my research, other minority students who are not members of the white, Euro-American, Judeo-Christian mainstream culture must also navigate inclusive and exclusive boundaries for their own identities. They, too, face similar difficulties in being accepted into the American national identity due to the inherently hierarchal structures and values systems of the nation's public schools. Like Wolf, I will continue to do fieldwork, exploring ways for my findings to leave the "ivory tower" and allow anthropology to

be used to elicit educational reform and social change.

"I, Too, Am American"

"All right, all right – settle down, everyone!" I yell across the room, encouraging Ms. Michelson's students to take a seat at their desks. They are all excited having just watched a short video of Mohammed and Bahdoon performing a hip-hop routine at Tree Street Youth, an after school program in downtown Lewiston. "More show and tell!" the students exclaim.

"Would you like to read your poem?" I ask Shukri, a quiet student in the back of the class. She nods lightly and slowly approaches the front of the room, growing more nervous with each step through the rows of brown desks. I raise my eyebrows and give her an encouraging 'thumbs up.'

After teaching a lesson on Langston Hughes' "I, Too," I instructed the students to create their own poem, using an "I Am" format. [70] The guidelines gave a basic structure, using the subject "I" followed by a verb, such as "see", "think," and "wonder." The words that followed, however, were completely up to the students' interpretation.

Shukri clears her throat and looks around the room at her classmates. Her hands shake as she lifts the poem to the level of her chin. "I am a sad student," she starts. Her voice is quiet but full of emotion. "I pretend to be happy… I feel left out." Hassan, the boisterous student in Ms. Michelson's class, listens to Shukri's words just as he did in the previous lesson with the first line of Hughes' poem, "I, too, sing America". "I want a high school diploma," she states with a sharp affirmation. "I dream about being a high school graduate… I understand that I need to

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[70] The combined epigraphs from the introduction and conclusion chapters form the full poem of Langston Hughes' poem "I, Too."

speak better English to achieve my dream…" I see her rub her eyes seeming to wipe away a tear before reciting the last line of the poem, "I am a sad student."

There is silence throughout the class. Shukri lifts her gaze from her paper and our eyes meet across the room. I smile widely, filled with a profound sense of sadness and pride. I erupt into applause with Ms. Michelson and the rest of the class soon follows. "Well done!" we exclaim. "Well done!"

Shukri's poem reveals the struggles she, like many Somali students in Lewiston High School, face in their daily life in the classroom. Her sadness is a product of her constant feeling of exclusion from the school, the city, and the nation. Whenever I work individually with Shukri, she always expresses her desire to do well in Ms. Michelson's literacy class, hoping that her performance will allow her to enter mainstream classes and be one step closer to achieving her goal of graduating from Lewiston High. Everyday she walks by Ms. Michelson's wall with newspaper clippings of the Blue Devils' victory as State Champions, reminded of the multiculturalism that Lewiston Public Schools aspire to adopt but fail to practice. Shukri continues to navigate the boundaries of exclusion and inclusion, assimilation and accommodation due to her linguistic and religious identities. Unable to achieve acceptance into the school community, she also internalizes feelings of non-Americanness and is unable to understand her place in America's national identity.

Although Langston Hughes' famous literary work, "I, Too," is directed towards African Americans and their history of slavery and segregation, I believe the poem's message of exclusion from a national identity is universal. Hughes envisions a greater and more inclusive America, one that practices the equality for *all* Americans that it claims to uphold. He

encourages the people who doubt their Americanness to not only assert their right to "sing America" but to also claim their right to be American.

I look around at all of the students in Ms. Michelson's classroom and I hear them singing. They struggle everyday with their acceptance into the school and national communities. These students, like Shukri and Hassan, want to be Americans but are constantly discouraged by the impermeability of the boundaries created around their identities. They want to be included into America, hoping that one day they do not just "sing America" but believe, without any doubt, that they can say, "I, too, am America."

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Appendix

Appendix A. Mayor Raymond's Letter

A Letter to the Somali Community

October 1, 2002

For some number of months, I have observed the continued movement of a substantial number of Somalis into the downtown area of our Community. I have applauded the efforts of our City staff in making available the existing services and the local citizenry for accepting and dealing with the influx.

I assumed that it would become obvious to the new arrivals the effect the large numbers of new residents has had upon the existing Staff and City finances and that this would bring about a voluntary reduction of the number of new arrivals — it being evident that the burden has been, for the most part, cheerfully accepted, and every effort has been made to accommodate it.

Our Department of Human Services has recently reported that the number of Somali families arriving into the City during the month of September is below the approximate monthly average that we have seen over the last year or so. It may be premature to assume that this may serve as a signal for future relocation activity, but the decline is welcome relief given increasing demands on city and school services.

I feel that recent relocation activity over the summer has necessitated that I communicate directly with the Somali elders and leaders regarding our newest residents. If recent declining arrival numbers are the result of your outreach efforts to discourage relocation into the City, I applaud those efforts. If they are the product of other unrelated random events, I would ask that the Somali leadership make every effort to communicate my concerns on city and school service impacts with other friends and extended family who are considering a move to this community.

To date, we have found the funds to accommodate the situation. A continued increased demand will tax the City's finances.

This large number of new arrivals cannot continue without negative results for all. The Somali community must exercise some discipline and reduce the stress on our limited finances and our generosity.

I am well aware of the legal right of a U.S. resident to move anywhere he/she pleases, but it is time for the Somali community to exercise this discipline in view of the effort that has been made on its behalf.

We will continue to accommodate the present residents as best as we can, but we need self-discipline and cooperation from everyone.

Only with your help will we be successful in the future — please pass the word: We have been overwhelmed and have responded valiantly. Now we need breathing room. Our city is maxed-out financially, physically and emotionally.

I look forward to your cooperation.

Laurier T. Raymond, Jr.
Mayor, City of Lewiston, Maine

Appendix B. Photos of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils

Photo I: The line-up at the start of the State Championship game at Portland on Saturday, November 7, 2015.
Source: scene from Ian Clough's documentary, "One Team: The Story of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils."

Photo II: Coach McGraw raises his hands in victory at the diverse crowd of Lewiston supporters.
Source: Twitter photo from Lewiston resident.

Photo III: The Blue Devils surround Coach McGraw with hugs after their victory over Scarborough on November 7.
Source: scene from Ian Clough's documentary, "One Team: The Story of the Lewiston High School Blue Devils."

Photo IV: The Blue Devils rush to the stands to show their supporters their success, with trophy in hand.
Source: Daryn Slover, *Sun Journal*.

Photo V: Lewiston Blue Devils pose with their State Championship on the field of Fitzgerald Stadium in Portland.
Source: *Sun Journal.*